

Interfaith Joint Humanitarian Activities Should be Encouraged

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YOGYAKARTA - To implement interfaith understanding, religious leaders are expected to conduct humanitarian activities more intensively together to provide solutions to various problems in society. "Dialogue between religious leaders is not sufficient, it must be applied in the form of joint humanitarian activities among religious believers," said the lecturer of the Law Faculty of the University of South Carolina, United States, David K. Linnan, in a book discussion entitled *Muslim and Christian Understanding: Theory and Application of a Common World* in the Faculty of Law on Friday (17/12).

According to Linnan, through humanitarian activities it is very easy to attract and invite other religious communities to work together because these activities aim to assist people that are experiencing distress. "It is easier for them to give help," he said.

Linnan said that religious conflicts amidst global society are caused by a lack of mutual understanding, which produces inter-religious prejudice from each side. As for dialogue, it is mostly done at the level of religious leaders, but not practiced at the community level where the source of conflict is found. It is important for them to engage in dialogue and make joint projects so that they can see people of other faiths as a usual matter," he said.

Chairman of the Yogyakarta Indonesian Churches Association (PGI), Pdt. Dr. R.s. Humphrey Kariodimejo, agreed that the togetherness among believers must be expressed in the form of social activity. He mentioned the activities of religious communities in providing humanitarian relief for Merapi disaster victims as one example. As for inter-religious dialogue activities, he considered that it is important for religious leaders to respect and listen to opinions of other religious leaders.

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