



EDUCATING
ASEAN
SOCIETIES
FOR INTEGRITY

The Role of Educators & Students in Building Integrity

The Role of Educators
& Students in Building
INTEGRITY

Editor

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Ries Wulandari, M.Si

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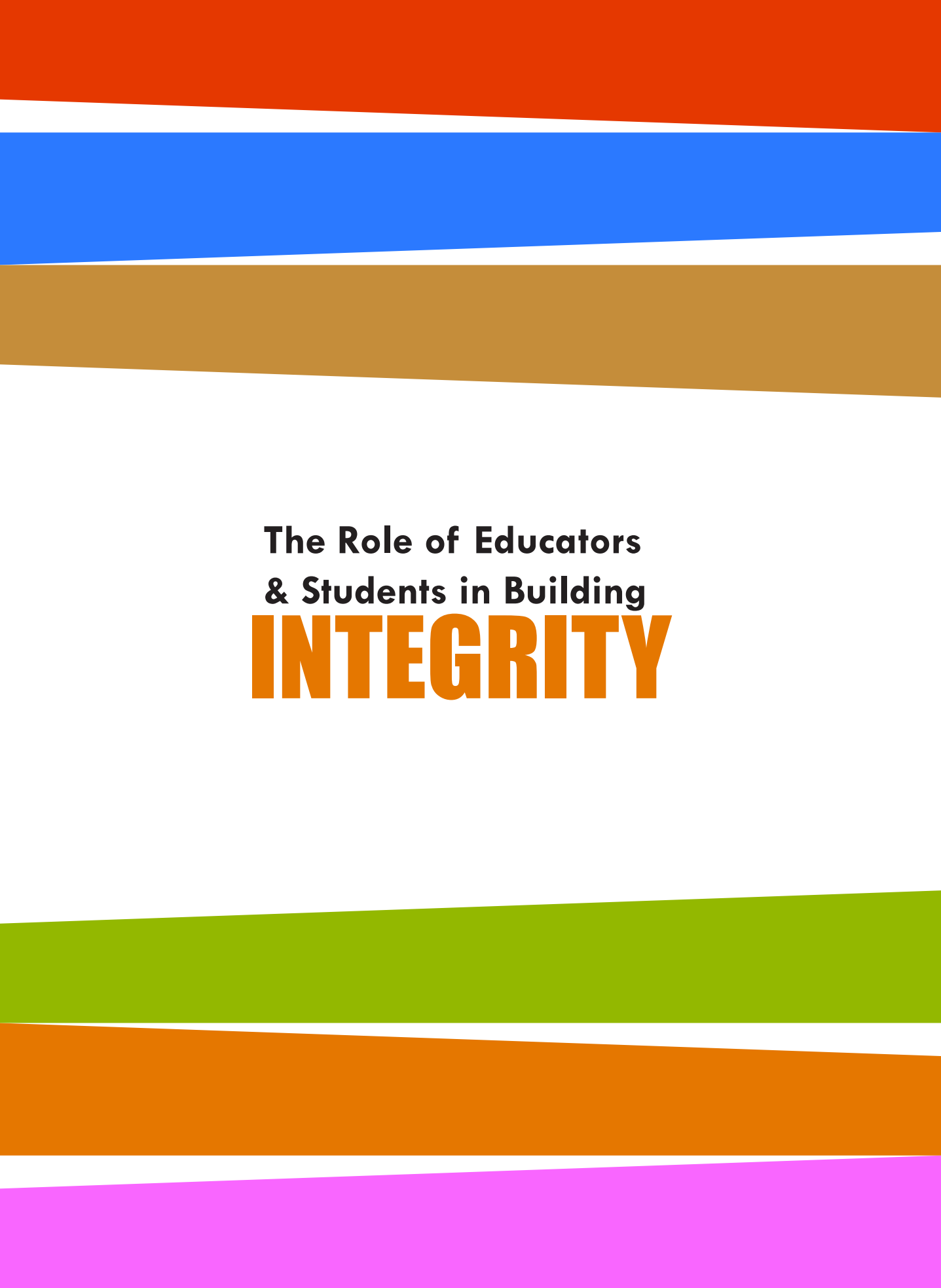
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Integrity in Christian Values During Problematic Social Relations: Case of GKI Yasmin in The Web Archives

Riris Loisa

Abstract

"..And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love" ... This citation from the holy Bible is the central issue of Christianity. Today, love has become a universal concept in the context of romance, family and friendships. In Christianity, love has many dimensions with multiple indicators: patient, kind, un-abusive, does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth, always hopes, always perseveres, etc. Christians believe that love never fails, and should always have this concept in mind, use it *as reference for way of thinking, speaking and behaving towards God, self and others. In other word, Christianity is about integrity of loving. This essay will discuss the integrity in applying the concept of love in a complicated social relations faced by the congregation of GKI Yasmin, in the city of Bogor. This congregation has encountered oppression by the radical groups as well as by the local government, even though they have won the case in the Supreme Court. How the congregation responding to the oppressions with integrity of Christian values will be analyzed, with the perspective of intercultural communication within ideology and moral issues. The analysis will be using interpretive text analysis toward several web archives including GKI Yasmin official website and news in Tempo.co. The result of this analysis will present a description of integrity based on Christian central values in a social relations that encountered by conflict.*

Key words: *love, integrity, conflict, web archive text analysis*

1. Introduction

Love is the center of the whole Christian faith: “now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love; ... for God is love” ... other than these citations, there are more than 2000 words about love in the Christian Holy Bible...¹ Love is the central issue of Christian life. Today, love has become a universal concept that use to be applied in the context of family, romance, and friendship. For Christians, love is a concept that has specific purposes, toward God, self, and others.² In other word, Christianity is about integrity of loving God, self and others.

Within the context of social life, love toward others becomes the reference for attitude and behavior in the social environment. The concept of love in this context is operated in The Biblical way of conduct such as patience, humility, justice, truth, etc³. In a favorable social relationship, it would not be too difficult to apply love into attitude and behaviors. Unfortunately, in many cases social life is filled with differences of values, purposes, and interests between groups that might lead to various social problems. In other word, social reality contains challenges toward integrity of applying Christian values into real actions.

For example, the practice of love is patience. Being patient is an attitude with different level of challenge. For most of people being patient toward unpleasant neighbors, clients, co-workers, or leaders are simple matters. But, it will be a different case if being patient challenged by tensions in a critical issue. The Indonesian Christian Church (GKI) Yasmin case represents an example of applying patience in a challenging reality.

GKI Yasmin is confronted by the fundamentalist groups that

-
- 1 <http://alkitab.sabda.org/search.php?search=Kasih&tab=text&scope=all&exact=off>
 - 2 Jesus replied: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.”[a] 38 This is the first and greatest commandment. 39 And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself (Mathew 22: 37-39), <http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mat%2022:37-39&version=NIV>
 - 3 1 Corinthians 13:4-5, Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs., http://www.biblegateway.com/quicksearch/?quicksearch=Love+is+patient&qv_version=NIV

accommodated by the local Government. In 2008 the building permission that they got from the city mayor was cancelled due to the demand from fundamentalist group. Even though GKI Yasmin has won the case in the Government Administrative Court and in the Supreme Court, and got support from the Indonesian Ombudsman and the Human Right Commission, the church is still not allowed to continue to build their place for worship.⁴

Furthermore, they are not allowed to conduct a prayer service in their own land. They held the service in the walk side in front of the sealed church. The situation was getting worse. Before, during, and after prayer service, they were intimidated by the government apparatus and the member of fundamentalist groups. The intimidation even continued to the residencies of the congregation, during home prayer services.⁵

After five years of oppression from the local government and the fundamentalist group, the congregation is still struggling for their house of worship and for the execution of the verdict of The Indonesian Supreme Court.

This essay will analyze the integrity of the GKI Yasmin congregation in applying the Christian value of love during problematic social relations within a conflict. Particularly, this essay will seek the answers of the following questions: (1) What are the values of integrity in Christianity in the context of GKI Yasmin congregation case?; (2) How are these values of integrity implemented in social relations in the society?; (3) What is the role of Christian institutions in maintaining the values of integrity in the society?; and (4) How is the political situation in Indonesia affecting the integrity of Christian institutions?

4 Up Dated Chronology of the Indonesian Christian Church Prospective Post Taman Yasmin, Bogor, a link in the official website of the Indonesian Christian Church: http://www.gki.or.id/betasgki/bloggkiyasmin/Kronologi_Gereja_Kristen_Indonesia_Bakal_Pos_Taman_Yasmin_Bogor_--VERSI_doc_23_Sept2011.pdf, January 19, 2013

5 <http://youtu.be/Ha0wRbm7Pp0>, January 17, 2013

2. Literature Review : Love, Integrity & Problematic Social Relations

*'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'*⁶ The law of love is the essence of all Christian values.

2.1. Love and Integrity

Quotations above represent 3 directions of love toward (1) God; (2) self; and (3) others. For Christians, love toward God is a form of respond that occur due to His initiative in loving His people.⁷ This response of love is manifested in the obedience to the commandments of God. For Christians, God's primary commandment is to love God. Meanwhile, there is another command which has similar position with the primary one, which is to love others as loving self.⁸ Thus, loving God is manifested in obedience to love.

There are only small numbers of verses in the Bible text that explains about loving self. Statements about this issue usually attached in the context of relationship with others. *Loving others as loving self; do toward others according to the expectation of what others would do toward self.*⁹

The center of Christianity is love. In daily life, true Christians will apply the value of love in their behavior.¹⁰ This fact shows why integrity is the key for obedience to apply Christian values into behavior. Integrity is the quality of always behaving according to the moral principles that one believes.¹¹

6 Matthew 22:37-39, <http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matt%2022%20%2037-39&version=NIV>

7 1 John 4:19 We love because he first loved us., <http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20John%20%204%20%2019&version=NIV>

8 If you love me, keep my commands. John 14:15. <http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John%2014%2015&version=NIV>

9 Do to others as you would have them do to you. Luke 6:31. <http://www.biblegateway.com/quicksearch/?quicksearch=do+unto+others+&qsversion=NIV>

10 Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful. Joshua 1:8. <http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Joshua%201:8&version=NIV>

11 <http://www.macmillandictionary.com/dictionary/british/integrity>

2.2. Problematic Social Relations : Conflict

Society is a social system that always pursues the state of equilibrium. For this reason the entities in a social system should function and interact a way that support the equilibrium state. Unfortunately the social relations among entities in a society rarely reach the ideal condition. Differences among entities are potential factors that lead to social conflict that harm the state of equilibrium.

Conflict is inevitable in any ongoing relationship (Roloff, in Gudykunst & Kim, 1997:278). Conflict arises in any social situation or process in which two or more social entities are linked by at least one form of antagonistic psychological relation or at least one form of antagonistic interaction. (Fink; in Littlejohn & Domenici, 2007:8). The linkage in this definition is the communication link that made up by symbolic exchange trough word or deed. According to this definition, the social interaction between parties must be antagonistic is some way. (Littlejohn & Domenici, 2007:8)

Members of a social group develop shared identity, experience, and belief that different than other social groups. These similarities are built upon a value system or ideology, and become the group's reference. The problem occur when the ideology of one particular group interpreted differently by the member of other groups. As stated by Pierce and Littlejohn as bellow:

The problem is that one group's truth is another's folly. In other words, communities of human beings-whether ethnic, political, religious, or national-often have drastically different worldviews that lead to different assumptions about what is right and good; these views often clash (Pierce & Littlejohn, in Littlejohn & Domenici; 2007:212)

In intercultural communication perspective, different value system among entities leads to an ideology or moral based conflict.

3. Methodology

This essay focuses on the integrity of a social entity to apply their central value in behaviors. Since the background of the problem

laid on different values between social entities, the analysis will be based on intercultural communication perspective.

The approach for the case is interpretive, that aimed to describe the behavior of a cultural group based on the assumption that human experience are subjective in nature. Their behaviors tend to be creative rather than determined, and their culture are created and preserved through communication. Interpretation of the case is based on the text that evolves within a specific context (Martin & Nakayama, 2007:55-57). Text for the analysis are snapshots of micro web archives (Consalvo & Ess, 2011: 25-32), selected purposively, that represent richness of data about integrity of applying Christian values during a conflict. Based on previous considerations the web archives in this essay are the news in Tempo.co and the official website of GKI Yasmin.

4. Results: Values of integrity in Christianity in GKI Yasmin case

The conflict experienced by GKI Yasmin has been going on for almost 5 years. During those years, the congregation created a culture of conflict that characterized by integrity, the quality of always behaving according to the value and moral principles that they believe, that is integrity to love God, self, and others.

Loving God by is implemented through preserving the ritual of worship even though they had to deal with intimidations and through the obedience of loving. While loving self and others is manifested by going through a long period of conflict in an appropriate way of conducts. Without integrity, love as the central Christian value is merely a concept. Integrity is the way that the concept of love manifested in reality, which in turn became the strength to go through the long drawn problematic social relations.

4.1. Implementation of values of integrity implemented in social relations

The official website of GKI Yasmin (web archive 1) contained details of ways of conduct that they implemented since the very

beginning, which is when they apply for the church building permission from the local government in the year of 2000.

Web archive 1. www.gki.or.id



Source: http://www.gki.or.id/betasgki/bloggkiyasmin/Kronologi_Gereja_Kristen_Indonesia_Bakal_Pos_Taman_Yasmin_Bogor_--VERSI_doc_23_Sept2011.pdf

After 6 years of waiting for the approval, finally the mayor of Bogor issued the GKI Yasmin building permission. The problem started in 2008, when the local government sealed the ongoing process of building of the church. In dealing with this problematic situation, the GKI Yasmin congregation went through legal action, by filing claim about the sealing to the court. After a series of legal process, finally the church won the case in the Supreme Court. Nevertheless, the mayor did not execute the Supreme Court verdict. On the contrary, in 2011 the local government cancelled the 2006 building permission. Furthermore, the congregation was not even allowed to enter their own land. The rituals were held in the sidewalk in front of the building gate, under intimidation and terror.¹²

The pressure experienced by GKI Yasmin, is a double barreled conflicts, one with the fundamentalist group that ask for cancelation of the building permission, and the other is with the local government, who accommodated the demand.¹³

12 http://www.gki.or.id/betasgki/bloggkiyasmin/Kronologi_Gereja_Kristen_Indonesia_Bakal_Pos_Taman_Yasmin_Bogor_--VERSI_doc_23_Sept2011.pdf

13 GKI Taman Yasmin Bogor Issue, Bogor City Government Official Website, http://kotabogor.go.id/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=8201, 19 Januari 2013

As for Christian, love manifested in to patience, politeness, justice, and truth.¹⁴ During the problematic social relations, The GKI Yasmin congregation shows a consistent integrity in applying the value of love that manifested in sustainable patience and endurance against pressures and injustice actions. 6 years of waiting for building permission, 2 years of process of court, 5 years of struggle for the execution of the verdict, that complicated by terror and intimidation.

The implementation of love also manifested in the endurance to go through conflict according to the law. At this point, the integrity of love is articulated in pursuing justice and truth with appropriate way of conduct through the legal action.

4.2. The role of Christian institutions in maintaining the values of integrity in the society

Tempo.co web archive shows that the Christian institutions put effort to maintain the values of integrity in pursuing favorable social relations. The Indonesian Communion of Churches (PGI) is the institution that covered the Churches in Indonesia. Since 2010, PGI has been advocating The GKI Yasmin case intensively. Meanwhile the support of interdenominational Christian organizations intensified in the year of 2012. At that time PGI advocated GKI Yasmin case accompanied by Christian and Catholic organizations. Union of Indonesian Church and Gospel Institution (PGLI), Indonesian Bishops Conference (KWI), and the Union of Pentecostal Churches of Indonesia (PGPI) and PGI reported the GKI Yasmin dispute to the Constitutional Court to report that the GKI Yasmin congregation's constitutional rights to worship had been violated.¹⁵

¹⁴ Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs., 1 Corinthians 13:4-5. http://www.biblegateway.com/quicksearch/?quicksearch=Love+is+patient&qv_version=NIV

¹⁵ Church Communion Disappointed in Yudhoyono's Handling of GKI Yasmin Conflict, <http://www.tempo.co/read/news/2012/02/16/055384537/Church-Communion-Disappointed-in-Yudhoyonos-Handling-of-GKI-Yasmin-Conflict>

Web archive 2. Tempo.co



Source: <http://www.tempo.co/read/news/2012/02/16/055384537/Church-Communion-Disappointed-in-Yudhoyonos-Handling-of-GKI-Yasmin-Conflict>

The intensifying of advocacy from interdenominational Christian organizations is a form of integrity of loving others. Nevertheless, it is unfortunate that the interdenominational started to show unity for advocacy after the case had been going on for so many years. Whereas the Christian organizations leaders should have been the example for all Indonesian church members and congregations in applying integrity to love one another even from different denomination. This unity need to be intensified particularly when one of the church encountered by problematic social relations with other entity. In the past, during the struggle for justice, GKI Yasmin had considerable support by organizations and individuals that care about the human right and pluralism.

However, the interdenominational Christian institutions have conducted actions toward the central government to solve the conflict between GKI Yasmin and the local government of Bogor (including the fundamentalist group). These actions were representations of effort to build a social climate that supports the implementation of Christian values. Unfortunately, the interdenominational Christian institutions advocacies were not able to make the central government to execute actions for conflict resolution.

Looking from another point of view, this condition is still appropriate for implementing Christian core value of loving. When

social relations experience problems, it is the right moment to implement integrity to love. Christians believe that integrity of loving should go through various tests, and those who preserve under trial will get their reward of blessings.¹⁶ This explains why problematic social relations are also appropriate for maintaining the values of integrity in the society.

4.3. The political situation in Indonesia and the integrity of Christian Institutions

GKI Yasmin case is not representing the overall situation of religious social relations in Indonesia. In general, the political situation is conducive for implementing Christian values with no significant challenge from other entities. But the GKI Yasmin case is filled with extraordinary information and circumstances that show the value for integrity. The collaboration between local government of Bogor and the fundamental pressure groups become a challenge that call for the integrity of Christian institutions to apply the concept of love into concrete social behaviors. Complicated situation might be difficult to handle, but it is the right place to exercise integrity to love.

Looking at the overall political situation in Indonesia, there has been a hope for a better democratic public sphere due to the availability of the internet for the citizens, even though mostly is still in the rural areas. Today, the GKI Yasmin exercises their integrity to love by fighting virtually. Using twitter and facebook they spread love by conducting a peaceful struggle within what as faith and national identity. Struggle with believe that their Christianity and Indonesian identity are united.

¹⁶ *Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him. James 1:12. <http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=James+1:12&version=NIV>*

Web archive 3. Peduli Yasmin Facebook



Source: <http://www.facebook.com/gkiyasmin>

Web archive 4. GKI Yasmin Twitter



Source: <https://twitter.com/gkiyasmin>

5. Conclusion

GKI Yasmin case is not representing the overall situation of religious social relations in Indonesia. But the GKI Yasmin case is filled with extraordinary information and circumstances that show the value of integrity. The quality of behaving according to the moral principles that they believe, that is integrity to love God, self, and others as the central value of Christianity.

The values of integrity implemented in social relations within the GKI Yasmin congregation are in their patient and endurance in a problematic social relation, how they struggle with appropriateness, through the path of law.

The role of Christian institutions in maintaining the values of integrity in the society laid on the negation conducted toward the government. However, the interdenominational Christian institutions need to build a strong unity, as a form of integrity to

love each other.

The political situation in case of GKI Yasmin, become complicated due to collaboration between fundamental pressure groups and the local government. But it is the right place to exercise integrity to love. Today GKI Yasmin struggle in peace through the social media, a promising public sphere for better democratic life.

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