

Duta Wacana and Mission in a Religiously Plural Context: A Reflection *

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Introduction : Religious plurality as the context of Java

The majority of the inhabitants of the Indonesian archipelago are Muslims. But the people of North Tapanuli (where the Batak ethnic churches are located), Minahasa in North Sulawesi, the province of Papua, and the province of Eastern Nusa Tenggara are exceptions. They are mostly Christians (Protestants, Catholics and Pentecostals). Formerly it was thought that the Moluccan Islands also belong to this category. However, forced mobilization caused by the religious-communal conflict from 1999 to 2002 and the re-formation of the northern part of the Mollucans into a new province of North Molluca make it difficult to hold on to this former presupposition. The conflict of 1999–2002 brought Christians in other parts of Indonesia into awareness that at least in the island of Ambon itself, Christians are never in a position of vast majority, and it is an illusion to regard Ambon as a Christian island. The island of Bali is Hindu, and in many parts of Java and the other islands there are Buddhists and Confucianist adherents. In the inner parts of the large islands outside Java there are many followers of the primal beliefs, such as the Kaharingans (Kalimantan) and the Marapus (Sumba).

The majority of the Javanese people are Muslims. “The Javanese” are those who inhabit the central and the eastern part of the island of Java. Its context has a rich religious and cultural tradition which is influenced by the primal religion, Hinduism, and Buddhism. This tradition is called Kejawen (the Javanese religion). Islam in Java has been more or less contextualized, and so until recently the religious practices of the Javanese Muslims are markedly different from the other parts of Indonesia, and one of the main differences of this “contextualized” Islam is the tendency towards syncretism. In turn this syncretism resulted in tolerance towards people from different religions such as Christians. It is common to see in a Javanese family, members who belong to different religions. But recently the situation has changed drastically. Because of the Islamic revival, Islam in Java has more and more taken the form of a decontextualized Islam, where instead of Javanese culture, Arabic and Persian cultures are now dominant. These two foreign cultures are not regarded as such, and for many they become the way to identify Islam empirically. Although it is not true that a decontextualized Islam automatically becomes intolerant towards others, there are many cases where it takes that stance. The most telling evidence is the fact that many Muslim volunteers (the so-called “Jihad Warriors”) who went to Ambon during the religious-communal warfare in 1999–2002 came from the

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vicinity of Yogyakarta, which for a long time has been regarded as the cultural center of Java, one of the strongholds of Kejawen and contextualized Muslims.

The Theological Faculty, Duta Wacana Christian University, is situated in this present context. As one segment of the Javanese Christian community at Yogyakarta who lives as a minority in an area where Islam is the majority, it cannot but acknowledge this context of religious plurality. When Christians in Indonesia talk about the difficulty in acceptance of religious pluralism, they usually mean the other side, the Muslims who cannot tolerate the context of religious plurality. It is the Muslims who need to have a change of mind, or even a change of theology, to accept the fact that Christians live and practice their religion in the midst of them, even if the central tenets of Christianity are unacceptable to them. On one hand this is true, but on the other hand at Duta Wacana we also try to make fellow Christians aware that they too live in the midst of people who belong to Islam as a religion, and although the central tenets of Islam are unacceptable to them, Islam in Yogyakarta as well as in the whole of Indonesia is a living religion, not an obsolete religion on its way to demise. There are of course two responses to the fact that we live within a context of religious plurality. One is acknowledgement of the fact and seeking to accommodate our theology to that context, and second is disavowal of the fact and seeking to change or overcome the context to make it more conducive towards our dominant worldviews. Although I am the present Dean (from 1993 to 1999 and again now from 2003 to 2007), I cannot speak for Duta Wacana. I am sure that among the Faculty and the students (both in the undergraduate and graduate programs), many opt for the second response. However, a significant part who are influential in designing the policy chose the first response. In my opinion, both Muslims and Christians need to have a change of mind, or even a change of theology, in responding towards the reality of “The Other” (here the term does not refer to God or the divine, but people who belong to different religions, and in our context in Indonesia, they are mostly Muslims).

Missiological discourse at Duta Wacana

Missiological discourses exist since the establishment of Duta Wacana as a theological seminary in 1962. Even the name “Duta Wacana” bears witness to the missiological intention of our institute. In Sanskrit it means “messenger of the Word.” The Word could mean Jesus Christ as the Word Incarnate or the Bible. To prepare students to become messengers of the Word, missiology was taught more or less according to the idea of plantation of the church, mixed with ideas which were leftovers from the earlier period, when Hendrik Kraemer was very influential in Indonesia. Kraemer was known as a follower of Karl Barth to some extent, and Karl Barth was known for his negative evaluation of non-Christian religions. Hence the emphasis on the Kingdom of God as the expansion of the Christian church to replace the old religions of Indonesia, or minimally, to make the church “large” and to make the religions “small.”

My clue for the idea of mission as plantation of the church is the feeling of success I sensed when I entered Duta Wacana in 1972 as a student. One of the results of the failed coup d’etat by the Communist Party in 1965 was the roundup of many thousands of people suspected of involvement in that event or simply because they are members and

sympathizers of the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI). The new regime which was called "The New Order" issued a decree that obliged everybody to belong to one of the five recognized or "official" religions (Islam, Christianity/Protestantism, Catholicism, Hinduism and Buddhism). Before 1965 PKI and the Muslim political organizations were involved in a fierce power struggle, and when it was clear that PKI was in a very weak position after 1965, many of the para-members of these Muslim political organizations launched violent attacks on people they suspected of being Communists or Communist-sympathizers. It was understandable that many of those whose life were in danger sought protection by declaring themselves as Christian sympathizers and asked to be baptized. Seen from the side of the Christians, the period from 1965 to 1970 was a period of "Golden Harvest." Especially the Javanese churches in both Central and East Java reaped and collected most of the sheaves. Because of these mass conversions, their membership fast increased. There were reports of baptismal services where so many adults wanted to be baptized that the ministers had to use hoses for the occasion. The impact of this extraordinary time was still strong when I entered Duta Wacana. Christians were proud that they had done their duty to protect the lives of those people who were looked upon as national enemies, and they were also proud to acquire so many people as members of the church. (One of my teachers, Rev. Tasdik, made a research for the ATSEA [now ATESEA] on these new Christians in East Java. His research is pessimistic: many lapse into an indifferent attitude as soon as the danger decreases. However, this does not hinder Christians at Duta Wacana to be proud of the past development.)

When I was a student at Duta Wacana from 1972 to 1977 there was already a strong awareness of the context. It was recognized that the context of Java is of Kejawen and Islam, and these two religions are studied seriously by experts such as Harun Hadiwijono, the famous systematic theologian and at the same time student of Javanese mysticism, and Dirk Bakker, a Dutch Islamologist. But the idea was of course to study them in order to overcome them and to enable students to see what they call "the weaknesses of Kejawen and Islam." Kejawen and Islam (and also Hinduism, Buddhism and the primal religions) are placed under missiology. But close to 1975, many students were reading literature on contextualization and dialogue from outside the country, and so the seed was sown for the change of attitude later on, where people study Kejawen and other indigenous religions and Islam, not to overcome or look at their so-called "weaknesses," but to understand them and to enable Christians to interact with Kejawen people and Muslims. It was close to the concept of mission as *presensia*. When later on I joined the Faculty in 1985, the terms "contextualization" and "dialogue" were already much in use. Not long before that, in 1982, I wrote and published a small booklet on contextualization and for the title I borrowed the title of one of Choan Seng Song's articles, "From Israel to Asia." To my pleasant surprise I discovered that this booklet was widely read by both the Faculty and the students. Dialogue was also much in vogue. One of the former Dutch expatriate lecturers at Duta Wacana was Dirk Mulder, and he was known as somebody who tried very much to make a link between mission and dialogue. He was not against dialogue and held that mission could be in a form of dialogue. Later on Mulder continued his work within the circles of World Council of Churches (WCC). Mulder's influence shows in the work of Djaka Soetapa, the lecturer on Islamology, and because of his enthusiasm for dialogue, he had to face criticisms from people who belong to his own

church, the Javanese Christian Church (GKJ). He was accused among others of losing faith in mission, which for many still consists of preaching or evangelizing.

Later on Djaka Soetapa became disappointed at the course of dialogue. This was not caused by opposition from factions inside the GKJ, but because of the development of the political situation in Indonesia. After the New Order under president Soeharto succeeded in stabilizing the country after the 1965 turmoil and its aftermath, it tried to accommodate itself to some aspirations of the Muslims, namely, to have some influence in the direction of the country. Before that the New Order gave preference to the Kejawen people. At that time people who did not adhere to one of the “official” religions were allowed to exist as *aliran kepercayaan* (“streams of beliefs,” which means: mystical groups). But after 1975 they no longer got preferential treatment. The mystical groups were not recognized, and they had to put themselves under the umbrella of the “official” religions. The government of President Soeharto started its “green politics” (green is the symbolic color of the Muslims in Indonesia), and many Muslim political and other mass organizations took heart at this new policy, and re-asserted their antagonistic attitude, not only against Kejawen people but also against Christians. Some clandestine radical groups started a campaign of terror, and there was rumour that some important Christian figures around Yogyakarta were going to be assassinated, Djaka Soetapa among them. He had to hide for some time, moving from one shelter to another. This traumatic experience caused Djaka Soetapa to qualify his dialogical stance. Since then his idea of relationship between Christians and Muslims in Indonesia is that this relationship should always be done within the framework of common life as Indonesian citizens. Nationalism in the form of citizenship should be the basis for dialogue. So Christians should work together with people who adhere to other religions as fellow citizens. The Muslim is regarded as a fellow citizen but his/her religion is not placed under regard at all. This position became more or less the dominant one within the churches for a long time. The fact that the government has launched its “green politics” is lamented, but still it is hoped that the same government will protect the Christians against the re-assertiveness of those who still want to change the Pancasila state into an Islamic state.

So far we have seen how the understanding of mission at Duta Wacana developed from a position which disregards the cultural and religious aspects of the context and has developed into a more dynamic one, where the otherness of the Other is accepted and appreciated. Mission then is related to contextualization and dialogue. However, like it or not, politics is always the determining factor in religion, including within Christianity in Indonesia. When Kejawen and contextualized Islam becomes the dominant color of the background where a Christian lives, mission and dialogue become possible, but when it recedes and is replaced by decontextualized Islam as the dominant colour, it becomes very difficult to engage in mission and dialogue. In my opinion the fact that Kejawen is one factor that makes mission and dialogue possible in Java has still to be acknowledged by Christians. In the past it was not so. Kejawen followers were regarded as enemies and Javanese Christians who wanted to follow the Kejawen worldview were regarded as heretics. The openness and tolerance from the side of Kejawen is put in use for the benefit of mission, but Christians in Java rarely show a reciprocal stance! On the other hand there is the problem of Islam. How should we relate to them? We have seen above

how at first Djaka Soetapa was keen to do dialogue with the Muslims, but because the general situation in the country turned to become more antagonistic to the Christians, he became disappointed at the course of dialogue and decided that it was pointless to continue that dialogue. I can understand his disappointment, but still I think that these radical factions are not necessarily representative of the Muslims, even of those who are regarded as orthodox, or as I termed them above, decontextualized Muslims. What we as Christians in Java have to do is understand these people, come to terms with their presence in our society, and continue to do dialogue with them. So it is not only with contextualized Muslims that we should engage in dialogue, but also, and primarily, with decontextualized Muslims!

In the 1980s the New Order started its program of *Kerukunan Umat Beragama* (Harmonious relationship between people from various religions). Its propagandist is the minister of religious affairs, Tarmizi Taher. Many, in both Islamic and Christian circles, were suspicious of this program as one of Soeharto's strategies to co-opt religious groups under his power. Dialogue was understood as harmonious life, where Muslims, Christians and others can live side by side in peace. But this program did not last long. Already between 1996 and 1998, hundreds of churches and church-related buildings in the coastal areas of Java were burned or ransacked by rioting mobs, and although Soeharto prided himself as the protector of Christians (and many Christians too regarded him as such), he was helpless to prevent these riotings. In May 1998 the New Order was toppled by the students and the people. The Muslim faction in politics, which Soeharto helped to strengthen, grew even more stronger, and nowadays it is common to hear discourses on the topic of Indonesia as an Islamic state or a state dominated by Islam as the majority religion, and there are demands that the Islamic *syariah* should be put into practice. Tensions arise in areas where Christians and Muslims live together, such as in Ambon, Halmahera and Poso, and these tensions later on developed to become communal wars. (I used the term "war" and not the customary euphemism "disturbance" [Ind: *kerusuhan*], where sometimes each side claims to be persecuted by the other. In my opinion if people attack each other and there are atrocities on both sides, then the term "persecuted" is suspect.).

At Duta Wacana we pay serious attention to these conflicts, and while we show our solidarity with Christians who are in very difficult positions at the eastern part of Indonesia, we are also aware that these conflicts can happen because both Muslims and Christians never seriously try to meet each other as Muslims and Christians, and that they hide their feeling of dislike and enmity of each other by referring to the discourse of nationalism. It means that dialogue in a real sense, *a non-antagonistic encounter between the two religions*, never happens. Because of this new awareness, after the riots and the communal wars, Djaka Soetapa, who in the 1990s helped to form the Center for the Study of Religions (PSAA) at the Theological Faculty, came to terms with his past trauma and involved PSAA in cooperation with Muslim institutes such as The School for Islamic Studies at Surakarta, in order to do research together on the reasons of the past anti-Chinese and anti-Christian riots in that city.

What kind of mission? Some sharing of experiences.

This meeting and this paper are not about dialogue but about mission. However, at Duta Wacana mission is related to dialogue. It is clear that these two important terms have been used with different meanings. In the course of time we have tried to move from the understanding of mission as plantation of the church to the understanding of mission as *presensia*. One example of how this is done at Duta Wacana can be seen in the cooperation between the Theological Faculty and the Institute for Community Service (LPM) of the University. Since the 1980s we have been serving people in the Gunungkidul area, south of Yogyakarta. Gunungkidul mostly consists of arid soil and, compared with other areas of the province of Yogyakarta, is poor. During the dry season people (and cattle) suffer from lack of drinking water. In that area congregations that belong to GKJ live together with their Kejawen and Muslim neighbors. When people from these congregations came to the Institute to ask for help to overcome this problem, we convinced them that they cannot do this alone, but have to involve the whole community, including the non-Christians who form the majority. This was agreed. Christians and non-Christians then worked together, with LPM as their consultant, to install pipes that could channel the flow of water from springs high in the hills down to the villages. When it is clear that all in the community benefit from this project, and that Christians do not harbor hidden agenda (doing communal or social service as “tools” for evangelization and targeting the villagers as would-be converts), relationship improves.

To prevent misunderstandings that in *presensia* and renewal of society there is no longer conversions into Christianity, I hasten to mention that the GKJ in the Gunungkidul area is still growing, and there are steady individual conversions both from Kejawen and Islam, but these are not the results of evangelization rallies and campaigns, but because of the witness of the life of the Christians themselves, who show their solidarity with the people. These conversions are different from the mass conversions in 1965–1970 mentioned above, but we cannot dream for the re-occurrence of that event. Mass conversions always trigger feelings of resentment from the other side, which later could develop into riots. It is precisely these evangelization rallies and campaigns, which are usually coordinated by evangelization groups with their dreams of “Christianization” and never bother to contact the local Christians, that cause trouble. Whenever they came to Gunungkidul, they stirred emotions, especially among the Muslims. After these evangelization groups held their rallies and returned to Yogyakarta, militant Muslim *dakwah* groups came and held meetings close to the church buildings of the GKJ congregations, and in turn they stirred emotions among the Christians. It remains for the leaders of the congregations to do the hard work of calming down these emotions, and they do this by involving the leaders of the Muslim congregations.

Students at Duta Wacana are involved in this kind of mission through the course of “Social Theology,” which is one of the non-optional courses in the undergraduate curriculum. After learning about the elementary forms of social theories and the hazards of “developmentalism,” they spend two weeks in the villages to do firsthand observation and social analysis, following the so-called “pastoral circle method.” This simple method of research is participatory, in the sense that villagers are involved, and what they say is

noted down as significant data. After this “live-in” they spend one weekend in evaluation. In these evaluation sessions, reports from groups are evaluated both by the teacher, the monitoring team (from the LPM) and the students themselves. This course has been in the curriculum for more than 15 years, and many graduates who are now working in rural parishes succeeded in persuading their congregations to do this kind of mission. There is a plan to lengthen this “live-in” from two weeks to three months, as the students who go to the parishes for practical work (“stage”) normally spend three months, doing every chore of parish work. The problem is that many of the churches that support Duta Wacana (twelve synods in all!) have difficulty in comprehending this policy. For them it is no problem if a student is sent by the Theological Faculty to do parish work for three months. They are willing to be responsible for that student. But to be responsible for a student who is not doing parish work, but three months training in social analysis and reflection with Christian social institutes such as YBKS at Surakarta, this is still too much for them. Now we frequently hear proposals that in order to participate in community-building with the aim to create a civil society for Indonesia, the churches should not only maintain ties with the state and the government, but also with the NGOs (LSM). Seen from the reaction of the churches to the plan above, I think it will take some time for the churches to be able to do this. But if mission is not concerned with expanding churches but community-building in the form of creating *renewal of church* and *renewal of society*, then what is mission? That is why in turn we at Duta Wacana feel that it is our mission to make the churches aware of this kind of mission.

The same holds for courses concerning mission and contextualization. At Duta Wacana the aim of contextualization is to enable Javanese Christians to live their faith authentically and in interaction with their own cultural heritage. Contextualization is not a tactic or strategy for mission (in the latter, traditional or local culture is regarded as a “tool” for evangelization), but the heart of mission. For a while Duta Wacana was not very strict on the definition of contextualization. In the 1980s Judowibowo Poerwowidagdo formed a Center of Faith and Culture/Art (PIIP) where Christian artists can gather to see how faith can be related to culture. Like Mulder, Judo too went to work with the WCC for many years. One of the reasons for the building of this center, according to Judo, is that the seminary (at that time Duta Wacana was still a theological seminary) had been slow in producing theological concepts that can be applied to practical matters of art and culture. So, like many missionaries in the past, he followed a missionary principle that practice would have come first, and theological concepts will follow afterwards. The center produced many experimental works in traditional Javanese ballet (Sendratari), Ketoprak and Wayang Kulit performances. Many artists (Bagong Kussudiardjo among them) painted pictures for the Center which later on were donated to the University. However, since many at that time were convinced that contextualization is only a “tool” for evangelization, and that art and culture are handmaidens to theology, these creative activities slowly petered out. I remember that two years ago, during the anniversary of our University, an all-night-long performance of Wayang Prajanjian (puppet shadow play using figures from the Bible in the traditional forms of the wayang kulit) in the parking lot facing the main street was attended by only four or five becak drivers. Wayang Prajanjian was created with the assumption that non-Christian Javanese could be attracted to the Good News if only Christians can make use of traditional

culture. But it seems that this experiment is alien to the context, or that the context is more dynamic than what was thought before, and that it has changed!

The only success we had with the period of PPIP is that lectures on Christology can be enriched by their many paintings of Christ in non-Western profiles. By reflecting on these paintings, students can be aware that there is plurality in Christ, and that the Christ that is relevant to our context could be a non-triumphalistic Christ, a Christ that could be looked upon in a friendly way by both Kejawens and Muslims. Kejawen is still for many Christians their cultural and even spiritual heritage. Javanese mysticism is known for its meditation sessions where people sit in the lotus position and keep silence for some time, and quietly sing some short verses. It is very interesting (and also very ironic, I think) that the Taizé meditative prayers from France meet all these requirements. This model of meditative prayer becomes very popular at Duta Wacana, and groups of students who sing the meditative short songs are very much in demand in churches all around Central and even East Java! It becomes for many a good alternative to the other kind of spirituality that is offered by the charismatic revival movements (they are also present at the University and the Theological Faculty—but they are facing “structural” opposition). We learn that in order to live our faith authentically by placing it in the framework of our culture, it is not necessary that we adhere to traditional culture. Just as by being faithful to faith does not mean that we just follow traditional ways of expressing our faith, so also being faithful to culture does not mean that we have to perform traditional plays. The most popular form of Javanese secular music nowadays is called “campursari,” and in campursari performances Western musical instruments such as guitars and electric keyboards are used. Javanese secular music manages to survive and become more or less permanent TV features. The most popular “dhalang” (shadow play performer) is Ki Manteb Sudarsono, and he introduced many modern tricks (including laser lights) to make his performances more impressive than before. I think we should interpret this baffling phenomena of the popularity of Taizé prayers as a contemporary expression of Javanese spirituality, or in a more negative way, their reaction against the traditional doctrinal teachings of the Javanese churches, which rejected this spiritual heritage. Most important, in the Taizé spirituality Christ is never depicted as a triumphant figure or stern figure, although the prayers are Christ-centred. For the kind of mission we mentioned above, a certain spirituality is needed, and for us at Duta Wacana, for the moment the Taizé spirituality seems to be the most appropriate one.

Again I have to mention the impact of politics on mission, and even in the life of a theological institute. When Abdurrahman Wahid (“Gus Dur”) was president (1999–2001), one of his liberative policies was acceptance of the Chinese people, religion and culture as part and parcel of the Republic of Indonesia. During the New Order Chinese culture was suppressed, because government officials were afraid of possible connections between the Chinese in Indonesia and Communist China. By a strange coincidence, the same Chinese culture was also suppressed by many Chinese Protestants in Indonesia, and for them it is only right that Chinese Christians took over Western culture as a product of Christianity to replace Chinese culture as a product of paganism. In many Chinese congregations in Indonesia no other culture than Western culture is allowed. But after the liberation of Chinese culture, the situation has changed. The Chinese New Year is now an

official holiday, and some congregations are starting to organize worship at the Chinese New Year. At Duta Wacana there are many Chinese students and faculty members (some taxi drivers refer to the university as “Duta Wacana”) . It is no wonder that they too feel the impact of this new re-appreciation of their own culture. In 2002, students at the Theological Faculty took the initiative and celebrated the Chinese New Year. During Christmas 2003, two Chinese graduates from Duta Wacana, Natan Kristiyanto and his wife Gracesianty, did three designs of cultural celebrations of Advent for their congregation, GKI Karangсарu Semarang, which for a long time was under the influence of an anti-cultural theology. For the first week of Advent the worship was done in Javanese style, the second in Batak style, and the third in Chinese style. Especially the third worship caused fierce controversy within the congregation. Natan and Grace had to face many accusations that they are blurring the identity of Chinese Christians. But there also many who applauded them, and for me the fact that many Chinese Christians already celebrate the Chinese New Year is a sign that they no longer like to continue their self-imposed discrimination.

What about dialogue? Mission has to be related to dialogue. But we have seen that the term “dialogue” can have several meanings. Sometimes dialogue means working together in a spirit of nationalism, and sometimes dialogue means living together in harmony. But learning from the recent past, from the bloody conflicts that colors the relationship between Muslims and Christians in Indonesia, I hold that dialogue has two meanings: the first is understanding and accepting the otherness of the Other, and the second is a plea for the Other, to understand and accept *our* otherness. The follow-up of this dialogue is of course a call to both to revise their theologies, which until recently has no space for the otherness of the Other. Although this is my personal opinion, it seems that many (but certainly not all) in the Faculty and the students at Duta Wacana are following this line of dialogue. The recent policy of PSAA, where Djaka Soetapa is chairperson, is the same, and based on this policy he works together for reciprocal understanding with many Muslim figures around Yogyakarta. His good relationship with Muslim figures makes it possible for Duta Wacana to create a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Islamic State Institute of Yogyakarta (IAIN, which is now UIY, Universitas Islam Yogyakarta). For the teaching of Islamic courses at Duta Wacana, professors from IAIN are invited, and vice versa. Whenever there are books on Christianity to be reviewed at the IAIN, professors from Duta Wacana are invited, and professors from IAIN are invited when books on Islam are reviewed at Duta Wacana.

Both IAIN and Duta Wacana participate in the Graduate Program of the Center for Religious and Cross-Cultural Studies, Gadjah Mada State University, Yogyakarta. I have been teaching “Foundation of Christianity” there for three years to classes where 90–95 percent of the students are Muslims. But I rarely hear insulting remarks towards Christian faith. One of the features of this course is exposure to Christian worship. Usually I invite the students to Sunday worship in the church where I belong, the GPIB congregation at Malioboro. They all come enthusiastically, and the next week they offer frank impressions on their visit. When they came for the first time, the congregations were bewildered by the presence of so many non-Christians (and also of the women students wearing Muslim dresses). But after that things become routine, and the visit of students

from the Center are placed in the congregation's calendar. Recently another center has opened at Duta Wacana, The Center for Conflict Mediation and Reconciliation. People at this center give training to both Muslims and Christians on mediation, and they work very hard to reach reconciliation between religious people in the areas that formerly experienced religious wars such as Poso and Halmahera. One other need that is recognized from this work is that Pastoral Care, which hitherto had always been understood in an individual way, should also be done in a collective way, to achieve the aim of reconciliation.

Students benefited from this atmosphere of dialogue. One example of their response is an invitation from the Student Senate to the students of IAIN to have one weekend together in the hostel of Duta Wacana. This event took place March 20–21, 2004. The fact that Muslim students are willing to spend one night at the hostel is already a good sign. The opening of this meeting was done with prayers and scripture reading from both sides. I participated in the meeting together with a young Muslim scholar from the Muhammadiyah movement, which is known for its anti-Christian stance. But this scholar, Zuly Qodir, is far from the stereotype of an anti-Christian. He could be self-critical, and I think another feature of dialogue is to be able to be self-critical. Of course one cannot be self-critical all the time, but ideally dialogue should contain in a balance, self-appreciation and self-criticism. To begin dialogue with self-criticism is better than criticism towards one another, as the latter tend to develop into polemics of the old times. This should not always be the case, but Indonesians are still learning to listen to criticisms in an open society, and I am not sure whether we learn well. In this meeting I received many questions from the IAIN students, including their "inability" to comprehend why Christians acknowledge Jesus, who was a human being, as God. I remarked that we come together to this meeting with our own assumptions. To the Muslims the prophet Isa (Jesus) is a human being, to the Christians Jesus is both God and a human being. For us this is the truth but we are not going to convince one another that one's assumption is right and the other's is wrong. They are different, but we learn to understand and accept the difference. In dialogue it is always important to ask why is the other's assumption important to them? What does it mean to them? Dialogue is not only concerned with truth, but also with meaning.

On other occasions I had the opportunity to listen to the Muslim's objection to the Christian attitude in building churches everywhere, even in areas where the population are not Muslims. It seems that the understanding of mission as church-plantation is followed literally. This is not a simple problem. I have referred above to the burning and ransacking of churches in 1996–1998. Since the period of Soeharto's government, it is already difficult for Christians to ask permission for church-building. They have to get permits from two ministerial departments and also from the surrounding population. When Abdurrahman Wahid was president, he scrapped this "two ministers permit." But still, as the surrounding population are mostly Muslims, Christians almost never got permission to build their churches. There are Christians who tried to get past this hindrance and asked permission to build clinics or meeting halls, which later on could be converted to worship places. It is also common for Christians in the big cities to buy or rent space which is originally meant to be used for a shopping area (we called them

“ruko” which is an abbreviation from “rumah-toko” [house-store]). Or they buy a house in a housing area, which is later on converted to become a church. For Christians in Indonesia, church buildings have a powerful symbolic meaning. Although I acknowledge the need for more space to worship, some change in the popular “temple theology” is necessary. Even after more than 50 years of living ecumenically with one another, it is still very difficult for churches that belong to the Communion of Churches in Indonesia (PGI) to worship in the same church building. Every church building belongs exclusively to one denomination and the form of worship is exclusively of that denomination. With every denomination building their own churches, soon the landscape starts to look as if the whole area is Christian. It is this fact that is resented by our Muslim neighbours. The number of Christians is small, but they own plenty of churches. The number of Muslims is large, but they do not own plenty of mosques. They have no need for that, because every Muslim can pray at any mosque. We can learn from the Muslims, and strive to have one ecumenical worship, and change our mission from church plantation to participation in the renewal of church and society, in community-building.

Conclusion

I hope from sharing this experience of Duta Wacana in mission and dialogue, we can be optimistic that mission in a religiously pluralistic society such as Java is possible, provided we are also ready to change some of our missiological perceptions. I narrated the experience of Duta Wacana from period to period, to see how a theological institute could play a role in enabling and empowering churches to become aware of the context that consists of culture and religion, and to accept and appreciate that concept. By preparing students for their future role as parish ministers, it is hoped that in the long run, they can convince their congregations to become mission-minded. Of course we cannot say that this experience will continue as we hope for. Situation in a theological institute is not constant, it will always have its ups and downs. But we hope it will last long enough to be able to influence some change in the relationship between Muslims and Christians in Indonesia, from worse to better!

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