



# **MISSION SPARKS: Academic Journal of Asia Region**

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Petrus Sugito M.M. (Coordination)  
Julian Tampubolon (Production and Distribution)

Address:

PGIW-SU Building (1st Floor)  
Jl. Selamat Ketaren No. 100, Pancing, Medan Estate, Medan, 20371  
Phone: +62 61 7332470, Fax: +62 61 7332468  
[uem.medanoffice@gmail.com](mailto:uem.medanoffice@gmail.com), [www.vemission.org](http://www.vemission.org)

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## Preface

Dear Reader,

In front of you is the new version of Mission Sparks - an Academic Journal of the Asia Region of the United Evangelical Mission (UEM).

Until recently, UEM Asia Department had published a monthly Mission Sparks magazine. Each edition contained a theological focus, descriptions of Joint Programs, news from UEM members as well as events in church and society affecting UEM's service to the Asia Region.

The change from a magazine to this academic journal is necessary due to the following reasons:

- Over the years, Asia Department and UEM as a whole had invited many resource persons to Joint Programs (JP). Their valuable contributions, presented during the JPs, are as yet only known to the participants of those programs and few others. Making these academic papers known to the wider public today is a token of gratitude and appreciation, as well as a contribution to the study on themes considered relevant and urgent to UEM.
- On Facebook, UEM Asia Page publishes breaking news immediately and reaches more than 7000 people daily. Therefore, this does not have to be repeated by means of a monthly magazine.
- There is also a need of students and lecturers to have access to academic articles and books concerning Mission and Ecumenism in the Spirit of the UEM-communion. There are many students finished their studies with UEM bursaries. Their works (their thesis) could be made known to a broader public through publication in UEM International journal. This journal

could be a way to introduce UEM and her mission world wide.

- During the two meetings with rectors of different universities and theological seminaries of UEM members held in 2012 and in 2016, the need of lecturers and students of the respective institutions to publish articles in recognized regional or international magazines was mentioned clearly. Since academic contributions in internationally recognized journals are a prerequisite for any academic career, UEM likes to be of assistance in this matter.

The writers of the articles of this new Journal are UEM bursary holders, lecturers in the theological seminaries, resource persons of UEM JP-seminars and workshops. The content of this and coming editions consist of academic research and interdisciplinary cooperation on various social and theological themes, especially concerning mission and ecumenism.

The Editorial Board hopes to publish Mission Sparks twice a year (in June and in November), both in print and online.

We herewith encourage intellectuals, lecturers and students, not only in Asia but worldwide, to submit results of their research to Mission Sparks.

Drs. Petrus Sugito, M.M.  
Member of Editorial Board and  
Coordinator of Production Team.  
Deputy Executive Secretary in  
Asia Region.



# An Editorial Note

On the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the internationalization of UEM, we are launching this new version of Mission Sparks.

The focus of this edition of Mission Sparks is on the efforts made before and after 1996 for a German missionary society to undergo a drastic change becoming an international mission organization. A former “mother-and-daughters-relationship” was turned into a communion of equal partners in mission. The “daughter-churches” in Asia and in Africa had long come off age; so it was about time to redefine relationships.

Rev. Hamonangan Girsang, member of the preparatory committee (called United in Mission / UiM), and former UEM Executive Secretary for Asia, describes the history of this internationalization process and Wolfgang Apelt made a list of the important stages in the life of UEM. Dr. Ulrich Beyer, former Vice Moderator of UEM, pictures the atmosphere of the General Assembly 1996 where this important decision was taken.

What is the mission of this new UEM? In an attempt to answer that, Dr. Uwe Hummel, missionary and former Executive Secretary for Asia of UEM, deliberates on the Corporate Identity of UEM, discussing the roots, principles and tasks contained in the document written in 2007-2008 in an effort of UEM to remain faithful to its calling in today's world.

Within this international family, UEM member-churches have various ethnic backgrounds. Is this ethnicity a chal-

lenge or enrichment to the mission of God? Dr. Andreas A. Yewangoe, former chairperson of the Communion of Churches in Indonesia (PGI), which includes many ethnically defined churches, shares his theological conviction and vision on this issue.

Radicalism in any religion is a major challenge for doing church mission today. Dr. Jeaneth Faller, an expert in Christian Education, convinces the reader that a true Christian Education can overcome radicalism.

Furthermore, Prof. Dr. Jan S. Aritonang of Jakarta Theological College (STT Jakarta) emphasizes the necessity to do God's mission among the marginalized people in Indonesia. Who are they? What do they need?

God's command to serve others needs thorough preparation. Underscoring this insight, Dr. Dingayan - whose main work is training theological students and church workers in the Philippines - argues that Jesus' way is The Way.

May these contributions enable the reader to understand UEM better and strengthen his and her participation in God's mission.

Sonia C. Parera-Hummel, M.Th.  
Chief Editor and  
UEM Executive Secretary for Asia



## **Review:**

# **The History of the Internationalization of UEM**

*Rev. H.M. Girsang*

## **From RMG to VEM**

Since the 18th century, the Spirit of mission has been moving ever more people in Germany. On September 23, 1823, the Rhenish Mission Society (RMG)<sup>1</sup> was established as successor to the smaller auxiliary missionary societies in Elberfeld (1799), Barmen (1818) and Cologne (1822). The towns of Elberfeld and Barmen are neighbours; they later, in 1929, merged forming Wuppertal City.

RMG is very active in organizing mission to some countries/territories in Africa and Asia. Only one year after the affiliation, in 1829 RMG had delegated missionaries to South Africa. Chronologically, the missionaries delegated to Borneo (Kalimantan, 1835), Namibia (1842), China (1847), Batak (1861), Nias (1865), PNG (1887), Mentawai (1901), Simalungun (1903), Papua (1960), and Karo (1961).

Not all of these activities are still carried out until now.

<sup>1</sup> Rheinische Missionsgesellschaft (RMG)

Due to some issues and considerations, some of the tasks have been handed over to other mission boards, i.e. South Africa to Netherland (*Nederlands Zendeling Genootschap/ NZG*), Borneo to Basler Mission (Switzerland), Papua New Guinea to Lutheran Church Australia (LCA), and as for China, since 1951, the contact is only with Chinese Rhenish Church Hong Kong Synod (CRC).

In 1971, RMG merged with Bethel Mission which has activities in Tanzania (Africa). Since Bethel is part of Bielefeld City and included within the Westphalia territory, the name of the Mission Board adjusted to its current situation. It is no longer RMG but *Vereinigte Evangelische Mission* or VEM. Ever since VEM was announced as the mission board of several churches in Germany together with Bethel Institution.

### **Towards the Union of the Mission Board**

In celebration of the VEM 150th anniversary since its establishment by the name of RMG (1828), in 1978, a consultation among the Church Leaders of VEM Supporters in Africa and Asia was held. The consultation took place in Bethel, Germany. The churches known as “VEM partners” are those that came about as the outcome of VEM missionary activities.

The consultation agreed on continuing and developing the existing activities by emphasizing on three issues, namely theology, resources and funding. Another agreement was to establish a “Continuation Committee” also called United in Mission (UiM) which later on was evaluated and devel-

oped. The “United in Mission” programme was established at that time, although the effect of its establishment on VEM structure has never been discussed before.

Ten years later, (1988) a second consultation was held in Mühlheim, Germany. The consultation considered that all of the achievements needed to be improved by giving possibilities for the churches in Africa and Asia to become the member of VEM, similar to the churches in Germany. Therefore, United in Mission was formed with the task of not only continuing and enhancing the achievement of the ‘Continuation Committee’ but to prepare the VEM Basic Management Planning in which the churches in Africa and Asia became VEM members. These tasks had to be completed within at least 3 years.

UiM Committee accomplished its task right on time. In 1991 the VEM Basic Management Planning was sent to all leaders of the churches in Africa, Asia and Germany to be studied and to share some suggestions.

### **Ramatea Assembly, Botswana 1993**

The main purpose of the assembly was to ratify the by-laws, which had been studied by the church leader for two years. Each article and paragraph was discussed and then the vote was taken. On October 16<sup>th</sup> 1993, the by-law were then approved in acclamation. The new name of this mission board had not been declared definitively, although it was agreed that the new name should represent the appreciation for the transmitted tradition on the one hand and its transformation on the other (continuity and discontinuity).

Hence, the assembly required all churches not only to ratify the by-law but also to suggest a new name to the committee preceding the VEM/UiM assembly in 1996.

The closing service of the Ramatea Assembly (18<sup>th</sup> October 1993) not only inaugurated the UiM committee members but also installed the 3 executive secretaries: for Africa, Asia and Germany. In other words, the International Personnel system has started for the first time since the one hundred sixty five-year of VEM existence

### **The United Evangelical Mission establishment**

After all churches had ratified the VEM by-laws, on 2-9 June 1996, another assembly was held in Bethel, Germany, in accordance with those by-laws. Regarding the new name of this mission society, none of the church delegates came up with a concrete idea. Therefore, the assembly spent some time on the issue. Eventually, by 5 June 1996, the new name was decided in three languages: they were German, English and French. In English it was named “United Evangelical Mission” – ‘Communion of Churches in three Continents’ or UEM.

Apart from setting the new name, the assembly had other tasks and responsibilities of selecting and appointing personnel from the UEM council in accordance to the by-laws. Hence, the forming of the council marked the accomplishment of UiM duties.

### **UEM is the communion of churches in three continents**

Having conducted an assembly in Bethel, VEM which has always been the Mission Society of 7 churches in Germa-

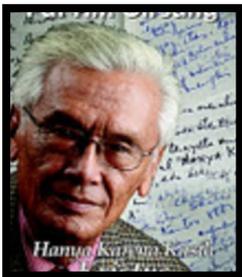
ny, including Bethel, was officially changed and became The UEM – the Communion of Churches in three Continents. All churches in Africa and Asia were listed as VEM partners, now officially became the UEM members similar to those in Germany.

The change means that any issues related to UEM, such as organization, programme, personnel and finance, shall be decided together in accordance to the ratified by-laws.

All UEM members, in Germany, Africa and Asia have equal rights and responsibilities of becoming the beneficiaries and donators according to each one’s capacity. There shall be no term as “the mother church” or “the daughter” church’.

It is expected that with the UEM establishment, all partnership relations in three continents shall be continued and enhanced, building an international communion in the mission of Jesus Christ for the glory of God.

#### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR:**



Hamonangan Girsang was born in Saribudolok, North Sumatra on November 23, 1939. On April 8, 1962, he became an ordained pastor of GKPS and later became the General Secretary of GKPS from the period of 1977-1990. He graduated from STT HKBP Pematangsiantar in 1961 and took further studies on Informal Education with World Council of Churches (WCC) in 1969 and later in Wuppertal, Germany in 1970-1971. In 1986-1996, he became the Executive Secretary of United in Mission

(UiM) and, in 1996-2000 he became Executive Secretary VEM/UEM Asia II. On his retirement, 23 November 2000, he served as pastor in GKPS.

## **Review:**

# **The Way towards United Evangelical Mission (UEM)**

*Wolfgang Apelt*

1799

Elberfelder Mission Society founded at Elberfeld (today Wuppertal)

1825

Start of a mission school in Barmen

1828

Rhenish Mission Society (RMS) founded in Mettmann

1829

King Friedrich Wilhelm III. (of Prussia) approves the constitution of the newly founded Rhenish Mission Society – Sending of the first 4 missionaries to an own mission field in the Cape area (today South Africa)

1886

Founding of the „Evangelischen Missionsgesellschaft für Deutsch-Ostafrika“ (Evangelical Mission Society for German East Africa) – EMDOA in Berlin, later re-named Bethel Mission

- 1965  
Start of the „Zaire Mission” (formerly Congo Mission) by Rev. Kurt Bonk – Bethel Mission and RMS publish a joint journal “In die Welt für die Welt”
- 1969  
Official foundation of the „United Mission Friends Congo Mission”, later Zaire Mission
- 1971, January  
Constituent meeting of United Evangelical Mission (UEM1) after the merger of RMS and Bethel Mission
- 1978, September  
Bethel consultation with delegates from all non-German partner churches and the German churches – The “United-in-Mission” programme is decided and a continuation committee formed
- 1979  
The „Zaire Mission“ joins UEM
- 1988  
Mühlheim conference of all UEM churches, forming of the United-in-Mission-Committee
- 1993  
General assembly in Ramatea, Botswana with the topic: Growing together into a witnessing fellowship, draft of a new UEM constitution
- 1996  
General assembly of UiM in Bethel, restructuring of UEM1 into UEM2: United Evangelical Mission – Communion of churches in three continents

1998

The „Archives and Museum foundation of the UEM consisting of the written archives, the historical library, the historical picture archives and the ethnological museum was founded

2000

General assembly in Windhoek, Namibia, the HIV/ Aids programme takes off

2004

General assembly in Manila, Philippines

2008

General assembly in Borkum, Germany with structural changes

2012

General assembly in Berastagi (Indonesia) “Pursue Peace with everyone - living with other faiths”

2014

General assembly in Wuppertal, Child poverty and trafficking, a challenge to churches

2016

General assembly in Rwanda

#### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR:**



Wolfgang Apelt is the person in charge of UEM Archives, Library and Museum Foundation. He has written a book on the Short History of United Evangelical Mission (Mission - Past and Present ) vol. 3

# A Historical Event

*Dr. Ulrich Beyer*

A new Mission Community by the name of “United Evangelical Mission. Communion of Churches in three continents” (UEM) has been formed during the General Assembly of all partners of *Vereinigte Evangelische Mission*<sup>1</sup>, gathered in Bielefeld-Bethel, Germany, from 2<sup>nd</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> of June 1996.

*Ephorus* Dr. Soritua A. E. Nababan from Indonesia has been elected as Moderator of UEM. The Vice-Moderators are Bishop Elinaza Sendoro from Tanzania and *Oberkirchenrat* Dr. Ulrich Beyer from Westphalia, Germany.

The vision of a Mission Communion in Joint-Responsibility had already been developed during an assembly in 1978. We came to realize that our partnerships have reached a degree of maturity which compels us to really share responsibility and to develop a common answer to the call of God to participate in His mission. For many years now, we have deliberated on how this could be achieved in an orderly fashion. And here we are today, 18 years later and gathered once again in Bethel to realize our dream.

During this General Assembly, we have not neglected to look back and analyse both the successes and failures of the missionary endeavour. But we did so conscious of the forgiveness we have in Jesus Christ. Therefore we know that we may make a new start, and this time we shall do it together.

## **The Emphases of mission**

Let me mention some of the emphases of the work of UEM:

Firstly, an important emphasis is and shall remain the actual missionary work. We are convinced that mission is not “out”, as some people like to make us believe. Mission is not “out” exactly because of the challenges of a secularized society which starts making its appearance in Asian and African centres. We are challenged right where we are: we have to develop methods and programs to face it.

Secondly, another important topic is youth: the problems of identity-crisis and UEM’s endeavour to cooperate with young people in terms of its programs, or to re-integrate them in our activities, is urgent.

## **Taking sides**

Thirdly, empowerment of women: this has for many years been a major emphasis of UEM. It also played an important role during one of the Pre-Assemblies as well as during this General Assembly. The issue is not limited to proper participation of women in leadership, but concerns also the violence which causes so much suffering among women.

Fourthly, the Conciliar Process: the struggle for Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation. This, too, has been

accentuated clearly during the past few years.

A fifth, substantial point of attention in the work of UEM is Dialogue with people of other faiths. We have the opportunity for a new beginning in this respect. We wish to have a worldwide dialogue with adherents of other religions and we would like to have it in our own country as well. Not in an arrogant way, but by listening to the other. Dialogue as a struggle of love to find the truth which God is giving us freely.

We praise God who has fulfilled our long-term dream to become the first Communion to practice Mission in joint responsibility.

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<sup>1</sup> The German version of United Evangelical Mission was adjusted during the General Assembly becoming Vereinte Evangelische Mission. The German abbreviation VEM remains the same.

*Oberkirchenrat* Rev. Dr. Ulrich Beyer has been one of the two first Vice-Moderators of UEM. This text was part of a speech which he held during the Open-Day on the 9<sup>th</sup> of June 1996, at the end of the General Assembly of UEM. The translation from the German publication, i.e. Ulrich Beyer, *Ein historisches Ereignis*. In die Welt für die Welt 3/1996, p. 3, was done by Uwe Hummel).

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR:



Dr. Ulrich Beyer, a German theologian, is a former UEM co-worker to the STT HKBP in Pematang Siantar. After his assignment in Indonesia, he was elected as UEM Executive Secretary for Asia. Then, he was elected by his church - the Westphalian Church (EKvW) as one of the members of the Synod until his retirement in 2001. He became UEM Vice Moderator in the GA 1996 and served in this function until GA 2000 in Windhoek. After his retirement, Dr. Ulrich Beyer gave a series of lectures in different theological seminaries in Indonesia.

# A Vemily in Three Continents: UEM Statement on Corporate Identity

*Dr. Uwe Hummel*

## **Introduction**

The United Evangelical Mission (UEM) is known by many in Africa, Asia and Europe as an organisation with a strong “corporate identity”. UEM has evolved from a former German missionary society into an international, interdenominational communion of Christians engaged in mission. Although its head-office still is in Wuppertal-Barmen, the seat of the former Rhenish Missionary Society, UEM is neither owned nor run exclusively by Germans anymore. The experiment of common ownership and responsibility of all of the African, Asian and German members, which followed the example of mission agencies earlier founded in London (*CWM*)<sup>1</sup> and Paris (*Cévaad*)<sup>2</sup>, was rooted in mutual trust and respect. Although it had often been considered impossible by others and despite the fact that the transformation has indeed been a long and sometimes difficult one, it worked amazingly well<sup>3</sup>. Nowadays, leaders of other mission agencies and churches agree that UEM has a convincing, viable model for contemporary global mission.

## Making a Statement

In 2007, leaders of UEM felt that there was a need for introspection in order to define more clearly who UEM is, what it stands for, and how it can best explain to others what it is doing. UEM-General Secretary at that time, Rev. Dr. Fidon Mwombeki, created a group consisting of both executives and administrative co-workers<sup>4</sup> in order to study and analyse the “corporate identity” of UEM and to draft a brief, but concise statement about it.

On the 24<sup>th</sup> of October 2007, UEM-Executive Secretaries Meeting (usually called “Management Team”) discussed the “Paper on UEM Corporate Identity”, adding “minor amendments” that had been suggested by UEM Council<sup>5</sup>. The final “UEM Statement on Corporate Identity” was then ratified by the General Assembly of UEM on the island of Borkum, Germany, in June 2008.

## Corporate Identity and Communion

In 1996, the former German *Vereinigte Evangelische Mission* (VEM) had undergone a metamorphosis, changing from a German missionary society into an international “communion” (a “brother-and-sisterhood”; German *Gemeinschaft*; Greek *koinonia*). The name was slightly adjusted in German, albeit in English and French it remained the same<sup>6</sup>.

The combination of the words “mission” and “corporate identity” makes you think about a business company and not necessary something faith-based or Christian. The words “Corporate Identity” generally refer to the specific culture of an organisation (“corporate culture”), the way it presents itself (“corporate image”), its symbol or badge (“logo”), and – most important – its “product”. UEM consciously choose such secular terminology to explain itself

to modern people of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. After all, the Good News of God's salvation of the world in Jesus Christ has always been communicated in terms of contemporary culture, both globally and locally, and therefore it is quite proper for an international organisation such as UEM to define itself in the current world-wide "corporate" language. UEM has a distinct "corporate culture" (a Christian communion), offering a unique, timeless "product" (the Gospel) in attractive, contextually relevant packaging (e.g. historical archives, ecumenical intercultural expertise, actions, networks, projects, and programs).

The choice of the word "corporate", however, also fits substantially (or theologically) the character of UEM, which is more than just an organisation; it is a living organism with members relating to one another like parts of a body. The "members" of UEM think of themselves as parts of the body (*corpus*) of Jesus Christ. The modern, secular term therefore has an old religious dimension (cf. 1 Corinthians 12)<sup>7</sup>.

The term "communion" is less common in contemporary language. But, just as "corporate", it also has a Eucharistic (sacramental or ritual) background. In the church, a communion usually refers to an intimate meeting of believers in worship (*communio sanctorum*), especially the Lord's Supper. Such a communion is more than a "fellowship", since it has that particular reference to the mystic body of Jesus Christ. "Communion" is the strongest unity, because it is constituted in the love of God who – in Jesus, the Saviour – re-united us with Him, and who in Christ calls, binds and empowers different people regardless of nationality, status or gender in service (cf. Gal. 3:28)

The words "communion" and "united in mission" form the frame of the Statement; you could also say they are the "outset" and the "purpose" of this intercontinental or-

ganisation. The adjective “Protestant” added to “churches” defines more clearly what the denominational identity of this communion is: It’s neither Lutheran nor Reformed, its not Anglican, Presbyterian, Methodist or Baptist, but a “communion” composed of these different “wings” of the Church Reformation of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The word “communion” indicates that these traditions, having been separated or even hostile toward one another in history, are now being “reconciled”. Whereas each of them continues to cherish its specific blend, this does not become an obstacle to God’s mission in this world. They are “united” in a common calling and task to witness in word and deed; they “are one” so that the world may believe (cf. John 17:21).

## **What does it say?**

The UEM-Statement on Corporate Identity consists of the following four main parts: “What is the United Evangelical Mission (UEM)?”, “What is our commission?”, “What are our tasks?”, and “How do we work together?”. Let’s look at each of these parts more thoroughly:

### **What is the United Evangelical Mission (UEM)?**

*Have reverence for Christ in your hearts, and honour him as Lord. Be ready at all times to answer anyone who asks you to explain the hope you have in you (1 Peter 3:15).*

Following the Biblical call we are a mission community of 33 protestant churches in Africa, Asia and Germany and the von Bodelschwingh Institutions Bethel united in mission. Our roots are in the Rhen-

ish Mission (founded 1828), the Bethel Mission (founded 1886), and the Zaire Mission (founded 1965). Since 1996, the UEM has been internationally organized and staffed with its headquarters in Germany.

The statement on UEM's identity begins with a "Biblical call" taken from the 1<sup>st</sup> letter of Peter in the New Testament. The choice of this verse at the outset is significant, for it avoids any association with a "victorious" mission-paradigm, or a kind of "marching order" to "Evangelise the whole world" which – in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries – had often been linked to the Great Commission of Jesus Christ to his disciples just before his ascension into heaven (Mathew 28:18-20)<sup>8</sup>. The reference to 1<sup>st</sup>Peter, on the contrary, emphasises that mission in "honour" of Jesus Christ is not aggressive or coercive. It should rather be responsive and respectful towards others. At the same time, a Christian should always be ready to give witness and share the hope that is in his/her heart with anyone who likes to know about it.

The other side of the divine calling is the very earthly reality of UEM, namely its concrete organisational form, and how this had come about. The Statement first mentions the status quo of the UEM at the time of its drafting, as well as its historical roots. In 2007, UEM was a "communion of 33 Protestant churches in Africa, Asia and Germany, and the *Von Bodelschwingh* Institutions"<sup>9</sup>. All of these "members", as a "communion", claim to be "united in mission".

There is a very short description of where UEM comes from, the historical background. The immediate predecessor was the *Vereinigte Evangelische Mission* (VEM), which had existed from 1970/71 to 1996. VEM had been a merger of the *Rheinische Missionsgesellschaft* (RMG, 1828

-1970)<sup>10</sup> and *Bethel-Mission/Evangelische Missionsgesellschaft für Deutsch-Ostafrika* (1885/1886-1970)<sup>11</sup>. *Zaire-Mission* also joined VEM in 1979/1980.

It is important to note that besides the church-organisations (today, in 2016, their number is 35), one of the UEM-members is the large Diaconal institute Von Bodelschwingh Foundations in Bielefeld-Bethel, Germany. The cooperation between Mission and Diaconia continues the good tradition of the 19th and 20th centuries, where “mission” (understood as crossing boundaries geographically) and “diaconia” (as a service of love; bridging the gap between the rich and the poor; often called “internal-mission”) had been working hand-in-hand. Both mission and diaconia had been fruits of Neo-Pietism and Revivalism.

### **What is our commission?**

*Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, so I send you (John 20: 21.).*

As a mission community we are taking part in God’s mission on earth. Together we give witness to the message of the Father’s reconciliation with all humankind through the Son Jesus Christ. We trust the power of the Holy Spirit, with whose help we work for justice, peace and for the integrity of creation.

The passage on the commission of UEM is again opened with a quotation from the Bible. John 20:21 indicates that mission is essentially a divine action that brings about peace. Just as God the Father has sent his son Jesus into this world to bring about salvation and peace, so Jesus is sending his followers. “God’s mission” (a term used since the early 1950s in the international Missionary and Ecumenical movement)<sup>12</sup> is both vertical and horizontal. God makes peace with the world through the sacrifice of love of Jesus on the cross; and God’s Spirit empowers

people to bring about justice and peace in this world, as well as to care and work for the integrity of creation.

### **What are our tasks?**

*The spirit of the Lord is upon me ... (Luke 4:18-19)*

We understand mission as a holistic commission, and we cooperate to carry out our task. Therefore, evangelism, diaconia, advocacy, development and partnership are integral parts of our mission to spread the gospel. The UEM is global and works locally – in Africa, Asia and Germany. To empower each other for mission we share our resources and gifts and exchange co-workers and volunteers.

This part of the Statement quotes from Luke 4:18-19, emphasising that UEM stands for a “holistic” approach in mission. It’s not only about preaching salvation in eternity, though this should always be part of missionary activity; it’s also not confined to the classical threefold model of the missionary movement formulated as witness (*martyria*), fellowship (*koinonia*) and service (*diakonia*)<sup>13</sup>. According to the Statement, the tasks of co-workers in “God’s mission” today are even more comprehensive, encompassing essentially the following five areas: Evangelism, Diaconia, Advocacy, Development and Partnership.

### **Evangelism**

*We believe in the Gospel as God’s power of salvation and renewal, therefore:*

*we jointly strengthen our spiritual life and develop and promote evangelistic projects;*

*to share the gospel with all people;*

*we promote joint programmes;*

*we promote theological exchange;*

*we encourage and support our members in their interreligious encounter and dialogue.*

Evangelism is rooted in faith. Together the Christians joint in UEM believe the good news of Jesus Christ is “God’s power of salvation and renewal”. This common belief both strengthens the spiritual life of the communion and makes it eager to share it with others through various activities, programs, exchange and dialogue. UEM has a Department for Evangelism for facilitating such Evangelistic activities.

## **Diaconia**

*We confess that all human beings are created in the image of God, therefore:*

*we maintain grassroots-networks to fight HIV and AIDS and to care for orphans, the widowed and for people infected with HIV;*

*we work to improve peoples’ living conditions, especially for those with special needs;*

*we strive to improve medical care for all people;*

*we support churches as they assist people in need as a result of human made or natural disasters.*

Pious words without appropriate deeds, however, cannot convince anybody. Jesus says in the Sermon on the Mount “By their fruit you will know hem” (cf. Mathew 7:16). Therefore, the complement of Evangelistic talk is Diaconal action; the gospel of God’s love is demonstrated by loving care for those who suffer. In this spirit UEM is developing programs to assist people in need, to help victims of catastrophes, to combat HIV and AIDS, etc. Although this help is often given directly (e.g. to the surviving victims of the Tsunami in Aceh and on Nias in 2004-2005), the goal is to help people to help themselves (transformative diaconia) through various trainings and education, including an academic course at the *Institute of Diaconic Management* in Wuppertal and Bielefeld (founded in 2010) leading up to a Master of Arts degree in Diaconal Science.

## **Advocacy**

*We believe that human rights are an integral part of human dignity, therefore:*

*we advocate for human rights;*

*we support initiatives to solve conflict peacefully;*

*we join efforts to achieve economic conditions that are just;*

*we strive for the protection of the environment.*

Whereas Diaconia is the mission of loving action, Advocacy is its prophetic counterpart. Loving the oppressed and downtrodden must include seeking justice for them. Therefore, the UEM-Department of Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation is advocating for human rights where they are being violated, especially in the societies where the UEM-member churches are situated. Often in cooperation with NGO's, networks, academics and activists, UEM supports trainings in the methods peaceful conflict-resolution, awareness campaigns on economic injustice, as well as the destruction of the environment and the need to protect it.

## **Development**

*We are convinced that God's love continues to empower people, therefore:*

*- we support programs that empower men, women and youth.*

*- we carry out training programmes.*

*- we offer scholarships for higher education to build capacity in our member churches.*

*- we contribute towards overcoming poverty.*

Development is part of a holistic approach in Christian mission. It has in fact been a mayor part of Protestant missionary work since the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Usually, soon after arriving on a "mission field" missionaries started a school which temporarily functioned as the place of worship as

well. In accordance with the ideals of August Hermann Francke (1663-1727), the leader of Pietism in Halle, Christian education was seen as the most important means to alleviate poverty and bring about both material and spiritual development.

Very often, missionaries had also some basic training in medicine, treating illnesses and nursing minor injuries. Missionary societies such as RMG and Bethel sent out missionary-physicians and build some of the first hospitals in remote regions in Asia and Africa. Medical-mission, which included promotion of health and hygiene, was considered an important aid in the propagation of the Christian creed. Furthermore, there are many reports of the mission improving housing and living conditions, agriculture and husbandry methods, as well as training men and women in various kinds of professional skills in order to improve their economic conditions.

Nowadays, UEM emphasizes that development projects should be sustainable, accountable and rooted in the population. This usually means that local people are involved in the implementation and trained to gradually take over full responsibility for a program that improved the quality of life.

### **Partnership**

*We understand ourselves as parts of the one body of Christ, therefore:*

*we support various forms of partnership relations among our members;*

*we facilitate exchange visits for staff, experts and volunteers.*

During the 1930s, many of the churches in Africa and Asia that resulted from the missionary endeavours of the Rhenish and Bethel missions became independent. The missionaries, however, often still held the reins of leader-

ship. This changed, when mission work was interrupted during World War II (1939-1945), most missionaries were interned in camps or evacuated, and indigenous church leaders assumed total responsibility. Nevertheless, quite soon after the end of the war, the young churches asked for the assistance of missionaries. Their role, however, had to be a completely different one. Not anymore as leaders but as advisors, trainers and teachers.

The relationship between the young churches, the mission societies and their supporting churches in Germany also changed fundamentally. Cooperation had henceforth to be done in a mode of equal "Partnership" instead of the paternalistic pattern of "parent-and-child".

This new model of an old relationship was one of the issues discussed at the World Mission Conference in Whitby, Canada in 1947. The slogan "Partnership in Obedience" not only related to a renewal of the relationships of western churches that had become estranged from one other due to their being on both sides of the warring parties, but also to the new equality between mission societies and their ecclesiastical hinterland in the developed countries and the independent churches in the so-called Third World. True partnership was only possible in obedience to Jesus Christ, because without humility, love and mutual forgiveness it would be impossible to cure the wounds of hatred (caused by the war) and the change the patterns of arrogance on the part of the "old churches" as well as the inferiority of the "young churches".

UEM today very much benefits from the many bilateral partnerships between congregations, church circuits and academic institutions between its members in Africa, Asia and Germany. Although UEM as an organisation does not have many partnerships with church institutions and NGO's, it is constantly assisting its members to engage in long-lasting partnership. In each of the three Regional de-

partments of UEM (for Africa, Asia and Germany) there is an Assistant-Executive Secretary who spends half of the time on partnership work. In addition to that, the Regional Offices of UEM in Medan (Sumatra, Indonesia) and Dar Es Salaam (Tanzania) give a lot of support in order to help the partners to communicate (often there is a language problem, cultural and even denominational differences, etc. that need expertise advice) and develop cooperation. One can truly say that “partnership” is the very backbone of the “Vemily” (a playful word-creation to indicate the intimate relationships within UEM communion).

Quite often there is “partnership in mission”, where UEM-members cooperate to reach out to others, such as the poor and marginalized, street children, victims of violence or catastrophes, or people of others faiths. The UEM-partnerships often play a key role in networks that are being supported by UEM such as the *Forum for Human Rights* in Germany, *The Climate-Alliance*, the *Action Alliance for Human Rights* in the Philippines, *West-Papua-Netzwerk*, the *Action Alliance against AIDS*, *Campaign for “Clean” Clothing*, *Tanzania-Network*, and The Young Adults network, and others<sup>14</sup>.

The above-mentioned tasks of the global communion of UEM are being implemented in the concrete contexts of the UEM members in Africa, Asia and Germany. Even services near the head-office in Wuppertal-Barmen, such as the *Centre for Mission and Leadership Studies* (CMLS) and the *Centre for Mission and Diaconia* (CMD), are situated within the region of “members” (i.e. EKIR, EKvW, Von Bodelschwingh Institutions/Bielefeld Bethel) and at the disposal of all of the members in three continents. This means that the whole communion is involved in locally based projects and programs, including the sharing of funds, personnel and facilities.

## How do we work together?

*Two are better than one, because they have a better reward for their toil. For if they fall, one will lift up the other, but woe to one who is alone and falls and does not have another to help. (Ecclesiastes. 4: 9)*

*Our members from Africa, Asia and Germany have equal rights in governance. Our decision makers – women, men and young adults – come from all three continents. All decisions about our work are taken on the basis of our common rules and regulations and our joint budget.*

*We manage the resources entrusted to us conscientiously and account for them together in faithful stewardship. In working and living together we learn from each other and are willing to be transformed and renewed as we experience that our partaking in God's mission also changes our lives and our work.*

In the spirit of the Old Testament book of Ecclesiastes, UEM believes that 36 (i.e. 35 churches and one Diaconal Institution) are better than one. As an international communion in mission, UEM is more capable in facing the challenges of Secularisation, Globalization, suffering and despair in the world. Africans, Asians and Europeans together can give a stronger witness to God's mission in Jesus Christ (cf. John 17:21) and a stronger hand to the downtrodden (cf. Proverbs 31:20).

UEM has put all organisational and operational levels in the hand of God. This includes both the management and the personnel working in the three regions. Since the transformation of UEM 1996, the Council has been moderated by an Asian (i.e. Ephorus Dr. Soritua A. E. Nababan from Sumatra), then an African (i.e. Bishop Dr. Zephania

Kameeta from Namibia) and then until now by a German (i.e. Deacon Regine Buschmann from Bielefeld-Bethel). Likewise, the General Secretaries: Rev. Dr. Reiner Groth (Germany), Rev. Dr. Fidon Mwombeki (Tanzania), and right now Rev. Volker Dally (Germany). The same international composition counts for the Executive Secretaries who lead the three Regional Departments, the three Program Departments, and the Finance Department of UEM in Wuppertal and the Regional Offices in Dar Es Salaam and Medan, as well as the Ecumenical Co-workers. There are, or have been until recently, Africans and Germans working in Indonesia, China, The Philippines and Sri Lanka. And the same counts the other way around respectively for Africa and Germany.

All of the rights and responsibilities of UEM are shared. Every member is both a “giver” and a “receiver”. Even the poorest church regularly pays its contributions and, of course, gets a lot of services (projects, programs, expertise, personnel) back. Even the richest UEM member receives valuable services that it couldn’t provide just by itself.

## **Conclusion**

Having had a closer look at the UEM-Statement on Corporate Identity, we thus may conclude that UEM has evolved from a merger of old fashioned German missionary societies, via a much more modern but still “German-run” mission agency (i.e. VEM, 1970-1996) into an international Communion of Christians in three continents who cooperate very closely in terms of “holistic mission”. All through the stormy days of debate about what comes first (‘social action’ or reaching out to the “untouched”; development or witness) and the disturbing polarisation between “Ecumenical” (e.g. World Council of Churches) and

“Evangelicals” (e.g. Lausanne Movement), UEM has managed to keep a balance between Evangelism and Advocacy for Justice, Peace and the Integrity of creation (organisationally represented by two respective departments). UEM has managed to demonstrate in its organisational structure that Africans, Europeans and Asians can bear responsibility together and participate fully in running a highly effective and integer intercontinental organisation. UEM has largely overcome the discrepancy between so-called young and old churches. It has bridged the gaps between Lutherans, Reformed, Baptists, Methodists and Anglicans<sup>15</sup>. It’s a viable model, not only for missionary and ecumenical work in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, but also as an example for inter-cultural and inter-denominational sharing. UEM is a kind of “patchwork-family” (the “Vemily”!) in the service of humanity and to the glory of God.

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## Footnotes:

<sup>1</sup> The Council for World Mission (CWM) had originally been formed in 1966 as Congregational Council for World Mission by the merger of the London Missionary Society (LMS, 1795) and the Commonwealth Missionary Society (Colonial Missionary Society, 1836). Cf. *Council for World Mission: British religious organization*. Britannica.com.

<sup>2</sup> In 1971, the *Société des missions évangéliques de Paris* (SMEP), together with some European churches and the churches abroad that had come about through the missionary work of SMEP, formed the *Communauté évangélique d’action apostolique*, abbreviated as Cévaa. Cévaa later became *Communauté d’Églises en Mission*. Cf. Kai Funkschmidt, *Earthing the vision. Strukturereformen in der Mission untersucht am Beispiel von CEVAA (Paris), CWM (London) und UEM (Wuppertal)*, 2000.

<sup>4</sup> This drafting-group was chaired by Rev. Dr. Claudia Währisch-Oblau. The author also attended the Management Team meetings that finalized the draft, and the UEM General Assembly in 2008 on the island of Borkum, Germany, which ratified the UEM Statement. Special mention to be made to Dr. Martina Pauly, who had been the administrative secretary to the General Secretary. She suggested the paradigm of five foci of the holistic Mission of UEM (see below).

<sup>5</sup> Minutes of ESM meeting No. 07/2007 on October 24, 2007, point 4.2. The amendments concern “empowerment” (as the objective of training and development programs) and “co-workers” (especially “Ecumenical Co-workers”, traditionally called “Missionaries”, and various kinds of experts send out from and to the three regions – Africa, Asia and Europe – wherever they are needed and requested by the members/churches. The amended text was then presented to UEM-Council (cf. UEM Corporate Identity – Draft” (Council 15/2007 Appendix 10).

<sup>6</sup> In German it changed from *Vereinigte Evangelische Mission* to *Vereinte Evangelische Mission*, the abbreviation “VEM” unchanged. The full name in English and French (the official languages of

UEM) is *United Evangelical Mission: Communion of Churches in three continents/Mission Évangélique Unie. Communion d'Églises dans trois Continents*

<sup>7</sup> In the Latin version of the liturgy of the Eucharist the priest or minister says: "... this is My (Jesus') body " (*hoc est enim corpus meum*).

<sup>8</sup> Dr. John R. Mott initially liked to use this kind of language. During the great Missionary Conference in Edinburgh in 1910, he called for "the Evangelization of the world in this generation" (Cf. David Bosch, *Transforming Mission. Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*, Cf. pp. 296-298; quote on p. 325).

<sup>9</sup> The *Von Bodelschwinghen Anstalten* founded in the 19<sup>th</sup> century in Bielefeld-Bethel, Westphalia-Germany (then Prussia), is a very large Diaconal organisation specializing in the support of those who suffer social and economic needs, as well as the care for and training of people with special needs.

<sup>10</sup> RMG had been founded in 1828 as a merger of some small auxiliary-missionary-societies (Elberfeld, Barmen, Cologne, and later Wesel). It was very much inspired by Pietism and Revivalism and supported by both Lutherans (e.g. Ravenberger Land) and Reformed (e.g. Siegerland) but wisely took a "mean way", namely the "United" (Protestant) model of Prussia, Westphalia and Rhenish Churches. Initially, RMG worked in Southern Africa, Borneo (now Indonesian Kalimantan) and China. In the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the work on Sumatra and some adjacent islands (such as Nias and later Mentawai) was begun. Whereas work in some areas was discontinued in the 20<sup>th</sup> century (e.g. Borneo after WW 1 and mainland China after the Communist Revolution), some new areas of mission (so-called "mission-fields") were opened up in Africa.

<sup>11</sup> Bethel-Mission had been founded in 1885 and worked mainly in East-Africa or Tanzania.

<sup>12</sup> Especially since the Conference of the International Missionary Council (IMC) in Willingen, Germany, in 1952. The concept took over the term "mission Dei", a concept emphasising that mission is part of God's universal plan of salvation. Cf. Konrad Raiser, *Ökumene im Übergang: Paradigmenwechsel in der ökumenischen Bewegung*, pp. 63-65.

<sup>13</sup> Witness (cf. Acts 1:8, 23:11; Mathew 23:31, 28:16-20; Mark 16:15); fellowship in work and in sharing (Luke 10:5; Gal. 2:9), service (Luk. 17:8 dan 22:26-30; John 12:2).

<sup>14</sup> Cf. *Cooperations / Links*, Vemission.org

<sup>15</sup> Within the UEM communion there are various kinds of Christian denominations, such as Lutherans in Hong Kong, Sumatra-Indonesia, Namibia, Botswana, Tanzania, and Germany. Calvinists (Reformed) in Karo-land, Sumatra, on Java and in Papua Indonesia, as well as in Germany and Cameroon. Furthermore, there are "United" churches and an institution in Germany, Philippines and the Democratic Republic of Congo. And last but not least there are Methodists in Sri Lanka, Anglicans in Ruanda and Baptists in Ruanda and DR Congo.

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR:



Rev. Dr. Uwe Hummel had the privilege of participating in some of the changes from a German into an international missionary organization. He is a Lutheran pastor and lecturer in Theology. At present, he is working as an Ecumenical Co-worker of mission21/Basel at the Theological Church-College of the Protestant Church of Kalimantan, Indonesia (STT-GKE). During his active service in UEM (1994-2001; 2004-2010), he served for about seven years (1994-2001) together with his wife Sonia as a missionary lecturer in the BNKP, on the island of Nias and later in Wuppertal as Coordinator of West-Papua-Netzwerk (2004-2009) and Executive Secretary for Asia (2007-2010) in job-sharing with Sonia Parera-Hummel.

# **Ethnicity: A Challenge or an Enrichment to the Church Mission Today and to the Ecumenical Movement?**

*Dr. Andreas A. Yewangoe*

## **I. Ethnicity is Something Given That Must Be Accepted**

Talking about ethnicity is talking about humanity. Why? The answer is very simple. Because ethnicity indicates one's identity. So, there is no talk about human being without acknowledging one's ethnicity. I think, it is God's good intention in creating human being consist of so many ethnicities in the world. If God wants, no one can prevent Him to create only one ethnicity. As a matter of fact, ethnicity is something given, that must be accepted, whether we like and/or do not like it. In other words, ethnicity is not a matter of option. On the contrary, the possibilities are always there, that we are living in a very pluralistic society, with various cultures and habits, conditions which are now found everywhere in open society.

## **II. Indonesia Consists of Many Ethnicities, Races and Tribes**

It is well known that Indonesia consists of many ethnicities, races and tribes. Our founding mothers and fathers were well

aware of this condition. They realized that such a condition might hinder Indonesia to be one nation. It was reasonable, therefore, why they struggled by pouring their blood for One Indonesia, as expressed in the famous “Youth Oath” (Ind.: Sumpah Pemuda, 1928): One Island, One Nation, One Language: Indonesia. This is one of our historical pillars, where the Indonesian youth were encouraged to bring into realization The Indonesian Nation. They created also our well known motto: “*Bhineka Tunggal Ika*”, (Unity in Diversity). This motto reflects our diversities, but at the same time also our wish to be one nation. So, Indonesia is finding herself in unfinished struggle to bring into existence: One Indonesia. Our former and first president Sukarno characterized this unending struggle as “the will to be one”. In her historical journey, this will to be one nation is not easy to bring into existence. Our history reflects the facts how political as well as economic interests, which self oriented in character threatened our nation. Indonesia has already experienced various armed rebellions launched by Darul Islam/ Indonesia Islamic State, The South Moluccan Republic (RMS), The Aceh Merdeka, G 30 S, The PRRI/Permesta, etc. Although all this rebellions, Indonesia is always survive. Why? Because we have Pancasila, our firm and solid state basis and ideology. It is by no means, however, that by owing Pancasila, then the possible threads will come to an end. No. The possibilities of failing to maintain our oneness are still there.

When I prepare this article, our Capital, Jakarta is busy with the process of regional election which takes place in 2017. The incumbent Governor, Basuki Tjahaja Purnama (A Hok) will run for his second term (2017-2022). A Hok is a Christian and belongs to Chinese ethnicity. He has double minorities thus. A Hok is very popular among other candidates, because his achievements in changing Jakarta are very concrete. Jakarta is changing into a real world metropolitan, which can be compared with

modern metropolitans in the world. Jakarta, which once was very dirty, thanks for A Hok's untired efforts is transformed into a clean city. He struggles for clean governance. His position against corruption is undoubtedly clear. He knows no compromise, especially for those who are trying to steal the money of the people. That is the reason, why most of the people of Jakarta love and support him. On the other hand, however, A Hok also creates enemies, especially those who no longer see opportunities to manipulate and to mark up the city annual budget. They do not want A Hok be successful in his effort for second term governor. By doing that, they manipulate A Hok's ethnic and religious background. That he is Chinese and Christian, and that is why is not appropriate to be a governor in a city where Muslim and "indigenous" people form a majority. They speak it up, as if Indonesia is a religious state, while we know very well that it is not. Indonesia is a nation state, based not on certain religion but on Pancasila.

By mentioning these facts, I want to show that ethnicity can be manipulated to attack someone politically. Unfortunately, this happens when Indonesia is supposed to be more mature after more than 70 years independence. This also means that Indonesia has not yet finish with her struggle to find her identity. Should this problem finds no satisfying solution, then Indonesia is in danger of failing to be one Indonesia. I am afraid that Indonesia would follow the destinies of Soviet Union and Yugoslavia.

### **III. Christianity As A Strong Minority**

Despite Indonesia is a country where Islam forms a majority among the population, and Indonesian Muslims are majority among the Muslim nations in the world, yet Christianity shapes a second big religious group in our country. In many places in

eastern part of Indonesia, for instance Christianity even appears as a majority. This can be seen in Papua, North Sulawesi, East Nusa Tenggara, etc. In western part of Indonesia, the island of Nias become a “Christian” islands due to the fact that almost 90% of the population embrace Christianity, while Tapanuli region has a very strong inheritance of Christianity. That is one of the reasons, why it is not appropriate to talk about the dichotomy between the majority and minority groups in Indonesia. A dichotomy minority-majority is against our Constitution.

With regard to the history of Christianity in Indonesia, there are already many books written. So, it is not so necessary to repeat it here. Some brief explanations can be done instead. When the western missionaries came to Indonesia at the end of 19th, and in the beginning of 20th centuries, they met the ethnic groups and tribes. At that time Indonesia was still under the Dutch colonial administration and government: the Netherlands-Indie. As a matter of fact, there was no talk about one Indonesia. Although the Dutch administrators were assumed to be Christians, it is by no means they facilitated the missionaries activities in this country. According to church historical records, the Dutch administrators even prohibited the missionaries to enter certain places in Indonesia. They were worry that such evangelizing activities would disturb the *rust en orde* (law and order) in that region. Bali for example, was protected by the Dutch from mission activities for a long time.

Yet, in other regions the missionaries had relatively freedom to spread the Gospel among the people, especially in the regions where Islam was not so strong. So, in Batak land we had Nommensen, while in Nias islands we met Sundermann. In Eastern Indonesia, Kruyt was active among the Toraja tribe, while in the island of Sumba we had D.K. Wielenga. In Papua, Otto and Geis-

ler anchored for the first time in a small island Mansinam, while in Moluccas island we had Joseph Kam, the Moluccas Apostle, in Timor P.Middelkoop was very active in translating the Bible into Timorese, etc. What does all this mean? It is undoubtedly clear that most of the churches which later were created, were characterized by certain ethnicity in which the churches find themselves. So, in Batak land we have HKBP for example which in her worship still use the Batak language. In Nias BNKP also still use Nias language in all their worship, etc.

Factually we can talk about tribal churches, in the sense churches which engage herself with certain ethnic group where she find herself.

#### **IV. Challenge or Enrichment?**

This is an interesting question. The answer is also not easy. I think, ethnicity is, on the one hand a challenge to the unity of the churches, in the sense if the churches tend to isolate themselves in a tribal ghetto. On the other hand, this fact is also an enrichment, where the churches with various ethnic group can learn to each other of how to be one church, despite all the differences in expressing the Christian faith in each culture. I have a strong impression that since the establishment of the various ethnic churches, the leaders and the founding fathers and mothers of the churches already realized, that they cannot walk alone in this huge Indonesia as a field where the Good News of Jesus Christ must be spread. Instead, they had to walk together. They, then came to the conviction, that, only in walking and working together, they were able to serve Indonesia better. This conviction was brought into realization by the establishment of the Council of Churches in Indonesia (Ind.: Dewan Gereja-gereja di Indonesia, later became Communion of Churches in Indonesia), on 25 May 1950. There were at least 29 tribal

churches coming to Jakarta, seeking the way of how to collaborate, walking and working together in order to be able to serve and to be good witness in this large country.

When the churches declared the existence of this council, Indonesia was also in searching for her identity. The year when the council was installed, Indonesia was only 5 years old after declaring her independence at 17 August 1945. As a new nation, she still struggled with so many problems inherited from Dutch imperialism as well as from Japanese fascism. The Dutch colonial administration still launched the “divide et impera” policy, by establishing so many small “independence” states within the former Netherlands-Indie. At the same time, this new nation was also facing with rebellion of Communist Party in Madiun (1948), the proclamation of Islamic State (Darul Islam) in West Java, and then in South Sulawesi by Kahar Muzakar, Daud Beureuh in Aceh, and in another places in Indonesia. It can be said therefore, that Indonesia found herself in identity crisis. The question at that time was, should it be possible for young Indonesia to be one in the mid of various cultural and religious background? Should it be possible for this young nation to maintain her oneness as Indonesia, while there were so many rebellions took place? Should Indonesia discover her own identity? Of course, this kind of questions might be never uttered explicitly, but I am convinced that implicitly these were the questions posed by every Indonesian longing for the welfare of Indonesia.

When the churches with so many ethnic backgrounds were successful in gathering themselves in one single council, this, according to me, must be seen as valuable contribution to Indonesia who was still seeking for her identity. The churches demonstrated, as it were, that just as the churches did, it is also possible for Indonesia to be one. The Youth Oath (1928) as

mentioned before can be really brought into existence. The Proclamation of Independence (17th August 1945) was not in vain. I am of the opinion, this is a very significant contribution of the Christians in Indonesia to the country which never mentioned before and written in the history of Indonesia, as well as in the history of the churches in Indonesia. Seeing from this point of view, it can be said therefore, that ethnicity has positive values not only for the unity of the churches but also for the nation. This conviction was clearly expressed in various documents on churches unity such as in, “Basic Task of Common Calling” (Ind.: Pokok-pokok Tugas Panggilan Bersama), “Common Understanding of Christian Faith” (Ind.: Panggilan Bersama Iman Kristen), “Document on Mutual Acknowledging and Accepting” (Ind.: Piagam Saling Mengakui dan Saling Menerima), etc.

By mentioning the various documents produced by the churches in the last times with regard to the unity, we may not be blinded by another facts, which might bring the efforts to unity in vain. As I mentioned before, ethnicity has positive, as well as negative values. I just want to mention one example in this regard, the establishment of ethnic churches outside their own “jurisdiction” sometimes contain potential trouble with another churches which already there. The installation of HKBP in Sorong (Tanah Papua) for example, has irritated the local church (GKI di Tanah Papua). GKI di Tanah Papua demanded HKBP to refrain from her efforts in establishing ethnic church, because, by doing that, she disturbed all the documents of unity as agreed together via Communion of Churches in Indonesia. So, in the eye of GKI di Tanah Papua, it is preferable if the Christian Batak participate and being involved themselves in the church already there, in this case, GKI di Tanah Papua. According to GKI di Tanah Papua, by joining GKI di Tanah Papua, this should reflect more clearly what oikoumene means. If we really agree

with the ecumenical movement, and accepting all the documents on unity as adopted by PGI, then it is not proper to build their own church within the church already there, which also belongs to the same communion.

Negotiations have been done under the auspices of PGI, seeking solution in solving this problem. As far as I know, satisfying solution has not yet been reached. I think, there is a deep different views regarding the essence and substance of the church. I am of the opinion, that we have to discuss in depth and openly what do we mean if we talk about church. As far as I understand, there are at least two understandings regarding the church. On the one hand, the church which interwoven in blood (*ius sanguinis*), which means that the church is overlapping with one 'ethnicity. As a matter of fact, HKBP is an example of such overlapping, which also means that by building HKBP outside Batak Land is not a problem. Even it is a calling. In this connection, I remember the book of Paderson entitled, *Darah Batak, Jiwa Protestan* [Batak's Blood and Protestant Spirit]. As far as I recall, the core of Paderson's view lays in his indication that a Christian Batak can solely be understood if we bear in mind this two elements: Batak's blood and Protestant spirit. On this two pillars, a Batak Church stands.

On the other hand, there is also another opinion which tend to see the substance and essence of the church as being beyond the frame of ethnicity. This means, that once a member of the (ethnic) church leaves his/her original church, he/she has to join a church which is already there as his/her new church. Such view is held by for example The Christian Church of Sumba. This is the reason, why Gereja Kristen Sumba is not established outside Sumba Island. I think, this two views on substance and essence of the church as the Body of Christ wherever they find themselves, have legitimate theological basis. So, it

is my suggestion that more discussions must be held tirelessly on this topic in the future.

Answering the question, whether ethnicity can enrich or hinder our mission today as the Church of Christ, I think it depends on how we understand it in relation to the understanding of the essence and substance of the church. It could be positive, but at the same time it could also be negative. One thing I think must be bore in mind, that Jesus Christ is greater than our ethnicity and “our” church. The church must always be seen as the church of Jesus Christ, which is open and humble in serving and witnessing Him in the midst of our society. The Church would never be OUR church.

#### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR:**



Rev. Dr. Andreas Anangguru Yewangoe was born in Mam-  
boru, West Sumba on March 31, 1945. In 1984, he studied  
at the Vrije University, Amsterdam, Netherlands and wrote  
a dissertation paper entitled: *“Theologia Crucis in Asia:  
Asian Christian Views on our Suffering in the Face of Over-  
whelming Poverty and Multifaceted Religiosity in  
Asia”* (1987). On November 2009, he was elected for his  
second term, in the period of 2009-2014, as the Chairperson of PGI  
(Communion of Churches in Indonesia). At present, he is PGI Advisory Board,  
Chairman.

# Overcoming Radicalism through Christian Education

*Dr. Jeaneth H. Faller*

## **Introduction**

Radicalism can be defined as “opinions and behavior of people who favor extreme changes especially in government”<sup>1</sup> The word radicalism comes from the Latin word radicalis, "of or having roots," which in turn arose from radix, or "root." Both radical and radicalism came out of the idea that political change must "come from the root," or the very basic source of society.<sup>2</sup>

Furthermore, radicalism is any radical act of getting down to the root or core of something. For example getting down to the root causes of the many issues in our respective societies so that change can happen. Like getting down to the root causes of poverty, social equality, justice and peace, war and conflict, religious fundamentalism and many others. Getting down to the root causes of all these is a radical act, it is radicalism.<sup>3</sup>

Radicalism is neither good nor bad, all it is a belief that you can't make change through the existing power structures. Almost always, it is accompanied with a belief that a different type of system is required. In the Philippine context for example the changing of Martial Law Regime

under Ferdinand Marcos to that of the Revolutionary Government under Corazon Aquino can be considered as a radical act.

The job of the radical or revolutionary, peaceful or not, is to convince people that the system cannot fix itself; then to convince them to take action, whether that action is peaceful or violent. Radicalism can come from the left or the right, from elites or populists. However, as mentioned above to be a radical is neither innately good nor innately bad. As with all other human endeavors, it depends on what the radicals are trying to accomplish (their ends) and how they do it (their means).

Radicalism has three different types. These are Passive, Active and Violent Radicalism.

Passive Radicals - are those who do not do anything to make change, like not voting, protesting, or lobbying because they figure out that the system is ineffective.<sup>4</sup>

Active Radicals - are those who decided that change isn't possible through the system so they believe that they have to do something about it. The key feature of an active radical is that they are trying to create change, but are trying to do it either outside the system, or by taking control of part of the system and then changing it.<sup>5</sup>

Violent Radicals - are those who decided that change will only come through violence and has decided to apply that violence themselves or actively support those who do.<sup>6</sup>

Radicalism also has many different faces. We have political, economic, social, cultural and religious radicalism. Let me then focus on religious radicalism.

## Religious Radicalism

*“Allah, Jehovah, and Yahweh; the Qur’an, Bible, and Torah – to the average citizen of the world, the aforementioned might stand as symbols of peace and virtue (though perhaps a little archaic), but to radicals and extremists, Allah, Jehovah, and Yahweh are symbols of war, hate, and death. We spit on your beliefs, one might say as they burn another’s creed and lifestyle to ashes. My God is better than your God. 51 dead, at least 183 wounded in Iraq. God said it. I believe it. That settles it. Doctors murdered by anti-abortionist advocates. The great irony in all of this is that we live in a world where we believe people should be allowed to speak freely, and yet we also live in a world where one would be killed outright for explaining such a belief. Radicals and extremists make such a small minority of our world’s population, and yet somehow they dominate the landscape and make such a grand impact on our lives. This shouldn’t happen.”<sup>7</sup>*

Yes, in many parts of the world religious militancy is on the rise. Religion is being used as a tool to unite and mobilize people in a radicalized manner. Religion is also being used to dominate politics, education, way of life and even thinking. Many religious leaders manipulate their people to do extremely violent acts in the name of religion. In return these people became extremists who are willing to undertake violent acts in the service of God. They also have little sympathy for their victims because for them these victims are the enemies of God. Religious radicalism inculcates to their followers the will to readily sacrifice one’s own life through ‘martyrdom’ in the service of God.<sup>8</sup>

Furthermore, radicalism is destroying the very fiber of human life and our society as a whole. Every day we are see-

ing a more dangerous form of radicalization. One of its forms we are witnessing is the recruitment of individuals in the name of religion to commit acts of terrorism. Charismatic leaders of such radical organizations manipulate religion in such a way where they define their political goals and then customize religion to fit such goals. They will twist, turn and manipulate religion to convince others to commit acts such as terrorism. They will go as far as legitimizing any and all means to achieve results. This is an issue that threatens every country around the world. The fact that radicalism must be defeated is no longer an issue of debate but rather an undisputable fact. Religious terrorism has already killed millions and the virulence of such attacks is on the rise. Going forward, unless concrete steps are taken at the global level to subdue and discourage extremism and bigotry in the name of religion, these violent forces are only going to become stronger.

## **Overcoming Radicalism**

How then can we overcome the dangers brought about by radicalism? There is a pressing need especially on the part of the church to respond to this problem, the church cannot remain silent. The most effective solution that the church can offer is through Christian Education. Through Christian Education creeds and beliefs, and all different types of political views and stances must be taught among the members especially among the young. Global tolerance must be among the teachings of the church. Church's Christian Education could bring in experts of whatever theology, and teach that doctrine, not to convert people or to create religious fanaticism, but rather to educate people about that religion to avoid a radical interpretation.

Furthermore, since religious radicalism has caused extremism among the religious followers there is a need to reduce especially the motivation of extremism and terrorism among the young. It is high time then to reflect on the role of the Christian education in shaping our future generations. The church should not leave the education of our people only to the secular schools. Instead the church through its Christian education must teach our people on how to provide a better life and a safer world especially to the young. The Christian Education of the church has an important role in educating our people especially the younger sector of the society. Above all, Christian education has to identify and address the issues related to this radicalism.

To address this, first and foremost Christian Education can focus on multi-faith teaching.<sup>9</sup> The church's Christian Education program includes many non-formal and informal education activities. Through these educational activities the Sunday School/Bible Study curriculum and even the curriculum of the church related schools should not only be about one religion but on the different religions. It is important that church member/learners/ students are taught about the similarities and differences among the different religions in order to prepare them for real life. We can gain lots from this multi-faith teaching, like respect, acceptance, deep understanding and empathy among people of other faiths. Our learners must realize that in our pluralistic and globalized society respect to the diversity of various faiths is necessary.<sup>10</sup> Such teaching will also make the members/learners/students to be equipped and become less vulnerable to the risks of religious radicalization in future.

Christian Education is supposed to give students a strong basis of knowledge and understanding of a multitude of

both religious and non-religious beliefs, and to help them to understand both common and divergent views between different religions and faiths. The church's Christian Education activities must be grounded on a more inclusive viewpoint. What should be taught should be religion from different perspectives not only that of the Christian perspective. For what is the purpose of the freedom of religion if the church only teaches one kind of religion.

Second, overcoming radicalism is to teach how people can have economic improvement. It is a fact that one of the reasons of radicalism is the poor conditions among people especially those in the countries where religious radicalism is rampant. Among those who are affected are the youths. These youths feel so discontented, hence, they can be easily manipulated to join organizations that they see as a means for their survival. The government has failed to provide them with financial support while economic conditions worsen, in return the youth are enticed to join self-sufficient organizations like the jihadi organizations.<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, since the government continue to fail to provide them respectable jobs and income, they are forced to join organizations where there is economic assurance although it means radicalism. Poverty and lack of participation often provide a breeding ground for radicalism. It is therefore imperative that economic improvement must be part of the Christian Education programs and teachings of the church.

Undeniably one of the roots of religious radicalism is the poor economic conditions among people especially the youth. Christian Education program therefore must help in establishing sustainable social and economic development programs - socio-economic development, social inclusion and fair, democratic systems must be included in the church Christian Education programs. This economic pro-

gram is necessary in helping to improve both the global economy and individual economies. The church must be aware that this is a more long-term solution. Through this Christian Education program if the members and students understand the facts behind sustainable development and the challenge of their societies, they can now be an agent of change in their societies. The Christian education program of the church if it integrates the socially inclusive development dimensions in both our church education curricula, it will encourage the members and students to use their creativity to improve the conditions of humankind.

Third important teaching that we need to teach among our church people and students is the teaching on spirituality. It should be a spirituality that promotes humanity. Spirituality that calls for connectivity, human being connecting with other human beings, and human beings connecting with environment.<sup>12</sup> It is spirituality that teaches members and students to be logical in their decisions and actions, spirituality that makes the learners to be wise, reasonable, knowledgeable, respectful and tolerant. A Christian education that focuses on holistic spirituality will enable our members and students to place human beings and other living species at the center of their moral outlook, and promote the championing of human rights for everyone. Holistic spirituality can train our members and students to find inner peace, harmony, emotional stability and respect for and balance in life.<sup>13</sup>

In connection with this we must also develop quality Christian Educators. Educators who are without influence from or bias toward any ideology and theology. This kind of educators are instrumental on how to promote understanding and tolerance among people of other faiths. This kind of educators are able to be comprehend the existing

divisive tendencies of radicalism. Hence the church must really invest more for the betterment of the Christian Educators. Their training must be a well-rounded one meaning it must include the ability not only to monitor the spiritual aspect of the learners but the holistic well-being of the students.

Fifth, Christian Education must also expose the members and the learners to the different non-violent movements. Through Christian Education the members and the learners can see the successes of the non-violent movement, and failures of the violent-movement. In this way, members and learners will be nurtured on how to live harmoniously with people of other faiths. We have successful stories on non-violent movements like that of Mahatma Gandhi. This movement can motivate future leaders of our societies to seek for the well-being of its people rather than harm.

## **Conclusion**

As a whole the root causes of radicalism are extremely complex and multifaceted. There is no simple and quick solution to this problem. Only a long-term and multi-pronged strategy, are needed. In all this strategy the role of Christian Education must be given serious consideration. Furthermore, success against radicalism will ultimately not depend on winning wars but in promoting a Christian Education that is inclusive, an education that encourages an ethos of discussion, religious equality, more inter-religious understanding, an education that promotes economic development among people especially the poor and an education that teaches on holistic spirituality. Christian education can help in eliminating prejudices among other faiths and promote equal opportunities to different societies of and religions in the world.

## Footnotes:

<sup>1</sup>Merriam-Webster Dictionary

<sup>2</sup>Vocabulary.com <https://www.vocabulary.com/dictionary/radicalism> ( accessed 12 May 2016)

<sup>3</sup>What Does it Mean To Be A Radical? - Breaking All The Rules [www. atr. org/ reactionary/ html](http://www.atr.org/reactionary/html) (accessed 12 May 2016).

<sup>4</sup>Welsh, Ian “The Three Types of Radicalism”[www.ianwelsh.net](http://www.ianwelsh.net). (Accessed 12 May 2016)

<sup>5</sup>Welsh, Ian, The Three Types of Radicalism

<sup>6</sup>Welsh, Ian, The Three Types of Radicalism

<sup>7</sup>Zaben, Aymen, “Religious Radicalism: A Growing Worldwide Issue” (2012). [http:// www. digitaljournal.com/blog](http://www.digitaljournal.com/blog) (Accessed 12 May 2016)

<sup>8</sup>Alinsky, Saul D. Rules for Radicals: A Practical Primer for Realistic Radicals Paperback – October 23, 1989.

<sup>9</sup>Rabbi Howard A. Addison, Show Me Your Way “The Complete Guide to Exploring Interfaith Spiritual Direction” (Woodstock, VT: Skylight Paths Publishing, 2000), 1

<sup>10</sup>Addison, Show Me The Way, 1

<sup>11</sup>Religious Radicalism contribution by Agnot the odd in Teen Ink @ [www.teenink.com](http://www.teenink.com) (accessed 12 May 2016)

<sup>12</sup>Ramon Gallegos Nava, Holistic Education: Pedagogy of Universal Love trans. By Madeline <sup>13</sup>Newman Rios and Gregory S. Miller (Brandon, VT.USA: Foundation for Educational Renewal 2001), 8-9

<sup>14</sup>Nava, Holistic Education: Pedagogy of Universal Love

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR:



Rev. Dr. Jeaneth Harris Faller currently serving as a faculty member of Silliman University Divinity School. She teaches courses in Christian Education, Christian Worship and Biblical Language. She also is serving as consultant of the Sunday School Curriculum of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines.

# God's Mission to the Marginalized in Indonesia

*Prof. Dr. Jan S. Aritonang*

## **Preliminary remarks**

It is not always easy to identify who are the marginalized among the people in a nation or country, including Indonesia. Marginalization or being marginalized is frequently situational and conditional. Someone or certain group of people that are marginalized in certain time, place, or community might hold central or important positions and role in others. Therefore, if we talk about the marginalized in Indonesia or elsewhere, we can only use common understanding and norms.

In this writing the inquiry and discussion concerning the marginalized in Indonesia will be limited into only three groups or categories, i.e. labor, people with disability and LGBTIQ. Of course, besides these three there are more, such as traditional peasants<sup>1</sup> and fishermen, orphans, elderly people, informal and incidental workers, unemployed, prisoners, narcotic consumers, HIV/AIDS infected<sup>2</sup>, the minority religious groups (including ethnic religions), the victims of deforestation and environmental destruction, the victims of human trafficking, etc. We will see the portrait of the three categories, including government's policy, laws and regulations concerning them. In

the respective section we will also see what have been done (or not yet) by the Christian churches and ministry institutions in Indonesia as the participants of God's mission<sup>3</sup>.

## **The labor**

Among approximately 255 million of Indonesian population there are at least 50 million laborers, formal and registered as well as informal and unregistered. They worked as permanent or temporary/short-term/incidental labor. The permanent workers work in around 5.000 big and around 50.000 middle-size companies (Silaban 2016, refers to data from Indonesian Statistic Central Bureau). Many of the laborers also work as migrant-workers in many countries in East Asia, Middle East, Europe and America. Most of those who work abroad earn good income and they become important financial resources for Indonesia, but many of them also find difficulties and injustices (Migrant Care, 2009). Christian Conference of Asia (CCA) has program of ministry and help for them (CCA-URM, Migrant Workers, 1992). We will not go further on the migrant workers' issues, but focus on the domestic labor issues.

Her Suharyanto et al. (2004, 21-30) portrayed the sad life situation of the laborers in some location in Java, among others: small wage, limited assurance of working safety, the working contract that frequently put the laborers in weak positions, and unclear step or promotion of career. The government sets the so-called minimum [regional or province] wage regulation with a hope that the laborers and the employers can sit together to formulate the following mechanism, for example to scale the wage according to working years. But the employers generally feel that they have fulfilled their obligation when they pay the la-

borer according to the minimum wage regulations irrespective of working years or achievement of the laborer, whereas the minimum wage is very small and not enough to cover the whole need of the laborers and their families.

From government side there are actually some policies regulations and decisions to improve the welfare of the laborers, by increasing the amount of minimum wage, securing working safety, provide health facilities, and obliging the employers to set up more balanced working agreement and contract. However, the laborers still find that they are still treated unjustly. The tripartite (labors, employers, and government) dialogue does not run well, too. Rekson Silaban, an analyst at Indonesia Labor Institute, and was formerly activist in Christian ministry for labor, found that the labor union organizations function more as watchdogs than problem solvers (Silaban 2016).

Confronted by this situation, some churches (among others the Roman Catholic Church that sees the laborers as the beloved darling [*buah hati*] of the church) and church-based organization (like Urban Ministry of Batak Church/HKBP) run programs to help and empower the laborers. For example they give training to prepare members of the church to enter the working and labor world. They also provide forum to hold seminars to discuss various problems and to look for solutions. Some of them even initiate legal advocacy institution or cooperate with legal advocacy from other communities to advocate for the laborers facing legal matters. As Christian institutions they also invite the laborers – during their off time – to study the Bible in order to get guidance and encouragement to work according to God’s mission and calling.

Since 1980s a number of Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) were established in Indonesia with focus on labor

advocacy; some of them founded by certain Christian communities or figures although not many of them using Christian labels. The existence of these NGOs are recognized and regulated by the government. One of them is Forum Adil Sejahtera (FAS, Just-Welfare Forum), founded in 1988 among others by Muchtar Pakpahan, Josef Widyatmadja, dan H.J. Pooroe. FAS connected the horizontal-dimensioned work of NGO with the vertical, i.e. God's calling to declare shalom to all humankind, as formulated in the preamble of its constitution: "God's love is indeed available for all humankind and universe; therefore God wants justice, peace, welfare and integrity of creation. The reality of poverty, oppression, injustice and destruction of environment are realities that God doesn't want (quoted in Gea 1992, 61).

But not many churches (including local churches) and church-based organization take the laborers into their account. Anna Pangaribuan (2015) showed one example among a number of HKBP's local congregations in Medan, North Sumatra, that 95 % of its members are laborers in some surrounding manufacturing companies. Concerning traditional ministry, this congregation only runs Sunday worship at 10.00 a.m., whereas the laborers also work during Sundays. There is no pastoral care such as visiting the labor members to their very poor homes. The councils of this congregations are busy with the construction of physical buildings. Let alone advocacy and striving for the rights of the laborers, it is practically none, whereas most of those labor members are underpaid. The pregnant women laborers approaching time of birthing are still required to work. When the laborers organized demonstration striving for the increase of their welfare, the church does not present to accompany. No wonder that those poor labor members expressed their disappointment on the church's indifference to their problem and fate. They,

however, hope that the church pay more attention and care, not must be regarding the big and heavy (like legal advocacy); just start with small things (such as providing baby daycare home) (Pangaribuan 2015, 101-3 and 135).

## The disabled

According to some survey and observation, around 10 % of the world population are people with disabilities. But in Indonesia, according to the study and official documents of the government, i.e. *Kementerian Negara Pemberdayaan Perempuan dan Perlindungan Anak* (State Ministry of Women Empowerment and Children Protection) and *Pusat Data dan Informasi Departemen Sosial* (Data and Information Center of the Ministry of Social Affairs), in 2007 only 3.11 % of the population in Indonesia are disabled, it means around 8 million. Whatever number is correct, this 8 million is still big.

There are various and different definition and understanding on disabilities or diffabilities (from different abilities). Indonesian government regulation specifies disabled persons as [majority] part of people with special need. The disabled among others are *tunanetra* (the blind), *tunarungu* (the deaf), *tunagrahita* (mentally retarded and down syndrome), and *tunadaksa* (physically handicapped or invalid). The children identified as having Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), slow learner, specific learning disabilities, communication disorder, and special intelligence and/or talent potentials, are categorized as people with special needs, but are not disabled.

Besides the government and a few communities of other faiths, a number of churches and Christian diakonia institutions run ministries (school, training and rehabilitation

center, etc.) to help and lighten the burden of the disabled. HKBP, for example, since missionary (RMG or Batak-mission) era has established Hephata Village in 1923 for the blind and deaf. Some of the 'alumni' of this village became famous evangelist, like Ev. Bartimeus Panggabean (J.R. Hutauruk 2009, 36-8). In 1977-78 two churches in North Sumatra (GKPI and a Pentecostal church, GPI) established a foundation to run a school and training for the blind, supported by Hildersheimer Blinden-Mission from Germany. This foundation is called *Yayasan Pendidikan Tunanetra Sumatera* (Yapentra, Foundation for Blind Education in Sumatera). During 30 years this foundation has educated and trained hundreds of blind children. Some of them continued their study up to university level (Abdul Hutauruk 2008).

Besides some Roman Catholic Church and ministry institutions, one of the churches in Indonesia that are very active to give ministry and education for the disabled is *Gereja Kristen Jawa Jakarta* (GKJ, Javanese Christian Church in Jakarta). In 1970s this local church established Rawinala Foundation to run a *Sekolah Luar Biasa* (Extraordinary School) for children with double disabilities (blind and mentally retarded as well as blind and deaf). In running this special school GKJ Jakarta cooperates with some other churches or denominations and are supported by a number of Christian fellowships, provincial government of Jakarta, and even a local Moslem women community. (Dwiharjo Sutarto in Yustinus Yuniarto et al. [eds.] 2012, 119-20)

World Vision International (WVI), a Christian NGO that also works in Indonesia, does not run a special program or project concerning disabilities (provides an extraordinary school, etc.). But - according to its vision and mission "for every child life in all its fullness" - WVI cooperates with

several partners do serve and help the disabled children in various methods and facilities. Throughout its existence, WVI was meant to help uplift the spirit of the poor and disadvantaged people, particularly their children, including the disabled. (Hendro Suwito et al. 2010).

Meanwhile, since 1971 the World Council of Churches (WCC) made the presence and problem of disabilities as the target of its mission and agenda to discuss and strive. One important effort of the WCC concerning this matter is establishing Ecumenical Disability Advocates Network (EDAN) as part of the broad Programme on Unity, Mission, Evangelism and Spirituality, to support WCC's vision to cooperate with the disabled in building a model of churching that actively involves the disabled in all aspect of life: spiritual, social and ecclesial. One of the programs of EDAN is to set up disability discourse for theological institution (Longchar 2006, 1-2). This program was also introduced to a number of theological institutions in Indonesia through a workshop that was held in *Duta Wacana Christian University*, Yogyakarta in November 2011 (Christiani 2011). The follow up of this workshop is still to be waited, among other things to put disability discourse in the curriculum of theological institutions. At least during this decade more students with different disability and handicap were admitted with a hope that in the future the churches also accept them to become ordained ministers.

Based on his ministry for the disabled through Rawinala Foundation, Sutarto asked further whether churches as part of and together with the wider society in Indonesia have paid enough attention and given special ministry to the disabled, among others providing special parking facilities, toilet, special area, and accessibility in public buildings. Especially in the churches or Christian communities, the disabled can participate and be involved in a lot

of activities to show or develop their talents and to end or to reduce their feeling as the marginalized. The disabled are also created according to God's image, part of the body of Christ, they are valued the same as the others, and even have bigger talents than the others (Dwiharjo Sutarto in Yustinus Yuniarto et al. [eds.] 2012, 121-3).

Related to that question, Nancy Eiesland, who herself a disabled, in her book, *The Disabled God*, presents a theological response towards certain attempt to marginalize the disabled by developing a contextual theology that God is perceived and understood as a disable figure. According to Eiesland (1994, 75), theology of disability must be made a visible, integral, and ordinary part of the Christian life and our theological reflections on that life. She said further:

*Thus the church, which depends for its existence on the disabled God, must live out liberating action in the world. The church finds its identity as the body of Christ only by being a community of faith and witness, a coalition of struggle and justice, and a fellowship of hope. This mission necessitates that people with disabilities be incorporated into all levels of participation and decision making.*

*Jesus Christ as the disabled God provides a symbolic prototype and opens the door to the theological task of re-thinking Christian symbols, metaphors, rituals, and doctrines so as to make them accessible to people with disabilities and removed their able-bodied bias. (Eiesland 1994, 75, 104)*

Together with Eiesland and some other theologians, Amos Yong promoted a theology of disability that operative not only among the Christians today but also in the wider society. This theology consists of three basic notions: (1) that disabilities are either ordained or permitted by God for God's purposes; (2) that the people with disabilities

are encouraged to hope and trust in God's plan for their lives; and (3) that the church (and society) is to meet the needs of people with disabilities (Yong 2007, 38). This theology of disability is also promoted in Asia (see among others Longchar 2006) as well as in Indonesia (Christiani 2011 and Sinulingga 2012).

## **LGBTIQ**

The issue of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersexual and Queer (LGBTIQ) is delicate and sensitive. Many churches refuse to discuss this issue, let alone to accept those identified as LGBTIQ to become ordained ministers. But in the last decade there has been increasing attention and support from several Christian communities and churches in Indonesia, including Jakarta Theological Seminary, on issues affecting LGBTIQ community.

In Indonesia this is actually a rather old issue (see below), but flared up in 2015-16, among others triggered by the decision of High Court of US on June 26 2015 that legalized the same sex marriage. This decision soon spread and affected the world. A number of LGBTIQ communities hailed and celebrated it enthusiastically. Meanwhile, a lot of religious communities, especially among the Christians and Moslems, condemned it, although some attempted to consider it more balanced (Ade Armando 2015, 3-4, and several articles in Solafide tabloid, 07 edition/2015).

The government also expressed refusal. For example, Minister of Research and Higher Education, Mohammad Nasir, on January 23 2016 asserted that the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender community is not allowed to enter university campus. He said this as response to the presence of Support Group and Resource Center on Sexuality Studies (SGRC) at the University of Indonesia that of-

ferred counseling for the LGBT. His assertion was then supported by many government officers, although they also insisted that the LGBTs have rights to have jobs and demand for legal protection. On the other hand, there are a lot of criticism against the rather negative statement of the government on LGBT, not only from LGBT circle but also from various circles and institutions that strive for human rights and refused discrimination (among others from National Committee for Human Rights).

In Indonesia the existence of the LGBT was already realized and noted since long time ago. According to a long research by Boelstorff (2005/2013, 52-75) from anthropological perspective, the people that currently called LGBT already existed in Indonesia since some centuries ago, although documents on this is very limited and mainly in the texts own by palace or other elite groups. Among a number of examples he mentioned *bissu* in South Sulawesi and *warok & gemblak* in East Java. In these last decades hundreds of groups or communities were founded to contain or show concern and give service to them. Besides from anthropological perspective, there were also a lot of research, inquiry, and publication from other perspectives (social-cultural, legal [including human rights], medical, psychiatric-psychological, religion, etc.). Some of the result and the opinions on this issue are similar, but many of them are contrary against each other.

From Christian circle we may mention Franz Magnis-Suseno, a professor at Driyarkara School of Philosophy (Jakarta) and a Roman Catholic/Jesuit clergy. In his article in Kompas daily (February 23, 2016) he illuminated this controversial issue by considering three things: fact, opinion or stand on the fact, and legal frame option to handle. Dealing with fact, Magnis-Suseno noted that World Health Organization (WHO) since 26 years ago already deleted

homosexuality from the list of mental disease. The base of consideration is that homosexuality is not chosen but experienced by the person. Homosexuality is natural inclination and also found in animals. Magnis-Suseno believed that homosexuality is not outside God's creation. Therefore, to heal or to direct those who have natural inclination to the so-called right way is nonsense. This is also asserted by Kristi Poerwandari in her article at the same daily (February 14, 2016).

Concerning stand on the fact, Magnis-Suseno (2016) warned:

*First, we have to stop stigmatizing and discriminating them. Sexual orientation is not relevant in most of life transaction. ... Despising someone because of her/his sexual inclination is despising God who created that inclination. Second, those who have homosexual inclination have the same human rights and citizenship with the hetero. Third, their right to discuss together their concern must be respected. The government is obliged to protect their constitutional right to gather and to express their opinion. It is humiliating if our police can be dictated by certain groups. It is the [fanatic] groups that spread intolerance and hate in the society. Fourth, in 1945 Indonesian nation opted to become law-based state, not religion-based state, nor customary-based state. It means that someone's autonomy is respected as long as she/he trespasses the law. Personal morality is not government officers' authority, a very important principle in pluralistic society. What is done by two adult persons in by their own will in the sleeping room should not be government's concern.*

By warning these four points, Magnis-Suseno also warned that homosexual inclination is not the same with the hetero. Like in many places in the world, in Indonesia the homosexual inclination is generally not found by the society as normal. Based on evolution theory, Magnis-Suseno had

an opinion that homosexuality – although is natural product – is peripheral product. The main product (so that is found normal) – among others related to reproduction – is heterosexuality. Based on this, Magnis-Suseno held a firm conviction that the best process and social space to assure the sustainability of humankind is marriage of man and woman, and family. Therefore an appeal for the equality of legal position of the same (homo) sex and the other (hetero) does not have [strong] foundation.

### **Closing Remarks: Theological Reflection**

There is a huge number of literatures of missiology that describe the meaning, essence, and goal of God's mission (Missio Dei)<sup>4</sup>. Some of these works also discuss God's mission through diakonia of the church to the marginalized. These literatures are also used in Indonesia<sup>5</sup> as well as in many other countries to equip and illuminate the churches and Christian ministry institutions in dealing with the marginalized. A major study is WCC document entitled "Theological Perspectives on Diakonia in the 21st Century", formulated and produced by the WCC Conference of Justice & Diakonia in Colombo-Srilanka 2012 (contained in Lorke & Werner [eds.] 2013, 401-6). Regarding the diakonia of the marginalized people, this document among other things says:

*The world may tend to see that margins as places of disgrace and powerlessness; however, the biblical witness points towards God who is always present in the struggles of those unjustly pushed to the margins of society. It gives several accounts of God's attention and caring love to people in situations of oppression and consequent depravation. God hears the cry of the oppressed and responds by sustaining and accompanying them in their journey towards liberation (Exodus 3:7-8). This is the diakonia of God: a diakonia of liberation as well as of restoring dignity, and ensuring justice and peace.*

*... Marginalized people are not to be seen always as those in need and despair. They resist injustice and oppression in their own ways and through their struggles for life, justice, dignity and rights for themselves and for all, unveil the presence and power of God in their lives. For example, people with disabilities are promoting the values of sensitivity and partnership. ...*

*From a theological perspective the language of the marginalized people may be conceived as a way of labeling or of reducing people to victims of systems and structures. Diakonia, however, must acknowledge the destructive and dehumanizing power of such structures, not only in order to point to the tragic effects of their reality, but also to the demands, legitimate rights and power of the marginalized people to transform the world. In a world where people are treated as objects and commodities and are also mistreated on account of their identities such as gender, ethnicity, color, caste, age, disability, sexual orientation, and economic and cultural locations, diakonia must build persons and communities, affirm the dignity of all people, and transform cultures and practices that discriminate and abuse some people.*

*Jesus too found himself among the marginalized of his time as he began his ministry of announcing the coming reign of God. A majority of Christian congregations around the world are made up of people who are mostly poor and marginalized on account of several factors, and this reality needs to be seen as an opportunity and a resource of for more authentic ecumenical engagement. Partnership and solidarity with the marginalized alone will ensure the credibility of the churches' claim of their participation in the mission of God.*

In November 2014 UEM, together with several partners in South Africa, held a conference in Stellenbosch under a

theme, “Inclusive Communities and the Church”<sup>6</sup>. During the conference, the participants also had opportunity to meet and discuss with some people who experienced marginalization in their work and daily life. The message of the conference (contained in Motte & Rathgeber [eds.] 2016, A13-16) among others states:

*We witnessed the trauma and sadness experienced by the victims of apartheid. We were impressed by the former victim’s determination for reconciliation. We were confronted with the disturbing situation of refugees and migrants and learned about the disastrous situation these people face in other parts of the world. ... During our visits we encountered the deplorable situation among women expelled from any system of social security and saw the minimal access that young people from underprivileged classes have to appropriate education. We saw people living on the streets who have trouble surviving day-to-day, let alone planning for the future. We also learned that churches face internal obstacles in becoming adequately committed to these causes, advocating for victims, overcoming historical rifts, and seeking closer cooperation among the churches and civil society to make the people’s voice better heard. ...*

*Based on these experiences, we call upon churches to strengthen their commitment to returning sovereignty, dignity, and self-esteem to the people. ... Churches are in a position to advocate for integrity, dignity, and sovereignty, and self-determination. They should be especially sensitive to the grievances and needs of the underprivileged and marginalized people in order to offer them both counseling and empowerment. ...*

*Involvement in new social order is not an end in itself for churches, but an indispensable part of protecting God’s image from degradation. We must make commitment to human rights, interreligious dialogue, protecting victims, re-establishing marginalized narratives, and evolving a rights-based approach.*

The concern, involvement and participation of the Christian churches and communities in God's mission to the marginalized in Indonesia are still going on. They need to learn more from many circles around the world and to strengthen their commitment, so that the implementation of God's mission in Indonesia is more real rather than verbal.

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### Footnotes:

<sup>1</sup>There is a very important book/dissertation inquiring opposition of a local community mainly consists of traditional tenants that supported by some NGO and churches, whose land was grabbed by a pulp company in Toba Samosir, North Sumatra, i.e. Victor Silaen, *Gerakan Sosial Baru* (Yogyakarta: IRE Press, 2006). Unfortunately, in this writing this segment of marginalized people cannot be elaborated further.

<sup>2</sup>UEM has special programs that also involve Indonesia, concerning HIV/AIDS. There are also a number of publications by UEM together with its partners, among others Sonja Weinrich et al., *AIDS – Meeting the Challenge* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 2004) and Uta Hedrich et al. (eds.), *God Breaks the Silence – Preaching in Time of AIDS* (Basel & Wuppertal: Mission 21 and UEM, 2005).

<sup>3</sup>Some parts of this article is excerpted or summarized from my forthcoming book, *Mereka Juga Citra Allah - Hakikat dan Sejarah Diakonia termasuk kepada Orang-orang Berkeadaan dan Berkebutuhan Khusus* (They Are God's Image, Too – The essence and history of Diakonia, including to the people of special needs).

<sup>4</sup>Some recent publications that also translated into Indonesian, to mention only a few, are J. Andrew Kirk, *What is Mission? – Theological Exploration* (1999, Indonesian translation 2012); LWF, *Mission in Context – Transformation, Reconciliation, Empowerment* (2004, Indonesian translation 2012); and LWF, *Diakonia in Context – Transformation, Reconciliation, Empowerment* (2009, Indonesian translation is still in process).

<sup>5</sup>One of the literatures that reflecting the implementation of the diakonia to the marginalized is Josef Widyatmadja, *Yesus & Wong Cilik* (Jesus and the Little Ones, 2010).

<sup>6</sup>I also attended the conference and submitted a paper entitled "Models of Inclusiveness in the Indonesian Church Context", and contained in Motte & Rathgeber (eds.) 2016, 123-32.

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#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR:



**Prof. Dr. Jan S. Aritonang** (b. 1952). Pastor of the Christian Protestant Church in Indonesia (GKPI), one of the members of UEM, and professor of History of Christianity at Jakarta Theological Seminary. Among his writings are *Mission School in Batakland 1861-1940* (1988/1994), *Various Streams within and surrounding the Church* (1995, revised 2016), *A History of the Encounter of Christian and Islam in Indonesia* (2004), and (together with Karel Steenbrink et al.) *A History of Christianity in Indonesia* (2008).

# Equipping God's People

## The Jesus Way

*Rev. Dr. Luna L. Dingayan*

### **Introduction**

This is an attempt to share our own experiences and reflections on our vocation of equipping God's people for the task of mission.

Basically, theological education, as we know, refers to our task of equipping men and women for the Christian ministry. And I do believe that the Jesus model should remain as our model in our task of doing theological education for mission.

### **Witness of the Scriptures**

Our text found in Matthew 9:35-38 would help us understand better the kind of theological education patterned after Jesus Christ our Lord, This is about an incident when he went around, visiting all the towns and villages, teaching in the synagogues, preaching the Good News about the Kingdom, and healing people with every kind of disease and sickness. And as Jesus saw the masses of people his heart was filled with compassion for them, because they were worried and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.

And so, Jesus said to his disciples, "The harvest is large, but there are few workers to gather it in. Pray to the owner of the harvest that he will send out workers to

gather in his harvest” (vs. 37-38).

Now, what do this incident in Jesus' life got to do with our task of theological education? Is there something in this incident that would help us understand better what theological education is all about in our time?

And so, let us therefore look more closely into this incident in Jesus' life, and try to draw out some valuable insights for doing theological education in our changing time.

## **Theological education that goes out to the people**

First of all, our text is reminding us that theological education patterned after Jesus is a theological education that goes out to people. Verse 35 says that “Jesus went around visiting all the towns and villages. He taught in the synagogues, preached the Good News about the Kingdom, and healed people with every kind of disease and sickness.”

Jesus was not contented of just sitting down and waiting for people to come to him. He went around to where the people are and taught them, preached to them, and healed them. Jesus trained his disciples, not so much inside the Temple or inside the synagogues, but more so in the outside world as Jesus and his disciples walked with the people beside the sea, in the mountain side, or in the open fields.

Hence, a theological education modeled upon Jesus Christ our Lord should not also be contented of just sitting down and waiting for people to come for theological training. A theological education patterned after Jesus should also be done where the people are. Since very few people could come to the Seminary for training, the seminary should go out where the people are and train them where they are.

One of the important features of the programs and services of our Seminary in Baguio City is the so-called Open Seminary Program. It is an attempt to bring the Seminary to the people. It is a way of doing theological education where the people are. To date, we already have 21 study centers throughout the country.

Of course, this is not an easy way of doing theological education, given the very meager human and material resources we have. It is much easier and more comfortable to just sit down and wait for people to come over to the Seminary to be trained, than to go out where the people are and face all the dangers and difficulties in the process.

But we may ask, why do we follow this more difficult way of doing theological education?

## **Theological education that takes people's life situation seriously**

It is simply because our text is also reminding us that theological education patterned after Jesus Christ our Lord should take people's life situations seriously. Verse 36 says that "as (Jesus) saw the crowds, his heart was filled with compassion for them, because they were worried and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd."

I do believe that it was Jesus' exposure to the realities of people's lives that made him compassionate to people. It was Jesus' compassion for people that motivated him to teach and preach about the Kingdom of God and to heal and restore people's broken lives into wholeness. Taking the cause of people as human beings, worried and helpless as they are, is the very core of the Jesus' teaching, preaching, and healing ministries.

It is significant to note the difference between Jesus

and that of the Scribes and Pharisees. While, on the one hand, the Scribes and the Pharisees emphasized holiness, Jesus, on the other hand, emphasized compassion for people in his mission and ministry as well as in the theological training of his disciples.

The problem of emphasizing holiness in theological education is that it tends to make a person self-righteous and condescending towards other people. That's the reason why the Scribes and Pharisees would easily condemn the poor, the tax collectors, and sinners, who could not follow the laws of holiness, unlike themselves. That's the reason why the Pharisee who prayed inside the Temple said, "I thank you, God, that I am not greedy, dishonest, or an adulterer, like everybody else. I thank you that I am not like that tax collector over there. I fast two days a week and I give you one tenth of all my income" Lk. 18:11-12).

But, on the other hand, by emphasizing compassion, Jesus was also able to educate his disciples to be more understanding and forgiving towards other people, especially the poor, the sinners, the sick and outcasts of society, even to those who were considered to be their enemies. Thus, Jesus said to his disciples, "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you"(Mt.5:44). "Be compassionate as your Father in heaven is compassionate" (Lk.6:36}. Jesus taught his disciples to pray like the tax collector in the Temple, "O God, have compassion on me, a sinner!"(Lk.18:13)

With Jesus Christ as our model, our Seminary is also trying very hard to educate our students, not to be holy like the Scribes and the Pharisees, (although some are forcing us to do that) but to be compassionate to people, like Jesus Christ our Lord. And we do this by exposing them in the course of their training to the realities of life of people in the church as well as in the larger communi-

ty. Like Jesus Christ our Lord, we try to impress upon their hearts and minds the situations of people, who are "worried and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd", and the urgent need to really care for them.

We call this approach *action-reflection approach* to theological education. It is founded on a philosophy that genuine theological education happens not so much in the classroom, but in the day to day life of people as they struggle with the reality of God in their own lives.

I would always tell my students in the Seminary that I would be very happy even if they would forget all the theologies I taught them as long as they would never forget to have compassion for people. For this, I believe, is the mark of a genuine servant of Christ.

## **Theological education that is sustained by prayer**

Finally, our Scripture Lesson this morning is also reminding us that theological education patterned after Jesus Christ our Lord is sustained by prayer. Verse 37 says, "*The harvest is large, but there are few workers to gather it in. Pray to the owner of the harvest that he will send out workers to gather in his harvest.*"

Our text pictures to us in a metaphorical way the reality of theological education in our time: "*The harvest is large, but there are few workers to gather it in.*" The primary problems of theological education lie in the recruitment, equipping and sending out of church workers. Apparently, we are not getting our best young people to enter the Christian ministry. Those who are supposed to have been trained are not fully equipped for the ministry. And those who are adequately trained are also taking other vocations in life for various reasons.

Hence, the shortage of well-trained and adequately

equipped church workers has always been a perennial problem in our churches today.

But the good news is that God is the owner of the harvest, and God is the one sending out workers to gather in the harvest. It seems that what we only need to do, is to pray to God, to pray to the Owner of the harvest, to send out workers to gather in the harvest.

To pray is not an easy task. To pray is not just telling God our needs. To pray is also listening and obeying what God is telling us to do. When we really pray we have to put ourselves, our whole being, under God's disposal. And this is where the difficulty of prayer lies.

When we started our Seminary in 1996, we had nothing at all, except our vision for the church and our genuine desire to serve the church by equipping church workers. For almost a year, I never had a salary or remuneration. My family had to live with the meager savings my wife and I had in the past years.

But God's grace was indeed sufficient for us. Our students and my family never starved. For even as we pray to God, we also share our vision to our friends and partner churches here and abroad. And in God's wondrous ways, by the end of the year, we had already all the most basic things that we needed to run the Seminary. And God doubled the number of our students every year. And every year, we had also new institutions and individuals (sometimes unknown to us) sharing us their resources in order for our seminary to go on.

Of course, we had also our own share of sufferings and sacrifices. To start and to build up an institution for theological education is never an easy task. I had to give up all my plans to pursue my doctoral studies in the U.S. and followed the more difficult yet more meaningful way of studying while working here in our own country.

There were times when I had to question God why He called me into this kind of ministry. Not a few tears flowed from my eyes, as I suffered all sorts of name-calling and harsh criticisms for pursuing a new way of doing theological education that I felt more responsive to the needs of our churches.

But through all these experiences, I would say like Apostle Paul in his letter to the Corinthians, "We are often troubled, but not crushed; sometimes in doubt, but never in despair, there are many enemies, but we are never without a friend; and though badly hurt at times, we are not destroyed" (2 Cor.4:8-9).

If there is anything that sustained us through all these years, it is no other than the power of prayer.

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR:



**Rev. Dr. Luna L. Dingayan** is the founding president of the Ecumenical Theological Seminary, a UCCP (United Church of Christ in the Philippines)-owned and managed ministerial formation center in Baguio City, Philippines. He is an ordained UCCP minister. He had served UCCP churches in North as well as South Luzon Jurisdictional Areas. He used to be the Chair of the Faith and Order Commission of the UCCP General Assembly, and a member of the Faith and Order Plenary Commission as well as the Working

Group of the Ecumenical Theological Education Commission of the World Council of Churches based in Geneva, Switzerland.

He also served as Formation Director of the Institute of Religion and Culture, Philippines, and Acting President, Dean of Academic Affairs, and dean of the College of Theology of Northern Christian College, Laoag City.

He is a writer and composer of hymns, together with his wife Perla, some of which are included in the UCCP's *Hymnal of Faith Journey*.

He writes articles for the magazine, *Writing on the Wall*, and regular columns for the local weekly newspaper, *Northern Dispatch Weekly*. He also provides messages and reflections in a radio program called "*Anasaas ti Biag*" (Ripples of Life) with Radio Sagada.



# 500 years Church Reformation

And its influence to  
Churches and Societies today

The next edition of Mission Sparks will focus on the 500th anniversary of the church reformation.

Theologians from Germany, Switzerland and Asia will look at the important events that took place in Germany and Switzerland initiated by Dr. Martin Luther, Huldrych Zwingli and Jean Calvin in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. How did their theologies influence churches and societies in Asia? What contextual adjustments and developments have taken place and how can these traditions be made fruitful in the future?

