

CHALLENGES FOR THE CHRISTIAN MISSION IN INDONESIA

20 Years after *Ecclesia in Asia* – PART II

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2.2. The efforts towards inculturation: The question is not how far we can go, but how far we shall go

It is always a challenge to be a local Church with certain autonomy—to celebrate and express faith, hope, and love to God, to other fellow human beings and to the world of nature. Bishop F. X. Hadisumarta assures that “no one in Indonesia is asking for full autonomy.”¹ However, there is a felt need to have more space in finding genuine ways to be rooted in the local reality, without losing the bond with the Universal Church. The idea of subsidiarity was mentioned oftentimes during the synod.

The first intervention in the name of the Indonesian Bishops’ Conference already presented this challenge. Bishop Joseph Th. Suwatan MSC, the then president of the Indonesian Bishops’

¹Francis Xavier Sudartanta Hadisumarta, “Peranan Konferensi Wali Gereja,” in John M. Prior and Georg Kirchberger, eds., *Yesus Kristus Penyelamat*. Misi Cintadan Pelayanan-Nya di Asia, LPBAJ, 1999, p. 224.

Conference, said that the local bishops are not employees of the Roman dicasteries but co-workers of the Pope sharing the responsibility for the Church. The bishops appealed for more freedom and respect in executing their pastoral ministry, so that the local Church truly becomes a local Church, a Church rooted in the culture and reality of the people. This is a very crucial point for the Indonesian Church. Giving more and reasonable autonomy in pastoral ministry to the local bishops will erase the impression or suspicion that the Indonesian Church is just a product of Western colonialism. It is also imperative for the Catholics to understand and practice the Catholic faith as their faith. Bishop Hadisumarta stressed this very clearly when he said:

For a new Evangelization we have to be reborn. Of course, we are reborn when our local theologies and spiritualities, local laws and structures, local liturgical rituals and local ways of worships emerge. We are born again to be a Church in dialogue with the poor and the marginalized, to be a real local Church in dialogue with big religious traditions and cosmic religions in Asia. If we are given more competence to pastor our faithful, we could move on from the early adaptation to a genuine interculturality. Only with this we will experience a new evangelical spring when entering into the new millennium.²

What is mentioned here is very crucial and remains a challenge for the mission of the Indonesian Church. However, for this change to happen, it requires a sense of courage and seriousness on the part of the local Churches to take initiatives. And here we see the problems. I want to mention four of these problems.

The first is about a genuine Indonesian theology. In the area of theological reflection there have already been some attempts to do and teach theology with a more contextual approach. The Master Program of STFK Ledalero in Flores, for instance, concentrates on contextual theology. The social, economic, and

²Ibid., p. 226.

cultural situations of the people are taken more seriously in theological reflection. Although there are still no systematic models of Indonesian theology, in fragments and sporadically we have already put to the fore some initiatives. More seriousness is needed to promote this effort to make Christian faith a genuine expression of the religiosity of the Indonesian Catholics. The works of Y. B. Mangunwijaya, especially his novels and reflections on daily life, are full of germane insights which need to be further developed theologically. Mangunwijaya refers to God as the Divine, without mentioning him as the personal God of any religion. In his book *Menumbuhkan Sikap Religius Anak-Anak* (1991), for which Abdurrahman Wahid, the leader of Nadhatul Ulama, Mangunwijaya wrote the Introduction, Mangunwijaya made a clear distinction between religion and religiosity. In most of his books, he did not mention the person Jesus. What is important for him is not the name of Jesus but the values which Jesus stands for and which Mangunwijaya promotes in his writings to the Indonesians of different religious backgrounds.³ Besides such initial efforts, the fact that the Indonesian Catholics live among the Moslem majority offers a special opportunity to develop a genuine theology. Such a theology would be an important contribution to theological reflections in other parts of Asia where Catholics are in the minority among other religious groups.

Based on the experience of the Indonesian people in recent history, it seems to be an imperative to deepen the understanding and skills of the faithful on how to be with others and to live as *the other* for the others. There should be no fear to be different; nor should there be arrogance or provocation to others. Indonesians are proud of the motto: *Bhineka Tunggal Ika*: Unity in Diversity. The missionary challenge here is to give stress on both: unity and diversity. The danger in a society that gives very

³Karel Steenbrink, *Orang-Orang Katolik di Indonesia Era Kemerdekaan 1945-2010*, translated into Bahasa Indonesia by Yosef Maria Florisan, Ledalero, 2018, pp. 194-195.

much attention to harmony is its tendency to only focus on unity. This goes at the cost of diversity. People should live not just peacefully but also joyfully in a multicultural society where differences are not only tolerated but welcomed as enriching influences.

In the era of Suharto, the stress was on unity. Any expression of being different was considered and even punished as political subversion against the government and the nation. Therefore, although they lived in peace, the religions in Indonesia missed the opportunity to lay the theological foundation of living together joyfully. An atmosphere of suspicion of the *other* was there. The Moslems suspect the Christians of attracting people to join them through their charitable projects. On the other hand, the Christians are concerned about the danger of Islamization through government politics of personnel and development. Loyalty to the government reduced the religions, including the Catholic Church, as brands to legitimize different programs of the government, which in many cases were unjust and inhuman. Now, some years after living in the new era of reformation, the tendency towards unification is back. As mentioned above, some religious groups fight for a puritan understanding and practice of their religions. They consider others as enemies to be vanquished or, at least, to be tolerated. Thirty years under Suharto did not help much in creating a theoretical framework and the skills to accept and deal with differences.⁴

What is urgently needed in this situation is a theological framework to accept to be the *other*. We need a theology that opens us to see, to be aware of, and to accept our own presence as the *other* to others and, at the same time, to accept others. Focusing on the other would help us free ourselves from egoism and lead us to altruism.⁵ The others are the ones who are outside

⁴Bastian Limahekin, "Assessing the Shari'a Movement in Indonesia from the Perspective of John Rawls' Conception of Justice" (ms), (SOAS London, 2009), hlm. 7-11.

⁵Felix Baghi, Pengakuan, Hospitalitas, Persahabatan (Etika Politik dan Postmodernisme), Ledalero, 2012.

of the center of attention and concern, outside of the power circles. The others are the marginalized, the strangers, the losers, those who enjoy no rights in society and even in the Church. The others are the women, the poor, the uneducated, the migrants, and the refugees. The others are the believers of other religions and those who find no reason to believe in any God. Finally, the *other* is God Himself.

For Christians, such a theology is based on the Trinity, understood and celebrated as *communio*. The Trinitarian God enables diversity in the midst of unity and lives the unity which gives space to individuality. The difference is not considered as a threat to be overcome. In fact, it is an enriching reality which facilitates the growth of self-identity. This is also the meaning of love which God manifests Himself in history. Love never subdues the others; instead it accepts and empowers others to be themselves. The teaching of Jesus as the hypostatic union of divinity and humanity sharpens the focus on the other. The total openness towards the others gives room for the others to find and bring themselves to full identity. Jesus' commitment to the marginalized is an expression of the attention to the *other*. It is tantamount to being in the midst of those who are pushed aside by religiously, culturally, and politically dominant groups. Jesus underlines their existence which has to be respected by others. Such a theology has consequences for ecclesiology. Dialogue has to be a way in the Church to enable people to express their ideas and concerns and to execute their decisions. Clericalism, which places the ordained ministers in a position to think of themselves as exclusively entitled to make decisions, is a contra sign to the other.⁶

A theology focusing on the *other* commits itself to dialogue. The fact is, the traditional practices of dialogue and peaceful living together of different religions are oftentimes threatened by

⁶Paulus Budi Kleden, “*Teologi Terlibat*. Involved Theology, Involving Theology – Doing Theology in Indonesia,” in *Verbum* 54:3 (2013), pp. 301-320.

fundamentalist groups. The Indonesian Catholics need to strengthen their commitment to dialogue. Catholic institutes of philosophy and theology in different places have taken initiatives to promote dialogue, especially with the Moslems. Many religious congregations have the practice of sending their young members to have an experience among the Moslems.

The observation of John M. Prior and Alle Hoekema in this regard gives us a clue as to why genuine theological reflections are still in the making. They write:

Many younger Catholic theologians have returned from neo-conservative studies in Europe; only after creative interaction with the crises of contemporary Indonesian Catholicism will they have any chance of burgeoning into original thinkers. Since most theologians operate outside the wider context of the multi-disciplinary university, they lack ongoing discourse and the challenge of debate with scholars from other disciplines. To date not many theologians are actively engaged in regional and global academic networks such as the Congress of Asian Theologians (CATS), Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians (EATWOT) and International Association for Mission Studies (IAMS).⁷

Secondly, the issue of liturgy. Bishop John Liku Ada from the archdiocese of Makasar reminded the participants of the synod that in Asia, “the religious rituals have a very important role and oftentimes are performed in the life of the community.”⁸ Inculturation of liturgy, as suggested by Vatican II in *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (SC), is the way to help experience that Jesus is really among us to bring us the fullness of life. I just want to mention one challenge which was already mentioned by the Indonesian bishops

⁷John M. Prior and Alle Hoekema, “Theological Thinking by Indonesian Christians, 1850–2000,” in Jan Sihar Aritonang and Karel Steenbrink, *A History of Christianity in Indonesia*, Brill, 2008, p. 772.

⁸John Liku Ada, “Liturgidan Kerohanian,” in John M. Prior and Georg Kirchberger, eds., *op. cit.*, p. 184.

during the synod. It is about the translation of the liturgical texts. Twenty years ago, the complaints were already made why the translation of important liturgical texts needed to be presented and approved by the Vatican, and by people who did not understand the language. Comments were made that on matters regarding translations the concerned dicastery consulted the Indonesian students in Rome, whom it trusted more than the Bishops' conference.⁹ This challenge has remained until now. Ten years ago, after a long period of discussions and argumentations, a new liturgical text was released, which caused discussions among Indonesian Catholics. This was brought again to the attention of the Vatican during the 2012 synod on the New Evangelization by Bishop Suharyo.¹⁰ The point here is about the implementation of the subsidiarity principle. Suharyo said, "My wish—I hope that I am not alone—is that the translation of liturgical texts ought not always to be done literally, rather seriously take into account the diversity of the cultural background." With this, "the local church will become more communicative and expressive, and as a result the faith of the people will be more energized and more relevant to their Catholic lives and engagement both in the Church and in the world."¹¹

The third is about *virī probati*, an issue which was stressed during the recent synod on the Amazon. Bishop John Liku Ada

⁹Anicetus B. Sinaga, "Otonomi Relatif Gereja Partikelir," in *HIDUP* (August 23, 1998), p. 15.

¹⁰John L. Allen, Jr. reported the intervention of Bishop Suharyo: "Suharyo's basic argument was about the need for flexibility in translation based on cultural differences. He then offered an especially telling case in point from his own neighborhood. "When the priest addresses the people, '*Dominus vobiscum*', the people are to reply, '*Et cum spiritu tuo*,'" he said. [In English, that's "The Lord be with you," followed by "And with your spirit" in the new translation.] Yet, Suharyo said, the word "spirit" as translated into his local language comes out as "*roh*," which often connotes an evil spirit. Thus his punch line: A literal translation of "*et cum spiritu tuo*" means some communities find themselves saying, 'With your evil spirit!'. See "A laugh line on liturgical translation," *National Catholic Reporter*, October 16, 2012.

¹¹*Ibid.*

reminds us that in 70% of worship places in Indonesia there is no Eucharistic celebration because of the lack of ordained celibate priests. Time and again the Indonesian Bishops' Conference reminds Rome that over 70% of Indonesian Catholics do not participate in the Eucharist on Sunday due to the lack of celibate ordained pastors.¹² Many Catholics die without receiving the sacraments of Holy Anointing and Penance (confession) for the same reason. Bishop F. X. Hadisumarta shared that already in the early 1970s the Indonesian Bishops' Conference had asked Rome to be given permission to ordain married men who were proven to live good moral life.¹³ The situation in the dioceses in West Papua still presents the need to find new ways of rendering sacramental services.

In other parts of Indonesia, the situation has changed because of the increasing number of priests, but not in the case of West Papua. In this region, the challenge is not only the big ratio difference between the number of the Catholic faithful and that of ordained ministers but also the distances among the communities. The parish of Arso in the diocese of Jayapura, for example, has some outstations which can be reached only by plane. The consequence is that the priest visits this place at most once a year. And this is not an exception. Therefore, the idea to ordain *virii probati* is still a request based on the need of the bishops who take seriously their responsibility to care for the faithful.

The fourth concerns the promotion of the Small/Basic Christian Communities (CBC). In some dioceses in Flores, the practice of praying the rosary in small groups composed of several families has been carried out since the 1970s. Lately this practice was

¹²John M. Prior and AlleHoekema, p. 807. The doctoral dissertation of Georg Kirchberger presents the discussion on *virii probati* in Indonesia in the 1980s (Neue Dienste und Gemeindestrukturen in der Katholischen Kirche Indonesiens, Steyler, 1986).

¹³Francis Xavier Sudartanta Hadisumarta, "Peranan Konferensi Wali Gereja," op. cit., p. 223.

enriched by the idea of Small Christian Communities as envisioned by the FABC in its assembly in Bandung in 1990 and propagated by the KWI. Since the SAGKI 2000, the Indonesian Catholic Church declared the CBC as the new way of being Church. The CBC is envisioned to be a community of Christians “living together their faith, in a small number, with an open communication among the members in the fraternal spirit, to build up solidarity with others, in particular with brothers and sisters who are poor and oppressed.”¹⁴ However, a study done by Alocita in 2003 mandated by the Bishops’ Conference shows that the main activities of CBC are praying the Rosary, going for pilgrimages, organizing liturgical celebrations in the parish or outstations. At the same time, most of the people admit that the biggest challenge they are facing is poverty. More than 50% of the respondents share that the benefit they get from the CBC is that they are more committed to prayer and reading the Bible. However, only less than 2% say that participation in the activities of CBC helps them to be more courageous in articulating their problems and fighting the injustice they face. In short, we can say that CBCs contribute to foster the internal consolidation and solidarity of the Church as a whole; but they are not yet instrumental in opening up people to be sensitive and to be open to share with outsiders, especially with people from other denominations and religions. The idea that the parish is a community of communities is based on the assumption that the CBCs are cells, that organize their life and mission on their own initiatives but still in communion and communication with the parish. What happens is that CBC becomes a mere extension or branch of the parish center, formed in order to administer the parish in a more effective and easier way for pastoral agents.

In sum, we can say that despite some efforts to make Church more Indonesian, there are still a lot of challenges. We even have to say that in the past the situation was better than that of today.

¹⁴*Rangkuman Hasil Sidang Agung Gereja Katolik Indonesia 2000*, No. 10

The Indonesian Church in the period of 1965-1985 was marked by the vitality to be more Indonesian. It gave more importance to the laity in the key words: *Indonesian isasi* and *Awam isasi*. Visionary bishops such as Leo Soekoto, Justinus Cardinal Darmoyuwono, Michael Coomans, and some lay persons were leading through their bold ideas and decisions to bring the Church forward and to root in the Indonesian reality. This period was a period of a “Conciliar Church” or a Church of *Gaudium et Spes*, because there were ideas and concrete steps to turn the Catholic Church in Indonesia into the Indonesian Catholic Church.¹⁵

The Indonesian Catholic Church, 40 years after this period, has changed. Although participation and dialogue are still operative terms in the vocabulary of the Church in meetings and documents, they are not, in reality, taken seriously and implemented consistently. For instance, the ecclesiastical provinces, which once prepared the lay pastors to play the same role as the ordained priests, now have brought in priests from other ecclesiastical provinces. The Institute of Theology of Fajar Timur (Jayapura), which once formed the candidates who were to become lay pastors or ordained priests together with a stress on dialogue between anthropological-social sciences and biblical-pastoral theology, has shifted to the idea of a traditional seminary composed of different units of the clerics.

Furthermore, the parish pastoral councils that were once responsible for the whole pastoral planning in the parishes have now become mere instruments in the hands of the ordained priests. Commissions, secretariats and institutions of KWI, which were, for many years, administered by the laity, are now heavily populated by priests. And last but not least, the model of creative Indonesianization of liturgies in 1960-1980 is put on hold and the inculturative celebrations are replaced by rituals taken from the

¹⁵John M. Prior, “Antara Monarkidan Demokrasi: Melacak Jejak Laku Hirarki Gereja 40 Tahun Terakhir,” in Paul Budi Kleden et al., eds., *Allah Menggugat – Allah Menyembuhkan*, Ledalero, 2012.

Roman books in the literal, cold and abstract language. In certain dioceses, inculturated songs, which were used for decades by the people, are forbidden because they seem not to fulfill the requirement of Roman Liturgy. In short, the participative Church has been pushed aside by a devotional, ritualistic Church with a lot of pilgrimages.¹⁶ Emmanuel Subangun says: “The process of de-colonialization of the Indonesian Church is a half-hearted process. We can and are able to move forward, if and as long as we are ready to learn from the past.”¹⁷

A long way to being the poor Church for the poor

Mission brings the Church to be involved in the struggles of the people to improve the quality of their lives, fight injustices and eradicate the poverty. The official statistics of the government reveals that as of March 2019, 25.14 million people or 9.41% of the population are classified as poor. This is 0.25% less than six months earlier. According to the prediction of the BPS in 2020, 62.8% of Indonesians are middle class; 56.7% are living in the cities, and 34% are in the age bracket of 15-39 (millennials); around 57.1% of the population have internet connection. Although there are signs of progress, poverty is still one of the main challenges of the Indonesian people. Addressing the problem of poverty has been one of the concerns of the mission of the Indonesian Catholic Church. This is fully in line with the spirit of the synod: to promote the mission of love and service. A lot of documents and materials for catechesis have been produced to animate Catholics to work together to eradicate poverty. Projects to help or empower the poor organized by religious congregations, dioceses and lay people are numerous. In the past, the concentration was to provide direct assistance to the poor. Later, this shifted to empowering the poor and, at the same time, to advocating them to fight for

¹⁶Ibid., p. 105.

¹⁷Emmanuel Subangun, *Dekolonisasi Gereja di Indonesia: Suatu Proses Setengah Hati*, Kanisius 2003.

their rights and against corruption, which is one of the main causes of poverty.

One important document that demonstrates such a concern is the “Pastoral Note 2006”. Here, the Indonesian Bishops underline the commitment of the Indonesian Catholic Church to become more the Church of the poor. The bishops found that poverty in the country is largely due to the pressure of population growth on scarce resources. There are problems of inadequate education and medical care, lack of clean water and sanitation, conflicts in land ownership, and to some extent, problems arising from foreign investments. After giving their analysis, the bishops emphasized the necessity and urgency of conversion of all, including the Church. They laid down four ways that they needed to follow: i) in *communio* with the poor and the marginalized, to inculcate in the poor the courage to start with what they have without being too dependent on the initiatives of others; ii) to animate the haves to involve themselves actively in finding ways to improve the lives of the poor; iii) to urge the politicians and those in power to be responsible and accountable for the authority given to them to assure the welfare of the whole society (*bonum commune*); and iv) to ask the intellectuals to study economy as a science to better serve the common good.

The Indonesian Catholic Church does not have to start from zero to carry out these steps, especially to inspire and animate the poor to start with what they have. I want to mention two examples here. The first is the long practice of APP (*Aksi Puasa Pembangunan*: Special Action of Lent for Development), which consists of a series of reflections on certain topics related to economic development. The second is the presence of Credit Unions (CU) and other forms of the micro financing institutions. Some dioceses had started CUs even before 2006, but with the Pastoral Note, the initiative got a new impetus. Nowadays almost all dioceses have their own CUs, or encourage the Catholics to join the CUs.

According to a study presented by Emilianus Yakobus Sese Tolo, a young sociologist lecturing at STFK Ledalero in Flores, the CUs failed to improve the lives of the poor. He mentions two reasons for this fact: first, the CUs have no political interest. For a change in economics, it needs a pressure on politics. The second reason is that the CUs do not make any clear study on the economic capacity of people because their interest focuses on the financial capacity of the clients to save their money and to pay back their loans. Furthermore, the CUs are designed to help people increase their consumption capacity or enable parents to pay the school fees of their children; but they are not meant to teach and help people to start their own small-scale businesses. These critical observations are important suggestions to improve the CUs to be really instruments to eradicate the poverty.¹⁸

An issue closely related to poverty is human trafficking. Indonesia is a place from where victims of human trafficking originate. The government estimates that 1.9 million of the 4.5 million Indonesians working abroad, many of whom are women, are undocumented or have overstayed their visas—which makes them vulnerable to human trafficking. The government regulations to address this problem are among the best, and yet the reality demonstrates the ineffectiveness of these written policies. In the poorer provinces like NTT, cases of human trafficking have become very serious. The dioceses and the religious congregations are called to take initiatives to address this problem.

The poverty map in Indonesia is related to the geographical. The eastern provinces are the poorer ones, and the two poorest provinces are the most eastern provinces: Papua and West Papua. According to the data provided in March 2019, 27.53% of the population of Papua and 22.17% of West Papua live in poverty. The irony is that these two provinces are, in fact, very rich with

¹⁸Emilianus Yakobus Sese Tolo, “Akumulasi Melalui Perampasan Kemiskinan di Flores,” in *Jurnal Sosiologi* 21:2 (2016), p. 186.

natural resources. However, land grabbing for palm oil plantation and mining have pushed the people, especially the locals, into extreme poverty. To protect all these businesses, there is a strong presence of the Indonesian military. The situation becomes worse as every initiative to raise the issue of injustice against the people in Papua is seen as a movement of separatism.

In the course of the years, many West Papuans were killed. Some individual bishops like Bishop Sorong-Manokwari of Jayapura and Bishop Timika protested against human rights violation in this part of the island. At the level of the Indonesian Bishops' Conference, the SAGKI 2000 made a general statement that the Catholics in West Papua need help and assistance, since they find themselves in very precarious conditions. Only in 2011 did a clear and sustained protest against the killings and other forms of human rights violations materialize and the media take notice of the protest.¹⁹

As Pope Francis reminds us in *Laudato Si*, the question of poverty is closely related to the issue of ecology. Indonesia has one of the largest tropical forests in the world. However, deforestation has been going on, on a dangerous scale. An official report of the Indonesian government (2018) says that deforestation increases every year by two million hectares. The result is that the size of the tropical forests in Indonesia has gone down in the last 50 years from 162 million to 98 million hectares.²⁰ In 1985, 73.7% of the tropical forests in Kalimantan was still untouched; in 2010, it was down to 44.4%.²¹

¹⁹Cypri Jehan Paju Dale et al., eds., *Papua Bercerita – Papua Nyawene*, Sunspirit for Justice and Peace, 2014; Bernard Korten et al., *Papua: The Neglected 'Paradise' – Human Rights Report SPJ throughout Papua 2015-2017*, English edition by Franciscan International and West Papua Network in Rome, JPIC Fransiscan Papua, 2018.

²⁰Nur Alim Mubin AM, Menakar Visi Ekologi Capres Pascadebat, detickom, <https://news.detik.com/kolom/d-4439251/menakar-visi-ekologi-capres-pascadebat>, 22 February 2019.

²¹Alexander Jebadu, *Bahtera Terancam Karam - Lima Masalah Sosial Ekonomi dan Politik Yang Meruntuhkan Keutuhan Negara Kesatuan Republik Indonesia*, Ledalero 2018, p. 143.

The credibility of the mission of the Church depends very much on the courage and consistency of Christians in fighting injustice, in conceiving concrete steps to eradicate poverty, and in taking initiatives to become faithful and wise stewards of God's creation. A lot has been said and published about this topic; and yet, the credibility issue of the Church remains a challenge. Theological reflections on these issues, in public or social theology, have been initiated to animate the Indonesian Catholics. They are called to involve themselves more seriously in addressing these issues as part of the mission of the Church. The JPIC commissions of some dioceses in Nusa Tenggara and West Papua and of congregations like OFM, SVD and SSpS, have become important tools in promoting the issues related to poverty and integrity of creation. And yet, the Indonesian Catholic Church is still in need of conversion and constancy in implementing what it says, writes, and preaches. The process of conversion should start with the bishops, priests and religious.

Conclusion

The Indonesian Catholic Church finds itself in a context marked by pluralism of religions, felt need to be inculturated in the local realities, and the struggle of a nation to eradicate poverty and to reduce the environmental problems. Many initiatives on the part of the hierarchy are going on, namely, animating and giving orientation to the faithful with official documents and pastoral teachings. Theologians and intellectuals—both in theological and philosophical centers and the academe—contribute, with their works in the area of research and publication, to the task of reflecting on the present situation and the signs of the times and to meeting the challenge of leading the faithful in the way forward. And more importantly, the Catholic faithful, individually and as groups, are living out their faith, sharing their hopes and practicing their love as their own ways of doing mission. And yet, much more can and should be done.

Inspired by the Good News lived and proclaimed by Jesus, the Indonesian bishops and theologians and the faithful need to work more closely to respond to the missionary challenges they are facing in the archipelago. The proclamation is much more effective when the bearers of the Good News proclaim it through their actions and examples, rather than mere words that call people to conversion. The way of proclamation should be the way of humble immersion into the reality of the people. The proclamation of the Gospel should not be carried out from a position of strength and superiority but by a humble “passing over to the people and being genuinely one with them in their condition of oppression and poverty, discrimination and loss of identity, suffering and sin. Keywords in doing mission are genuine solidarity and loving service, which is manifested in self-giving, and humility in mission, for mission is primarily God’s mission.”²²

Furthermore, mission should not be characterized by organizing and doing things. In the past, there was a suspicion that the Catholics were being sponsored by foreign powers to “Christianize” the country. But mission should be a move to be with the people. The contemplative dimension of mission is to be given more space. Mission in Indonesia does not consist in explaining who God is, but in searching and deepening the faith in Him, together with people from other religions. Mission, therefore is “an encounter with the mystery of the Triune God who calls all of humanity to share in his life and glory, the mystery of God’s salvific plan for the world, the mystery of the presence and action of Christ and the Spirit in the world. Keywords in this contemplative way of doing mission are: to look, to listen, to learn, to discern, to respond, and to collaborate.”²³ In doing mission,

²²Antonio M. Pernia, SVD, “Address of the Superior General in response to the conferral of the ‘Distinguished Alumnus Award,’ Divine Word School of Theology, Tagaytay City, 20 August 2009,” http://svdphc.org.ph/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&layout=blog&id=59&Itemid=431

²³Ibid.

we share our faith in God, “entering into the Triune God’s ongoing dialogue with peoples, discovering God’s agenda in this ongoing dialogue, respecting the freedom of God who is present and active among the people, and respecting as well the freedom of the people who are responding in their own way.”²⁴

In generously responding to God’s mission, the Indonesian Catholic Church has been abundantly blessed over the years with an increasing number of vocations to priesthood and religious life. The formation of these young women and men should be designed and oriented to selfless service to others as its final end, so that they learn to shun any form of clericalism and self-promotion. It is meant to train shepherds and leaders who will bring the Church closer to the people, making it a Church that is inclusive—one that, for example, gives more responsibility to the laity in its decision-making processes—and a Church truly faithful to the ideals, values and precepts of God’s Reign.

²⁴Ibid.

