

The Catholic Mission in Indonesia and Propaganda Fide - A Historical Overview

Armada Riyanto, CM

[Abstract] The history of Catholic Missions in Indonesia and its relationship with Propaganda Fide has a dynamic periodization of the context of struggle from Portuguese and Dutch colonialism to the present: from the establishment of Catholic communities by Portuguese missionaries to the persecution of the Dutch VOC (*Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie*) for two centuries, from the “primitive conflict” between the First Apostolic Vicar of Batavia and the Governor General of the Dutch colonial government (1845) to the appeal of the Bishops for the abolition of the repressive regulations to the Catholic evangelization in Indonesia (1924), from the “fruitful” period of mission in the twenties and thirties to the enormous devastation caused by the Japanese invasion that resulted in the internment of all of the Dutch missionaries which caused a real crisis in mission, and from Indonesia as a land of mission to the Indonesian Catholic Church sending missionaries all over the world at present. In this historical overview, one of the crowning phenomena of the significant contribution of the mission is the establishment of higher education institutions for clergy and laypeople formations in catechesis officially and equally recognized and accredited as other similar state or private institutions in the country. These institutions help Indonesian Catholics integrate themselves fully and historically into the cultural and socio-politics of Indonesia.

Introduction

Has anyone ever imagined that in the mission history of the Catholic Church in Indonesia or the East Indies (*Nederlandsch Oost-Indië*) in 1605-1807, there was absolutely no missionary priest? The Portuguese missionaries came to Indonesia at the beginning of the 16th century. Saint Francis Xavier's boat reached Maluku's islands in 1546/7. He baptized hundreds of the indigenous in Ternate and Tidore. But how was it possible for Indonesia to be without missionaries for 200 years? Since the arrival of the Dutch VOC (*Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie*) or the Royal Dutch trade association founded in 1602, all Catholic (Portuguese) priests were killed or expelled from Indonesia; Catholics were registered as Protestant Christians; the existing Catholic churches were sealed or converted into Protestant churches; Catholic communities in the islands of Maluku and surrounding areas were disbanded. The Catholic community in Ambon was even converted to Protestant Christianity.

Was the fire of the Catholic faith dead? Even though the mission history was "dark" for 200 years, the Catholic faith of the Indonesians was not extinguished at all in one or two places. Among them, in Larantuka, Flores, or the Solor Islands, the Catholic communities persisted in the faith they received from the Portuguese missionaries. Missionary work is not the endeavor of human beings but God himself. Secretly some Catholic communities in Flores performed prayers and worship and thus carried out defiance and resistance to the political policies of the Dutch VOC. In the historical account, more than 30 seminary students were aspiring Catholic priests in Lohayon, Portuguese Fort, East Solor. But they were killed by Muslims orchestrated by the Dutch VOC.¹ Can we imagine how strong the Catholic communities in Flores remained persistent and perseverant in their Catholic faith even without the Eucharistic ministry for 200 years? It has to be called the miracle of the Holy Spirit.²

The Dutch VOC was not only an association of traders who represented the power of the Dutch Empire in Asia; it also carried out "religious wars," as happened in Europe (Protestants against Catholics and vice versa). During its existence in Indonesia, the Dutch VOC suppressed the Catholic community for 200 years (1605-1799). At the end of the 17th century, the VOC went bankrupt due to corruption and disbanded. The Kingdom of the Netherlands appointed a Governor General to represent its political

¹ E. D. Lewis and Oscar Pareira Mandalangi, *Hikayat Kerajaan Sikka*, 2007.

² There is an unwritten story passed down to this day that they were visited by a Protestant minister. The Catholics asked him to pray the Rosary so that they could welcome him as a trustworthy missionary. However, when the minister could not pray the Rosary, they rejected the Protestant minister and remained faithful to the Catholic faith.

power. The first Governor-General, Herman Willem Daendels, began reopening the Catholic Church's doors. Two Catholic priests who arrived from the Netherlands were also sent by the Dutch Kingdom in 1807. The purpose of the first Catholic missionaries at that time was to perform a kind of Chaplaincy for the Dutch Royal troops who served in Indonesia.

The Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide, founded in 1622, played a crucial role in the mission of Indonesia since the beginning of 1807 when Indonesia (then called *Nederlandsch-Indië*) for the first time became the Apostolic Prefecture. In 1841, the Apostolic Prefecture of Batavia, Indonesia, was erected to the Apostolic Vicariate of Batavia. The Portuguese *Padroado* supported the arrival of Portuguese and Spanish missionaries in Indonesia before 1605. For the next 200 years (1605-1807), Indonesia was under the rule of the Dutch VOC, which repressed completely the activities of the Catholic Church. Not a single Catholic missionary worked in Indonesia. After the Dutch VOC was disbanded, religious freedom began to be revitalized. Since that moment, Propaganda Fide has been essential in the Catholic mission in Indonesia, particularly when Prefect Cardinal Willem van Rossum, C.Ss.R (1923), invited some more religious orders for missions in the East Indies. Propaganda Fide's support has been realized in several aspects to developing the Catholic Church, including financial assistance for the education of the lay people and the ongoing formation of the clergy, which has had a significant impact on the foundation of the major seminaries in Indonesia. These seminaries then produce missionaries and indigenous priests. It is estimated that thousands of Indonesian missionaries are preaching the Gospel worldwide today.

The Portuguese and Dutch Missions

The Catholic missionary work (by the Dutch missionaries) that came in the early 19th century (in 1807) differed from the Portuguese missionaries in the 1500 eras of Francis Xavier. What was the difference? The difference was, first of all, in the personnel. Before 1600, it was clear that the Catholic missionaries were either Portuguese or Spanish. After 1800, Catholic missionaries came from the Netherlands (the Protestant Kingdom) and other countries.

Since 1509, the year the Portuguese ships arrived, missionaries had begun to proclaim the Gospel in these regions. In 1515, the Portuguese fortification of the *Nossa Senhora Annunciada* in Ambon was established. This means missionaries came to Indonesia in the context of the *Padroado*, which was similar and became a "continuation"

of Goa and Malacca.³ The Portuguese Padroado mission was terminated when the Dutch VOC armada defeated Portuguese fortifications starting in 1605 in Ambon and surrounding areas. Persecution and suppression of the Catholic mission started, along with the “cooperation” of the VOC with the existing Muslim local kingdoms. The Catholic mission was “replaced” by the Protestant Zending. Many Catholic churches were burnt down or converted to Protestant. The existing Catholics were registered as Protestants. Catholic priests from Portugal and Spain were no longer allowed to enter Indonesia. On the other hand, the Protestant missionaries from the Netherlands took advantage of the situation and were facilitated by the VOC.⁴ The political situation which was “harmful” to the Catholic mission, would continue even after the VOC being disbanded in 1798.

Political changes in the Kingdom of the Netherlands and Europe flowed significantly into the East Indies (Indonesia). In the Netherlands, on May 16, 1795, *the Republic of the Unitary Seven Provinces*, which was established in 1588, was dissolved due to the 1795 “Batavia Revolution,” and the Dutch kingdom was changed to “the Batavian Republic” (1795-1806). In 1806-1810, the Netherlands became “the Napoleonic Kingdom of Holland” due to the victory of France. In the time of King Louis-Napoleon (1806-1810), the political power in the Dutch East Indies (Indonesia) was under the authority of the colonial minister (the 1806 Constitution). Indonesia was no longer under a trading association, as the Dutch VOC in the past, but was under the authority of the Governor-General, who acted on behalf of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. Meanwhile, the Reformed Calvinist Church lost its privileged position through a decree dated August 5, 1796. This situation led to the declaration of “religious freedom” in the territory that was a colony of the Netherlands through instructions given by the Governor-General, especially in the Netherlands Indies, through royal promulgation dated February 9, 1807, articles 22 and 23. Thus, the provisions in force at the “Union of Utrecht” since January 20, 1579, which affirmed one religion (Calvinism) and led to the suppression of Catholicism, ended. The freedom of religion (for the Catholics) that prevailed in the Netherlands also flowed in the Dutch East Indies,

³ Tara Alberts, “Catholic Communities and Their Festivities under the Portuguese Padroado in Early Modern Southeast Asia,” in L. Jarnagin ed., *Portuguese and Luso-Asian Legacies in Southeast Asia, 1511-2011, Volume 2: Culture and Identity in the Luso-Asian World: Tenacities & Plasticities*. Vol. II, (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2019), 21-43.

⁴ B. J. J. Visser, *Onder Portugees-Spaanse Vlag. De Katholieke Missie van Indonesië 1511-1601*. (Amsterdam: R.K. Boek-Centrale, 1925); Gerard van Winsen, *Rooms-Katholieke Missie in Indonesië* (Amsterdam-Brussels: Grote Winkler Prins, 1970, and Gerard van Winsen, “Motifs de l’Assistance Missionnaire Hollandaise à l’Indonésie (1800-1920).” *Neue Zeitschrift Für Missions-Wissenschaft*. (1974): 52-61.

Indonesia, as a colony.⁵ The first Governor-General appointed on January 28, 1807, for the Dutch East Indies (Indonesia) was Herman Willem Daendels, who arrived in Indonesia on January 1, 1808 after an arduous sea voyage. During Daendels' time, the doors of the Catholic Church, closed for 200 years, were reopened. The Catholic communities were revived again.

Meanwhile, through a decree of *Lodewijk-Nederlandsche*, on March 4, 1807, two diocesan priests, J. Nelissen and L. Prinsen, were able to sail for the first time to Indonesia as missionaries.⁶ However, because of this decree, the government viewed the Catholic priests as “functionaries of the colonial government,” for which they received the same salaries and benefits as Protestant clergy. They were called “colonial government functionaries” by the government because they came with a Royal decree meant to serve the Catholic Dutch people, especially soldiers serving in Indonesia. The other side was that the Governor-General could replace or transfer the missionaries according to the interests of the colonial government. Because of this “uncomfortable situation,” the Catholic mission was called a religion of *quasi serva, in vinculis gubernii constricta* (a slave in the circle of government boundaries). This situation would get a new perspective after the conflict between Bishop Jacobus Grooff and J.J. Rochussen (1845). After the conflict, which would later be referred to as the “Grooff Affair,” the relationship between the Catholic Church (Catholic mission) and the Dutch colonial government would have a new perspective.⁷ On May 8, 1807, the Apostolic Prefecture of Batavia was formed, with the first Apostolic Prefect J. Nelissen. For the first time, the Indonesian mission area was separated from the Apostolic Prefecture of the Indian Ocean Islands. On April 3, 1841, the Apostolic Prefect of Batavia became the Apostolic Vicariate of Batavia with Bishop Grooff as the first Apostolic Vicar. He arrived in Indonesia in 1845.

Both the Portuguese and Dutch Catholic missionaries came on merchant ships. The Portuguese missionaries in Indonesia had no “ties” with the trading authorities (colonialism). Whereas the Dutch missionaries who came to the East Indies (Indonesia)

⁵ Gerard van Winsen, *Rooms-Katholieke Missie in Indonesië*; and Gerard van Winsen, “Motifs de l'Assistance Missionnaire Hollandaise à l'Indonésie (1800-1920),” 52-61.

⁶ A. H. L. Hensen, “Het Onstaan van de Rooms-Katholieke Missie in Nederlands-Indië.” *De Katholiek*, No. 133 (1908): 274-95; MPM. Muskens, *Sejarah Gereja Katolik Indonesia (History of the Catholic Church of Indonesia) Jilid 3b* (Jakarta: Dokumen Penerangan Kantor Wali Gereja Indonesia, 1974); and Gerard van Winsen, *Rooms-Katholieke Missie in Indonesië*.

⁷ J. J. Kleintjes, “Mgr. Grooff, Apostolisch Vicaris van Batavia,” *Bijdragen Bisdom Haarlem*, No. 47 (1931): 399; and Gerard van Winsen, “Motifs de l'Assistance Missionnaire Hollandaise à l'Indonésie (1800-1920),” 52-61.

after 1800 were “bound by” the colonial rules. This means that the Dutch missionaries were subjected to the colonial political authorities in terms of proclaiming the Gospel with all restrictions which were ratified in the interests of the colonial government.

Why had the Catholic missionaries from the Netherlands been subject to the colonial civil authorities? The reason was that the Dutch government supported the activities of missionaries. When their duties were completed, all the expenses were the responsibility of the colonial government. Consequently, the missionary boundary was, in reality, limited and restricted. The priests sent were mostly diocesans until one day Bishop Vrancken, after the “Grooff Affair” requested the Jesuit Provincial to take up mission in the Dutch East Indies. They arrived in Surabaya in 1859. A new form of missionary activities started.

Catholic Mission after the “Bishop J. Grooff’s Affair”

One of the critical events that helped change the strategy of the Catholic mission is what happened in 1845, namely the affair of conflict between Bishop Jacobus Grooff and J.J. Rochussen. Generally speaking, only a few contemporary historians pay attention to this event. It is so essential that, according to Karel Steenbrink, thousands of pages had been written to explain the causes and consequences of the subsequent missionary work in the Dutch East Indies from various perspectives.⁸

Bishop Grooff was the first Apostolic Vicar of Batavia (1842-1846). J.J. Rochussen was the Governor General who represented the political power of the Dutch government in Indonesia (1845-1851). The conflict between the two was directly related to the historical event of the Indonesian mission because one was the leader of the Church, and the other was the leader of political power. This affected the “unique” realm of the relationship between the Church and the state (in the Dutch East Indies). Of course, the aftermath of the conflict would be directly related to the matter of how the relationship between Church and state was defined, regulated, and implemented; or how the work of the Catholic missions would be carried out in compliance with the state laws of the colonial government.

How did the conflict occur? Bishop Grooff was appointed as the first Vicar Apostolic in Batavia. Propaganda Fide issued the decree on September 20, 1842, then confirmed by the Kingdom of the Netherlands decree dated December 16, 1842. Bishop

⁸ Karel Steenbrink, *Orang-Orang Katolik Di Indonesia 1808-1942 Jilid 1: Suatu Pemulihan Bersahaja 1808-1903*. (Maukere: Penerbit Ledalero, 2006), 36-37.

Grooff served in Suriname or the West Indies when appointed as Apostolic Vicar. Grooff was born in 1800, ordained a priest at age 25, and was appointed Apostolic Prefect of Suriname at a young age (27 years). He was known to be an assertive, kind, and intelligent person. In Suriname, he was once the only existing Catholic priest. At the end of his assignment, he worked in a leper community. Because of his duties, he did not immediately leave Suriname to go to the Dutch East Indies. He returned to the Netherlands and was ordained as the Apostolic Vicar on February 26, 1844, and only left for the Dutch East Indies at the end of 1844 and arrived in Batavia on April 1, 1845.

Bishop Grooff was also known as a person who had firmness in the orthodoxy of the teachings of the Catholic Church.⁹ As soon as he arrived in Batavia, he was with four priests who would become co-workers in the mission. He immediately saw the “irregularities” that occurred to the priests in the Vicariate, including Hubertus Jacobus Cartenstat, Arnoldus Grube, and Joannes Antonius van Dijk. Fr. Cartenstat was the representative of the Apostolic Prefect Mgr. Scholten (on duty in Batavia), Grube on duty in Semarang, and Fr. van Dijk (from Surabaya, but there was also Adrianus Thijssen, who got a lot of complaints from his colleagues and the Catholics in Surabaya). All of them were then suspended by Bishop Grooff on September 10, 1845. Suspension means freezing the power of the priesthood from the effectiveness of its pastoral work in an ecclesiastical territory (Batavia). Thus, the priests could not perform priestly functions in the Dutch East Indies. Fr. Thijssen from Surabaya immediately returned to the Netherlands in 1845.¹⁰

Suspension is usually imposed for various reasons that are considered serious. At that time, one of the severe reasons was the allegations against priests who were in touch with the Freemasons, whether in association or involvement in serious matters such as rituals or being suspected of being sympathizers. Freemasons are a “confraternity” (brotherhood) originating from the Middle Ages and who uphold their ethical concepts and have “naturalistic deistic” beliefs. The members of the Freemasons were the elite group of society that was opposed to the Catholic Church. The Catholic Church itself, based on *In Eminenti Apostolatus* (1738) of Pope Clement XII, viewed Freemasons with their teachings as contrary to the Catholic faith. Pope Leo XIII in *Ab Apostolici* (1890)

⁹ J. J. Kleintjes, “Mgr. Grooff, Apostolisch Vicaris van Batavia,” 399; and Karel Steenbrink, *Orang-Orang Katolik Di Indonesia 1808-1942 Jilid 1: Suatu Pemulihan Bersahaja 1808-1903*.

¹⁰ Karel Steenbrink, *Orang-Orang Katolik Di Indonesia 1808-1942 Jilid 1: Suatu Pemulihan Bersahaja 1808-1903*; and G. Vriens SJ, *Sejarah Gereja Katolik Indonesia Vol. 2: Wilayah Tunggal Prefektur-Vikariat Abad Ke 19 - Awal Abad Ke 20*. Vol. 2. (Ende Flores: Percetakan Arnoldus, 1972).

and the teachings of the Vatican Council I emphasized that Catholics who were members of Freemasons would automatically be excommunicated.

On the same year of the suspension, a new Governor-General, J.J. Rochussen arrived in Batavia. He heard of the “suspension” of the Catholic priests (Surabaya, Semarang, and Batavia) and immediately adopted a policy that only priests who had obtained permission from the colonial authorities could carry out their duties in the Dutch East Indies. In other words, the Church leader (Bishop Grooff) could not suspend his priests who had *Radicaal* letters by the colonial authority. Because all Catholic priests working in the mission area of the Dutch East Indies were under the authority of the Dutch kingdom and their lives were guaranteed by the government. Thus, the Governor General was against the suspension. There was inevitably a direct conflict between the leader of the Catholic Church and the leader of the colonial government.¹¹

On January 19, 1846 Bishop Grooff was summoned by the Governor-General to negotiate the suspension cancellation. According to Rochussen, a Protestant, only the Government could fire or transfer Catholic priests because the priests were sent to the Dutch East Indies by the Government of the Kingdom of the Netherlands at the expense of the state. The Apostolic Vicar could not fire his priests who had obtained permission from the colonial government to provide pastoral services. Meanwhile, Bishop Grooff firmly and clearly stated his position. The domain of the Vicariate area (ecclesiastical area) was his authority. It was his duty to discipline his priests and the territory of this kingdom could not be interfered with by any power, including political power. Bishop Grooff did not want to cancel his suspension and thus was disobedient to the will of the political leader.

Rochussen was adamant in his view that he had complete authority in his area. The Governor General was very angry. Soon after, Bishop Grooff was ordered to leave the Dutch East Indies within 14 days along with the four young priests who had come with him.¹² The reason was that the four priests had not yet obtained permission from the Kingdom of the Netherlands. In fact, the permit had been given and signed on December 12, 1845. Most Catholics did not see the return of Bishop Grooff to the Netherlands as a “defeat” of the Church from the state. The bishop was greeted as a hero who defended the independence and authority of the Catholic Church against political authority (the colonial government). But some clergy viewed Bishop Grooff as unwise because he

¹¹ Armada Riyanto, *Sejarah Misi Surabaya Jilid I 1810-1961: 100 Tahun CM Indonesia*. Vol. I. (Jakarta: Penerbit Obor, 2023), 61-104.

¹² Karel Steenbrink, *Orang-Orang Katolik Di Indonesia 1808-1942 Jilid 1: Suatu Pemulihan Bersahaja 1808-1903*, 39.

could not negotiate the matter properly. This “Grooff’s Affair” will always be considered a crucial event related to Indonesia’s relationship between the Church and the state.

In 1847, the entire island of Java (or the whole of the Dutch East Indies) was without a missionary priest. Because Bishop Grooff had dismissed the existing priests and all had returned to the Netherlands, the Governor-General did not approve the young priests who had just arrived to work. The conflict resulted in a “missionary vacuum” throughout Indonesia for two years or more. The Santa Maria Church, the first Catholic Church in Surabaya, was also sealed by the government. No one or any power could resolve this situation in the Dutch East Indies. The Catholic communities in Indonesia could no longer attend the Eucharist.

The Vatican heard the news of the conflict between Bishop Jacobus Grooff and the Governor General. Of course, the most disadvantaged result in that conflict was the work of the Catholic mission. Through the ambassador, Mgr. Ferreiri, the Vatican agreed with the Government of the Kingdom of the Netherlands regarding the work of the Catholic mission in Indonesia. The agreement included, among other things, that if the clergy worked in the Dutch East Indies, they would be provided with a special permit; the Governor-General would be notified regarding the place where the priests would be assigned by the ecclesiastical leader to avoid conflicting missions with Protestant Zending; the Governor-General would not interfere in matters of ecclesiastical authority; the ecclesiastical leader had the full right to suspend his priests without the intervention of the colonial leaders; the administration of ecclesiastical finances was in the hands of Church leaders who had to be reported to the Church council, to the government finance department in the Dutch East Indies for annual inspections. In addition, religious leaders were allowed to send as many missionaries as needed at their own expense; Church leaders had the right to visit their ecclesiastical territory at the expense of the state while still observing security procedures which were the responsibility of the Governor-General; and if the visit was carried out at one’s own expense, this had to be communicated, and so on.¹³

¹³ Karel Steenbrink, *Orang-Orang Katolik Di Indonesia 1808-1942 Jilid 1: Suatu Pemulihan Bersahaja 1808-1903*, 39-40; Arn J. H. van der Velden. *De Rooms-Katholieke Missie in Nederlandsch Oost-Indië 1808-1908*. (Nijmegen: Malmberg, 1908), 126-127; G. Vriens SJ, *Sejarah Gereja Katolik Indonesia Vol. 2*; Gerard van Winsen, *Rooms-Katholieke Missie in Indonesië*; and Gerard van Winsen, “Motifs de l’Assistance Missionnaire Hollandaise à l’Indonésie (1800-1920).”

The agreement would later culminate in the so-called provisions of Article 123 of 1854, where on the one hand, there was independence in proclaiming the Gospel; but still, areas in which missionaries could and could not evangelize were within the restriction of the colonial government, on the other hand. The colonial government no longer interfered in the internal affairs of the Church's authority; *the Dutch Constitution of 1848* mentioned this regulation,¹⁴ but the missionaries still had no freedom to go anywhere. In fact, on many occasions, the missionaries were prohibited from going to Northern or Western Sumatra or Sunda or Madura or Bali, or Papua and from baptizing the natives. In other words, spiritual care was carried out only for the Dutch or European families scattered in the cities. The reason was to avoid conflict with the indigenous people, which would be very detrimental to the interests of the colonial government. Not only that, in principle, the Catholic missions should not be carried out in Protestant Zending mission areas, so that there would not be a possibility of conflict between churches.

The Catholic missions after the Affair of Bishop Jacobus Grooff produced new baptisms, which were modest or very small. However, the Catholic priests often clashed with the colonial authorities because the colonial policies were detrimental to missionary work. In short, in this context, the Catholic Church was even more subject to "restrictions," which made the missionaries not free to proclaim the Gospel. They were only allowed to go places the colonial government had determined. They were even forbidden to baptize the indigenous people. Not surprisingly, the increase in the number of people baptized was very slow. In Surabaya itself, after nearly a hundred years of missionary presence (1810-1900), there were only ten Javanese Catholics. In 1923, when the Congregation of the Mission (CM) fathers came to continue the missionary work of the Jesuits, a report from the Vatican indicated that there were only 40 Catholics of the Javanese people.¹⁵

In Central Java, the Catholic mission got a different enthusiasm from the missionary creativity of Fr. van Lith SJ, who founded the Muntilan (1904) and Mendut

¹⁴ The Dutch Constitution of 1848: Before 1848, any regulations on missions in the Dutch East Indies depended on the Queen of the Netherlands giving instructions, and the Governor-General followed the Queen's instructions. However, due to the 1848 Constitution, supervision and restrictions related to the spread of religion in the mission lands had to be established by law and approved by parliament. In the 1848 Constitution, the government's oversight of the Catholic mission was repressive, controlling or punishing in case of violations (Vriens SJ 1972:44).

¹⁵ Armada Riyanto, *80 Tahun Romo-Romo CM Di Indonesia [The 80th Anniversary of the CM Fathers in Indonesia]* (Surabaya: Provinsi CM Indonesia, 2003).

Schools (1906). In 1904, Fr. van Lith baptized 158 Javanese in Sendang Sono, Kalibawang.¹⁶ The Catholic mission then was realized in its form, which was increasingly influential to the lives of the indigenous people with educational work. Fr. van Lith's educational work became the emblem of the missionary work of the Catholic Church. Later, "Catholic education" would contribute to the journey of the entire Indonesian nation to the period of its independence until now. The "integration" of Catholic spirituality into the journey of the independence movement would be built mainly by the work of the Catholic educational mission. The mission of Catholic education in Indonesia is not meant to proselytize but to build a human character who is virtuous and loves his nation. In fact, the leaders of the Indonesian nation from the movement until the next came from Catholic education. Catholic education was to pursue quality and fight the illiteracy that dominated the nation then. It also educates children about a deep love for the Indonesian motherland.

The Mission After 1924

The year 1924 was said to be, for the first time, the Apostolic Vicars of Indonesia (which at that time consisted of Jakarta, Kalimantan, Nusa Tenggara, and Maluku-Irian) and the Apostolic Prefects met to discuss the state of the Church. The meeting took place in Batavia (Jakarta) because there was recognition from the colonial government that they were the legitimate leaders of the Catholic community or the formation of the *Nadere Regeling* in The Hague (1913), where the minister of colony affairs was located. On May 15-16, 1924, the first session of the Indonesian Bishops' Conference was held at the Jakarta Cathedral rectory. This session was chaired by Bishop A. van Velsen, S.J., Vicar of Jakarta. The Mission Leaders in Indonesia were also present, including Fr. Theophilus de Backere CM as the mission leader in the Surabaya area. Among the many themes discussed, the Ordinaries agreed to suggest abolishing Article 123 of the *Regerings Reglement* (1853/4), which prevented missionaries' freedom to go anywhere they wanted to preach the Gospel. This point would be emphasized again in the 1925 Council, which was presided over by the Apostolic Delegate.¹⁷

This step was a remarkable advance in missionary work. This period and in the future would be a period of the growth of the number of Catholics in Indonesia. Karel

¹⁶ G. Vriens SJ, *Sejarah Gereja Katolik Indonesia Vol. 2*, 15.

¹⁷ MPM. Muskens, *Sejarah Gereja Katolik Indonesia (History of the Catholic Church of Indonesia) Jilid 3b* (Jakarta: Dokumen Penerangan Kantor Wali Gereja Indonesia, 1974): 1431-1442.

Steenbrink called this period a “fruitful period,” where new baptisms abounded in the work of Catholic missions in Indonesia.¹⁸ In the Apostolic Prefectures throughout Indonesia, the establishment of seminaries for the education of indigenous clergy was also encouraged. In addition, the missionaries were very active in establishing schools in villages and cities in the following years. But, in the context of the mission of the period after 1924 until the Japanese occupation, the missionaries complained about a lack of money. Aid from the Netherlands or Europe naturally decreased drastically following the Malaise era, the world’s great economic crisis in the early 1930s.

One of the crucial breakthroughs is also in the field of mass media. The Vicars and Apostolic Prefects agreed to establish and strengthen the Catholic press. There were monthly journals to be established at the prefectural levels, or profound thoughts were being made on starting a Catholic publication in Dutch and the local language. Later in Surabaya, during the Establishment of the Apostolic Prefecture in 1928, a publication called *Katholieke Gids* was established, where Catholic writers conducted many discussions and debates against anti-Church opinions.¹⁹ Not only that, it was also agreed that Catholic missionaries should learn the local language and culture. Here comes the initial awareness of how missionary work must include efforts to “root” faith in the local culture. In the Surabaya Prefecture, the mission leader, Mgr. Theophilus de Backere CM, strongly encouraged his missionaries to learn the Javanese language. At the same time, the Lazarist missionaries also sought pastoral care for people who spoke Mandarin and Dutch.²⁰ Not only learning the Javanese, the CM missionaries in Surabaya Prefecture also established schools in many villages. The history of establishing village schools showed how missionaries worked with the local communities. Village leaders or local religious leaders assisted some of them in establishing and running these community schools. The missionaries not only approached the Javanese “culture” but also familiarized themselves with it, studied it, and in the future, they also carried out a sort of “inculturation” in the proclamation of the Catholic faith. Later, in this context, Fr. Jan Wolters CM founded the church building of Pohsarang, which has become a pilgrimage

¹⁸ Karel Steenbrink, *Orang-Orang Katolik Di Indonesia 1808-1942: Pertumbuhan Yang Spektakuler Dari Minoritas Yang Percaya Diri 1903-1942. Jilid 2. (Transl. from Catholics in Indonesia 1808-1942: A Documentary History Volume 2, the Spectacular Growth of a Self-Confident Minority 1903-1942)* (Maukere: Penerbit Ledalero, 2006).

¹⁹ Jan Haest, “De Missie van Soerabaia.” *De Katholieke Gids. Weekblad Voor de Prefectuur Soerabaia*, (June 1934): 157-403.

²⁰ Armada Riyanto, *80 Tahun Romo-Romo CM Di Indonesia*; and Armada Riyanto, *Sejarah Misi Surabaya Jilid I 1810-1961: 100 Tahun CM Indonesia*. Vol. I. (Jakarta: Penerbit Obor, 2023), 228-241.

site not only for Catholics but also for people from other religions. In these times, the context of the Catholic mission was increasingly seen as a process of “inculturation.” The Catholic missions were becoming more “Javanese” and no longer “European.” In this era, the Catholic mission was in the harvest season. The “harvest” time in the context period after 1924/1925 would have been halted for several years during the Japanese occupation (1942-1945). At the time of the arrival of the Japanese, the mission situation in Indonesia experienced severe “damages.” In fact, many dioceses experienced it for a long time afterward.

The Catholic mission in the Japanese occupation period has been written in various books and publications.²¹ During World War II, the Catholic mission in Indonesia did not die because the indigenous priests, with the help of reliable lay figures, enthusiastically lit the fire of the Catholic faith. Because the number of missionaries was so small, since all the missionaries were detained in the concentration camps, there were tremendous difficulties in the small areas or stations. In the Vicariate of Surabaya, mission lands that had been purchased and built for chapels or churches were damaged, destroyed, or then “taken” by mass groups. It was until a few years later, they could only be restored. Or in many cases, in the Catholic stations, many mission lands and churches were abandoned and ended up being used by residents or as public schools, while the chapels were demolished.

This period is short – in the context of the mission in the Vicariate of Surabaya (because Surabaya became one of the epicenters of World War II) – but the damage suffered by the Catholic mission was enormous. The missionaries themselves were almost all physically exhausted and deteriorating. Catholic missions in the post-World War II period had a “restorative” character. Not all station areas that had received the Gospel before the war could be restored.²²

There is also something to remember: the Catholic Church is becoming “more Indonesian,” as the European or Dutch Catholics are decreasing in number because they are going back to the Netherlands or emigrating to Europe or other places due to the

²¹ Jan Bank, *Katolik Di Masa Revolusi Indonesia (Transl. from Katholieken En de Indonesische Revolutie / The Catholics in Time of Revolution of Indonesia)* (Jakarta: Grasindo bekerja sama dengan KITLV, 1999).

²² Armada Riyanto, et al., “Memoria Passionis of the Vincentian Missionaries during the Japanese Invasion: A Glimpse of the 100 Years of the Lazarists’ Mission in Indonesia.” *Bogoslovni Vestnik* 83. Vol. 1 (2023):103-24. doi: 10.34291/BV2023/01/Riyanto.

political tension at the lower levels. Statistically, the number of Indonesian Catholics is increasing in line with the decline of the Dutch/European population.

The missionaries' service in other languages, such as Dutch, Mandarin and Javanese, is fading along with the development of the Indonesian language. Until the 1960s, the Apostolic Vicar of Surabaya, Bishop J. Klooster CM, still wrote the Pastoral Letter in two languages (Indonesian and Dutch). Even though services to Catholics according to their language were no longer available, Church leaders strongly urge Catholics to explore Indonesian culture. This is where the context of the lay people's "intellectual apostolate" and "political apostolate" find their fruitful period.²³

The Catholic Mission After *Quod Christus*

1961 was the year when the Catholic Church in Indonesia became the "Indonesian Church definitively." This means that thanks to the Bull of the *Quod Christus Adorandus* from Pope John XXIII, ecclesiastical areas in Indonesia were erected to become dioceses. This is the so-called moment of "hierarchical establishment" of the Catholic Church in Indonesia. What are the consequences of the *Quod Christus*?

The bishop has all the authority to organize and manage his territory more autonomously. The relationship between the diocese and the religious congregations or congregations that have worked or established their diocese has to be addressed. Another consequence is the growing diocese with the participation of the laity. After the year of the Establishment of the Hierarchy in Indonesia, the Catholic Church made improvements in the renewal of the Second Vatican Council. The church is newer and more and more self-renewing in line with the spirit of the Second Vatican Council.

*Seminary establishments.*²⁴ Thanks to the creativity of the Dutch missionaries, the Indonesian Catholic Church is highly involved and committed to the education of indigenous clergy. Clerical education may have been encouraged since the Encyclical *Maximum Illud*, but more widely since World War II. In the end, after the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965), more and more educational centers for prospective priests were established in Indonesia. Today, there are 12 educational institutions (major seminaries)

²³ Armada Riyanto, *Sejarah Misi Surabaya Jilid II 1962-2022: 100 Tahun CM Indonesia* (Jakarta: Penerbit Obor, 2023).

²⁴ Armada Riyanto, "Sejarah STFT Widya Sasana 1971-2021 (Sketsa Peristiwa & Tradisi Talenta)." in A. Sad Budianto ed., *Buku Kenangan Dies Natalis 50 Sekolah Tinggi Filsafat Teologi Widya Sasana*, (Malang: Widya Sasana Publication, 2021), 34-123.

for priest candidates. Besides, there are over 20 higher educations in pastoral disciplines and catechesis for lay people. Some are as follows: 1. Theological Department of Sanata Dharma University, Yogyakarta, which was started by the Archdiocese of Semarang, Society of Jesus (S.J.), and Missionary of the Sacred Family (M.S.F.). 2. Philosophical Department of the Catholic University of Parahyangan, Bandung, initiated by the diocese and the Order of the Holy Cross (O.S.C.). 3. Philosophical Department of the Catholic University of St. Thomas, Pematang Siantar, Medan, where the Dioceses of Sumatra and Franciscan Capuchins send their students. 4. Philosophical Department of the Catholic University of Widya Mandala, Surabaya. 5. Philosophical Department of the Catholic University of Widya Mandira, Kupang. 6. Institute of Philosophy and Creative Technology, Ledalero, Flores, which was started by the Divine Word Society (S.V.D). 7. School of Philosophy Theology, Fajar Timur, West Papua. 8. School of Philosophy and Major Seminary, Pineleng, Manado, initiated by the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart (M.S.C.) and the Diocese of Manado. 9. School of Philosophy Theology, Widya Sasana, Malang, which was initially the fruit of the collaboration of the Vincentians and Carmelites (O.Carm) in 1971. 10. School of Philosophy Theology, Drijarkara, Jakarta, which the Jesuits, the Archdiocese of Jakarta, and Franciscans started. 11. Major Seminary of Pastor Bonus, Pontianak, which the Bishops of Kalimantan created. 12. School of Catholic Religion, Bandol, West Kalimantan, initiated by the Congregation of Sancti Eliae (CSE).

Missionaries often craved that their missionary work would bear much fruit by establishing seminaries. The Indonesian Church is probably still relatively “young” from an age point of view. However, currently in Indonesia, “many” seminaries not only deal with the field of theology but also higher education for the pastoral field and catechesis for the layman. Now Widya Sasana School of Philosophy Theology can present a doctoral theology study program accredited by the Indonesian National Accreditation Board.

Concluding Remarks

A chronological history provides a straightforward journey of how the Catholic Church has passed through the ages. There are moments that significantly “drive” and “guide” the development of historical context and moments of events that are not significantly in the same context. The Indonesian Catholic Church belongs to the category of a young Church. As in many places in Asia, the Catholic faith came with colonialism. However, the Catholic mission was not part of colonialism. When

colonialism was removed, the Catholic Church continued to grow and flourish on Indonesian soil. The Catholic Church survived because it did not utilize the colonial system to spread its faith to the Indonesian people. Instead, the Dutch East Indies colonial government persecuted Catholics in many places.

The Catholic laypeople have played a crucial role in the life of the Church, not only as “helpers” of missionaries but also as “evangelizers” through their duties as teachers, businessmen, and so on. The Indonesian Catholics are aware of integrating themselves into the Indonesian nation’s and local people’s cultures, as mentioned by Petrus Maria Muskens, a Church historian who later became the Bishop of Breda: “I spent two months in India, Pakistan, Thailand, and Bangladesh. I visited the Catholic centers there. It seemed surprising to me what I saw in Indonesia. The Catholics are so fully recognized, accepted, integrated, and even influential that they have no lack of self-esteem as Indonesian Catholics.”²⁵

History is not just about chronological events. The history of the Indonesian Catholic Church has a “frame,” which means not only that of the period but also a kind of “spirit” that guides the integration of the Catholic Church into the Indonesian context as a whole from time to time. The Catholics recognize themselves as an integral part of the whole nation, and Indonesia is a nation that has been navigating the sea of its identity. The significant contribution of the Catholics is to embrace a new “spirit,” namely the “spirit” of the pilgrimage of a nation that is pursuing its cultural identity. The Catholic Church (Catholics) and other fellows from different backgrounds of belief do not seek to fight for their own identity but the identity of being Indonesian. The higher institutions of priestly formation of the major seminaries and catechesis across the country are also some of the Catholics’ full integration into the Indonesian culture and socio-politics.

²⁵ MPM. Muskens, Introduction, *Sejarah Gereja Katolik Indonesia [History of the Catholic Church of Indonesia] Vol. 1* (Jakarta: Kantor Wali Gereja Indonesia, 1974).

【摘要】 印尼天主教傳教團的歷史及其與傳信部的關係，為從葡萄牙和荷蘭殖民主義到現在的掙扎之間，畫下了一個動態的分段：從葡萄牙傳教士建立天主教團體到荷蘭東印度公司兩世紀以來的迫害；從巴達維亞第一位宗座代牧和荷蘭殖民政府總督之間的「原始衝突」（1845年）到主教們呼籲廢除對印尼天主教傳教的壓制性規定（1924）；從二三十年代「卓有成效」的傳教時期，到日本入侵造成的巨大破壞，導致所有荷蘭傳教士被拘留，造成真正的傳教危機；從印尼作為傳教地區到印尼天主教會向世界各地派遣傳教士。在這段歷史回顧中，傳教團重大貢獻的最重要現象之一，是為神職人員和平信徒建立了高等教育機構來培育教義。這些機構與國內其他類似的國立或私立機構一樣，得到正式和同等的認可和承認，幫助印尼天主教徒在歷史上充分地融入印尼的文化和社會政治。

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