

***Da'wah* to Non-Muslims in Indonesian Civil Society**
Case Studies from East Java

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This thesis is my own original work. To the best of my knowledge it contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text.

Signed

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Glossary

<i>abangan</i>	nominal Muslims, who practise a syncretic Javanese Islam
<i>barongsai</i>	Chinese lion dance
<i>da'i</i>	person who carries out <i>da'wah</i>
<i>da'wah</i>	Islamic propagation; literally 'call' or 'invitation'
DDII	Indonesian Council for Islamic <i>Da'wah</i>
Forum Arimatea	organisation formed in 2003, aiming to oppose Christianisation and conduct <i>da'wah</i> to non-Muslims
FPI	Islamic Defenders' Front, a vigilante group
Hadith	collection of traditions relating to Muhammad's words and deeds
<i>Isa</i>	prophet Jesus in Islam
<i>kristolog</i>	expert in <i>kristologi</i>
<i>kristologi</i>	study of issues relating to Christianity from an Islamic perspective
MMI	Indonesian Holy Warriors' Council
Muhammadiyah	largest Muslim reformist organisation in Indonesia, Indonesia's second largest Muslim organisation
MUI	Indonesian Council of Ulama
Nahdlatul Ulama (NU)	traditionalist Muslim organisation, the largest Muslim organisation in Indonesia
<i>Pancasila</i>	five principles on which the Indonesian state is based, enshrining belief in one God, humanitarianism, nationalism, democracy and social justice
<i>pengajian</i>	Qur'an study group
PITI	Chinese Muslim Association of Indonesia
<i>Reformasi</i>	era of reform following the end of Suharto's New Order regime

SARA	ethnicity, religion, race and inter-group issues; considered as potential sources of conflict under the New Order regime
Sunnah	established tradition based on the example of Muhammad
<i>syiar</i>	displaying or spreading Islam
<i>tabligh</i>	proclamation of a message, similar meaning to <i>da'wah</i>
<i>tauhid</i>	Islamic monotheism

Abstract

Da'wah in Indonesia was invigorated in the 20th century, especially in the New Order era. While *da'wah* is typically directed at Muslims, there are examples of organisations in Indonesia that also focus on *da'wah* to non-Muslims. An exploration of this practice during the *Reformasi* era can help in understanding Indonesian Islam. It can also shed light on the place in civil society of organisations that spread their religion to non-adherents.

This thesis therefore examines organisations that conduct *da'wah* to non-Muslims and considers their effect on Indonesian civil society. It focuses on two main case studies in urban East Java: the Chinese Muslim Association of Indonesia (PITI) and Forum Arimatea. This thesis argues that *da'wah* to non-Muslims is not necessarily an anti-pluralist activity. *Da'wah* to non-Muslims conducted by mainstream organisations in Indonesia can enhance civil society and the country's tradition of pluralism. However, direct *da'wah* to non-Muslims is sometimes associated with anti-Christianisation sentiment and activism as well as with more radical elements in Indonesian Islam – undermining civil society. Some minority groups in Indonesian Islam pose challenges to civility, but mainstream groups continue to foster civil society.

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Introduction

Indonesia has long been hailed as a nation characterised by religious diversity, pluralism and the peaceful expression of Islam. Recently, however, this image has come under question, and some observers (e.g. Dhume 2008) have argued that Indonesia's tradition of tolerance is giving way to radicalism,¹ threatening the stability of the multi-confessional *Pancasila* state.² Others have argued that despite some worrying developments, Indonesia's plural basis remains intact (e.g. MacIntyre and Ramage 2008: 31–6).

Islam, like Christianity and Buddhism, is a 'missionary' religion, one whose followers aim to propagate the faith to non-adherents, with the intended result that some will convert (Poston 1992: 3).³ The spreading of religion to non-adherents is a sensitive and contentious issue in the modern world, and some argue that proselytising works against pluralism.

Da'wah to non-Muslims,⁴ or calling non-Muslims to Islam, is by no means a recent development in Indonesia. In part, however, the way in which it is conducted has changed due to the new political climate of the *Reformasi* era. In the last 10 years, Indonesia has undergone a process of democratisation, and Muslim groups have gained greater freedom and public space, benefiting from freedom of speech and freedom to organise. How Muslim organisations in Indonesia carry out *da'wah* to non-Muslims gives an indication of the role these organisations play in Indonesian civil society. Studying *da'wah* to non-Muslims helps in understanding Islam in Indonesia; is the way *da'wah* to non-Muslims is practised confirmation of a growing

¹ Fealy (2005: 12–13) provides a definition of 'radical Islam', which 'seeks dramatic change in society and the state by the unstinting implementation of shari'a (Islamic law) and the upholding of Islamic principles.'

² The state is officially plural, recognising six religions: Islam, Christianity, Catholicism, Hinduism, Buddhism and Confucianism.

³ This does not mean, however, that all followers of these religions consider this activity to be their personal responsibility. According to Poston (1992: 4), 'even a casual acquaintance with indigenous Muslim communities is enough to convince the unbiased observer that no more than a tiny minority perceives an activist mission as being a religious duty for all.'

⁴ Also transliterated as *da'wa* in English. In Indonesian, *da'wah* or *dakwah* is used. *Da'wah* will be used in this thesis. Like other Arabic words used to describe Islamic concepts, *da'wah* is complex, and there is no direct equivalent in English.

radicalism in Indonesian Islam, or rather does the activity reinforce Indonesia's tradition of pluralism?

This thesis explores how *da'wah* to non-Muslims is carried out by Muslim organisations in East Java. It considers the effect of such organisations on Indonesian civil society. It also questions what trends in Indonesian Islam this activity reflects.⁵ In particular, the thesis focuses on two case studies: the Chinese Muslim Association of Indonesia (*Persatuan Islam Tionghoa Indonesia* – PITI) and Forum Arimatea.⁶ *Da'wah* to non-Muslims is a very minor part of the *da'wah* movement in this predominantly Muslim province, and few organisations explicitly focus on it. However, examining the practice highlights aspects of the relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims in Indonesia. Whether this relationship is overall one of goodwill, or rather suspicion and distrust, has great implications for the wellbeing of Indonesian civil society. This thesis argues that organisations engaging in *da'wah* to non-Muslims in East Java during the *Reformasi* era have both positive and negative effects on civil society. The *da'wah* to non-Muslims conducted by mainstream organisations generally involves promoting social peace and interfaith cooperation. However, some efforts in *da'wah* to non-Muslims can increase tensions between religious groups, and are an expression of more radical elements in Indonesian Islam.

Da'wah

The basic meaning of the Arabic term '*da'wah*' is 'call' or 'invitation', and it is used to refer to a number of related activities in the context of Islam.⁷ *Da'wah* is aimed at both Muslims and non-Muslims – it can involve

⁵ *Da'wah* (or *syiar*) through the Indonesian mass media, such as Muslim sermons and soap operas on television, reaches Muslims and non-Muslims alike. This important form of *da'wah* is not explored in this thesis.

⁶ Forum Arimatea is commonly referred to as 'Arimatea'. This thesis often uses this shorter version of the organisation's name.

⁷ For a discussion of the concept of '*da'wah*' in the Qur'an and Hadith, refer to Walker, Schulze and Masud (2008) and Racijs (2004: 31–48). Racijs' discussion includes a critique of Walker's contrasting of *da'wah* as a passive activity with *tabligh* as active. Racijs (2004: 36) regards the two terms as synonymous and argues that *da'wah* has historically been both passive and active. According to the Oxford Dictionary of Islam ('Tabligh' 2003), the term '*tabligh*' is interchangeable with '*da'wah*'.

consolidating Muslims as well as inviting non-Muslims to Islam.⁸ It is most commonly used, however, in reference to an activity directed to Muslims. This is the aspect of *da'wah* of primary concern to most contemporary *da'wah* movements (Walker, Schulze, and Masud 2008).⁹ Racijs (2004: 188) argues that the institutionalisation of *da'wah* to non-Muslims was a 'by-product' of the revival of *da'wah* to Muslims in the 19th century. The 19th century Islamic reformist movement and its *da'wah* was partly a reaction to Christian missionary activity in the Muslim world, much of which was under European colonial rule (Racijs 2004: 136–7).¹⁰

According to Racijs (2004: 133), most Arabic and English language material written by Muslims concerning *da'wah* to non-Muslims assumes the targets are mainly Christian.¹¹ Kerr (2000) also deals with the important subject of *da'wah* to Christians. He says that those adopting the 'supercessionist' approach argue that Islam supersedes Christianity – the Christian religion of today is a corruption of the original truth proclaimed by *Isa* (Jesus). According to Kerr, the *da'wah* to Christians carried out by those holding the supercessionist view, such as South African Ahmad Deedat (see Chapter Three), is 'controversialist'. The approach of a Muslim individual or organisation engaging in *da'wah* to Christians may well be a combination of the categories Kerr uses.¹²

⁸ Racijs (2004) distinguishes between the two aspects, which he calls 'intra-*ummaic da'wa*' and 'extra-*ummaic da'wa*' respectively, and considers each separately in the light of history. He maintains that the concept of *da'wah* in the Qur'an and Sunnah is that which has non-Muslims as its object. Husin (1998: 26–32), on the other hand, argues that the Qur'anic concept of *da'wah* clearly includes Muslims. According to Kerr (2000: n.p.), classical Qur'anic commentators (with the notable exception of al-Tabari) focus on *da'wah* as an activity directed within the Muslim community.

⁹ Contemporary Muslim leaders Al-Faruqi (1982: 35), a Palestinian American, and Wu (1989: 92), a Chinese Singaporean, explain why Muslims need *da'wah* even though they have already accepted Islam. Al-Faruqi explains that *da'wah* to Muslims is necessary because 'Islamicity is a process.'

¹⁰ Racijs (2004: 188) refers to the *Tablighi Jama'at* and Ahmadiyah as *da'wah* organisations which at first focused on reviving Islam within the Muslim community as a response to non-Muslim proselytising, and later developed a focus on *da'wah* to non-Muslims as well.

¹¹ For classical Muslim views on Islam's relationship with Christianity, see Husin (1998: 21–4).

¹² Certainly some of the differences of opinion among Muslims engaging with Christians can be attributed to the different attitudes towards the People of the Book (principally Christians and Jews) in the Qur'an (see Poston 1992: 12).

Poston (1992) argues that the traditional strategy of *da'wah* has been through control of society's institutions. In its first century, Islam spread quickly through political conquest. With Muslims in control, Islam pervaded society, resulting in conversions – 'Muslims entered a society at its uppermost levels and extended their influence downward to the masses' (Poston 1992: 52). Poston's discussion lacks a rigorous account of the place of *da'wah* in Islam's early expansion – he accounts for the expansion of Islam and for conversions without analysing the role of *da'wah* in these processes.¹³ A military conquest or the creation of a pervading 'Islamic ambience' at the end of the 20th century in North America was not feasible, so Poston argues that this necessitates focusing on individual conversions among the populace. Poston's distinction between the traditional strategy of *da'wah* and that adopted by modern North American organisations is of limited use in studying *da'wah* to non-Muslims in Muslim-majority areas, where Islam is already well established. In East Java, for example, an 'Islamic ambience' exists. Moreover, the aims of creating an 'Islamic ambience' and of fostering individual conversions can surely overlap.

Poston (1992) identifies two approaches of *da'wah* to non-Muslims advocated by modern Muslims, taking examples from North American organisations. Some adopt a relatively passive 'lifestyle' approach whereby it is hoped that non-Muslims will be attracted to the faith through the example of the pious lives of Muslims. Others take a more direct approach, arguing that it is the duty of all Muslims to actively and verbally invite outsiders to the faith, drawing principles from Qur'an 16:125:

Invite (all) to the Way of your Lord with wisdom and beautiful preaching; and argue with them in ways that are best and most gracious:

¹³ It is important to remember that conversions are not necessarily due to *da'wah*. The focus of this thesis is on *da'wah* to non-Muslims, not the conversion of non-Muslims to Islam. Martin (1999: 107) notes that 'conversion to Islam during the first four centuries was not necessarily the product of *da'wa*, proselytising non-Muslims.' Arzt (1999: 87–9) refers to Gibb's classification of early converts in Arabia as total converts, formal adherents for economic advantage and forced adherents of pagan tribes. See Racijs (2004: 55–6) for a critique of Poston's assertion that the early conquests were designed to prepare the way for *da'wah* and to Racijs (2004: 111–15) for a historical overview of *da'wah* to non-Muslims up until the modern era.

for your Lord knows best, who have strayed from His Path, and who receive guidance (Ali 2005).¹⁴

Although Poston separates the indirect approach of *da'wah* from 'direct *da'wah*', his own discussion shows that these approaches often cannot be neatly categorised. Nevertheless, these categories are of some relevance for understanding *da'wah* to non-Muslims in East Java.

Civil Society, Religion and Proselytising

The concept of 'civil society' is useful in investigating the effects of *da'wah* to non-Muslims on society, as it depicts how society can function in an orderly manner, with positive relations between individuals and groups. There are two main aspects of the modern meaning of 'civil society'. Demerath III (2003) treats the aspects as distinct meanings, which he believes are often linked in a misleading manner. The first meaning describes:

a broad segment or layer of any society's social structure. It refers to that assortment of nonkin, nonwork, mediating institutions, voluntary associations, and social movements separate from the state and government (Demerath III 2003: 349).

The second meaning refers to:

a cultural preference for a 'civilized' society characterized by civility and the civil virtues, variously defined but generally including such liberal staples as mutual trust, respect, and tolerance as part of a package of good democratic citizenship (Demerath III 2003: 349).

Demerath III (2003) argues that the existence of the first kind of civil society does not necessarily lead to the second kind, although this is often assumed to be the case. Similarly, Berger (2006: 13) points out that 'some intermediate institutions foster civil society; some do not.' Berger's (2006: 12) definition of 'civil society' consists of two aspects that he calls 'structural' and 'cultural', corresponding to Demerath III's distinctions

¹⁴ This passage and the verses that follow has 'become one of the most widely cited Qur'anic descriptions of *da'wah* and how it must function' and 'has become a favorite text in support of the external mission of Islam' (Walker, Schulze, and Masud 2008).

above. He explains that ‘culturally, the term refers to those “in-between” institutions that are indeed *civil* – that is, institutions that mitigate conflict and foster social peace.’ He refers to the Mafia as an example of an organisation that is not part of civil society because it fulfils the structural but not the cultural aspect of the definition. Hefner (2000: 24–5) argues along similar lines, but with stronger reference to democracy and democratic culture. He argues that the values an organisation promotes are more important than its structure in assessing an organisation’s impact on politics: ‘we have to examine the way their members relate to one another *and* to outsiders, and ask whether the overall pattern contributes to a public culture of inclusion and participation or uncivil exclusivity’ (Hefner 2000: 24).

While religious institutions in the modern world usually fulfil the ‘structural’ aspect of civil society because they are intermediate, it is their fulfilment of the ‘cultural’ aspect that varies. In making this point, Berger (2006: 15) argues that although religion in the modern world has both positive and negative impacts on civility, its impact is usually negative – causing and exacerbating conflict. He does, however, argue that Pentecostalism in Latin America fosters civil society, pointing to its grassroots organisation and its peaceful nature (Berger 2006: 17–18). He contrasts Pentecostalism with Islam, arguing that there are particular aspects of Islam that are not conducive to the development of civil society, such as the traditionally ‘all-embracing place of the sharia...the inferior status of women...[and] the violent understanding of jihad’ (Berger 2006: 18–19). The power of the sharia means that ‘there is no separation of religion from the state, and, more importantly, no social space for the development of autonomous institutions.’¹⁵ However, he does recognise the alternate views of ‘moderate’ Muslims and the potential of what Hefner (2000) describes as ‘civil Islam’.

Hefner (2000) is optimistic, even passionate, about the compatibility of Islam with civil society, an issue he examines in the Indonesian context. According to Hefner (2000: 219–20), ‘civil Islam’ is an example of civil

¹⁵ Gellner (1994) argues that Islam is resistant to secularisation and thus not easily compatible with civil society. See Herbert (2003: 75–9) for a critique of Gellner’s work.

religion – independent of the state and suited to our age of pluralism. Civil religion’s ‘underlying pluralist premise’ is that it ‘accepts the diversity of public voices, acknowledging that it is, in some sense, the nature of modern things.’¹⁶ ‘Civil Islam’ promotes ideals that Hefner (2000: 220–1) believes are cross-culturally relevant and appealing in the modern world, including the values of ‘freedom, equality, and plurality’. ‘Civil Islam’ involves the rejection of the idea of an Islamic state, ‘instead affirming democracy, voluntarism, and a balance of countervailing powers in a state and society’ (Hefner 2000: 12–13). However, proponents of ‘civil Islam’ believe in Islam as a public religion, not restricted to private belief as in Western liberalism based on Enlightenment secularism (Hefner 2000: 9, 218).¹⁷

There is little discussion about the place of proselytising in literature on religion and civil society.¹⁸ An exception is Thomas’ study (2001), which considers the activity to be inappropriate. Although *da’wah* to non-Muslims does not always involve overt proselytising, it is useful to examine such literature. Many of the ideas raised are relevant to a consideration of *da’wah* in relation to civil society. Thomas presents his argument with reference to the concept of ‘world culture’. Global civil society is based on ‘world culture’, which Thomas (2001: 517) describes as ‘a rational moral project of value attainment, a “modern” project over which there is much conflict.’ Religion is practised in the context of world culture, and even competes with

¹⁶ It is in this way that I use the term ‘pluralism’ in this thesis – in the sense of acknowledging and respecting differences. Sometimes ‘pluralism’ is used as a synonym for ‘relativism’ in the context of religion. It is important to distinguish between the terms when discussing religious views, as it is possible to accept pluralism while holding exclusive truth claims.

¹⁷ Refer also to Hefner’s discussion of de Tocqueville’s understanding of American Christianity’s role in public life (2000: 9). See Herbert (2003: 137–42) for a discussion of the debate among Muslims concerning Islam’s public role. See Bajunid (2001: 188) for a discussion of the views of modern Muslim intellectuals concerning their vision for civil society, compatible with Islam.

¹⁸ There is, on the other hand, much literature available that calls for reforming mission or *da’wah*. These calls are made without rigorous theoretical analysis and are an attempt to address the discord between Christians and Muslims. Because Christian missions and Islamic *da’wah* cause tensions between followers of the two religions, many have called for the two religious communities to change their behaviour, or even abandon proselytising. ‘Witnessing’ has been proposed as an alternative to, or a helpful way of viewing proselytising. This is mainly in the context of Christians using the term instead of ‘mission’ (Racius 2004: 139). Since the concept is both Biblical and Qur’anic, Kerr (2000: n.p.) believes that Christian–Muslim reflection on ‘witness’ holds promise for models of mission and *da’wah* without ‘the distorting malpractice of proselytism.’

world culture as a provider of moral standards (Thomas 2001: 517). According to Thomas' model of world culture, proselytising is an illegitimate practice, because it 'depicts one religion as truer or more valid than another', and attempts to influence others to accept this one 'truth'.¹⁹ This theological claim to truth is 'cultural supremacy' and 'is of the same essence as intolerance and civil exclusion' (Thomas 2001: 527). In addition, proselytising contravenes world culture's humanist doctrine of no other-worldly salvation (Thomas 2001: 528). Similarly, Marty (1999: 2–3) observes that proselytising is stigmatised in this late-modern or post-modern period – in the age of freedom, pluralism, insecure identities and relativism. For instance, proselytising violates 'at least the implicit rules of the pluralist game. The proselytiser seeks homogeneity and resents the persisting presence of the other' (Marty 1999: 2). Such arguments suggest that Indonesian organisations that proselytise through *da'wah* must be inherently intolerant and their activities must undermine pluralism.

Thiessen (1985) puts forward a very different view of religious proselytising, pointing to its positive influence on society.²⁰ He argues that the institution of proselytising is not inherently 'immoral', and can be carried out with a tolerant attitude and have positive effects on society. Thiessen (1985: 335) believes that the institution of proselytising is beneficial to humanity because through it we may discover truth. He says that even if untruth is propagated, the thought and discussion it produces are beneficial. According to Thiessen (1985: 343), 'tolerance' is an attitude toward a person, not their beliefs. He explains, 'we must respect the person, even though we consider the beliefs he holds to be false.' Furthermore, Thiessen (1985: 344–5) critiques the suggestion that religious proselytising should be

¹⁹ Kimball (2002) believes that absolute truth claims in proselytising are dangerous. Focusing primarily on Islam and Christianity, he argues that there are five signs which point to the corruption of religion, potentially resulting in religion becoming evil. The first of these is a claim to absolute truth, and 'when missionary zeal is informed by absolute truth claims defining who is "saved" and what is acceptable, the propagation of religion frequently includes sinister dimensions' (Kimball 2002: 62).

²⁰ See Marty (1999: 6–7), who puts forward the arguments of the 'pro-conversion faction' that proselytising is valid and helpful in this age of freedom, pluralism, insecure identities and relativism.

replaced with dialogue.²¹ Thiessen argues that proselytising is a key element of many religions, so it cannot be eliminated. Furthermore, there is no clear distinction between dialogue and proselytising because most conversations involve an attempt to show others that our ideas are correct. Thus, ‘a society with no proselytisers will end up becoming a society in which there is no dialogue either’ (Thiessen 1985: 345). Thiessen’s arguments, applied to Indonesia, suggest that proselytising through *da’wah* to non-Muslims need not necessarily be regarded as a practice antagonistic towards civil society – it may, in fact, have positive effects.²²

An important point in considering the relationship between civil society and organisations that conduct *da’wah* to non-Muslims is that the notions of ‘civil society’ and ‘civility’ are subjective. Demerath III (2003: 352) makes this point, observing that ‘civility itself is a matter of cultural taste and is a variable rather than an absolute.’ The notion of ‘civil Islam’, too, is subjective. A weakness of Hefner’s (2000) study is that he is somewhat dismissive of the relevance to Muslim thinking in Indonesia of Islamist views of how society and the state should operate.²³ This thesis focuses on the effect of religious practices on civil society, but some religious people would believe that their activities have a higher purpose than fostering civil society. They would hold that conforming to what they consider to be God’s way is of supreme importance, whatever the effects on ‘civil society’ might be.

²¹ Scantlebury (1996) presents the different views on the relationship between interfaith dialogue and proselytising. In his prescriptive article, Indian Muslim writer Engineer (2002) refers to the tensions caused by Christian mission and Islamic *da’wah* and argues that in today’s diverse societies, proselytising is an unfit practice. The focus should instead be on dialogue. Engineer (2002: n.p.) believes that the Qur’an promotes dialogue rather than disputation, and that Muslims should return to this principle.

²² Bakar (2001: 171–2) also sees spreading religion (Islam) to non-adherents in a positive light. He argues that Muslims should embrace religious pluralism and ‘fruitful interaction’ between different religious groups. At the same time, Muslims should invite others to become Muslims. This should be done without compulsion and with respect for human dignity, in accordance with Qur’anic teachings. Bakar thus considers the practice of *da’wah* to non-Muslims to be compatible with the values associated with civil society.

²³ See Fealy (2005: 13) for a definition of ‘Islamism’, which includes: ‘Islamism is most commonly used to mean political Islam, but it is more useful to regard the term as denoting a strict application of Islamic teachings and law.’

Methodology

As far as I am aware, there have been no studies specifically focusing on *da'wah* to non-Muslims in Indonesia. For this reason, I considered fieldwork to be a vital part in beginning to understand the phenomenon. I undertook fieldwork in January and February 2008. All fieldwork was carried out in East Java. Indonesia is large and multi-ethnic, so I thought it was best to restrict my attention to one province. East Java's population is approximately 95% Muslim (BPDE Propinsi Jawa Timur 2008).²⁴ As the fieldwork for this thesis was carried out in the cities of Surabaya and Malang, this thesis is specifically a case study of *da'wah* to non-Muslims in urban areas.²⁵ I chose two major case studies, PITI and Forum Arimatea, because both are unusual organisations in that *da'wah* to non-Muslims is one area on which they focus. PITI's *da'wah* to non-Muslims typically involves non-Muslim Chinese, while Arimatea's typically involves Christians. I also did a mini-case study of Muhammadiyah in order to discover what, if any, *da'wah* to non-Muslims is conducted by this large organisation. Muhammadiyah played a key role in the invigoration of *da'wah* within the Muslim community from the beginning of the 20th century. This mini-case study helps to put my major case studies in the context of the broader practice of *da'wah* to non-Muslims. While I am aware that there are other organisations which would be relevant to a study of *da'wah* to non-Muslims in Indonesia,²⁶ the case studies I have chosen allow for an initial and area-specific exploration of this phenomenon.

I chose to study the practices and values associated with *da'wah* to non-Muslims, so observing the activities of organisations and their members was

²⁴ Other provinces would also be interesting case studies for future research, such as provinces in eastern Indonesia where Islam is not the religion of the vast majority.

²⁵ Although not relevant to this thesis, *da'wah* to non-Muslims in rural and remote areas of East Java would be interesting to examine. The Tengger highlands, in particular, would be an interesting site of research. 227 Hindu Tenggerese from Senduro converted to Islam in a mass ceremony on 17 May 2007 (Ans 2007). *Da'i* from the organisation Hidayatullah are active in the area and endeavour to support the new converts. See also Ulum (2007) and Akhmad (2008).

²⁶ For example, the Forum Against the Apostate-Making Movement (*Forum Anti-Gerakan Pemurtadan* – FAKTA) could be a relevant case study. Studying organisations other than PITI which focus on building up new converts could also be relevant. One such organisation is the Irena Center in South Bekasi. Irena Handono, a Chinese Indonesian and a convert from Catholicism, established the organisation in 2004 (Irena Center 2006–2007).

the best approach. In the case of Arimatea, I also learnt about how they conduct *da'wah* to Christians through hours of first-hand experience. In addition, I carried out semi-structured interviews with leaders and members of organisations. The interviews were usually about one hour in length. I conducted the interviews in Indonesian and recorded them. Another way I gathered information was through collecting primary sources, including written material and VCDs. I also gained insight into the aims and activities of Arimatea through reading articles from the Muslim media, allowing me to draw broader conclusions about the organisation, beyond Malang. All translations of Indonesian language material in this thesis, including all interviews and written material, unless otherwise stated, are my own.

Thesis Outline

Chapter One brings together general literature on Islam in Indonesia and literature on *da'wah* in Indonesia. It discusses *da'wah* in Indonesia from a historical perspective, tracing the place of *da'wah* throughout the 20th century, especially its invigoration during the New Order. The chapter then examines Muslim civil society in Indonesia in the context of what Hefner (2000) calls 'civil Islam', which emerged in the 1980s and 1990s. While 'civil Islam' remains strong, a number of trends in Indonesian Islam pose a challenge to civility. Studying how Muslim organisations conduct *da'wah* to non-Muslims gives an indication of the directions in which Indonesian Islam is moving. A brief case study of the Muhammadiyah's role in *da'wah* to non-Muslims in East Java demonstrates this mass organisation's overall enhancing of Indonesian civil society.

Chapter Two is a case study of the Chinese Muslim Association of Indonesia (*Persatuan Islam Tionghoa Indonesia* – PITI) in Surabaya. Government policy towards Chinese Indonesians has changed in the *Reformasi* era, and a revival of Chinese culture is taking place. While Jacobsen (2005) puts forward a pessimistic view of the place of Chinese Muslims in Indonesia, the case study of PITI in Surabaya suggests a more optimistic view. After providing some background on PITI's history and its

da'wah focus, the chapter discusses PITI's activities in Surabaya. This case study shows Chinese Muslims' agency in the *Reformasi* era, expressing and promoting both Chinese culture and Islam. PITI fosters its relationships with other Chinese and other Muslims. Its activities reinforce 'civil Islam' in Indonesia, fostering interfaith and inter-ethnic respect and cooperation.

Chapter Three is a case study of Forum Arimatea in Malang. It discusses instances of Muslim-Christian polemic in the modern era. Engaging in such polemics can be a way Muslims 'defend' their community from Christian 'attack'. Similarly, an examination of recent *kristologi* publications in Indonesia shows a concern about the perceived threat of Christianisation and a desire to conduct *da'wah* to Christians. The chapter then explores the aims and activities of Arimatea, an organisation that acts to counter Christianisation as well as conducts *da'wah* to non-Muslims. Arimatea's agenda suggests that it adopts an approach of 'attack is the best defence', as South African Ahmad Deedat's tactics are described (Westerlund 2003: 271). The chapter then discusses Arimatea's activities in Malang. The organisation and its members contribute positively to civil society in Indonesia through engaging in robust, orderly debates with Christians and through some amicable interaction with non-Muslims. However, Arimatea's anti-Christianisation activism, links with the radical FPI and some aspects of their debates suggest that the organisation's activities as a whole undermine 'civil Islam' in Indonesia.

Chapter One: *Da'wah* and Civil Islam

As in other parts of the world, *da'wah* in modern Indonesia has largely focused on Islamising Muslims. From the early 20th century, the reformist movement invigorated *da'wah* in Indonesia. Under the New Order regime, the *da'wah* effort gained momentum for a number of reasons: government support; concerns over Christian missionary activity; and as an alternative form of activism for Muslims excluded from politics. From the 1980s, a new development that Hefner (2000) calls 'civil Islam' had a large impact on Islam in Indonesia. While a number of trends apparent in the *Reformasi* era represent challenges to civil society, mainstream Muslim organisations in Indonesia, representing the bulk of the nation's Muslims, maintain a commitment to civic values. This commitment is clearly demonstrated in a brief case study of Muhammadiyah's role in *da'wah* to non-Muslims in East Java.

Da'wah Invigorated

Although the details of the early spread of Islam in the Indonesian archipelago are unclear, some generalisations can be made. Islam became established both by Indonesians converting following contact with foreign Muslims, as well as through foreign Muslims settling and assimilating into the local society (Ricklefs 2001: 3). Trade played an important part in Islam being established in Indonesia, and mystic teachings were influential. Islamisation was typically a top-down process, which began with the conversion of the elite (Ricklefs 2001: 10–11, 15–16). Islam was not imposed on the population through foreign military conquest. Nevertheless, Islam sometimes spread following the conquest of non-Muslim regions by Indonesian Muslim states (Ricklefs 2001: 17). In Java, Islam began to spread from around the 14th century, and by the late 18th century it was the majority religion (Ricklefs 1984: 11–12). By the early 19th century, a 'mystic synthesis' of Javanese and Muslim identity was dominant (Ricklefs 2006). Later in the 19th century, this dominant identity came under challenge

through the pressures of modernity, including Islamic reform and colonial rule (Ricklefs 2007).

Boland (1971: 191) argues that while Islam became established in most of the Indonesian archipelago over the centuries, ‘the problem of a more thorough Islamization has been tackled in a resolute and organized way only in the 20th century’. He identifies the establishment of Muhammadiyah in 1912 as a key event in the building of the reformist movement, which aimed to achieve this thorough Islamisation. Shihab (1995) argues that there were a number of factors which led to the founding of Muhammadiyah, including the influence of Islamic reformist ideas from the Middle East, antagonism between *santri* and *priyayi* in Javanese society and concern over the influence of Christian missions.²⁷ Muhammadiyah aimed to Islamise through ‘purifying’ Muslim beliefs and practices from superstition. Education played an important role in achieving this goal (Boland 1971: 191). Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) was established in 1926 as a reaction to Muhammadiyah’s reformism. NU was traditionalist, and defended the authority of the four *madhab* (Islamic schools of jurisprudence). In addition, NU was more tolerant of Javanese traditions than Muhammadiyah (Boland 1971: 49–50, 213). Thus, since colonial times, Muhammadiyah and NU have been the major organisations conducting *da’wah* in Indonesia, focusing internally, on Islamising Muslims.

A number of political circumstances led to an increase in *da’wah* to Muslims during the second half of the Sukarno era. According to Boland (1971: 108), lack of success in the 1955 elections encouraged many Muslims to channel their energies into *da’wah* within the Muslim community. The Ministry of Religion played an important role in this consolidation of Muslims. In addition, modernist Muslims, many from Muhammadiyah, intensified their *da’wah* after President Sukarno banned the Muslim political party of Masyumi in 1960 (Hefner 2000: 47–8). Masyumi opposed

²⁷ Geertz (1960: 4–6) famously put forward ‘three cultural types which reflect the moral organisation of Javanese culture’ – the *abangan* are typically peasants and follow a syncretic religion, influenced by animism and Hinduism as much as by Islam; the *santri* are typically Javanese traders and practise Islam in more orthodox fashion; while the *priyayi* are the Hinduistic elite.

Sukarno's 'Guided Democracy' and Sukarno accused Masyumi leaders of supporting regional rebellions (Hefner 2000: 44).

According to Boland (1971: 190, 193), '*da'wah*' became one of the most common terms used among Indonesian Muslim groups from the 1960s. He draws on a Dutch source to argue that at that time, it became the key term referring to the promotion of Islam in Indonesia, especially among the *abangan*. He translates a quote from an Indonesian authority to show the emphasis in publications on Islamising Muslims: 'It is not yet necessary to call non-Muslims to Islam (*mendakwahi*). First call the Muslims to Islam, so that they do not use the term "Muslim" too lightly but will become true Muslims' (Boland 1971: 191). In addition, Boland (1971: 193) argues that the term *da'wah* came to be used in a broad sense – encompassing not only Islamic propagation through preaching and the written word but also through action and the betterment of society – 'in other words that *da'wa* had to be a comprehensive Islamization of society.'

During the New Order, *da'wah* within the Muslim community gained momentum. While the regime was wary of Islam and repressed Islam's expression through politics, it encouraged Muslim piety (Hefner 2000: 58–9). According to Hefner (2000: 59), 'regime strategists looked to organized religion as a ground for public morality, a shield against Western liberalism, and an antidote to communism.' As a result, the government supported the initiatives of NU and other organisations in 'religious education and "building up" (*pembinaan*)' (Hefner 2000: 92). The extent of government subsidies to religious programs was unprecedented in Indonesia. Furthermore, in 1967–1971, the Department of Religion's staff numbers increased by 60%, and it became the largest department (Hefner 2000: 80). Hefner (1987: 546) refers to a study which shows that *da'wah* sponsored by the government increased markedly in East Java, particularly since 1975. The government's *da'wah* programs included preaching, radio and television broadcasts and publications. The study highlights the scale and reach of government religious programs in East Java, down to the village level. Areas that the department regarded as 'weak' in Islam were especially targeted for *da'wah*.

Another reason for the strong *da'wah* focus during the New Order was that the regime suppressed Muslim political expression, as it aimed to keep Islam under control. From the beginning of the New Order, the regime frustrated attempts by modernists to establish an effective political party (Hefner 2000: 97–9). The Muslim community was ‘the biggest loser’ under the government’s policy to restructure the party system in the early 1970s. The fusion of the Muslim parties into the United Development Party (*Partai Persatuan Pembangunan* – PPP) was designed to weaken the electoral success of the Muslim groups. Moreover, the government heavily restricted PPP’s activities (Hefner 2000: 100–1). In the 1980s, the government’s policy requiring all organisations to recognise the *Pancasila* as their sole basis ‘dealt a severe blow’ to PPP (Hefner 2000: 121).

Since their direct political involvement was limited, the former Masyumi party leaders regarded *da'wah* as the logical avenue for activism. With others, former Prime Minister Mohammad Natsir established the Indonesian Council for Islamic *Da'wah* (*Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia* – DDII) in 1967, and endeavoured to continue politics through *da'wah* (Hefner 2000: 96, 106–7). For much of the New Order, however, the activities of DDII and other *da'wah* organisations were restricted. The army monitored and censored *da'wah* activities, and leaders were sometimes interrogated. Fourteen DDII *da'i* (people who carry out *da'wah*) were held as political prisoners in 1979–1988 (Husin 1998: 112–13). When the regime adopted a more accommodating approach to Islam in the 1990s, the government’s treatment of DDII and other organisations changed, and DDII was able to conduct *da'wah* more freely (Husin 1998: 117–18).

Wertheim (1980: 1) has described Muslims in Indonesia as a ‘majority with [a] minority mentality’, which he primarily accounts for with reference to their consistent political marginalisation under the Dutch and during the presidencies of Sukarno and Suharto – ‘the representatives of the Muslim community have rather consistently been assigned an outsider’s role.’ Mujiburrahman (2006: 103) observes that Muslim discourse concerning Christianisation in the New Order reflects this minority mentality; Muslims considered themselves weak and defenceless in the face of the Christian

advance.²⁸ He argues that relations between Muslims and Christians in Indonesia have been tense due to mutual suspicions. On the Muslim side, this is evident in discourse concerning the threat of Christianisation (*kristenisasi*), referring to:

unfair and aggressive efforts to convert Muslims to Christianity such as by offering money, food, education, and health care to the poor Muslims; building a church in a Muslim majority area; encouraging Christians to marry Muslim partners in order to convert the latter; inviting Muslims to participate in Christmas celebrations under the pretext of religious tolerance; and teaching Christianity to Muslim students in Christian schools (Mujiburrahman 2006: 299–300).²⁹

Early in the New Order, Muslims pressured the government to control foreign aid to religious groups and to restrict religious propagation to those not adhering to an official religion (Mujiburrahman 2006: 31, 33–4). Muslims welcomed a series of decrees in 1978–1979 which addressed these issues (Steenbrink 1998: 329–31; Pranowo 1990: 493).

Concerns about Christian activity have often spurred Muslims in Indonesia to intensify *da'wah* within the Muslim community. As noted above, Christian missionary activity was one motivating factor for the founding of Muhammadiyah in 1912. Mujiburrahman (2006: 50–1) argues that Muslim groups intensified their *da'wah* following the early New Order controversies with Christians concerning religious propagation and religious freedom. Many seminars on *da'wah* were held in 1968. At one, held in Tasikmalaya, Idham Chalid, representing the traditionalists, and Mohammad Natsir, representing the reformists, both 'expressed their concern with the weaknesses of the Islamic *da'wa* activities'. Especially in light of the threat to Islam from Christianisation, they called for increased efforts in *da'wah*.

DDII is an example of a Muslim organisation in the New Order whose motivation to conduct *da'wah* was partly a response to Christian advance.

²⁸ Fears of Christianisation trace back to the era of missionary activity under Dutch colonial rule (Bush 2007).

²⁹ Mujiburrahman (2006: 300) also notes that Christianisation can refer to an anti-Islamic political conspiracy of Christians and secularists. For a more detailed list of accusations concerning the activities of Christian missionaries in Indonesia, see Rasjidi (1982: 71–4).

One of DDII's prime objectives was to meet the challenge of large-scale conversions of nominal Javanese Muslims to Hinduism and Christianity (Hefner 2000: 107).³⁰ Mohammad Natsir believed that consolidating the Muslim community was a pressing concern in the face of the Christianisation threat – weak Muslims are more susceptible to Christian mission activity. *Da'wah* to Muslims was required as a 'defence' against the Christian 'attack' (Husin 1998: 39–40, 136). Anwar Haryono, who was appointed head of DDII after Natsir's death, popularised the notion of *difa* (self-defence) as a description of DDII's efforts to counter Christianisation (Husin 1998: 93, 108).³¹ Liddle (1996: 330) argues that the editors of *Media Dakwah*, DDII's monthly magazine, 'are obsessed with the idea that Islam, as they understand it, is under siege' and that Christians 'are well-financed and determined proselytisers who take advantage of the poverty and weak faith of many Muslims, especially the *abangan* Javanese.' Van Bruinessen (2003: n.p.) believes that those most concerned about Christianisation in the New Order were the DDII activists. Through their contacts with the Islamic World League and other Middle Eastern groups, the DDII activists also came to understand Christianisation in the international context of the Jewish–Christian conspiracy against Islam.³²

While the former Masyumi leaders focused on *da'wah* as an alternative to direct politics, a younger generation of modernists took a different approach, initially cooperating with the regime. They were committed to a

³⁰ Approximately 3% of the Javanese population converted to these religions following the anti-communist purge of 1965–1966 (Hefner 2000: 18).

³¹ Although it prioritised *da'wah* to Muslims, part of DDII's *da'wah* activities in the New Order involved *da'wah* to non-Muslims, including in areas where people had previously converted from Islam and also in animistic areas (Husin 1998). The government initially restricted the areas in which DDII was allowed to operate, but in the 1990s, DDII was allowed to operate in Javanese villages where conversions from Islam had taken place years before (Hefner 2000: 109). Husin (1998: 137–8) is not aware of any DDII initiatives specifically targeting Hindu–Buddhist or Christian groups. However, he describes DDII as active and strategic in its *da'wah* among remote animistic groups, including the Dayaks of Kalimantan, West Papuans and the people of the Mentawai Islands in West Sumatra. The government's recognition of only Islam, Protestantism, Catholicism, Hinduism and Buddhism as official religions meant that followers of traditional religions were regarded as potential converts for the major religions.

³² Van Bruinessen (2003: n.p.) observes that anti-Semitic material which was translated into Indonesian in the 1980s and 1990s reinforced the trend towards adopting conspiracy theories. Versions of the 'Protocols of the Elders of Zion', for example, became available.

renewal (*pembaruan*) of Muslim society in Indonesia, rather than attempting to revive Muslim political parties (Hefner 2000: 113–15). Indeed, Indonesia's Islamic resurgence from the late 1970s which was generally characterised by a commitment to democracy and pluralism (Hefner 2000: 17–18).

Civil Islam

Hefner (2000) describes the emergence of 'civil Islam' in Indonesia in the 1980s and 1990s, and describes its leading role in the push for democratisation. He describes 'civil Islam' as 'a democratic, religiously ecumenical, and boldly reformist movement' (Hefner 2000: xvii). Two of the main 'civil Islam' figures were the neo-modernist Nurcholish Madjid and Abdurrahman Wahid. Nurcholish was the most prominent figure among the younger generation of modernists of the early New Order (Hefner 2000: 115). To contextualise Qur'anic ideas, he and other neo-modernist intellectuals drew upon a wide variety of sources, including classical Muslim scholarship, Indonesian history and Western social science, creating 'a new Muslim discourse of civility and pluralism' (Hefner 2000: 118–19). Intan (2004: 157–8) argues that neo-modernists advocate for religion having an important role in Indonesian public life, with reference to Nurcholish's view that the first principle of the national ideology of *Pancasila* – belief in one God – is the proper 'ethical foundation' of the other principles.³³ The Muslim middle class was attracted to Nurcholish's ideas, which were disseminated through an organisation called Paramadina from the mid-1980s (Barton 1997: 333–4). Nurcholish was a member of the government-sponsored Association of Indonesian Muslim Intellectuals (*Ikatan Cendekiawan Muslim Indonesia* – ICMI), formed in 1990 (Hefner 2000: 128). In this role and as a public intellectual, Nurcholish was a vocal

³³ Furthermore, Madjid introduced into Indonesian discourse the concept of civil society as '*masyarakat madani*', referring to an Islamic ideal of a harmonious society, as existed in Medina in the age of the prophet Muhammad (Collins 2004: 102). See Bush (2002: 168–70) for a comparison of the views on civil society according to modernist Muslim intellectuals and NU. Nurcholish Madjid and Abdurrahman Wahid were important figures in the respective discourses on civil society in the 1990s (Bush 2002: 170, 172–3).

advocate for religious tolerance, free speech and civil society (Hefner 2000: 143–4).

The leadership of NU joined the civil Islam cause in the early 1980s (Hefner 2001: 505). As NU's leader, Wahid led the effort to make NU 'a vehicle of grass-roots development and pluralist tolerance' from the mid-1980s (Hefner 2000: 162). Wahid was an outspoken critic of ICMI, which he regarded as sectarian. Soon after ICMI's establishment, Wahid and other intellectuals formed the Democratic Forum (*Forum Demokrasi – Fordem*), for multi-faith discussion concerning democracy and pluralism (Hefner 2000: 162–3).

The influence of 'civil Islam' on Indonesian society has been profound and long lasting. Indonesia's post-Suharto transition to democracy was marked by ethno-religious conflict. Despite this recent 'chaos', Hefner (2006: 47) believes that 'much of the framework for a civil Islam remains intact within a multiconfessional republic.' Mujani and Liddle (2004: 113) argue that the largest group of Muslims in Indonesia today are those whose political views have been influenced by Nurcholish and Wahid. These people have prominent roles in government and civil society, and in the political parties of Golkar, the National Awakening Party (*Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa – PKB*) and the National Mandate Party (*Partai Amanat Nasional – PAN*). Moreover, Wahid himself, one of the key promoters of 'civil Islam' in the New Order, was elected as president of Indonesia in October 1999 (Mitsuo 2001: 9–10, 23).

Muslim activism has played an important role in promoting values associated with civil society since the 1970s (Pohl 2006: 112–14), and has flourished since Suharto's fall in 1998. After the September 11 terrorist attacks, Muslim groups such as the Liberal Islam Network (*Jaringan Islam Liberal – JIL*) received more international funding (van Bruinessen 2003: n.p.). JIL had been established earlier in 2001, and Muslims from both Muhammadiyah and NU were involved from its inception (Bush 2002: 313–14). JIL promotes its pluralist and inclusive vision of Islam through newspaper articles, books, campaigns on television and radio, radio talk shows, its website and public discussions in association with universities

(Jaringan Islam Liberal 2001–2006). The International Center for Islam and Pluralism (ICIP), established in 2003, promotes similar work (Pohl 2006: 114). According to van Bruinessen (2003: n.p.), Muslim NGOs ‘appear to be re-conquering parts of the public sphere that had in the 1990s come under almost hegemonic control of Islamist discourses’.

As voluntary Muslim organisations, the mainstream Muhammadiyah and NU are the most influential constituents of Muslim civil society in Indonesia. Both have branches throughout the country and are active in many fields including education, health and social services. Together, their memberships number over 50 million, thus providing many Indonesians ‘with invaluable opportunities for civic participation’ (Pohl 2006: 114–15). Based on their survey data, Mujani and Liddle (2004: 120–2) believe that 75% of Indonesian Muslims feel connected with either NU or Muhammadiyah, which they regard as ‘the “steel frame” of Indonesian Muslim civil society.’ Muhammadiyah and NU declared in 1971 and 1984 respectively they would not be involved in party politics (Fuad 2002). Both organisations were important in the democratisation movement in the New Order era (Azra 2006: 41, 212). In response to the heightened activity of radical Muslim organisations after the fall of Suharto, Muhammadiyah and NU have taken a stance against these groups’ agendas and activities and have strived to portray a peaceful, tolerant image of Islam (Azra 2006: 130). For example, Muhammadiyah and NU have cooperated with the government in countering terrorism (Azra 2006: 217–18). The organisations also cooperate in initiatives supporting the functioning of a democratic state. Groups affiliated with Muhammadiyah and NU are the main members of the Voter Education Network for the People (*Jaringan Pendidikan Pemilih untuk Rakyat – JPPR*), which has provided information to voters and monitored elections since 1999 (MacIntyre and Ramage 2008: 35; Suaedy 2004). Furthermore, in 2004, the two organisations agreed to cooperate to address government corruption (Collins 2004: 117). It is important to recognise that Indonesia’s mainstream Muslim organisations and leadership are ‘highly variegated’ and not all elements of Muhammadiyah and NU have promoted values associated with civil society (MacIntyre and Ramage 2008: 35). Nonetheless, Pohl (2006:

116) notes that their recent leaderships have been committed to democracy, opposed the establishment of an Islamic state and advocated the formation of a tolerant Muslim civil society.

Challenges to Civility

The increasing prominence of radical Muslim groups in post-Suharto Indonesia represents a challenge to ‘civil Islam’. The New Order regime did not tolerate groups which it regarded as threats to social and political stability (Azra 2006: 194). It considered matters relating to SARA (*Suku, Agama, Ras dan Antar-golongan* – ethnicity, religion, race and inter-group issues) as potential sources of conflict (Sumartana 2003: 79), and ‘behaviour deemed to incite SARA was liable to be suppressed and the perpetrators prosecuted’ (Fuyuan 2003: 456).³⁴ During the New Order, then, radicalism was suppressed. Azra (n.d.) attributes the rise in prominence of radical groups in the *Reformasi* era to the ‘euphoria of newly found democracy’, President Habibie’s lifting of the anti-subversive law as well as weak law enforcement. The *Hizbut Tahrir*, for example, which campaigns to re-establish the *khilafah* (caliphate), uniting Muslims in one polity, has become more visible and confident, and frequently holds demonstrations (Azra 2006: 128, 193–4). Furthermore, new radical groups have emerged in public in the *Reformasi* period, including *Laskar Jihad*, the Islamic Defenders’ Front (*Front Pembela Islam* – FPI), the Indonesian Holy Warriors’ Council (*Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia* – MMI) and the Indonesian Muslim Brotherhood (*Jamaah al-Ikhwan al-Muslimin Indonesia* – JAMI) (Azra 2006: 194–5). Before it was disbanded in 2002, the *Laskar Jihad* sent troops to Maluku when Muslim-Christian tensions flared (Fealy 2005: 40–1). The FPI is a vigilante group, focusing until recently on attacking bars, nightclubs and other places considered immoral (Fealy 2005: 38). Meanwhile, the fall of the New Order regime also ‘proved to be a significant boon’ to *Jemaah Islamiyah* (JI), which has its roots in the Darul Islam movement that began in the late 1940s

³⁴ As Chua (2004: 478) argues, however, the SARA policies ‘can be interpreted as means of the government to control and monopolise the discourse on those topics and not, as it is often assumed, to protect minority groups.’

(Chalk and Ungerer 2008: 9–10). JI was responsible for a number of high-profile bombings each year from 2002 to 2005 (Chalk and Ungerer 2008: 14). The organisation experienced a major setback after authorities cracked down on the group following the first Bali bombings (Fealy 2005: 42). Fealy (2005: 41–2) argues that while radicalism experienced a revival in the years immediately after the fall of Suharto, ‘the radical revival has stalled and gone into reverse’ since late 2002. Similarly, Sidel (2007: 29–30) refutes the ‘alarmist account’ of the Islamist threat in Indonesia, arguing that the momentum of Islamist forces has decreased, especially compared with the height of Islamist activism under the Habibie presidency.

Tensions between Muslims and Christians represent another challenge to civility. Anti-Christianisation sentiment is one way this is evident. Since the end of the New Order, opposition to Christianisation has remained – even intensified or become more visible. Mujiburrahman (2006: 302–3) links Muslim discourse on Christianisation with debates about the right of students to be taught in religious classes by a teacher of their own religion, included in the Education Law of 2003; as well as with the controversy surrounding the proposed Religious Harmony Bill (*Rancangan Undang-Undang Kerukunan Umat Beragama* – RUU KUB). Muslims intended this bill to upgrade New Order decrees – concerning the building of new places of worship, targets of religious propagation and foreign funding of religious groups – to the status of law ratified by parliament. According to Watson (2005: 208–9), Muslim–Christian tensions in Indonesia have been increasingly prominent in publications, including books, magazines and newspaper articles. He observes that ‘over the past five years the anti-Christian tone has become more noticeable in some of the Muslim media’, giving the example of the magazine *Sabili* (2005: 209). Watson (2005: 208–9) believes that ‘the growing articulation of suspicions about missionary work and the hostility to Christian theology on the part of an educated elite is slightly alarming.’

Another trend some have observed in recent years is increasing conservatism in Indonesian Islam – which could signify a degree of movement away from ‘civil Islam’. Fealy (2006) presents evidence for this

trend – the election of conservative leadership boards for NU and Muhammadiyah at the national congresses in 2004 and 2005 respectively; the Indonesian Council of Ulama's (*Majelis Ulama Indonesia* – MUI) fatwa against liberalism, pluralism and secularism; and the implementation of sharia-inspired local government policies in certain regions. In addition, the success of the Prosperous Justice Party (*Partai Keadilan Sejahtera* – PKS) (Sidel 2007: 34–5), a new Islamist party, could be considered further evidence for increasing conservatism.

Fealy (2006) argues that militant groups, such as FPI and MMI, have acted to take advantage of the conservative trend, pressuring authorities to close unregistered churches and attacking Muslim sects regarded as heretical, such as the Kingdom of Eden, led by Lia Aminudin, and Ahmadiyah.³⁵ On 5 June 2008, the government issued a decree ordering Ahmadiyah to stop its activities, without banning the sect (The Jakarta Post 10 June 2008). Ricklefs predicts that in view of the ability of militant groups to intimidate the Indonesian government, others will react against this and there will be 'a lot of social and political polarisation' (ABC Radio National 2008). Other observers, however, are less concerned. MacIntyre and Ramage (2008: 31–6) argue that despite some worrying developments and incidents,³⁶ Indonesia overall remains a tolerant country.

***Da'wah* to Non-Muslims in East Java: Muhammadiyah's Role**

This thesis considers what the phenomenon of *da'wah* to non-Muslims shows about Islam in Indonesia – what trends are evident in this activity. A brief study of Muhammadiyah allows an insight into *da'wah* to non-Muslims as seen by this large *da'wah* organisation. This provides a starting point for an examination in Chapters Two and Three of smaller groups that have *da'wah* to non-Muslims as one of their main focuses. The head of

³⁵ On 1 June 2008, FPI members violently attacked activists from the National Alliance for the Freedom of Faith and Religion (*Aliansi Kebangsaan dan Kebebasan Beragama dan Berkeyakinan* – AKKBB) at the National Monument (*Monas*) in Jakarta as they considered AKKBB to be supportive of Ahmadiyah (Kompas 1 June 2008; Cahyaningrum and Harthana 2008).

³⁶ This report was published in May, before the *Monas* incident and the government decree concerning Ahmadiyah.

Muhammadiyah for East Java, Syafiq Mughni (interview), considers Muhammadiyah's wide variety of programs to be all a part of *da'wah*, including its religious programs such as sermons and seminars, as well as its programs in the fields of education, health and community development.³⁷ Muhammadiyah's *Tabligh* Council is responsible for preaching, while other specific *da'wah* initiatives include *dakwah khusus* (special *da'wah*), *dakwah jamaah* (community *da'wah*) and *dakwah kultural* (cultural *da'wah*).³⁸ For Muhammadiyah, the most pressing issues that need to be addressed lie within the Muslim community, so *da'wah* to Muslims is prioritised.³⁹ Syafiq Mughni explains this emphasis with reference to Indonesia's large population of Muslims, among whom there are many who are poor, uneducated and have little understanding of their faith. He says, 'rather than pulling (*menarik-narik*) people to enter Islam – what for? We already have plenty. The work that must be done is to improve the quality of life of the Muslim community.' By serving the poor through health and community development programs, Muhammadiyah hopes these people will then not be susceptible to Christianisation (Syafiq Mughni, interview).

Da'wah to non-Muslims, while not a focus of Muhammadiyah's programs, is not excluded. Husin (1998: 59) argues that *da'wah* to non-Muslims is 'indirectly implemented' by Muhammadiyah; but in this regard he mentions only Muhammadiyah's education sector. Syafiq Mughni (interview) explains various Muhammadiyah initiatives which can involve non-Muslims being exposed to Islam: Muhammadiyah has a website, a magazine, its leaders write in newspapers and appear on television, and

³⁷ Similarly, the head of Muhammadiyah, Din Syamsuddin (2007: 3), says that all Muhammadiyah's efforts have been done 'in the interest of Islamic *da'wah*, that is, an invitation to goodness and the best'.

³⁸ According to Syafiq Mughni (interview), *da'wah khusus* is aimed at the vast leadership of Muhammadiyah, to increase their knowledge of Islam and their organisational skills. *Da'wah jamaah* is carried out at the *ranting* (sub-branch village) level. It involves a leader guiding up to 25 people. *Da'wah kultural* is aimed at ridding syncretic and superstitious elements from cultural expressions such as traditional ceremonies and performing arts, in order to be in accordance with Islam.

³⁹ Poston's comment on reformist *da'wah* movements in 19th century Africa also applies to Muhammadiyah's focus: 'the aim has not so much been to gain new adherents to the faith from non-Muslim communities (although such persons are welcome) as it has been to revive or reform communities that had abandoned "true Islam"' (1992: 25).

Muhammadiyah organises and participates in interfaith dialogues. Syafiq Mughni himself is often invited to speak at churches, such as those of the East Javanese Christian Church (*Gereja Kristen Jawi Wetan* – GKJW) and the Catholic Church. His hope is that those present will understand Islam without misconceptions – about the meaning of jihad, for instance. Syafiq Mughni explains that another way non-Muslims can learn about Islam is through Muhammadiyah's cooperation with non-Muslim groups. In East Java, Muhammadiyah works in cooperation with non-Muslim groups to promote interfaith harmony and conduct social/charity work.

Muhammadiyah's large education system, health services and other initiatives also present opportunities for Muhammadiyah to conduct *da'wah* to non-Muslims. Muhammadiyah's schools and universities are open to non-Muslim students. There are non-Muslim students at the University of Muhammadiyah Malang (*Universitas Muhammadiyah Malang* – UMM), for instance. Syafiq Mughni hopes that those students will mix with Muslim students and come to a deeper knowledge of Islam. Abdullah Hasyim (interview) was an assistant to the rector of UMM for the period 1983–2000. He led two lecturers and about ten students in converting to Islam during that time. In addition, Muhammadiyah's health services and economic programs, such as banking and mini-markets, are also open to non-Muslims (Syafiq Mughni, interview). Muhammadiyah can conduct *da'wah* through these initiatives too, by providing a good service and helping others. Syafiq Mughni is pleased that non-Muslims participate in Muhammadiyah's programs and attend their schools – it shows that Muhammadiyah is on good terms with non-Muslims, and is an indication of Muhammadiyah's success in displaying Islam to non-Muslims.

Conclusion

Scholars have commented on various trends in Indonesian Islam since the fall of Suharto. Radical groups and their ideology, suppressed during the New Order, have become much more active and visible in the *Reformasi* era. In addition, Muslim concerns about Christianisation have been increasingly

prominent, signifying underlying tensions between Muslims and Christians in Indonesia – an obstacle to the development of the civic values of mutual trust and respect. Moreover, a trend towards conservatism in Indonesian Islam has been noted. Nonetheless, mainstream Muslim organisations generally foster the development of civil society in Indonesia. Although the overwhelming focus of *da'wah* in Indonesia is internal, examining the way organisations engage with non-Muslims and promote Islam reflects broader trends in Indonesian Islam. For example, where the activities of Muhammadiyah in East Java involve *da'wah* to non-Muslims, the organisation generally promotes a tolerant and peaceful vision of Islam and encourages cooperative endeavours with non-Muslims. This reflects the organisation's wider contribution to civil society. The case studies presented in the following chapters represent two of the few organisations that explicitly target non-Muslims for *da'wah*. This will allow a further exploration of the place of *da'wah* to non-Muslims in Indonesian civil society.

Chapter Two: Case Study of PITI

In the *Reformasi* era, Chinese Indonesians are enjoying new freedom to express their culture within civil society. The ethnic Chinese number around three million, making up about 1.5% of the nation's population (Suryadinata 2004c: vii). Chinese Muslims constitute a minority religious group within this minority ethnic group, and little research has been done on them. Jacobsen (2005) puts forward a pessimistic view of the place of Chinese Muslims in modern Indonesian society, even calling them 'a redundant legacy of history' (2005: 87). This chapter presents a case study of the Chinese Muslim Association of Indonesia (*Persatuan Islam Tionghoa Indonesia* – PITI) in Surabaya, questioning whether Jacobsen's view holds for this group. It focuses on PITI's initiatives in *da'wah* among non-Muslim Chinese, which involve promoting Islam and Chinese culture together. PITI displays and asserts an Islamic Chinese identity, and presents a favourable view of Islam.⁴⁰ PITI is an example of an organisation that connects groups in society.

The Chinese in Indonesia and Chinese Muslims

Chinese Indonesians experienced discrimination under the New Order regime, and Chinese culture was repressed. From the 1960s, the regime implemented assimilationist policies to deal with what it saw as 'the Chinese problem' (*masalah Cina*) (Chua 2004).⁴¹ Under these policies, the use of Chinese characters in publications and advertisements was banned. The one exception was the newspaper *Harian Indonesia*, which was published in Mandarin and Indonesian. It was kept under government control. Moreover,

⁴⁰ Members of PITI sometimes use the less direct term *syiar* rather than *da'wah* to describe their activities, both as an organisation and as individuals, in displaying Islam to non-Muslim Chinese.

⁴¹ Policies towards the Chinese were not entirely assimilationist, however. Some policies served to separate the Chinese from other Indonesians and mark them out as different (Suryadinata 2004a: 2–4; Turner 2003: 348). For example, Chinese ethnicity was coded on identity cards and Chinese Indonesians were essentially confined to the business sphere for work (Giblin 2003: 356). Chua (2004) argues that within the 'Chinese problem' framework, the New Order regime characterised the whole Chinese population as a wealthy minority through 'marginalisation: extinguishing Chineseness', 'discrimination: making the Chinese visible' and 'stigmatisation: ethnicising a class problem'.

Chinese language schools were closed. Chinese socio-political organisations and public Chinese cultural events, such as Chinese New Year celebrations, were banned. The government also encouraged the Chinese to change their names to sound more Indonesian (Suryadinata 2004a: 2–3; Allen 2003: 384–5; Lindsey 2005: 55–6; Chua 2004).

In the *Reformasi* era, Chinese culture is in revival and the Chinese are forging new identities. Nowadays, there is no longer an official ‘Chinese problem’, and much of the legislated discrimination against ethnic Chinese has been removed (Chua 2004: 476).⁴² Chua (2004: 476) argues that during the sympathetic presidency of Wahid, ‘the agency to define Chinese ethnicity was taken away from the state and largely given to the Sino-Indonesians themselves.’⁴³ President Wahid and his government permitted the public celebration of Chinese New Year and the use of Chinese characters, and allowed many schools to teach Mandarin (Turner 2003: 347–8). Wahid even claimed to have some Chinese ancestry himself (Heryanto 2008). President Megawati Sukarnoputri declared Chinese New Year to be a public holiday from 2003 (Turner 2003: 348). The *barongsai* (Lion Dance) has become symbolic of the newfound freedom for Chinese cultural expression (Allen 2003: 389). Turner (2003: 338) argues that there has been a ‘public re-emergence of the Chinese consciousness, hitherto suppressed for more than thirty years.’ The regime which encouraged the ‘effective erasure of Chinese identities in the public sphere’ (2003: 348) is gone, and now many Chinese ‘are adopting a new tactic of “ethnic promotion”’ through politics, the media and civil society groups (2003: 349).

In order to evaluate the place of Chinese Muslims in Indonesian society, Jacobsen (2005) considers the ‘minorisation’ of the ethnic Chinese. As a result of several historic processes, Jacobsen argues, the Chinese came to be a distinct, separate group. Firstly, he places great emphasis on the shift in Southeast Asian Islam from syncretic and tolerant to more orthodox and

⁴² For a discussion of the post-Suharto reforms, see Lindsey (2005: 57–63). Lindsey (2005: 57) in fact argues that the process of reform has ‘often been disappointing, as public debate has been more concerned with symbolism than practical reality.’

⁴³ See Purdey (2003) for an account of the debate concerning integration and assimilation in the late 1950s and early 1960s, and the re-emergence of this debate in the *Reformasi* period.

exclusive, resulting in a significant decline in Chinese conversions to Islam from the 19th century (Jacobsen 2005: 75–7). Secondly, he discusses the changing demographics of Chinese migration and how this reinforced the community's minority status (Jacobsen 2005: 76, 86–7). Thirdly, Jacobsen (2005: 77–8) describes how the non-assimilationist Dutch colonial policy drew distinctions between indigenous people and 'foreign Orientals', and the Dutch used Chinese as intermediaries between the colonialists and the indigenous people. The Chinese came to regard Islam as the religion of the inferior indigenous people, so it had little appeal. One problem with Jacobsen's discussion is that at times, he equates the 'minorisation' of the Chinese, as a whole, with the 'minorisation' of Chinese Muslims, with no explanation for why this is legitimate.

Jacobsen (2005: 82–6) discusses conversion to Islam amongst the Chinese and the place of Chinese Muslims in contemporary Indonesia. He refers to Brown (1989: 115), who believes that significant numbers of Chinese converted to Islam only once the New Order began. The *Yayasan Ukhuwah Islamiyah* (Islamic Brotherhood Foundation) endeavoured to convert Chinese to Islam (Brown 1989: 115).⁴⁴ According to Jacobsen, Chinese Muslims are in a predicament. They are positioned awkwardly between the predominantly Muslim population and the Chinese, most of whom follow traditional Chinese religions or Christianity. Relative to these two groups, the Chinese Muslims function 'almost like a buffer zone; not fully integrated in either of them, not fully liked by any of them' (Jacobsen 2005: 82). He argues that Chinese Muslims were and are shunned by fellow Chinese, who regard them as betraying 'Chinese culture and identity as well

⁴⁴ In 1981, assimilationist figure Junus Jahja (he changed the spelling of his name to 'Yunus Yahya' in 1985 (Brown 1989: 115)) and four others established *Yayasan Ukhuwah Islamiyah*, with the aim of conducting *da'wah* among the Chinese – especially intellectuals, entrepreneurs and youth (Jahja 1982: 243–4). Less than two years later, Junus Jahja (1983: 350–1) expressed his pleasure at the success of the foundation's activities. The foundation had helped two Chinese sport champions and their husbands to perform the hajj. It had also arranged for a Chinese Muslim leader to preach in Jakarta. Junus Jahja (1983: 350) explains, 'we publicised all this on a large scale through the mass media so that the public, especially those of Chinese descent in Indonesia, know that there is rapid growth in Islamic *da'wah* among their fellow Chinese.' He also mentions other activities of the foundation, such as publishing books and other material, as well as connecting Muslims with the Chinese community on Islamic holidays (Jahja 1983: 350–1).

as threatening their societal position' by adopting the religion of the inferior indigenous people (Jacobsen 2005: 86). On the other hand, even if Chinese convert to Islam, they cannot assimilate into broader society, and are viewed with suspicion by the indigenous people. They are therefore 'caught in a no-man's-land between the ethnic Chinese and the rest' (Jacobsen 2005: 86).⁴⁵

There are two main problems with Jacobsen's discussion of the place of Chinese Muslims in contemporary Indonesia. Firstly, Jacobsen (2005: 83) admits that there is little information on the relationship between Chinese Muslims and other Chinese, and between Chinese Muslims and other Muslims in Indonesia. He proceeds to refer to studies concerning Malaysian Chinese Muslims, drawing tentative links with the Indonesian case (Jacobsen 2005: 83–5). However, he does not clearly examine the similarities and differences in the circumstances of the Chinese in the two countries in order to justify extrapolating from Malaysian examples to the situation in Indonesia. Secondly, although the changes in the experience of Chinese Indonesians after the fall of Suharto are mentioned earlier (Jacobsen 2005: 80), Jacobsen's discussion fails to address the influence of these changes on Chinese Muslims.

Jacobsen (2005: 87) observes that more empirical data on Chinese Muslims in Indonesia are needed. This chapter's case study of PITI in Surabaya aims to provide some information on Chinese Muslims in the *Reformasi* era, a topic Jacobsen entirely neglects. This case study suggests a less pessimistic view of the place of Chinese Muslims in Indonesian society than that described by Jacobsen. PITI in Surabaya in no way considers itself to be a 'redundant legacy of history' (Jacobsen 2005: 87) – it is confidently engaging in society and is very relevant to the contemporary Indonesian scene. It aims to be accepted and valued both among the Chinese Indonesian community and the general Indonesian Muslim society. PITI members do not act as if they are victims of marginalisation. They are active and take seriously their role as a bridge between communities. PITI's *da'wah*

⁴⁵ Giap (1993: 71) makes a similar point, in the context of the 1930s, where the convert's position 'was a hovering one' as they were not accepted fully by either the Chinese or the non-Chinese population.

activities are one way PITI asserts the place of Chinese Muslims in Indonesian society.

PITI

PITI was established in Jakarta, 14 April 1961 (PITI 2005: 13). It grew out of the Chinese Muslim Association (*Persatuan Islam Tionghoa* – PIT), which was established in Medan in 1936 and moved its headquarters to Jakarta in 1953 (Lombard and Salmon 1993: 130).⁴⁶ On 6 July 1963, the Muslim Chinese Association (*Persatuan Tionghoa Muslim* – PTM) merged with PIT in the new organisation PITI (Budiman 1979: 42).⁴⁷ Giap (1993: 76) regards PITI as an organisation that supports the assimilation of the Chinese in Indonesia. He describes PITI as helping interested Chinese to study Islam and convert, as well as carrying out social initiatives. According to Suryadinata (2004b: 120), members of PITI had typically been poor, but in the New Order the situation changed, as many wealthy and educated Chinese joined. This occurred ‘especially after new blood, like Junus Jahja’ converted and joined the organisation.

Along with the rest of the Chinese Indonesian community, PITI experienced discrimination under the New Order regime’s assimilationist policies. Abdul Karim (1982) describes some of PITI’s trials. In 1972, the central board of the organisation requested permission from the Minister of Religion to publish the Qur’an and a *da’wah* magazine partly in Mandarin. Permission was refused on the grounds that the initiative could encourage ‘exclusivity’, contrary to the government’s assimilationist policies (Karim 1982: 199–201). Also in 1972, the Attorney General banned the use of the organisation’s name because it was considered ‘exclusive’. As a result, the PITI leadership informed the Attorney General that the organisation had been

⁴⁶ According to Giap (1993: 71), PIT aimed ‘to raise the prestige of Chinese Muslims and to found a Muslim missionary institute for the propagation of Islam, especially among the Chinese population.’ He refers to one leader of this organisation who believed that Chinese Muslims should not try to rid themselves of their Chinese identity and that being Muslim is compatible with remaining Chinese (Giap 1993: 71–2).

⁴⁷ There is some discrepancy in the information concerning the year PITI was established. According to Abdul Karim (1982: 198), there was a change of leadership in PIT in 1961, and PITI was established in 1963, through the merge with PTM.

disbanded, and ten days later reported that they had established an organisation called *Pembina Iman Tauhid Islam* (Cultivators of the Islamic *Tauhid* Faith). The abbreviation 'PITI' was maintained and much of the leadership remained unchanged (Karim 1982: 201–2).⁴⁸ In 1994, authorities detained and interrogated two of PITI's leaders in Surabaya after the organisation published a section of the Qur'an, Juz 'Amma, in the original Arabic with translations in Indonesian and Mandarin (interviews).

Like most Muslims in Indonesia, and indeed worldwide, PITI believes that the most important focus of *da'wah* is within the Muslim community. According to a prominent PITI leader in East Java, Bambang Sujanto (interview),⁴⁹ what is important is the quality, not the quantity, of the Muslim community. Unlike many in Indonesia, however, PITI also conducts *da'wah* to those who are not yet Muslim (Abdul Chalim, interview).⁵⁰ According to the central leadership's Accountability Report for the period 2000–2005 (PITI 2005: 9):

PITI as a *da'wah* organisation especially for Chinese Indonesians functions as: a place for the Chinese community to become acquainted with and study Islam; a place for the Chinese community to enter and embrace Islam; and a place for socialising and interaction for the Chinese community who are already Muslim.

The same report sets a target that within 20 years, 20–30% of Chinese Indonesians would become Muslims, and says that 'this will not be reached if PITI only talks about religion but does not put it into practice' (PITI 2005: 12).⁵¹

PITI's most active region is East Java, centred on Surabaya (Willy Pangestu, sms 2008). The organisation was established at the provincial level in East Java in 1988, and Bambang Sujanto was chosen as leader (PITI Jawa

⁴⁸ The organisation is now officially referred to as *Pembina Iman Tauhid Indonesia d/h. Persatuan Islam Tionghoa Indonesia*, recognising its former name (PITI 2005: 13).

⁴⁹ See *Persatuan Islam Tionghoa Indonesia* (2007–2008a) for information about Bambang Sujanto.

⁵⁰ See *Pelita* (3 August 1983) for information about the conversion of Abdul Chalim, a former national wrestling champion. See also *Persatuan Islam Tionghoa Indonesia* (2007–2008c) for information about this prominent PITI leader.

⁵¹ Although I discussed PITI's *da'wah* with many of its leaders in Surabaya, nobody mentioned this target.

Timur 2008). PITI was active in East Java even when the organisation was not functioning in other regions before 2000 (Willy Pangestu, interview). PITI in Surabaya is based at the Muhammad Cheng Hoo Mosque, built in 2002 on a large block of land near the centre of the city. The mosque is named after Cheng Ho (also known as Zheng He),⁵² a Chinese admiral who is said to have helped spread Islam in the archipelago in the 15th century (Tanudjaja 2007–2008; Persatuan Islam Tionghoa Indonesia 2007–2008d).⁵³ There are plans to extend the mosque once the necessary funds are available (Abdul Chalim, interview). Next to the mosque is PITI's East Java headquarters. The complex houses PITI's offices for Surabaya and East Java as well as offices for *Yayasan Haji Muhammad Cheng Hoo* (The Haji Muhammad Cheng Hoo Foundation). The foundation was established in 1995, and its main purpose is to raise financial support for PITI, especially in East Java (PITI 2005).⁵⁴ Also part of PITI's complex are a pre-school, badminton courts and a canteen. Chinese culture is very evident here – acupuncture is available and Mandarin language classes are held weekly. A *pengajian* (Qur'an study group) is held in the mosque on Sunday mornings. The busiest time of the week is Friday, when hundreds of men of various ethnic backgrounds come to the mosque for prayers. The mosque is no longer large enough to hold all those who attend, so every Friday temporary shelter is erected (personal observation).

'Islamic Chineseness' and *Da'wah*

PITI in Surabaya is making the most of the newfound freedom to express Chinese culture in the *Reformasi* era. Like other Chinese, PITI members are adopting what Turner (2003: 349) calls a 'new tactic of "ethnic promotion"', through the work of their organisation. PITI is unique, however, in that it promotes Islam along with Chinese ethnicity, delivering the message that

⁵² Although the mosque is named after Cheng Ho, often spelt with one 'o', it is called the Muhammad Cheng Hoo Mosque, spelt with two 'o'.

⁵³ Indonesian historian Slamet Muljana put forward the theory that the Chinese played a role in the Islamisation of Java. The New Order regime banned his book in 1971 (Lombard and Salmon 1993: 116; Hifzillah 2005).

⁵⁴ To avoid unnecessary confusion, I will refer to PITI throughout this chapter, although sometimes it would be more correct to refer to *Yayasan Haji Muhammad Cheng Hoo*.

‘Chineseness’ is compatible with Islam. The organisation believes it is important for all to hear this message in order to break down barriers between Chinese Muslims and other Muslims in Indonesia, and to make the Muslim faith more accessible to non-Muslim Chinese. PITI uses the resurgence of Chinese culture to its advantage in conducting *da’wah* among Chinese Indonesians. According to Abdul Chalim (interview), they always display Chinese culture within the PITI environment with the intention that their *da’wah* to Chinese be made acceptable.

One way that PITI in Surabaya expresses ‘Islamic Chineseness’ is through its mosque, the first mosque in Indonesia with Chinese architecture (PITI Jawa Timur 2008). The Muhammad Cheng Hoo Mosque is a clear statement that Islam and Chineseness are compatible. Since its dedication in 2003, the mosque has become a tourist attraction. The mosque is well set-up to receive visitors and ‘to share information about the history of Admiral Cheng Hoo, the mosque’s architecture and the development of *syiar* at the Cheng Hoo Mosque’ (Persatuan Islam Tionghoa Indonesia 2007–2008b). A quadrilingual (Indonesian, English, Mandarin and Arabic) handbook about the mosque is available for visitors. According to the handbook, the mosque’s architecture, resembling a Chinese temple, is intended to display the Chinese Muslim identity and to commemorate (*mengenang*) the Chinese people’s ancestors, the majority of whom were Buddhist (Yayasan Haji Muhammad Cheng Hoo c.2007: 6). Abdul Chalim (interview) says that their aim in building such a mosque was to facilitate *da’wah* among Chinese. Chinese are used to going to Chinese temples, he says, so they feel more comfortable approaching a Chinese-style mosque.

Outside the mosque, there is a relief depicting Cheng Ho and a model of one of his ships. The story of Cheng Ho is of symbolic importance to PITI. By sharing the story, PITI shows that it is normal to be Chinese and Muslim. In addition, the story shows that the Chinese are an important part of Indonesia’s history, including its Islamisation. Chinese Muslims should thus

be valued as part of the wider Muslim community in Indonesia.⁵⁵ The handbook about the mosque (Yayasan Haji Muhammad Cheng Hoo c.2007) tells the story, emphasising Cheng Ho's good character – how he respected followers of other religions, lived peacefully with others and helped the poor. Cheng Ho is portrayed as a model to follow.

One of PITI's aims is to help new converts and those interested in Islam to learn more about the faith. Such people can consult with Muslim leaders at the Muhammad Cheng Hoo Mosque complex. Classes for new converts are held at the complex on weekends. According to the teacher of the classes (interview), half of those who attend are Muslim, while the other half are still non-Muslim. Inquirers and new converts can also find out information about PITI and Islam by reading PITI's publications. These include a new version of the controversial 1994 publication of Juz 'Amma, with translations in Indonesian, English and Mandarin. It is printed in a book called 'Guidance for a New Family Member' (*Tuntunan bagi Saudara Baru*), which was launched at the Muhammad Cheng Hoo Mosque's fifth anniversary celebration in 2007 (Hsn 2007). The book also includes a guide to reading the Arabic Qur'an and information on the obligatory Muslim prayers (Yayasan Haji Muhammad Cheng Hoo 2007). In addition, PITI in East Java produces a monthly magazine called *Komunitas* (Community), which contains articles about PITI's recent activities, the activities of other Chinese organisations, aspects of Islam and Chinese culture, the place of Chinese culture in Indonesia, as well as stories about converts.

As an organisation with many members who were originally from non-Muslim backgrounds, PITI is strategically placed to help people of Chinese ethnicity with their specific issues (Willy Pangestu, interview).⁵⁶ According

⁵⁵ References to Cheng Ho and other historical links with Chinese Muslims are not new among those conducting *da'wah* to Chinese. See Junus Jahja (1982) in which Chinese in the New Order are encouraged to return to Islam, the religion which was brought from China centuries ago by figures such as Cheng Ho. Junus Jahja emphasises that early Chinese immigrants were from Muslim regions in China. See also Yayasan Rahmat Semesta (1979: 51).

⁵⁶ This was evident from my conversations with several Chinese who attended the classes for new converts. One came to PITI to enquire a week before he converted in the mosque. He says he felt more comfortable approaching PITI (*'merasa lebih cocok ke PITI'*), where there are many fellow Chinese. Another recent convert told me he wanted his body to be

to a former leader of PITI in Surabaya (interview), PITI is important because ‘goats must mix with goats, only then can they be close.’ Part of PITI’s *da’wah* is for non-Muslim Chinese, for whom mixing with other ‘goats’ is easy, he says. PITI gives support to Chinese in living as Muslims in their non-Muslim family environments (Tanudjaja 2007–2008).

Willy Pangestu (interview) observes that since the establishment of the Muhammad Cheng Hoo Mosque, there has been extraordinary growth in the number of conversions at PITI’s East Java headquarters. According to one report (Persatuan Islam Tionghoa Indonesia 2007–2008d), the large number of conversions is proof that the mosque ‘has become an effective centre for *da’wah* and *syiar*.’ Simple conversion ceremonies are held in the mosque after the Friday prayers or in the mosque’s office (personal observation). Those who convert may or may not be Chinese. In 2007, 57 people converted at the mosque (Ta'mir Masjid Muhammad Cheng Hoo Indonesia 2008). According to Burnadi (interview), 75% of those who convert do so because they want to marry a Muslim. PITI tries to ensure these people understand what it means to become a Muslim, and encourages them to attend the classes for new converts.

One way that PITI in Surabaya engages with other Chinese Indonesians and the broader Muslim community is by holding large events. Even during the New Order, PITI in Surabaya organised celebrations, to which it invited non-Muslim Chinese (Willy Pangestu, interview). Nowadays, PITI is free to express Chinese culture at such events. With the media present, PITI’s display of ‘Islamic Chineseness’ is spread to many. After the end of Ramadan, PITI invites thousands to a celebration (asking each other’s forgiveness – *halal bihalal*) in the grounds of the mosque complex. The celebration includes Chinese cultural forms such as singing, dancing and *barongsai* (Abdul Chalim, interview). According to Abdul Chalim (interview), one aim of using Chinese cultural forms is ‘to demonstrate and

cremated, and he intended to ask a Muslim teacher at PITI whether that would be acceptable. Another converted to Islam before he married in 1993. Around 2001, he came to PITI in Surabaya. He chose PITI because ‘we all liked eating pork in the past.’ He started attending the classes for new converts a month before our conversation, and he also recently decided not to eat pork anymore.

display that Chinese culture does not conflict with Islamic or Indonesian culture.’ Burnadi (interview) hopes that by inviting non-Muslim Chinese to the celebration, PITI can demonstrate that Islam is not a ‘frightening religion’, but rather loves peace.

To celebrate Chinese New Year, PITI hosted an impressive Gala Dinner in Surabaya International Business Exhibition and Convention Centre, on 8 February 2008 (personal observation). Thousands of people, mainly Indonesians of Chinese ethnicity, packed a beautifully decorated convention hall to enjoy a banquet and entertainment. Each item was introduced in Mandarin and Indonesian. The program included an Islamic song or two alongside Chinese items. In a brief address, Bambang Sujanto wished everyone a happy Chinese New Year and thanked those who had donated to flood victims through the organisation. Later in the proceedings, Abdul Chalim led a prayer for the few Muslims present before the singing and dancing extravaganza resumed. At the conclusion of the evening, people were handed a copy of PITI’s *Komunitas* magazine as they left the convention hall. The celebration was clearly both Islamic and Chinese. Like the celebration held after the end of Ramadan, the Gala Dinner provided Chinese Indonesians with a friendly encounter with Islam, in a Chinese context – an opportunity for *da’wah*. It also demonstrated to Chinese Indonesians that Chinese Muslims are still very much Chinese. Through such events, PITI expresses both its Muslim and Chinese identities, and shows that they are compatible.

Members of PITI informally display Islam to their own personal Chinese contacts, such as non-Muslim family members. They adopt an approach to *da’wah* somewhere between what Poston (1992) describes as the indirect or ‘lifestyle’ approach and the direct approach. One member of PITI (interview), whose family members are Confucian and Catholic, says he gently shows his family what it means to be Muslim, through the way he lives and also by explaining aspects of the faith to them. He also has opportunities to explain Islam and debate with other contacts, such as his Catholic boss. His non-Muslim friends sometimes ask questions such as why he is not allowed to eat pork – giving him another opportunity to explain his

faith. Burnadi (interview) believes Chinese Muslims are in a unique position to conduct *da'wah* to non-Muslim Chinese of high status. He believes it is more appropriate for fellow Chinese to invite Chinese business people to consider Islam than for people of lower status to do so.

PITI also helps to build and maintain a good image of Islam, as well as raising its own profile, through many charitable initiatives. These include disaster relief, campaigns for blood bank donations and collaborations with other organisations to provide free medical clinics (interviews). PITI is active in cooperating with non-Muslim Chinese organisations for charity. Such partnerships strengthen PITI's relationships with other Chinese Indonesians and give PITI the opportunity to present a tolerant and caring image of Islam.

Fostering Relationships with Others

PITI endeavours to maintain good relationships with the rest of Indonesian society, including with fellow Muslims and fellow Chinese. In fact, fostering these relationships is a central part of PITI's aim to function as a bridge between Muslims and Chinese in Indonesia (PITI 2005: 11; Tanudjaja 2007–2008). PITI's good relationship with fellow Chinese is evident in the support they receive from outsiders. Non-Muslim Chinese participate in PITI's events, and other Chinese organisations are willing to cooperate with PITI. Most of those who live around the Muhammad Cheng Hoo Mosque are non-Muslim Chinese. They donate food and drink for Muslims to break their fast at the mosque during Ramadan (Burnadi, interview). Non-Muslim Chinese even donated to help build the mosque (Abdul Chalim, interview).

PITI in Surabaya also has strong ties with the broader mainstream Muslim community in Indonesia. At the official level, the heads in East Java of MUI, NU and Muhammadiyah are advisors for PITI (Dewan Pimpinan Pusat PITI 2006). The speakers for the Friday sermon and Sunday *pengajian* in the Muhammad Cheng Hoo Mosque are often Muslim leaders from NU or Muhammadiyah. Non-Chinese Muslims also help in the running of the organisation and participate in the mosque's activities (personal observation). In the Muhammad Cheng Hoo Mosque, Chinese and non-Chinese Muslims

mix freely. Here, at least, the relationship between Chinese Muslims and other Indonesians is one of respect and goodwill.

PITI in Surabaya promotes values associated with civil society, which it regards as values esteemed in Islam. The image of Islam that PITI presents and endeavours to put into practice is one of peace and respect for others, including those of different religions and ethnic backgrounds. This can be seen not only through its fostering of good relationships with fellow Muslims and fellow Chinese, but also through symbols. For instance, at the front of the mosque there is an area used by those leading the prayers or giving sermons. According to the handbook about the mosque (Yayasan Haji Muhammad Cheng Hoo c.2007: 7), the prominent wall here is intentionally made to look like a church door, indicating Islam's respect for *Isa* and that 'Islam loves to live in peace, with mutual respect and not interfering with other people's beliefs'.

Conclusion

This case study is not consistent with Jacobsen's (2005: 87) view of Chinese Muslims as a 'redundant legacy of history.' Surabaya's Chinese Muslim community is actively negotiating a place for itself in Indonesia's multi-ethnic, multi-religious society. PITI in Surabaya is fostering its relationships with fellow Chinese and fellow Muslims and enhancing its role as a bridge between the communities. It is making the most of the new climate of openness and the public re-emergence of Chinese culture to present Islam as peaceful, tolerant and compatible with 'Chineseness'. PITI conducts *da'wah* to non-Muslims through ethnic promotion. It makes a positive contribution to Indonesian civil society, not only through providing opportunities for civic participation, but also through the values it promotes. PITI's *da'wah* to non-Muslims is conducted in the context of commitment to the values of respect, tolerance and mutual cooperation with other groups in society, including ones outside of Islam.

Chapter Three: Case Study of Forum Arimatea

In Indonesia and elsewhere, Muslims have sometimes responded to Christian advance with polemical attacks on Christianity, as a ‘self-defence mechanism’ (Scantlebury 1996: 262). The perceived threat of Christianisation has not only helped to invigorate *da’wah* to Muslims in Indonesia (see Chapter One), but has sometimes stimulated *da’wah* to Christians. This chapter discusses the case study of Arimatea in Malang, a recently formed organisation that is boldly using the freedoms of the *Reformasi* era to conduct its activities. Arimatea is in fact an acronym for *Advokasi, Rehabilitasi, IMunisasi Aqidah yang Terpadu, Efektif & Aktual* (Advocacy, Rehabilitation, IMMunisation of the Faith which is Integrated, Effective & Actual),⁵⁷ referring to its goals and activities, involving *da’wah* to non-Muslims, helping new converts, acting against Christianisation, bringing apostates back to Islam, and educating Muslims about others’ efforts to make them apostates (Forum Arimatea c.2004). As it tackles Christianisation, Arimatea displays what Wertheim (1980: 1) has described as a Muslim ‘minority mentality’. Arimatea’s activities reflect a trend which Watson (2005: 208–9) observes in Indonesian Muslim discourse of increasing animosity towards Christian mission activity and theology.

Polemics, *Da’wah* to Christians and *Kristologi*

Historically, one mode of interaction between Muslims and Christians has been polemical or apologetic encounters, through which Muslims have defended their beliefs for the benefit of fellow Muslims. Muslims have also sometimes conducted *da’wah* to Christians through these encounters.⁵⁸ Westerlund (2003: 263) argues that religious polemics ‘may be flourishing

⁵⁷ Articles about Arimatea mention that the name ‘Arimatea’ is the last name of Yusuf Arimatea, a secret disciple of *Isa* (AIS 2007: 103; Tabloid Intelijen 26 April–9 May 2007). In fact, the Bible refers to ‘Joseph of Arimatea’ (*Yusuf orang Arimatea*) (e.g. Mark 15: 43).

⁵⁸ Smith (2007: 65) refers to ‘confrontational debate’, the purpose of which is ‘disproving the validity of the other’s belief system and thus the truth of one’s own. Often the debates are the means whereby either a speaker wishes to encourage members of his or her own faith tradition to hold firm, or they are used to hammer home disagreements with members of the other tradition that are long-standing and generally impossible to resolve.’

more than ever before', and are under-studied in comparison to interfaith dialogues. Scantlebury (1996: 261) describes the Christian–Muslim polemic that developed in India in the 19th century and subsequently spread to other areas of the Muslim world. She considers the 1835 publication of '*Mizan al-haqq*' (Balance of Truth) by a German missionary, Pfander, and the Muslim reaction it provoked, as the beginning of a 'new phase of interaction between Islam and Christianity...public confrontations then took on the nature of verbal combat with the aim of proving the other wrong'. Indian Muslim leader, Rahmatullah Kairanvi, debated Pfander in Agra in 1854, and in 1867, he wrote the seminal work '*Izhar al-Haqq*' (Truth Revealed) in reply to Pfander's 1835 publication.⁵⁹ From this context, Scantlebury (1996: 262) argues that polemic can become 'a self-defence mechanism' when a group feels threatened by the advance of another religion.

In the 20th century, the enormously influential Ahmed Deedat used the polemic approach to *da'wah* in South Africa and worldwide through debates with Christians as well as in his publications and videocassettes (Westerlund 2003).⁶⁰ Reading Kairanvi's '*Izhar al-Haqq*' inspired Deedat's interest in countering Christianity. He founded the Islamic Propagation Centre in 1957, and from the 1980s, the Centre organised activities internationally.⁶¹ Often thousands of people, mainly Muslims, were present at Deedat's debates with evangelical Christian leaders and other religious figures (Westerlund 2003: 266–7). Deedat's influence has also been felt in Indonesia. Translations of Deedat's apologetic texts and recordings of his debates, with sub-titles, are available (personal observation). Of particular interest here, Arimatea's style of *da'wah* is similar to Deedat's.

While acknowledging that 'Deedat's work has been used extensively' for *da'wah* to non-Muslims, Westerlund (2003: 271) argues that Deedat's

⁵⁹ See Schirrmacher (1999) for a discussion of the importance of the Agra debate in 1854 and the publications of the figures involved. From this time, Muslim apologists used liberal Christian theological scholarship to prove Christianity as false. This was a new development in Muslim apologetics.

⁶⁰ See Westerlund (2003: 268–70) for a discussion of Ahmed Deedat's views on the Bible, the Qur'an, Jesus and Muhammad, which are 'orthodox' Muslim positions.

⁶¹ The name of the Centre was changed to Islamic Propagation Centre International in 1982 (Westerlund 2003: 267).

work is primarily a strategy of defence – using the tactic of ‘attack is the best defence’. Especially early in his career, Deedat’s polemic attacks were a defence mechanism for the Muslim community in South Africa, where the Christian missionary effort was strong. Similarly, Zebiri (1997: 46) refers to Deedat urging Muslims to ‘launch a counter-offensive by actively pursuing *da’wah* to non-Muslims.’ Furthermore, Scantlebury (1996: 263) points out that since the majority of those attending Deedat’s debates were Muslim, ‘the effect, if not the aim, is that of reassuring a Muslim audience rather than of converting a Christian one.’

In Indonesia, there is a long history of Muslim apologetics and polemic publications concerning Christianity, strongly influenced by the writings of Muslims from other parts of the world (Ropi 1998). Steenbrink (1998: 344) argues that ‘there has always been an apologetic stream within Muhammadiyah’ and that in terms of doctrinal apologetic, ‘Muhammadiyah revived the polemic style of the Muslim tradition.’ Boland (1971) devotes much attention to the ‘endless stream of apologetic and polemic publications’, which he considers prepared the way for controversy and conflict with Christians after 1965 (Boland 1971: 225). He suggests that anti-Christian polemic literature in Indonesia is apologetic in nature, aimed at doubting Muslims (Boland 1971: 229).

Muslim apologetic and polemic publications can also be referred to as *kristologi* publications. In his booklet in which he encourages fellow Muslims to study *kristologi*, Wakhid Rosyid Lasiman (n.d.: 1) defines Islamic *kristologi* as the study of ‘various issues related to Christianity, based on the Islamic point of view, that is, based on the Qur’an and Sunnah.’ Many apologetic *kristologi* publications are available in Indonesia, some published during the New Order and some more recently.⁶²

⁶² An example of a New Order *kristologi* publication is Mudhary (2001). First published in 1971, it includes a dialogue between the author and a Catholic, who became a Muslim following the discussions. Wakhid Rosyid Lasiman, who converted to Islam in 1980, has written *kristologi* booklets including one attempting to prove that Muslims are the true followers of Jesus (n.d.). Sanihu Munir (2004, 2005) has also written *kristologi* booklets. Other recent apologetic books include those by Mokoginta (2006b) and Al-Ghaffar (2005), both converts from Catholicism. Books about the stories of new converts are also available (e.g. Dyayadi 2007).

Abdullah Wasi'an is a *kristolog* who was active in the New Order era. Muhammad Ihsan Tanjung (2003: v) calls him 'one of the first *da'i* to struggle in *da'wah* to defend the faith and conduct *da'wah* to non-Muslims.' Born in Surabaya in 1917, Abdullah Wasi'an has been active in Muhammadiyah, Masyumi and DDII (Ulum 2003). Early in the New Order, he was responsible for the DDII program in East Java for tackling the problem of Christianisation, and was appointed by Mohammad Natsir to train *da'i* in other regions in Indonesia in *kristologi* (Ulum 2003: 31). Abdullah Wasi'an has often debated Christian figures and has written many books (Ulum 2003). Most of Wasi'an's books are responses to articles in the media or to books by Christian ministers (Ulum 2003: 57).⁶³

Da'wah to Christians in Indonesia is a practical application of the study of *kristologi*, which is partly a response to the perceived threat of Christianisation.⁶⁴ According to a leader of Muhammadiyah in East Java, Imam Muchlas (2003: 170–1), 'in Indonesia, the field of *kristologi* is very important because Christians are very persistent in spreading their teachings in this country.' Muhammad Ihsan Tanjung (2003: v) declares that '*da'wah* to Christians is a fundamental necessity for the Muslim community in Indonesia', elaborating with reference to what he sees as Christians' long reign of political and economic control in Indonesia, their cunning and deceit, their efforts to Christianise Muslim children and their readiness to disobey the law. Wakhid Rosyid Lasiman (n.d.: 9–10) gives a list of reasons for why Muslims should study *kristologi*, the first three of which are: to strengthen conviction concerning the truth of Islam, to be equipped for *da'wah* and to be a fortress against (*membentengi*) Christianisation.

In Muslim literature in Indonesia, *da'wah* to Christians is not only linked with apprehension about Christianisation, but is also put forward as a Muslim duty. Muhammad Ihsan Tanjung (2003: vii) argues that 'it is necessary that

⁶³ Wasi'an (1993, 1995), for instance, responds to works that attempt to prove Christian beliefs from interpretations of the Qur'an.

⁶⁴ According to Insan L.S. Mokoginta (2006a: xi), however, not all Muslims are comfortable with studying *kristologi*. To explain why Muslims should not be hesitant about approaching *kristologi*, he compares the field of study with criminology. Studying criminology does not mean police must become criminals, but rather helps them do their job better. In the same way, Muslims who want to understand Christianity need to study *kristologi*.

we conduct *da'wah* to Christians not only because we feel disturbed by their activities, but also in particular because it is our obligation to save them from the fire of hell.' Similarly, before discussing the problem of Christian efforts to convert Muslims, the head of the Indonesian *Kristologi* Organisation (*Lembaga Kristologi Indonesia*), Zahir Khan (2006: ix), argues that conducting *da'wah*, which includes *da'wah* to Christians, is the obligation of all Muslims. He reasons that, 'because of this, we need to understand their teachings by studying *kristologi* in order to identify the errors of Christianity.'

Insan L. S. Mokoginta (2006a) also considers *kristologi* as useful in the important task of conducting *da'wah* to Christians.⁶⁵ His comic book (2006a) demonstrates how to conduct *da'wah* using *kristologi*. The Muslim characters in the comic, Aslam and Din, conduct *da'wah* to Aslam's Christian friend, Kris. The Muslim arguments used are typical and Kris is soon convinced that Christians are in fact followers of Paul, not Jesus, and to be a true follower of Jesus he should become a Muslim. Mokoginta (2006a: xiii) expresses hope that the readers of his *kristologi* comic book will be equipped to conduct *da'wah* to Christians, 'so that they are saved in this world and the hereafter'. He claims that it is almost guaranteed that everyone who masters *kristologi* has converted a Christian to Islam (*mengislamkan orang Kristen*) (2006a: xii). Furthermore, Mokoginta argues, with reference to a hadith, that conducting *da'wah* to non-Muslims can result in great reward from Allah if successful (2006a: xii–xiii).⁶⁶ He expresses his hope that by conducting *da'wah* using his *kristologi* comic book, 'God-willing we will receive a very large reward at the side of Allah SWT' (Mokoginta 2006a: xiii).

⁶⁵ Mokoginta founded the Forum Against the Apostate-Making Movement (*Forum Anti-Gerakan Pemurtadan – FAKTA*) and is a DDII leader (Syafa'at 2008).

⁶⁶ Without giving its reference, he simply quotes the hadith in Indonesian: 'If because of your *da'wah* someone receives *hidayah* to enter Islam, surely the reward is as big as the sky, earth and all that is in it.' *Hidayah* refers to divine guidance. A report on Arimatea (AIS 2007: 107) ends by quoting this same hadith, attributing it to Abu Dawud. The wording of the quotation is slightly different from Mokoginta's.

Forum Arimatea Takes Action

Arimatea is an example of an organisation with similar concerns to those evident in the literature discussed above – opposing Christianisation, studying *kristologi*, and conducting *da'wah* to Christians. Arimatea was established on 16 August 2003 by Abujamin Roham, Ramly Nawai, Risman Muhtar, and Diki Candra (AIS 2007: 103). Abujamin Roham and Risman Muhtar are both current Muhammadiyah leaders at the national level (Muhammadiyah Online 2008). Diki Candra is a former businessperson, who changed careers to be a *da'wah* activist, primarily focusing on *da'wah* to non-Muslims and opposing 'crusaders' (*salibis*) (Diki Dalam Media c.2007).⁶⁷ Arimatea was established due to concerns about Christianisation and *pemurtadan* (apostate-making) – Christians are allegedly active and aggressive proselytisers, and many have left Islam (AIS 2007: 103 & Warno, interview). Arimatea's first step was to conduct research about the apostate-making movement (*gerakan pemurtadan*) in Indonesia. After this initial stage, Arimatea formed its strategy to oppose the movement (AIS 2007: 104). The organisation now has fifty branches and plans to open more (Masyhud, interview).⁶⁸ Like some other Muslims concerned about Christianisation in Indonesia, Arimatea is motivated to conduct *da'wah* to Christians. Masyhud (interview), a convert from Christianity,⁶⁹ considers Arimatea's aim in *da'wah* to be to show the truth of the *tauhid* to those of other religions, especially in relation to *Isa* – a prophet, not God.

Before Arimatea existed, there were individuals who had an interest in *da'wah* to non-Muslims and in *kristologi*, but it was not possible during the New Order to form an organisation like Arimatea because of the SARA

⁶⁷ Besides his role as the secretary general of Arimatea, Diki Candra is involved in polygamy *da'wah* as the secretary general of the Indonesian Polygamy Community (*Masyarakat Poligami Indonesia* – MAPOLIN) as well as *da'wah* opposing corruption through his roles as a leader of the Newspaper of Corruption Monitors (*Koran Pemantau Korupsi*) and as the founder and secretary general of the Anti-Corruption Forum (*Forum Redam Korupsi* – FORK) (Diki Dalam Media c.2007).

⁶⁸ Arimatea's main source of funds for the running of its organisation is the profit gained from selling its own VCDs (As 2006).

⁶⁹ Masyhud was a lecturer at a theological college in Malang and became interested in Islam when teaching Islamology. He converted to Islam with Arimatea Malang in September 2006, and joined the organisation (Masyhud, interview).

issue.⁷⁰ In the *Reformasi* era, there is freedom to organise, and individuals with an interest in *da'wah* to non-Muslims can gather together in Arimatea and work as an organisation (Warno & Harap Nurilah, interviews).⁷¹ Arimatea's members come from a variety of Muslim organisations. These include NU, Muhammadiyah, al-Irsyad, DDII, Persis, *Hizbut Tahrir*, FPI and *Jamaah Tabligh* (Sari 2005: 89 & Warno, interview). Members like the fact that Arimatea is diverse and inclusive in this way.

Arimatea's explicit focus on *da'wah* to non-Muslims is clear from the VCD *Profile Arimatea* (Forum Arimatea c.2004). This VCD, produced by Arimatea to promote itself, features Arimatea leaders delivering short addresses, exhorting Indonesian Muslims to join the organisation and help in their *da'wah* efforts. A common theme in these addresses is the nature of *da'wah*. The leaders persuade viewers that it is the obligation of all Muslims to conduct *da'wah*, and that Islam is universal; so *da'wah* is aimed at all people, whatever their religion.⁷² They explain that Arimatea's focus on *da'wah* to non-Muslims is an important aspect of *da'wah* that has been neglected. FPI figure Habib Riziq Syihab also points to the way Muhammad carried out *da'wah* as an example to follow, explaining that Muhammad invited Jews and Christians to sit and discuss with him. The leaders also draw on concepts from Qur'an 16:125 to explain the way *da'wah* should be conducted, including discussing and debating with people, using wisdom and logical reasoning.

⁷⁰ According to Bahrul Ulum (2003: 50), the study of *kristologi* was often monitored by security in the New Order era – 'Make a little mistake and you could be arrested for toying with SARA.' For example, Abdullah Wasi'an was arrested and detained for six hours by police in Ujung Pandang (now Makassar). He was in Ujung Pandang to teach *kristologi* to South Sulawesi members of Indonesian Islamic School Students' Association (*Pelajar Islam Indonesia* – PII) and was arrested because the organisers of the training had not informed the police that the material would include *kristologi*, which they considered as having the potential to incite SARA (Ulum 2003: 50–1).

⁷¹ Imam Muchlas (2003: 171) observes that 'KH Abdullah Wasian conducts his *da'wah* as an individual. It would be far more effective if there were a specific organisation in which *kristolog* could gather.' Arimatea is one organisation formed to meet this need in the *Reformasi* era. According to Sari (2005: 88), however, the government at first did not agree with Arimatea's approach, since the organisation invites people who already have a religion to change religion.

⁷² In fact, one leader, Sukron Ma'mun, even says, 'we don't conduct *da'wah* to those in the mosques, we just strengthen their faith. *Da'wah* is inviting those who are not yet Muslims to become Muslims. That's what *da'wah* is' (Forum Arimatea c.2004).

Arimatea Malang leaders Haryono (interview) and Warno (interview) both explain the uniqueness of Arimatea by comparing it with Muhammadiyah and NU, which focus on consolidating Muslims. Haryono says that he was interested in supporting Arimatea in Malang:

because I thought that there's something that Muslims haven't been addressing. Muslims have been preoccupied with themselves, doing internal *da'wah*...without realising that actually Islam's command is to spread the religion not only to fellow Muslims.

Haryono saw that Arimatea was formed to address this neglected matter and wanted to support the effort.

Da'wah to non-Muslims is not a common focus among Indonesian Muslims, and fellow Muslims sometimes express disapproval at Arimatea's *da'wah*. According to Diki Candra, Arimatea's movement is not popular, because the community is not familiar with *da'wah* to non-Muslims. The community is only accustomed to *da'wah* in mosques and *majlis ta'lim* (similar meaning to *pengajian*) (Sari 2005: 88). Arimatea Malang leader Harap Nurilah (interview), complains that fellow Muslims sometimes ask, 'why on earth do you carry out *da'wah* to non-Muslims – *da'wah* within Islam isn't finished yet!' He wishes that all Muslim organisations would accommodate, rather than intimidate (*'ditakut-takuti'*), a member who wants to conduct *da'wah* to non-Muslims. It would be ideal, he believes, if each organisation had a program that deals with non-Muslims. For instance, if a non-Muslim approaches to ask about Islam, the organisation should be able to handle the enquiry.

Indonesian Muslim opposition to direct *da'wah* to non-Muslims is likely a result of general Muslim emphasis on internal *da'wah* and perhaps the influence of 'world culture' in global civil society, in which proselytising is stigmatised (Thomas 2001). In addition, there are particularities of the Indonesian context that may give rise to unease with direct *da'wah* to non-Muslims. Until recently, potential SARA issues were officially avoided. 'Civil Islam' is strong in Indonesia and mainstream Muslims want to ensure that inter-religious relations are peaceful. Some Muslims may consider direct

da'wah to non-Muslims as undermining peaceful relations with other religious groups.

When explaining the place of Arimatea to the Department of Religion, Diki Candra used terminology reminiscent of Westerlund's (2003: 271) description of Ahmad Deedat's tactic as 'attack is the best defence'. Diki Candra likens the situation to a fistfight, in which the Muslim community has been inactive: 'we are just silent, while the enemy punches constantly. So the best defence that must be made is attacking' (Sari 2005: 88). The aims of opposing Christianisation and of conducting *da'wah* to Christians are thus logically linked, as *da'wah* is an offensive strike from a group of Muslims who feel as if they are under attack. Further evidence of this is found in statements by Diki Candra. He says that Arimatea was formed 'to oppose missionaries, to research them, to correct their misunderstandings. We conduct *da'wah* for that' (As 2006: 26). More explanation is found in another report (AIS 2007: 107), which refers to Diki Candra as reasoning that *da'wah* to Christian missionaries is 'one way of protecting Muslims' faith (*pembentengan aqidah umat*), through weakening the missionary drive as doubts grow in missionaries' minds when they begin to know the truth of Islam.'

Arimatea's polemic approach to *da'wah* is indeed similar to that of Ahmad Deedat of South Africa. Warno (email 2008) has learnt much from Deedat, and considers Arimatea's *da'wah* to be the same as Deedat's. Like Deedat, Arimatea holds debates with Christian leaders and invites Muslims and Christians to watch. Debates are often recorded and the VCDs are distributed among Muslims and non-Muslims. One example is 'Debate *Mualaf* (Former Christians) vs *Murtadin* (Former Muslims): "Why Did They Leave Islam?", "Why Did They Leave Christianity?"' (Forum Arimatea n.d.-a), involving a debate between three former Muslims who are now Christians and three former Christians who are now Muslims. Another example is 'The Absoluteness of "God": Is it Allah or Jesus Who is Absolute?' (Forum Arimatea n.d.-c), involving a debate between two Christian and two Muslim

leaders (figures from Arimatea) focusing on the concept of God.⁷³ Arimatea aims to conduct *da'wah* to non-Muslims and its members consider this an important aspect of *da'wah*. However, as with Deedat's activities, it may be that the main outcome of Arimatea's endeavours is a strengthening or defence of the Muslim community.

***Da'wah* to Non-Muslims and Responding to Christianisation in Malang**

Arimatea's branch in Malang was launched at the end of 2003, soon after the organisation was formed (Warno, interview). There is a core group of about a dozen who make up the branch in Malang. One way that Arimatea in Malang responds to Christianisation is by providing information to Muslims about Christianity. Arimatea holds regular *pengajian* at Brawijaya University, the State University of Malang and at the Muhajirin Mosque. Besides studying the Qur'an, these *pengajian* involve a discussion of *kristologi* – the Bible and its history, the history of Christianity and Christian dogma – as well as Christian missions and the apostate-making movements of churches (Warno, interview). Warno (interview) gives similar reasons for studying *kristologi* as those given by Wakhid Rosyid Lasiman (n.d.), described above. According to Warno, studying *kristologi* is important for 'immunisation' – so that Muslims understand Christian teachings and are strengthened to avoid apostasy and Christians' attempts to convert them. The *pengajian* also help equip Muslims to conduct *da'wah* to non-Muslims. Besides running their own regular *pengajian*, Arimatea is also invited by outside groups to speak at *pasantren* (Muslim boarding schools) and mosques about *kristologi* and other topics (Haryono, interview).

Arimatea also holds one-off seminars and presentations for Muslims. On 17 February 2008, for example, Arimatea Malang held a one day training session on the topic 'Islamic Investigation and Advocacy: Guarding Against the Apostate-Making Movement of the 21st Century' (*Investigasi dan*

⁷³ Other VCDs include 'Islamic Oration in Front of 160 Missionaries' (Forum Arimatea n.d.-d), in which Habib Riziq and others address an audience including 160 Christian leaders; and 'Europe Heading for Islam' (Forum Arimatea n.d.-b), which tells of the growth of Islam in Europe, including footage from a trip of several Arimatea leaders to Europe.

Advokasi Islam: Mewaspada Gerakan Pemurtadan Abad 21) (personal observation). Diki Candra was the instructor. He presented material on Christian missions, apostasy and how to bring apostates back to Islam. He also explained how Islamic counter-intelligence can be used, for example, to ascertain whether a person is a genuine convert to Islam or just an impostor trying to infiltrate Muslim communities.

Arimatea also acts directly to defend Muslims from Christianisation. Warno (interview) describes how Arimatea deals with situations that involve 'misbehaving' Christians or apostates, as part of its 'advocacy' role. Arimatea learns of these situations in various ways, for example, when a NU or Muhammadiyah leader refers on to Arimatea a matter that a concerned Muslim has reported to them. Cases of allegedly 'misbehaving' Christians can involve Christians opening churches without the necessary permission. In other cases, poor Muslims are allegedly given financial help to send their children to school, but on the condition that they attend church. Arimatea approaches the Christians responsible to discuss the issue, protesting that those targeted already have a religion. When necessary, Arimatea even notifies the police about situations involving Christianisation.

According to Warno (interview), there are many cases of 'misbehaving' Christians in southern Malang, where there is a large population of poorer, less educated people. Arimatea has discovered a program run by Christians in Malang involving free tuition for school children who come from poor families (Warno, interview & email 2008). The children were allegedly sponsored from America. Those running the program taught the children about Christianity and sometimes took the children to church. The parents had given permission for their children to participate in the program. Arimatea handled this case by warning the parents about the motives of the Christians. Some parents took notice and withdrew their children from the program. Others were angry with the representatives of Arimatea, saying that they were pleased with the program and the academic progress of their children. Arimatea also wrote a letter to the Christian leaders of the program, asking them not to force people to go to church. Arimatea then took the initiative to find Muslim university students who wanted to lead a similar

program to help children with their studies, so that families would not avail themselves of Christian programs.

Other cases that Arimatea handles involve bringing apostates back to Islam. Haryono (interview) told of how Arimatea in Malang was asked for help by the parents of a boy in senior high school. The boy had become a Christian for six months after talking with friends and with Christian teachers. After Haryono and Warno talked with the boy, he reverted to Islam.

Arimatea in Malang conducts *da'wah* to non-Muslims by organising 'dialogues' involving Christian representatives. Usually the representatives are Protestant, as Catholics rarely wish to participate. On a rare occasion, a Catholic representative did participate in a discussion about the book 'The Da Vinci Code' (Warno, interview). Arimatea has held two large public debates at Malang's Brawijaya University, including the debate on the absoluteness of God (Forum Arimatea n.d.-c). According to Warno (interview), thousands were in attendance at the debates, and the video recordings have been distributed throughout Indonesia. Warno (interview) explains that because Christian pastors are involved in Arimatea's 'dialogues', many Christians attend, providing an opportunity for *da'wah*. Though the events, Arimatea wishes to inform them about Islam.

Arimatea members in Malang also conduct *da'wah* to non-Muslims as individuals, creating and taking opportunities to tell non-Muslims about Islam. Many members of Arimatea whom I met tried to reason with me that Islam was the true religion and that Christian beliefs were false. They used what Poston (1992) describes as the direct approach to *da'wah*. Individual initiatives in *da'wah* to non-Muslims on the part of Arimatea members are not necessarily a reaction against Christianisation, but rather due to a conviction that Muslims must share the truth with non-Muslims. An Arimatea member may have a natural curiosity about other religions and their background may have helped them to develop an interest in conducting *da'wah* to non-Muslims. Warno (interview), for instance, attended a Catholic junior high school and enjoys studying all religions. Harap Nurilah (interview) became interested in *da'wah* to Christians because he often witnessed his father discussing religion with Christian pastors as he was

growing up. Haryono (interview) was raised in a nominally Muslim family, and during his school years he became a Christian and then a Hindu. In his final year of high school, Haryono was challenged by a friend to prove Hinduism was true, so he set about studying religions. He concluded that Islam was true, as it was the most reasonable and logical option. The backgrounds of these three Arimatea leaders in Malang gives some indication as to why they are involved in *da'wah* to non-Muslims as part of Arimatea and on an individual level.

Warno (interview) sometimes visits churches or seminaries to talk with ministers or priests – creating an opportunity for *da'wah*. He goes irregularly, either alone or with a friend from Arimatea. He telephones first or asks the security guard in order to arrange to meet the minister or priest. When they meet, he tells them that he wants to learn about Christianity and its teachings. They discuss Bible verses and the doctrines of the Trinity and the incarnation of Christ. Some ministers and priests are happy to meet again for further discussions, while others do not wish to. If Arimatea has upcoming events, Warno invites the ministers and priests. Before Arimatea's two major public debates in Malang, Warno visited many Christian institutions to invite people to attend. He has also visited Buddhist *vihara* (monasteries) to discuss religious matters with Buddhists.

Harap Nurilah (interview & email 2008) has run many interfaith forums, which provide opportunities to conduct *da'wah* to non-Muslims. These forums are not necessarily held under the name of Arimatea. Harap Nurilah is a lecturer at a private university in Malang and has run one forum at his own campus, which was attended by Muslim, Protestant, Catholic, Hindu and Buddhist students. Students have invited him to other tertiary institutions in Malang in order to run similar forums. The number of participants varies, but there are usually 20 to 40 present, from a variety of religious backgrounds. Harap Nurilah has even been invited to Tarakan, East Kalimantan, to run a forum for around 300 participants. At the beginning of such forums, Harap Nurilah discusses the concept of thinking. He explains the need to be consistent in thinking rationally. Next, he discusses the concept of God, where the participants are encouraged to consider what can

be regarded as ‘God’ – that which fulfils the criteria of absolute, distinct and unique – precluding fellow human beings. Finally, there is a discussion on comparative religion, which involves the participants sharing, asking and debating with each other about the concept of God in each of their respective religions. Harap Nurilah only describes Islam. The complete program takes two full days, with the lively discussion of the second day often extending through the night and into the morning.

Haryono (interview) is a lecturer at a state university in Malang and has good relationships with his students. The subjects he teaches, including philosophy, research methodology and ethics, lend themselves to discussions related to religious matters. In philosophy class, for instance, Haryono uses logic to explain that if there is a God, then there can only be one truth and one true religion. He mentions and explains Islam only briefly in class, focusing instead on God. Haryono believes that as a result of these discussions, some Christian students become better Christians. Some students approach Haryono outside of class to discuss further. Some students who have discussed Islam with Haryono have converted to Islam. He says that two Hindu students, for example, came to him a few years ago to discuss more about Islam after they had doubts about their own religion. They met on several occasions and later became Muslims. Another year, he says, the interest of a Christian student in his philosophy class was triggered by the class discussion. She discussed the issues raised in class with her friends and with Haryono. She converted to Islam and asked Haryono to teach her how to perform the prayers.

Arimatea – a Civil Organisation?

The effect of Arimatea’s activities on civil society is difficult to determine, due to the diversity among Arimatea’s members. Members’ perceptions of other religious groups and their ways of interacting with non-Muslims vary. Arimatea and its members do attempt to build amicable relationships with non-Muslims, and are successful in some ways. On the VCD ‘Profile Arimatea’ (Forum Arimatea c.2004), the achievements of the organisation

are described, focusing on the positive responses of Christians. This welcoming response, it is claimed, ‘will make it easier to conduct *da’wah* to them through various means.’ Several Christian leaders give brief addresses on the VCD, in which they show support for Arimatea’s activities. One expresses his approval at Arimatea’s academic approach, and encourages his fellow Indonesian Christians, especially intellectuals, to support the organisation. Another even commends Arimatea’s field research as it reveals the facts about inappropriate ways Christians evangelise. Warno (interview) believes Arimatea has a good relationship with non-Muslims. For instance, one Christian seminary in Batu, near Malang, is very keen to participate in more of Arimatea’s debates, asking when they will next be invited. Arimatea’s members value friendly encounters with non-Muslims at a personal level. Warno tells of his contact with a Chinese Indonesian Catholic, with whom he had a long discussion about Jesus, God and the Bible. They both remained convinced of their respective religious beliefs, but enjoyed the conversation nonetheless. The Catholic invited Warno to come again.

Arimatea’s emphasis on discussion and debate means that the members are, to a certain extent, open to and tolerant of different opinions. Haryono and Masyhud (interviews) do not object in principle to Christians inviting Muslims to Christianity. According to Haryono, he and others are open to discussion with Christians – and they will respond with counter-arguments. Members of Arimatea emphasise rational and logical reasoning in their discussions. According to Haryono, ‘it’s impossible that we invite people of other religions to become Muslims if we aren’t able to present arguments which make sense.’ In Arimatea’s public debates, Haryono says ‘we don’t force Islam is the right but we prove Islam is the right (sic).’⁷⁴

That Arimatea holds debates and discusses religious issues with people of other religions demonstrates a certain appreciation of different points of view, not only among Arimatea members but also the communities in which they conduct these activities. According to Arimatea members (interviews),

⁷⁴ comment made in English

Arimatea is not able to operate fully in other cities and regions of Indonesia due to the unfavourable climate. For example, Arimatea does not hold debates in Bali and East Nusa Tenggara, where Muslims are a minority; or in Madura, which is highly Muslim (Warno, interview). Warno explains that in some regions people are sensitive, emotional and not ready for debates. In Malang and other large cities in Java, on the other hand, the conditions are more conducive to Arimatea operating. According to Harap Nurilah (interview), people in Java are more open and objective in attitude.

Directly conducting *da'wah* to non-Muslims with the aim of encouraging conversions is not necessarily contrary to values associated with civil society. As discussed in the Introduction, Thomas (2001) argues that proselytising is inappropriate in modern civil society, while Thiessen (1985) argues that it is possible to proselytise without demonstrating intolerance, reasoning that tolerance is an attitude towards people, not their beliefs (1985: 343). Arimatea's *da'wah* certainly encourages thought and discussion, an outcome of proselytising which Thiessen (1985: 335) considers as positive. However, several factors indicate that Arimatea exhibits some intolerance towards people of other religions, not just their religious beliefs. Although Arimatea employs the rhetoric of promoting inter-religious harmony and understanding, it is doubtful whether it does in fact always achieve this.

The way Arimatea members engage with Christians in public debates shows that they are not entirely tolerant of people holding different religious views. Arimatea's debates are controlled discussions, but they are not altogether amicable. This is partly due to the nature of religious debates and polemics. Scantlebury (1996: 262) even asserts that interfaith polemic 'can only ever be a negative exercise reinforcing the combatants' existing convictions.'⁷⁵ Arimatea's debate in Malang on the absoluteness of God (Forum Arimatea n.d.-c) is an example of Arimatea's mode of communication with Christians. The two Christian representatives were given plenty of time to present and explain their arguments. However, the debate was an unequal exchange – the Christians mainly presented and

⁷⁵ She reasons that participants tend to be inconsistent and selective in presenting arguments and giving evidence and 'the criteria of judgement that each side uses differ'.

defended their views without directly criticising Islamic doctrine. The two Muslims, on the other hand, put forward their views as well as criticised Christian beliefs. One of the Arimatea speakers, Egi Sujana, defined ‘tolerant’ in such a way as to ‘trap’ the opposition. According to Egi Sujana, ‘tolerant’ means that whichever side is proved to be right, the other will join. He framed the debate in such a way that Islam was logical and Christianity was illogical, and those who did not accept this were thus intolerant. He even said that if someone refuses Islam it is either due to stupidity or arrogance. The debate was clearly not characterised by a genuine attempt to carefully consider the Christians’ point of view.

Furthermore, Arimatea’s anti-Christianisation activities cast doubt on the organisation’s fostering of values associated with civil society. In championing the anti-Christianisation cause, Arimatea is encouraging suspicion rather than trust between the two religions. According to one article (Variasari April 2006: 66), Arimatea ‘adopts a gentle and very respectful approach’ when conducting *da’wah* to non-Muslims, but, quoting Diki Candra, ‘if there are clearly efforts in apostate-making or deception, then Arimatea activists will act, and will have a physical confrontation (*beradu fisik*) if necessary.’

Arimatea’s connections with radical elements in Indonesian Islam are further evidence that the organisation does not overall promote civility. For example, Arimatea cooperates with FPI ‘in the field’ (Variasari April 2006: 66) and FPI figure Habib Riziq Syihab is an Arimatea leader. The respect shown by Diki Candra towards Abu Bakar Ba’asyir, leader of MMI and suspected spiritual leader of the terrorist organisation *Jemaah Islamiyah*, is also disconcerting. While Abu Bakar Ba’asyir was in prison, Diki Candra visited him and asked if he would be willing to be put forward as a presidential candidate for the 2004 election (Diki Dalam Media c.2007).

Conclusion

Considering the Indonesia context, it is clear that Muslim polemic against Christianity can be an impulse for protecting Muslims from the perceived

threat of Christian activities – a ‘reactive phenomenon’ (Zebiri 1997: 49). Arimatea is part of a larger movement in Indonesia of those who study *kristologi* and conduct *da’wah* to Christians, in the context of opposing Christianisation, and also as a religious duty. This case study of Arimatea in Malang shows a variety of aspects of Arimatea’s activities as well as those of its individual members. As part of meeting the perceived challenge of Christianisation, Arimatea educates Muslims about Christianity and responds to specific instances or cases where Christianisation occurs. Arimatea conducts *da’wah* to non-Muslims through holding public discussions and debates with non-Muslims, as well as through efforts on an individual level.

The complexities of Arimatea’s relationship with civil society are apparent. The existence of the organisation as a forum for orderly inter-religious debate is an encouraging sign of the freedom of the *Reformasi* era, and demonstrates a certain appreciation and tolerance of different religious views on the part of Arimatea members and the wider public. To an extent, the organisation and its members build positive relationships with non-Muslims, and the organisation provides practice for its members in civic organisation. While Thiessen (1985) argues that it is possible to proselytise without an intolerant attitude, aspects of the way Arimatea interacts with non-Muslims demonstrates intolerance towards people of other religions. In addition, their preoccupation with countering Christianisation as well as their links with FPI suggest that the organisation’s activities as a whole do not promote civic values, but rather work against ‘civil Islam’.

Conclusion

Da'wah to non-Muslims in Indonesia has not attracted much scholarly attention. An examination of this issue adds to our understanding of Indonesian Islam and the directions in which it is moving. The advent of the *Reformasi* era has opened up new opportunities for organisations that conduct *da'wah* to non-Muslims. How *da'wah* to non-Muslims is conducted shows examples of the way organisations are exploring new possibilities and extending boundaries in the way they practise their faith. I have used the concept of civil society to consider the impact these groups have on the functioning of an orderly society. How groups relate to outsiders is an important indicator of their effect on civil society. It is therefore worthwhile to study how Muslim groups engage with non-Muslims through *da'wah*. This study sheds light on the relationship between Muslim groups and civil society in Indonesia as well as the place in civil society of organisations that spread their religion to non-adherents.

The case studies of PITI and Forum Arimatea in East Java are examples of how the freedoms of the *Reformasi* era have had a large effect on the way *da'wah* to non-Muslims is conducted by organisations. For PITI, recent changes have allowed free expression of Chinese culture, and PITI's celebration of its 'Chineseness' is a reflection of the present resurgence of Chinese culture in Indonesian society. As part of asserting its Chinese Muslim identity, PITI in Surabaya conducts *da'wah* to non-Muslim Chinese through displaying the compatibility of Islam and 'Chineseness'. This is evident in their Chinese mosque, their large celebrations combining Muslim and Chinese elements, and their publications. For Arimatea, the freedoms of the *Reformasi* era have meant that their organisation can exist, even though their activities are sensitive, involving SARA. The organisation can openly conduct *da'wah* through holding public debates with Christians and can distribute the VCD recordings throughout Indonesia. Arimatea considers *kristologi* an important area of study for Muslims, in order to build 'immunisation' against Christianisation as well as to equip them for *da'wah* to non-Muslims. The freedoms of the *Reformasi* era mean that Arimatea can

focus on the sensitive subject of *kristologi* without the concern of regime restrictions.

Organisations' *da'wah* to non-Muslims in East Java can foster civic values and have positive effects on civil society. Most Muslim organisations in Indonesia do not have strong 'missionary' mindsets. This is true for the large mainstream organisation of Muhammadiyah, which nonetheless engages with non-Muslims through its own social services as well as through cooperative initiatives. My limited case study suggests that where its activities involve *da'wah* to non-Muslims, Muhammadiyah is keen to present Islam in a good light, as a peaceful religion. Unlike Muhammadiyah, PITI in Surabaya does focus on *da'wah* to non-Muslims. PITI conducts *da'wah* to non-Muslims in the context of promoting values of respect and understanding between different ethnic and religious groups in Indonesian society. PITI aims to be a 'bridge' between Muslims and Chinese in Indonesia. It fosters relationships with non-Muslim Chinese in various ways, including through hosting large celebrations at which it displays 'Islamic Chineseness' and through cooperating in charity. These case studies suggest that spreading religion to non-adherents is not necessarily an intolerant practice.

The effects of the organisation Arimatea on civil society are important to consider because it is this organisation that represents a direct, activist approach towards *da'wah* to non-Muslims. Arimatea's *da'wah* to non-Muslims also demonstrates some positive effects on civil society, such as through the promotion of lively discussion and debate. That they discuss with non-Muslims and hold orderly debates demonstrates a certain amount of understanding and openness to different opinions, despite not being willing to concede any ground. Moreover, members of Arimatea contribute positively to civil society through some friendly interaction with non-Muslims. However, the case study of Arimatea also highlights some negative effects which organisations that engage in *da'wah* to non-Muslims can have on civil society. Arimatea's *da'wah* to Christians stems from a preoccupation with opposing Christianisation. The organisation uses the tactic Westerlund (2003: 271) describes as 'attack is the best defence' in its polemic approach

to *da'wah* to non-Muslims. Arimatea's focus on actively countering Christianisation, their connections with the radical FPI and the manner in which Arimatea leaders sometimes engage with Christians in debates suggests that Arimatea works against 'civil Islam'.

An issue that has not been explored in this thesis is the role of women in *da'wah* to non-Muslims. Women are active in the Muslim public sphere in Indonesia, and both Muhammadiyah and NU have vibrant women's wings. However, I observed that both PITI in Surabaya and Arimatea in Malang were male-dominated organisations. Their leaderships are overwhelmingly – perhaps exclusively – male. In the case of PITI, this may be due to a gender imbalance among Chinese Muslims. Further research could investigate why an organisation such as Arimatea is predominantly male, and whether women are less attracted to anti-Christianisation activism and polemical *da'wah* to non-Muslims.

The two main case studies of this thesis, PITI and Arimatea, are both minor Muslim organisations. In addition, they are not representative of Muslim organisations in Indonesia. In fact, both organisations are highly unusual and their focus on *da'wah* to non-Muslims is part of what makes them atypical. While *da'wah* in Indonesia was invigorated in the 20th century, it was, and remains, primarily an activity internal to the Muslim community. Indeed, both PITI and Arimatea also conduct *da'wah* to Muslims. Arimatea has encountered opposition to its *da'wah* to non-Muslims from the wider Indonesian Muslim community. This suggests that their enthusiasm for this activity is not broadly shared. While the organisations of PITI and Arimatea are unusual, they are not necessarily marginal. PITI enjoys the support and involvement of leaders from both NU and Muhammadiyah. Arimatea's members are drawn from these two large mainstream organisations, as well as smaller radical groups. Two of Arimatea's founders are current members of Muhammadiyah's national leadership board.

This thesis has demonstrated that the activities of organisations that conduct *da'wah* to non-Muslims in East Java have both positive and negative effects on civil society. *Da'wah* to non-Muslims is not an inherently anti-

pluralist activity – it is possible to conduct *da'wah* to non-Muslims in the context of promoting civic values. 'Civil Islam' continues to dominate in Indonesia, and the way mainstream organisations engage in *da'wah* to non-Muslims reflects this. However, the clearest trend in deliberate, direct *da'wah* to non-Muslims is its association with anti-Christianisation sentiment and activism as well as with more radical elements in Indonesian Islam – undermining civil society. The practice of *da'wah* to non-Muslims in Indonesia is diverse, reflecting the complexities of Indonesian Islam. Although minority groups in Indonesian Islam pose challenges to civility, the mainstream continues to foster civil society and to enhance Indonesia's tradition of pluralism.

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Appendix: List of Interviews

All informants gave their permission for me to use their names in this thesis. Nonetheless, in most cases I have avoided using my informants' real names. Names that I have changed are italicised.

Muhammadiyah

<u>Name</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Position</u>
Abdullah Hasyim	16 January 2008	assistant to the rector of the University of Muhammadiyah Malang, 1983–2000, current leader in Muhammadiyah East Java
Syafiq A. Mughni	21 January 2008	head, Muhammadiyah East Java

Persatuan Islam Tionghoa Indonesia (PITI)

<u>Name</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Position</u>
Burnadi	7 & 11 January 2008	head of the <i>ta'mir</i> (management) of Muhammad Cheng Hoo Mosque
Bambang Sujanto	11 January 2008	head, PITI East Java, 1988–1994; head, <i>Yayasan Haji Muhammad Cheng Hoo</i>
Abdul Chalim	11 & 18 January 2008	head, PITI East Java 1994–1998; leader in <i>Yayasan Haji Muhammad Cheng Hoo</i>
anonymous	18 January 2008	former PITI leader, Surabaya
anonymous	18 January 2008	member of PITI since 1993
3 anonymous	19 & 20 January 2008	attended class for new converts
anonymous	20 January 2008	teacher of class for new converts
Willy Pangestu	8 February 2008	secretary, PITI's central leadership board, Jakarta

Forum Arimatea

<u>Name</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Position</u>
<i>Warno</i>	30 January & 16 February 2008	leader in Arimatea Malang
<i>Haryono</i>	7 February 2008	leader in Arimatea Malang
<i>Masyhud</i>	10 February 2008	leader in Arimatea central, Jakarta
<i>Harap Nurilah</i>	15 February 2008	leader in Arimatea Malang