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## **Interfaith Debate Through Youtube Media as an Effort to Educate and Fortify the Faith of the Ummah**

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**Abstract.** The da'wah method through youtube media is a method used by Muslim debaters in conveying da'wah messages so that the da'wah message is conveyed according to the objectives to the listeners and viewers of the youtube channel so that Muslims are fortified with their faith so that they are not easily influenced and not easy to be converted by other religions. To facilitate and attract a broader audience in the world of da'wah and broadcast or debate between Islam and Christianity, Muslim and Christian apologists or debaters use effective communication media through online media, one of which is YouTube. The delivery of messages of truth must be systematically arranged so that the mission of this ministry can run efficiently and effectively. The research approach used is qualitative with netnographic research methods, namely the method used to understand the culture of social media users. The culture referred to here is social media (Youtube) as a safe space for social media users to share information. Netnography is a method for social media users' behavior (culture) or habits.

**Keywords.** Communication, debate, education, faith, youtube

### **A. Introduction**

There is a call for salvation in religious teachings or doctrines accompanied by the obligation to invite others to that salvation. This activity is commonly referred to as "*dakiah*." *Da'kiyah* is an effort to socialize (invite, seduce) religious teachings. Each religion may justify that religion is the most correct. If this interest is prioritized, each religion will face the other in upholding its right to truth. This will raise religious sentiments so that clashes are challenging to avoid. (Nazaruddin, 2016).

A person's religious attitude will lead to practically useful things following the teachings of that religion so that existing religious education always emphasizes moral improvement. The mission of religion is always oriented to the practices of each individual in carrying out every commandment and staying away from every prohibition taught in that religion.

Conceptual differences between existing religions are a reality, which no one can deny. Differences and even clashes of conceptions occur in almost all aspects of religion, both in the field of the conception of God and the conception of the regulation of daily life. This, in practice,

quite often triggers conflicts between people of different religions, especially Muslims and Christians.

In Islamic teachings, da'wah is an effort to invite people to goodness and guidance to do good and prevent doing evil to achieve happiness in the world and the hereafter following the instructions from Allah SWT contained in the Qur'an and the sunnah or actions that are exemplified. By the Prophet, Muhammad SAW during his life as stated in the authentic hadiths.

Efforts to invite understanding, awareness, appreciation, and practice of religious teachings properly and correctly require away. This way or path is also known as the method. The method or means is an important thing to achieve a goal. That is why among them, the method in da'wah is one component that cannot be ignored and is even very decisive in achieving the goals of da'wah. (Usman, 2009)

According to the teachings of Islam, it is highly recommended for its followers to convey good things, for that da'wah must be packaged in the right and appropriate way and method. Da'wah must appear actual, factual, and contextual. As the word of Allah SWT in the Qur'an Surah An Nahl verse 125 which reads:

وَهُوَ سَبِيلُهُ عَنِ ضَلَّ بِمَنْ أَعْلَمُ هُوَ رَبُّكَ إِنَّ أَحْسَنَ هِيَ بِأَلَّتِي وَجَادِلُهُمُ الْحَسَنَةَ وَالْمَوْعِظَةَ بِالْحِكْمَةِ رَبُّكَ سَبِيلٌ إِلَيَّ  
بِالْمُهْتَدِينَ أَعْلَمُ

Meaning: "Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good instruction, and argue with them in a way that is best. Indeed, your Lord is most knowing of who has strayed from His way, and He is most knowing of who is (rightly) guided." (Surat an-Nahl [16]: 125)

If in Islam the way of preaching is not forcing and provoking people outside Islam to embrace Islam, but da'wah is carried out using the following methods: 1) Wisdom, namely preaching by paying attention to something and the conditions of mad'u and emphasizing according to the ability of mad'u, so that in carrying out the teachings of Islam they do not feel forced and objected. 2) Maudhah hasanah, which gives advice or conveys Islamic teachings with love so that the message conveyed can be accepted by mad'u and provides examples, commendable actions, noble traits, commendable morals, and adhering to teachings according to Islamic teachings. 3) Mujdah, preaching by exchanging ideas, not putting pressure, and not vilifying those who are da'wah partners.

To facilitate and attract a broader audience in the world of da'wah and broadcast or debate between Islam and Christianity, Muslim and Christian apologists or debaters use effective communication media through online media, one of which is YouTube, where YouTube is one of the media. With the most popular video database in the internet world, social media is a video site that provides various information in the form of "moving images" and is reliable. This site is indeed provided for those searching for video information and watching it live. We can also participate in uploading (uploading) videos to the Youtube server and sharing them throughout the world (Sianipar, 2015)

The da'wah method through youtube media is a method used by Muslim debaters in conveying da'wah messages so that the da'wah message is conveyed according to the objectives to the listeners and viewers of the youtube channel so that Muslims are fortified with their faith so that they are not easily influenced and not easy to be converted by Christians, Following the mission of the Christian Apologetics Online service, it must be prepared as carefully as possible,

so that there are no errors or obstacles that could hinder this service. Everything must be arranged systematically so that the mission of this ministry can run efficiently and effectively.

Some Muslims and Muslim debaters have widely used Youtube media to convey Islamic studies through uploaded videos. If you take advantage of a dai's YouTube with his lecture recorded using a camera, then upload it, it will attract much public attention, even more of those who watch it can be repeated over and over again to be watched anywhere (Hajar, 2019)

YouTube media channels owned by Muslim debaters such as Jim Media Channel, JCC Zulfikar Official, Zulkifli M Abbas Channel, Ngaji Smart Channel, Dondi Tan Channel, and other Muslim channels, while Christian-side channels such as Nuska Channel, Terang Dunia Channel, Neutral Corner Channel, Clay Channel, My Catholic Cool Channel, and other Christian channels. Users or netizens widely use these channels to view and listen to debates and discussions that are carried out to convey the truths from the side of each religion, using arguments sourced from the *Qur'an*, *Hadith*, and the Bible supporting literature.

Debates between religions are not impossible to be colored by emotions and reason that are not always controlled. Each side happened to bring down the other, blamed and even disbelieved the opponent in the debate. As a result, the natural religion exists to unite, reconcile, and get to know each other, but in the end, it is the opposite, namely conflict, fighting, and endless hostility. The emergence of various sects, schools, organizations, and each claiming that his group is the correct result of this debate.

Each debater as an apologist tries to provide convincing information based on the knowledge and knowledge they have. It is more often done by Muslim debaters to always use valid data valid arguments by referring to the Qur'an and Hadith. If Muslim apologists cannot answer or respond to Christian apologists' questions, they will be honest to look for the data. First, they never want to answer based on assumptions on their thoughts. On the other hand, based on the author's observations, it is unfortunate that Christians sometimes prefer to assume to answer questions or responses from Muslim apologists,

The author researched several channels to examine debates and discussions between debaters, individuals, and groups presented through YouTube media to find out the communication process for inter-religious debates, especially Islam and Christianity.

## **B. Literature Review**

### **Interfaith Debate**

Debates on behalf of two or more parties from different religions are now easily found, both offline and online. In particular, this debate is currently taking place on social media such as YouTube. You can easily find this on various YouTube channels in the country. Unfortunately, inter-religious debates are often based on the desire of each party to find fault and bring down the other party. They assume that religious teachings are the most correct. As a result, the ongoing debate widens the gap between differences and, at the same time, whether we realize it or not, actually sows and sows the seeds of hatred on each side. This hatred then developed into a conflict involving followers of different religions in the Indonesian context. (Susanta, 2021)

Interreligious debate is unnecessary because the debate of two different teachings will never end. The debate should end and be replaced with dialogue. Dialogues that have been carried out for a long time still often reach a dead end, let alone inter-religious debates. As stated by Irfanullah and Hasse that a debate that emphasizes absolute truth claims will further

complicate the dialogue, which will eventually end in a charioteer debate or contentious battle that is useless and unproductive (Irfanullah & Hasse, 2016).

### **Youtube Social Media**

Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) define social media as “a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and which enable the creation and exchange of user-generated content”. Social media are ordinary people who share ideas, work together, and collaborate. The point is that using social media is tantamount to making us ourselves (Mayfield, 2008).

Youtube has the understanding as a digital media site (video) that can be downloaded, uploaded, and shared throughout the country (Baskoro, 2009). Youtube is a social media site that is often used and is phenomenal among the public. People use YouTube to view the latest news, look for information, even for entertainment such as watching movies, listening to songs, or watching various tutorials.

YouTube has five characteristics (Faiqah, Nadjib, & Amir, 2016:260): 1) There is no duration limit for uploading videos. This distinguishes YouTube from several other applications with a minimum duration of time, such as Instagram, Snapchat, etc. 2) an accurate security system. YouTube limits its security by not allowing videos containing SARA, which is illegal and will provide confirmation questions before uploading videos. 3) Paid. According to Theoldman in Faiqah, Nadjib, & Amir (2016: 261), YouTube offers anyone who uploads their video and gets a minimum of 1000 viewers. They will be given an honorarium. 4) Offline system; YouTube has a new feature for users to watch videos offline. This system makes it easy for users to watch videos offline, but the videos must be downloaded first before that. 5) A simple editor is available. In the initial menu for uploading videos, users will be offered to edit the video first. The menu offered is cutting videos, sorting colors, or adding video switching effects.

According to Sianipar (2013), YouTube is a database containing video content popular on social media and a provider of various beneficial information. Youtube has a function to search for video information or view videos directly. Youtube is designed as a video-sharing site that is very popular, especially among the younger generation, and even YouTube as a site for sharing information in today's digital era. The younger generation almost mainly uses youtube in their daily life.

### **Fortifying the *Aqidah* of the *Ummah***

*Aqidah* literally comes from the word which means bonding. In terms, *aqidah* is the heart's belief in something. According to *TM Hasbi ash-Shiddieqy*, *aqidah* is a matter that must be justified in the heart and accepted in a satisfied manner, firmly embedded in the soul. The storm of subhat cannot shake it. 3 Hassan al-Banna, defines *aqidah* as something that requires the heart to justify, which makes the soul calm peaceful to him and becomes trust-free from doubts.

According to Ibrahim Muhammad bin Abdullah al-Burnikan, the word *aqidah* has gone through the development of meaning through several stages, namely: The first stage, *aqidah* is defined as a unanimous determination (*al-azm al-muakkad*), collecting (*al-jam'u*), Intention (*al-niyah*), strengthens the agreement, something that is believed and adhered to by humans, be it true or false. The second stage is the actions of the heart (the servant).

Then *aqidah* is defined as faith that does not contain contra. It means confirming that there is nothing but faith in the servant's heart, not assuming anything other than that he has

faith in Him. In the third stage, *aqidah* has entered a period of maturity where it has been structured to be a scientific discipline with its scope of problems.

The true *aqidah* is the basis (principle) for the establishment of religion (*din*) and is a condition for accepting a deed. Allah *subhanahu wata`ala* says:

فَلْيَعْمَلْ عَمَلًا صَالِحًا وَلَا يُشْرِكْ فَلْإِنَّمَا أَنَا بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُكُمْ يُوحَىٰ إِلَىٰ أَنَّمَا إِلَهُكُمُ إِلَهُهُ وَجِدْ فَمَنْ كَانَ يَرْجُوا لِقَاءَ رَبِّهِ  
أَحَدًا بِعِبَادَةِ رَبِّهِ

Meaning: “Say, ‘O Prophet,’ ‘I am only a man like you, ‘but’ it has been revealed to me that your God is only One God. So whoever hopes for the meeting with their Lord, let them do good deeds and associate none in the worship of their Lord.” (Surat al-Kahf: 110)

Allah *subhanahu wata`ala* also says:

لَقَدْ أُوحِيَ إِلَيْكَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ لَكَ لَبِئْسَ أَشْرَكَتَ لِيَحْبِطَنَّ لَكَ لَتَكُونَنَّ الْخٰسِرِينَ

Meaning: “It has already been revealed to you—and to those ‘prophets’ before you—that if you associate others ‘with Allah’, your deeds will certainly be void and you will truly be one of the losers.” (Surat az-Zumar: 65)

Based on QS al-Kahf: 110 and QS az-Zumar: 65 above, it can be seen that it is essential to continuously maintain and fortify the *aqidah* of Muslims from apostasy or silencing of *aqidah*, especially for ordinary Muslims who still do not understand how Islam regulates and be an accurate guide to life. This effort to fortify *aqidah* is carried out to strengthen the faith of Muslims so that Muslims still have strong faith and understand very well how the *Qur'an* and *As-Sunnah* are very reasonable and unquestionable guidelines for life. In this way, it is hoped that Muslims will not be easily converted to Christianity or converted by the lure of material and other Christianization tactics carried out by the missionaries.

### C. Research methods

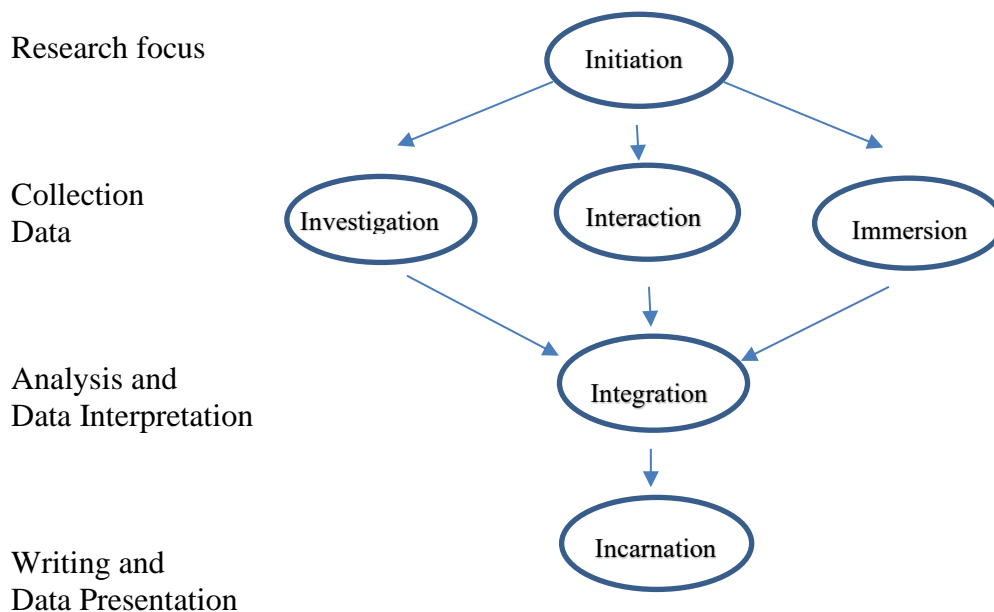
Based on the problems or phenomena described above, the research approach used is qualitative with netnographic research methods, namely the method used to understand the culture of social media users (Kozinets, 2010). The culture referred to here is social media (Youtube) as a safe space for social media users to share information. Netnography is a method for investigating social media users' behavior (culture) or habits.

Netnography uses online footprints (social media posts, comments on online shopping sites, comments on online forums/news sites, etc.). The netnographic method utilizes this data to understand the culture of online media to find out the content and culture, which requires the author's participation and involvement (immersion). The author is involved with the phenomena, problems and objects studied. However, the involvement of researchers does not always have to be in a community or become a member of an online community, and so on. Netnography is a method that is data-site. The author first dealt with data in the form of online (digital) traces in huge quantities, and not all of the data were relevant in the study. Hence, the authors only examined digital traces relevant to the research objectives.



Kozinets (2010)

In researching da'wah through discussions and debates as an effort to educate and fortify the faith of the people through YouTube media related to cases of interfaith debates between apologists from parties of different religions by going through the following stages of research:



This research focuses on issues related to faith and public belief, which are discussed and discussed in interfaith debates through YouTube social media as a medium of da'wah in educating and fortifying the people's faith. Collecting data using the author investigating by looking for various channels that broadcast the case, the writer selects videos containing discussions and debates between Muslim and Christian apologists, where each tries to give an opinion from the side of his faith and refute the opponent's opinion is against his faith. The data that has been selected is then stored and further researched.

#### **D. Research result**

Debates often occur between Muslim debaters and Christian apologists broadcast via YouTube channels, and debates always arise due to different understandings or perceptions of the exact human figure named Jesus in Christianity and Jesus in Islam. Christians believe in Jesus as the Christ, or savior (Messiah), from a Christian perspective. They believe that humans can be reconciled to God through His death and resurrection and thus receive the offer of salvation and the promise of eternal life.

Meanwhile, in the Islamic perspective, in the *Al-Quran*, Isa or Jesus is seen as a servant of Allah (Abdullah), prophet, and apostle. God taught him the Torah, gave him the gospel (3:48), and helped him with the Holy Spirit (2:87). Jesus is God's 'word' or sentence, respected

in this world and the hereafter (3:45). Jesus was created from dust, as was Adam (3:59). Like other prophets, the name of Jesus is mentioned with the phrase 'alaihi salam (AS), may peace be with him.

The debates that are broadcast on YouTube media, especially on Muslim channels, always bring up different themes and are in great demand by netizens or the online media user community by listening to while making comments on live chat and those in live chat also giving each other their arguments and commenting on each other. In the debates they listen to, especially if on live chat, some netizens have different faiths and try to defend the debater who is the champion or the superior one. So that debates and attacks occur not only in zoom between debaters but also in live chat between netizens.

Next, the author will analyze some of the videos that the author has chosen based on the research method above by taking several YouTube videos from several Muslim channels that broadcast discussions and debates between Islam and Christianity.



The video above is entitled *HOW MANY GOSPELS ARE THERE? HOLLY BIBLE TRUE THE GOSPEL OF JESUS?* Aired on Jim Media channel, discussed by Ustad Kainama and Ariesto is a convert who discusses the gospel of Jesus. How Christians believe many holy bibles. In this video, Ustadz Kainama explains based on or refers to the Bible or Christian books explaining the beginning and existence of the gospel that God revealed about the kingdom of God, which was preached to humans among the Israelites.

The gospel is the mystery of the kingdom of God, and the gospel is the word of God which is conveyed in parables. Jesus was not the word made flesh, but Jesus came and was sent by God to receive the word to be delivered to the children of Israel. Ustad Kainama explained biblically about the Bible by referring to the Koran Surah Almaidah verses 46-47, Sevaria, Shabbat 116a, Matthew chapters 4: 23 and chapters 5: 3, 17; Luke chapters 8:1, 10, 11; John chapter 17:8

Based on the Christian perspective, what is called the gospel is (gospel). There are only 4 books, namely, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, which are only in the New Testament. At the same time, the Bible is a collection of books that exist in the Old Testament and the New Testament. Moreover, after being studied by Ustadz Kainama, it turns out that in the Christian Bible, there are very many gospels with contents in the form of notes from the apostles, including the apostles Paul, Mark, Luke, and John, the Christian version.

According to cleric Kainama Islam, the Bible is one of the books of Allah SWT, which was revealed to Prophet Isa (as), which confirmed the position of Allah SWT as the God of the week and Jesus (as) as his messenger. (Maryam(19) : 20)



The conclusion of the discussion and study delivered by Ustadz Kainama and Ariesto was the da'wah they carried out to provide knowledge and motivation to listeners to gain knowledge and enlightenment on the actual truth that can be digested by common sense. Ustad Kainama's testimony stated that there was no intention to blaspheme or humiliate or attack Christians but to provide factual information based on valid data in the form of presentations and studies of scientific testimonials.



The video above is titled "Father Aldo Criticizes and analyzes whether LAI (Indonesian Bible Institute) is wrong in translating the words of Allah?" broadcast by *Zojahedin Cakrawala Cemerlang (ZCC)* channel and witnessed by debaters both from Christianity and Muslims representing Muslim and Christian channels who participated in debates and discussions discussing the use of the word Allah and the sentences in the Koran quoted or used in the Bible belonging to Christians, represented by Father Aldo from the Christian side and Ustad Zuma from the Muslim side.

The theme of the discussion in the video is criticizing and analyzing the Indonesian Bible Institute for mistranslating the word Allah in the Bible. Father Aldo as a Catholic leader, invites stakeholders in LAI to immediately revise the words of God in the Bible to be replaced with the word God from the original Hebrew language, which can mean Yahweh, Elohim, or Adonai. According to Father Aldo, what LAI has done in translating the word Allah from Arabic into Indonesian is the God of Allah in the Bible. Father Aldo requested that LAI immediately revise the Bible so that it no longer uses the word Allah in the Bible but returns to using the original Hebrew language.

By using historical data and evidence, it is proven that the use of the word Allah for God is only used in Indonesia, whereas in the General Indonesian Spelling Guidelines, the word Allah is the name of God in Arabic; the creator of the all-perfect universe; God Almighty whom believers worship. Meanwhile, from the Muslim side, represented by Ustad Zulfifli M. Abbas, who is better known by the nickname Ustad Zuma, conveyed to Christians, especially the Indonesian Bible Institute, not to pry or use Islamic terms in the Koran because it has hurt Muslims who use or place these terms in the Bible that are not following their original meaning in the *Qur'an*.

In the *Qur'an*, the word "ilah" is a common word that is also used to refer to "deities/gods" other than Allah (example: Qs.17:42,18:15, etc.) While the word "ALLAH" is NEVER attached to "Gods/Gods/Idols" in the *Qur'an*, even the word "ALLAH" is emphasized by the *Qur'an* as "His Name" (Qs. Thaa Haa verse: 14).

The term: Allah (الله) does not have the form mustsanah (dual), plural, feminine or masculine in the *Qur'an*, while the word ilah (إله) as the singular form, has the form mutsanah

(dual): ilāhayni (الْإِلهَيْنِ) [example: Qs. An Nahl :51] is a general word that has a plural form: Alihat/h (الِهَةٌ) [example: Qs. Al kahfi: 15,110, Qs. Maryam: 46,81].

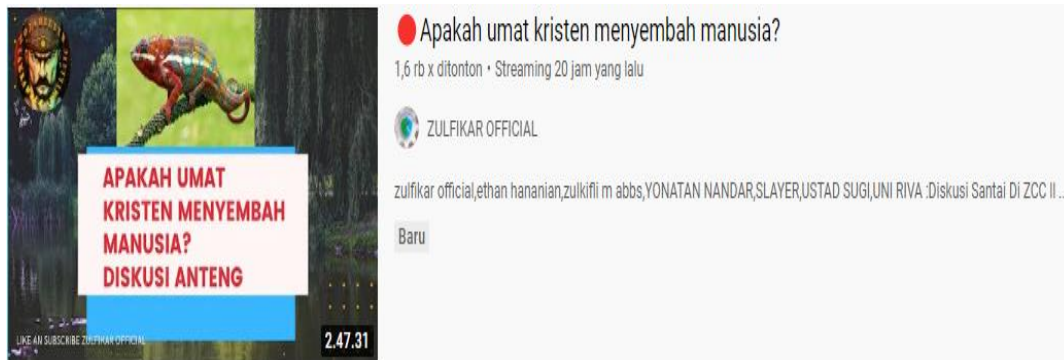
- 1) The term: ALLH (الله) is not a "generic name" but a "Proper name."
- 2) Because the term: ALLAH (الله) is the "Proper Name/name of Himself" automatically cannot be translated.
- 3) The term: ALLAH (الله) is not Mustaq ( word formation ), but Ghairu Mustaq ( not from word formation), so the theory of the formation of the word " AL + iLAH " is unconditionally invalid.
- 4) The term: ALLAH (الله) is not originally Arabic, but the term 'Arabic' automatically cannot be found in Arabic grammar.

According to Ustad Zuma, this is supported by Surah Thaa Haa: 14, namely:

لِذِكْرِي وَأَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ لِيَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنَا فَأَعْبُدْنِي إِنِّي أَنَا اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنَا اعْبُدْنِي الصَّلَاةَ لِذِكْرِي

*'It is truly I. I am Allah! There is no god 'worthy of worship' except Me. So worship Me 'alone', and establish prayer for My remembrance. - (Surah Thaa Haa: 14).*

Surah ThaaHaa verse 14 above shows that Allah explains that He is a God who cannot have other gods besides Him. Hence, it is permissible to worship Allah, the only God who created the universe and its contents, not worshipping gods or creatures or objects. Other. If we believe that Allah is the only God we must worship, we must establish prayers always to remember Allah.



The video above is entitled "Do Christians worship humans?" broadcast on the Zulfikar Official channel discussing the concept of divinity from the Christian version, which was debated and discussed by Vivo and Kadrin representing Christians and Erwin, Handy, Zulfikar representing Muslims.

The debate begins by discussing the holy spirit, that the holy spirit is in man with the spirit in Jesus. Then proceed to God, who became human, and debate whether Jesus came to the world by proceeding or by incarnating from God's word into a human son. The debate ran fiercely because Christian debaters did not accept that the Christian God had evolved. They denied what was questioned by Muslim debaters.

Questions were asked from Muslims to Christian debaters whether Mother Mary worshiped the God who was being conceived and whether the God who was being conceived could support herself. Christian debaters did not accept these questions. Pastor Billy added that the child in Mary's womb was a holy God and glorified her. Mary knew that what she was carrying was the God she also worshiped.

The Christian Vivo debater asked the Muslim debater to ask the truth, he thought that Jesus was conceived by the mother Mary, and the Muslim debater asked again what Mary conceived God for 9 months.

Muslim debater asked whether the Jesus in Mary's womb was holy and depended on his mother's nutrition. Whatever his mother consumed, Jesus also felt it. When Mother Mary was activeness must have joined and was confirmed by Kadrun. Vivo responded with an annoyed tone because he did not accept the question from Muslim debaters who cornered the God of Christians. The question was raised again by Muslim debaters whether God can be weak and was agreed by Kadrun, who thought that God could freely will. Vivo explains that Jesus in the womb of Mary the fullness of the Godhead physically proves according to the Bible John 14:8, John 3:2 Corinthians 3, Genesis 1:2

Muslim Handy debater asks again if Jesus was full of divinity when he was conceived, is there still God in heaven? Moreover, who takes care of the universe? Kadrun as an apologist, believes that God in his mother's womb can do whatever he wants. The discussion ended by giving each other closing statements by clarifying each of the understandings of the debaters.

### **E. Conclusion**

From the results of the analysis of several YouTube videos that present inter-religious debates, it can be concluded that apologists from both Islam and Christianity try to give their opinions that justify their respective beliefs by presenting supporting data or arguments that strengthen their arguments.

Muslim debaters tend to use the verses in the book The Bible, which is a holy book for Christians, is divided into two, namely the Old Testament and the New Testament. By questioning the many contradictions contained in the book. Meanwhile, Christians give their views about the books they believe in based on the doctrines instilled by the church's pastors in their congregations.

The debate occurs because of differences in the concept of God from both sides, where Muslims believe in monotheism that God is one, namely Allah SWT, and believe that Muhammad SAW is a prophet for all humanity, the messenger of Allah SWT. While Christians believe that Jesus or Isa Messiah is a God they deserve to worship, Muslims believe that Jesus or Isa Almasih is a special messenger of God for the children of Israel.

Youtube is a very powerful online media in defending the creed of the people through interfaith debate shows that present valid and valid data, arguments based on each book that is believed by the debaters, especially from Muslim debaters who always present the arguments evidence from the Qur'an and hadith.

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