WÉDHA UTAMA:
A Framework for GKJ to Formulate Principal Teachings in the Context of Java

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**GKj’S PRINCIPAL TEACHINGS**

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RANGKUMAN

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INTRODUCTION

Motivation
The reason for this study is the fact that I am both Javanese and Christian. This means that I am a Javanese Christian as well as a Christian Javanese. On the one hand, as a Javanese Christian, I need to understand Christian faith in the context of my ‘Javaneseness.’ On the other hand, as a Christian Javanese, I need to live my ‘Javaneseness’ in the light of my Christian faith. For me, contextual theology, as E.G. Singgih says, deals with both confrontation and confirmation.¹ I want to make so-called contextual theology real in an adequate way. An adequate contextual theology is a reflection on the experience of a Christian community in a particular place at particular time. It will be a relevant and living theology, one that refuses easy universalization because it speaks to and out of a particular situation,² so that the objective of understanding the Christian faith in the Javanese context benefits the church, the academic community, and society.

The Significance of the Study
The significance of this study is found in the need to formulate contextual principal teachings in the context of Java. I will briefly explore some fundamental aspects of this context, namely: 1) the historical existence and identity of the GKJ,³ 2) inadequate principal teachings used by the GKJ, 3) the fact that the Javanese context is complicated, 4) the possibility of accommodating Wédhatama, which is considered to be the most prominent didactic text in Java, and 5) the adaptation of Sadrach’s contextual theology.

³ GKJ is an abbreviation for the Gereja-gereja Kristen Jawa (Javanese Christian Churches). The synod of the GKJ is a federation of Javanese Christian Churches, in total 311 churches in 32 Klasis (classes), divided among 6 provinces in the island of Java. In the rest of this study I will the abbreviation GKJ for Javanese Christian Churches.
The Historical Existence and Identity of the GKS

The spread of Western culture along with Christianity has been an enduring problem in missions, for conversion involves not only a change from one religion to another but always entails cultural critique and change as well. The result of cultural alienation, which occurs when indigenous peoples are uprooted from their culture through conversion to Christianity, has been common throughout the history of missions, as also happened with the GKS.

The founding of the GKS was definitely influenced by the mission work of De Nederlandsche Zendings Vereniging (the Dutch Reformed Mission Organization) in the history of the Christianization of Java. Because of the mentality of colonialism and the missionary vision in the past, missionaries trained members of the GKS to think and act in Western cultural patterns. This can be seen, for instance, in A.M. Brouwer’s view regarding the goal of mission as emphasized during the time of colonialism in Java: it was simply to bring Western ideas to the East and to be able to teach psalms, prayers, the compendium of the main doctrines, and the catechism that could change Indonesians into good Christians, and to bring the church order and organization of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands to the East. Justus Heurnius, who served as a missionary to the Dutch East Indies, is cited by Brouwer as stating that the church in the East had to be like that in the West, also in regard to form and organization. T. Müller-Krüger also noted that it was clearly evident that the organization, church order, music, creed, and catechism of the GKS are patterned after the ‘mother church,’ the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands. Despite the sincerity of the missionaries, they seemed unable to present the Christian message without simultaneously imposing their own culture on the indigenous people, consciously or unconsciously. As a result, the GKS has been shackled for a long time in a Western expression of religiosity as well as it way of doing theology.

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Actually, the GKJ itself has been aware of this. In 1988, the GKJ Synod published a book on the history of the GKJ, with a critical note on the urgency of responding to social change, the shift in norms and values in society that accompanied the emergence of Western modernization.8 One year later, the 1989 Synod announced the need to communicate the message of the Gospel to its members contextually.8 Eight years later, the GKJ Synod published its principal teachings in a document, *Pokok-pokok Ajaran Gereja Kristen Jawa* (PPAG),9 which was intended to ‘replace’ the Heidelberg Catechism. In reality, however, it is nothing more than a simplification of the latter. It is also remarkable that the GKJ did not clearly formulate PPAG’s relation to the GKJ’s own identity. The reason why the GKJ preferred to be called the GKJ (Gereja Kristen Jawa or Javanese Christian Churches) rather than the GKI (Gereja Kristen Indonesia or Indonesian Christian Churches) remains completely unexplained. This is a relevant issue because in some areas many of its members come from ethnic backgrounds other than the Javanese. In Sunday services and formal meetings, they are even more inclined to use *Bahasa Indonesia* (the Indonesian language) than *Basa Jawa* (the Javanese language). Moreover, its name has absolutely no link to the Javanese culture and society, which is the context in which the GKJ lives.

The historical existence and identity of the GKJ, as shown by PPAG is, indeed, questionable. Because the PPAG is intended to help lay Javanese Christians understand their Christian faith, the GKJ needs to make its existence and identity clear by taking the historical, cultural, and religious context of Java into account. The PPAG should become the basic foundation that shows what the GKJ is and what it believes in the midst of social change in the contemporary Javanese context.

**The Inadequate Principal Teachings Used by the GKJ**

Many years before the PPAG was published, there were books on systematic theology written by Javanese theologians.10 The most famous, at least among theological students, was the late Harun Hadiwijono’s *Iman Kristen* (The Christian Faith).11 He claimed this book was written in a popular way, unlike most dogmatic works, and was intended for readers besides Christians. That is why he tried to explain the subjects in this book by comparing them with other religious traditions such as *kebatinan, kejawen* (a Javanese religious tradition), Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam. 

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10 See R. Soedarmo, *Itisar Dogmatika*, I, BPK Gunung Mulia, Jakarta, 1965; and Harun Hadiwijono, *Iman Kristen*, BPK Gunung Mulia, Jakarta, 1992. R. Soedarmo and Harun Hadiwijono were members of the GKJ. The latter is an alumnus of VU University Amsterdam in the Netherlands.
11 For many years theological students in Indonesia have been required to read *Iman Kristen.*
Buddhism, or Islam. According to some of his students, this work was considered to be contextual systematic theology.

Unfortunately, as noted critically by E.G. Singgih, who was one of Harun’s students, the other traditions were never treated properly nor appreciated adequately as sources contexts relevant to the subject being investigated. Hadiwijono explained away all religious traditions as well as all the religious views that were part of them. The method of contextual theology includes both confrontation and confirmation, which *Iman Kristen* does not do adequately. In my view, emphasizing confrontation indicates the influence, in one and other way, of the colonial mentality and narrowness of the theology of the missionaries in the past who trained members of the GKJ to think and act in Western cultural patterns. Indeed, Harun’s *Iman Kristen* is a tremendous work of systematic theology but, in my opinion, did not reach Javanese Christians: it did not take into account their real needs or their particular context. In other words, such systematic theology is improper or not contextual.

Since the GKJ used inadequate or non-contextual works like *Iman Kristen*, which are not reflections on the experience of Javanese Christian community in the Javanese context, the GKJ therefore needs to formulate a systematic theology of its own, a contextual one. A theology that is not contextual, i.e., an expression of faith in terms of contemporary society, history, and culture, is a false one.

**The Complex Context of Java**

In a discussion in Yogyakarta, Pramudya Ananta Toer said that the only value that originated in the Javanese culture was loyalty. All others came from outside. This is an absolutely interesting claim, for it shows us that the Javanese context is actually elaborate, intricate, and complicated. Various sources indicate that this is not a haphazard statement. Some examples of such sources are as follows.

Sir Thomas Stanford Raffles’ *History of Java*, published in 1817, gives us a tremendous and intricate explanation of the historical context of Java from the geographical, botanical, zoological, and antiquities points of view.

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14 As reported by *The Guardian*, Pramudya Ananta Toer, an Indonesian novelist, short story writer, essayist, and critic, is listed on Top 100 Intelectuals released by a respected UK Magazine, *Prospect*. He is the only Indonesian on the list. Pramudya has been nominated for the Nobel Prize for Literature several times, yet most of his works were banned by Suharto regime.


Clifford Geertz’s book, *The Religion of Java*, which deals with the religious, social, and cultural life of Java, has become a classic study in this field. It provides a great deal of information about the elaborate cultural life of the Javanese, their spiritual beliefs and rituals, their attitude towards magic, and much more. Geertz divides Javanese religious society into three ‘variants’: *abangan*, *santri*, and *priyayi*. The *abangan* group refers to those who are only nominal Muslims, i.e., who do not perform the five daily prayers prescribed by Islamic law or fast during the month of Ramadan. This group is the largest variant of religiosity in Java and is a syncretism of animistic, Hindu, Buddhist, and Islamic elements in which the pre-Islamic elements seem to dominate. The second ‘variant’ is the *santri*. This group is comprised of the Javanese who first and foremost identify themselves as Muslims (and not Javanese), and, insofar as they are able, perform the five pillars of Islam (confession of faith, the five daily prayers, paying *zakat*, fasting during Ramadan, and performing the pilgrimage to Mecca). This variant is very text-oriented and is very concerned with Islamic doctrine, while the *abangan* is more concerned with the ritual aspects of religious life. The third variant is the *priyayi*. According to Geertz, this group is the Hindu cultural elite, which is primarily connected with the governmental parts of society (in contrast to the *abangan* who are peasants and the *santri* who are merchants). Geertz is often criticized on this point because of the fact that the *priyayi* is not a religious group in Javanese society but a social class. Geertz’ book also informs us about Javanese art, both classical and popular, and about the famous Javanese shadow puppet theater (*wayang*), Javanese classical music (*gamelan*), folk theater (*ketoprak*), and much more.

John Pemberton explores the peculiar relationship between culture and politics in Java in his *On the Subject of “Java,”* attempting to disclose the limits and horizons of cultural critique in New Order Indonesia as well as in the field of anthropological inquiry.

In his *Varieties of Javanese Religion*, Andrew Beatty offers a grassroots view of Javanese religion, based on fieldwork carried out in a Javanese village. In this most comprehensive study of Javanese religion since Geertz’s classic study, Beatty considers Javanese solutions to problems of cultural difference and how villagers make sense of their complex, multilayered culture. Pantheist mystics, supernaturalists, orthodox Muslims, and Hindu converts at once construct contrasting faiths and create a common ground through syncretistic rituals. This book, vividly evoking local religious life, probes beneath the surface of ritual and cosmology, revealing the compromise inherent in practical religion. It has – inevitably – been compared to Geertz’s *The Religion of Java* but is in many ways more compelling. It is strongly grounded...
in the details of everyday religious practice and captures the depth of diversity within a single community.

Koentjaraningrat’s *Javanese Culture* explains Javanese people and their complicated culture from the perspective of more animistic, dynamistic elements. This indigenous work on Javanese culture has become a classic. Koentjaraningrat’s approach is anthropological.

Niels Mulder argues in his book *Mysticism and Everyday Life in Contemporary Java* that most Javanese are Muslims, but there is also a distinctive *kejawen* (‘Javaneseness’), incorporating elements of mysticism or *kebatinan*. *Kebatinan* (traditional Javanese mysticism) draws on earlier (Hindu-Buddhist and Islamic) strands and is a product of the colonial encounter, particularly of the courts in south central Java in the 19th and early 20th centuries. The resurgence of Javanese mysticism has led to its being given formal status by the state but not yet accepted as a full partner of the official religions. Accompanying this has been an increasing emphasis in *kebatinan* on monotheism and differentiation from *klenik* or black magic. Underlying Javanese mysticism is a complex and elaborate metaphysics. The human being actively and inevitably participates in the all-encompassing unity of material and spiritual existence. The spiritual aspect is superior – truer, as it were. Harmony and unity with the ultimate essence is the purpose of all life. Nature and the supernatural mutually influence each other, and causality is implied in their coordination. Mulder goes on to look at the practice of *kebatinan*, at the paths to mystical union, the role of masters, the context of meetings, connections with shadow theater, etc., and at its broader ethics and social philosophy.

According to M.C. Ricklefs in his *Polarizing Javanese Society: Islamic and Other Visions (C.1830-1930)*, by the early 19th century, Islam had become the dominant religion on Java, but it was a particular kind of Islam described by the author as a “mystic synthesis.” The Javanese held firmly to their identity as Muslims and fulfilled the basic ritual obligations of the faith, but they also accepted the reality of local spiritual forces. Ricklefs discusses how colonial rule, population pressure, and Islamic reform undermined this distinctively Javanese syncretism. A fourfold division appeared among pious Muslims: some continued as adherents of the “mystic synthesis,” some followed reformers who demanded a more orthopraxis way of life, some supported reformist Sufis, and some accepted messianic ideas. A new category emerged comprised of Javanese who resisted Islamic reform and began to attenuate their Islamic identity. These increasingly nominal Muslims, the majority, became

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known as *abangan*. The *priyayi* elite meanwhile embraced the forms of modernity as represented by their European rulers and modern scientific learning, and Christianity began to make limited inroads into Javanese society. Some even came to regard the original conversion of the Javanese to Islam as a civilisational mistake, and within this social sphere explicitly anti-Islamic concepts took shape. In the early 20th century, these categories became politicized in the context of Indonesia’s nascent anti-colonial movements. Thus were born the contending political identities that lay behind much of the conflict and bloodshed of 20th-century Indonesia.

The examples above provide us with a picture of how elaborate, intricate, and complicated the Javanese context is. It is precisely important for the GKJ to be aware of the historical, cultural, and religious context of Java because it is that context in which Javanese Christians are doing theology.

The Possibility of Accommodating *Wédhatama*

If asked to mention the names of some of the greatest Javanese literary works, Javanese literary scholars almost certainly begin with the *Wédhatama*. This work is indeed held in high esteem even today, although it does not necessarily imply that many have actually read it or would be able to give an account of its contents. This is because it is considered to contain the ‘highest wisdom’ appropriately cast in the mold of fine poetic language.

The highest concern of Javanese people, as strongly claimed by Banawiratma, is the essence and meaning of life itself, the objective being the perfection of life. In Javanese, this is expressed as *hanggayuh kasampurnaning hurip* (striving after the perfect life). 23 Emphasis is placed on the questions regarding *sangkan paraning dumadi* (the origin and destiny of life). The mystery of life is to be grasped through the human experience of unity with *kasunyatan* (the highest reality), known as God, the Absolute, or *Gusti* (Lord), as well as other names. To achieve this ultimate goal of perfection, one needs to obtain knowledge of *pitutur* (advice, instruction) and *wevaler* (prohibitions), which were handed down orally by one’s ancestors and found in written form in Javanese classical literature. This attitude drove one forward in a constant search of what is considered the highest *ngèlmu*, and satisfaction is not achieved until the highest *ngèlmu* is found.

What is *ngèlmu*? Its original meaning was ‘knowledge’ or ‘science’ but often with the extra nuances of valuable, esoteric knowledge, knowledge useful for the spirit, hence philosophy or philosophy of life. Precisely this is the key concept of *Wédhatama* that is considered to be the most prominent work of systematic wisdom in Java.

23 J.B. Banawiratma S.J., *Yesus Sang Guru*, Kanisius, Yogyakarta, 1977, p. 120.
In this regard, I am aware that I might be ‘accused’ of echoing what Nancy K. Florida has called the “myth of the adiluhung.” A commonplace assertion among modern Javanese is that the language of this literature is so sublime that we could not possibly understand it. Florida notes that the dominant image among Javanese today of traditional literature is that of an acknowledged ‘classic’: “an untarnished emblem of high culture, a mysteriously inscribed jewel from a vast cultural inheritance. As is probably true of acknowledged classics anywhere, such an exalted status is a testimonial to its not being read.” My intention, however, is just as the same as the title of Florida’s article, “Reading the Unread.” Furthermore, after reading the ‘unread’ Widhatama, I would like to ‘unlock’ the key concept in it.

Since contextualization, as William P. Russell pointed out, has to do with how we assess the peculiarity of the contexts, the GKJ accordingly needs to take Widhatama into account in formulating contextual principal teachings in the contemporary Javanese context.

**The Adaption of Sadrach’s Contextual Theology**

According to Karel Steenbrink, one of the most remarkable individuals among the Javanese Christians was Sadrach Surapranata. Sadrach was a pioneer Javanese evangelist who became the charismatic leader of Javanese Christians throughout Central Java. He had great influence on his followers and was highly respected as their spiritual father. Sadrach’s community was a unique religious phenomenon since it was the product of neither the Indische Kerk nor of any of the Western missionary enterprises working in Central Java in the second half of the 19th century. Rather, it was the fruit of the missionary activities of lay Eurasian Christians who felt called to evangelize the Javanese people. Because the community was born from the womb of Javanese culture and was nurtured, developed, and shaped within this cultural

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24 The word adiluhung can be translated as ‘the beautiful sublime.’ The “myth of the adiluhung” is the idea of reified icons of Javanese High Culture. See Nancy K. Florida, “Reading the Unread in Traditional Javanese Literature,” in *Indonesia*, volume 44, 1987, p. 2. Nancy K. Florida, is a professor of Javanese and Islamic studies in the Department of Asian Languages and Cultures at the University of Michigan. She received a royal title from H.R.H. Pakubuwana XII, the ruler of Java’s most ancient court, the Kraton Surakarta. “The title was awarded in recognition of her scholarship and service to the field of Indonesian studies. She was installed at the highest level of courtier (senior minister) that is possible for someone who is not a blood relative of the king. She is the first westerner in history to ever receive such an honor. The honor is a formal acknowledgment of and appreciation for Florida’s work in preserving, photographing and making available for research the complete collections of historical manuscripts from the three royal archives of Java and for her scholarly writings on Javanese literature and history.” Her Javanese title, Kangjieng Mas Ayu Tumenggung Budayaningtyas, can be translated roughly as ‘Her Ladyship the Golden High Minister in whose Heart Dwells Culture.’ See [http://quod.lib.umich.edu/j/jii/4750978.0007.206/?rgn=main;view=fulltext](http://quod.lib.umich.edu/j/jii/4750978.0007.206/?rgn=main;view=fulltext). Editor Bonnie Brereton interviewed her shortly after the award was announced.


framework by those who valued the Javanese cultural background, the result was, not surprisingly, an indigenous community with a Javanese cultural outlook. Sadrach understood the Gospel as a type of ngelmu but viewed it as a ngelmu plus, the highest, noblest, and true ngelmu (ngelmu sejati), distinct from and superior to other ngelmu.

As the Javanese churches continue to search for their contextual identity, they would do well to take up the challenge presented by a figure like Sadrach as their starting point. According to Ricklefs, Sadrach was the most influential of the Javanese Christians at that time over the long term. He also was a powerful evangelizer who produced a significant expansion of the Christian community. His version of Christianity preserved Javanese customs as far as possible. Ricklefs admits that, whatever the figures, it is clear that Sadrach was the most effective proselytiser Christianity had ever seen in Java. As A.G. Hoekema observes, “there is a tremendous challenge for the churches here. The Javanese Christians are right in pointing to their Christian ancestors like Sadrach, who back in the nineteenth century presented the Gospel in a Javanese way.”

The Research Question

Based on the introduction above, my main research question is: How can the Serat Wédbhata and the Ngelmu Sejati theology of Sadrach Surapranata be retrieved for the purposes of constructing an authentic Javanese contextual theology for the GKJ that improves the deficiency of the current expression of its faith as found in Huran’s Iman Kristen and as expressed in its current main doctrinal statement, the PPAG? This main question entails some subquestions. They are:

- To what extent can Wédbhata, as the most prominent work on wisdom in the culture of Java, be accommodated in formulating a contextual systematic theology?
- Is Sadrach’s contextual theology, as a significant example of Javanese Christian’s contextualizing efforts, useful in helping to formulate contextual principal teachings for the Javanese context?
- What was the purpose of Iman Kristen? What is the significance of Iman Java? How contextual is Iman Kristen?
- How adequate is the PPAG for the GKJ in expressing its faith and defining its existence and its identity in the Javanese context?

The Field and Purpose of this Study

This study is one of systematic theology. For the sake of a better understanding and actualization of the Christian faith in the Javanese context, this study is also intended to be study in contextual theology. The latter can be defined as a way of doing theology in which one takes into account the following: the spirit and message of the Gospel, the tradition of the Christian people, and the culture in which one is theologizing.\textsuperscript{31} Authentic contextualization is always prophetic, always arising out of a genuine encounter between God’s Word and his world, and moves towards the purpose of challenging and changing the situation through rootedness in and commitment to a given historical moment. Yet contextualization does not imply the fragmented isolation of peoples and cultures. While people within each cultural situation must struggle to retain their own identity and to become subjects of their own history, there is an interdependence of contexts. Contextualization thereby means that the possibilities for renewal must first of all be sensed locally and situational, yet always within the framework of contemporary independence that binds both to the problems of the past and present and to the possibilities for the future.\textsuperscript{32}

The purpose of this study is to propose a framework for formulating contextual principal teachings in the Javanese context.

**Methodology**

This research project is based upon a study of relevant literature. As is clear from the title of this study, our research maintains that formulating principal teachings in the Javanese context is not simply delivering a ready-made theological concept of what Christian faith is but integrating the Gospel into reflection on the experience of the Javanese Christian community and in the Javanese culture, communicating it within a framework that can touch and be understood by the Javanese.

Our intention is to translate a type of religious experience remote from our own into a type of religious experience so that the Gospel can be “at home.”\textsuperscript{33} Since religious experience is expressed and communicated through symbolic forms in any culture, we will interpret those cultures semiotically,\textsuperscript{34} and in the light of our intention to contextualize we shall try to


\textsuperscript{32} The term contextualization emerged in a theological discussion in the year of 1972 when the Theological Education Fund (TEF) launched their third programme mandate. See Russell, *Contextualization*, 1995, pp. 9-12.


find a possible framework that can denote the Javanese Christian identity and may stand as a suitable language for communicating the Christian faith.

**Structure**

In Chapter 1, our attention will be directed to the highly esteemed Javanese literary work: *Serat Wédbatama*. This chapter will give us a thorough understanding of the principal wisdom or core teaching of *Serat Wédbatama*. By understanding what it means for the Javanese both in the past and in the present, we will be able to understand the Javanese worldview through which the Javanese religious need is expressed.

Chapter 2 will explore Sadrach’s contextual theology as a significant example of a Javanese attempt at contextualization. As the Javanese churches continue to search for their contextual identity, they would do well to take up the challenge presented by a figure like Sadrach as their starting point. This will be done in Chapter 2.

Chapter 3 will present a critical review of the systematic theology that has been used by the GKJ up to now. In this chapter, we will review Harun Hadiwijono’s *Iman Kristen*. This work has been one of the most influential sources for teaching the Christian faith for Javanese churches. Yet no one has ‘touched’ it completely in the sense of giving a thorough critical review of it as systematic theology in general or as a Christian dogmatic text in particular.

The origin of the GKJ will be discussed. Here we will describe its identity and its relationship to its ecclesiastical tradition as well as to the Javanese context. Furthermore, we will deal with the PPAG, the present principal teachings of the GKJ. Examining the GKJ’s identity from the perspective of the principal teachings this church holds entails searching for their theological themes. This will be done in Chapter 4.

As the conclusion of this study, Chapter 5 will deal with the question of our research: How can the *Serat Wédbatama* and the *Ngelmu Sejati* theology of Sadrach Surapranata be retrieved for the purposes of constructing an authentic Javanese contextual theology for the GKJ that improves the deficiency of the current expression of its faith as found in Huran’s *Iman Kristen* and as expressed in its current main doctrinal statement, the PPAG? In this concluding chapter, we will apply the *Wédbatama* and Sadrach’s contextual theology as an example of constructing such a theology and propose a framework for the GKJ to formulate principal teachings in the Javanese context.
Chapter I. **SERAT WÉDHATAMA**

A. Introduction

As already mentioned above, Javanese literary scholars, if asked to mention some of Java’s finest literary works, may well begin with *Serat Wédhatama*. It is indeed held in high esteem, even today. There are many reasons for the prestige enjoyed by *Serat Wédhatama*. First, there is the fact that it is attributed to a royal author, K.G.P.A.A Mangkunagara IV of Surakarta. This already lends it a certain authority among cultured Javanese who look to the courts of Surakarta and Yogyakarta as the center of civilization, one of the expressions of which is found in traditional Javanese literature. Second, *Serat Wédhatama* as representing an ideal of literary beauty, to be sought in the use of noble language appropriate to its subject, with elegant vocabulary and laden with alliteration and assonance. Third, it is heavy with the authority of teaching on sublime subjects such as philosophy and mysticism, all within the range of only 72 stanzas.¹

With *Serat Wédhatama* we find ourselves near the end of the traditional or classical period of modern Javanese literature, which began with the coming of Islam to Java in the 16th century. On the one hand, modern Javanese literature continued using elements from preceding times and on the other incorporated new themes from outside. This literary tradition was developed further at the courts of Central Java, in particular in the second half of the 18th century, when peace returned after a long period of conflict and disruption.²

The word *serat* signifies a letter or book, and the term *Wédhatama* comes from the words *wédha*, which means knowledge or teaching, and from *utama*, which means lofty or supreme. Thus *Serat Wédhatama* denotes a letter or book containing lofty or noble teaching or knowledge of the highest importance.

The orginal text of *Serat Wédhatama* was written in the Javanese script and in the form of Javanese poetry known as *macapat*. I will use the text of a translation drawn directly from the original text by the Seksi Dokumentasi dan Perpustakaan Yayasan Mangadeg Surakarta, who substituted Roman script for Javanese script and then produced a free translation in Indonesian for the benefit of the wider community. This translation draws on two texts that differ mainly with respect to the number of *pupuh* (songs) and *pada* (verses).³

| The first text (100 verses) | The second text (72 verses) |

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The first was taken from a manuscript (no number given) in the Mangkunagaran Library, and the second from manuscript Br.651 in the Museum Pusat, Jakarta. I will use the second text, taking into account assessments concerning its originality as presented in this book; that is, in general terms, the style in the first 72 verses differs somewhat from the 28 verses (an additional 10 verses in *pupuh Gambuh*, added to 18 verses in *pupuh Kinanthi*) that follow it. The addition is indicated merely as a *sambetan* (continuation) rather than as an integral part of the text. It was thus not present in the oldest printed version and is almost certainly a later accretion. Stylistically, it seems uninspired, and the content represents a mere expansion. Thus, it will not be consulted here. The second text that is presented and translated here is the same as the one published in Part Three of the *Volledige werken* of K.G.P.A.A Mangkunagara IV under the supervision of T. Pigeaud in 1928. This publication was issued by the Java Institute on the occasion of the commemoration of the 120th anniversary of the birth of Mangkunagara IV at the behest of Mangkunagara VII. This second text was chosen as the basis for the translation because of its status as the ‘official’ or accepted text, as well as being the best known and most widely available. Moreover, after verse 72 of this text, the word *Iti* appears, which means ‘this much,’ and is usually used to indicate the end of a *serat*.

Stuart Robson refers to the *Serat Wédhatama* as the highest wisdom. Perhaps because, in his opinion, this literary work was composed by a *mature writer and thinker*, Robson also identified K.G.P.A.A Mangkunagara IV, a *prolific writer*, the author of many works, as the author of this work as well. I think this opinion is valid, considering that the *Serat Wédhatama* is indeed a work of the highest literary merit in terms of the quality of both its writing and its content. Because of this, and to gain a picture of K.G.P.A.A Mangkunagara IV as its author and also of the content of the *Serat Wédhatama*, these matters will be discussed below.

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7 Ibid., p. 7.
B. K.G.P.A.A Mangkunagara IV

1. Family Background

K.G.P.A.A Mangkunagara IV was the great-grandchild of Sri Mangkunagara I (Pangeran Sambernyawa) and the grandson of Sri Mangkunagara II. He was the seventh child and third son of the daughter of Sri Mangkunagara II, who was married to the son of Pangeran Hadiwijoyo Kaliabu (killed in the village of Kaliabu, Salaman while resisting the VOC). Mangkunagara IV was born on a Saturday, in the middle of the night before the day Akad Legi, on 1 Sapar, year Jimakir 1736, according to the Javanese calendar, or the year 1809 CE. He was named Raden Mas (R.M.) Sudiro. During his infancy, he was in the direct care of his grandfather, Sri Mangkunagara II, and when he turned 10, he was placed in the care of B.R.M. Sarengat or Kanjeng Pangeran Rio, also a grandson of Sri Mangkunagara II, who later became K.G.P.A.A Mangkunagara III. Kanjeng Pangeran Rio was charged with teaching R.M. Sudiro to read and write the Javanese script as well as introducing him to other branches of Javanese arts and culture. For five years R.M. Sudiro applied himself diligently to studying directly under his elder brother.

When R.M. Sudiro turned 15, he was enlisted as a cadet in the Infantri Legiun Mangkunagaran, and three years later was promoted to captain. He later married the daughter of K.P.H. Soerjomataram and was given the title R.M.H. Gondokusumo. As a recognition of his leadership, he was chosen for the role of closest and most trusted assistant to Sri Mangkunagara III. Initially, he was appointed Patihdalem, later Captain-Adjutant in the household and commandant of the Infantri Legiun Mangkunagaran with the rank of major. One of his sons later married the oldest daughter of K.G.P.A.A Mangkunagara III, B.R.Aj. Doenoek.

When Sri Mangkunagara III passed away R.M.H. Gondokusumo succeeded him on 14 Rabiulawal, year Jimawal 1781, or 24 March 1853 CE, with the title K.G.P.A.A. Prabu Prangwadono Letnan Kolonel Infantri Legiun Mangkunagaran. Confirmation of his adoption of the title K.G.P.A.A Mangkunagara IV occurred when he was 47 years old, on Rebo Kliwon 27 Sura, year Jimakir 1786, with a Letter of Authorization dated 16 August 1857 CE.

He passed away on 8 Sapar, year Jimakir 1810, or 2 September 1881 CE., having fathered 32 sons and daughters, ten of whom died in infancy. Two of these sons, one after the other, ascended the throne as Sri Mangkunagara V and VI, respectively. His body was laid to rest in the Astana Girilayu.

10 Yayasan Mangadeg Surakarta, Wédhatama, 1979, pp. 3-6,73-76; Robson, The Wédhatama, 1990, pp. 3-18.
2. **Work and Service**

His reign lasted 28 years, from 1853 until his death. During this period Mangkunagaran brought about a ‘golden age’ in politics, the military, society, economics, and culture. His service was as follows.

a. **In the Government and the Military**

He engaged in the examination and reassessment of the territorial borders of Mangkunagaran with the territory of the Kasunanan and the Sultanate of Jogjakarta. Every adult relative of Mangkunagaran and those planning to become city or regional officials were required to undergo six to nine months of military training.

b. **Society and Economics**

He created a variety of enterprises that became sources of profit for the regional officials and the widest possible field of employment for the population of the territory of Mangkunagaran. At that time coffee, tea, sugar cane and quinine plantations began to be promoted, particularly on the western slopes of Mt Lawu, in the wooded areas of the Wonogiri district, and in almost all of the territory of Mangkunagaran. Later, sugar processing factories were established in Tasikmadu, Colomadu, and Gembongan, copra processing facilities in the village of Polokarto, and a factory for bricks and roof tiles in Kemiri village.

c. **Culture**

Apart from being known as a statesman and economist, K.G.P.A.A Mangkunagara IV was also recognized as a leading artist and philosopher. In fact, he was seen as the greatest Mangkunegaran poet since R.Ng. Ranggawarsita. His works in the field of culture include *Kiai Sebet*, on the Mangkunagaran shadow puppet theater *wayang*, the presentation of *Wayang Madya*, staging portions of the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* epics under the title *Beksan Wireng*, a variety of new creative dances in the characteristic Mangkunagaran style, a fashionable jacket called the Jas Langenharjan, which remains the essential formal garment for a bridegroom up to the present in the region of Surakarta. In addition, he composed many high-quality literary works, including *Wara Yagnya* (1856), *Wara Wiyata* (1860), *Sri Yatna* (1861), *Nayaka Wara* (1862), *Candra Rina* (1863), *Laksita Raja* (1867), *Pali Atma* (1870), *Pariminta, Pariwara, Pralambhang Rara Kenya*, *Rerepen Manubara, Prayangkara, Prayasmara, Pitutur, Puii, Sendbon Langenswara, Salokatama* (1870), *Tripana, Yogatama, Darma Wasita, Darma Laksita* (1878).

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11 In the Mangkunagaran tradition this period is known as the Kala Sumbaga. *Kala* signifies a time or period and *sumbaga* means famous and very prosperous. See Ki Sabdacarakatama, *Serat Wedhatama*, Narasi, Yogyakarta, 2010, p. 10. Cf. Masatoshi Iguchi, *Java Essay: The History and Culture of a Southern Country*, Matador, Leicestershire, 2015, p. 319. Here he explains that Kala-Sumbaga was the period of *misuwur*, which meant that many people became famous and well known during their lives. This is how the term ‘golden age’ should be understood.
The majority of these works were written in the form of poetry or *tembang* and are didactic and philosophical in nature, indicating that the writer was a mature writer and thinker. One example, the best known, is the *Serat Wédhatama*. Considering the works noted above, written during a period that was ‘brief enough’ (during the 28 years of his rule, in the midst of his busy life ruling and managing the region of Mangkunagaran, he wrote dozens of literary works of high quality), Robson seems fully justified in referring to K.G.P.A.A Mangkunagara IV as a prolific writer.

C. **The Key Concept**

The *Serat Wédhatama* is a *macapat* (a form of Javanese poetry) laden with *piwulang* (instruction), or, to borrow a term from Robson, it is a *didactic poem*. The author of the *Serat Wédhatama* gives a systematic presentation of the concepts *ngèlmu luhung, laku utama, ngèlmu iku kalakoné kantbi laku*, with *sembah catur*, as totality of *piwulang* concerning primary knowledge, as I will discuss below:

1. **Pangkur**
   
a. **Translation**

   1. **Mingkar mingkur ing angkara**
      
      *Akara* karanan mardi siwi*
      
      *Sinawung remining kidung*
      
      *Sinuba sinukarta*
      
      *Mrih kretaria pakartining ngèlmu luhung*
      
      *Kang tumrap ning tanah Jawa*
      
      *Agama ageming aji*

   **English:**

   Turning away from selfish motives, as one is pleased to give instruction to sons, it is cast in the form of a delightful song, finely finished and well turned, in the hope that they may prosper in their practice of noble wisdom, that pertains to the land of Java, as the spiritual tradition adhered to by its kings.

   2. **Jinejer ning Wédhatama**
      
      *Mrih ten kemba kembenganing pambudi*
      
      *Mangka nadyan tuwa pikan*
      
      *Yen tun miki rasa*
      
      *Yekti sepi anta lir sepah samun*
      
      *Samangsané pakumpulan*
      
      *Gonyak – gonyak ngglingsemi*

   **English:**

   It is set out in the *Wédhatama*, so that they should not weary of turning it over in their minds, whereas though a man be old and bent, if he has not grasped the essence, truly he is as empty and insipid as an abandoned quid, and when people are gathered together in company, he is embarrassingly easy.

   3. **Gugu karsané priyangga**
      
      *Nora nganggo paparanh lamun angling*
      
      *Lamub ingaran baillu*

   **English:**

English:
He pleases himself what he does, and takes no forethought when he speaks, he is unwilling to be called ignorant, and is always out for compliments, but a person who has learnt to observe appearances, hides his feelings behind a pleasant expression, and his conversation is in good taste.

4. Si pengung nora nglegéwa
Sangsayarda dénira cacariwis
Ngandhar-andhar angendhukur
Kandhané nora kaprah
Saya élok alangka longkangipun
Si Wasis waskitha ngalah
Ngalingi marang si Pingging

English:
The Fool pays no attention, but prattles all the harder, they stretch on and on, pile up and up, those tall stories of his, ever stranger, with seldom a break for breath; the Wise Man finds it prudent to give in, and thus he shields the Fool.

5. Mangkono ngélmu kang nyata
Sanyatané mung wèh reseping ati
Bangab ingaran cahlok
Sukéng tyas yin din-inà
Nora kaya si Pingging anggung gumanggung
Ujungan sadina-dina
Aja mangkono wong urip

English:
Such is true wisdom, in truth it only gives a deep delight, one is happy to be dubbed a blockhead, and content to be treated with contempt. Not like the Fool, always eager for praise, and demanding attention all day long, let not your life be thus!

6. Uripé sapijan rusak
Nora mulur nataré ting saluwir
Kadi ta guwa kang sirung
Sinerung ing maruta
Gumanggung anggung anggung gumanggung
Pindha padhané si Mudha
Prandéné paksa kumaki

English:
Once his life is in confusion, he does not think things through but is a scatterbrain; he is like a dark cave, blown upon by the wind, sighing and soughing, rushing and roaring; this is the image of the Fool, nonetheless he insists on playing the wise old man.

7. Kikisané mung sapala
Palayuné ngendelken yayah wibi
Bangkit tur bungsaning lubur
Lab iya tingkang rama
Balik sira sarawungan baé during
Mring atining tata-kruma
Gon-anggon agama suci

English:
His horizons are only limited: he puts his faith in his parents, for they are sensible and of noble family! Oh yes, your father is, you on the other hand are not yet even acquainted, with the heart of good manners, that pertains to a pure way of life

8.  Sucaning jiwangganira
    Jer katara lamun pocapan pasthi
    Lamuh kator kuda nggup
    Sumengah sosongaran
    Yin mangkono kena ingaran katungkad
    Kareem ing rih kaprawiran
    Nora inak iku kaki

**English:**
The defects of your character, will surely come to light when you talk to others, you refuse to be outdone, you insist on standing out, conceited and swaggering; in that case you could be said to be absorbed in self, you think of nothing but being ‘king’ of the castle, And that is not a pleasant thing, my boy

9.  Kekerane ngèlmu Karang
    Kakarangan saking bangunan gaib
    Iku boreb paminipun
    Tan rumasuk ing jasad
    Among aneng sajabaning daging kalup
    Yen kapengkok panabaya
    Ubayane batenjani

**English:**
The secrets of the magic arts, are products of the realms of the invisible; they can be compared to a cosmetic, which does not enter the body, but remains only on the outside, my boy; If you encounter real perils, their promises will fail you.

10. Marma ing sahita-bisia
    Babasane muriha tyas basuki
    Puruitaa kang patut
    Lan trap ing angganira
    Ana uga angger-ugering kaprabun
    Abon-aboning panembah
    Kang kambah ing siyang ratri

**English:**
Therefore for as far as you are able, as the saying has it, strive for peace of mind; take tuition in what is fitting, and applicable to yourself; there are also the rules and principles of kingship, and all that pertains to worship, which have to be observed by day and night

11. Iku kaki takokena
    Marang para sarjana kang martapi
    Mring tapaking tepa tulas
    Kawawa naben bana
    Wrinanira munggub sanyataning ngèlmu
    Tan pasthi neng jauna wreda
    Tawin mudha sudra kaki

**English:**
Enquire after this my boy, with the scholars who live an austere life, in the footsteps of an auspicious example, and capable of restraining their desires; you should realize with regard to true wisdom, that it is not perforce to be found among the senior, or either the ignorant and lowly, my boy.

12. Sapantuk walyoning Allah
    Gya dumilah mangulah ngèlmu bangkit
Bangkit mikat reh mangukut
Kukutaning juwangga
Yen mangkono kena sinelut wong sepah
Liring sepah sepah hawa
Awai roroning atunggil

English:
Whoever obtains God’s inspiration, soon shines at the practice of the science of insight, he is skilled at grasping the ways of gathering up, the scattered pieces of himself; in that case he may be called an ‘old’ man, ‘old’ in the sense of free from desires, with clear insight into the two-in-one.

13. Tan samar pamoring suksma
Sinuk maya winahya ing asepi
Sinimpen telenging kalbu
Pambukkan wanagan
Tarlen saking layap-ayerap aadyut
Pindha pesating supena
Sumusup ing rasa jati

English:
He sees unclouded the union of the soul, piercing the illusion, it is revealed to him in stillness; locked in the depths of his heart, is the lifting of the veil; It is no different from the twilight twixt sleep and waking: with the swiftness of a dream, the full meaning dawns upon him

14. Sajatine kang mangkana
Wus kakenan nugrahani Hyang Widhi
Bali alaming asawung
Tan karom karameyan
Ingkang sipat wisesa winisesa wus
Mulih mula-mulanira
Mulane wong anom sami

English:
Truly such a man, has been granted grace by God; he has returned to the realm of Void, and takes no pleasure in mundane matters, what had the quality of power has itself been overpowered is done, and is reduced to its first origins, and hence young people

b. Analysis
Taken as a whole, as with the key concept in this pupuh, Serat Wédhatama contains instruction concerning ngėlmu lubung (pada 1, gatra 5) or lofty ngėlmu. According to Prawiroatmodjo, the word ngėlmu itself can be understood as ilmu (knowledge) or pengetahuan (understanding) about something.14 In this pupuh, however, the word lubung points toward a certain quality that embodies a deeper understanding than the common concept of ilmu. This is the view of Niels Mulder, who sees ngėlmu as ilmu rahasia (secret knowledge). That is, knowledge of something that moves a person to reflect on the mystery of life can serve to illustrate the fact that the word ngėlmu, as presented in the introduction, cannot be separated from how

14 See, for example, S. Prawiroatmodjo, Bausastra Djawi-Indonesia, Express dan Marfiah, Surabaya, 1957, p. 386.
Javanese people understand their existence in the universe. This understanding is clarified by means of the classification that appears in the gatra that follow: *kang tumrap neng tanah Jawa* (*pada 1, gatra 6*). The first thing to be understood concerning *ngèlmu luhung* is that it embodies a particular perspective *kang tumrap neng tanah Jawa* (“that prevails in the land of Java”). This important qualification refers to a consciousness of Javanese identity that differs from other identities. One cannot understand *ngèlmu* from any perspective other than this. Most missionaries in the colonial era had an inaccurate understanding of *ngèlmu*. E.G. Singgih explains:

in the literature of the missionaries there were two understandings of this term. The first and most prominent was negative: *ngèlmu* is the manipulation of spiritual powers to satisfy the individual’s needs. This understanding was associated with magic, mystery, superstition, and backwardness. The second understanding, held only by a minority was: *ngèlmu* represented a Javanese existential understanding of themselves within the universe.

From the first of these understandings we can see that if *ngèlmu* is not understood from the perspective of Javanese culture but from the perspective of Western culture as represented by the missionaries, then the resultant view can produce a very negative attitude toward Javanese culture. The qualification put forward by *pupuh Pangkur* as a consciousness of Javanese identity demonstrates that there are, in fact, other identities that attempt to ‘remove’ Javanese identity via negative attitudes. Confirmation of this is also presented in the following sentence: *ageming aji*. I agree with Robson who emphasizes that *agama* cannot be translated narrowly as *religion* because *agama* is more than mere outward practice, or even articles of belief. It also includes a way of thinking and living as well as an orientation toward the invisible world that is more pervasive in Java compared to the modern Western world. Robson also notes that in Sanskrit *agama* means *something handed down, tradition*. Based on this, I argue that placing the word *agama* in the sentence *agama ageming aji* indicates that *agama*, which is understood as tradition, became a matter of great importance in Java. That *agama* points to a superiority or excellence also means that tradition points toward excellence or superiority. The previous sentence, *kang tumrap neng tanah Jawa*, becomes an introduction to this sentence. Taken as a whole, these two sentences can be translated as follows: *that prevails in the land of Java, tradition points to excellence*. Here Javanese identity, with the tradition embodied in it, becomes important because of the excellence, or self-respect, of a Javanese individual is demonstrated by how he *memakai* (‘wears’ or makes use of) his own tradition. The word *ageming* in the

16 Robson presents it as “knowledge, science, but often with the extra nuances of valuable, esoteric knowledge, knowledge useful for the spirit, hence philosophy or philosophy of life.” See Robson, The *Wédhatama*, 1990, p. 4.
sentence *agama a Senging aji* comes from the word *(ng)agem*, which means *menakai* (to make use of something).

In several *pada* (verses) that follow, this *pupuh* presents reasons why it is important to possess this *ngelmu luhung*. It is argued that the one who does not possess it will become a person who *sepi asepa lir sepah samun* *(pada 2, gatra 5)*, *gonyak – gonyak ngilingsemi* *(pada 2, gatra 7)*, *gugu karasané priyangga* *(pada 3, gatra 1)*. Put briefly, the one who does not possess *ngelmu luhung*, will become *si Pengung* *(pada 4, gatra 1)*, i.e., “the Fool,” who *nora nglegawa* *(pada 4, gatra 1)*, “is totally unaware of his own foolishness.”

On the other hand, those who possess this *ngelmu luhung* will become *si Wasis* *(pada 4, gatra 6)*, “the Clever One,” *waskitha ngalab* *(pada 4, gatra 6)*, “who with wisdom chooses to yield.” An attitude of this kind points to a calm composure in the heart that at the same time indicates a quality of having this deep *ngelmu*. For this reason, this *ngelmu* is spoken of as *ngelmu kang nyata* *(pada 5, gatra 1)* because this *ngelmu*, sanyatané mung wèh resaping aji *(pada 5, gatra 2)*, “decidedly only gives a sense of calm in the heart.” It is a different matter with the *si Pengung* who always relies on *ngelmu karang* *(pada 9, gatra 1)*, i.e. *ngelmu* that is the fruit of make-believe. For *ngelmu* of this kind is just like face powder: it lies only on the surface, and does not penetrate below the surface. This kind of *ngelmu* is *kapengkok paniabaya nhayane mhalenjani* *(pada 9, gatra 6)*. It is altogether without value, because it has no use and cannot be compared with, let alone called, *ngelmu kang nyata* for it is not *nyata* (real).

In the following *pada*, sanyataning *ngelmu* is explained as *tan pasthi neng janma wreda, tuwin mudha sudra kaki* *(pada 11, gatra 5, 6, 7)*. The clarification given here reminds us that there is no absolute assessment that this *ngelmu kang nyata* is possessed only by someone who is already old, still a youth, or those who are humble. Anyone at all *antuk wahyuning Allah*,20 gya dumilah mungalab ngelmu bangkit *(pada 12, gatra 1, 2)*. In this *pada* God becomes the source that is the basis of the human potential to assimilate *ngelmu*. This capacity to *mikat reb mangikut kesutaning jiwangga* makes a person *kena sinebut wong sepah* *(pada 12, gatra 3, 4, 5)*. What is appealing here is that a person can be called *sepah* if he (or she) is already *mikat reb mangikut*.

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19 The word *karang* in *ngelmu Karang* perhaps comes from the term *rekaan* (invention or fabrication) which is *karangan* in Javanese. So this *ngelmu* only represents a fabrication, not something real. Cf. Robson, *The Wédhatama*, 1990, p. 18. Here Robson explains *ngelmu Karang* as ‘the magic arts.’ Further, he cites Drewes who writes: “As is known, Javanese literature more than once mentions the famous religious school *(pesanlen*tren) which is supposed to have been established in *Karan* in former times and where mysticism, and everything which was associated with it in the practices of the brotherhoods *(tarekat)*, was energetically pursued.... The name of the Karan school has furthermore remained known because the performances given by adepts in trance spread from Karan over the whole Java under the name of *nelmu Karan*, the arts of the *fakir*.” See G.W.J. Drewes, *The Admonitions of Sebari*, Nijhoff, The Hague, 1969, p. 11.

20 The word *sapatuk* in the literary vocabulary of the Javanese language is expressed as *tembung garba*. As is the case with the word *Wédhatama*, which is a combination of the words *wèdha* and *utama*, the word *sapatuk* is a combination of the words *sapa* and *antuk*, which literally mean ‘whoever obtains.’ For further clarification of *tembung garba*, see Daryanto, *Kawruh Basa Jawa Pepak*, Apollo, Surabaya, 1999, pp. 110-111.
kukutan ing jiwangga. Although it can also mean tua (old), the word wreda in the preceding pada is entirely different from the word sepub. A wreda person (old in body) is by no means certain to be sepub because sepub means sepi bawa and awas roorning atunggil. Javanese culture recognizes that there are ngélmu kasepuhan that are of a higher status than ngélmu kanoman. If ngélmu kanoman are associated with kanuragan (the physical manifestation of spiritual powers, such as the physical tolerance of or ability to avoid or, on the other hand, to undertake an attack of some kind either with bare hands or with some kind of blunt or sharp weapon), then ngélmu kasepuhan is closely connected with matters concerning the relationship (harmony) between the microcosmos and the macrocosmos, as is evident, for example, in the act of healing (not only physical healing but most of all in connection with the spiritual condition) and petengan (calculation), which calls for kawaskithan (wisdom) and clarity of panggraita (intuition). In my view, this sense of this awas roorning atunggil points to an expression that is very well known in the worlds of Javanese mysticism, pamoring kawula Gusti. This is indicated clearly by the word pamor in the following sentence in pada 13 gatra 1, i.e., tan samar pamoring sukma. Thus someone who is already sepub is a person who is able to understand how to gather (reunite) something of himself that has been scattered in disorder, because he is able to master his physical desires and always remain aware of the meaning of the perfection of life, pamoré kawula Gusti.

Pupuh Pangkur, which closes with the sentence mingkar mingkur ing angkara, which is associated with the sound pangkur from the word mingkur, is closed with the exclamation mulane wong anom sami, which is associated in turn with the sound sinom from the word anom, which reperesents a call to wong anom (young people) to undertake something that will be made clear in the following pupuh, Sinom.21

2. Sinom
   a. Translation

   1. Nulada laku utama
      Tumrap ing wong tanah Jawi
      Wong agung ing Ngokiriganda
      Panembahan Senapati
      Kapati amarsudi
      Sudane bawa lan nepsu
      Pinesu tapa brata
      Tanapi ing sijang ratri
      Amamangun karyenak tyasing tasama

   English:
   Take as model an excellent rule of life, appropriate to the people of Java: That of the Great Man of Mataram: Panembahan Senapati, with all his strength he devoted himself, to the lessening of desire and

passionate impulses; by applying himself to ascetic practices both day and night, he strove to please his fellow men.

2. Samangane pasamuwan
Mamangun marta martani
Sinambi ing sahen mangsa
Kala-kaluning asep
Lalana teki-teki
Gayuh geyonganing kayun
Kayungyun enening tyas
Sanityasa pinribatin
Pangub panggah veguh diubar lawan mendra

English:
Whenever he was in company, he strove to be gentle and comforting, but at the same time whenever he retired to solitude, he would roam with the sole aim of grasping what his heart yearned for: he was captivated by peace of mind, and constantly took pains to find it, firmly and steadfastly he resisted the desire for food and sleep

3. Saben mendra casking wisma
Lalana lalakan sepi
Ngingsep sepahing sopana
Mrib pana prauweng kapti
Tis-tising tyas marundi
Mardawuning budya tulas
Mesu reh kastudaran
Neng tepining jalanidhi
Sruning brata kataman walyu dyatmika

English:
Each time he set forth from his home, to wander in desolate regions, he would savour the hardships of the way, to gain insight and understanding of his desires. He strove for inner detachment, and the amenity of sincerity, he exerted himself to the utmost for true virtue, and there on the shore of the ocean, in the midst of his austerities he was visited by an inward sign

4. Wikan wengkoning samodra
Kederen widi den-ideri
Kinemat kanmot ing driya
Ringem sayegen dadi
Demudya angratoni
Nenggih Kangjing Ratu Kidol
Dede gayuh gogana
Umara maruk maripih
Sor prahawa lan wong agung Ngeksiganda

English:
He surveyed the circumference of the sea, roundabout and having swept it with his eye, he entered it into his heart by magic, where he held it no bigger than a fistful, so that he might take dominion over it, and verily the Queen of the South Sea, arose soaring into the sky, and came before him in beseeching, her majesty inferior to the Great Man of Mataram.

5. Dahat denira aminta
Sinupeket pangkat kanthi
Jroning alam palimunan
Ing pasahan sahen sepi
Sumanggem anyanggemi
Ing karsa kung wut tinatmu
Pamrihe mung aminta
Supangate teki-teki
Nora ketang token janggat suku jaja

English:
Earnestly she begged, to be allied to him as companion, in the realms of the invisible, whenever he frequented lonely places. She took upon herself to undertake, whatever he might determine as his wish; her intention was merely to beg, the blessing from his austerities, never heeding all the pains it might entail.

6. Prajanjine abipraya
Satrun-turnun ing wuri
Mangkonoro trahing awirya
Yen amasah mera budi
Dumadya glii demugji
Iya ing sakarasanipun
Wong agung Ngakriganda
Ngrahane prapteng mangkin
Trah-tumerah darahe padha wihawa

English:
They concluded an agreement, for all his descendants in later days: thus those of noble house, should they apply themselves to mental discipline, would speedily achieve, whatever they desired, the Great Man of Mataram, this favour bestowed on him has lasted till today: generation by generation those of his blood have enjoyed the same power.

7. Ambawani tanah Jawa
Kang padha jumeneng aji
Satriya dilya sumbai
Tan Iyan trahing Senapati
Pan iku pantes uji
Tinulad labanipun
Ing sakawasani
Enake lan jaman mangkin
Sayektine tan bias nggpleki kuna

English:
They have held sway over the land of Java, those who reigned as king, famed as excellent noblemen, none other than the seed of Senapati; so it is fitting also to take their merits as example, with all your strength, as befits this present age, which in fact can never match the past.

8. Leweng kalamun timimbang
Aurip tanpa prihatin
Nangin ta ing sumen mangkya
Pre mudha kang den-karemi
Manulad nelad Nabi
Nayakeng rat Gusri Rasul
Anggung giuwun unhabak
Saben seba mampir masjid
Ngajap-ajap muffat tibaning drajat

English:
It is preferable when compared, to living without care. However at the present time, what the youth are obsessed with, is taking as their model and example the Prophet, guide of the World, the Apostle of God. They constantly make this ground for boasting, and whenever they attend court they call first at the mosque, in the hope of a miracle and carrying off an official position.

9. Anggung anggubel sarengat
Saringane tan den-wruhi
Dalil dalaning gemahe
Kiyase nora nukani
Katungkal mungkul sami
Bengkrakan mring magid agung
Kalamun maca kuthub
Lalagne Dhandhang-Gendhis
Swara arum ngumandang cengkok Palaran

English:
Constantly they appeal to Islamic law, but the essence they do not grasp; Of the explanation of Quranic
texts, the path of consensus, and argument by analogy they know nothing. They give themselves over
assiduously, to swaggering off to the Great Mosque; when reading the sermon, they adopt the metre
Dhandhanggula, with a sweet voice echoing long in the Palaran style.

10. Lamun sira paksa nulad
Tuladhaning Kangeng Nabi
nger kadohan panjangkah
Wateke tan betab kaki
Rohne ta sira Jawi
Sathibhik bae wus cukap
Aywa guru alempan
Nelad kas ngeleng leg pekih
Lamun pengkab pangangkah yekti karahmat

English:
If you insist on imitating, the example of the Prophet, oh my dear you overreach yourself: as a rule you
will not hold out long. Seeing that you are Javanese, just a little will be enough. Do not set your heart on
praise from others, imitating precisely and acting just like a scholar of Islamic law; providing you are
firm in your aspirations, you will surely be blessed.

11. Nanging enak ngupaboga
Rohne ta tintab langip
Apa ta suwiteng nata
Tani tanpi agrami
Mangkono munggah mani
Padine wong dahat cubluk
During wrub cara Arab
Jawaku bae tan ngenting
Parandene paripeksa mulang putra

English:
However it is best to try to earn a living, seeing that we are created needy - whether you be in the
service of the king, a farmer or again a trader. Such is my opinion that a person who is very dull - I
know no Arabic, and even my Javanese is not perfect; nevertheless I make bold to teach my sons.

12. Saking duk maksib taruma
Sadibola wu ngjakoni
Aberag marang agama
Maguru angering haji
Sawadine tyas mani
Banget wedine ing besuk
Pronatan akir jaman
Tan tutug keseluk ngahdi
Nora koher sembahyang ga tinimbalan

English:
From the time when I was still a young fellow, for a while I led an ascetic life, I was passionately
religious, and took lessons from any Haji who happened by. The actual motive in my heart, was a great
fear of the future, of what is ordained for the end of time, but before I could finish I had to go into
service - I had no time for prayers, for I was soon summoned
13. Marang ingkang aiung pangan
Yen kasuwen den-dukani
Bubrah kawur ing tyasingwang
Lir kiyamat salen ari
Bot Allah apa Gusti
Tambuh-tambuh runahingun
Lawas-lawas gruita
Rehne ta suta priyayi
Yen muriha dadi kaum temah nistha

English:
By him who supplied my daily bread, and if I was late I would be blamed; my heart was disturbed and puzzled, and each day was like the Day of Judgement. Which was more important, God or my lord? I was always in a quandary as to what to do. By and by I realized, that as I was the son of an official, if I should strive to be a Kaum I would degrade myself.

14. Tuwin ketib suragama
Pan inggun nora winaris
Angur baya ngantepana
Pranatan wajiling urip
Lampahan angludari
Ahurining pra lulubur
Kana-kumununara
Kongsi tumekeng samangkin
Kikisane tan Iyan among ngapaloga

English:
And a Ketib or Suragama likewise, for I had not inherited such a place. It would probably be preferable to adhere to, the rule that in life it is one's duty, to follow the course, traced out by our forefathers, from the earliest times, right down to the present day, which amounts to no more than merely earning a living.

15. Bonggan kang tan mrelokena
Mungguh ugering aurip
Uripe lan tri prakara
Wirya arta tri winasis
Kalumun kongsi sepi
Saka wilangan tetelu
Telas tilasing janma
Aji godhong jati aking
Temah papa papariman ngulandara

English:
On the basic principles of life - one's life has three things: status, property and, thirdly, skills. If you come to be lacking, in this threesome, you have lost all trace of humanity, are worth no more than dry teak leaves, and end up in misery beggary and vagabondage.

16. Kang wu waspada ing patrap
Mangayut ayat winasis
Wasana wating jinwonga
Melok tanpa aling-aling
Kang ngaling kalingling
Wenganing rasa tumlawung
Keksi saliring jaman
Angelangut tanpa tepi
Yeku arun tapa tapaking Hyang Suksma
English:
He, who has clear insight into the right course of action, is skilled at pursuing his aims, till finally the core of his own self, is plain to see without a veil. That which veiled it he examines closely, and then the essence is laid wide open; he views all ages, his mind's eye ranging limitlessly - this is what is meant by practising austerities in the footsteps of Hyang Sukma

17. Mangkono janma utama
    Taman tumanem ing sepi
    Ing saben rikala mangsa
    Masah amamazuh budi
    Lairi anetepi
    Ing reb kasatriyanipun
    Susila anor-ruya
    Wigya met tyasing sasami
    Yeku arun wong bacak berag agami

English:
Such is the perfect man - he is accustomed to being deeply rooted in solitude, time and again, he subdues his will and disciplines his designs, in outward things he fulfils, the duties of his noble station, he is well-mannered self-effacing, and skilled at winning the hearts of his fellow men. This is what is meant by a man who is a paragon and zealous for his philosophy.

18. Ing jaman mengko pan ora
    Arahe para taruni
    Yen antuk tuduh kang nyata
    Nora pisan den-lakoni
    Banjur jujurken kapti
    Kakaknu aria winuruk
    Ngandelke gurunira
    Pandhitane praja sidik
    Tur wus manggon panucung me ring makripat

English:
Nowadays that is not, the course followed by young people, when they get clear directions, they do not put them into practice at all, they have their own way, and would even teach their grandfather, they put their trust in their own masters - their pundits are clever and clairvoyant! And they have a habit of making a riddle out of seeing God

b. Analysis

As a continuation of the appeal to wong anom as expressed in at the close of pupuh Pangkur, pupuh Sinom opens with an analysis of what is best for the wong anom to do. This nulada laku utama (pada 1, gatra 1), set the highest example of laku. The word laku in this sentence becomes a key concept in this pupuh. Laku itself is frequently understood as the cara or means by which some specific goal can be attained. If this word laku has the suffix –an, thus becoming lakon, then its meaning is crita or story. If the word laku has both the prefix ng- and the suffix -i, thus becoming nglakoni, then it means to carry out something, with the sense of undertaking something as a way of obtaining something by means of definite steps. The word lakon itself is taken from the world of wayang and indicates the basic theme of the entire story of a particular wayang performance to be presented. Before a wayang performance begins, it is usual for the dalang (the narrator and puppeteer) to announce that the
performance will follow a particular lakon, for example, Bima Suci. This means that the wayang performance will not deviate from the plot or the set episodes in the story of Bima Suci. In this pupuh, however, the word utama indicates a certain quality that gives laku a conception that is deeper than just the idea. According to Robson, laku is a rule of life, a discipline, an ascetic practice. This does not imply a choice of one out of three but embraces all three, with all three terms loose synonyms of one another. Laku cannot be separated from life, discipline, and practice. It is an attitude toward life based on the understanding that this life possesses a definite rule for living that must be followed in a disciplined manner, by means of certain ascetic practices. The chief (utama) qualification of laku makes clear that what must be exemplified by wong anom is not a commonplace attitude towards life. The following sentence, tumrap ing wong tanah Jawi (pada 1, gatra 2) emphasizes that what is to be exemplified by wong anom, although representing an attitude to life that is not commonplace, or eminent, is nevertheless something that is applicable to a Javanese person and because of this points to an attitude toward life that is utama and thus also points to a Javanese person who is also utama, i.e. wong agung ing Ngksiganda. This one is Panembahan Senapati. The word Ngksiganda actually points toward Mataram, as the kingdom in which Panembahan Senapati became king. At that time, Ngksiganda became the name of a major road in the region of Kotagede, an old city to the south of Yogyakarta, which became the capital of the Kingdom of Mataram during the reign of Panembahan Senapati. In fact, the word Ngksiganda itself is a combination of the words aksi (to see) and ganda (smell), which are associated with the words mata (eye) and arum (fragrance) or mata arum, which later became Mataram. The word aksi (to see) is related to mata (eye), while the word ganda (smell) is related to arum (fragrance). Given these associated words, the test can be read as mata melihat bau harum, which can be understood as a testimony that, during the reign of Panembahan Senapati, people could experience the fragrance of the name of the Kingdom of Mataram.

The laku utama that should be exemplified by wong anom are: kapati amarsudi sudane hawa lan nepsu pinesu tapa brata (pada 1, gatra 5, 6, 7), tanapi ing siyang ratri amamangun karyenak tyasing sasama (pada 1, gatra 8, 9), samangane pasamuan mamangun marta martani (pada 2, gatra 1, 2), sinambi ing saben mangsa kala-kalaning asepi lalana teki-teki (pada 2, gatra 3, 4, 5), gayah geyonganing kayun: kayungyun ening tyas, sanityasa pinrihatin, puguh panggah cegah dhahar lawan nendra (pada 2, gatra 6, 7, 8, 9), saben mendra saking wisma lalana laladan sepi ngising sepupuh sopana (pada 3, gatra 1, 2, 3), mrah pana pranaweng kapti tis-tising tyas marsudi (pada 3, gatra 4, 5) dan mardawaning budya

24 Compare the sentence tumrap ing wong tanah Jawi in pada 1 of pupuh Sinom with the sentence kang tumrap neng tanah Jawa in pada 1 of pupuh Pangkur as a confirmation of Javanese identity.
The above discussion shows the association of *laku* with *rule of life*, which in a Javanese context means *amamangun karyenak tyasing sasama* (*pada 1, gatra 9*) and *mamangun marta martani* (*pada 2, gatra 2*). The first sentence, if compared with the sentence *guga karsane priyanga* (*pupuh Pangkur pada 3, gatra 1*), indicates a consciousness that life (in Java) implies a definite *rule* concerning one’s attitude toward one’s *sasama* (one’s fellow human beings). A person cannot live just to please himself because he must pay attention to the needs of his fellow human beings, all the more so if they live in a *pasamuan* (community). A person must carry himself in such a way that there is no opportunity for *papumpulan gonyak – gonyak ngblingsemi* (*pada 2, gatra 7*). Discipline is also clearly indicated in the word: *kapati* (sincerely) in the sentence *kapati amarsudi* (*pada 1, gatra 5*), *pinesu* (strive with all your strength) in the sentence *pinesu tapa brata* (*pada 1, gatra 7*), *siyang ratri* (day and night) in the sentence *tanapi ing siyang ratri* (*pada 1, gatra 8*), *gayuh* (work to achieve) in the sentence *gayuh geyonganing kayun* (*pada 2, gatra 7*), *sanityasa* (at all times) in the sentence *sanityasa pinrihatin* (*pada 2, gatra 8*), *puguh panggah* (hold firmly to your standpoint, be tenacious), in the sentence *puguh panggah egab dhabar lawan nendra* (*pada 2, gatra 9*), and the word *mesu* (strive with all your might) in the sentence *mesu reb kasudaran* (*pada 3, gatra 7*). Ascetic practice in this *pupuh* can be seen clearly in, for example, the *tapa brata* (*pada 1, gatra 7*), *lalana laladan sepi* (*pada 2, gatra 5*), *sanityasa pinrihatin* (*pada 2, gatra 8*), *egab dhabar lawan nendra* (*pada 2, gatra 9*), and *lalana laladan sepi* (*pada 3, gatra 2*). It is also important to clarify here the presence of Kangjeng Ratu Kidul (beginning of *pada 4*), whose authority was inferior to that of Panembahan Senapati, in the sentence *sor prabawa lan wong agung Ngrokxiqanda* (*pada 4, gatra 9*), following *kataman walyun dyatmika* (*pada 3, gatra 9*). Aside from pro and con arguments concerning the existence or non-existence of the person of Kangjeng Ratu Kidul, for Javanese people her meeting with Panembahan Senapati embodies philosophical and cultural consequences that are sufficiently important. Historically, as recorded in the *Babad Tanah Jawi*, to confront the issue launched by Pajang that misled and goaded people concerning Raden Sutawijaya (the personal name of Panembahan Senapati), Ki Juru Martani (brother in-law of the father of Raden Sutawijaya, Ki Ageng Pemanahan, a specialist in war tactics, turned the issue of competition into a mystery story that attracted a great deal of attention and exalted the vigor of Raden Sutawijaya with respect to his meeting

25. Compare the understanding of *rule of life* here with the clarification of Franz Magnis Suseno concerning the general coordinates of Javanese ethics that embody an appropriate internalized attitude, appropriate actions, appropriate place, and appropriate understanding in life in this world. See Franz Magnis Suseno, *Etika Jawa-Sebuh*, 1999, pp. 138-167.

with Kangjeng Ratu Kidul, a prominent ‘fictional’ figure introduced as the ruler of the South Sea spiritually endowed with great spiritual power in the kingdom of the unseen world. The story of this competition, after it became widely known in this way, influenced the general opinion of the people of Pajang and restored the good name of Raden Sutawijaya in their eyes. The supernatural powers of Raden Sutawijaya became famous and were admired. The impact of this story was so remarkable that it later became a legend and to the present remains a folk tale in Pajang and Mataram. From a philosophical perspective, the word kidul, which means south, represents the common people because poverty is always identical with the people. The people in this context are associated with the sea, which represents the attitude of momot or the capacity to contain or take in. Ratu Kidul became a personification of the people who formed a couple with a king. In cultural terms, only a king who is ‘married’ to his people is able to have the attitude of momot because he is oriented to the needs of the little people. In this way he becomes the pengayom (protector) of Javanese culture, which is based on rule of the people. Because of this, the term tahta untuk rakyat (throne for the people) became a familiar one during the dynasty of the Kingdom of Mataram.27

After clarifying the example that must be followed, this pupuh presents a critique of things usually enjoyed by the wong anom. Pra mudha kang den-karemi, manulad nelad Nabi, nayakeng rat Gusti Rasul, anggung ginawe umbak, saben seja mampir masjid, ngajap-ajap mujijat tibaning drajat (pada 8, gatra 4-9). Anggung anggubel sarengat, saringane tan den-wruhi, dalil dalaning ijemak, kejase nora mikani, katungkul mungkul sami, bengkrakan mring masjid agung (pada 9, gatra 1-6). A reminder is issued against attitudes like these: lamun sira paksa nulad, tuladhaning Kangjeng Nabi, nger kadohan panjangkah, wateke tan betah kaki, rehne ta sira Jawi, satibhik baue wus cukup, aywa guru aleman, nelad kas nyebligi pekih, lamun pengkuh pangangkah yekti karahmat (pada 10, gatra 1-9). A ‘neutral’ attitude is very evident (if not to be described as anti) in the author of the Serat Wédhatama with respect to Islam, within a framework of thought that always sees Javanese identity as the chief thing to be emphasized. I concur with Robson that “the message of the Wédhatama is one of cultural identity. It says: we are Javanese, and we should be true to ourselves and follow our own way in the realm of spirituality.”28 In my opinion, this matter is influenced, to a greater or lesser degree, by the experience of the writer who perhaps witnessed the attitude of the pra mudha of that time who tried to imitate the Prophet (Muhammad) solely as a means of exalting themselves. In the same way, attending mosque with the goal of increasing one’s hopes of attaining a high rank or position without the effort of hard work and evident diligence but simply hoping for a miracle was also to be

condemned, not to mention the habit of wrestling unceasingly with religious laws without understanding their essence. Attitudes like this undoubtedly became a wedge because the pra mudha in the end no longer had the attitudes of Javanese people while at the same time the quality of their practice of Islam could not be called good. Because of this the ‘reminder’ about their Javanese identity in the clause rebne ta sira Jawi became very important.

In the final sentence above containing the reminder is the clause: lamun pengkab pangangkab yekti karahmat (pada 10, gatra 9), which means “provided there is diligence in teaching hopes will certainly be blessed,” which then becomes the opening of a confirmation that life in this world is associated closely with three important matters (pada 15, gatra 4): wirya (power), arta (property), and winasis (skill). Whoever does not mrelokena (have a need) has a wrong attitude in the sense of bonggan, i.e., is false to oneself because if one does not have any one of these three things, he is no longer human, his life is of no more value than godhong jati aking (dried out teak leaves).

What is of interest is that in the following pada (16) the discussion is focused on winasis in the context of mangaynt ayat as a sign of a person who is wus waspada ing patrap (pada 16, gatra 1, 2). Those who are winasis in this are wosing jiwangga melok tanpa aling-aling, kang ngalingi kalingling, wenganing rasa tumlawung keksi saliring jaman angelangut tanpa tepi (pada 16, gatra 3 - 8), that is, the core of their spirit will be clearly seen because there is no longer any screen. The screen, which had at first been a barrier, can now be seen clearly and is transparent. So taste/sensation itself is then clearly opened. Something like this is spoken of as tapa tapaking Hyang Suksma, surrendering oneself completely to the power of the Lord. Those who do this are already nuladha laku utama (pada 1, gatra 1) and will be referred to as janma utama (pada 17, gatra 1), people who are utama.

3. Pucung
   a. Translation
      1. Ngèlmu iku
         Kalakone kanthi laku
         Lékase lawan kas
         Tegesu kas nyantosani
         Sëtya budha pangkese dur angkara

      English:
      Knowledge, goes together with practice, it is effected with firmness; the meaning of firmness is steeling oneself, that is, with determination striving to master the evil urges of egotism.

      2. Angkara gung
         Ning angga anggung gumulung
         Gogolonganira
         Triloka lekere kongsi
         Yen den-ambar ambabar dadi rubeda

      English:
Selfishness dominates, in man’s physical being; they roll ever onward, all its kinds united, till they encompass the three worlds - if given its head it will swell up and bring trouble.

3. **Beda lamun**  
Wus sengsem rebing asamun  
Semune ngaksama  
Sasamane bangia sirip  
Sarwa sareh saking Mardi martotama

**English:**  
It is quite different when, one loves to be quiet, appearing to forgive, one's fellow men who are in error, calm in all things through devoting oneself to the highest gentleness.

4. **Taman limut**  
Durgameng tyai kang weh limput  
Kereni ing karanat  
Karana karohan ing sib  
Sibing sukma ngebuda sabardi gengira

**English:**  
Not dismayed, by the uneasiness of mind that causes uncleanness, but inundated in marks of divine favour, by being overwhelmed by love, God's love which grows as great as a mountain

5. **Yeku patut**  
Tinulad-tinurut tinurut  
Sapitubuhira  
Aja kaya jaman mangkin  
Keb pra mudha mulhi dihari rapal makna

**English:**  
That is the one fitting, to be always taken as an example, and all his directions followed. Let it not be like the present time: many are the young people who boast of their theological knowledge

6. **Durung pecus**  
Kasusu kaselak hecus  
Amakeni rapal  
Kaya sayid wetsu Mesir  
Pendhak-pendhak angendhak gunaning janma

**English:**  
Though not yet qualified, they are in a hurry to show off; the way they interpret Arabic texts, is like a Sayid from Egypt: every time they belittle the abilities of others.

7. **Kang kadyeku**  
Kalebu wong ngaku-aku  
Akale alangka  
Elok jawane den-mohi  
Paksa langkah ngangkah met kawruh ing Mekah

**English:**  
Such persons can be reckoned as frauds: where is their common sense? Oddly enough they deny their Javanese soul, and at all costs bend their steps to Mecca in search of knowledge.
English:
They do not comprehend, that the core of the essence which they seek, is closely tied to their own self; providing you practise hard, it makes no difference if you are here or there.

9. Uger lugu
Denta mrih pradehukang kalbu
Yen Kabul kabuki
Ing drajat kajating urip
Kaya kang wus winalha sekar Srinata

English:
If only you are sincere, in aiming at a thorough understanding, when this is granted then the way is opened, to the station you desire in life, as already revealed in the Sinom canto

10. Basa ngélmu
Mapakate lan panunu
Patabe lan tapa
Yen satiýa lanah Jawi
Kuna-kuna kang ginilut tri prakara

English:
But as for knowledge, its acceptance is achieved by considered judgement, and it is made effective through asceticism. The Javanese nobleman, from olden times has cultivated three things:

11. Lila lamun
Kelangan nora gegetun
Tríma yen kataman
Sak, serik sameng dumadi
Tri lewawu nalangta srah ing Bathara

English:
He acquiesces when, stricken by loss, and is not taken back; he resigns himself when a victim, of annoyance from his fellow creatures; and thirdly he willingly and humbly surrenders himself to the Lord;

12. Bathara gung
Inguger graning jajantung
Jenek Hyang Wisesa
Sana patenenan súci
Nora kaya si Mudha mudhar angkara

English:
The Lord Most High, is firmly seated in the pinnacle of his heart, and the Almighty is well pleased, to be enthroned there in a pure retreat. This is not like the young fellow who gives free rein to selfish impulses:

13. Nora uwus
Kareme angawu-uwus
Uwos tan ana
Mung jajine muring-muring
Kaya buta buteng betah nyamaya

English:
Without an end, is his addiction to sharp words - they have no content, it is just for the sake of grumbling, like an irascible demon who keeps on tormenting people.

14. Sakeh luput
Ing angga tansah linimput
Linimput ing sabe
English:
All the faults, in himself are always obscured, covered up with words, on the assumption that no-one will notice; being refractory, his malicious desires he makes into a cudgel.

\[15.\]  

\textit{Durung punjul} \hspace{1em}  
\textit{Kasusu kaselak jajul} \hspace{1em}  
\textit{Kaseelan bawa} \hspace{1em}  
\textit{Capet kapepepan pamrib} \hspace{1em}  
\textit{Tangen nedja anggamlub mring Hyang Wisesa}

English:
He has not yet attained prominence, yet it is already too much for him; since he is stuffed tight with passions, he falls short and fails to achieve his object; he is far from intending to become an intimate of the Almighty.

b. Analysis

After \textit{pupuh 1} described \textit{ngèlmu} (luhung), and \textit{pupuh 2} outlined \textit{laku} (utama), \textit{pupuh 3} now presents a combination of the two preceding \textit{pupuh} and becomes a key section for the entire \textit{serat}. \textit{Ngèlmu iku kalakoné kauthi laku}. Within the framework of the \textit{Serat Widhatama}, this means that \textit{ngèlmu luhung} will only \textit{kelakon} (come to be) if accompanied by \textit{laku utama}, and this itself must \textit{dilekasi} (be initiated) with \textit{kas} (sincerity of heart), \textit{lekase lawan kas} (\textit{pada 1, gatra 3}).

\textit{Tegese kas} (the purpose of sincerity of heart) is \textit{nyantosani} (to give peace), \textit{tegese kas nyantosani} (\textit{pada 1, gatra 4}). It is very interesting that sincerity of heart is associated with bringing tranquility or a feeling of calm, quiet. To begin \textit{laku}, a state of \textit{kas} (sincerity of heart) one must wish to \textit{nglakoni} and at the same time be able to \textit{nyantosani} (bring about tranquility). This is of great value because it is not uncommon for a person to seek something, even in sincerity of heart, without bringing about a sense of calm and quiet, particularly for the individual himself and others, and thus destroys the harmony of his life as a Javanese.\(^29\)

‘Close’ to \textit{pada 1}’s “requirement” that \textit{ngèlmu} can \textit{kelakon} is that a situation of \textit{kas} for beginning \textit{laku}, other than having the quality of \textit{nyantosani}, must be accompanied by a commitment to \textit{setya budy a rongkasa} (\textit{pada 1, gatra 5}), that is, a firm determination or strength of heart, which is not an easy thing. This is because \textit{angkara gung neng angga anggung gumulung} (\textit{pada 2, gatra 1, 2}), a greedy disposition (\textit{sifat angkara}), always accompanies the human person. \textit{Yen den-unbar ambahar dadi rubeda} (\textit{pada 2, gatra 5}), if it is not restrained it is certain to break out and bring about disaster. In this connection it is also important to note that a critique of \textit{pra mudha} attitudes appears again in the following \textit{pada}: \textit{kaya sayid weton Mesir}, \hspace{1em}  

\(^{29}\) Suseno, \textit{Etika Jawa-Sebuah}, 1999, pp. 82-137, particularly pp. 133-137, concerning the viewpoint of the Javanese world, which emphasizes the understanding of \textit{rasa} and the experience of \textit{slamet}, achieved by way of a situation of \textit{tentrem ing manah} (quietness of heart) as awareness. See also pp. 51-54, particularly p. 54 concerning the condition of \textit{tentrem} (peace, quiet).
pendhak-pendhak angendhak gunaning janma (pada 6, gatra 4, 5), i.e., behaving like a sayid from Egypt and always belittling others. People like this kalse wong ngaku-aku (pada 7, gatra 2) in reality or are like those who only make an outward confession while akale alangka (pada 7, gatra 3), without thinking about it. This kind of thing certainly causes astonishment. Eloke, jawane den mohi (pada 7, gatra 4), they are Javanese people, but they ngemohi (reject) their Javanese identity. Instead, they paksa langkab ngangkab met kawrub ing Mekah (pada 7, gatra 5), that is, they seek knowledge in Mecca.

It is very clear that Javanese identity is again under pressure. This is also seen in the following pada, which points out the consequence of this attitude of the pra mudha who ngemohi (reject) their Javanese identity: they nora wendh rosin rasa kang rinurub lumeket ing angga (pada 8, gatra 1, 2, 3) or do not see that the essential feelings they are searching for are in fact within them. It is important to be reminded in this connection concerning the existence of rasa, which is closely connected with awareness of the numinous unity between people, the world, and the supernatural realm in pada 8, which states that rosin rasa kang rinurub lumeket ing angga. The characteristic of kas or sincerity of heart that precedes laku in the context of ngèlmu iku kalakoné kanthi laku must enable a person to see the existence of ros (kernel in rasa, not simply apparent rasa or something that is only superficial, as already noted above in the example of the sayid from Egypt, always belittling others and proclaiming himself clever, without having any ideas of his own. As long as the existence of this rosin rasa (kernel of rasa) that lumeket ing angga is unable to be sensed and as long as Javanese identity is diemohi, then ngèlmu will not be kelakon. There is no hope that it is possible to possess ngèlmu. One can compare the philosophy contained in the mystical story of Dewaruci, which shows that the source of the water of life is not to be found in the external world but only within the human person himself. By penetrating to the real foundation of the self, a person may reach the goal of his life, that is, attain pamori kawula Gusti.

From this pupuh, particularly pada 2 to 8, we can see that there is always a ‘struggle’ within the individual between angkara yang neng angga anggung gunuling (pada 2, gatra 1, 2) and rosin rasa, which is lumeket ing angga (pada 8, gatra 1, 2, 3). Because of this, there needs to be commitment first of all to setya budya pangekese dur angkara (pada 1, gatra 5), so that this angkara does not become a calamity. Second, there needs to be a willingness to develop a lugu attitude (pada 9, gatra 1), i.e., the attitude appropriate to a Javanese person, with all the complexities of Javanese identity. He should not be allowed to arrive at ngemohi, his identity as a Javanese person, if he only imitates or makes a superficial affirmation of another culture while having no true knowledge of it.

30 Compare this with the variety of understanding in Javanese ethics, see Suseno, *Etika Jawa-Sebuh*, 1999, pp. 157-159.
After *pada* 1 to *pada* 9 made clear that ngèlmu can only *kelakon* if it is accompanied by *laku*, the following *pada* (10-15) assert that discussion of ngèlmu must be harmonised with detailed examination. Basa ngèlmu *mupakate lan panemu* (*pada* 10, *gatra* 1, 2). The *panemu* or examination meant here refers to data that is gathered *satriya tanab Jawi* as samples, which indicates that *kuna-kuna, kang ginilut tri prakara* (*pada* 10, *gatra* 5), which were followed and carried on with sincerity from three former times are three in number, namely, *lila lamun kelangan nora gogetun, trima yen kataman sak serik sameng damadi, legawa nalanga sah ing Bathara* (*pada* 11, *gatra* 1-5). *First* is an attitude of willingness, *i.e.*, having no regrets if something is lost or given away; *second*, one needs to always remain patient in the face of unfair prejudice from one’s fellows; *third*, one needs to display an honest and straightforward nature with complete submission to the Lord. This is what is meant by *basa ngèlmu mupakate lan panemu*, while the sentence following, *pasahe lan tapa* (*pada* 10, *gatra* 3), shows how the earlier discussion on ngèlmu can best be understood and absorbed. The word *pasahe* comes from the word *pasah* (a wood plane), which Javanese woodworkers use to smooth wood and to form it to fit precisely as required. In my view, the sentence *pasahe lan tapa* indicates a continuity that has to be formed after discussing ngèlmu. *Tapa* or deep reflection can be compared to a *pasah* that is employed to smooth and form the ngèlmu into something relevant. We can compare this with the sentence *puruitaa kang patut lan trap ing angganira in pupuh Pangkur,* *pada* 10, *gatra* 3 and 4, which advises the reader to seek ngèlmu that is fitting *patut* and *trap*, which means appropriate and relevant for himself/herself. If in *pupuh Pucung* *pada* 1-9 the clarification focuses on the concept of ngèlmu *iku kalakoné kanthi laku,* then the following *pupuh* (10-15), provide guidance that, before ngglakoni, in order to obtain ngèlmu, it is best to engage in a deep discussion, in harmony with the examination of this matter along with a true understanding of this ngèlmu so that it will become something relevant to the individual concerned.

One sign that a person can be aware of *rosing rasa* that are proper to his self is *bathara gung inguger graning jajantung jenek Hyang Wisesa sana pasenetan suci* (*pada* 12, *gatra* 1-4), The Exalted One is worshipped continually deep in his heart, with the result that The Exalted One is prepared to be enthroned there because that place is holy. Furthermore, in this *pada*, *gatra* 5 refers to a contrasting reality that arises if *si Mudha mudhar angkara* (*pada* 12, *gatra* 5) or continues to indulge his sensual appetites, *nora uwus karone angawan-uwus uwose janjine muring- muring kaya buta buteng betab nganiya* (*pada* 13, *gatra* 1-5), and delights in cursing, even though there no cause, only a desire to be angry like a monster that is quickly enraged and eager to maul. Sakeh luput Ing angga tanab linimpat linimpet ing sabda narka tan ana udani lumuh ala ardane ginawe gada (*pada* 14, *gatra* 1-5), every personal fault is always hidden and so covered over with all kinds of excuses that the individual thinks no one will know. Even so, he does not want to be called bad, and if someone reveals his wickedness he uses his anger as a club.
Durung punjul kasusu kaselak jujul kaseselan hawa cupet kapepetan pamrih tangen nedya anggambuh mring Hyang Wisesa (pada 15, gatra 1-5), not having yet attained a higher level but is unable to receive additional knowledge (ilmu) because his thinking has already been filled with fleshly desires. As a result, his thinking becomes restricted and cannot develop further because it is closed off by thinking about profit. If this is how things stand then the question indeed is whether he wants to draw close to the Lord.\textsuperscript{32} In my opinion, its relevance to this papuh is the emphasis concerning the condition of freedom from dependence on superficial matters, so that a person is able to break through to a life that is fitting and proper. The sentence \textit{tangen nedya anggambuh mring Hyang Wisesa} thus becomes a sentence of confirmation, ngèlmu iku kalakoné kanthi laki, mupakate lan panemu pasahe lan tapa. Without \textit{laku}, \textit{panemu}, and \textit{tapa}, ngèlmu will not kelakon.

4. Gambuh

a. Translation

1. Samengko ingun tutur
Sembah catur supaya lumuntur
Dhihin raga cipta jiwa rasa kaki
Ing keno lanun katemu
Tandha nggrahaning Manon

English:
Now I shall teach, the four kinds of worship, so that you may acquire them: firstly, that of the body, then thought, the soul and the essence, my boy; the acquisition of these, Is a sign of favour from the All-Seeing

2. Sembah raga puniku
Pakartine wong amagung \textit{laku}
Ssucine asarana saking warih
Kang wus lamrah limang waktu
Wantu wataking wawation

English:
Worship with the body, is the work of an apprentice; its ablution is made with water, and the usual custom is five times; this has the nature of an established rule

3. Ing nguni-uni durung
Sinaraawung wulang kang sinerung
Lagi iki luagsa kas ngetokken anggit
Mintokken kuwigyanipun
Sarengete elok-elok

English:
In former times secret teachings, were not yet made public, but now punctilious people make a show of their fabrications, in order to let their cleverness be seen - their precepts are most strange

\textsuperscript{32} One should compare this with the philosophy contained in in the mystical story of \textit{Dewaruci}, a profound Javanese text. There was the awareness that, to find the water of life, to seal the \textit{pamoré kawula-Gusti}, humankind has to risk everything, as demonstrated by the character Bima, who experienced pressure in the mystic life of a Javanese. See Franz Magnis Suseno, \textit{Beriman}, 1993, pp. 196-197.
4. **Thithik kaya santri Dul**  
Gajeg kaya santri brai kidul  
Sanure Pacitan pinggir pasisir  
Ewon wong kang padha gugu  
Anggere padha nyalemong

**English:**  
It is rather like the santri Dul, as I recall, like the santri birai of the south, along the Pacitan coast. There are thousands who believe them, whenever they start talking gibberish.

5. **Kasu arsa weruh**  
Cahyaning Hyang kinira yen karub  
Ngarep-arep urub arsa den-karebi  
Tan weruh yen urip iku  
Akale kaliru enggen

**English:**  
They are in a hurry to see, the divine light that they imagine they know well; they look forward to its glow in order to throw themselves upon it; they do not understand that such a life, has its brains in the wrong place.

6. **Yen ta jaman rumuhun**  
Tata titi tumrah tumaruntun  
Bangsa srengat tan winor tan [laku] batin  
Dadi noru duwe bingung  
Kang padha nembab Hyang Manon

**English:**  
Now in days gone by, things were orderly and correct from one generation to the next, matters of Islamic law were not mingled with spiritual practice, so it did not confuse, those who worship the All-Seeing

7. **Lire sarengat iku**  
Kena nga ingaranan [laku]  
Dhingin ajeg kapindbone atalberi  
Pakolihe pratraningsun  
Nyenyeger badan mrih kant

**English:**  
As for Islamic law, it can also be called a discipline: firstly it calls for regularity, and in the second place for diligence. Its use, my son, is to keep refreshing the body in order to improve it.

8. **Wong seger badanipun**  
Otot daging kulit balung sungsum  
Tumrah ing rah mamarah antenging ati  
Antenging ati nnnungku  
Angruwat ruweding batos

**English:**  
For when the body is refreshed, muscles, flesh, skin, bones and marrow, this passes on to the blood, causing peace of mind. The peace of mind becomes focussed, and banishes inner confusion
English:
Thus it is with regard to myself - however, seeing that men are not all alike, the direction and lot of the living are various; in fact there is no similarity, between the paths that are embarked upon.

10.  *Nanging ta paksa tutur*
Rebne tuwa tuwase mung catur
Bok lununtur lantaraning reb utami
Sing sapa temen tineun
Ngreba gemying kaprabon

English:
However, I cannot help but give instruction, and seeing that I am old, the gains are only four in number; may a means of reaching the highest things be imparted. Whoever strives sincerely will find, a favour of princely worth.

11.  *Samengko sembah kallu*
Yen lunintu uga dadi *laku*
*Laku* agung kang kanggunan narapati
Patiti teteping kaawrub
Meruhi marang kang momong

English:
Now worship of the heart, if it is sustained can also be a way of practising asceticism; It is a grand way, such as befits a king. It is precisely the certainty of knowledge, that leads us to acknowledge Providence.

12.  *Sucine tanpa banyu*
Among nyunyuda ardaning kallu
Pambukane tata tiri ngati-atu
Atetep talaten atul
Tuladan manung waupans

English:
Its ritual ablution is without water, it consists simply of steadily lessening the impulses of the heart; it opens with order, scrupulousness and caution, it is steadfast, persevering and unwearying, being guided by clear insight

13.  *Mring jatining pandulu*
Panduking don dadalan satubu
Lamun ingu tegutaning reb malagi
Lagehane tumalawung
Wenganing alam kinaot

English:
By true vision, that striving for the end is the real way. When the habit of pure things is unalloyed, its particularities fade away into the revelation of a higher world.

14.  *Yen wus kambah kadyeku*
Sanat sareb saniskareng *laku*
Kalakone saka eneng ening eling
Ilangin rasa tumalawung
Kono adiling Hyang Manon

English:
When this path has been embarked upon, the means is calmness in everything we do; it is reached by inner stillness, clarity and mindfulness. Feeling then dies away, and there we find the righteousness of the All-Seeing.

15.  *Gagare ngunggar kayun*
English:
It fails when the will is given free rein, to hope for the finest it could wish; that kind of fantasy when tested comes to nothing. Therefore look sharply and be mindful, of what brings about the downfall of endeavour.

16. Samengko kang tinutur
Sembah katri kang sayekti katur
Mring Hyang Sukma sukmanen saari-ari
Araben dipun kakakup
Sembahing jiwa sutengong

English:
What is taught now, is the third kind of worship, which verily is offered, to God; absorb yourself in it day by day, take care to master it, this worship of the soul, my son!

17. Sayekti lawih parlu
Ingaranan puquunoting laku
Kalakawan kang tumrap bangsining batin
Sucine lan awas emnt
Mring alaming lama amot

English:
Truly it is more important, and can be called the culmination of the way; it is a practice that relates to inward things. Its ablution consists of insight and mindfulness, Indulgent toward the past.

18. Ruktiné ngangkah ngukut
Ngiket ngruket triloka kakakut
Jagad agung giindung lan jagad alit
Den-kandel-kumandel kulup
Mring kelaping alam kono

English:
One prepares for it by aiming to bring together, bind up and tightly tie the three worlds; being gathered up, the macrocosm is mastered by the microcosm. Believe with your whole heart, my boy, that you will catch a glimpse of the world yonder

19. Kelemé mawi limut
Kalamatan jroning alam kanyut
Sanyatane yitna kayitnan iku kanyataan kaki
Sajatiné yin tan limut
Sayekti tan bio amor

English:
To sink in it brings forgetfulness, and barely conscious one is swept into the universe; In truth that is the truth, young man. But if in fact you are not mindful, you cannot really become a part of it

20. Pamèté saka luyut
Sarwa sarib saliring penganayut
Lamun yitna kayitnan kang miyatani
Tarlèn mung pribadnipun
Kang katon tinouton kono

English:
It is sought through a fading of the wakeful state, complete calm, and any means of inspiring rapture. Providing you are watchful with a sure watchfulness, it is no more than your own self, that there you look upon and view

21. Nging aywa salah surup  
Kono ana sajatine urub  
Yiku urub pangarep wuring badi  
Sumirat-sirat narawung  
Kadya kartiko katonton

**English:**
But do not misunderstand me: yonder there is a true flame, which is the flame that leads the life of the spirit onward; it shines brightly roundabout, and looks just like a star.

22. Yiku wenganing kalhu  
Kaluka ta kang wengku-winengku  
Wewengkoné wus kawengku ning siriki  
Nging siru nga winengku  
Mring kang pindha kartika byor

**English:**
That is the heart opening, the revelation of what contains and is contained. Its whole content is contained within you, but you yourself too are contained, by what was compared to a glittering star.

23. Samengko ingsun tutur  
Gantya sembah ingkang kaping catur  
Sembah rasa karasa wusin damadi  
Dadiné wus tanpa tudub  
Mung kalawan kasing batos

**English:**
Now I shall teach you, in its turn the fourth kind of worship, the worship of the essence, which is felt to be the core creation. How it happens cannot be pointed out, only that it is achieved by inner firmness.

24. Kalamun during lugu  
Aja pisan wani ngaku-aku  
Antuk siku kang mangkono iku kaki  
Kena nga wenang muluk  
Kalamun wus padha melok

**English:**
If it is not yet pure, you must never dare to claim it - such an action would reap wrath, my boy. But you may and have a right to pride yourself, if it is all equally obvious to you.

25. Meloko njara iku  
Yin wus ilang sumelangling kalhu  
Among kandel-kumandel marang ing takdir  
Iku din-ava din-imut  
Dim-memut yin arsa momot

**English:**
The clear understanding of these words, comes when anxiety has vanished from your heart, when you simply put your trust in Providence. Keep this in view, remember it; do your utmost if you wish to grasp it

b. **Analysis**
As the final pupuh, *pupuh Gambuh* is dedicated to teaching *sembah catur* (*pada 1, gatra 2*), that is, four kinds of *sembah* (homage or worship). Besides being the embodiment of the concept *laku* that points to the *rule of life, discipline, and ascetic practice* as already explicated in the *pupuh Sinom*, these four kinds of *sembah*, namely *raga, cipta, jiwa,* and *rasa* (*pada 1, gatra 3*) represent one form of personal submission with the purpose to *katemu tandha nugrahaning Manon* (*pada 1, gatra 5*), i.e., encounter signs of the grace (or gift) of the Lord. One should compare this with the understanding that God (Allah) is the source that becomes the foundation for the human capacity for *ngèlmu*, as was already set out in *pupuh Pangkur, pada 12, gatra 1 and 2* in the sentence: *sapantuk wabyuning Allah gya dumilah mangulah ngèlmu bangkit*. In the framework of thought of *pupuh Gambuh*, consciousness of this kind brings humans to submit themselves more fully to the Lord. It is this submission that brings humankind to *tandha nugrahaning* or *wabyuning Allah*. The four forms of *sembah* are presented below.

1) *Sembah Raga* (*pada 2-10*)

It is possible that *sembah raga* points to the ritual prayer (*shalat*) that is generally performed by Muslims, with a view to the personal cleansing prior to undertaking the ritual. *Susucine asarana saking warih* (*pada 2, gatra 3*), i.e., purification of the self with water (read: *wudlu*), and the frequency of its enactment, *kang was hunrah limang waktu* (*pada 2, gatra 4*), that is, customarily performed five times in a day. Because it is not stated explicitly, this conclusion is simply a possibility based on two earlier points. But what it can be taken to indicate is to take care of bodily cleanliness because a body that is clean and healthy may also contain thoughts that are clean and healthy. This is emphasized in the *pada* that follow. Discussion of this *sembah* is of interest because the four following *gatra* (3-6) give a warning not to confuse *syariat* with *laku batin*, as done by *santri Dul* or *santri brai* who went far astray in the name of religion. *Santri Dul*, also called *santri Dul-dulan*, was a follower of the teaching or knowledge (*ilmu*) of *Guyeng Dul*. Sitting on a *kuda lumping* (a horse made of plaited material), they chant repeatedly in unison, dancing around until they are dizzy and intoxicated, in a trance. With their *kuda lumping*, they feel as though they can fly into the heavens, as though they were riding *buraq* (the horse the Prophet Muhammad rode on his *Isra’ Mi’raj* or nightly journey from Jerusalem into heaven). This group is found in the district of Pacitan Selatan in East Java. While they are intoxicated with ecstasy anyone who sees them will believe anything these *santri* say. These people are also called *santri brai* because they are very *brai* (passionate) in teaching the religion of Islam, although in a random way.33

The outcome of this *sembah raga* is *nyenyeger badan mrih kaot* (*pada 7, gatra 5*), to refresh the body so that it will be healthy and strong. Apart from making a person *seger badanipun, otot*.

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daging kulit balung sungsum tumrah ing rah mamarah antenging ati, antenging ati nunungku angrawat ruweding batos (pada 8, gatra 1-5), which means: his body fit and fresh, his muscles, his flesh, his skin, bone, his marrow, right down to his blood, bringing about calm in his heart, a calmness of soul when he integrates his thinking and feeling at the time of meditation, as well as disentangling inner confusion.

2) Sembah Cipta (pada 11-15)
The second sembah is made with the heart. In this mode, cleansing is no longer an outward act but an inward one. And sucine tanpa banyu (pada 12, gatra 1), its cleansing, no longer employs water but nyunyuda ardaning kalim (pada 12, gatra 2), i.e., by reducing the desires of the heart. Via sembah cipta humans will approach the stage of comprehending jatining pandalu (pada 13, gatra 1), or true vision, and will be able to witness wenganing alahilem kinant (pada 13, gatra 5), or the extent of the ‘other’ world of the most exceptional beauty. This condition must be followed with constantly guarding the self by means of an attitude of eneng, ening dan eling (pada 14, gatra 3), or calm the self, purify the heart and always recall the origin of oneself. For the Javanese people, to understand eling is to be conscious of who one is, where one has come from and where one is going; or, in popular language, it is kawrub sangkan-paraning dumadi. 34

3) Sembah Jiwa (pada 16-22)
The third form of sembah is undertaken with the spirit, in which jagad agung ginulung lan jagad alit (pada 18, gatra 3), or the macrocosmos, is rolled up in the microcosmos. In analyzing macrocosmos and microcosmos Franz Magnis Suseno uses the term jagad gedhe, which he clarifies as the outer world, or the outer realm, while what he intends by jagad cilik is the human self or interior realm.35 I concur with the opinion that follows from this, i.e., that Javanese mysticism expresses the unity between the Lord and humankind in a number of paradoxical formulas such as, ‘the kris enters the sheath and the sheath enters the kris’ also ‘the hole contains the frog and the frog contains the hole.’36

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34 Suseno, Etika Jawa-Sebuh, 1999, p. 130. The term mengeheningkan cipta (to observe a brief silence in honour of someone or something), often observed in formal national, government and school ceremonies, in fact means eneng, ening, and eling and is not just a ‘ritual’ to commemorate in silence with bowed head heroes who have died: rather, its emphasis is on who one is essentially and what one is to do in this life.
It is necessary in this regard to remember that Javanese people do not seek mystical speculation as such. In the end, mystical thinking is pursued only to the extent that it can help form a meaningful life praxis by which the individual can achieve perfection in his endeavours to control all aspects of his existence. What is sought is not some kind of theory about the relationship between the individual and the Divine nor is its aim to have the individual surrender to the Divine in a pure religious act. Rather, both elements themselves, theory and faith, are pursued to achieve the integration of his personal existence. The purpose of mystical endeavours for the Javanese people is evident in the experience of the fruitfulness of one’s personal existence that flows from these mystical endeavours. The meaning of this is measured in terms of the inner peace, the harmony of all elements with one another, by the experience of slamet, and in accordance with the whole universe that is mirrored in calmness of life with calm rasa in the social environment. In this sembah, sucine lan awas enmut (pada 17, gatra 4), personal cleansing occurs through an attitude of alert watchfulness and consciousness of who one is, to the point where in the end he is able to see sajatining urup (pada 21, gatra 2), atau cabaya sejati (true radiance) which leads to uriping budi (pada 21, gatra 3), or his life is ise, and wenganing kalbu (pada 22, gatra 1), or the opening of the mind. The word enmut is the krama madya (middle polite) form of eling. In pupuh Gambuh cleansing the self begins with sembah raga, using water to cleanse raga, which leads to the disentangling of confusion, batin; then the cleansing proceeds to sembah cipta that, by reducing desire, cleanses batin, which leads to eneng, ening, and eling. The next step is sembah jiwa, which employs awas and eling to cleanse budi, leading to a life that is budi and open hearted.

4) Sembah Rasa (pada 23-25).

With sembah rasa, karasa wosin dumadi (pada 23, gatra 3), the essential reality of this life is experienced. In this sembah rasa wus tanpa tudub (pada 23, gatra 4), demands and instruction are no longer needed because dependence on kasing batos (pada 23, gatra 5), or interior strength, is made clear. The whole discussion on sembah catur becomes clear yèn wus ilang sumelanging kalbu (pada 25, gatra 2) or when the feeling of anxiety that continually haunts one’s heart has disappeared. In conclusion, pupuh Gambuh and the Serat Wédhatama as a whole end with the advice that all who have been instructed be dèn-awas, dèn-émuit, dèn-memet yèn arsa momot (pada 25, gatra 4, 5), i.e., to be alert, recall, be meticulous if one wishes to contain it.

“Baitane ngemot laut, kuda ngrap pandangan nenggih, tapaking kuntul ngalayang, pembarep adhine ragil, si welut ngeleng ing parang, kodhok ngemuli lengneki.” (Far without boundary, close untouched, if far clearly visible, whenever close unseen, it is said full yet empty, it is said empty yet filling all of it. Soft cannot be picked up, rough cannot be measured, wide yet very narrow, tight yet very roomy, empty basket what is in it, who is in front of you. A ship contains the sea, a herd of horses is in sight, the track heron flies, the first born younger sibling of the youngest child, an eel make a gap among the stones, the frog conceals his gap).
D. Concluding Remarks

Serat Widhatama, which means a letter or book containing a lofty teaching or supreme knowledge, provides guidance for attaining a noble heart as well as loving and doing what is right. In the Javanese language this is called berbudi bawa leksana and ngudi sejatining becik. Apart from this, as a didactic poem, the Serat Widhatama as a whole is a compilation of pititur (instruction) and uwaler (prohibitions that are very necessary for people so that they are not led astray while banggayuh kasampurnaning hurip [striving to achieve a perfect life]). Most important in my opinion, however, is that the Serat Widhatama, which its four pupuh outlines in succession, ngèlmu luhung, laku utama, ngèlmu iku kalakoné kanthi laku and sembah catur, guides people toward kawruh sangkan paraning dunadi (knowledge of the origin and objective of all that has been created) that can be understood by means of human experience ‘united’ with the highest reality or kasunyatan, i.e., the Lord, or, in Javanese, pamoré kawula gusti.

This, then, is the outcome of the analysis of the key concepts in the Serat Widhatama. This may be the background for our understanding of the theology of Sadrach’s ngèlmu sejati and at the same time a strong foundation for the GKJ to engage in contextual theology. This theology is intrinsically bound to two things. First is the reason for the choice of the Serat Widhatama itself, the fact that this literary work existed in the colonial era, points to how ngèlmu became important for the masses at that time as well as for those who came after, the people who worked and struggled with the poverty and backwardness that resulted from colonization to become a free and autonomous people.37 Because the life of Sadrach and his community was closely involved in the situation and conditions noted above and based on the fact that the Serat Widhatama in contemporaneous with Sadrach and his community, I hold that the concept of ngèlmu in Javanese culture, which points to the Serat Widhatama as its source, can be used as an tool, to a greater or lesser extent, directly or indirectly, to assist us in better understanding the ngèlmu sejati theology of Sadrach. Second, this question is also inextricably tied to an understanding of contextual theology in the Javanese context, i.e., how a Javanese Christian evaluates and gives meaning to ngèlmu as something distinctive in Javanese culture, taking account of ngèlmu as something that has significance for the GKJ in its efforts to engage in contextual theology. Because this concept of ngèlmu in Javanese culture points to the Serat Widhatama as a source, I employ it as a starting point for a discussion of Sadrach’s ngèlmu sejati theology, as an example of the endeavour to engage in an authentically Javanese contextual theology, which I will discuss in the following chapter.

37 This reason may sound rather emotional and ideological, but it is interesting that, in the novel Para Priyayi written by Umar Kayam, we can see how the teaching of Serat Widhatama on ngèlmu, especially this one: ngèlmu iku kalakoné kanthi laku, was always chanted in a family gathering as a wejangan or pititur (instruction) that was very valuable and encouraged all the family members facing the hardships arising from colonization. See Umar Kayam, Para Priyayi, Grafiti, Jakarta, 1992, p. 131-134.
A. Introduction
Prior to the second half of the 19th century, before the various missionary organizations began their work in Indonesia, the Christianization of the indigenous people had been carried out by the Protestant Church of the Dutch Indies (Indische Kerk) as an continuation of the mission of the Dutch East India Company (Vereenigde Oost Indische Compagnie, the VOC). Although the mission fell under the official jurisdiction of the colonial government, it never became a priority and was often relegated to second place behind other interests. Unlike the eastern part of Indonesia (for example, on the Moluccan Islands where the Indische Kerk was fairly succesful in converting the indigenous people), the role of the Indische Kerk in Java became primarily one of maintenance, partly for internal ecclesiastical reasons and partly because the socio-political situation was not conducive to missions. Nevertheless, several lay people, together with their Javanese helpers, took the initiative and played a significant role in missions during that time. One of these people was Sadrach.1

Sadrach was a pioneer Javanese evangelist who became the charismatic leader of Javanese Christians throughout Central Java. He exercised great influence over his followers and was highly respected as their spiritual father. The local Dutch colonial government, however, considered Sadrach a rebellious leader who threatened the delicately maintained peace and public order, while the Dutch missionaries generally perceived Sadrach’s authority and leadership as going beyond the limits of true Christianity and against the principles of Calvinism. They accused him of leading Javanese Christians astray and regarded his teachings as a mixture of Christian and non-Christian ideas. The community that emerged around Sadrach grew and seceded from the established colonial church (De Protestansche Kerk in Nederlandsche-Indië, i.e., the Indische Kerk) and the missionary community of the Dutch Reformed Church. The members of the community were called Sadrach’s kring (Sadrach’s Circle) by some, and Javanese Christians by others. They chose to refer themselves as Golongane Wong Kristen Kang Mardika (the Group of Free Christians).

Sadrach’s community was a unique religious phenomenon since it was the product neither of the Indische Kerk mission nor of any of the other missionary enterprises working in Central Java in the second half of the 19th century. Because the community was born out of Javanese culture and was nurtured, developed, and shaped within this cultural framework

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by those who valued the Javanese cultural background, the result was, not surprisingly, an indigenous community with a Javanese cultural outlook.3

B. Sadrach and his Community

1. Sadrach’s life

I will commence my account of the role of Sadrach and his community as an introduction to our understanding of Sadrach’s ngelmu sejati theology with a discussion of Sadrach’s life before he became a Christian, and in the period following based on the name he used. It is important to keep in mind here that, for Javanese people, a change in name points to an important event of in one’s life.

a. Radin

According to existing information,3 Sadrach was born around the year 1835,4 in the area of Demak,5 and was named Radin. Unfortunately, there is no record of who his parents were.

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4 With reference to J. D. Wolterbeek, Babad Zendung, 1939, p.314, Guillot states that Sadrach died when he was about 90 in 1924. This is supported by the results of his interview with Jayapawira, the only one of Sadrach’s disciples still living (in 1978, when the interview took place) who said that Sadrach died when he was about 89. So, the year of his birth was around 1835. Cf. Guillot, Kioi Sadrach, 1985, p. 55. At the same time, with reference to Lion Cachet, Een Jaar op reis, 1896, p. 364, and Sumanto, Kyai Sadrach, 1974, p. 11, Lydia Herwanto concludes that Sadrach was born in the year 1840, but without offering any clear evidence in support of this. See Lydia Herwanto, Pikiran dan Aksi, 2002, p. 23. Whereas two sources referred to indicate that Sadrach was born in 1841, Lion Cachet states that when he visited Karangjasa in 1891, Sadrach was 50 years old; Sumanto, however, does not offer any evidence at all. Apart from these opinions, there is also the opinion of Sadrach’s heir (based on my interview with Bapak Soepeno Martoseputo in Karangjasa in June 2002), who stated that Sadrach was born in the year 1837, also, however, unfortunately without any clear evidence in support. I tend to agree with Guillot that Sadrach was born around the year 1835 for the following reasons: first, the results of Guillot’s interview with Jayapawira which indicated that Sadrach was born in 1835, while the results of my interview with Soepeno Martoseputo indicated that Sadrach was born in 1837. The difference between these two concussions is only two years, closer if compared with the view of Lion Cachet and Sumanto which indicate that Sadrach was born in 1841, which would be a difference of six years and four years from 1835 and 1837 respectively. Second, a witness present at Sadrach’s burial on 14 November 1924, K. van Dijk, stated that Sadrach died at the age of about 90. This would mean he was born around 1835. See K. van Dijk, “Sadrach’s kring na 1922,” in De Macedonienër 42, J. den Boer, Breukelen, 1938.
5 There is no certainty about where exactly Sadrach was born. While existing sources conclude that he was born in the Jeparaian Kawedanan (district) in the northern region of Central Java, Adriaanse, Sadrach’s kring, 1899, pp. 4, 47 and Lion Cachet, Een Jaar op reis, 1896, p. 364 point to a place in the region of Jepara, without indicating a precise place. Lion Cachet adds that many believe that Sadrach was born in Demak because, according to tradition, it was from that place that the Ratu Adil would come to rule the island of Java (p. 366). But Herwanto, Pikiran dan Aksi, 2002, p. 24, following I. Sumanto, Kyai Sadrach, 1974, p. 11, proposes Dukuh Sakti near Pati as Sadrach’s birthplace, also without offering clear evidence. At the same time, Manuskrif A Karangjasa states that “asal-usulipun Panjenenganipun boten dipun mangertosi kanti terang” (his origin is not known with clarity), “mung antawisipun wonten satunggaling dhusun celak kaliyan
The argument that the suffix ‘-in’ of the name Radin, indicated that he came from a village and was the child of poor farmers has several difficulties in my view.

There is no evidence that there was any tendency at that time to bestow a name based on the place of residence (village or town), as the name Radin, which, on account of its ending –in, means to come from a village and from an inferior social position – might indicate. In fact, there was an aristocrat at that time called Radin Inten II (1834-1856) who was crowned king in Lampung in 1850. It could be that Radin is in fact the word raden because the former often appears to ‘replace’ the latter, which indicates aristocratic status. There is the possibility that Sadrach was not in fact named Radin but given the title of Raden because of the suffix ‘-in’ of the name Radin, which, on account of its place of residence (village or town), as the name Radin, which, on account of its ending–in, means to come from a village and from an inferior social position – might indicate. In fact, there was an aristocrat at that time called Radin Inten II (1834-1856) who was crowned king in Lampung in 1850. It could be that Radin is in fact the word raden because the former often appears to ‘replace’ the latter, which indicates aristocratic status. There is the possibility that Sadrach was not in fact named Radin but given the title of Raden, and simply called Radin. The only indication I know of concerning this name is found in L. Adriaanse who refers to him as de kleine Radin, which can be understood as the little Raden. Furthermore, in the Manuskrip Karangjasa, there is not a single reference to Radin as Sadrach’s personal name.

Other than the question of the name, Radin, there are other problems concerning Sadrach’s origins: first, there is no strong evidence that he was born into a farming family that was very poor. That Radin engaged in begging while he was a child does not necessarily mean that parents were so very poor they abandoned their child. In my view, the conclusion raises the possibility that Sadrach was descended from one dynasty or another of the Kingdom of Demak and thus entitled to a title: Raden. Without strong evidence, however, this issue may be put aside.

The argument that the suffix ‘-in’ of the name Radin, indicated that he came from a village and was the child of poor farmers has several difficulties in my view.

There is no evidence that there was any tendency at that time to bestow a name based on the place of residence (village or town), as the name Radin, which, on account of its ending –in, means to come from a village and from an inferior social position – might indicate. In fact, there was an aristocrat at that time called Radin Inten II (1834-1856) who was crowned king in Lampung in 1850. It could be that Radin is in fact the word raden because the former often appears to ‘replace’ the latter, which indicates aristocratic status. There is the possibility that Sadrach was not in fact named Radin but given the title of Raden, and simply called Radin. The only indication I know of concerning this name is found in L. Adriaanse who refers to him as de kleine Radin, which can be understood as the little Raden. Furthermore, in the Manuskrip Karangjasa, there is not a single reference to Radin as Sadrach’s personal name.

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by Sutarman S. Partonadi offers a sufficient explanation of this matter.\footnote{12} Second, there is no strong evidence that his parents came from a lower social class.\footnote{13} Furthermore, according to oral tradition and one important document concerning the history of the establishment of the first Christian village in Java, along with the genealogy of the Javanese people who became Christian in that time, Sadrach was the son of the second bupati of Pati, and so it was not strange if he was referred to later as Radin, which perhaps pointed to raden.\footnote{14} In addition, the Manuskrip Karangjasa (A and B), when referring to Sadrach’s parent, always use the terms for father and mother, i.e., Romo-Ibu, appropriate for aristocratic families (or those of high socio-economic status), and not, Bapa-Bijung, appropriate for common people.

Based on the discussion above, I hold that Sadrach’s origin is a mystery. I agree with what was written in Manuskrip Karangjasa, which emphasized that the origins and parentage of Sadrach are really unclear and cannot be clarified: “asal-usulipun Panjenenganipun boten dipun mangertosipun kanti terang” (his origins are unclear), “menggah romo-lan ibu ugi boten saged dipun mangertosipun” (nothing can be known either about his father and mother). Perhaps it is because of this lack of clarity that ‘speculation’ circulated that he was born a villager, into a family of poor peasants. It is also possible that Sadrach’s origins were deliberately concealed by Sadrach himself, for unknown reasons, if we recall that Sadrach had an opportunity to present the story of his life in Manuskrip Karangjasa. Precisely because of this attitude of ‘silence’ Sadrach’s part might have given the Dutch in the time that followed an opportunity to ‘create’ an account of Sadrach’s origins, with a tendency to diminish his standing. What can be taken as indications about himself are the following facts: he was born around 1835 near Demak, and when he was small he was called by or referred to as (but perhaps not named) Radin (noting the possibility that raden was a title he had).

It must be admitted that the life of Radin in this period certainly contains elements that are unclear. The little that we know of this period is from Partonadi, which makes clear that the childhood and early life of Radin was filled with study in the Qur’anic school, which

\begin{itemize}
\item [12] It had already become traditional for pupils of Qur’anic schools and pesantren to beg as part of the ‘curriculum.’ This was generally undertaken on Thursdays, as indicated by the Javanese word ngemis (mengemis – to beg), which comes from kemis (Kamis – Thursday); this was a way of gathering funds for religious activities and social work. See Partonadi, Sadrach’s Community, 1988, p. 56, which also gives important reference to this tradition from J.F.G. Brumund, Het Volksonderwijs onder Javanen, Kessinger Publishing Company, Batavia, 1857, and Poensen, “Een en ander over de Godsdiendigen toestand van den Javaan,” in Mededelingen van wege het Nederlandsch Zendeling Genootschap 8, 1864, pp. 163, 167, 168.
\item [13] At that time, poverty was something ‘normal’ as a result of the Diponegoro War (1825-1830), natural disaster, and the failure of the rice harvest between 1843 and 1851, supplemented by the outbreak of typhoid and cholera epidemics, and the Kulturtselsel (compulsory planting of crops to meet the needs of the Dutch plantation economy). See Guillot, Kiai Sadrach, 1985, p. 56, cf. A.G. Hoekema, “Ibrahim Tunggul Wulung,” in Peninjau- VII/1, 1980.
\item [14] Jebus Wirosadarma, Sejarah Keluarga Raden Pahing Wiryogono Alias Karolus, Pemimpin Babat Hutan Keracil dan Berdirinya Desa-desa Kristen Pertama, tahun 1844-1899 (without publisher or year of publication indicated).
\end{itemize}
also functioned also as a ‘public school.’

Radin left home to take up an ascetic itinerant way of life (kelono) in the region of East Java because he was very concerned with seeking ilmu. There he studied in a number of pesantren and with teachers of ngèlmu. His kelono journey in East Java brought him to a pesantren in Jombang, about seven kilometers north of Mojowarno, a Christian village established by Abisai Ditotruno and Paulus Tosari, together with Christians from Ngoro who had been expelled by Coolen for opposing a ban he had issued on baptism. It was in Mojowarno that Radin made contact with Christian teaching for the first time and met Jellesma, a pioneer missionary who lived in that village from 1851 to 1858. So, one could imagine that Radin was in Jombang when he was between 16 and 23 years old. Radin’s encounter with Jellesma and the Christian people in Mojowarno was apparently not something special or something that left a deep impression because Radin later continued on his way to study in a pesantren in Ponorogo.

b. Radin Abas

15 It is unclear what Partonadi meant by the term ‘public school.’ Perhaps it was because these schools not only taught the Qur’an but also what was Javanese society required of its pupils. See Partonadi, Sadrach’s Community, 1988, p. 56. I am unaware of what source Partonadi employed or where he obtained this information because there is no citation nor does he refer to any other sources. For this period only, Wolterbeek, Babad Zending, 1939, p. 94 provides information that Sadrach “kaparingan piwoelang sawetawis wonten ing satoenggaling langgar” (received instruction for a time in a langgar [prayer house]). Only as a youth (naliaka sampoen djaka) did he leave home to lead an ascetic itinerant way of life (lelono). Perhaps what Partonadi meant by ‘public school’ was the langgar.

16 Manuskrip A Karangjasa states wiwit timur (since youth); Manuskrip B Karangjasa states naliaka isih noroyano (while still unmarried). Adriaanse states: opgeschoten jongen (an older boy); see Adriaanse, Sadrach’s kring, 1899, p. 47. Wolterbeek, however, states naliaka sampoen djaka (when already a youth); see Wolterbeek, Babad Zending, 1939, p. 94. Sutarmann is more specific, that is when he was about 17 years old, although without offering any further clarification. See Partonadi, Sadrach’s Community, 1988, p. 57.

17 So, Sadrach’s leaving home was not, as asserted by Guillot, for economic reasons but because he was eager to find ilmu. This also points to the possibility that Sadrach came from a family of a social status sufficient to pay attention to the issue of education because a family of low social status at that time could not afford to attend to such things. Guillot, Kiai Sadrach, 1985, p. 56.


19 Adriaanse, Sadrach’s kring, 1899, p. 48; Wolterbeek, Babad Zending, 1939, pp. 22-34 (concerning Coolen), 95; Guillot, Kiai Sadrach, 1985, p. 58; and Partonadi, Sadrach’s Community, 1988, p. 57.

20 Not much is known of what Radin and Jellesma did when they met in Mojowarno. On this matter Herwanto states that Radin often heard Jellesma who was giving instruction on the Christian religion to the inhabitants of that village. Referring to Adriaanse, she stated that Radin was greatly impressed by a Bible passage, Romans 10: 9-13. See Herwanto, Pikiran dan Aksi, 2002, pp. 25-26. Unfortunately, Herwanto’s reference to Adriaanse is without foundation because the latter never ever touched on this matter. In my opinion, this meeting could have taken place only because of Radin who, as a person seeking ngèlmu, to hanggayuh kasampurunaning hurip. This urged him continually to seek and study what was considered to be the highest ngèlmu. He would not be satisfied until he encountered ngèlmu yang sejati because only in this ngèlmu yang sejati could one find the pitutur (instruction) and wewaler (prohibition) that guide one’s path to kasampurunaning hurip (the perfect life).
A book considered to be an ‘heirloom’ by Sadrach’s heirs that was kept in his house gives us a small picture of what Radin studied while he was in the pesantren. Aside from deepening his understanding of Islam, Radin also learned to read and write Arabic and Javanese pegon (Javanese written with Arabic characters adapted to Javanese phonetics). It is not known exactly how long Radin was in Ponorogo, but, according to Partonadi and Wolterbeek, Radin was there until he graduated from the pesantren because he then went to Semarang and settled in Kauman. At that time, according to Adriaanse, Radin later added the Arabic name Abas to his name, hence, he became Radin Abas. There are different opinions about Radin’s addition of the name Abas. Wolterbeek states that Radin received the name Abas while he was still in a pesantren in Jombang before he met Jellesma. Adriaanse, on the other hand, whose view was ‘followed’ by Guillot and Partonadi, stated that Radin received the name Abas after he had been in Kauman and kept company with Arabs and hajis. In my view, Adriaanse’s opinion was ‘more acceptable’ to Guillot and Partonadi because at that time Radin was meeting Arab people who certainly used Arabic names. It is most likely that he received the Arabic name Abas at one point in his life to indicate that he had become part of the educated Muslim community. Apart from these two views, there still remains the possibility that Radin obtained the name Abas while he was learning to read and write in Arabic and Javanese pegon because, according to Partonadi, the name Abas is an Arab name that was adapted to the Javanese language. Perhaps he used this name after graduating from the pesantren in Ponorogo to indicate a phase in his life, showing that he was a genuine santri, someone who had graduated from a pesantren, so that he would be accepted when he moved to Semarang to live in Kauman. As Partonadi made clear, Kauman was an exclusive Muslim community that was not open to all people.

An important event took place while Radin Abas was in Semarang: he met Pak Kurmen, a guru ngèlmu who was also known as Iskak alias Sis Kanoman. With regard to Radin Abas’ meeting this prominent figure, Adriaanse, Guillot, and Partonadi state that Pak

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21 The ‘heirloom’ book of about 200 pages was written in Arabic characters and Javanese pegon. Of all the books in Karangjoso, this book is the only one written in Arabic characters and the only book that discusses the Islamic religion. It consists of chapters that are not arranged systematically but are rather the notes of a diligent pesantren pupil. Its contents cover a variety of questions mysticism (tasawuf) understood widely as various rasa, the genealogy of Javanese Muslim rulers, angels, mystical transcriptions of the name of the Prophet Muhammad, titles of Allâh and the dialogue between Sunan Kalijaga and Sunan Bonang concerning the spiritual dimension. See Guillot, Kipl Sadrach, 1985, pp. 58-59.

22 Partonadi, Sadrach’s Community, 1988, p. 57. Cf. Wolterbeek, Babad Zending, 1939, p. 95. According to Adriaanse, Radin’s journey to Semarang was to further his religious education with Arabs and hajis “Toen hij zoo wat kennis van den Islam had opgedaan, trok hij naar Semarang en zocht door verkeer met de Arabieren en de hadji’s nog meer van Mohammed’s leer te weten te komen.” See Adriaanse, Sadrach’s kring, 1899, p. 48.

23 Wolterbeek, Babad Zending, 1939, p. 94.

24 Partonadi, Sadrach’s Community, 1988, p. 57.


26 Adriaanse, Sadrach’s Kring, 1899, p. 48.
Kurmen was Radin's former guru Kejawen, while Hoekema states that Radin Abas first met Pak Kurmen through Asa Kiman, W. Hoezoo's assistant, one of three missionaries sent to Java as evangelists. At that time, Hoezoo lived in Semarang. This means that this was the first meeting between Radin Abas and Pak Kurmen. It is a little surprising that Hoekema makes this observation because he stated elsewhere that at the time when Tunggul Wulung was often in Semarang to meet Hoezoo, Radin Abas was referred to as the adopted son of Pak Kurmen. Perhaps what Hoekema meant is that Radin Abas was reintroduced (thus, not introduced), by Asa Kiman to Pak Kurmen. This happened because after Radin Abas left Kauman and lived in a small village five hours from Semarang, he attended services in Hoezoo's church on a regular basis. It is possible that he met Asa Kiman there who later introduced them. According to Wolterbeek, at that time Radin Abas met with a guru ngèlmu and later received teaching and instruction as a fortune-teller and guru ngèlmu. It is not clear what Wolterbeek meant by guru ngèlmu or whether this was Pak Kurmen because he does not indicate the name of the guru ngèlmu. From a variety of sources, however, that refer to the presence of Pak Kurmen at the time Radin met with him in Semarang (whether for the first time or for the umpteenth time as ‘former’ guru ngèlmu and ‘former’ pupil), Pak Kurmen was no longer a guru ngèlmu because he had become a Christian after being defeated in a debate with Kiai Tunggul Wulung. It was this event that really drew Radin Abas to the Christian faith. Because of this, I am inclined to agree with Adriaanse and Partonadi who state that Pak Kurmen was Radin Abas’ teacher when he was young, so that the meeting in Semarang was not the first time they met. At that time if a guru ngèlmu had been defeated in a debate then he with all his students would become pupils of the teacher who had won the debate. Although Radin Abas became Pak Kurmen’s pupil when he was still young, nevertheless, the association with a teacher could never be severed for the Javanese, so it would not be surprising if Pak Kurmen’s defeat by Tunggul Wulung became one of the factors that drew Radin Abas increasingly to the Christian faith. After all, it was Pak Kurmen who later introduced him to Tunggul Wulung. What is clear is that Radin Abas was very impressed by

27 Ibid., p. 49: “Toen nu eenige jaren later Paq-Kurmen zijn vroegeren leerling Abas ontmoette....”;
28 Partonadi, *Sadrach’s Community*, 1988, p. 58: “Once again he met his former Javanese teacher, Pak Kurmen”;
29 Guillot, *Kiai Sadrach*, 1985, p. 59: “At this time also he met with his former teacher, Pak Kurmen.”
30 In particular, Partonadi states that Pak Kurmen was Radin’s teacher when he was young, after Radin had graduated from the public school (or according to Wolterbeek: langgar; see footnote 15, above). At this time Radin studied ngèlmu kejawen with Pak Kurmen in Semarang. See Partonadi, *Sadrach’s Community*, 1988, p. 57: “Rather than going to a pesantren, he first studied under a Javanese ngèlmu teacher, Pak Kurmen, alias Sis Kanoman, in Semarang.” So, Radin studied ngèlmu kejawen before he lelono or golek ngèlmu (took up an itinerant lifestyle to seek ngèlmu) in pesantrens in East Java.
Tunggul Wulung’s teaching, which stressed that becoming a Christian did not have to mean departing from Javanese adat.\(^{31}\)

We are, in fact, unable to get a clear understanding why, when Radin made contact for the first time with Christian teaching and met Jellesma in Mojowarno, this did not leave any deep impression on him, that drew him to study the Christian faith more closely but continued his lelono to a pesantren in Ponorogo.\(^{32}\) Nevertheless, what occurred on the second contact with Hoezoo’s congregation in Semarang shows that, as shown by Guillot, Radin seemed to follow Hoezoo regularly attending the services he led, even though that meant having to travel some considerable distance to do so.\(^{33}\) He was nevertheless only really drawn to Christianity after meeting with Pak Kurmen, who had become a Christian after being defeated in debate by Tunggul Wulung, and then meeting Tunggul Wulung himself face to face. The basis for Radin Abas’s attitude is very clear, as explained by Partonadi, Hoezoo was a ‘hard-liner’ who instructed those who repented to make a radical break with their culture.\(^{34}\)

For Radin Abas, this kind of Christianity was certainly not consistent with his Javanese identity, which meant that when he encountered the Christian teaching as presented by Tunggul Wulung he felt very drawn because he could become a Christian without abandoning his Javanese identity. This series of events experienced by Radin Abas, as described above, forms one part of the story of his abandoning his Javanese identity. This series of encounters with Christianity that would later change his life, from a person seeking ngèlmu, and at the same time the beginning of a series of encounters with Christianity, as will be shown below.

c. Sadrach

\(^{31}\) Report by the missionary P. Janz, 7 April 1862, to the The Board of the DZV Foundation as cited in Hoekema, “Ibrahim Tunggul Wulung,” in Peninjau- VII/1, 1980, p. 17, which quotes the saying by Tunggul Wulung that: “it is wrong for a Javanese to follow a European missionary: they must be Javanese Christians and they must seek a Christ like themselves.”

\(^{32}\) According to Wolterbeek, Jellesma was known to be a person full of deep compassion and wisdom, patient and loyal, unpretentious and friendly, See Wolterbeek, Babad Zending, 1939, p. 40. Jellesma’s personality apparently did not attract Radin to study Christianity any further. Perhaps this was because, as indicated by Partonadi, he was still the pupil of Pak Kurmen. See Partonadi, Sadrach’s Community, 1985, p. 57: “when he met Jellesma in Mojowarno, East Java, he was still a murid.”

\(^{33}\) Guillot, Kiai Sadrach, 1985, p. 60.

\(^{34}\) Partonadi, Sadrach’s Community, 1988, p. 35: “He was a ‘hard liner’ who required converts to make a radical break with their culture.” Referring to Wolterbeek, Partonadi also states that “Hoezoo’s congregations lived in enmity with the surrounding Moslems.” See Wolterbeek, Babad Zending, 1939, p. 50. Perhaps because of this Partonadi concluded that Hoezoo “did not gain many converts and was largely unsuccessful in his mission work.” A situation like this, exacerbated by the presence of Tunggul Wulung in Semarang, made Hoezoo lose almost all his followers. Cf. Hoekema, “Ibrahim Tunggul Wulung” in Peninjau-VII/1, 1980, p. 12 and Guillot, Kiai Sadrach, 1985, p. 11.
According to Adriaanse, around 1865\(^{35}\) or later, Radin Abas went to Batavia to meet the senior Dutch official F.L. Anthing, who was very active in the Christianization in Java. There are different views about who took the initiative for the journey to Batavia. According to Guillot, Tunggul Wulung brought him,\(^{36}\) whereas Partonadi states that Radin Abas decided to go to Batavia accompanied by Tunggul Wulung,\(^{37}\) meaning the decision to go to Batavia was Radin Abas’, while Tunggul Wulung only accompanied him or, more precisely, introduced Radin Abas to Anthing, as stated by Wolterbeek.\(^{38}\) I conclude that Radin Abas’ decision to go to Batavia was at his own initiative. This conclusion is based on at least two considerations. First, as I have already stated, a Javanese seeker of ngèlemu, his desire to banggayub kasampurananging hurip would impel him to continually seek and to investigate what was considered to be the highest ngèlemu. Satisfaction could not be attained until the ngèlemu yang sejati was encountered. This is consistent with what is written in Manuskrip Karangjasa, which states that Radin Abas’ journey to Batavia was part of his lelono. After attaining a sufficient understanding of ngèlemu kejawen and ilmu from pesantrens in East Java, he began wandering in West Java, travelling toward Batavia.\(^{39}\) Second, and this is quite important, is the possibility that when he met Jellesma, he obtained information about important figures involved in efforts at the Christianization of Java because he was later active in seeking to meet Hoezoo in Semarang and Anthing in Batavia, although his meeting with the latter occurred ‘by chance’ as an outcome of his meeting with Tunggul Wulung. That Radin Abas had information about who was involved in efforts at the Christianization of Java is evident from the fact that, as well as actively attending Hoezoo’s services, he also decided to meet Anthing. Perhaps Radin had already heard Anthing’s name when he was in Mojowarno and thus hoped to meet with him when he was in Semarang. But by that time Anthing had already been appointed to Batavia, and Radin Abas had only met Hoezoo. The fact that Radin Abas later diligently attended Hoezoo’s services could have been because they had previously met in Mojowarno or knew of him from Jellesma. As we know, Hoezoo had been in Mojowarno for several years before returning to Semarang.\(^{40}\) Moreover, in meeting

\(^{35}\) Adriaanse, Sadrach’s kring, 1899, p. 50: “Radin Abas ging in 1865 of iets later naar Batavia.”

\(^{36}\) Guillot, Kiae Sadrach, 1985, p. 60: “As is known, in 1865 Tunggul Wulung brought Sadrach with him to Batavia to meet a senior Dutch official, F.L. Anthing. Anthing, who was very active in Christianisation in Java, initially serving in Semarang, where he got to know Tunggul Wulung. In 1863, Anthing was appointed deputy chairman of the Supreme Court in Batavia.” More ‘dramatically,’ Herwanto, quoting I. Soemanto, states that: “Radin Abas was sent by Kiae Tunggul Wulung to Anthing in Batavia.” See Herwanto, Pikiran dan Aksi, 2002, p. 29; cf. Sumanto, Kyai Sadrach, 1974, p. 14.

\(^{37}\) Partonadi, Sadrach’s Community, 1988, p. 58: “In 1866, Radin Abas decided to go to Batavia accompanied by Tunggul Wulung, to meet Anthing.”

\(^{38}\) Wolterbeek, Babad Zending, 1939, p. 95: “Radin Abas tomoenten katepangaken kalijan toewan Mr. Anthing sarana pitoeloenganipoen Kjai Toenggoel Woeloeng.”

\(^{39}\) In Manuskrip A Karangjasa it is stated: “Sareng sampun cekap kathah tumrap kasumurupan bab ajaran ilmu-ilmu Jawi lan ilmu saking pesantren, lajeng miwiti lelono dhateng tanah Jawi Kilen, nuju kitho Betawi.”

\(^{40}\) Guillot, Kiae Sadrach, 1985, p. 15.
Hoezoo so diligently Radin Abas had perhaps hoped he would be given an opportunity to meet Anthing, who, as a high official (deputy chairman of the Supreme Court), would certainly not grant access to just anyone. Because of this his meeting Tunggul Wulung opened a path for him to meet Anthing. As is well known, Tunggul Wulung and Anthing knew each other well; in fact two of Tunggul Wulung’s children lived in Anthing’s house. Tunggul Wulung himself had worked for Anthing for five months as a colporteur employed to distribute Christian religious brochures from house to house in Batavia before finally leaving Batavia.41

Radin Abas’ arrival in Batavia was well received by Anthing; in fact, he was later adopted as an anak mas.42 While in Batavia, Radin Abas fostered contacts with the third centre of Christianity on Java, the principal place to find non-church Dutch members of the Genootschap voor In-en Uitwendige Zending.43 According to P. Heyting, as quoted by Guillot, Radin Abas stayed in the Serani kampong while learning to read and write in the Latin script.44 He received instruction in the Christian religion from Matheus Teffer, a close friend of Anthing’s, and in the end he made the very important decision to be baptized. The baptism was performed by Rev. (Johannes William Hendrik) Ader, a minister in the Indische Kerk, in the Portugeesche Buitenkerk, Batavia, on 14 April 1867. Radin Abas chose the name Sadrach (one of the three Jews who were thrown into a furnace because they refused to worship a statue of the king of Babylon, as related in Daniel 3) as his baptismal name.45

Referring to Guillot, Singgih wrote that it was not by chance that he chose this name. Just as Sadrach refused to give up his Jewish identity under threat from the Babylonian invaders, so the ‘Javanese Sadrach’ was not going to immerse his identity under the cultural and religious threat of Dutch colonial rule.46 At the same time, according to Partonadi, Guillot interprets the name Sadrach, from the perspective of his thesis that Sadrach’s community represents a social movement, as indicating that – like the figure of Sadrach in the Bible who struggled for recognition before Nebukadnezar – Sadrach struggled for equal status with the Dutch

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41 Ibid., pp. 60-61.
42 Adriaanse, Sadrach’s krings, 1899, p. 50.
43 The Genootschap voor In-en Uitwendige Zending (GIUZ), formed in 1851 in Batavia, was established by Anthing, Izaak Esser, Keuchenius, and E.W. King because they were disappointed by the decision of the Indische Kerk in Batavia which was not interested evangelization. This, the only Dutch organization for evangelization set up by lay people in Indonesia, paid a great deal of attention to the spiritual well-being of the indigenous people. See Guillot, Kiai Sadrach, 1985, p. 7; Partonadi, Sadrach’s Community, 1988, p. 59.
44 From its name, Serani, it can be concluded that this kampung was a place of settlement for educated Christians (Nasrani). Just as when he was living in a settlement of educated Muslims in Semarang, Kauman, when he was in Batavia Radin Abas lived in the area populated by educated Christians. There he learned to read and write in the Latin script. Cf. Guillot, Kiai Sadrach, 1985, p. 61; Adriaanse, Sadrach’s krings, 1899, p. 50.
45 Adriaanse, Sadrach’s krings, 1899, p. 50; Guillot, Kiai Sadrach, 1985, pp. 61-63; Partonadi, Sadrach’s Community, 1988, p. 58.
46 Singgih, Berteologi dalam Konteks, 2000, p. 96.
while maintaining his Javanese identity.\textsuperscript{47} My own view is that Radin Abas’ choice of the name Sadrach is clearly connected to his identity as a Javanese who is a Christian. As suggested by Singgih, Sadrach was determined not to surrender his identity under the threat of the colonial religious culture. To become a Christian does not mean to become a white person. Also, from a sociological perspective, as put forward by Partonadi on Guillot’s thesis, this commitment not to immerse his identity later became clear when Sadrach, while holding onto his Javanese identity, fought to be treated the same as Dutch people. This appeared clearly, for example, in the \textit{op een stoel of niet op een stoel zitten} (to sit on a chair or not sit on a chair) controversy, related later by P. Quarles van Ufford.\textsuperscript{48} What is clear is that from that time forward he was known by the name Sadrach.

After his baptism, Sadrach was assigned by Anthing to distribute Christian religious brochures and books from door to door around Batavia. This work brought Sadrach into a wider engagement with Dutch people, particularly lay evangelists. One person he became close to at this time was E.W. King, an Indo-Dutch missionary who had grown up in Indonesia. He was one of the pioneers in establishing a congregation close to Batavia and was a pioneer and secretary of GIUZ. Because he was able to speak Indonesian (Malay) and was close to the culture and the indigenous people, King had a close connection with Sadrach.\textsuperscript{49} Like Tunggul Wulung, however, Sadrach was not interested in this work as a \textit{colporteur} and in the end left Batavia for reasons that are not clear. Why Sadrach, just like Tunggul Wulung who worked as as a \textit{colporteur} before him, was not interested in this work remains a mystery. Clearly, it was not for any financial reason because Tunggul Wulung had been offered a permanent honorarium to encourage him to stay on, but he refused it.\textsuperscript{50} According to Sumartana, it was this ‘habit’ of Anthing that later led to the dependence of

\textsuperscript{47} Partonadi, \textit{Sadrach’s Community}, 1988, p. 58, note 11.

\textsuperscript{48} A photograph showing J. Wilhelm (an NGZV missionary in Central Java 1881-1890) and Sadrach sitting side by side, with two Javanese evangelists in traditional dress standing behind them, circulated among missionaries in Central Java and the Netherlands. The photograph was taken on 14 July 1885. For more detail, see, P. Quarles van Ufford, “Why Don’t You Sit Down?” in R. Schefold (ed.), \textit{Man Meaning and History}, Martinus Nijhoff, The Hague, 1980, p. 270. In this article Quarles van Ufford argues that the religious movement led by Sadrach must be placed in a wider context than that of the general movements of resistance to Dutch colonial power in Java at the end of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century. This resistance was not simply resistance to political and economic power; it also represented a “reaction against the colonial expression of Dutch Christianity as superior to Javanese Christianity.”


\textsuperscript{50} Hoekema, “Ibrahim Tunggul Wulung,” in \textit{Peninjau- VII/1}, 1980, p. 12. This is consistent with the report in the \textit{Mededelingen van het Java-Comité} (Java Committee), 1866, pp. 4-5, as quoted by Hoekema, \textit{Berpikir dalam Keseimbangan}, 1997, p. 66: “he went by foot from town to town, from village to village to proclaim the Gospel, without receiving the least financial assistance from anyone.” In Sadrach’s case, as \textit{anak mas}, he would certainly not suffer from a lack of material things. Furthermore, Anthing was known as a wealthy official and very generous to his assistants. Cf. Sumartana, \textit{Mission at the Crossroads: Indigenous Churches, European Missionaries, Islam Association and Socio-Religious Change in Java} 1812-1936, BPK Gunung Mulia, Jakarta, 1991, p. 29.
individuals of the northern region of Central Java. Sadrach decided to leave Batavia without any formal farewells, without supplies, and surrounded by a sense of apprehension, as is clearly expressed in Manuskrip B Karangjasa: “anjur oncat soko Betawi tanpo pamit. Tindak dharat tanpo sangu, tindake awirandhungan amanggung prihatos.” Guillot does not see this as making sense on the part of an anak mas such as Sadrach. What is clear is where he went: to the northern region of Central Java. Sadrach met Pak Kurmen and Tunggul Wulung there again. At that time, Tunggul Wulung had succeeded in coaxing Christians in Semarang to settle in Bondo, a Christian village he had founded. In 1868, Pak Kurmen and Sadrach led groups to Bondo village. Tunggul Wulung himself had only settled there around 1875. According to the Manuskrip Karangjasa, Sadrach stayed a significant time in Bondo and indeed cultivated a garden with vegetable plantings. He also planted a garden for his own use that was neatly maintained. Apart from that, he was able to journey to East Java to visit a number of Christian villages there to meet Christian leaders and study matters that would be useful for the congregation in Bondo. It is not very clear whether Sadrach’s trip to East Java was anything more than an “orientation tour,” as Partonadi says, or whether he wanted to find a suitable leader for the Bondo congregation because the situation in Bondo had deteriorated at that time due to Pak Kurmen’s lifestyle (he had been appointed by Tunggul Wulung to lead the village during his absence) which could not be seen as an example for the congregation. He took opium and was too often absent from Bondo. As a result, some families returned to Semarang and the rest remained under Sadrach’s leadership. Perhaps because Sadrach did not feel entitled to become leader and because in fact this task and responsibility had not been conferred on him, he then met with leaders of Christian villages in East Java in the hope that one of them might be able to become a ‘temporary leader’ until Tunggul Wulung returned to Bondo. I detect a ‘unique’ attitude on Sadrach’s part here that will become evident later after he became leader of the Karangjasa community, i.e., he was

51 Guillot, Kiai Sadrach, 1985, p. 64. At the same time, according to Wolterbeek, the Sadrach’s departure was brought about by his very strong desire to proclaim the Gospel in his region he came from, Central Java. That was why he left Anthing. See Wolterbeek, Babad Zending, 1939, p. 95.
52 Cf. Wolterbeek, Babad Zending, 1939, p. 95 and Partonadi, Sadrach’s Community, 1988, p. 60. At the same time, according to Adriaanse, Sadrach returned to Jepara. See Adriaanse, Sadrach’s kring, 1899, p. 51. According to Guillot, he went to Semarang; see Guillot, Kiai Sadrach, 1985, p. 65. Both places are in the northern region of Central Java.
53 Hoekema, “Ibrahim Tunggul Wulung,” in Peninjau VII/1, 1980, p. 12, and the report by P. Jans in Rapport 1867 (Pati), as quoted in Guillot, Kiai Sadrach, p. 64. Both sources more or less indicate that many of the Christians coaxed by Tunggul Wulung to Bondo were from Hoezoo’s congregation or were baptized by him.
54 Partonadi uses the term “orientation tour.” See Partonadi, Sadrach’s Community, p. 60. According to Adriaanse, Sadrach’s kring, 1899, p. 51 cited by Guillot, Sadrach had the opportunity to meet with Emde’s daughter in Surabaya, Paulus Tosari in Mojowarno, and C. Poensen in Kediri. On his return journey he met with P. Jansz and requested that the congregation in Bondo be received as a congregation under his leadership. Jans refused, however, because he was prejudiced against Sadrach. Cf. Guillot, Kiai Sadrach, 1985, p. 66.
always loyal, both willing to take the initiative with regard to the sacraments because he had not received the authorization to do so (he was not recognized as someone who could administer them). That is why he requested Dutch ministers, who at that time were the only ones who were authorized (considered themselves authorized) to do this.55

Around 1869, at a time when Tunggul Wulung had an opportunity to return to Bondo, Sadrach decided to leave Bondo for reasons that are not clear. There are, however, a number of opinions about this event. According to F. Lion Cachet, there was conflict between Tunggul Wulung and Sadrach because of a struggle over the leadership of the congregation. According to Lion Cachet, Sadrach wanted the main power in the congregation, but all of Tunggul Wulung’s pupils opposed him, so Sadrach was forced to acknowledge defeat and withdraw.56 I consider this argument too contrived, giving the impression that Sadrach had been forced into a corner. What I have presented above indicates that Sadrach did not have the attitude Lion Cachet accuses him of. On the contrary, with his honourable attitude he endeavoured to find help to ‘save’ the Bondo congregation. Indeed, it is not impossible for a Javanese person to claim power for his own ends (even though Partonadi held that Javanese saw this power as coming from the Lord and thus could not be contested).57 On this matter, however, I am certain that Sadrach would not have adopted such an attitude. On the other hand, Adriaanse, who systematically defends Sadrach from Lion Cachet’s attacks, argued that the conflict occurred because Tunggul Wulung took a second wife and Pak Kurmen became addicted to opium.58 Differing from these two views, the Manuskrip Karangjasa states that the reason for Sadrach’s departure from Bondo was that he kaparingan dbawub wangsit kudu anilar tanah tetrukane (received a wangsit, or divine inspiration, to leave the area he had managed), just as the Lord had called Abraham to leave Ur and journey to a place he would show him. What is clear is that he left Bondo with great sorrow.59

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55 On the problem of Pak Kurmen, see L. Adriaanse, Sadrach’s Community, 1899, p. 51 and P. Jansz, Rapport 1869 (Pati), as cited by C. Guillot, Kiai ..., 1985, p. 66.
56 Lion Cachet, Een jaar op reis, 1896, p. 364.
57 Partonadi, Sadrach’s Community, 1988, p. 61.
58 Adriaanse, Sadrach’s kring, 1899, p. 51. I agree with Partonadi’s conclusion, regarding Adriaanse’s conclusion in this matter. According to Partonadi, at this time in Java it was not unusual at this time in Java to take a second wife or to take opium (if we do not want to say commonly took place). Not to mention that the Javanese sense of respect would not permit public opposition or insult against a kiai and even more in the case of one’s own teacher. An ethical consideration, that a Christian Sadrach who opposed these things, would not be sufficient to make him leave. It is certain that there was a much stronger reason for this event.
59 Partonadi, Sadrach’s Community, 1988, pp. 60-61. Apart from any definite reason for Sadrach’s departure from Bondo and based on the footnotes 106 and 110, I tend to agree with Partonadi’s conclusion, which asserts that Sadrach left, as expressed in Manuskrip Karangjasa, because he heard the call to go to a place he did not yet know. His departure, enveloped in deep sadness, shows that Sadrach faithfully obeyed the calling of the Lord, leaving behind all that was personally important to him.
Whatever reason lay behind Sadrach’s departure, this event became the beginning of a new stage in his life as an independent Javanese evangelist, as is clear from what followed. After Sadrach left Bondo, he again fostered contacts with Dutch people. This time he contacted Johannes Carolus Philips and his wife Christina Petronela Stevens, better known as Stevens-Philips, who led a house church in the village of Tukanga, Purworejo, Central Java. There are several possibilities that might have led Sadrach to take up contact with the Stevens-Philips. According to Partonadi, this came about because there had been correspondence between this couple and his Dutch associates, such as Anthing, Hoezoo, and other missionaries, seeking an indigenous worker to assist in the work of evangelism in Bagelen. It was through this correspondence that they obtained their assistants and perhaps heard of Sadrach.\(^{60}\) From *Manuskrip B Karangjasa* we gain a picture of Sadrach’s memories of this Dutch couple:

Pandhito Philip iku … sawijining walondo kang becik bebudene lan ngerti boso Jowo kalawan patitis, sanyonyahe. Anggelarake pakabaran Kristen, banjur jinunjung dadi pandhito; kakung putri tangkep lan becik pamonge marang sadulur Jowo, ambek pataten, nandho pari ing lumbunge perlu kanggo pangane sadulur.\(^{61}\)

Like Jellesma, Anthing, King, and other Dutch people Sadrach encountered on his *jelono* travels, the Stevens-Philips couple were known to be good-natured and very close to the Javanese people.\(^{62}\) From these meetings we gain the idea that Sadrach had a good sense of where he was to go whenever he left a particular place. It seems he always tried to establish rapport with those Dutch people who were well acquainted with the Javanese people and culture.\(^{63}\)

In Purworejo Sadrach was received well by the Stevens-Philips couple, who at that time had an adopted son, Kangjeng Pangeran Kutoardjo, who later became *bupati*. From the

\(^{60}\) Ibid., p. 62. Cf. Adriaanse, *Sadrach’s krING*, 1899, p. 52. The third possibility, as was alluded to by Guillot, is that the Dutch had a kind of religious network throughout the Christian regions on Java. As a result, Javanese who had recently become Christians felt connected within an organized group of Dutch people. See Guillot, *Kiai Sadrach*, 1985, p. 30.

\(^{61}\) In English: “Pendeta Phillips is a Dutch person who is considerate and has good command of the Javanese language, and the same is true of his wife. Because he spreads the Christian religion he was ordained a minister [Indonesian: *pendeta*]. This husband and wife mix well with Javanese people, storing rice in their barn for their fellows.”


\(^{63}\) From the story of his life we can understand the background of this. As a new Christian with his background as a seeker of *ngêlmu*, Sadrach always wanted to deepen his understanding of Christianity while at the same time discovering what was considered to be *ngêlmu sejati*. He sought these ‘first hand’ from those who brought Christianity, the Dutch. Apart from that, as we know, Sadrach was influenced by the teaching of Tunggul Wulung, which stressed that becoming Christian did not mean leaving one’s identity as Javanese behind. Because of this, Sadrach, as a Javanese individual who held strongly to his identity, felt more connected to those Dutch people who respected his identity as Javanese.
Manuskrip Karangjasa we know that Sadrach was also adopted as a son. Once more (after previously being adopted as an anak mas by Anthing), Sadrach was now adopted as the child of Dutch people. In this second such event, Sadrach’s place was parallel to Kangieng Pangeran Kutoardjo’s, who certainly came from the aristocratic class. Perhaps my suspicion stated at the beginning of this chapter, i.e., that Sadrach came from the aristocratic class, is correct. If Sadrach was an ordinary person of low social standing, it would certainly be difficult for him to be placed on the same level as a candidate for the role of bupati.

Clearly, Sadrach felt happy in the Stevens-Philips home. With Abisai Reksadiwangsa, who already worked with them, Sadrach joined in helping to proclaim the Christian religion in several villages, particularly in the areas of Jelok and Jambean, east of Purworejo. At that time what he had waited for arrived: after a number of earlier meetings with Dutch people in which he did not get the opportunity to become an independent Javanese evangelist for the first time he was entrusted with proclaiming the Gospel in his own way.

In a way that was authentically Javanese Sadrach won great success in evangelization. This was certainly not surprising. As a seeker of ngelmu who had tasted the experience of kelono boro, Sadrach demonstrated a knowledge more extensive than that of contemporary Javanese people. He understood three languages, Javanese, Arabic, and Malay. He was able to write in four scripts, Jawyanese, Arabic, pong, and Latin. He studied two religions, Islam

64 In Manuskrip A it is stated: “[M]alah lajeng kapundhut putro angkat dening Tuan Philip, inggih kados dene Kangieng Pangeran Kutoarjo ingkang ugi dades putra angkatipun.” ([H]e was even adopted later by Tuan Philips, as was the case with Kangieng Pangeran Kutoardjo, who had previously been adopted as a child). At this time it is stated in Manuskrip B: “Waktu samono kagungan putro angkat, iyo Kangieng Pangeran Kutoarjo, sadurunge jumeneng bupati. ... Sakeng kaporeng seneng Sang Begawan, banjur ugo kapundhut putro angkat.” (At that time he had an adopted child, Kangieng Pangeran Kutoardjo, prior to his becoming bupati. ... with the approval of the Begawan, Sadrach was also adopted as child).

65 Guillot noted a report from Heyting that Bupati Kutoardjo and Raden Ajoe often came to visit the Stevens-Philips home. Apart from seeing his son (Kangieng Pangeran Kutoardjo) who lived with this Dutch couple, his visit was also to seek as much information as possible about the Christian religion. It was reported also that when this bupati and his wife visited, Sadrach greeted them not with the respectful greeting appropriate for a ordinary person greeting an aristocrat but by thrusting out his hand, as though he was the equal of the bupati. See Guillot, Kiai Sadrach, 1985, p. 74, particularly note 68. In my opinion, if Sadrach was an ordinary person he would certainly not have been bold enough to act in that way because that kind of attitude could bring kualat – being struck down by disaster.

66 In presenting the Gospel, Sadrach used the method employed by Javanese teachers (gurus) at that time, that is by visiting other teachers and discussing Christian ngelmu. While it is not really clear what form of discussion Sadrach employed in evangelization, some sources mention challenging others to debate, See Partonadi, Sadrach’s Community, 1988, p. 62; Adriaanse, for example, refers to it as a twistgesprek (dispute); Adriaanse, Sadrach’s kring, 1899, p. 58; Guillot refers to it as semacam “perang tanding” (a kind of “duel”); see Guillot, Kiai Sadrach, 1985, p. 75. In my opinion, it is best to be cautious in using these expressions so that we do not fall into an absolute opinion that Sadrach always challenged others to debate or always invited others to a duel in communicating the Christian Gospel. In the Manuskrip Karangjasa, for example, there is not one word that is consistent with the terms noted above (this will be discussed at more length later in connection with Sadrach’s meeting with Kiai Kasamentaram). What is clear, as disclosed by Partonadi, is that Sadrach certainly had a special gift for speaking so he was able to draw the attention of many people and finally make the teachers he invited for discussion, together with all their pupils, his followers. After that, the catechetical instruction of his disciples was passed over to Stevens-Philips. See Partonadi, Sadrach’s Community, 1988, p. 62.
and Christianity; to which he added Javanese ngelmu. In addition, his experience of life was very impressive. He had travelled around the island of Java on foot, had lived in the capital city (Batavia), and other major cities like Semarang, had had close relationships with prominent members of the colonial power, like Anthing, and Isaac Esser, the former head of a residency. He also had experience as a colporteur, fostering contact with GIUZ, getting involved with Tunggul Wulung in developing the congregation in Bondo, as well as witnessing and experiencing for himself the diverse form of religious society in Java at that time, such as pesantrens and Christian villages. In a short time Sadrach became a prominent evangelist, portrayed by D. Pol, as quoted by Partonadi, as as bold a defender of Javanese Christianity as Tunggul Wulung.67 Later he was even given the title Sang Gembala by Nyonya Philips68 which shows that Sadrach had gained the confidence of Stevens-Philips not only to proclaim the Gospel but also to become a pastor (gembala). Because of this, we can understand if Sadrach later left Purworejo, after living with the Stevens-Philips couple for more or less a year. According to Partonadi, Sadrach’s decision to leave Stevens-Philips was motivated by his confidence in himself and his passion for standing on his own feet and being independent. This made him more free so that he was no longer bound to this Dutch couple. The link between them, however, was not severed because it was through them that those wishing to be baptized were put in touch with the minister of the Indische kerk in Purworejo.69

d. Kiai Sadrach Surapranata
From Purworejo, Sadrach went to Kutoarjo. When he returned, he met a Dutch family involved in the work of Christianizing the Javanese people, the A.M. Brouwer family.70 This time, however, Sadrach only stopped for a bit and did not stay there.71 He travelled in the

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68 Manuskrip Karangjasa A and B, both state that Sadrach received the nickname Kang Angon or Sang Gembala (Shepherd or Pastor). The word kang is from the word ingkang which means yang (the). Angon means ‘to shepherd or pastor.’ Thus, ingkang angon means ‘the one who shepherds’ while kang angon points to the one who shepherds, thus Sang Gembala – ‘The Shepherd.’
69 Partonadi, Sadrach’s Community, 1988, p. 65.
70 On A.M. Brouwer see Guillot, Kiai Sadrach, 1985, p. 75; Adriaanse, Sadrach’s kring, 1899, p. 60; Partonadi, Sadrach’s Community, 1988, p. 30.
71 From the record of his life in the Manuskrip Karangjasa, we gain the valuable information that not all Dutch people Sadrach met were people he considered to be important. At the very least, this is evident from those who are mentioned in the Manuskrip Karangjasa. Of all the Dutch people he met, only a few are mentioned, such as Anthing, who adopted Sadrach as his anak mas and gave him work as a colporteur, thus giving him wide contacts among people, particularly Dutch lay evangelists, King, one of the founders of GIUZ who was close to Sadrach while he was in Batavia; and the Stevens-Philips couple just discussed. It is interesting also to know that in the Manuskrip Karangjasa, not all the Javanese he knew or who had an important influence on his life were mentioned by him. For example, the name Pak Kurmen, alias Sis
region round Kutoarjo, until he finally met a kiai named Ibrahim who lived in the village of Sruwoh and later became a Christian. It was Kiai Ibrahim who later became Sadrach’s loyal friend in the work of evangelism in the district of Kutoarjo and who took him to meet Kiai Kasanmentaram, who was known to possess a high level of ilmu and also lived in Sruwoh but later moved to Karangjasa. From this meeting we gain a fairly clear picture of how Kiai Kasanmentaram became a Christian after Sadrach visited him. This is explained in detail in Manuskrip Karangjasa:

Manuskrip A

Ki Ibrahim wau enget Ki Kasanmentaram ingkang saking Sruwoh pindhah dhateng dhusun Karangjoso, puniko satunggaling priyantun ingkang moncer mengahing ngèlmu kasepuhan.72 Pramilo wekdal Panjenenganipun Kyai Sadrach ngersakaken martosaken agami73 wau ing Karangjoso, kadherekaken dening Ki Ibrahim njijug ing dalemipun Ki Kasanmentaram. Sadumuginipun Kyai Sadrach ing dalemipun Ki Kasanmentaram katampi kanthi bingah, amargi kaleres Ki Kasanmentaram sampun tepang ing salebetipun sami angudi ngèlmunipun wonten pondhok Tanah Jawi Wetan.74

Wonoten ing ngriku bawaning poro ahi ngèlmu kanthi gayeng ngawontenaken pirembagan75 ngantos boten eman wekdal sawatawis dinten kaginakaken ngawontenaken

Kanoman, alias Iskak, Sadrach’s guru ngèlmu, who later became a Christian after being defeated in a debate by Tunggul Wulung. We do not know for certain why Sadrach did not mention him at all in the Manuskrip Karangjasa when he had had so great an influence on Sadrach’s life. At the very least, Sadrach had been his pupil, and also introduced him to Tunggul Wulung who got him interested in Christianity, and they also worked together to build the Christian village in Bondo. Other than Tunggul Wulung, Javanese names mentioned in the Manuskrip Karangjasa are those who were connected with Sadrach’s community in Karangjasa.75

In the previous chapter I explained that ngèlmu kasepuhan is ngèlmu on a higher level compared with ngèlmu kanoman. Ngèlmu kanoman is associated with konuragan (supernatural powers in the physical realm, such as bodily resistance to, or the ability to avoid or, conversely, to perform various kinds of attacks, either with one’s bare hands or some kind of blunt or sharp weapon). Ngèlmu kasepuhan, however, has a close connection with matters associated with the relationship (harmony) of the micrcosmos with the macrocsmos, as seen, for example, in healing (not only physical but most of all with respect to one’s spiritual condition), and petangan (prediction) which require kawaskithan (wisdom) and sharpness of panggraaita (intuition). It is important to know that those who master ngèlmu kasepuhan must have first mastered ngèlmu kanoman. See the preceding chapter for the concept ngèlmu in Serat Wédhatama in pupuh Paṅgkur.

72 The word martosaken is a shortened form of mawartosaken, from the root warta, i.e., the kromo (polite) form of warta, which means news. With the prefix and suffix, it becomes mawartakaken, and in abbreviation martakaken. In the sentences such those found in Manuskrip A, martosaken agami means to convey some news about religion; cf. the phrase ‘to convey the good news’ (menyampaikan kabar gembira) often used in evangelism. I am persuaded that Sadrach’s coming to visit Kiai Kasanmentaram was to convey the good news about the Christian religion he had received.

73 From the records of this event we can know that Sadrach was someone at this time who possessed a high level of ngèlmu, i.e., ngèlmu kasepuhan that he had obtained through his study in the pesantren with Kiai Kasanmentaram. Up to the time of his move to Karangjasa, however there is no source that reports clearly on Sadrach’s use of this ngèlmu. Only after the formation of a community in Karangjasa led by Sadrach are there many reports about Sadrach’s supernatural powers, from exorcism to healing the sick. (This will be discussed further, particularly in connection with the discussion of Sadrach’s community).

74 The word pirembagan has a meaning close to the Indonesian word diskusi, which means to discuss something with the possibility (thus not always), of achieving agreement. Good news about the Christian religion conveyed by Sadrach apparently received a fairly good response from Kiai Kasanmentaram because both were later involved in a discussion described as gayeng (lively, warm) that lasted several days before reaching its conclusion (tuntas). Tuntas means that they came to agree later: Kiai Kasanmentaram and his family became Christians.
Translation in English:
Ki Ibrahim recalled Ki Kasanmentaram who moved from Sruwoh to the village Karangjoso, a person known to possess a high level of ngelmu. So, when Kiai Sadrach desired to preach religion in Karangjoso, he was taken directly by Ki Ibrahim to the home of Kiai Kasanmentaram. On his arrival in Ki Kasanmentaram’s home, Kiai Sadrach was received very happily because it happened that Ki Kasanmentaram already knew Kiai Sadrach from the time they sought ilmu together in a pesanten in East Java.

There the ngelmu specialists engaged in a lively discussion over several days until they reached a conclusion. Finally, Kiai Kasanmentaram was greatly enthralled and truly moved, then surrendered his body and soul, willing to blot out his past, surrender, believe fully in the Lord Jesus, become a Christian.

Manuskrip B
Kacarito sawijing dino, panjenengane kang angon ing dhukuh Karangjoso kadherakake Kyai Ibrahim. Kersane gelar agomo, tumeko ing padepokane Kyai Kasanmentaram 76 sadumugine ing pamondokane katampi klayan suko bungahing panggalihe sakaliyan, wuwuh maneh kabingahane mario Kyai Kasanmentaram naliyo lelono ing tanah wetan, wis wanuh lan tunghal pamdhokan. Aprasasar ketemu sadulur, kang nunsgal yayah reno. Saben dino tanah agunem rao, tan antoro lomo, Kyai Kasanmentaram sarimbit kangetan ing panggalih, matemah luhul trenyuh, agumur-gumur tanpo bebayu, pasrah jiwo rogo, sedyo nglebur tapak, manut, sumungkem, andherek pracoyo kumandel ing Gusti Iso, dadi golongan Kristen.

76 The words gelar agomo are unique because they are associated with the method by which trade is organized in the traditional Javanesse market, i.e., by spreading out one’s goods, or (ng)gelar dagangon (spread out what is for sale). This is the method adopted by traders who do not possess a permanent stall in the market. Usually, they are itinerant traders who sell in different places depending on the market (the busy day for a market is denoted by a day in the Javanese calendar, for example the day wage, is referred to as wagean, which means that the market will be particularly busy on that day). Because they do not possess a permanent place in the market they simply spread out their goods on the ground or on a road near the market, usually near the entrance so that those entering will have to pass by. This background shows us how Sadrach who had no settled place at that time menggelar (to spread, disseminate,) his religion in Kiai Kasanmentaram’s residence, no doubt in the hope that the owner of the residence would be attracted by what he had to offer. From this we see that at that time there was a home in Karangjasa headed by Kiai Kasanmentaram. From oral informants he interviewed, Guillot was informed that pupils of the pesanten came from all over the island of Java, particularly East Java. If this is true, then at that time Kiai Kasanmentaram would have been a very well-known and influential figure, not only in Karangjasa but throughout Java. See Guillot, Kiai Sadrach, 1985, p. 71. Thus, if Kiai Ibrahim introduced Sadrach to Kiai Kasanmentaram, it would certainly have been because Sadrach had already demonstrated a remarkable ability so that it was considered proper for him to enter into religious discussions with Kiai Kasanmentaram.

Unfortunately, there is no source to indicate in any detail what it was that Sadrach discussed so that Kiai Ibrahim became Christian and recommended that it also be commended to a well-known and influential kiai such as Kiai Kasanmentaram.

77 It is not thought that Sadrach met with companions from the same boarding school, while they lelono in East Java. Their association is portrayed as being rather like siblings. Because of this soon they were involved in agunem rosao, i.e., deep discussion with the presentation of rosao. Such a deep discussion with the presentation of rosao is certainly not the same as an ordinary or general conversation in everyday life. (On the understanding of rosao, see the preceding chapter where the concept of ngelmu in the Serat Wèdhatama in pupuh Pucung is discussed.) Similarly, as specialists in ngelmu kasepuhan, it is certain they would not have engaged in a debate on ilmu kanuragan with the objective of defeating each other – all the more so since they were already like siblings. In addition, religion was discussed. What is clear, as I have already argued, is that Partonadi is not wrong in stating that Sadrach indeed possessed a special ability in discussion so that he was able to attract the attention of many and finally to turn the teachers he challenged into his followers. See Partonadi, Sadrach’s Community, 1988, p. 62, because this happened also with Kiai Kasanmentaram.
English translation:
As the story goes, he was in Karangjasa one day, escorted by Kiai Ibrahim. His intention was to spread religion in the residence of Kiai Kasanmentaram. On arriving Kiai Kasanmentaram’s home, Kiai Sadrach was received warmly because Kiai Kasanmentaram, when he sought ilmu in East Java, knew Kiai Sadrach having lived together in the same boarding school. It could be said that this was a meeting between siblings. Every day they engaged in discussion that put forward rasa. Not long after that Kiai Kasanmentaram was greatly enthralled and truly moved, then surrendered his body and soul, willing to blot out his past, surrender, believe fully in the Lord Jesus, become Christian.

As a follow-up to his visit that brought such a happy outcome, Sadrach took them to Purworejo to be baptized, involving the participation of the Stevens-Philips couple. According to the baptism register, they were baptized on 6 February 1871, along with 19 other Javanese people, with the baptismal names of Paulus and Debora.78

According to Guillot,79 this event became a decisive factor in Sadrach’s decision to live in Karangjasa because, after Kiai Kasanmentaram became a Christian, he ‘offered up’ his wife Debora as a sign of respect. Before she received her baptismal name she had been called Tompo.80 Because of his marriage with Tompo, Sadrach’s mother-in-law (Nyai Debora) offered Sadrach a house and gave him rice fields. This house was coincidentally close to the home and residence of Kiai Kasanmentaram. Apart from that, Kiai Pringgo (lurah [village head] of Karangjasa at that time) was Nyai Suromenggolo’s nephew. Thus, he was Sadrach’s cousin. So, indirectly, Karangjasa village ‘became the property’ of Sadrach, and it is understandable why Sadrach later decided to live in Karangjasa. From the above information we can see that Sadrach’s presence in Karangjasa was not to found a new (Christian) village, as happened in East Java and around Mt. Muria. Karangjasa already existed as a village and it was as if all this had been prepared for him. In my view, this is more of a confirmation for Sadrach of the reality that his faithfulness to the Lord had already borne fruit. At the same time, although Sadrach lived in Karangjasa, his connection with the Stevens-Philips and Brouwer families was not severed.

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78 Guillot, Kiai Sadrach, 1985, pp. 76, 81. Compare with the report of Father F. van Lith, S.J., (1863-1926) “Eene les voor ons uit de Protestansche Zending van Midden-Java,” in Manuskrip Provensi S.J., Semarang, 1921-1924, pp. 26-27 and 36, as quoted by J. Weijens, “Pastor van Lith mengenai Kiai Sadrach,” in Orientasi 6, 1974, pp. 183-202. According to this report, 21 people were baptized. Apart from Kiai Kasanmentaram and his wife, there were two other kiais: Kromowijoyo and his brother Bongsorejo (these three kiais later became Sadrach’s assistants in the Karangjasa community). Individually, they received the baptismal names Paulus, Johan, and Markus. The same report is presented by Adriaanse, Sadrach’s kring, 1899, p. 62.

79 Guillot, Kiai Sadrach, 1985, pp. 76-77.

80 For further information on Tompo, see Manuskrip Karangjasa. At this time, such an event was not strange. What is clear however, as advanced by Guillot, is “in reality Debora never ever became the wife of Sadrach, but was merely ‘invo’ which must be understood here as a woman who manages the household.” See Guillot, Kiai Sadrach, 1985, p. 77. So Sadrach in fact did not really marry Debora. This is not surprising, given Sadrach’s life which was devoid of women, particularly if compared with Coolen, Tosari, or Tunggul Wulung. That the literature on the Christian history of Java never ever touched on or judged Sadrach on any issue about women in his life more or less confirms this.
Evey Sunday Sadrach took his pupils to attend the service in the homes of these two Dutch families, in Tuksanga or in Kutoarjo, which was closer. There they also received religious instruction.

As an outcome, Sadrach’s evangelistic efforts in the region of Purworejo, Kutoarjo, and its surroundings developed quickly. From this time on, Sadrach’s remarkable standing as a s guru ngèlmu Kristen spread widely, not only because he was successful in convincing Kiai Ibrahim and Kiai Kasanmentaram to become Christian but also because Sadrach had been deemed to have been bold in cultivating land that had been considered haunted (angker) in that village, to plant rice (an activity that previously only the pioneers of the village had been bold enough to undertake when they cleared the forest to form the village of Karangjasa).81

In the eyes of the inhabitants, Sadrach was seen as an elder and a very influential guru ngèlmu. As a result, his community continued to grow, and thus the need for a church building of their own became more pressing.82

At the end of 1871, the first church building was erected in Karangjasa, and this village quickly became a gathering place for Javanese Christians from a variety of regions. Not long after this, several kiais joined Sadrach’s community. At that time, in addition to Ibrahim and Kasanmentaram, there were several well-known kiais in the region around Kutoarjo: Ranawidjaja: Wira Moehammad, Tjojontani, Setradiwangsa, and Ranoekoesoema.83 It was the the two latter who later became Christians after hearing about the Gospel (pemberitaan Injil) from Sadrach. Along with their pupils, in all about 200 persons, they were baptized on 26 October 1872. Setradiwangsa received the baptismal name Jakub while was called Jusup.84

81 In traditional Javanese belief, any place occupied by evil spirits (angker, sangar) was very dangerous, bringing bad luck, illness, and death. Adriaanse relates that there were ricefields in Karangjasa that were considered angker. It was believed that anyone bold enough to cultivate such land would suffer sudden death. If he was a married man his wife would become a widow. For this reason, such land was called a sawah janda (widow ricefield). After settling in Karangjasa, Sadrach cultivated this land without suffering any calamity. As a result, the people considered him a person blessed with special ability that rendered evil spirits powerless. See Guillot, Kiai Sadrach, 1985, p. 78; Adriaanse, Sadrach’s kring, 1899, pp. 68-70; Partonadi, Sadrach’s Community, 1988, pp 66-67. A short prayer seeking the Lord’s protection against what is angker as used by Coolen, Tunggul Wulung, Anthing, and Sadrach: “Lord God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, neutralise dangerous poison in our plantings so that they may may bear fruit. Make the spirits that haunt land and trees become powerless. May the blessing of the Lord bring us prosperity.”
82 At that time, Nyonya Brouwer fell ill and eventually died, so there was no longer a place for a service of worship in Kutoarjo, which was relatively close, and the Stevens-Phillips family home in Tuksanga was rather far from Karangjasa. See Guillot, Kiai Sadrach, 1985, p. 81; Adriaanse, Sadrach’s kring, 1899, p. 63.
83 Adriaanse, Sadrach’s kring, 1899, pp. 56-59. Cf. Wolterbeek, Babad Zending, 1939, p. 97. According to Wolterbeek, at that time there were four very well-known guru pametja (peramal fortune-tellers). They were well known because they caused unrest in the population by teaching about a religion opposed to Islam, Buddhism. For a report about the presence of these goeroe pametja, see H. Reinders, De Gereformeerde Zending, 2001, pp. 226, 266-267. It is stated that: “Twee dezer Goeroe werden gedoopt (Two of these teachers were baptized).”
Less than a year later, on 5 April 1873, 310 people were also baptized. By the end of 1873, Sadrach’s evangelistic efforts had already borne fruit, with as many as 612 new people baptized.85

According to Lion Cachet and Adriaanse, at the end of 1873 the total membership of Sadrach’s community had reached around 2,50086 – an amazing total that was achieved in only three years (1870-1873). At that time, a number of other church buildings were being erected in Karangjasa, Banjar (1872), Karangpucung, Kedungpring, and Karangjambu (1873).87 Sadrach began to lead services and read his own sermons in Javanese.88

He did not, however, separate his community from the congregation of the Stevens-Philips couple because they were also invited to preach and to visit villages with Sadrach to meet his disciples face to face. They visited Sadrach regularly and carried out inspections together. This continued and ended only when Nyonya Philips-Stevens fell ill in 1873.89 With the gradual decline in Nyonya Stevens-Philips’s health, the centre of Javanese Christianity gradually moved from Tuksanga to Karangjasa. The role of Sadrach as Stevens-Philips’ replacement became increasingly evident. Although many Dutch missionaries considered Sadrach a shadow of Stevens-Philips, it is nevertheless clear that his career was built on his own ability because Stevens-Philips had only led in a formal sense, while control of the community was entirely in Sadrach’s hands.

On the 23 May 1876 Nyonya Stevens-Philips died at the age of 51 years. Her husband later moved to his sister’s (Oostrom-Philips) home in Banyumas. Thus, there were no longer any Dutch people on whom Sadrach could look for support.90 Abisai, Stevens-Philips’s...
assistant, presented him with a difficult situation. Sadrach then assumed full leadership of the congregation because it was clear that his influence was greater than Abisai’s. So Sadrach began a new period in his life. Following tradition, Sadrach added the name Surapranata to his name to indicate his new position. Surapranata means ‘one who is bold to set in order’ from the word sura (bold) and mrana (set in order). From this time until his death at the age of 90 he was known as Kiai Sadrach Surapranata.

2. Sadrach’s Community
   a. Early Development of the Community

This represents the period of formation of Sadrach’s community, begun when Sadrach settled in Karangjasa, particularly after the erection of a mosque there in 1871, and four other mosques in 1872 and 1873 in surrounding villages. There are several important notes regarding this period that need to be presented if we are to gain a full picture of Sadrach’s community, which will assist us in better understanding Sadrach’s life and the formation of his nglimu sjeti theology.

The first important note concerns the conflict that arose in the community triggered by the increasing membership of Sadrach’s community compared with the number of Dutch Christians under the leadership of Stevens-Philips. This occurred around 1872. During that time Sadrach’s community had been combined with the Stevens-Philips congregation, which basically had a Dutch membership. After Sadrach had assisted them in evangelism the situation in the congregation was reversed. The Dutch became a minority in their own church and this made them unhappy. I agree with Singgih’s conclusion that this unhappiness can only be understood by examining the background of the colonial mentality. They were not happy to mix with people they saw as being of lower status. On the other hand, the Javanese did not feel comfortable in a Dutch congregation. They were quite sensitive to the

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Karangjasa, not even the name of J. Wilhelm, a missionary who had a good relationship with Sadrach and who was well known in connection with the op een stoel zitten episode.

According to Lion Cachet, following the death of Nyonya Stevens-Philips, their house and little church were sold by their children who later moved to Salatiga. 140 copies of the New Testament in Javanese were sold to someone for a very low price, 21 guilders. The person who bought them later sold them for 2 guilders each. See Lion Cachet, Een Jaar op reis, 1896, p. 286; cf. Wolterbeek, Babad Zendning, 1939, p. 103.

A description of this new period in Sadrach’s life, particularly after the death of Nyonya Stevens-Philips, will be presented more fully in the discussion of Sadrach’s community.

In the past, Javanese people distinguished between names; the childhood name (given at birth) and the adult name (given at the time a person married, experienced some life event, or, for the priyayi, the name given when the person was appointed to an official position). As a Javanese man, Sadrach was not exempt from this cultural tradition. As we have seen, he added to his name several times to mark some important event in his life. After taking the name Abas to indicate that he was a santri, and Sadrach to indicate that he was a Christian who did not want to surrender his identity under pressure from the Dutch religious culture, he took the name Surapranata to indicate that he was a Javanese bold enough to lead his congregation himself, not depending on Dutch people. See Partonadi, Sadrach's Community, 1988, p. 71. We can take the final name chosen into account as an indication that Sadrach was perhaps a priyayi.

Lion Cachet incorrectly interprets the word Surapranata as The Lord who reigns, the highest name above all the Javanese aristocratic titles: See Lion Cachet, Een Jaar op reis, 1896, p. 366.
attitude of Dutch people towards them. This unhappiness led to division among the Dutch members themselves. This development led to the Purworejo church closing its doors to the Javanese people. After this, the Stevens-Philips couple continued to give support to Sadrach’s community. Towards the end of 1873, they carried out an inspection tour together and invited Aart Vermeer to baptize Javanese people who had decided to become Christian, bless marriages, and celebrate Holy Communion. The presence of Vermeer, however, also brought a problem because he thought that these Javanese people had declared themselves Christian as a result of evangelization undertaken by Stevens-Philips and not because of Sadrach. Like the majority of other Dutch people, Vermeer greatly underestimated Sadrach and intended to integrate Sadrach’s community in the Banyumas region into his own group. As we might guess, Sadrach rejected that, and, as a result, they quarreled (ngantos paben). Sadrach was very disappointed and severed the association with Vermeer. From that time on the connection of Sadrach’s community to the Christian (read: Dutch) church was cut off.

The second important point, was that, because of the severing of links with the Christian churches no baptisms and no celebrations of Holy Communion could be performed in Sadrach’s community for several years, and thus Sadrach was accused of ignoring or even rejecting the sacraments. This certainly made no sense because he was baptized himself after his conversion. That he clearly valued the sacraments highly can also be seen from the fact that he took his community to be baptized in the Indische kerk in Purworejo. As I have already noted, the ministry of the sacraments was no longer carried out because Sadrach did not consider himself qualified to administer them, never having been ordained as a minister. I agree with Partonadi’s opinion that while Sadrach was aware that the sacraments were important, in the present situation with no minister available to serve, it was absolutely

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95 Singgih, Berteologi dalam Konteks, 2000, p. 97.
96 In the Purworejo Protestant Church, which was for the Dutch in principle, a parish committee had been set up. Its members consisted of Dutch people motivated to Christianize Javanese people. A conflict arose among them due to a difference of opinion about the presence of Javanese members in increasing numbers; for example, Philips was positive about the increase in the number of Javanese becoming Christian, while Schneider took the opposite view. For more details on this, see Guillot, Kiai Sadrach, p. 86; Adriaanse, Sadrach’s kring, 1899, p. 67.
97 Aart Vermeer was a pioneer missionary who arrived in Java around 1861 and served in the regions of Pekalongan and Tegal. For some reason, he moved to Banyumas in the end. The invitation to Vermeer was certainly not without reason. First, the Stevens-Philips couple already knew him through Philips’s sister, Oostrom-Philips, who lived in Banyumas. Second, after the Purworejo Church closed its doors to Javanese people, the sacrament could no longer be celebrated. Because of this, Stevens-Philips invited him to minister to the Christian Javanese who had been rejected. For more information on Vermeer, see Guillot, Kiai Sadrach, 1985, pp. 13-15, 88, 89, 90; Partonadi, Sadrach’s Community, 1988, pp. 38, 67-69.
98 See Adriaanse, Sadrach’s kring, 1899, p. 72.
99 Heyting and PBieger report that Sadrach prevented his followers from being baptized because he did not consider the sacrament necessary for salvation. See Partonadi, Sadrach’s Community, 1988, pp. 68-69.
100 See footnotes 92-97, which illustrate events at Bondo connected with the problem that confronted Sadrach concerning the attitude of Pak Kurmen and leadership in that Christian village.
impossible to administer them.\textsuperscript{101} What is clear is that after this a variety of accusations against Sadrach began to appear.\textsuperscript{102}

The third important point, is that after the severance of the connection with the Christian churches and up to the death of Nyonya Stevens-Philips in 1876, Sadrach’s community continued to grow. In 1874, for example, a church building was erected in Jembangan.\textsuperscript{103} Thus, Sadrach’s community became increasingly wider, including not only the lowlands but also the mountains. At the same time, this also showed that, although the connection with the Dutch was severed, Sadrach’s community could develop as a self-reliant congregation, not dependent on the involvement of foreign people who looked down on them. From this period on, we can see clearly that on the one hand Sadrach always endeavoured to involve Dutch people in developing his community, particularly in the ministry of the sacraments, while on the other hand, he did not strive at all to make himself dependent on the involvement of these Dutch people, particularly when they began to attempt to control his congregation with their superior attitudes. So, with respect to the op een stoel of niet op een stoel zitten event, Quarles van Ufford rightly draws the conclusion that the religious movement led by Sadrach was a “reaction against the colonial attitude of Dutch Christianity as superior to Javanese Christianity.”

b. Sadrach Becomes the Leader: The Vaccination Episode

After Nyonya Stevens-Philips died, Sadrach took over the full leadership of the community. In keeping with the name he had chosen to show this, Surapranata, Sadrach showed he had the courage to direct his community that, by the end of 1876, already totaled about 3,000 people.\textsuperscript{104}

The first important note here is connected to Sadrach’s efforts to perfect the organization of his growing community. The organization of the community grew and developed along the lines of Javanese culture. Its structure was very simple, identical with the \textit{paguron} system or traditional \textit{pesantren}. What was emphasized was personal and emotional relations to stress spiritual aspects rather than church management issues. Throughout the Stevens-Philips period, the Javanese Christian congregations that were under the umbrella of the Indische Kerk in Purworejo already conducted their own services independently. Partonadi notes the \textit{house church}, which developed outside the formal jurisdiction of the Indische Kerk.

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\textsuperscript{101} Partonadi, \textit{Sadrach’s Community}, 1988, pp. 68-69.

\textsuperscript{102} At that time there was a rumour circulated by those around Vermeer, that “on both palms of Sadrach’s hands were found nail holes from crucifixion. This shows that he is Christ. At one time he was in the closed church then disappeared and only appeared again after three days. He is not just called imam (priest) but also father, kiai and elder”; see Guillot, \textit{Kiai Sadrach}, 1985, p. 90. We will examine other accusations of the same kind in the following discussion.


\textsuperscript{104} Adriaanse, \textit{Sadrach’s kring}, 1899, p. 77.
death of Nyonya Stevens-Philips, this structure was still maintained, as can be seen in Sadrach’s community.  

105 Because the community grew rapidly and with growing numbers, Sadrach appointed three assistants to represent him. They were Johannes Kramawidjaja, Markus Bangsaredja, and Musa Wirawidjaja. Markus and Musa were appointed Gospel teachers (guru Injil), while Johannes became the chairman of the elders in Karangjasa. Their positions were very important, and their authority was recognized by the whole community. Their leadership was well received because they had worked with Sadrach for a very long time. All three had a background in ngilim and were ordained by Sadrach.  

106 Sadrach organized regular meetings in Karangjasa that were attended by all the community leaders and any others who wished to attend. These meetings were held every selapan (once every 35 days), that is on Tuesday Kliwon.  

The second important note is in connection with the efforts of the Dutch to get rid of Sadrach through the vaccination affair. The rapid growth of a community that were independent of Dutch control gave rise to government suspicion. Sadrach was seen as a powerful figure and a political threat to the general peace and order.  

108 So W. Ligvoet, the Bagelen Resident at that time, sought a means to place the congregations under the supervision of a Dutch official and if possible to have Sadrach removed. The way out arose by chance. In 1882 a smallpox epidemic occurred and, in response, the government required everyone to be vaccinated. According to Ligvoet, Sadrach refused vaccination on religious grounds, based on I Timothy 5:6-7 and II Corinthians 6:3.  

109 These two passages from the New Testament stressed that the congregation must live without blemish.  

110 On the basis of...
Article 143 of the laws and regulations concerning indigenous people, Sadrach was considered to have opposed the government and was thus arrested and taken to the Kutoarjo police station. Without interrogation, he was taken before the Purworejo court officials. After appearing before the Resident, he was put in prison.\footnote{111} In a full meeting attended by the elders in Karangjasa on 15 March 1882, Ligvoet announced that Sadrach had been arrested and closed the church building in Karangjasa for services of worship. At the same time he appointed Bieger as the new leader of the Javanese Christians. Sadrach was imprisoned for three weeks and subjected to house arrest for nearly three months.\footnote{112} When this issue came before the Governor-General, F. Jacob, in Bogor, a thorough investigation was undertaken. Because there was insufficient evidence to bring Sadrach to trial, he was freed on the decree of the Governor-General in July 1882. As a result, Resident W. Ligvoet took early retirement on the grounds of health. In October 1882, after having his appointment terminated, Bieger requested to be recalled to the Netherlands.\footnote{113} After being released, Sadrach returned to Karangjasa. This affair increased his authority in the eyes of the people.

\textit{The third important note} is connected with a new NGZV missionary, Jacob Wilhelm, who came to Purworejo on 28 February 1881. He met with Sadrach a year later because Sadrach’s house arrest was served in the mission house where Bieger lived. Wilhelm also lived there at the time, charged with opening a school.\footnote{114} While he was detained there Sadrach developed a friendship with him because he was the only missionary who paid attention to Sadrach and tried to understand the affair from Sadrach’s point of view. He felt that Sadrach was not at fault and saw that the whole affair had been a great mistake.\footnote{115}
Sadrach’s friendship with Wilhelm brought Sadrach’s community into a new situation, as will be seen in the period following.

c. **Collaboration with Jacob Wilhelm: Golongané Wong Kristen Kang Mardika**

After release from house arrest in Purworejo and his return to Karangjasa, Sadrach and Wilhelm met regularly. On one occasion, Sadrach brought his adopted child, Yotham, to Wilhelm who was a teacher at the time in a school in Purworejo, as a pupil.\(^{116}\)

*The first important note* here concerns a follow-up to the close contact between Sadrach and Wilhelm. On 22 March 1883, Sadrach went to Purworejo to request that Wilhelm become the minister of the community. Wilhelm responded positively. In the full meeting of elders in Karangjasa on 10 April 1883, Sadrach announced Wilhelm’s willingness to work with the community. He was later received and appointed as their minister, by unanimous vote. A letter was written and signed by Sadrach and 26 elders as representatives of 22 local congregations with a total membership of 3,039. On 17 April 1883, the elders gathered again, and Wilhelm was also present in his new role as minister. The community officially adopted the name Golongané Wong Kristen Kang Mardika (Group of Free Christians) and acknowledged Wilhelm as their minister.\(^{117}\)

The word *mardika* indicates that it was the independence of the community which had been the prime characteristic to be defended from the beginning. All outside interference was to be rejected, either from the government or from the Indische Kerk in Purworejo. From a positive perspective, the word *mardika* indicates that the community was entitled to express its faith freely and and organize themselves in ways that are relevant to their local context. In short, the community had freedom that had to be acknowledged by all parties. According to Partonadi, it seems that the word *mardika* was suggested by Wilhelm who was familiar with the Western concept of independence. The principles of neutrality in matters of religion held by the Dutch government gave a place to individual rights, including freedom of religion. Rights such as the freedom of religion and its expression in worship, teaching, and practice, along with the freedom to join other groups for religious purposes had to be achieved in Central Java, as was the case in the Netherlands. The rights exercised by Dutch people must also be accorded to Javanese Christians.\(^{118}\)

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\(^{116}\) According to one story, when the wife of Markus Bangsaredja (one of Sadrach’s right-hand men) was pregnant, Sadrach told her that the child would certainly be male. This was the child he asked for later to adopt because he had no child from his marriage to Debora. See Adriaanse, *Sadrach’s kring*, 1899, p. 121. We will see below the role of Yotham in Sadrach’s community and also the influence of the school that was later run by J.P. Zuidema who later directed the mission school of Keuchenius where Yotham became his pupil.

\(^{117}\) Adriaanse, *Sadrach’s kring*, 1899, p. 131.

\(^{118}\) Partonadi, *Sadrach’s Community* 1988, pp. 76-80. I agree that Wilhelm was influential in the choice of this word *mardika*. This is very clearly reflected in his letter to Governor-General F. Jakob dated 7 April 1883,
The second important note is connected with the *op een stoel of niet op een stoel zitten* (sit on one seat or not sit on one seat) episode, which caused a great commotion among Dutch missionaries. At one time Wilhelm and Sadrach sat on chairs side by side.119 In the 19th century, when Western cultural superiority and the colonial mentality were still inherent in the mind of the Dutch, including missionaries, this was very unusual. It was really astonishing that a Dutch person would honour a Javanese in this way. Usually, the Javanese person would always sit on the floor or stand but never ever sit on a chair. Wilhelm’s attitude overturned the feudal-colonial conventions in operation then and, at the same time, to borrow an expression from Singgih, it was “like oil thrown on fire.”120 After this, a variety of accusations in a tone not very different from that of the earlier accusations,121 were directed against Sadrach with vigour. Basically, Dutch people could not accept Sadrach’s boldness in placing himself on the same level as themselves.

The third important note is connected with the *toelating* (work permit) that was given to Sadrach and his two representatives, Johanes Kramawijaya and Markus Bangsaredja. On 4 October 1886, according to the decision of the Governor-General, Sadrach received a licence *als Indische hulpzending* – as indigenous mission assistant.122 As an assistant – assistants were indeed usually Javanese – Sadrach’s position in the eyes of the Dutch was that of an assistant to a *zendeling* (missionary), at that time Wilhelm.123 But, of course, this did not mean that Sadrach had a lower status in the eyes of his followers – certainly not, because for them Sadrach was the senior leader. Nevertheless, Wilhem’s presence embodied a role that

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119 From Wilhelm’s diary, as cited by Partonadi, this event was immortalized in a photograph taken on 14 July 1885. See Partonadi, *Sadrach’s Community*, 1988, p. 226.


121 After the conflict with Vermeer, Sadrach’s community no longer received any sacraments. As a result, Sadrach was accused of not seeing the sacraments as important. Other accusations emerged after this. In the periodical *Heidenbonde*, October, 1878, pp. 21-22, several allegations made against Sadrach were repeated by P. Heyting. These allegations can be summarized as follows: Sadrach declared himself to be Christ. He exalted himself (selverheffing) like a Javanese aristocrat. He acted as if he possessed supernatural powers. He was a political leader who wanted to rebel, which is why there were so many weapons in his house. He enriched himself by selling *kris* that he blessed. According to Wilhelm, these accusations were compiled by C. A. L. van Troostwijk and B. C. Schneider, Abisai Reksadwangs (Stevens-Philips’ assistant in evangelism), who had worked with Sadrach although he was not ‘as successful as’ Sadrach, and Bieger. The reason is clear: they were attempting to have Sadrach removed. See Partonadi, *Sadrach’s Community*, 1988, pp. 174-175.

122 Sadrach’s *toelating* (permission) is No.1/C, 4 October 1886. See Lion Cachet, *Een Jaar op reis*, 1896, p. 841. Johanes Kramawijaya and Markus Bangsaredja received *toelating* several months later, on 21 March 1887. Cf. Partonadi, *Sadrach’s Community*, 1988, p. 84.

was important for the community, particularly with regard to bureaucracy. Partonadi informs us that their working together brought blessing. As Kiai, Sadrach taught in the pesantren style, while Wilhelm, as a Dutch missionary, taught in the Western manner. As a Javanese person familiar with Javanese culture and tradition and as a greatly respected teacher of ngèlmu, Sadrach went to a wide range of outlying villages to visit influential teachers of ngèlmu to proclaim his new ngèlmu. Meanwhile, Wilhelm concentrated on organizational development, teaching, preaching, and the ministry of the sacraments. He also made Javanese translations of the Kort Begrip der Christelijke Religie voor hen die zich tot het Avondmaal willen begeren (A Compendium of the Christian Religion for Those who Wish to Participate in Holy Communion), the Nederlandsche Geloofsbelijdenis (The Belgic Confession), the Heidelberg Catechismus (Heidelberg Catechism), and De Kerkorde der Gereformeerde Kerken (Church Order of the Reformed Churches).

Sadrach’s community grew through the cooperation of these two leaders. The fourth important note is connected with the sending of three NGZV missionaries to Central Java, following the success of Wilhelm’s collaboration with Sadrach. Aart Vermeer was reappointed as a missionary and sent in 1887. A year later, in 1888, Zuidema was appointed to Purworejo to take the place of Wilhelm’s place as school teacher at and principal of the Keuchenius school built a year before his arrival; at the same time he became inspector and supervisor of educational issues. There is a possibility that the arrival of Zuidema and the establishment of the Keuchenius school were in fact prepared to restrict Wilhelm’s activity in his successful collaboration with Sadrach. As we know, the op een stoel of niet op een stoel zitten affair ignited the anger of the Dutch against Wilhelm and Sadrach. According to Guillot, Zuidema was highly surprised to find that there were already schools in the villages that formed Sadrach’s community, which they managed themselves without any Dutch assistance. From a report by Heyting cited by Guillot, we are informed that

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124 According to Adriaanse’s report, the Javanese people of Sadrach’s community considered Sadrach as having the highest status, but, as tuan pendeta Belanda, Wilhelm also had a special high status. See Adriaanse, Sadrach’s kring, 1899, pp. 164-165. What was meant by Wilhelm’s high status was certainly connected to his status as a Dutch person, which made it possible for him to act as an intermediary if the congregation experienced any difficulty with the government. There were several events that caused concern, as reported in Manuskrip C Karangjasas; for example, Wilhelm approached the local authorities on the occasion of the detention of several members of the congregation and the destruction of a church building; see Guillot, Kiai Sadrach, 1985, pp. 14-142.

125 Partonadi, Sadrach’s Community, 1988, pp. 79-80.

126 Adriaanse, Sadrach’s kring, 1899, p. 192. According to Guillot, although he was unhappy, Sadrach put up with the return of his ‘old adversary,’ and more than that later, when he was appointed to serve Sadrach’s community in Banyumas because his presence there (as had been the case with Wilhelm) played an important mediating role between the congregation and the often hostile local officials. See Guillot, Kiai Sadrach, 1985, pp. 148, 150. In my view it is certain that the efforts of the NGZV to appoint Vermeer was not without a ‘goal’ because, some time after his arrival and after several other missionaries had appeared, a conflict occurred (again) that brought about the termination of the association of Sadrach’s community with the NGZV.

127 Partonadi, Sadrach’s Community, 1988, p. 80.
Sadrach had begun to build schools for his community in 1883. Pupils were taught to read and write for at least three hours a day. There were nine schools spread out over the whole area encompassing Sadrach’s community. One was in Karangjasa and around 1885 had 30 pupils, including five girls.\(^\text{128}\) This report provides us with the very valuable information that Sadrach was greatly concerned with the issue of education. It is clear that Sadrach was able to see the needs arising from the development of that era. It certainly does not surprise us that Sadrach and his community successfully managed schools without Dutch assistance, in the way that Zuidema was surprised (again the mindset of the Dutch in belittling and underestimating Sadrach and his community can be seen here). Because, as we know, Sadrach and many of his followers were pesantren graduates. As for Sadrach himself, as well as having lived in Kauman, he had also studied in Kampung Serani in Batavia. From his experience and his capability, as I have already argued, it is not surprising that he was able to build a community of learning in the form of schools. Moreover, at that time there were five girls studying in these schools, which indicates how Sadrach saw the importance of women in his community. This truly shows that women were valued, well before R.A. Kartini began her ‘emancipation movement.’\(^\text{129}\) The third missionary to come was R.J. Horstman, who was sent a year (1889) after Zuidema arrived. This time he was appointed to assist Sadrach’s community in Tegal and Pekalongan because they complained about the attitude of the local officials who were hostile to them.\(^\text{130}\) As could be predicted, for a year after Horstman’s arrival, rumours arose again about Sadrach and his teachings, which were considered to be errant. According to Partonadi and Guillot, the allegations in the gossiping of the three newly arrived evangelists were the fullest and most detailed. The content of the allegations is as follows:\(^\text{131}\):

- Sadrach is Christ who is called Lord (\textit{Gusti}) born of the Virgin Mary; the marks of the nails (stigmata) can be seen in his hands and feet.
- Sadrach holds power in Karangjasa and from there rules all of Java. He was the one who appointed all the missionaries like Vermeer, Horstman, Zuidema, and Wilhelm. He is also the one who dismisses them, as in the case of Bieger.
- Once a year the congregational elders (\textit{sesepuh}) and the Dutch missionaries are required to attend and offer worship and sacrifice in the mosque (\textit{masjid}) Each household must put aside one cent (\textit{sen}) each day for this event.


\(^{130}\) Once more Sadrach allowed this to happen for the same reason, i.e., that the presence of a Dutch missionary could provide mediation for his congregation in their dealing with local officials who were often hostile to them. See Adriaanse, \textit{Sadrach’s kring}, 1899, pp. 205-206.


- Loyal Christians will be permitted to receive amulets (jimat), spells (japa-mantra), and ngelmu. In the same way traditional customs such as circumcision (sunat), almsgiving (sedekah), offerings (sesajen), and other things are practise with no sense of guilt. They are no longer required to pray facing Mecca because their mosque (masjid) is now in Karangjasa.

- Sadrach produced a book on ngelmu sejati that was distributed to ministers as a completion of the Gospel.

- Prior to marriages or baptisms, the Dutch missionaries and the elders must request a permit from Sadrach and will receive a guarantee of his endorsement and his blessing after making payment.

- Everyone, including the Dutch missionaries, who does not agree with the above will be considered a non-Christian and unable to be believed or accepted.

There are many other allegations of a fairly similar tone. One matter that calls for attention is the existence of an allegation concerning ngelmu sejati that Sadrach taught as a completion of the Gospel. We will discuss this in more depth later, in the following section. In the meantime, however, we are getting an increasingly clearer picture of these Dutch people certainly never ceasing their offerings to be rid of Sadrach and now Wilhelm as well who was considered to have been influenced by Sadrach.

The fifth important note concerns Lion Cachet’s arrival. He was sent to Central Java to investigate rumours about Sadrach that disturbed Dutch people. This action was taken in accord with the minutes of a NGZV meeting in May 1890, which stated that the executive was given the task of evaluating the spiritual life of Javanese Christians as well as studying all the problems that arise and develop in the work of evangelism. This was also in line with the decision of a meeting of the General Synod of the Nederduitsche Gereformeerde Kerken (NGK) held in Leeuwarden the same year. On 9 April 1891, Lion Cachet, a member of the Board of Directors of NGZV, left for Central Java and did not return to the Netherlands until 12 April 1892. Because the journey there and back took three months, this means he was in Central Java for nine months. He met first of all with his friends, the Dutch missionaries, who gave him a variety of reports and, of course, nonsense about (especially) Sadrach and Wilhelm. He met with Sadrach only once, for less than an hour, without discussing anything important. He used the remaining time to visit Sadrach’s community in the districts with disappointing results. Nevertheless, in his report to the Synod of June

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133 The NGK are the congregations that separated from the Nederlandse Hervormde Kerk (NHK) in January 1886 and planned to take over responsibility for evangelization in Central Java from the NGZV. On this, see H. Berkhof, Sejarah Gereja, BPK Gunung Mulia, Jakarta, 1967, pp. 320-323.
134 See Lion Cachet, Een Jaar op reis, 1896, p. 875; Partonadi, Sadrach’s Community, 1988, p. 83.
135 Partonadi, Sadrach’s Community, 1988, p. 83; Guillot, Kiai Sadrach, 1985, pp. 156-162.
1892, he recklessly stated (and claimed to know) that Sadrach was simply a Javanese imposter who abused the Christian religion through cunning to enrich himself and improve his social standing. Sadrach’s teaching was considered wrong, even falsehood, if measured against the Word of the Lord. He drew the conclusion that all collaboration between the missionaries and Sadrach was regrettable. On the basis of his findings, Lion Cachet recommended that the NGZV terminate their association with Sadrach.

Om de eere des Heeren, en uit liefde tot zielen ook tot de ziel van Sadrach, moest de Zending zich losmaken van leugen Sadrach, die geheel ons zendingsveld vergiftigde, en een ‘Javaansch-Christendom’ in het had geroepen, waarin voor den Christus geen plaats is.

d. Termination of the Connection with the NGZV

Most unfortunately, Lion Cachet (read: the NGZV) had not learned from the bitter experience of the failure of the efforts of Ligvoet, Heyting and Bieger to remove Sadrach ten years earlier, and he now repeated their mistake. Lion Cachet’s action against Sadrach resulted in the severing of the connection between Sadrach’s community and the NGZV. The work of the NGZV over more than thirty years, including the nine years of Wilhelm’s work, was gone. It was not Sadrach, but the NGZV that was almost exiled from Central Java – almost all the Javanese Christians followed Sadrach. Of the 6,374 church members, no more than 150 took the side of these missionarties from the Netherlands.

Wilhelm was pressured by his friends who tended to confront Sadrach and himself, stating that, in addition in his position as a NGZV missionary, he was also a ‘subordinate’ of Lion Cachet, which meant that he was unable to do much to defend Sadrach. He even had to sign a statement severing his association with Sadrach. Sadrach himself had already decided to stop fostering any association with these londo-londo – white people - making no exception for Wilhelm. According to Adriaanse, to demonstrate that collaboration between them had really ended, Sadrach dismantled the entire organizational setup Wilhelm had initiated and revived the meetings held in Karangjasa once every 35 days, on Tuesday Kluiwan. But Sadrach’s compassion was stronger than his anger, and all the more so because Wilhelm had worked with him for 9 years. Adriaanse reported a dramatic event: after Lion Cachet returned to the Netherlands, there was a final meeting between Sadrach and Wilhelm who felt he had been in the wrong in the events that had taken place and asked Sadrach’s

136 Lion Cachet, Een Jaar op reis, 1939, p. 841.
137 English translation: For the glory of the Lord and out of love for souls, including Sadrach’s soul, the Mission needs to separate itself from Sadrach’s falsehood that has poisoned our whole mission field and (from) a so-called ‘Javanese Christianity,’ in which there is no place for Christ. See Lion Cachet, Een Jaar op reis, 1896, p. 842.
138 Cf. Wolterbeek, Babad Zending, 1939, p. 132; Partonadi, Sadrach’s Community, 1988, p. 84.
139 Guillot, Kiai Sadrach, 1985, p. 162.
140 Adriaanse, Sadrach’s kring, 1899, p. 311.
forgiveness, requesting to be able to still live peacefully with the congregation in Karangjasa. These two ‘former’ colleagues wept for each other. After Sadrach assured him he would be received, Wilhelm returned to Purworejo but did not come back because he became ill and died soon after. Concerning the fate of Wilhelm and the three other NGZV missionaries (Vermeer, Zuidema, and Horstman), T. Sumartana, who dedicated a section of his book to Sadrach, particularly in respect to the aftermath of that conflict, states that at the end:

In a greatly weakened, depressed condition, [Wilhelm] died on March 3, 1892.

Zuidema … Following the split, all the pupils were withdrawn by their parents until the school was empty. A similar thing befell Vermeer and Horstman: they did not have any church members left.

Vermeer experienced a more tragic end. Already advanced in years, he too was sharply criticized and his entire work was considered by the Inspector to have been devoid of fruits. He was even discharged from his task and position as a NGZV missionary. Vermeer died while Lion Cachet was still in Purworejo.

Horstman himself experienced a fate no less sad. In December of 1891, his wife died from an illness. Because his five small children, the oldest being only seven years old, were such a heavy burden to him, Horstman was so shaken emotionally … Upon arriving in Holland he was met with great anger by the directors of the NGZV, which included Lion Cachet, who accused him of being “a soldier who had deserted.” The NGZV directors decided to withdraw the allowances for his children and to continue his salary for only three months.

These events disclosed by Sumartana really constitute a tragic end for the missionaries who up till then had endeavoured to remove Sadrach. This will also be the case with Lion Cachet, as we will see later in the way his life ended.

e. The Arrival of L. Adriaanse: Sadrach becomes the Apostle of Java

With his toelating als Indische Hulpzending still in hand, Sadrach carried on the task of evangelism together with two of his right-hand workers, Johanes Kramawijaya and Markus Bangsaredja, to the most isolated villages. Increasing numbers converted and Sadrach’s community continued to grow. Nonetheless, there was still one outstanding lack felt by Sadrach, and that is the issue of the sacraments. After their relationship with the NGZV had been severed, there was no ministry of the sacraments in Sadrach’s community, as had been the case earlier following Sadrach’s conflict with Vermeer. Because Sadrach was aware of the importance of this issue, he was always open to collaborating with ministers who were available, as shown with respect to Adriaanse, who had replaced Wilhelm after his death.

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141 Ibid., p. 326; Guillot, Kiai Sadrach, 1985, p. 163.
The first important point is that after Lion Cachet returned to the Netherlands, the NGK took over the task of evangelism in Central Java from the NGZV. Rev. L. Adriaanse from Zeist was sent to Purworejo on 9 November 1894; he was an ordained minister, the first sent to Central Java by the GKN (Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland; Reformed Churches in the Netherlands) after taking over the responsibility from the NGZV. He took up his work in Purworejo in January 1895, with a cautious attitude, as described by Sumartana:

He desired to have a fair attitude and to check first hand what really was the heart of the problem faced by the mission…. He sensed that the problem faced by the Gereformeerde Mission had to be reexamined, weighed and resolved in a more careful manner.144

Because he paid careful attention to Sadrach and his community, Adriaanse studied meticulously the events around Sadrach and evangelism in Central Java. We know from a variety of sources that, like Wilhelm, Adriaanse was sympathetic to Sadrach and his community and strove as much as possible not to open ‘old wounds.’ According to Adriaanse, many of the evaluations of what had taken place were unfair and without foundation. Their viewpoint had been too Western and failed to take account of the Javanese context. On this basis and with the intention of providing more information in order to set the problem in its context, he decided to write the book *Sadrach’s kring* (Sadrach’s Circle) in the hope that those with an interest in evangelism in Central Java might understand the situation accurately. According to Sumartana, throughout the first four years Adriaanse worked Purworejo (1895-1899): “all of his time and energy were poured into researching Sadrach’s teaching and position as leader of the Javanese Christian community.” Because of this, it is not surprising if, “[t]he impression he received appeared different from the atmosphere of Lion Cachet’s report ….” What is clear is that Adriaanse was aware that Sadrach was not a person who knew nothing about redemption, as some had claimed, nor was he a man who considered himself an incarnation of Christ, as had been alleged. He noted that the severing of the connection of the NGZV with Javanese Christians arose from

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143 A minister appointed to undertake evangelization by a missionary society (like NGZV) was titled *zendeling* (missionary) while if the appointment is made by a Church (like GKN) he was titled *predikant* (minister). On these terms see, C. Guillot, *Kiai …*, 1985, p. 8.
147 Sumartana, *Mission at the Crossroads*, 1991, p. 65. From the report by Guillot, we are informed that Adriaanse read the missionary magazines carefully and was very fortunate to have Wilhelm’s diary he found in the mission house he now occupied, which had previously been used by his predecessor. With this valuable source in his possession, he wrote his book to correct Lion Cachet’s hasty assessment of Java in general and of Sadrach in particular. See Guillot, *Kiai Sadrach*, 1985, pp. 51-53.
the attitude of the former, which wanted to control the situation. He emphasized that the Javanese Christian community was the fruit of Sadrach’s work and not of the labours of the Dutch missionaries. That the Dutch missionaries claimed it as the fruit of their work was clearly an illusion. Adriaanse was also certain that the community would gladly accept all missionary assistance if the Dutch missionaries did not try to direct or, worse, still dominate them.

The second important point is that Lion Cachet, after his ‘success’ in severing the connection of the NGZV with Sadrach, occupied an important position as editor of the journal *De Heidenbode*, a missions periodical that covered important issues within the NGZV, particularly those connected with evangelization in Central Java. He took full advantage of this position to force Sadrach more and more into a corner through the articles he published in the magazine and endeavoured strongly to convince its readers that it was not necessary to doubt his report. Some years after he enjoyed his ‘success,’ however, something he truly did not anticipate occurred. After four years of personal commitment to studying the life of Sadrach and his *kring* (circle), Adriaanse published his book *Sadrach’s kring*. According to Sumartana:

> This book was written with material and observation that was judicious and thorough so that its contents were more reliable and authoritative than Cachet’s report.

The publication of this book had an extraordinary impact on Lion Cachet. It cannot be disputed that he felt threatened by the publication of Adriaanse’s book. Sumartana states this clearly:

> He felt threatened by Adriaanse’s book – it could be that his (Cachet’s) entire evaluation of Sadrach that had influenced missions would be revised and thus threaten his position. On the other hand, he also suggested that the Sadrach problem should not be exaggerated because it could be dangerous in arousing differences of opinion and division within the mission body. In any case, he persistently held to his own report emphasizing the objectivity of the facts which he discovered on Java. It appears that the problem of Sadrach, particularly after the publication of Adriaanse’s book, was a heavy mental and spiritual burden for Cachet.

This was truly a tragedy. The Dutch people who had striven in every way they could to box Sadrach into a corner were in the end defeated, including Lion Cachet, by no less than one of their own countrymen.

Possibly there is a connection, possibly not, but several months after that book was published, Lion Cachet died from a heart attack in November 1899, at age of sixty four.

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148 Cf. the conclusion of P. Quarles van Ufford, i.e., that the conflict that occurred between Sadrach and the Dutch missionaries signified a “reaction against the colonial expression of Dutch Christianity as superior to Javanese Christianity.” See P. Quarles van Ufford, “Why Don’t You Sit Down?”, 1980, p. 270.


It is a fact that Cachet was deeply rankled by the book which he considered an attack on his own evaluation of the whole ‘Sadrach affair’. For Cachet, Adriaanse’s book seemed to be an attempt to rehabilitate Sadrach. 152

The third important note is that before Adriaanse arrived in Purworejo Sadrach had already made contact with the Apostolic Church 153 in Magelang, which was led by a Chinese named Liem Tju Kim. According to Guillot, he was a disciple of Anthing. Kim informed Sadrach that Anthing, had become a member of this church while on leave in the Netherlands and on his return to Java had established a congregation in Batavia.154 This meeting with Kim initiated a change in the life of Sadrach and his community, particularly after his relationship with Adriaanse tended to deteriorate because of the latter’s overly cautious attitude in developing a relationship with Sadrach because he feared he would suffer the same tragic fate as Wilhelm.155 Thanks to the contact with Kim, in the end Sadrach, who was accompanied by Markus Bangsareidja and Yotham, went to Batavia and was ordained an Apostle of Java (Rasul Jawa) by Pendeta Hannibals. This occured in 1899, more or less thirty years after Sadrah received the Apostleship of Java (Rasul Jawa) by Pendeta Hannibals. This occurred in 1899, more or less thirty years after Sadrach received the wangsit to leave Bondo and go to a place he did not know.

On 30 April 1899, in Karangjasa, after a long struggle to lead the community of Javanese Christians independently, Sadrach marked his apostolic office together with his whole community in a special service in which he himself led the celebration of Holy Communion, since his ordination now authorized him to administer the sacraments and he was now recognized internationally as an apostle, as witnessed in a Legitimatie en Erkenningsbewijs (Letter of Recognition), dated May 1901.156 This, in my view, was the principal reason why Sadrach joined the Apostolic Church, i.e., so he would have the authority and recognition to lead the community himself independently. After he became an apostle, his association with the Dutch missionaries ended. According to Sumartana, Sadrach

152 ibid., p. 63.
153 The Apostolic Church was founded by the Scottish Presbyterian minister Edward Irving (which is why it is sometimes referred to as Irvingism), and was only established officially after 1835 or one year before his death. The foundation of the Apostolic Church was initially an attempt to revive spiritual life driven by a sense that the existing spiritual life of the church was in decline. Its members desired a church identical with the early church in being filled with power, spirit, and a variety of gifts, led by the apostles, waiting faithfully for the second coming of Christ. For further information on this, see Partonadi, Sadrach’s Community, 1988, pp. 91-192.
154 Guillot, Kiai Sadrach, 1985, p. 166.
155 Wolterbeek has noted one example of Adriaanse’s overly cautious attitude: his constant checking his every decision with the Deputaten voor de Zending op Midden Java in the Netherlands. For example, when Sadrach invited Adriaanse to preach in Karangjasa on 17 May, Adriaanse requested prior permission from the Netherlands. Permission was given only seven months later, on 23 November. From this one example we can see how great the role of the GKN was and even how dependent Adriaanse was on the GKN in his relationship with Sadrach’s community. See Wolterbeek, Babad Zending, 1939, p. 262. According to Guillot, this made Sadrach reluctant to foster a connection with a missionary who was so dependent on the hierarchy of the Dutch church. See Guillot, Kiai Sadrach, 1985, p. 166.
156 Partonadi, Sadrach’s Community, 1988, pp. 93-94.
formally instructed his community to no longer foster a connection with the missionaries because in fact nothing more could be hoped for from them.

[H]e also formally gave instruction to all his followers to have no further relationship with missionaries. In his position as the Apostle of Java, with the rights as leader being formally acknowledged, he had the authority to baptize, celebrate the Lord's Supper and other church sacraments as is fitting for the leader of a congregation. There was no longer any need to make his authority and leadership dependent on a mission body.157

Adriaanse’s fate was not very different from that of his predecessors, although now the situation was entirely different:

the circumstances were different this time, for it was Sadrach who determined with whom he would have relationships. He could no longer be approached as ‘private’ Sadrach, a person who was free, private, and without a formal position. Approaching Sadrach now meant approaching a person who in churchly terms was an apostle. … There was no longer any place for Adriaanse among the circle of Sadrach’s congregation. In fact his presence among the Java Apostolic Church was openly repelled. Because Adriaanse believed there was no longer any task that he could effectively execute, under the excuse of illness he too returned to Holland in 1902.158

After a variety of efforts to approach (read: control) Sadrach’s community always failed, especially after Sadrach became the apostle of Java, the Gereformeerd missionaries began to change their strategy for evangelism. According to Sumartana, they were forced to think of another way to win the souls of the Javanese. This would require nothing less than a reorganization of the work of the mission. A new method and new personnel were necessary.159

We will see later that the Gereformeerd missionary policy changed – particularly after Sadrach’s death on 14 November 1924 at the age of almost 90 – in relation to the community in Karangjasa and the Javanese Christian people in the most far-flung areas throughout Central Java who had become Sadrach’s followers. According to Partonadi, there were no signs that Sadrach was going to die. He suffered from no illness. As is common with elderly Javanese people, Sadrach slept more often, particularly in the few days before he died. The news of Sadrach’s death spread rapidly among his followers. They flocked to Sadrach’s house to pay their last respects. His funeral was attended by Bupati Kutoarjo and Kulon Progo, the missionaries Netelenbos and K. van Dijk, the mission doctor G.J. Dreckmeyer, and the missionary teachers Harkema and Hooisma. The funeral was conducted by Apostle Schmidt from the Apostolic Church in Cimahi.160 Guillot has an important comment about the funeral. Based on oral sources from his interviews in Karangjasa, we are informed that Sadrach’s casket was wrapped in parang barong batik cloth, a pattern that is allocated only for

158 Ibid., p. 67.
159 Ibid., p. 69.
the use of aristocrats from keraton families (families of the Javanese princes). Once again, this represents another factor, alongside those already noted above, indicating that Sadrach was not a commoner. However that may be, his origins still remain a mystery. Precisely because of this, in my opinion, the person of Sadrach will always attract discussion.

C. The Contextual Theology of Sadrach

With reference to the opinion of Banawiratma, it becomes clear that the primary concern of Javanese people in their religious life and their engagement in theology is kesempurnaan hidup (the perfection or completeness of life). In Javanese this is hanggayuh kasampurnaning hurip (endeavour to attain a perfect life) which can be understood through the human experience of ‘unity’ with the highest reality or kasunyatan, known as Lord or, in Javanese, Pamoré Kawula Gusti. It often happens that a mistaken understanding of the term Pamoré Kawula Gusti arises from the assumption that kawula (humankind) becomes luluh (dissolved) and identical with Gusti (Lord). To clarify the term Pamoré Kawula Gusti, Damardjati Supadjar explains a parable, based on the manuscript Wulang Reb, that this Pamoré Kawula Gusti is like the combination of gold and copper for producing swasa (an alloy of gold and copper) by means of fire. Gold or copper or the mixture of both is kawula, while what represents Gusti is fire. Metal is not fire, but if that metal glows with heat, there is pamoré. According to Damardjati Supadjar, this phenomenon of glowing metal represents, in everyday human life, an awareness that the degree of humanity takes the form of an ascending awareness, of totality and difference alike. Nonetheless, humankind should not stop at the point of self-awareness, all the more so when humans are mistaken in understanding themselves or have a mistaken view of someone else. What is necessary to remember is that it is the caring Lord who is full of compassion and we are the ones who lack (or do not possess) any perception of the bond of personality, which lack leads us into error.

In this connection, Haedar Nashir argues that the modern individual, because of his arrogant reliance on reason and personal superiority, has become unable to understand the meaning and conception of an authentic, genuine human in the midst of extraordinary development. People are unable to answer the question “fa aina tadzhabûn?” (“What do you want and where in fact is your life leading?”) Citing Peter L. Berger, Nashir says that modern humanity experiences anomie, i.e., a state of being in which each person has lost the bond that gives a sense of calm and stability to his or her fellows, bringing about a loss of the sense of

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162 J.B. Banawiratma S.J., Yesus Sang Guru, Kanisius, Yogyakarta, 1977, p.120.
the origin and goal of life. The endeavour is to hanggayuh kasampurnaning hurip, to urge someone to continually seek and investigate what is considered to be the highest ngèlmu (knowledge or wisdom). Fulfillment will not be attained until ngèlmu yang sejati is found because only in ngèlmu yang sejati can a person find the pintutur (instruction) and wewaler (prohibitions) that direct one’s path toward the perfect life. In reality, this is what was Sadrach meant concerning ngèlmu sejati in connection with the Gospel.

1. Ngèlmu Sejati

The expression ngèlmu sejati arose in connection with the charge against Sadrach that he produced a book about the doctrine of ngèlmu sejati as a supplement to the Gospel. To clarify the issue we will discuss the basic elements of Sadrach’s teaching about ngèlmu sejati, particularly in its relationship to the Gospel and Jesus, two elements that cannot be separated from each other as the source of Christianity, and something he taught throughout his life as a Christian.

Before discussing Sadrach’s central teaching on ngèlmu sejati, it will be good to consider the opinion of the missionaries concerning ngèlmu in relationship to the Gospel so that we can gain a picture of what they really thought when they accused Sadrach of teaching ngèlmu sejati as a completion of the Gospel. According to Horstman as noted by Partonadi, ngèlmu was superstitious. Javanese gurus who practiced ngèlmu were merely misleading the people, and advancing their own interests. The Gospel, he felt, was the Light which was diametrically opposed to darkness. Compromise was out of the question. The Gospel’s purpose was to liberate people from satanic forces such as those found in Javanese ngèlmu. … Javanese Christians had to be confronted with an alternative. They needed to choose between Yahweh and Baal, between Christ and Balaam. A strong warning had to be given to the Javanese Christians – they needed to abandon their superstitious and idolatrous practices.

Charges against Sadrach (among them those of ngèlmu sejati as a completion of the Gospel) were ‘popularized’ by Horstman through his correspondence with Wilhelm. This occurred shortly after Horstman arrived in Purworejo, after Vermeer and Zuidema. We must remember that some time before he arrived, the accusations against Sadrach and the arrival of the Dutch missionaries, the incident of Sadrach sitting op een stoel side by side with Wilhelm occurred and caused such a stir. A photograph, taken on 14 July 1885, showing Wilhelm and Sadrach sitting side by side with two Javanese evangelists in traditional dress

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standing behind them circulated among missionaries in Central Java and the Netherlands. Quarles van Ufford argues that the religious movement led by Sadrach must be seen in a wider context than that of a general resistance to Dutch colonial rule in Java at the close of the 19th century. This resistance was not only directed at political and economic domination but also represented a “reaction against the colonial expression of Dutch Christianity as superior to Javanese Christianity.” It is very clear that Horstman, like most other missionaries, did not understand the meaning of ngelmu. We can see this from the opinion of D. Bakker, who came to Kebumen about a year after Horstman arrived in Purworejo.

According to Bakker, as noted by Partonadi, ngelmu:

was nothing more than a secret teaching which was believed to bring good fortune. It dealt with magic, the spirits of darkness, and was syncretistic in character, mixing elements from Animism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam. He also believed that in ngelmu, the living God, the Creator whom man should worship, was replaced by creatures, and therefore be described in one word: idolatry. Contrary to ngelmu, the Gospel is the liberating force of God which judges man for worshiping creature and evil spirits. The Gospel could not, in Bakker’s thinking, be regarded as ngelmu. The Gospel centers on the crucified Christ, not on the fulfillment of human fancies as does ngelmu. … The Gospel demands radical faith, conversion, repentance and rebirth. It must be proclaimed in an uncompromising manner … For Bakker, proclaiming the Gospel as ngelmu was self-deception, darkening the very core of the Gospel itself and leading astray those who hear such a proclamation.  

Singgih shows that the missionaries were indeed inclined to view ngelmu as a manipulation of spiritual powers to meet the practitioners’ own interests and was linked to spells, magic, superstition, and backwardness. The missionaries held that ngelmu was not consistent with the Gospel. Its followers could not be accepted as Christians even though they professed to believe the Gospel. In my view, this indicates that missionaries were not able to understand ngelmu from the cultural and Javanese perspective because, when it came down to it, they were convinced that their own viewpoint was the most correct. Since they were not able to understand the Word of God, they needed to recognize the position of the missionaries as the only ambassadors of the Highest King (God). They needed to believe, obey, and do what the missionaries preached, commanded, and instructed.

So, the most fundamental issue, as expressed by Quarles van Ufford in the example of op een stoel of niet op een stoel zitten (to sit on a seat or not sit on a seat) was, “the colonial expression of Dutch Christianity as superior to Javanese Christianity.” The missionaries were unable to accept the existence of a Christianity that differed from Gereformeerde Christianity, which they understood to be the most correct. This then was how ngelmu was understood by the majority of missionaries in the charges they made against Sadrach at that time.

170 Partonadi, Sadrach’s Community, 1988, p. 194.
172 Letter by Horstman to Wilhelm, October 1891. See Partonadi, Sadrach’s Community, 1988, p. 194.
Nonetheless, some among them also viewed *ngèlmu* in a sufficiently positive light, as part of Javanese culture that had an important place in the religious life of the Javanese. Here, for example, is the view of M. Linderborn as reported by Partonadi:

*ngèlmu* was part of the cultural character of the Javanese and, therefore, a part of their national identity. The magical element in *ngèlmu* was not essential, and that the mystical element was the most crucial. [*A*]s the knowledge which is power, and which is obtained through mystical union with the guru, whose word alone is power for those who are united with him and do that which he commands.173

From this analysis we can see quickly that the tendency of the missionaries to regard *ngèlmu* in a negative light arose because they saw or emphasized one aspect only, as noted in M. Linderborn’s critique, i.e., the *magical element* only. At the same time they ignored its *mystical element*. At the time, as we saw in Chapter 1, we are reminded that this *ngèlmu* has a particular perspective: *kang tumrap neng tanah Jawa* (as occurs or is valid in the land of Java). This important qualification represents an awareness of a unique Javanese identity. So, any attempt to understand *ngèlmu* must of necessity be from this perspective. If *ngèlmu* is not understood from the perspective of Javanese culture but from that of Western culture, as represented by the missionaries, then the resultant understanding will be detrimental to Javanese culture.

From Sumartana’s opinion we understand that what was undertaken by Sadrach at that time was not teaching *ngèlmu sejati* as a completion of the Gospel. What happened was: “The Gospel, proclaimed as *ngèlmu*, gave inner contentment, answered the secret of life, and guided humans on the way to perfection.”174

Based on the above opinion, I offer a clarification concerning what Sadrach did in fact undertake. What occurred when the Gospel was proclaimed as *ngèlmu* was not that *ngèlmu sejati* was taught as a completion of the Gospel. This is clear because this Gospel that was proclaimed “gave inner contentment,” “answered the secret of life,” and “guided humans on the way to perfection.” The first aspect, *inner contentment* can only be attained when a person seeking *ngèlmu* encounters *ngèlmu yang sejati*. As one seeking *ngèlmu*, Sadrach experienced this *inner contentment* in the Gospel he had received as part of his decision to become a Christian. If he had not experienced this, he would certainly have abandoned Christianity because a seeker after *ngèlmu* is not going to stop *lelono* (leading an ascetic, itinerant way of life) from one guru to another, from one *ngèlmu* to a different *ngèlmu*, until he is satisfied by the *ngèlmu* he has encountered. This is what is meant by the term *ngèlmu sejati*. Because Sadrach found that the Gospel gave *inner contentment*, he proclaimed the Gospel as *ngèlmu sejati*.

Second, Sadrach proclaimed the Gospel as ngèlmu sejati because the Gospel answers the secret of life. There is a phrase in Javanese, kawruh sangkan paraning dumadi, which means understanding (kawruh) of the origin (sangkan) and goal (paran) of all created things (dumadi). As a Javanese and as a seeker of ngèlmu, Sadrach undertook to ngangsu (draw up) kawruh. From his life, we understand that Sadrach ngangsu kawruh in various religious schools and from teachers of ngèlmu. What he sought was clear, i.e., ngèlmu sejati, because only with ngèlmu sejati can humanity gain kawruh sangkan paraning dumadi. Once it was clear to Sadrach that the Gospel answered the secret of life, giving kawruh sangkan paraning dumadi, then it is no longer surprising that he proclaimed the Gospel as ngèlmu sejati.

Third, Sadrach proclaimed the Gospel as ngèlmu sejati because the Gospel guided humans on the way to perfection. As I have made clear, the prime concern of the Javanese in their religious life and in doing theology is hanggayuh kasampurnaning hurip (endeavouring to attain perfection in life). If Sadrach proclaimed the Gospel as ngèlmu sejati, it was clearly because it was only in the Gospel that he found the pitutur (instruction) and wewaler (prohibitions) that guided humans on the way to perfection.

From the above discussion, it is clear that Sadrach proclaimed the Gospel as ngèlmu sejati because the Gospel “gave inner contentment, answered the secret of life, and guided humans on the way to perfection.” According to Sumartana, such an understanding was far beyond the reach of missionary thinking: “to compete on a level that so affirmed the current cultural milieu was clearly beyond the capability of the mission.”

In my view, this means that Sadrach’s understanding of contextual theology was far more advanced than that of the missionaries. What happened then was that the theology of ngèlmu sejati, as Sadrach’s contextual theology, was seen as threatening Gereformeerd theology. Once again, this shows that the charge against Sadrach of teaching ngèlmu sejati as the completion of the Gospel represented no more than “the colonial expression of Dutch Christianity as superior to Javanese Christianity.” Actually, their superiority was only apparent because in fact they felt defeated by Sadrach. Sadrach’s understanding of contextual theology, in his proclamation of the Gospel as ngèlmu sejati, was truly beyond the capability of the mission.

2. The ‘Face of Jesus in Java’

176 Manuskrip A Karangjasa states this by “satunggaling guru ngèlmu,” while Manuskrip B Karangjasa states it by “guru-guru jowo (kyai-santri).”
177 We will discuss pitutur (instruction) and wewaler (prohibitions) in a later section.
179 I adopt the phrase used by R.S. Sugirtharajah in the title of his book, Wajah Yesus di Asia (The Face of Jesus in Asia), BPK Gunung Mulia, Jakarta, 1996. I use this title to indicate the way in which Javanese Christians at that time, as evidenced by Sadrach, possessed a picture of Jesus as he was for them.
On the question of who Jesus was for Sadrach and his community, Partonadi proposes the terms guru, panutan (example) and Ratu Adil (Just Ruler). With regard to the first two terms, in my opinion, when Sadrach proclaimed the Gospel as ngélmu sejati because he had found in it pitutur (instruction) and wewaler (prohibitions) that guide humankind toward perfection of life, he was in fact portraying the ‘face of Jesus in Java’ not only as a guru but as guru sejati. After a time of kelono from one guru to another, Sadrach found that only Jesus could become a panutan (example).

In my opinion, a person is called guru because he is digugu (followed) and ditiru (taken as a model). The term digugu refers to all his commands and teaching, while ditiru points to his way of life. If a guru is only able to command and teach but is unable to be an example for a way of life, what results is guru-gara (turbulence), a term from the wayang plays that describes a situation of chaos. This condition can be overcome only by the presence of the Punakawan, i.e., Semar, his three ‘children’ (Gareng, Petruk, and Bagong) as the embodiment of the highest gods. But even though a person is unable to teach, his words can become digugu (followed) if he is a good example. Offering respect of this kind usually arises only from a sense of trust. Sadrach, as a seeker for a way of life, he was in fact portraying the ‘face of Jesus in Java’ not only as a guru but also as a guru kejawen (example). At the same time, his resurrection gave evidence that the ngélmu he taught was ngélmu yang sejati.

Partonadi informs us that the resurrection of Jesus became the central theme in Sadrach’s preaching. Jesus was affirmed as the risen and living one, the prophet most empowered and

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180 The term oeverlevering (tradition, what is handing down) and verraad (betrayal) I have taken from Anton Wessels in his guidance and supervision of this dissertation at VU University Amsterdam. He advised me to be cautious in offering an evaluation of whether various portrayals of Jesus created by prominent figures in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, who discuss out of and address their concrete situations, are authentic or betrayals. For clarification he referred me to his own book, Jezus zien: See Anton Wessels, Jezus zien: Hoe Jezus is overgeleverd in andere culturen, Ten Have, Baarn, 1986. (Indonesian translation, Memandang Yesus: Gambor Yesus dalam Berbagai Budaya, BPK Gunung Mulia, Jakarta 1990).

181 Partonadi, Sadrach’s Community, 1988, pp. 217-225. Unlike the function of panutan that points more to the attitude to life that is modeled, guru usually indicates a function of teaching and ‘translating’ pitutur along with wewaler. As an aside, calling Jesus Ratu Adil (Gusti Yesus Ratu Adil) can still be found at present in Kidung Pasamuwan Kristen. See BMGJ, Kidung Pasamuwan Kristen, BMGJ, Salatiga, 2001, p. 177.

182 From his earlier experience we can know that Sadrach was taught things by his earlier teachers (gurus) that were not very good—as was the case with Pak Kurmen, alias Iskak alias Sis Kanoman in the Bondo affair. Although he became a guru, his attitude to life stood in the way of his becoming an example.

183 Compare this to Banawiratma’s view, which emphasizes that only those who show achievement in their attitude to life are able to be recognized as gurus. See Banawiratma S.J., Yesus Sang Guru, 1977, pp. 28-46.

184 Suseno, Etika Jawa-Sebuhah, 1999, pp. 186, 193. In Javanese culture, such situation generally arises from a crisis in leadership. A leader, whose way of life cannot be accepted as an example will sooner or later bring about chaos.

185 Partonadi, Sadrach’s Community, 1988, p. 144.
unique, Christ victorious. Because Jesus is very powerful and amazing, his commands should be obeyed and the example of his life be followed. Sadrach remained faithful to the foundations of the Christian faith in his preaching, as affirmed by Paul in his letter to the congregation in Corinth: "If Christ is not risen then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain." The ‘face of Jesus in Java’ for Sadrach is that of a guru sejati; the ngelmu he taught was ngelmu sejati. Because the ‘face of Jesus in Java’ was so amazing and powerful for Sadrach, it is not surprising that the ‘face of Jesus in Java’ also later took on the form of a Ratu Adil, that is to say a messiah long awaited by the people of Java.

As is well known, there was great unrest in the first half of the 19th century as a result of the Diponegoro War (1825-1830), natural disasters occurred, and the failure of the rice harvest between 1843 and 1851. Added to this were outbreaks of contagious diseases like typhus and cholera, along with the Kulturstelsel (the imposition of compulsory plantings to meet the needs of the Dutch economy). For the Javanese people, the political unrest, natural disasters, and disruptions of the harmony of the cosmos pointed to a jaman edan (a time of madness), that would end only if a Ratu Adil (Just Ruler) would appear and return the situation to tata tenrem kerta raha (calm, quiet, justice and prosperity). For Sadrach, Jesus – who was able to calm the storm – is a Ratu Adil who is able to resolve all the chaos of the zaman edan. All that was necessary was the cooperation of humanity in following all his pitutur (instruction) and wewaler (prohibitions), following the example of his life so that the perfect life could be achieved.

The ‘face of Jesus in Java’ as portrayed by Sadrach represented a verraad (betrayal) of the lordship of Jesus for the Dutch missionaries. Sadrach’s theology was onesided and fragmentary, ignoring the principle of sola fide (by faith alone) and sola gratia (by grace alone). They accused Sadrach of ignoring rebirth by the Holy Spirit and denying the essence of Jesus as the incarnation of God. They felt that he belittled the significance of Jesus’s suffering and death, concluding that Christ had no place in Sadrach’s community.

According to the missionaries, because the Ratu Adil was only a human person, Jesus, who is at the same time God and human, could not be called Ratu Adil. All the more so with reference to the Belgic Confession (intended to oppose Docetism) which stressed the Jesus is truly God and truly human. On the other hand, the Javanese Ratu Adil was simply a human person. As noted by Singgih, however, the attitude of the missionaries in their opposition to Sadrach’s understanding of Jesus as the Ratu Adil was in fact docetist because

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186 See Suseno, Etika Jawa-Sebuah, 1999, p. 101. Compare the situation of jaman edan that only ends with the presence of a Ratu Adil with a gara-gara (an event of turbulence or conflict in the wayang dramas) that can only be overcome with the presence of the punakawan (royal servants in the wayang stories).
188 Ibid., p. 223.
189 Partonadi, Sadrach’s Community, 1988, p. 192.
they emphasized the divinity of Jesus over against the human nature of the *Ratu Adil*. So, this was not a *verraad* by Sadrach, but an inability of the missionaries to grasp the *overlevering* ('portrayal') made by Sadrach because, as Wessels stated, the meanings of *overlevering* and *verraad* are very close. While the difference between *overlevering* and *verraad* in Dutch is quite clear, the Greek word *paradidomi* has a double meaning. It can mean handing down in the sense of tradition, but it can also mean betrayal (in the sense of handing over or surrendering). Paul used this word in his letter to the church in Corinth, with both these meanings in the same context: “Because what I have *passed on to you* (with the meaning *hand over*) I already *received* from the Lord, that the Lord Jesus, on the night when he was *handed over* (from the meaning *betrayal*), took bread . . . . This is my body which is *handed over* for you.” (I Corinthians 11: 23-32). In addition, Jesus cannot be limited only to one context, whether the East or of West, because differing contexts will yield different traditions. In my view, it is true that the ‘face of Jesus from the West’ that Sadrach received represents an *overlevering* to his community that did not simply pass on what it was in itself because it was embodied in a reinterpretation he made within the context of that time. In the context of the *jaman edan*, Sadrach presented a message about Jesus as the *Ratu Adil*. If we look at this matter through the spectacles of the *Gereformeerde* missionaries with their teaching about the messianic role of Jesus, then Sadrach would certainly be viewed as having committed *verraad* (betrayal). But was it not in fact the missionaries who were guilty of *verraad*? Were not all their efforts to marginalize Sadrach and control his community of Javanese Christians and replace their culture with ‘Christian culture’ nothing other than “the colonial expression of Dutch Christianity as superior to Javanese Christianity”? Because of this, the ‘face of Jesus in Java’ became a matter of importance in the proclamation of the Gospel by Sadrach, or more precisely, the way Sadrach’s portrayal of the ‘Face of Jesus in Java’ influenced his proclamation of the Gospel as *ngèlmu sejati*. Because Jesus was seen as *guru sejati* and *Ratu Adil*, Sadrach proclaimed the Gospel as *ngèlmu sejati*.

3. *Ngèlmu Sejati* as Sadrach’s Authentic Contextual Theology: *Bijtenen ‘Syncretism’ and ‘Bijbelgetrouw’*

As we have already seen, this was like pouring oil on fire. A strong reaction came from the NGZV missionaries who certainly did not want to acknowledge that the Javanese (and Sadrach in particular) were their equals. According to the missionaries, the incident of sitting

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op een stoel opened the door for Javanese syncretism, which they saw to be the greatest danger they faced.

Suspicious of his tolerant and cooperative attitude, they accused Wilhelm of not only gaining access into the community, but also opening the door for syncretism to permeate the church of Christ. They felt that the church needed to be protected from the so called Javanese syncretism, which they felt posed the greatest danger to their mission.193

If the missionaries thought that Sadrach’s teaching was a matter of syncretism, this was because they saw syncretism as a term that denoted a mingling of things and ideas that were not the same or were even in conflict with each other.194 Uhlenbusch for example labeled Sadrach’s teaching as ‘Islamic Christianity’ while Bakker called it “Islamic religion in Christian packaging.”195 According to Robert J. Schreiter, a negative attitude like this towards syncretism demonstrates that anything that waters down or changes the basic structure of Christianity in some substantial way is certainly going to be opposed with every effort – the Christian church has always felt it important and was concerned to make every effort to ensure that the message of the Gospel remained pure and undefiled.196 Because, for the missionaries, the purity of the Gospel could only be found in the teaching of the Gereformeerd fiath, Sadrach’s ngelmu sejati was a stain that had to be removed. He represented a source of error that they had to eliminate.

Horstman was convinced that the only way to achieve this goal (purifying the Javanese Christian community from syncretistic elements) was to dismiss Sadrach, whom he viewed as the source of error in the community.197

The explanation put forward by Singgih cannot be denied, i.e., that the principal accusation of the Dutch was in reality non-theological: they were not able to accept the fact that Sadrach was bold enough to put himself on the same level as themselves. Only subsequently were various theological reasons sought to brand Sadrach’s teaching as syncretism that was capable of destroying the purity of the Christian religion.198

In my opinion, the syncretism of which Sadrach was accused really represented a part of the authenticity of doing theology in the Javanese context. Syncretism, as suggested by Singgih, basically means: ‘unite to face a common enemy.’ According to him, syncretism comes from the Greek term synkretismos, which means perserikatan (union, [sun]) of cities on the

194 Cf. the view of D.C. Mulder concerning the meaning of syncretism: syncretism “refers to the blending of all elements into one religious system. The colour of each element becomes mixed. And the basic orientation is blurred, resulting in a new religion composed of these elements.” See D.C. Mulder, “The Christian Message to a Changing World,” in the International Reformed Bulletin no. 35 (October, 1968) p. 40.
island of Crete (in the Mediterranean). That is the source of the word *synkretizein*: unite to face a common enemy. During a certain period in history the cities on the island of Crete were in competition with one another, even enemies. There was neither sameness nor togetherness. But when they faced a threat from a common enemy from outside the island of Crete they all united even though previously they had had competing interests.199

For Sadrach and his community, the common enemy was “the colonial expression of Dutch Christianity as superior to Javanese Christianity.” As an educated person with a great deal of experience, Sadrach was conscious that the approaches made by missionaries up to the present were a form of *verhollandiseren* (forcing the Javanese people to become like Dutch people).200 Because of this, I am convinced that one primary reason for Sadrach to proclaim the Gospel as *ngèlmu sejati* was so that Javanese Christians would not take the teaching of the missionaries as the source of *pitutur* (instruction) and *uwaler* (prohibitions) and make the missionaries themselves *panutan* (examples) who could guide their life on the way to perfection. This could be found only in the Gospel and in the person of Jesus as *guru sejati* and *Ratu Adil*.

In light of this it is no overstatement if Hoekema describes what was done by Sadrach as *Bijbelgetrouw* (faithful to the Bible).201 According to Singgih, Sadrach was certainly wrong in his understanding of Jesus according to the determinations of 19th-century *Gereformeerd* teaching on the nature of the Kingdom of God and the messiahship of Jesus. But it is by no means certain that Sadrach was wrong if we examine the text of the New Testament itself. Singgih explains:

> The Kingdom of God is eternal, but is not solely spiritual, but embraces all things. The coming of the Kingdom of God is in this concrete world, as in the expression the ‘New Jerusalem’ which comes down from heaven in Revelation 21. Where would it come down to if not to the earth? The coming of Jesus is not the same as the renewal of Israel but this may not be taken to mean that the Kingdom of God is spiritual and inward. Jesus and his Kingdom do not intend that his power be used or manipulated by politicians. But this does not mean that Jesus and his Kingdom do not have political impact. The understanding of messiahism, alike in Christian and non-Christian religion, always embodies a concrete element: desiring change in social life and embracing protest against existing structures that are considered intolerant or become agents of evil.

I agree with Singgih’s view because it is clear that through the ‘face of Jesus in Java’ as *Ratu Adil*, Sadrach (like the Javanese people in general) desired a change in their lives in line with the *jaman edan* and also points to a reaction to “the colonial expression of Dutch Christianity

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199 Ibid., p. 83; cf. also the explanation of Plutarch in *Opera Moralia*: “He there tells how the Cretans were often engaged in quarrels among themselves, but became immediately reconciled when an external enemy approached. ‘And that is their so-called Syncretism’.” See [http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/14383c.htm](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/14383c.htm).
as superior to Javanese Christianity.” It is interesting that, as an ‘admirer’ of Tunggul Wulung, Hoekema concluded that where Sadrach differed from Tunggul Wulung was clearly an attempt to become a Christian who was faithful to the Bible: “Allereerst mogen we concluderen dat Sadrach anders dan Tunggul Wulung onmiskenbaar gepoogd heeft een ‘bijbelgetrouw’ christen te zijn.” This conclusion is not entirely without foundation. According to Hoekema, Sadrach was very careful in his reading of the Bible. It is certainly true that he was occasionally hindered by a translation or by language that was unclear in the Javanese Bible he used, as happened in the incident regarding vaccination with the word acaad (which can be interpreted to mean physical scar) in II Corinthians 6:3 (no blemish) and I Timothy 5:6-7 (without reproach). But this in fact indicates that he was meticulous and careful in reading the Bible and endeavoured to be faithful to it. One important event in his life was his baptism accompanied by his choice of the name Sadrach, which once again shows how careful and meticulous he was in reading the Bible. In addition, Hoekema states that, of the Javanese prototheologians he discussed, Sadrach was the best educated.

“In my opinion, Sadrach’s faithfulness to the Bible was certainly not a blind faithfulness. We must be aware that meticulousness and care in reading the Bible cannot be separated from the ‘full’ background as we have discussed it above. With a capacity of this kind, Sadrach demonstrated his capacity as a prototheologian able to understand his existence as Javanese and as a Christian and in this way, to borrow a term from Singgih, was able to experience to the full his kejawen-an (his ‘Javaneseness’) in the light of Jesus Christ,” rather than just

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203 Hoekema draws the following conclusion about Ibrahim Tunggul Wulung: “Ibrahim who was charismatic became an important instrument in spreading the Gospel from East Java by way of Central Java to West Java. More than others (perhaps more than Sadrach who later became better known).” Hoekema, “Ibrahim Tunggul Wulung,” in Peninjau VII/1, 1980, p. 13. It is not surprising that Hoekema became an ‘admirer’ of Tunggul Wulung, if we keep in mind that where Hoekema served as a minister sent by the Mennonite Church in the Netherlands, in the region of Gunung Muria, was the area of evangelization where Christian villages had been established by Tunggul Wulung. In my opinion, it could be said that (who? Hoekema?) is ‘one who continues’ the work of Tunggul Wulung, having an historical and emotional connection in carrying on the ministry among the Javanese people around Gunung Muria.

204 Hoekema, Denken in dynamisch evenwicht, 1994, p. 68. Hoekema states indirectly that although Tunggul Wulung was not particularly faithful to the Bible or, to put it more modestly, Hoekema wants to say that Sadrach was more faithful to the Bible.

205 “Among the Javanese figures discussed in this study there can be no doubt that Sadrach was the most erudite. It was reported that he was able to read Javanese, Arab, and Latin script and also pegon (Javanese written in Arab script). He had studied Islam, as well as the Javanese ngèlmu and Christianity, and was well acquainted with the religious traditions of the countryside and the cities.” See Hoekema, Denken in dynamisch evenwicht, 1994, pp. 66-67.

206 Singgih, Berteologi dalam Konteks, 2000, p. 105.
than the light of Christian (read: Western) culture. Here is where we find Sadrach’s authenticity as a theologian working in the Javanese context.

To better understand the above discussion let us recall the *Serat Wédhatama*, in particular the opening of *pupuh Pucung* as discussed in Chapter II, i.e., *ngèlmu iku kalakoné kanthi laku*. Two important issues here are *ngèlmu* and *laku*. *Ngèlmu* is obtained because it is accompanied by *laku*. What is meant by *laku* here is not just any kind of *laku* but *laku utama*. In connection with *ngèlmu*, what has to be undertaken by the Javanese people is *nuladha laku utama* (set an example of *laku utama*). If not, *ngèlmu* will not *kelakon* (come to be). That Sadrach proclaimed the Gospel as *ngèlmu sejati* demonstrates that he *nuladha laku utama* from the central figure in the Gospel, Jesus the *guru sejati*. Without posing the example of the *laku utama* of Jesus, the Gospel cannot be proclaimed as *ngèlmu* because *ngèlmu iku kalakoné kanthi laku*. One way in which Sadrach posed the example of the loving ministry of Jesus was in his expulsion of evil spirits and healing the sick. That he also erected schools and prepared land for agriculture indicated that Sadrach paid close attention not only to spiritual and inner issues but also to physical issues and to everyday life, just as Jesus also had done by, for example, feeding 5,000 people and turning water into wine. For this reason, he also proclaimed Jesus to be the *Ratu Adil*, remembering the longing for deliverance from the suffering of the *jaman edan* they experienced. Sadrach also taught the Gospel as *pitutur* (instruction) and *wewaler* (prohibitions) that had to be obeyed, just as Jesus also had given an example of obedience, even obedience unto death, which thus demonstrated that he was a *panutan* (example), and his *laku* was *laku utama*.

As a Javanese, Sadrach showed his faithfulness to the Bible, his *bijbelgetrouw*, in his own way, in a Javanese way. If we recall the meaning of *kawruh sangkan paramuning damadi* then we will see that Sadrach, at the time he decided to become a Christian, did not endeavour to become *londo* (a white person). As a Javanese, Sadrach was aware that with the *ngemohi* (rejection of) *ke-Jawa-annya* (his Javanese identity), he would *nora weruh rosing rasa kang rinuruh lumeket ing angga*, not see that the core aspects he sought adhered closely to his existence as a Javanese. It is important to note concerning the existence of *rasa*, as explained in the first chapter, that it is closely linked with awareness of the existence of a *numinous* union between people, the earth, and the supernatural realm, given the sentence in *pada 8 pupuh Pucung*, which says that *roising rasa kang rinuruh lumeket ing angga*. The attitude of *kas* or sincerity of heart that precedes *laku* in the context of *ngèlmu iku kalakoné kanthi laku* should make a person able to see the existence of *ros* (core) in *rasa*, not only *rasa semu* or something that is superficial, as described previously: “Kaya sayid weton Mesir Pendhak-pendhak angendhak gunaning janma, Kang kadyeku Kalebu wong ngaku-aku Akale alangka Elok jawane den-mohi Paksa langkah ngangkah met kawruh ing Mekah (Their style like a sayid from Egypt.
And whenever they disparage the skill of others. People like this are those who like to claim the skill of others. There is no fruit of their own thought. Even stranger yet, they do not wish to acknowledge their own culture, i.e., the culture of Java. On the contrary they make great attempts to reach and take knowledge from Mecca.” Basically, if a Javanese person becomes a Muslim it is not necessary for him to depart from his ke-Jawa-an, or ngemohi, to reject it. It is not necessary either to ngangkah met kawrub ing Mekah. As long as the existence of rising rasa (the core of rasa), which luneket ing angga, adheres within his personality as a Javanese, is not able to be experienced and as long as his ke-Jawa-an identity is diemohi, ngèlmu will not kelakson, one cannot hope to be able to possess ngèlmu. This is what occurred in the case of Sadrach. His becoming a Christian did not mean that he had to abandon his identity as a Javanese. He was able to experience inner contentment, receive an answer concerning the secret sangkan paraning dumadi, and obtain guidance on the way to perfection from the Gospel and from the person of Jesus for no other reason than that he kept his identity as a Javanese person. It is precisely in this way that Sadrach’s faithfulness to the Bible became reality. If he had let his identity go and became londo, it is not impossible that what verwaad would have been the result.

Between syncretism and faithfulness to the Bible – this is how the ngèlmu sejati of Sadrach as an authentic contextual theology must be understood. Syncretism must be understood as an effort to empower one to face a common enemy, in this case verbollandisering (Dutchification) as a feature of “the colonial expression of Dutch Christianity as superior to Javanese Christianity.” At the same time, faithfulness to the Bible must be understood within the framework of Sadrach’s standpoint of autonomy in seeking inner contentment, seeking an answer to the secret of sangkan paraning dumadi, and receiving guidance on the way to perfection. That is to say, this is an autonomy that points towards Sadrach’s identity as a Javanese who is precise and careful in his study of the Bible.

4. A Comparative Review of the Concept of Ngèlmu in the Serat Wédhatama and the Ngèlmu Sejati of Sadrach

As we have already seen in Chapter 1, the concept of ngèlmu in the Serat Wédhatama was clarified in four pupuh (Pangkur, Sinom, Pucung, and Gambuh). Because the last pupuh, Gambuh, is dedicated to sembah catur, the four varieties of sembah, as the embodiment of the concept laka, I will undertake a review of three pupuh, Pangkur, Sinom, and Pucung. In doing so, I hope that the comparative review of the concept of ngèlmu in the Serat Wédhatama and in the ngèlmu sejati of Sadrach will become more focused.

In pupuh Pangkur, ngèlmu is clarified as ngèlmu lubung or ngèlmu that is lofty or noble. There are, at the very least, three important things to be noted here. First, ngèlmu is called lubung or lofty or noble because it represents an ilmu rahasia (secret ilmu) that enables people
to reflect on the mystery of life, which at the same time points towards an existential understanding for the Javanese people about their personal existence within the present universe. Second, this ngèlmu is also referred to as a tangible ngèlmu because this ngèlmu definitely gives one a sense of calm. Third, it is God alone who becomes the source underlyng the human capacity to obtain ngèlmu.

In pupuh Sinom, the word laku in the sentence nuladha laku utama, or follow the example of laku utama, became a key concept in this pupuh. This laku itself was often understood as the way to attain some particular objective. But understanding laku utama is not as simple as that. There are at least two important things to note here. First, the word utama points to the existence of a certain quality that means that laku embodies a deeper understanding than just cara (method). Laku cannot be separated from a rule of life, discipline, and practice. Laku is an attitude to life, based on an understanding that this life has a definite rule of life that has to be followed in a disciplined way and by observing various forms of ascetic practice. Second, the word nuladha, or exemplifying what precedes laku utama, shows that laku utama is something applicable to Javanese people because it refers to the attitude of an eminent Javanese person or wong agung ing Ngéksiganda, Panembahan Senapati.

In pupuh Pucung, a saying that is popular in Java, ngèlmu iku kalakoné kanthi laku, becomes a key sentence in the Serat Wédhatama as a whole. There are three things to note in this regard. First, ngèlmu luhung will only come about if the Javanese people nuladha laku utama. Second, Kedua, ngèlmu luhung will only come about if undertaken with sincerity and commitment to setya bunya pangekese dur angkara, or determined resolve or firmness of heart to overcome evil. Third, ngèlmu luhung will only occur if the Javanese people are prepared to take an attitude of lugu in the sense of taking the Javanese attitude for what it is, with all the complexities of its ke-Ja wa-an (Javaneseness). One should not ngemohi one’s identity as Javanese, particularly if only to imitate or profess a different culture that he or she does not understand well.

Because of the clarification concerning Sadrach’s ngèlmu sejati that we described earlier, I will now compare the use of the concept ngèlmu in the Serat Wédhatama and in Sadrach’s Ngèlmu Sejati. Once again, I emphasize that the purpose of this comparison is that we can better understand ngèlmu sejati as a contextual theology by Sadrach.

As we have already seen, Sadrach announced the Gospel as ngèlmu sejati because the Gospel: “gave inner contentment, answered the secret of life, and guided humans on the way to perfection.” At the same time, in the pupuh Pangkur, the concept of ngèlmu had to do with the mystery of life and the understanding of the Javanese concerning their existence in the midst of the universe, a sense of calm, and the ability to develop ngèlmu. In my opinion, as a Javanese, a seeker and indeed teacher of ngèlmu, Sadrach understood this ngèlmu in this way It
cannot be denied that Sadrach did indeed search for an answer to the mystery of life, in the context of comprehending his existence in the midst of the universe. If he proclaimed the Gospel as ngélmu sejati this indicated that he had found what he searched for in the Gospel. For Sadrach, the Gospel answered the secret of life, and this is clear because the Gospel unquestionably gave a sense of peace in the heart, gave inner contentment. In connection with the third important note on pupuh Pangkur, it can be stated here that Sadrach was truly conscious that God alone was the source of human capacity to obtain ngélmu because Sadrach understood the Gospel as a guide on the way to perfection and not as a perfect guide. As long as humankind is still in this world, they are in fact still on the way to perfection, on the path that leads to perfection. The Gospel is not that perfection; only God is perfect. If (as clarified in the introductory chapter) this perfection could be understood through the experience of the pamori kawula-Gusti and Sadrach was aware that the Gospel guided humans on the way to perfection, then it is not surprising that he later portrayed the ‘face of Jesus in Java’ as guru sejati and panutan sejati (a true example). This has to do with the understanding of nuladha laku utama in pupuh Sinom, as will be discussed below.

In pupuh Sinom, nuladha laku utama points to the understanding that a person should take a model of laku utama from someone who is utama, who can guide his life toward perfection, that is, God himself. If in the Serat Wédhatama, Panembahan Senapati became a figure to be followed as an example, then, for Sadrach, it is Jesus who is the example or panutan to be followed. This is because he is a human person who is utama, who has demonstrated laku utama, in teaching and giving an example of love as the rule of life, taught and gave an example of a disciplined attitude, obedience to God as a way toward perfection, and also taught and gave an example of forms of ascetic practice such as prayer and fasting. Of greatest importance, as a human person who is utama for Sadrach, Jesus is the embodiment of pamori kawula-Gusti. This is why Sadrach portrayed the ‘face of Jesus in Java’ as panutan sejati (a true example). In this way, if the Serat Wédhatama ngélmu presents nuladha laku utama, in this case laku utama Panembahan Senapati, then Sadrach’s ngélmu sejati has to do with the nuladha laku utama of Jesus. And this is something that is applicable to Javanese people because Jesus is also portrayed as guru sejati. We can obtain a broader understanding of this from the following pupuh, Pucung.

As a key concept, the phrase ngélmu iku kalakoné kanthi laku in pupuh Pucung points to the relationship between ngélmu and laku as a unity. Ngélmu will not arise without laku. In connection with Sadrach’s ngélmu sejati, it is clearly evident that the stress on the piety of life points toward the imitatio Christi (the imitation of Christ).207 Sadrach was fully aware that to

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207 In particular, concerning the understanding of the imitatio Christi, see Partonadi, Sadrach’s Community, 1988, pp. 217-225, particularly p. 221.
receive the Gospel as ngêlmu sejati is a logical consequence of the portrayal of Jesus as guru and panutan sejati. This means that the Gospel is not going to be fully understood by Javanese people without a portrayal of Jesus as guru and panutan sejati (a true example).

Because ngêlmu is only kelakon if accompanied by laku, then this means that the Gospel becomes meaningful only if Christians truly follow the example of Jesus. But this is not a simple matter. When someone makes a decision to follow Jesus he or she must begin with sincerity of heart (lekase lawan kas) and a commitment to overcome evil (setya budya pangekese dur angkara), that is, the evil arising from within his own person. This means he must struggle to overcome himself, deny himself. In addition, for Christian Javanese people, the Gospel becomes meaningful only if they are willing to be lugu, which means not coming to ngemohi his identity as Javanese. This, then, is the essence of Sadrach’s ngêlmu sejati in comparison with the concept of ngêlmu in the Serat Wédhatama.

As emphasized earlier, a contextual theology in the setting of Java, is concerned with how to evaluate and interpret ngêlmu as something peculiar, unique, to Java. The above comparison clearly shows that Sadrach evaluated and interpreted ngêlmu as something peculiar and unique to Java, and because of this we are more convinced that ngêlmu sejati is a contextual theology.

D. The Role of Sadrach’s Ngêlmu Sejati
Before discussing the significance of the theology of Sadrach’s ngêlmu sejati any further, I wish to discuss a difference of opinion between Partonadi and Sumartana concerning Sadrach’s role in the history of Javanese Christianity, so that we will be able to identify their key insights about Sadrach. This will be valuable, particularly for the work of the GKJ in undertaking contextual theology.

1. The Difference of Opinion between Partonadi and Sumartana
According to Partonadi, Sadrach’s involvement in proclaiming the Gospel in Java in the 19th century played an important role in the emergence of a Javanese Christian community that was independent and self-reliant, that developed in independence from the existing colonial church and its congregations. This community, born of Javanese culture, was cared for, developed, and built up by those who valued this culture. Sadrach pioneered the way towards the realization of an expression of the Christian faith that was close to the heart of the community, arising from and in accord with their thinking, cohered with their feelings and experience, and was directed precisely at their needs, wishes, hopes, and aspirations. Even if it was often misinterpreted, Sadrach’s achievement stands as an initial example of the

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208 Partonadi, Sadrach’s Community, 1988, p. 2.
indigenous contextualization of Javanese Christianity and, as such, is relevant to the Javanese churches. Sadrach made the Christian faith easier to communicate to his hearers. His understanding of ngelmu sejati, his confession of Jesus as guru, panutan, and Ratu Adil, is a contextual theology because he does theology, can be understood as a reflection on the meaning of Jesus’ life in connection with the values, sources, and the final purpose of life. His theology was developed on the basis of his experience, and functioned in his work. His theology spoke to the concrete situation – Java in the 19th century – when guru, panutan (example) and Ratu Adil (Just King) were live issues. In a spirit of self-reliance and self-confidence Sadrach demonstrated a model of Javanese “episcopacy,” that was a momong (family approach) and momot (full of understanding). Through his charismatic leadership Sadrach operated as primus inter pares uniting Javanese Christian people.

Briefly, according to Sumartana, Sadrach and his community experienced difficulty in facing the socio-religious changes that occurred at the beginning of the 20th century. The existence of new policies that emphasized social ministries such as education and community health, along with a change in their focus of activities from the village to the town, meant that missionaries had an opportunity to develop their ministries without relying on Sadrach. According to Sumartana, Sadrach was considered unable to respond to the principal requirements in the areas of education and community health. The traditional charisma Sadrach possessed had already been displaced by new modern tools that were able to respond in better and more effective ways to the challenges that arose at the beginning of the 20th century. The problem of poverty and social suffering could only be ended by modern Western culture. This is why Sumartana concluded that Sadrach was not able to play an important role in the history of Javanese Christianity.


At its core, according to Partonadi, Sadrach had an important role in the history of Christianity as shown by his model of leadership and organization, along with his contextual theology. Sumartana, however, held that Sadrach was not able to exercise an important role in the history of Christianity in Java because the problems of poverty and social suffering could only be ended by modern Western culture. The traditional charisma Sadrach possessed had already been displaced by new modern tools that were able to respond to the challenges that appeared at the beginning of the 20th century in better and more effective ways. As can be seen from its title, Partonadi’s study is concerned with Sadrach’s community

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209 Ibid., p. 203. For further study, see pp. 204-235.
210 Ibid., pp. 222, 223.
211 Ibid., pp. 120-126, 206-207.
212 Sumartana, Mission at the Crossroads, 1991, pp. 80-81, 86.
and its contextual rootedness, which was an expression of 19th-century Javanese Christianity. Attention was given to Sadrach’s contextualization efforts as reflected in his community, with its focus on the problem of contextualization.\textsuperscript{213} Included in the study is the dynamic of Sadrach’s life and the conflict he experienced with the Gereformeerd missionaries. At the same time Sumartana focused on the period following the conflict between Sadrach and the Gereformeerd missionaries,\textsuperscript{214} particularly after he became the Apostle of Java and the years following, which were associated with the changing policy of the Gereformeerd mission in Java at the beginning of the 20th century. In my view, although there was a difference of focus between the two studies, there was, nevertheless, one particular period that was discussed by both, i.e., the decade following the death of Sadrach, the years 1924-1934. The final period concerning Sadrach and his community discussed by Partonadi ended in the year 1934. Sumartana more specifically indicates the years 1812-1936 as the limits of his study. Of special interest concerning Sadrach is the period after the conflict with the Gereformeerd missionaries in connection with the changed policy of the Gereformeerd mission in Java at the beginning of the 20th century. For this decade Partonadi focuses on the condition of Sadrach’s community, particularly following his death, which resulted in a three-way split in the community. On the other hand, Sumartana focuses on the change in policy of the Gereformeerd missionaries along with their impact on Sadrach’s community. Put briefly, the focus of Partonadi’s study is more internal, i.e., on what happened within the community, resulting from or caused by the community itself. The focus of Sumartana’s study is more external, drawing attention to external influences on Sadrach’s community. To see (and of course evaluate) their difference of opinion in a clear and balanced manner, let us look at how Partonadi and Sumartana analyze what occurred in Sadrach’s community during the period 1924-1934.

a. Sutarman S. Partonadi: The State of the Community following Sadrach’s Death

After Sadrach’s death, Yotham replaced him as leader of the community, although half-heartedly. He was ordained as an apostle (rasul) in May 1925, after a deep struggle. Before he was ordained Yotham had been torn between the church that had previously been led by Sadrach and the church that would be formed as a fruit of his leadership. Yotham faced a dilemma: become an apostle or join the ZGKN.\textsuperscript{215} On the one hand, because of his educational background in a Gereformeerd mission school, Yotham was uncertain about the Apostolic Church. In fact, he wanted to rejoin the ZGKN because he felt this would be better for his church. On the other hand, he never wanted to oppose his father while he

\textsuperscript{213} Partonadi, *Sadrach’s Community*, 1988, pp. 5-6.
lived. Opposing Sadrach’s wishes meant the loss of the support of the largest Christian community in Java because they were faithful followers of Sadrach.\footnote{Ibid., pp. 97-98.} In the end Yotham accepted the office of apostle and carried on his father’s legacy, seeking to prevent a crisis of leadership and division within the community and to strengthen his own position by way of easing the conflicts and disputes among its members. In taking this approach, Yotham hoped that he would be able to achieve what he hoped for. Little by little, he encouraged his community to take part in joint activities with the ZGKN, so that the link between the two developed and became deeper. After employing this tactic for about eight years, Yotham decided to unite his community with the ZGKN.\footnote{Ibid., pp. 100-103.} Inevitably, this decision, although suggested over a period of eight years already, caused a commotion in the community. According to Partonadi, it was impossible to compete with the ZGKN in the areas of funds, equipment, and expertise. Any competition of this kind would leave Sadrach’s community far behind. Nevertheless, it felt the presence of the ZGKN as a threat to their existence. There was some ‘power’ in the community that restrained its members from flocking to the ZGKN. What this ‘power’ was is difficult to determine.\footnote{Ibid., pp. 104-105.} In the end a split occurred that produced three different groups. The group that agreed with Yotham joined the ZGKN. Those who wished to continue Sadrach’s church as he had led it, now under Citrawirya’s leadership, continued as the Apostolic Church. At the same time Wijaya Sastra and some members who were not satisfied with the situation founded a new group called Pasamuwan Kristen Jawi Netral (Gereja Kristen Jawa Neutral), a free group not part of either the Apostolic Church or the ZGKN.\footnote{Ibid., pp. 106-107.}

b. Sumartana: Policy Changes in the Gereformeerd Mission at the Beginning of the 20th Century. As already discussed, Sadrach’s contextual theology was, “beyond the capability of the mission.” According to Sumartana, this forced the missionaries to think of another way to win the souls of Javanese people.

For that reason, the mission was forced to think of another way to win the souls of the Javanese. This would require nothing less than a reorganization of the work of the mission: a new method and new personnel were necessary…. By the beginning of the 20th century they were ready to begin to return to the mission field with new equipment, new personnel, new methods and a new spirit.\footnote{Sumartana, Mission at the Crossroads, 1991, p. 69.}
At this time, the severe challenge faced by the missionaries was the situation of great suffering in Java caused by famine and epidemic disease. Because the efforts of the missionaries to proclaim Christ in this kind of situation often brought the response: “Day and night we have to worry about finding ways to get food, so how shall we then think about the subject you talk about?” the missionaries endeavoured to reflect more deeply on the relevance of the Gospel to the situation in Java. It is of interest that a situation like that appeared to represent ‘a hidden blessing’ to the missionaries in their efforts to win the souls of the Javanese. This meant that evangelists were no longer able to limit their existence to a religious body only concerned with the salvation of souls but also confronted existing concrete problems such as hunger and epidemic disease. As a result, the establishment of a hospital became a core concern and had an important role in evangelization in Java. According to Sumartana, the Gereformeerd missionary health ministry in Central Java demonstrated an advance that was astonishing. This was also linked to growth in the numbers of Christians in the region concerned. Because of this, the medical mission can be said to have made a very large contribution to the success of Christian mission in Central Java. In a situation like this the missionaries had an opportunity to develop their own ministry without interference from a prominent figure with special charisma like Sadrach.

Concerning this change of mission policy and its influence on Sadrach’s community, Sumartana argues:

The spectacular jump came in the period following Sadrach’s death at the end of 1924. Throughout the 1920s and 1930s the total number of Javanese Christians almost doubled. Without Sadrach his community was like a flock of sheep without a shepherd, and thus they looked to the mission for guidance, which was intentionally seeking them as well.

This then indicates that Sadrach and his community were not able to deal with the challenges that appeared in Java in the 20th century.

c. Critical Review

In this part I will make use of the thinking of two Indonesian (Java) theological specialists who are experts in the realm of contextual theology. First, there is Singgih’s thinking on contextualization as captured in the concept: “Masalahnya adalah praxis, bukan praktis” (The problem is practice, not what is practical). The second is Banawiratma’s thinking

221 Ibid., p. 77. “Famine, cholera epidemic, and those horrible skin ulcers were found most everywhere on Java.”
222 Ibid., p. 78.
223 Ibid., pp. 80-81, 86.
224 Ibid., p. 103.
225 E.G. Singgih, Dari Israel ke Asia, BPK Gunung Mulia, Jakarta, 1982, pp. 17-19. This book was intended for alumni of Duta Wacana associated with the GKJ and the GKIW, so it is relevant in the critical review in this
concerning the context for doing theology in Indonesia expressed in the concept “Teologi Fungsional-Teologi Kontekstual” (Functional Theology – Contextual Theology). I see their thinking as important in helping us understand the difference of opinion between Partonadi and Sumartana because the critical review in this section has to do with the context for doing theology and what is discussed in the contextualization undertaken by Sadrach. To assist in understanding the thinking of Singgih and Banawiratma, we will quote passages from their works. According to Singgih,

‘all-round practical’ does not mean that it is grouped in what is meant by contextualization. By borrowing a common term practical does not become the same as ‘praxis’. Praxis is certainly a neutral term that comes from the Greek praxis, ‘act,’ ‘action,’ for example, praxeis apostolon, ‘(kisah) acts of the apostles’ in the New Testament. But people commonly give the word a certain meaning. Paulo Freire, for example, interprets praxis as the union of word, thought, or reflection with the work of action or struggle. In fact, in his view, humankind in its entirety should be viewed as praxis. This is what distinguishes them from animals. Contextualization is a question of praxis; this means being connected with the question of how Christians understand themselves within their real and concrete situation so that in this way and at the same time, their work is also real and concrete.

According to Banawiratma, however:

In Asia it has long been believed that to adopt Western theology just like that is no longer consistent with striving for the full expression of the faith in Asia. The importation of an already formed theology from the west no longer fills the need for the full expression of the faith of the local churches. In other words, theology is no longer functional…. [T]he term ‘functional theology’ perhaps gives rise to a question: Is there a theology that is not functional? There certainly is; it is the theology that does not support the full expression of the Christian faith but poisons it…. Here the term ‘functional theology’ is used to indicate a theological effort that is explicitly based in human experience and the experience of faith (based on contextual experience) that aims to assist the full expression of the faith in that situation. At least three reasons can be put forward as to why theology requires explicit action for its functionality. First, the full and total comprehension of Christian faith founded on the Gospel of Jesus Christ always takes place in a situation, sphere, context, or cultural system that is defined and concrete. The word of God addresses people in a concrete situation. God’s call and missionary task is always experienced in a concrete way. Reflection on the full and complete understanding of the Word of God that is going to have meaning for the understanding of the Gospel must take account of this. Second, the concrete context of the concrete cultural system involved is not only an ‘object’ that is addressed by the Gospel but a ‘subject’ that is active. The human values contained there are necessary to enrich our comprehension of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Human comprehension and the expression of the Word is limited and always assisted by an understanding of a different faith so as to grasp this Word in more depth and more perfectly…. The demands of theological functionalization arise from faith in Jesus Christ himself. Third, coming to faith means being called to become a new creation…. In the situation of real life the church is called to live as a new creation. A new creation is not an already-made

section. What is most important, however, is that this book provides an important qualification concerning the problem of contextualization in Java.


thing produced by the ceremony of baptism but a continuing struggle to be where Christ would be.\textsuperscript{228}

As discussed above, the primary difference between Partonadi and Sumartana concerned Sadrach’s role in the history of Christianity in Java. According to Partonadi, he played an important role as is demonstrated by his model of leadership, organization, and contextual theology. Sumartana, however, holds that Sadrach was not able to play an important role in the history of Christianity in Java because the problems of poverty and suffering in society could only be resolved through modern Western culture.

The traditional charisma Sadrach possessed was replaced by new modern tools that were able to respond to the challenges that arose at the beginning of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century in ways that were better and more effective. In my view, if we employ Singgih’s thinking, i.e., “Masalahnya adalah praxis, bukan praktis,” then we will quickly see that the one issue at the root of the difference of opinion between Partonadi and Sumartana concerned the practicality of Sadrach’s role in the history of Christianity in Java. Sumartana was not mistaken when he holds that new, modern tools were able to respond to the challenges that appeared at the beginning of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century in a way that was better and more effective. The view that Sadrach did not play an important role in the history of Christianity in Java is, in my view, not quite accurate, if judged by what contextualization achieved. As expressed by Singgih, “all-round practical’ does not mean that it is grouped in what is meant by contextualization” Indeed, it is true that many Javanese Christians (not least Yotham and his followers) were later drawn by the missionaries’ new, modern devices and methods, such as hospitals and medicines. But Partonadi informs us that there was some kind of ‘power’ within the community that held back its members from flocking to the ZGKN. If Partonadi says what it was or in fact states that it was difficult to determine what this ‘power’ was, then in my opinion the problem is praxis, not practicality. In my view, the community was conscious that what they needed was not only something practical, like a hospital and medicines that could improve their state of health. If they made use of these facilities, what they needed was only treatment and their medicines – nothing more than that. Sumartana himself was aware of this:

they came with the primary motive of treatment-not looking for a new religion. Those who visited the hospitals were not necessarily those who were attracted to the religion offered by the mission. Most of them simply needed the medicine that was offered by the mission.\textsuperscript{229}

Once again, to refer to Singgih’s view that contextualization is a problem of praxis connected with the problem of how Christians understand themselves in their real, concrete

\textsuperscript{229} Sumartana, Mission at the Crossroads, 1991, p. 86.
situation and at the same time work in a way that is real and concrete, this ‘power’ in the community that held the members back from flocking to the ZGKN was the sensitivity of Sadrach’s community to not only understanding themselves in a real and concrete situation but also their desire to be able to work in a real and concrete way. To do this, they had to defend their freedom and self-reliance, like it or not. The more they were dependent on the missionaries with all their modern aids, the more they were unable to work in a way that was real and concrete. Sadrach’s experience in an earlier era had proved that. At the same time, based on Partonadi’s opinion, we know that, after Sadrach’s death, his community split into three groups. As we know, the split was triggered by the desire and effort to link up with the ZGKN. Even though there was a power in the community that held members back from flocking to the ZGKN, the split could not be avoided. In the end, those who agreed with Yotham chose to join the ZGKN. According to Sumartana, “Without Sadrach his community was like a flock of sheep without a shepherd, and thus they looked to the mission for guidance, which was intentionally seeking them as well.”

In Sumartana’s view, the problem here was the absence of leadership. Yotham was viewed as unable to give guidance to Sadrach’s community, which it later sought from the missionaries. This means that those who agreed with Yotham, even though they ‘acknowledged’ Yotham’s leadership, did not receive the guidance they wanted from him because in reality they sought it from the missionaries. In my view, what occurred was that Yotham displayed a lack of leadership or, to employ Banawiratma’s concept, Yotham did not demonstrate a functional theology. According to Banawiratma, to simply adopt Western theology or to do theology in the Western way is no longer consistent with seeking the full understanding of the faith in Asia. The importation of a ready-made theology from the West no longer fulfills the need for the full understanding of the faith of the churches of the region. In other words, theology is no longer functional. As we know, as leader of the largest Christian congregation in Java, given the background of his education in the mission school that produced a tendency toward a Westernized understanding of faith, Yotham could not be expected to meet the requirements for the full understanding of the faith of Sadrach’s community. From manuscript C Karangjasa we know that Yotham, according to Partonadi, understood that what Sadrach had done in the past could not be understood. Because of this, there was no point in doing these things. It was better to follow what was already there than to go on without financial capital or supplies. It is very clear that, unlike Sadrach who endeavoured hertimeologi fungsional (to engage in functional theology), that is, to do theology in a way that was explicitly based on human experience and his contextual experience of faith,

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230 ibid., p. 103.
Yotham tended to choose what was practical, and this meant, to use Barawiratma’s terms, that he did not strive to understand and fulfill the three reasons why theology required an explicit effort for its functionality. If Sadrach had engaged in theology contextually by way of his theology of *ngelmu sejati* (which showed how he had carried out syncretism, in the sense of employing all the potential he had to oppose the missionaries and to continue to be *Bijbelgetrouw*; faithful to the Bible), then Yotham easily gave in to the modernity offered by the missionaries.

It is important to note here that, in fact, as Sadrach’s replacement, Yotham did not have the capacity to adequately confront the challenges that appeared at the beginning of the 20th century (the changing policy of the Dutch missionaries). In my opinion, Partonadi has clearly demonstrated that Sadrach had played an important role in the history of Christianity in Java. Nonetheless, Sumartana demonstrated that the new and modern means employed by the missionaries were able to respond to the challenges that emerged at the beginning of the 20th century in a better and more effective manner. What we do not see from Partonadi is what kind of attempts Sadrach’s community made after Sadrach’s death to confront the changed policy of the Dutch missionaries. This is understandable because, as already noted, the focus of Partonadi’s study is in fact more internal. This is regrettable, however, because the continuing discussion concerning Sadrach’s community ends with the split that occurred. At the same time, Sumartana’s study shows more of what was in the related changes in mission policy of the Dutch missionaries. He tends not to give any place to the efforts at contextualization in a situation such as this. In fact, to use Singgih’s terminology, he did not place sufficient value on *kejawen* (being Javanese) and Javanese people. It was as though the problems of poverty and social suffering could only be brought to an end by modern Western culture.

So, the question is not whether Sadrach played an important role in the history of Christianity in Java, but rather one of praxis and leadership, which points to the attempt to undertake what has been called functional theology. In my view, Partonadi does not yet (if we do not want to say not at all) see the problem of praxis and the practical that led to the split. He was, however, aware that the factor of Yotham’s leadership played a major role in this event. What is clear is that he has shown that Sadrach’s community as a Javanese congregation, a place where Javanese Christians could live in the context of Javanese culture, represents a problem that is relevant for us at this present time. At the same time, Sumartana has also shown how the factor of leadership became the cause of the split experienced by Sadrach’s community and how new, modern tools were able to respond to the challenges that emerged at the beginning of the 20th century in a way that was better and more effective.

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Unfortunately, he drew the conclusion in a less than precise manner that Sadrach and his community were not able to respond to the challenges that appeared at the beginning of the 20th century.

3. The Contribution of the Difference of Opinion between Partonadi and Sumartana

In my view, the key points of value to us that we can draw from the difference of opinion between Partonadi and Sumartana are the following.

First, there is the issue concerning praxis and the practical. On the one hand, the existence of some kind of ‘power’ in Sadrach’s community that prevented its members from flocking to the ZGKN indicates that being practical in every way does not mean that it is part of what is meant by contextualization. On the other hand, however, the reality that part of Sadrach’s community reunited with the ZGKN indicates that something practical like that demonstrated by the policy of missionaries by way of employing new and modern means was also needed for responding in a better and more effective way to the challenges that arose. Although being practical in every way does not mean what is meant by contextualization, this does not mean that contextualization has no connection at all with practical things. In my opinion, contextualization must also take account of practical matters because praxis also includes practical things.

Second is the question of leadership. Partonadi and Sumartana give us a clear indication that one characteristic of leadership needed by Sadrach’s community was the commitment to undertake what Banawiratma called functional theology. Congregational leaders who conclude that it is no longer necessary to advance Sadrach’s work (read: engage in contextual theology) will lose their function as leaders. In fact, their presence is able to poison the full understanding of the faith of the community. Good leadership must be able to indicate explicit actions in the direction of functionality because, as argued by Singgih, contextualization not only deals with the problem of how a Christian understands himself or herself in their real and concrete situation even more that they are also able to work in a real and concrete way.

4. The Role of the Theology of Ngèlmu Sejati for Sadrach's Community

a. Holiness of Life: Javanese Pietism and the Imitatio Christi

As we have already seen with respect to ngèlmu sejati in its connection with the Gospel, Sadrach found that pitutur (instruction) and wewaler (prohibitions) could be found in the
Gospel that direct one’s life toward perfection. In addition, he understood Jesus as a *panutan* (exemplary figure). For Sadrach’s community, this entailed the consequence of obedience to Christ, obedience to all his *pranatan* (rules) that become manifest in holiness of life.

Javanese culture contains the terms *ber budi bawa leksana* (noble-hearted) and *ngudi sajatining becik* (pursuing goodness). These two aspects are inseparable from *hanggayuh kasampurnaning hurip* (pursuing perfection in life). When Sadrach’s community received the Gospel as *pitutur* (instruction) and *wewaler* (prohibitions), which directed their journey towards *kasampurnaning hurip* (the perfection of life), they were motivated to demonstrate attitudes to life that, in my opinion, point to a *pietisme Jawa* (Javanese pietism) that is *ber budi bawa leksana* (noble-hearted) and *ngudi sajatining becik* (pursuing good). Also, this cannot be separated from an understanding of the *imitatio Christi* because, for them, only Christ is the true *panutan* (example). Because of this, they always strive to follow the example of Christ in their daily lives. Thus, I think, a particular role of Sadrach’s theology of *ngèlmu sejati* for the Golongané Wong Kristen kang Mardika is manifested in piety that points towards *pietisme Jawa* and *imitatio Christi*.

b. **To Become Wong Kristen Kang Mardika**

Other than its manifestation in piety, Sadrach’s *ngèlmu sejati* theology had an important influence on his community in respect to freedom and self-reliance as indicated in the community’s name, *Golongané Wong Kristen kang Mardika*. The use of the word *mardika* (independent) indicated that all interference from outside, particularly from the Dutch missionaries, would be rejected. As I have indicated, one principal reason for Sadrach to proclaim the Gospel as *ngèlmu sejati* was so that Javanese Christians would not take the teaching of the missionaries as a source of *pitutur* (instruction) and *wewaler* (prohibitions) and view the missionaries themselves as *panutan* who could guide their lives toward perfection. It was the same for Sadrach: only in the Gospel and in the person of Jesus as *guru sejati* and *Ratu Adil* could these be found. While it is true that Sadrach was a leader who was obeyed, even though he was not a ruler who governed in an absolutist way like a dictator or even *Tuhan yang Memerintah* (it is the Lord who Rules), which the Dutch missionaries accused him of because of the name Surapranata. The obedience of the community to Sadrach must be understood as an acknowledgement of Sadrach’s presence as a pastor who had pioneered independence and self-sufficiency for the community, as indicated in the word *mardika*. This word indicated in a positive way that the community was entitled to give expression to its

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233 The term *mardika* is a powerfully emotive word in Javanese and other Indonesian languages. See, for example, the use of the term *kaum mardika* in Pramoedya Ananta Toer, *Sang Pemula*, Hasta Mitra, Jakarta, 2003. Cf. Takashi Shiraiishi, “Reading Pramoedya Ananta Toer’s Sang Pemula,” in *Indonesia*, volume 44, 1987, pp.129-139, especially p. 133.
faith freely, and to arrange and organize itself in ways appropriate to the Javanese context. Sadrach enabled his community to enjoy and make use of their freedom and self-reliance in giving expression to faith, i.e., freedom and self-reliance that represented resistance to the *verhollandisering* (Dutchification) undertaken by the Dutch missionaries. If the *op een stoel of niet op een stoel* incident was seen by the missionaries as an entry point for the Javanese syncretism they saw as the greatest danger to their mission, for Sadrach’s community this represented a “reaction against the colonial expression of Dutch Christianity as superior to Javanese Christianity.” How they experienced faith was no longer determined by the missionaries because they also had the right to *op een stoel zitten* (sit on one chair) with the Dutch.

In this way, I think, the role of Sadrach’s ngèlmu sejati theology for the Golongané Wong Kristen kang Mardika, in addition to its manifestation in piety of life that points toward *pietisme Jawa* and the *imitatio Christi*, is also manifested in their freedom and self-reliance to give free expression to their faith and to arrange and organize themselves in ways appropriate to the Javanese context.

5. The Role of Sadrach’s Ngèlmu Sejati Theology in the Development of the Christian Religion in Java

a. In the Village Context

As we all know, Sadrach’s community grew and developed in the village environment, where *kejawen* constituted the basic attitude to life (*levenshouding*). As we have already seen, this was because *kejawen* formed the context in which Sadrach engaged in theology, as he demonstrated through proclaiming the Gospel as ngèlmu sejati. Because his theology was theology in the Javanese context, the Christian religion that he proclaimed was a Javanese Christianity. This I think is what made the Christian religion develop in the village context. It is in accord with what Guillot reported: if someone asked what reason compelled the Javanese people to adhere to Christianity then they answered: “In developing Christian teaching, Sadrach was skilled at finding words that touch the feelings of Javanese people.” Guillot suggested this to indicate that Alkema’s conclusion.235 I agree with Guillot. In my view, it is not mistaken to say that one thing that drew the Javanese – who, *nata bene*, were still in the *jaman edan* and awaiting the coming of a Messiah – to the Christian religion was that Christ was proclaimed as the *Ratu Adil*. But this is not the sole reason, or even the principal one. Javanese people certainly hoped for the coming of the *Ratu Adil* who would free them from the *jaman edan*. As already argued in the introduction, the principal attention of Javanese

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235 [Initial] Alkema was a missionary whose personal view was that those who read the work of Adrianeese would come to the conclusion that Javanese people became Christian for the single reason that Jesus Christ was the *Ratu Adil*. See Guillot, *Kiai Sadrach*, 1985, p. 174.
people in their religious life and in doing theology is hanggayuh kasampurnaning hurip (striving to achieve the perfect life), which can be understood through the experience of human ‘unity’ with the highest reality or kasunyatan, who is known as Lord or referred to in Javanese as pamoré kawula-Gusti.236

In my view, through njèlmu sejati Sadrach enabled the Christian religion to flourish in the village environment, not only in connection with Christian teaching that touched the feelings of Javanese people but by praxis (which also included practical matters within it) Sadrach also provided media for Javanese Christians to fulfill their need for the rites and symbols that have an important role in their daily lives. This can be seen from the way Sadrach cast out evil spirits with a special mantra containing prayers, healed sicknesses using holy water, and worked to ‘Christianize’ traditional Javanese ceremonies, particularly those connected with the agricultural world, such as planting rice, and sedekah bumi (a thanksgiving ceremony performed by farmers and fishermen). Once again, I agree with Guillot who concluded that Sadrach’s success was due to ‘this traditional attitude of his.’237 In my opinion, Sadrach’s njèlmu sejati theology represents the face of a Javanese Christianity that lives in a kejawen world. Because of this, he played an important role in the development of the Christian religion in Java, particularly in the village environment.

b. The Islamic Context

As we have already seen, in addition to the village context Sadrach’s community grew and developed in the context of Islam. Next to kejawen, Islam had become part of the Javanese context at that time and Sadrach was very much aware of this. Thus, with respect to certain matters Sadrach tried to accommodate aspects that included Islamic nuances in his efforts to make the Christian religion acceptable and capable of development in an Islamic environment.238

It must be acknowledged, however, that development of the Christian religion in an Islamic environment was in fact greatly influenced by the proclamation of the Gospel as njèlmu sejati. This was a proclamation that was only made to certain people, most importantly the kiai (a title of respect for venerated Islamic scholars). To me, this shows that Sadrach was

236 This is in accord with the mystical understanding of kejawen founded on the conception of the Lord in the kitab (book) Nawaruci (written at the beginning of the 17th century in the Bali-Jawa language), Bimasuci (more recently, from Mataram, with the same content as Nawaruci), or Dewaruci (an edition of the Bimasuci later translated into Dutch by Poerbatjaraka). See Koentjaraningrat, Kebudayaan Jawa, 1994, pp. 322-323; see also previous footnotes that stress that to attain pamoré kawula-Gusti, Javanese people must weruh rosing rasa kang lumeke ing angga.

237 Guillot, Kiai Sadrach, 1985, p. 197.

238 For example, calling the church building a masjid (mosque), the leader of the congregation an imam (leader of public prayer), conforming the confession of faith to the syahadat in Islam:: “lha illah lha illallah, Yesus Kristus ya Roh Allah.” A confession in this form had been initiated by Cooley, who called it a Christian syahadat. See Guillot, Kiai Sadrach, 1985, p. 39.
aware that it was not wise to set out to influence people whose religious knowledge was limited, as though the proclamation of the Gospel was only about persuading uneducated people to change their religion – by no means. In proclaiming the Gospel Sadrach strove to approach a group of people not one by one but through a person of influence who had status, reputation, and certainly education (at least in religion). The people Kiai Sadrach approached and who finally became Christian were educated people (at least in religion) and were sufficiently influential in the community. This means that Sadrach wanted the people he contacted to become Christian not just because they were ‘influenced’ by his ‘propaganda’ but so that they would truly represent the fruit of deep reflection and struggle on the part of people who had knowledge and experience in religion. At that time the most appropriate method to do this was to proclaim a new ngelmu to someone who possessed ngelmu, or had even become a guru ngelmu (teacher of ngelmu). Because the Gospel was proclaimed as ngelmu sejati, i.e., the ngelmu that seekers of ngelmu searched for to reach the perfect life, the Christian religion was able to be received within the environment of Islam through the mediation of the kiai who were influential and had many santri (pupils). It is clearly evident then that Sadrach desired to share the truth of the Gospel and not just have followers because at that time Sadrach also vowed that if his message about the Gospel as ngelmu sejati was not accepted he would return to Islam. Because of this, we can see how Sadrach continued to respect those who stayed faithful to Islam, even people close to him, like his father-in-law, Nyai Suromenggolo. In addition, Sadrach’s existence in Karangjasa was not the same as in a Christian village, like those established at Mojowarno or near Gunung Muria, because Karangjasa was a village that was already established. This indicates that Sadrach was not intending to establish a Christian village because this would mean that he would compel all its occupants to be Christian. Far from it. On the contrary, according to Guillot, as long as Sadrach was in Karangjasa there was a pesantren (Islamic school) that remained active up to the time he undertook his study (around the 1880s), and was run by the same family. This shows how Sadrach, as one who had been a santri and studied Islam in depth in different pesantren and also in Kauman, valued Islam as the Javanese context at that time. The outcome was that the Christian religion could be received and develop properly in the Islamic environment. Therefore, I conclude that Sadrach’s ngelmu sejati theology played an important role in the history of Christianity in Java, particularly for the development of the Christian religion in the context of Islam.

239 Guillot, Kiai Sadrach, 1985, p. 79.
240 Ibid., pp. 76-77.
241 Ibid., p. 71.
E. Concluding Remarks

It must be kept in mind that Sadrach was not theologically trained at the seminary level. His main concern as an evangelist was how best to communicate his newfound faith to his fellow Javanese. He did not attempt to construct a comprehensive theology to touch upon every aspect of the meaning of Jesus and his work. His goal was simply to make the Christian faith more communicable to his audience. His faith, rather than primarily intellectual, was based on his personal encounter with the Gospel. His recognition of Jesus as guru, panutan (an example), and Ratu Adil (Just King) was based on his experience of what Jesus meant for him. His experience, however, also manifested itself in his theology. Thus, Sadrach was doing theology in the sense that he was reflecting on the meaning of his life in relation to its ultimate values, sources and destiny. His theology developed from his experience and functioned in his work. It spoke to the real situation – the Javanese context of the nineteenth century in which ngělmu sejati was a burning issue.

The meaning of Jesus and the Gospel is ultimately an existential question requiring a personal answer. Sadrach found his answer, just like the disciples who expressed their personal confession when Jesus posed the question: “But who do you say that I am?” The disciples could not have answered apart from their personal experience of Jesus. This was the case with the early church as well, which developed its confession based on actual experiences of Jesus, both his life and work.

Trying to understand Sadrach’s theology, therefore, means understanding his personal experience resulting from his encounters with Jesus, living and working through the Spirit. We must keep in mind that the Scriptures, to a certain extent, record personal human experiences and encounters with Jesus. We find a variety of experiences in them that range from the common to the unique. The image of Jesus is not the same for everyone. Through these various personal experiences, different images of Jesus are portrayed that are of benefit to the readers. The image of a guru who teaches and gives his life as an example and the image of the just king who reigns with wisdom and justice are familiar images of God and Christ in Scriptures. While the immediate context – Javanese culture – may be different, the basic meanings of these concepts are the same. The concepts of Jesus as guru and Ratu Adil are images that are still accepted by Javanese Christians at the present time.

It must also be noted that, in many respects, Sadrach did not follow the official teaching of the mission church. He chose, rather, to find his own way – the Javanese way. From the very beginning he was ‘outside’ the mission church. To choose this route was not without risk and required a great deal of courage, as can be seen in his struggles with the

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243 Partonadi, Sadrach’s Community, 1988, p. 223.
missionaries and the Indische Kerk. The theological concept of *extra ecclesiam nulla salus*\(^{244}\) led to the view that everything outside the official church was false, a view that, to a certain extent, coloured the missionaries’ attitude toward all ‘non-Christian’ elements, seeing them as pseudo-religion, false faith, lying faith, idolatry, and heathenism.\(^{245}\) In addition, the ‘denominationalism’ that coloured the theological thinking of the NGZV missionaries produced theological intolerance for anything outside Reformed doctrine. It is our opinion, therefore, that Sadrach’s theology was viewed from a biased standpoint. The approach to missions used in the 19th century by the Dutch missionaries presupposed that any theology that did not develop from Reformed principles was suspect. This approach is unnecessarily intolerant, and by its very nature it failed to support any attempts at contextualization.

We must acknowledge Sadrach’s right, together with that of others from different cultures all over the world, to construct their own images of Jesus – images that speak from and to their own concrete situation. Determining whether those images are authentic or a betrayal requires cautious judgement, since, as Wessels states, the meaning of *overlevering* (passing on) and *verraad* (betrayal) is very close. I agree with him that Jesus cannot be restricted to one context alone, neither Eastern nor Western. Different contexts will naturally result in different images as a response to Christ. Not only do I agree with this conclusion, but I am also convinced that the various images of Jesus that were developed in Central Java by Sadrach, who declared at the synod, “I am a servant of our Lord Jesus Christ, He is my Mediator and my King, who is just!”\(^{246}\) should be sincerely regarded as equal to other images of Christ. The images developed by Sadrach as well as those of other Javanese evangelists must be viewed as an effort at an authentic, obedient response to Christ and His redemptive work.

\(^{244}\) A Latin saying derived from Cyprian (200-258) that was developed and adopted by Pope Pius IX in 1863. See K.A. Steenbrink, *Perkembangan Teologi dalam Dunia Kristen Modern*, IAIN Sunan Kalijaga Press, Yogyakarta, 1987, p. 168.


\(^{246}\) Allegations against Sadrach were discussed at this meeting held in Purwareja in December 1890. Sadrach confessed “Ik ben een dienaar van onzen Heere Jesus Christus, die is mijn Middelaar en mijn Konig, die rechtvaardig is.” See Adriaanse, *Sadrach’s kring*, 1899, p. 270.
Chapter III. CASE STUDY: IMAN KRISTEN

A. Introduction

The aim of this study is to propose a framework for the GKJ in formulating a contextual systematic theology in the Javanese context. This chapter will present a case study of a systematic theology in that context in which the Javanese Christians are doing theology.

Iman Kristen (Christian Faith) is a monumental book on dogmatics, written about 40 years ago by a prominent Javanese theologian, Harun Hadiwijono. It is intended to be a systematic explanation of the essence of the Christian faith. The book consists of six chapters that deal respectively with the following doctrines: God's Revelation (I), God's Nature (II), God as Creator (III), Sin (IV), God as Saviour (V), and God as Redeemer (VI).

As highlighted by Harun in Chapters II and III, this book basically describes God as the sekutu (ally) of humankind and humankind as the sekutu (ally) of God. It is interesting that Harun chose to use sekutu to depict the relation between God and humankind. In Indonesia, the term sekutu is well known because of the belief that God is unique, not like creatures, One, and has no partner (lā sharīka labū). Harun may have chosen this particular word because of its use in Indonesian Islam: tuhan tidak berekutu (there is only one God); menyekutukan Tuhan (to have other gods than the one God); jangan sekali-kali menyekutukan Allah dengan sesuatu yang lain (on no account should God be viewed as having partners). In a political sense, the word sekutu strongly suggests a close association of nations or other groups formed to advance common interests, especially during war, to defeat a common enemy. In my opinion, this theme is very strong in the whole explanation of the essence of Christian faith, even, so to speak, becoming the spirit of Iman Kristen itself. In this regard, we can link the use of sekutu to the circumstance that Harun deliberately wrote his book in ‘mono-theocentrist’ terms, most probably on account of contrasting Christianity with Islam.

Formally speaking, it can be said that Iman Kristen has been playing an important role in Java for more than 30 years. Before being published in 1973, it was a seminary textbook and was used as reference in Christian dogmatics at STT, Sekolah Tinggi Theologia Duta.

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1 Harun Hadiwijono, Iman Kristen, BPK Gunung Mulia, Jakarta, 1992. I use this edition because it is the one that was used in class when I was a theological student at Duta Wacana, and since then, only minor emendations have been made to the text.
2 Harun Hadiwijono was a well-known systematic theologian who was highly competent in the fields of Christian theology, Javanese mysticism, and other religious traditions in Java. Many of his academic works come from deep reflection on those traditions. Nonetheless, his thought and theology are, more or less, influenced by the Gereformeerd missionaries’ view in the past who trained members of the GKJ, such as Harun, in the Western ways of thinking. Therefore, Iman Kristen is an interesting book on dogmatics that should be studied and investigated with all due respect.
4 It is possible that Harun was influenced by the Second World War and the Independence War in depicting the alliance of God and humankind versus some enemy. We will discuss this below.
It has been reprinted more than 15 times and even today the Faculty of Theology of Duta Wacana Christian University and other theological education institutions in Indonesia, especially in Java, still use it as important material for lectures. In short, it has become a ‘classic’ or, in other words, has served as the established model or standard writing on Christian dogmatics. As for churches in Java, *Iman Kristen* has been one of the most influential sources for teaching the Christian faith. The abbreviated versions of *Iman Kristen* written in Javanese, *Kawulo Pitados* (I Believe) and in Bahasa Indonesia, *Inilah Sahadatku* (This is My Confession), have been used in catechism classes since their very first publication.8 *Iman Kristen* is also ‘unique.’ Harun claimed he wrote the book in a popular way, unlike other dogmatics works, wanting to extend its readership beyond Christians. He tried to explain all the subjects in this book via comparisons with local culture, such as *kebatinan* (Javanese mysticism), *kejawen* (a typically Javanese religious tradition), and other religious traditions such as Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam.9 Through its content and the significance of its ‘uniqueness,’ *Iman Kristen* has become the stepping-stone for Christianity to interact, at least as a discourse, with local cultures and other religions in Java and vice versa.

In his foreword to the first edition of *Iman Kristen*, Harun wrote that there were already three books in *Bahasa Indonesia* on the Christian faith: *Aku Percaya* (I Believe), by J. Verkuyl,10 *Dogmatika Masakini* (Dogmatics Today), by G.C. van Niftrik and B.J. Boland,11 and *Ichtisar Dogmatika* (Concise Dogmatics), by R. Soedarmo.12 Nonetheless, he felt encouraged to write a fourth. When people read the book, he said, they will find out that it has its own place among those preceding books. It is up to the readers to judge whether it is good or bad.13

Harun’s words by here provide the impetus for this study. Many theologians and scholars have criticized *Iman Kristen* in part but no one has criticized it completely in the sense of giving a thorough critical review of it as a work of systematic theology or Christian

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5 The first form of this book was a kind of mimeographed material, from 1969 to 1971 when the Faculty of Theology of Duta Wacana Christian University was still a hogere theologische school.
12 R. Soedarmo, *Ichtisar Dogmatika*, BPK Gunung Mulia, Jakarta, 1965. Soedarmo (1914-1991) was a theologian from the GKI. He studied theology at VU University Amsterdam, in the Netherlands, and gained his doctorate in theology in 1957. He was a professor of dogmatics at STT Jakarta (founded in 1934 as Hoogere Theologische School with T. Müller-Krüger as its first rector), Harun, who was also a theologian from the GKI, studied at the same university (VU University Amsterdam) and obtained his doctorate in theology about 10 years after Soedarmo.
dogmatics in particular. Therefore, I want to look critically at *Iman Kristen* and, as Harun said, to more or less 'judge' it so that we can discover the place of this book for its readers among the preceding books.

This chapter relates to the fields of systematic theology, especially dogmatics, and contextual theology. In the field of systematic theology, we will deal with *Iman Kristen* generally as a study of Christian theology organized thematically, focused on the attempt to arrange and interpret the ideas current in the Christian religion and deal with the logical categorization of biblical truths by tracing the self-revelation of God through the Scriptures as a whole and then carefully organizing it systematically. Specifically, we will deal with *Iman Kristen* as a work of dogmatics, referring to Gerald O’Collins who holds that dogmatic works aim to examine all the main Christian doctrines, i.e., the Trinity, incarnation, atonement, sin and grace, the church, sacraments, eschatology, etc. coherently and systematically. Three guidelines for dogmatics proposed by D. Becker will also be used to evaluate Harun’s efforts in arranging *Iman Kristen*: 1) Did he accurately determine the problems in the recent situation? 2) Did he deal with the problems exegetically and historically? 3) Did he respond contextually?

In the field of contextual theology we will deal with *Iman Kristen* as a case study of systematic theology written in the Javanese context in which Javanese Christians are doing theology. We will, therefore, deal with contextual theology, as Stephen B. Bevans said, as a way of doing theology in which one takes into account the spirit and message of the gospel, the tradition of the Christian people, the culture in which one is theologizing, and social change in that culture. Whether brought about by Western technological process or the grassroots struggle for equality, justice, and liberation, our cultural and historical context plays a role in the construction of the reality in which we live. Our context influences our understanding of God and the expression of our faith. We will, of course, also deal with contextualization in the sense of how, as stated by William P. Russell, we assess the peculiarity of Third World contexts. Contextualization takes into account the process of

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secularity, technology, and the struggle for human justice, a process that characterizes the historical moment of nations in the third world. Authentic contextualization is always prophetic, always arising out of a genuine encounter between God’s Word and His world, and moves towards the purpose of challenging and changing the situation through rootedness in and commitment to a given historical moment. But contextualization does not imply the fragmented isolation of peoples and cultures. While people must struggle within each diverse cultural situation to regain their own identity and to become subjects of their own history, an interdependence of contexts still remains. Contextualization thereby means that the possibilities for renewal must first of all be sensed locally and situationally, yet always within the framework of contemporary interdependence that binds both to the problems of the past and present and to the possibilities for the future.  

B. Harun Hadiwijono

1. Family Background

Harun Hadiwijono was born on 19 March 1915 in Wirobari, Central Java as the second of four children: 1) Kasilah, 2) Harun Hadiwijono, 3) Supeno Sastrowijono, and 4) Kurdi Pujowijyo. Sastrodiwiryo, Harun’s father, was a carik (clerk of the village) of Kundhen, Wirobari. It was a high position at that time. As explained by Koentjaraningrat, the carik is one of the perabot dhusun (village officers), the highest social group in a village. This group consists of the lurah (head of the village), congkok (vice-lurah), carik (clerk) kamiseput (treasurer, who is in charge of funds or revenues of the village), kaum (religious leader who is in charge of the rituals and ceremonies), kebayan (announcer, who delivers announcements from the perabot dhusun to the villagers), ulu-ulu (officer in charge of the irrigation system), and some jagabaya (security guards of the village). Tursini, his mother, had a small stall for selling rice, sugar, and other typical Javanese cooking spices. They were a respected couple in the community, not only because of their social level but also because they were generous people, eager to help their neighbors.

Even though they were not rich, they made every effort to provide their children with a good education. Kasilah, the only daughter in this family, had sufficient time to reach the third year of elementary school before going through the seclusion process in preparation for marriage, a normal Javanese tradition for a girl at that time. But all three sons attended university, which was a very rare achievement in the colonial period, considering the

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19 Our primary source in this part refers to Panggabean et al., (ed.), Menuju Manusia Baru, 2000, pp. 3-80.
educational policy of the Dutch government. Harun even obtained a doctoral degree in theology from VU University Amsterdam in the Netherlands. (We will trace his education background from elementary school to doctoral degree below). Supeno finished his studies in agriculture at a university in Bogor. Meanwhile, Kurdi, after succeeding his father as carik, studied theology and became a pastor in the GKJ of Wirosari until the end of his life.

After becoming acquainted with the Gospel while he was in the HZS (Hollandsche Zending School) in Purwodadi (1929-1934) and struggling with illness for about 2 years, Harun was baptized on 21 June 1936 during a Sunday service in Purwadadi, with his parents and relatives present. One year afterward, his sister and brothers were also baptized. The fact that Harun’s parents were so open to other religions besides Islam (since they were Muslims), and had a generous tolerance for their children’s conversion to another faith (in this case Christianity) is not surprising because Harun’s parents came from an agricultural society, which is considered to consist of abangan (nominal Muslims). Most students of Javanese society are familiar with the dichotomy between practising and nominal Moslems (santri versus abangan). This division, elaborated in Geertz’s *The Religion of Java*, can now be seen to have been part of a former structure of society that vanished rapidly over the past twenty years. At present, at least as it appears at the level of the urban educated middle classes, the two mainstreams in Javanese culture seem to be converging. Moreover, and this is often insufficiently appreciated, all Javanese, whatever their degree of Islamicization, share in Javanese culture. That culture is not necessarily religiously expressed but contains a common view of humankind, society, and the ethical conduct of life.

His mother died in 1942, when Harun was 27 years old. One year later, his father married a widow called Kadijah. She had no children right up to the time Pak Carik (Harun’s father) died in 1950, when he was 70. The uniqueness of their gravestones merits comment. The cross is carved on the front of each. This initiative by Supeno, Harun’s brother, was surprising because their parents had never embraced the Christian faith.

Approximately one year after his mother died, in the same year of his father’s second marriage, on 8 December 1943, when he was 28, Harun married Suwartini, a girl from Klaten, Central Java. They were schoolmates in the MULO (Meer Uitgebreid Lager Onderwijs), friends Petronella Hospital (then Bethesda Hospital, Yogyakarta), members of the *club van Vijf* (a Bible Study group), serving together as Sunday school teachers, and active in other church ministries. They had three children: Sri Harini, Harianta, and Sri Hardjanti.

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23 For further study on this division, see Clifford Geertz, *The Religion of Java*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1976.
After 25 years of struggling with diabetes, when he was about 70, Harun died in Bethesda Hospital, Yogyakarta on 17 February 1985.

2. Education

Harun’s education comprised of several phases. It began with De Schoolen Der Tweede Klasse (1926-1929), and then HZS (Hollands Zending School; 1929-1934), MULO (Meer Uitgebreid Lager Onderwijs; 1934-1937), TOS (Theologische Opleidings School; 1937-1941), VU University Amsterdam (1952; doctorandus theologiae), Serampore, India (1960-1962), and finally VU University Amsterdam (1967; Doctor of Theology).

Since 1848, the Dutch government classified people who stayed in Indonesia into four groups according to their legal status: 1) Europeans, 2) those who were of equal status with Europeans, 3) native Indonesians, 4) those who were of equal status with native Indonesian. Later on, as also noted by Koentjaraningrat, this classification was revised into three groups: 1) Europeanen (Europeans), 2) Inlanders (native Indonesians), 3) Vreemde Oosterlingen (Foreign Easterners). Inlanders (native Indonesians) in particular were divided into three more groups; (a) aristocrats, (b) religious leaders, (c) lay people. The impact of this classification could be seen from the discrimination in education. Those belonging to the aristocrats were educated at De Schoolen Der Eerste Klasse (The Schools for the First Class), and lay people at De Schoolen Der Tweede Klasse (The Schools for the Second Class). The basic differences lay in the quality of curriculum, teachers, and the primary language. De Schoolen Der Eerste Klasse had a high-quality curriculum and teachers. They used Dutch as the primary language, whereas the curriculum and teachers at De Schoolen Der Tweede Klasse were of lesser quality. They used Javanese as the primary language. The alumni of De Schoolen Der Eerste Klasse had the opportunity to continue to higher levels of education, while those of De Schoolen Der Tweede Klasse did not. Those who had excellent academic qualities and could read Dutch, however, could continue by transferring to the so-called Schakelschool, in which they would complete their study to the same level as that of De Schoolen Der Eerste Klasse, in the HZS. Harun, as the son of a carik, even though the latter was respected in his community, was considered one of the lay people and therefore had to go to De Schoolen Der Tweede Klasse in Wirosari (1926-1929). Not many facts can be discovered about this period. Nonetheless, because of the

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25 Koentjaraningrat, Kebudayaan Jawa, 1994, pp. 75-76. This classification is based on the Indische Staatsregeling No. 163 IS/1854. For further study this classification, see H. Westra, De Nederlandsch-Indische staatsregeling, Martinus Nijhoff, ’s-Gravenhage, 1934.
excellence of his academic quality and his ability in the Dutch language, Harun succeeded in entering the Schakelschool and completed his study in the HZS Purwodadi.

In the HZS Harun was accepted in grade 1b. Because of his academic qualities, he skipped grade 2 and went directly to grade 3, finishing all six grades within five years. M. Boshoudt, the headmaster, signed the diploma. Harun’s achievement in entering the HZS acquainted him with the Bible. It was a custom in the HZS to start school activities by reading the Bible. This was an activity both students and teachers followed together. Therefore, in addition to learning languages (Javanese, Malay, and Dutch), algebra, geography, and the natural sciences, Harun also studied the Bible. During this period he was coping with a spiritual crisis and struggling with existential questions concerning his identity and what religion truly expects from him as a human being. His encounter with the Bible and Christianity at large seemed to answer his questions, more or less because he was baptized two years after he finished his study in the HZS.

In 1934 Harun was officially accepted as a student of MULO in Yogyakarta. He stayed in a dormitory supervised by J.D. Wolterbeek, an outstanding lecturer at TOS Yogyakarta. He was well known as strict but was a spiritual man and took good care of the students. Because Harun had good academic qualities, he received special attention from Wolterbeek and had a good relationship with him. This directed Harun’s life not only for preparing him to become a good pastor but also for shaping his theology so that he became a respected theologian. Harun graduated from the MULO on 21 June 1937 exactly one year after he was baptized on 21 June 1936. The school headmaster, H. Oldhoff, signed his diploma. A year later he entered TOS.

Officially, TOS was founded by De Nederlandsche Zendings Vereniging in 1930, but had actually existed since 30 August 1906. This was the time when the theological schools merged with the Keuchenius School or normaal schools that taught common school teachers. This was the practice until 1911. For about 14 years afterwards (1911-1925), TOS was declared the Opleidingschool van de helpers bij de Dienst des Words (Training School for Assistants in the Service of the Word). In the early period, the length of the programme was 3 years. The Second World War led to new policies that brought about some basic changes in the school. One of them was lengthening the programme to 4 years. This began exactly at the time when Harun entered TOS in 1937. He finished his studies in 1941. Another impact of

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27 As mentioned above, Harun did not come from a Christian family. Therefore, entering the HZS was one of the most crucial moments in his life because it was there he became acquainted with Christianity and later on decided to be baptized.
28 The MULO was an advanced school for those who had finished De Schoolen Der Eerste Klasse or those who gone, like Harun, to study at the HZS. There were two kinds of MULO; the Christian MULO and the public (openbare) MULO. The main difference was that the latter did not give lessons in the Christian faith like the Christian MULO did. Harun entered the Christian MULO.
the policies was the possibility for those who finished TOS to enter higher educational institutions like the university. Later on, this is what made it possible for Harun to continue his studies at VU University Amsterdam in the Netherlands until he gained his doctorate in theology.

After more than 10 years of working as a pastor, Harun got a chance to continue his studies at the higher level, at the Faculty of Theology of VU University Amsterdam, the Netherlands. He gained his doctorandus degree in 1952, with a thesis called Manusia Jawa (Javanese Man). The dean of the faculty, G. Berkouwer, signed the diploma. He was a well-known dogmatician at the time, and was considered one of the theologians who influenced Harun’s thinking and theology later on, especially in his capacity as a lecturer at Sekolah Tinggi Theologis Duta Wacana.

To deepen his knowledge and understanding of Eastern philosophy and other religions in addition to Christianity (Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam), Harun studied them in Serampore India for about 2 years. In my view, it is not without reason that Harun chose to go to India instead of continuing his studies in the Netherlands, where he got his doctorandus degree. After the Second World War, the relationship between Indonesia and the Netherlands deteriorated, with the result that it was not easy for Indonesian scholars to go to the Netherlands for study. Another important reason, in my view, is that Harun wanted to continue his research on the theme of Javanese man in preparation for writing his dissertation. India was the right place to go since Javanese culture has its roots in Hinduism. Moreover, as noted by Hoekema, the theological discourse in India at that time was well developed compared to Indonesia. Furthermore, Indonesia and India had a strong relationship at the time politically. India was a role model for the national movement in Indonesia and motivated the Christians’ participation in nation-building. This experience provided the impetus for Harun to pay significant attention to theology of religions and more or less influenced his writings that now gave a place to Eastern philosophy and other religions in Indonesia.

After many years of teaching dogmatics and theology of religions, Harun decided to continue his studies and earned his doctoral degree in theology in 1967. He defended his dissertation entitled Man in the Present Javanese Mysticism. The rector of the university, W.F. de Gaay Fortman, signed the diploma.

3. Ministry

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Harun’s ministry was comprised of several phases. He began as a guru Injil (teacher of the Gospel) at Petronella Hospital (for the NZV: 1941-1942, for the Sawokembar GKJ: 1942-1945), and as pastor of the Sawokembar GKJ (1945-1946). He then became a teacher and director at the School for Pastoral Candidates (1946-1956), a lecturer at ATY (Akademi Theologia Yogyakarta/Academy of Theology Yogyakarta) (1956-1962), lecturer and rector at STT (Sekolah Tinggi Theologia [Hogere Theologische School] Duta Wacana) (1962-1980), and lecturer at the Faculty of Theology at UKDW (Universitas Kristen Duta Wacana/Duta Wacana Christian University [1980-1985]).

After graduating from TOS on 18 June 1941, according to the policy at that time, the NZV assigned Harun to Petronella Hospital. The spiritual ministry in this hospital was divided into three parts: 1) a Dutch Class, serving Dutch patients, 2) the Middle Class; serving patients from the middle social class, such as teachers and officers, 3) the Common Class; serving patients from the low social classes/the common people. Harun was assigned to the Middle Class, which consisted of three wards. His duties included 1) visiting patients in the morning and reading the Bible to them, and 2) catechism classes for nurses in the evening. At that time Harun became close friends with Suwartini, his classmate at the MULO and one of nurses serving in those wards. They later married.

In 1942-1945, Japan captured Indonesia from the Dutch and expelled all Dutch officers, including mission pastors. All missionary activities were forbidden. The ministry in Petronella Hospital (which became Tyoeo Byoin under the Japanese) was continued by the Sawokembar GKJ. As for Harun, he kept serving in Petronella Hospital but now as an employee of the Sawokembar GKJ. After 3 years as a guru Injil in Petronella Hospital, the Sawokembar GKJ called Harun to be their pastor.

After he was declared to have passed the Peremtoir examination (consisting of 12 subjects) with an assessment of tjekap sanget (very satisfactory) on 12 December 1945, Harun was ordained as pastor of the Sawokembar GKJ on 27 December 1945. He held this position for only 10 months, however, until 31 October 1946. This was because of the policy of the Sinode GKJ bagian Selatan (Synod of the South Java Christian Churches) that was convened in Yogyakarta 29-30 October 1946, which appointed Harun as teacher in the School for Pastoral Candidates.

The initiative to found a School for Pastoral Candidates arose at the conference of the Sinode GKJ bagian Selatan (Synod of the South Java Christian Churches) on 7-8 March 1945. This was followed by coordination with the Council of Churches (Raad van Kerken) on 22-23 May 1946, which was attended by delegations from Sinode Jawa Timur (Synod of the East Java Churches), the Sinode GKJ bagian Utara (Synod of the North Java Christian Churches) and the Sinode Tiong Hwa (Tiong Hwa Synod). All delegations agreed to found a
school for pastoral candidates. The school was to be supported, more or less, by the facilities of TOS, such as the building and lecture materials. Nonetheless, this school included a new method for teaching and training pastoral candidates that differed from the model of the Opleiding School van de helpers bij de Dienst des Words that TOS followed. At first, Harun was the only teacher, and its rector was Soedarmo. After 1949, Soedarmo was also assigned to be a teacher along with Probowijoga, which brought the number of teachers to three. On 1 April 1955, Harun was assigned to replace Soedarmo as rector when Soedarmo went to the Netherlands to receive his doctoral degree in theology.

In 1956 the School for Pastoral Candidates was upgraded to ATY. Harun served as a lecturer in this academy for about six years afterwards. The existence of this academy at that time benefitted the development of church ministries, not only in Java but also in Indonesia as a whole because the students came from all parts of Indonesia, besides Java.

In addition to the dynamics of the time and circumstances as well as the need to increase the quality of the education for pastoral candidates, on 31 October 1962 ATY was upgraded to STT Duta Wacana Yogyakarta. This upgrade cannot be detached from the 16 years of struggle to unite the ATY and Theological School of Bale Wiyoto, Malang which had been founded on 6-9 August 1946 at the conference of the Synod of the East Java Churches Synod in Mojowarno. STT Duta Wacana existed for about 18 years. During this time Harun worked not only as a teacher but also as the rector of STT Duta Wacana for about 12 years, over a total of four periods; 1962-1964, 1968-1972, 1974-1977, and 1977-1980. Therefore, he was the first and the last rector of the STT Duta Wacana. In this phase, Harun was a strong influence in the school, as shown by the statutes of the STT Duta Wacana that, more or less, shows his thought and theology at that time. One part was to call for attention to confront religious groups existing in Indonesia as well as Indonesian culture. This was followed by giving lectures on Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, tribal religions, kebatinan, and mysticism. The aim was to prepare the minister or pastor to deal with those religious traditions carefully.

On 30 October 1980, the STT Duta Wacana became the UKDW. By that time, he was 65 years old and a month before, on 25 September 1980, had already received a pension letter. Because of academic considerations, however, this was postponed until 31 December 1984. Just 20 days before he was to retire, on 11 December 1984, he received another postponement until 1 July 1985. He died, however, just a few months before his retirement, on 17 February 1985, in Bethesda Hospital (Petronella), the place where he once worked as a guru Injil.

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31 From 1964 to 1967, Harun continued his studies for a doctoral degree in theology at VU University Amsterdam, the Netherlands.
4. **Writings**

Harun’s writings reflect several periods in his life: Harun as a minister and church officer (1945-1953), Harun as ‘Penyadar’ (1954-1967), Harun in an academic environment (1968-1974), and Harun as theologian-

bhagavān (1975-1985).32

On 23 November 1913, the GKJ in Yogyakarta (then the Sawokembar Gondokusuman GKJ) became autonomous from the churches in the Netherlands with respect to management and organization of the church itself and tried to be autonomous in all aspects. One of the issues here was the *Credo* that appeared in 1932 and was discussed at Synod.33 Later on, more issues emerged as the consequence of efforts by the Javanese churches to unite. Apart from the *Credo*, there were also issues concerning the church order, hymns, and liturgy as discussed in the report of the synod in Yogyakarta, 7-8 March 1945. As a church officer, Harun paid significant attention to these issues and was even involved intensively at the synod in studying it. He even then served as the editor of a regular publication entitled *Patunggilan* (fellowship or union), a medium by which those issues could be discussed attentively.34 This was Harun’s first publication. After more than 10 years’ involvement in some ministry, Harun was given the opportunity to continue his study at the highest level, at the Faculty of Theology of VU University Amsterdam, the Netherlands. He obtained his doctorandus degree in 1952 with a thesis called *Manusia Jawa* (Javanese Man). Harun’s writing on this subject continued in many of his publications later on. But it is not the only subject he wrote on, as we will see in the next periods.

During the period of 1954-1967, Harun was either a teacher or a student, as we can see in the earlier explanation above. His focus was, more or less, on academic theological issues. That is why Karmito called this period “The Academic Intellectual Formation.” As a minister, however, who used to be a church officer for years and then a theologian and a teacher in theological institutions, Harun tried to bridge the gap between them (church and theological institution).35 He played a role, more or less, as *penyadar*36 in the development of theology in Java as he tried to make Javanese Christians and churches aware and clear about

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32 The division of the periods as suggested by Karmito. See Panggabean et al., (ed.), *Menuju Manusia Baru*, 2000, pp. 55-80. Karmito was the head librarian at UKDW and was one of Harun’s students. I will go along with this division, with some adjustments.
33 At a meeting in Yogyakarta on 2 June 1932, the synod scheduled this issue as one of their urgent points on the agenda.
34 The first publication was on 24 November 1949.
35 There will always be a tension between the ‘theology of the church,’ which refers to the laity’s understanding of the faith, and the ‘theology of the theological academic institutions,’ which refers to the intellectual academic explanations of the Christian faith.
36 *Penyadar* is derived from the word *sadār*, which means ‘conscious,’ ‘awake,’ or ‘enlightened.’ Thus, *penyadar* means someone who makes others conscious, awake, or enlightened. Thus he is an arouser or instigator. Another translation could be ‘reviver.’ See Alan M. Stevans and A. E. Schmidgall-Tellings, *A Comprehensive Indonesian-English Dictionary*, 2004, p. 853. I use the term *penyadar* in this sense.
their faith and theology. Therefore, I prefer to call this period: Harun as Penjadar. As editor, he was involved, in a theological periodical called Penjadar,\textsuperscript{37} which was launched in August 1954. From 1954 to 1961, Harun wrote 50 articles for this journal.\textsuperscript{38} There are many topics in those articles. There are, however, at least three important topics that were seriously discussed: 1) ecclesiology, 2) korban,\textsuperscript{39} and 3) Javanese mysticism.\textsuperscript{40} With respect to the first, Harun made interpretative approaches to ecclesiology based on biblical texts\textsuperscript{41} and provided practical-theological implications\textsuperscript{42} so that the laity could understand what it is to be a member of the church and how to take active participation in the communal life of the church. In doing so, Harun (as a theologian and a teacher in theological institutions) played a role in the development of the church as well as the theology of the church. The second topic is, in my opinion, very intriguing. In Java, korban is an Islamic religious offering made at rites celebrating Idul Adha. Discussing this topic was uncommon at the end of the 1950s when theological discourse was not yet well developed. Such a topic was not popular at that time as it was considered to be either too hard to understand or too impractical for the laity. But it is important since it contributed, more or less, to the arrangement of Iman Kristen, as we can see in the fifth section of the fifth chapter of the book: “Karya Penyelamatan Kristus dipandang dari segi Korban.” Here Harun connects Christ’s work of salvation with the idea of korban (sacrifice).\textsuperscript{43} Christ’s work is linked to atonement, the fulfilment of the Old Testament law of sacrificial rites. Harun highlights his explanation by referring to Hebrews 9-10.\textsuperscript{44} I could not find any publications by Harun for the period 1961-1966. The most reasonable argument is that by that time he was very active as a teacher at ATY, and then as a teacher and rector of STT Duta Wacana, all at once. Moreover, he was also a student at Serampore, India (1960-1962) and preparing for his doctoral studies at VU University Amsterdam years later. Actually, as noted by Hoekema, there were four articles that are considered to be preliminary exercises for Harun’s dissertation.\textsuperscript{45} They are the 23\textsuperscript{rd}, 24\textsuperscript{th}, 25\textsuperscript{th},

\textsuperscript{37} The meaning of the title of this magazine, Penjadar, is more or less the same as De Opwekker, the title of a mission periodical that appeared from 1855-1942. Among its contributors was Hendrik Kraemer who wrote many articles for it. Penjadar is an old spelling of Penyadar. I will use the modern spelling in reference to Harun.

\textsuperscript{38} According to Karmito, there were 49 articles, but there were actually 50. Karmito forgot to include the 23\textsuperscript{rd} article: “Mistik,” 4/12, June 1958, pp. 3-6.


\textsuperscript{40} Ibid. See lists No. 23, 24, 25, 26.

\textsuperscript{41} There are texts from Ephesus (No. 1, 2, 4.), Matthew (No. 5), Hebrew (No. 6, 7).

\textsuperscript{42} Panggabean et al., (ed.), Menuju Manusia Baru, 2000, pp. 71-74. See lists No. 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 27, 28, 29, 31, 32, 33, 34, 36, 45.

\textsuperscript{43} See on this item, W.S. Wibowo, Jesus as Kurban: Christology in the Context of Islam in Indonesia, Amsterdam 2014 (VU dissertation).

\textsuperscript{44} Harun Hadiwijono, Iman Kristen, 1973, p. 345.

\textsuperscript{45} Hoekema, Berpikir dalam Keseimbangan, p. 336. (The original book was written in Dutch: Denken in Dynamisch Evenwicht, Uitgeverij Boekencentrum, Zoetermeer, 1994). Unfortunately, in the Indonesian edition Hoekema only mentions three of them (the 23\textsuperscript{rd}, either the 24\textsuperscript{th} or 25\textsuperscript{th}, and the 26th). There may
and 26th articles. Obviously, Harun continued his concern on the theme of humankind in the Javanese context (as he did in his thesis in 1952), by writing his dissertation in 1967 on *Man in the Present Javanese Mysticism*. Here Harun states that, since the 19th century, Javanese mysticism had to face many challenges, such as the coming of Christianity in the middle of the century, the challenges of modern science, which was beginning to influence the intellectual stratum of Indonesian society, political challenges, such as the attempt of communism that had been trying to take away the religious consciousness from the masses. Before the Second World War, mysticism was generally considered to be the business of people who did not expect anything from this world. During the Japanese occupation mysticism remained low-key, though it did not disappear from the stage altogether. After the proclamation of the independence of Indonesia in 1945, and especially when it was obvious that the existing religions did not prove to be strongholds of moral strength, mysticism came to the fore and was proclaimed as the source from which moral strength could be drawn *ad libitum*.46

The period 1968-1974 refers to the years Harun was at STT Duta Wacana as teacher and rector. Therefore, he was in an academic environment. During this period, he was involved in several international theological education organizations, at least within South-East Asia: The Association of Theological Schools in South-East Asia or ATISSEA, at that time ATESEA (The Association of Theological Education in South-East Asia). He wrote at least four articles and eleven books during this period. His articles “Influence of Christianity on Javanese Mysticism” and “Theology in Asia Today” were published in *The South-East Asia Journal of Theology*.47 These were Harun’s first two international articles. Unfortunately, as noted clearly by Karmito, Harun did not have the courage yet in these articles to undertake a prominent experiment for doing theology à la Asia or even à la Indonesia.48 Indeed, since Harun’s first monograph: *Man in the Present Javanese Mysticism* (1967), and then in several books published between 1970 and 1974,49 Harun gave serious attention to the context of Java. But the influence of Western theology became a kind of ‘academic, cultural and psychological obstacle’ to Harun for doing contextual theology in a proper sense. For me, in this period his international discussions did not give Harun any *leitmotiv* for focusing his theology into a contextual one; instead, it drove Harun to demonstrate his ability to blend his

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48 Ibid.
49 Panggabean et al., (ed.), *Menuju Manusia Baru*, 2000, pp. 75-77. See the list, Book No. 1-12
knowledge about the Javanese context with Western theology. The result can be seen in *Iman Kristen*, as we will see below.

Karmito called the period 1975-1985 “The Theologian-Bhagavān Formation.” *Bhagavān* is a Sanskrit word meaning ‘the blessed one.’ By using this term, Karmito intends to appreciate Harun as a great person in his field, an expert in theology – as, indeed. Harun was. In this period, Harun was working at the STT Duta Wacana as teacher and rector. He also gave lectures in several theological education organizations in Java (not only in Central Java but also in West and East Java). During this period, when Harun was in his 60s and 70s, he wrote at least four articles, seven books, and translated another 14 articles. There is an interesting article written by Harun in this period: ‘Kesenian Dipandang dari Segi Theologia’ (Art Viewed from a Theological Angle).\(^5\) This article is considered an ‘abnormality’ as it was not Harun’s main interest. Javanese culture is rich with art, and, in my opinion, the fact that there were attempts by Javanese Christians to use art in doing theology inspired Harun to make a clearer explanation of it. Moreover, in his ‘mature’ period, it seems to me that Harun wanted to probe his concern about contextual theology. This is shown in his article: “Pembimbing ke dalam Teologia Asia Tenggara” (An Introduction to South-East Asia Theology). Here, Harun explains Choan Seng Song’s contextual theology to his students. During this period, Harun was very much immersed in the ‘deep sea’ of his work; right up until his death. He was well known to be a bookworm and a prolific writer. Even before he died, Harun said that he wanted to publish a volume on Reformed theologians in Asia, Latin America, and Africa.\(^5\) Not long after he died, his family found some documents ready to be published, but no one knows if these documents were part of a volume he intended to publish. One thing is certain: one of the documents was the revised version of *Iman Kristen*. Unfortunately, those documents were lost before they could be published. I would argue that Harun’s writings comprise many aspects of the Christian life, individually and communally, locally and internationally, showing the richness of his intellectual knowledge, experiences, and faith expressions.

C. **A Critical Review of *Iman Kristen***

1. **Its ‘Uniqueness’**

   As mentioned above, *Iman Kristen* has its own ‘uniqueness’ compared to other dogmatic works. According to Budyanto, this originality of Harun’s method was demonstrated by his effort to liberate himself from the traditional model of dogmatics which is ontological, towards a functional-contextual dogmatics. When Harun talked about the nature of God, he

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\(^5\) *Ibid*, p.74. See the list, Article No. 54.

did not start with the attributes of God, solely or exclusively. He always discussed God in relation to humankind. The most prominent example of this is the designation of the term sekutu to describe the relation between God and humankind is, indeed, unique because it is not found in other dogmatic works.52

I agree with Budyanto that Harun tried to liberate himself from the traditional model of dogmatics. But I doubt that Iman Kristen is an attempt at a functional-contextual dogmatics. Let us start with my agreement. Actually, Budyanto does not give any further explanation of how Harun liberates himself from the traditional model of dogmatics. In the second chapter of Iman Kristen, however, we can see that Harun begins his explanation of the existence of God by first discussing four important arguments53 (ontological, causal, teleological, and moral), and then presenting his own views.

In discussing the ontological argument, Harun refers to Plato’s ideas. As Plato conceived them, the Platonic ideas are permanent, self-contained absolutes that correspond to each item of exact knowledge attained through human thought. Also, they are the standards by which all human endeavour can be judged, for the hierarchy of the ideas leads to the highest absolute – ‘God.’54 After explaining Plato’s ideas, Harun presents Anselm’s ontological argument, which contradicts Plato’s philosophy.55 As we know, Anselm offers a definition of God as “aliguid quo maius cogitari non potest,” (that than which no greater thing can be thought). If this definition of God is correct, it necessarily implies the existence of God. The reason for this is as follows. If God does not exist, the idea of God remains, yet the reality of God is absent. But the reality of God is greater than the idea of God. Therefore, if God is “that than which no greater thing can be thought,” the idea of God must lead to accepting the reality of God because otherwise the mere idea of God is the greatest thing that can be thought. And this contradicts the definition of God on which the argument is based. Therefore, given the existence of the idea of God and the acceptance of the definition of God as “that than which no greater thing can be thought,” the reality of

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52 Budyanto, “Sambutan Dekan Fakultas Teologi UKDW,” in Panggabean et al., (ed.), Menuju Manusia Baru, 2000, pp. xiii-xiv. Budyanto is a Javanese systematic theologian from East Java. He was once a student of Harun and was the dean of the faculty of theology of UKDW as well as its rector.

53 We have to be cautious in our presentation of Iman Kristen because it contains no bibliography. Harun makes his argument without mentioning the exact reference (article/book/publication), simply referring to name, tradition, or religion. It is possible that he considered himself as capable enough to write this book with his in-depth knowledge and comprehension, as an expert on those resources, without mentioning their publication details. In my opinion, however, the reason is that Harun tried to make it simple and not too complicated as in a high academic work so that anyone could understand it.

54 Harun Hadiwijono, Iman Kristen, 1992, p. 74. I think Harun carelessly equates Plato’s idea of the ‘good’ with ‘God.’ It was Augustine of Hippo, who identified the ‘good’ in Plato’s philosophy with God.

55 Ibid., p. 75. Harun does not give detailed information about Anselm’s argument, but, from his explanation, we know that it is Anselm of Canterbury’s Proslogion, which was written around 1079.
God necessarily follows. Confronting these arguments, Harun said that Anselm’s argument jumps from ‘thought’ to ‘existence.’ What is thought is not definite in reality. Harun, then, gives an example that Javanese people have thought about: Semar. But Semar is merely an imaginary being who does not exist in reality. To understand Harun’s example better, an explanation about Semar is in order. In wayang (Javanese traditional shadow puppet theatre), Semar or Sang Hyang Ismaya, the oldest and most important character of the panakawan (paka means ‘clear vision,’ ‘clever’ and kawan means ‘companion,’ thus, those who have clear vision and can give wise advice), was originally a god, ‘the twin brother of heaven.’ He was the elder brother of the highest god, Batara Guru. As punishment for a crime, he was given a grotesque form and sent to earth to serve the descendants of the ksatria (gods). He serves as the guide for a hero on a journey full of tribulations that the hero must overcome before achieving his goal. The name Semar comes from the word samar (vague) and, as a master of secret theology, he can be called ‘mysterious.’ In Javanese mysticism his name is composed of se[ngeom] (to lure) and mar[sudi] (to search, to do), meaning that one is lured to search or do good things. In short, Semar is a mysterious character, for he is not an ordinary human but a divinity from suralaya (heaven). For the Javanese people, who pay more attention to immanent ways of approaching the Divine, Semar is the Sang Hyang Ismaya (venerable God).

Continuing his explanation on the ontological argument, Harun says that existence is not an attribute that can enrich an understanding (100 rupiahs in our thought are equal in value to 100 rupiahs in reality). This is just the same with the understanding of ‘God.’ Therefore, the ontological argument does not, according to Harun, prove the existence of God.

Briefly explaining the causal argument, Harun notes that only nothing comes from nothing; everything else comes from something. Everything leads back to a more original form. Here Harun presents Thomas Aquinas’ argument that there is no case known in which a thing turned out to be the efficient cause of itself because in that case it would be

56 Note that the Latin verb cogitare is sometimes translated as ‘conceive,’ leading to the definition of God as “that than which no greater thing can be conceived.” Both translations are acceptable. See Alister E. McGrath (ed.), The Christian Theology Reader, Blackwell Publishers Inc., Cambridge-Oxford, 1995, p. 8.


58 The person of Semar is difficult to define. He has a man’s body but a woman’s face. But that is not the only ambiguity about Semar. His language is coarse and often obscene, he farts and belches: he is, in a word, kasar (rough), a clown, but he is also a god: most spiritually refined inwardly and has a rough appearance. See G.B. Milner, Natural Symbols in South East Asia, SOAS, London, 1978, p. 133. See also Laurie Jo Sears, Shadows of Empire: Colonial Discourse and Javanese Tales, Duke University Press, Durham, 1996, p. 41. According to Niels Mulder, Semar is “the God of Java, progenitor of the Javanese race.” See Niels Mulder, Mysticism in Java: Ideology in Indonesia, Pepin Press, Amsterdam, 1998, p. 93. Cf. Peter Levenda, Tantric Temples: Eros and Magic in Java, Ibis Press, Lake Worth, 2011, p. 68.

59 Harun Hadiwijono, Iman Kristen, 1992, p. 76.
prior to itself, which is impossible. If, however, one thing was caused by another, there would be an infinite chain of cause and effect, which would also be impossible. But if we take away the ultimate cause, we take away the effect. If it is possible to propose an infinity of efficient causes, there will be no first efficient cause nor will there be an ultimate effect. Therefore, it is necessary to admit a first efficient cause, to which everyone gives the name of God. Addressing this point of view, Harun clearly states that the argument is not a proof of the existence of God. He admits that there must be a first cause. But concluding that the first cause is God does not prove the existence of God. Pointing out directly that the first cause is God is merely asserting our own belief, our presumption. And this will not satisfy those who have different presumptions, who do not believe in the existence of God.

The third argument discussed by Harun is the teleological argument. This is an argument for the existence of God as a creator based on the perceived evidence of order, purpose, design, and/or direction in nature. According to Harun, this argument is stronger than the two preceding proofs. But the supposition that there is purpose or a directive principle in the works and processes of nature does not prove the existence of God. It is just the same as with the causal argument: we simply assert our own conviction.

Harun, then, presents the moral argument. This argument states that every human being has a moral consciousness, an awareness of ‘the good’ and ‘the bad.’ According to this argument, this awareness can only be the result of the work of God. Yet, for Harun, this argument does not prove anything about the existence of God. It is not a convincing argument because this moral awareness is not the same in all situations. It is evolving. Each place has its own morality.

In his conclusion, Harun states that basically those arguments do not prove the existence of God. They all come from those who already believe in God. For Harun, those proofs should be regarded as witnesses. For those who already believe in God, the arguments serve to strengthen their faith. For those who do not believe in God, the arguments prove nothing.

As explained above, we can now see how Harun liberates himself from the traditional model of dogmatics, but the question then is, Why did Harun do that? Of course, as Budyanto said, this demonstrates his originality, but, in my opinion, there is more to it than that. The answer is, actually, shown in Harun’s statement, made after presenting the point of

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60 Again, Harun does not give detailed information about Thomas Aquinas’ argument, but from his explanation, we know that it comes from Thomas Aquinas’ *Summa Theologiae*, written in 1265 and left unfinished at the time of his death in 1274.


62 Ibid., p. 77.
view of some religious traditions such as Hinduism, kebatinan, and Islam, which have been influenced by Plato in discussing the essence of God, as follows.

Harun said that, for Plato (followed by Philo) God is transcendent – the highest and most perfect being – and uses eternal forms, or archetypes, to fashion a universe that is eternal and uncreated. Therefore, God is inaccessible to humankind. Humans cannot understand God’s attributes and entity. According to Harun, many religions’ teachings have followed this understanding. The result is the idea of revelation that can be viewed as the ‘self-adaptation’ of God to humanity (anthropomorphism), so that people can understand who God is. Therefore, there are two different types of knowledge of God: the one that only God knows and the other one, which can be understood by humans. The first point of view discussed by Harun regarding that knowledge about God is the teaching in Hinduism: Para Brahman (or Nirguna Brahman) and Apara Brahman (or Saguna Brahman). The first refers to the higher Brahman. Man cannot understand this Brahman because He is transcendent and absolute. The second one refers to the lower Brahman. This Brahman can be understood because of His lower and less refined being. In discussing kebatinan, Harun notes briefly that there is a teaching about the transcendence of God as tan kena kinaya ngapa. It means that God cannot be described. As humans, we cannot know what God is like. God’s being remains inaccessible to human logic. In my view, it really is a pity that Harun only mentioned the understanding of the transcendence of God and did not mention the concept of Semar. For the Javanese, who pay more attention to immanent ways of approaching the Divine, Semar is really the image of an ‘immanent’ God. Harun, then, explains Islamic views about the essence of God. In short, the point of his explanation is that the ulama emphasize this phrase about God: Billa kaif wa laa tasbeh, which can be translated as: “We cannot say anything about God’s essence. We cannot compare God to anything.”

After discussing those arguments for the existence of God and some religious traditions’ points of view on the essence of God, Harun makes the important statement that his purpose in discussing them was to show that Christian theology is different. Accordingly, he accentuates this statement by presenting some biblical points of view about God. By

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63 As we know, Plato posed the notion of the transcendence of God because of his disagreement with Greek religion for depicting their gods in the form of human beings or having human attributes and displaying human emotions like jealousy, hatred, or love. Plato’s Demiurge in the Timaeus and his explanation in the dialogue The Republic (in which he particularly opposed the attribution of human failings to divine beings) are notable examples of his thinking.
64 Harun Hadiwijono, Iman Kristen, 1992, pp. 78-79.
65 Ibid., pp. 75-76. Unfortunately Harun did not give any further explanation about who Brahman is for the lay reader who does not have any knowledge of Hinduism. This is important because people are sometimes confused about the difference between Brahma and Brahman.
66 Harun Hadiwijono, Iman Kristen, 1992, p. 79.
doing so, in my opinion, Harun makes the Bible normative67 above all the arguments discussed. He neither puts biblical concepts in dialogue with concepts found in other religious traditions nor ‘excavates’ such concepts to enrich the Christian understanding of God. For me, this is not a sign of an attempt at a contextual theology. Referring to Exodus 3:13-15, Harun explains that the God who sent Moses to liberate Israel reveals Himself as Ehyèh asyèr Ehyèh, which can be understood as God whose presence is recognized in His acts of liberating Israel from slavery and bringing them to the Promised Land. God is the sekutu of Israel.68 Here, we have to be aware that there is a danger in using this term since the word sekutu strongly connotes a close association of nations or other groups formed to advance common interests, especially in a battle, to defeat their opponent. As noted before, it is not impossible that Harun was strongly influenced by the ambiance of the Second World War and the Independence War in depicting the alliance of God and humankind against an opponent. The danger is that anything that has nothing to do with God or Israel will be easily considered an opponent. It is also not impossible that, as Hoekema says, Harun was influenced by Karl Barth.69 As we know, in his Church Dogmatics, Barth has an extensive section on “Creation and Covenant [Bund]”.70 Unfortunately, Hoekema does not discuss this matter any further. My discussions with Hoekema, however, lead me to conclude that he is not fully convinced that Harun used the word sekutu in a confrontational way. Hoekema says that, for Barth, God is the ally of humans, and humans should be allies of God; here the Hebrew background is the word brith (covenant), which has affinity with the Greek term koinonia in the New Testament. I am fully aware that the idea of brith (covenant) has long been one of the main ways in which the biblical encounter between humankind and God is understood. Even more, this term has been especially popular among today’s political theorists with an interest in Scripture who have tried to marshal the biblical term for contemporary political applications. But these attempts have often only clouded our understanding of the biblical concept of covenant. Invariably, they employ anachronistic political theories or much later understandings about what the word means to interpret the term and then read it back into the biblical text.

Daniel J. Elazar offers a good example of the problem. Seeking to mine the term for its contemporary implications, Elazar characterizes a covenant, following Max Weber,71 as a bonding agent among members of the Israelite community. Yet the covenant in the Bible is

67 In a way similar to Barth, Harun speaks about the Bible as our only normative (though written by humans) witness. He did so already in chapter I. See Harun Hadiwijono, Iman Kristen, 1992, pp. 41-44, 54, 67-70.
70 See section 41 of Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics, volume III/1, T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1958.
between God and Israel, and any definition that is not built around that relationship must necessarily miss the point.⁷² In short, it is an exclusive relationship. Therefore, I agree with Singgih who says that Harun begins with an assumption, which was widely accepted in the 1960s and 1970s, that places the Bible in direct confrontation with the world.⁷³ Precisely many arguments or points of view from other religious traditions discussed by Harun, as explained above, are viewed as different from the Christian faith. Therefore, in my opinion, the term sekutu only describes the alliance of God and Israel to defeat them because they are considered enemies. It is dangerous.

Now, discussing my doubt concerning Budyanto’s opinion that Iman Kristen is an attempt at a functional-contextual dogmatics, I would like to refer to Banawiratma.⁷⁴ He states clearly that such a functional-contextual attempt is one that does theology based explicitly on human experience and the faith experience (or in other words, on a contextual experience), aiming at a better comprehension of the faith. Banawiratma also emphasizes that there are reasons why theology necessarily needs functional-contextual attempts. First, the understanding of the Christian faith has always taken place in a certain situation, atmosphere, or culture. The Word of God meets people in a particular context. Comprehending our faith should take the context in which we live into account. Furthermore, this tangible context we are talking about is not merely an ‘object’ for the Bible. In fact, it is an active ‘subject.’ All the human values within the context are needed to enrich our comprehension of our faith.⁷⁵ I am not sure why Budyanto concludes that Harun’s theology becomes more contextual⁷⁶ when Harun confronts other religious traditions either with his own opinion or with a biblical point of view. Because he only presents arguments that differ from the Christian faith, he closes off any possibilities of learning from the other to understand one’s own faith better. Therefore, Harun is actually trapped in his own situation, regardless of whether he liberates himself from the traditional model of dogmatics and moves towards a functional-contextual model. For me, Harun is in between the two.

I conclude that Harun was not aware of the danger of depicting the relation between God and humankind by the term sekutu. In short, it is indeed original and unique but

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⁷⁴ Banawiratma, “Teologi Fugisonal-Teologi Kontekstual,” in Eka Darmaputera (ed.), Konteks Berteologi di Indonesia, 1991, p. 51. Banawiratma is a Catholic Javanese theologian. He holds a doctorate in theology from the University of Innsbruck, Austria. A director of the Centre for Research and Training of Contextual Theology, Banawiratma is presently teaching Christology and Social Theology at the faculty of theology of Sanata Dharma University, and at the postgraduate program at the Faculty of Theology of UKDW, Indonesia.
nonetheless brings many problems that are not even being realized by Christians in Indonesia. An example of this is the use of the term *persekutuan*, which is usually translated as ‘fellowship.’ *Persekutuan Pemuda* is simply translated ‘Youth Fellowship,’ whereas the term *persekutuan*, from the word *sekutu*, means ‘alliance,’ not fellowship. So it should be ‘Youth Alliance.’ Another example is the name change of Dewan Gereja-gereja di Indonesia (Council of Indonesian Churches) to Persekutuan Gereja-gereja di Indonesia, which is still translated as ‘Council of Indonesian Churches.’ It should be ‘Alliance of Indonesian Churches.’ This alteration, recognized or not, indicates a lack of awareness of the faith as if, as in a *persekutuan*, Indonesian Christians and God are on one side in a battle to defeat anything that is different from them.

2. **Christian Faith and the Javanese culture**

It is undeniable that *Iman Kristen* gives extensive explanations about what *kebatinan* says on certain topics regarding God or humankind or the relationship between them. Unfortunately, there is no explanation for how the Christian faith deals with *slametan*, for example, the Javanese version of what is perhaps the world’s most common religious ritual: the communal feast.77 Obviously, in his explanation Harun emphasizes only the mystical part of Javanese culture since *kebatinan* is Javanese mysticism. But Javanese culture is more than *kebatinan*. *Kejawen* is the heart of Javanese culture and belongs to an ‘enchanted’ way of life that does not distinguish between the sacred and the profane. As a system of knowledge, *kejawen* is singularly elaborate, with a cosmology, mythology, and mystical teachings that give rise to a particular anthropology or ideas about the nature of man and society that, in turn, inform ethics and morality while permeating tradition and style of life.78

*Slametan* is the heart of the Javanese religious life.79 For the native Javanese, since this ritual is part of their life, *slametan* is always regarded as an indigenous ritual. Geertz also affirms this fact when he admits that *slametan* is a ‘core ritual’ in Javanese culture. Mark R. Woodward, however, rejects this notion80 and argues that *slametan* is Islamic. His argument is based on his assumption that *slametan* is a ritual complex similar to the ritual meals and distribution of blessed food that are so common in the *Hadith*. It is not primarily a village

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79 Both the Javanese themselves and outsiders have identified this ritual as the core of Javanese religious life. Even before Geertz did his extensive research, many outsiders had noted this Javanese ritual. H. De Leeuw, for example, said that, in Java, “no man may take an important step in his life without a celebration called *slametan*.” See H. De Leeuw, *Crossroads of the Java Sea*, Garden City Publishing, New York, 1931, p. 141. See also J.S. Philips, *Coconut Quests: The Story of a Beach in the Solomon Islands and the East Indies*, William Brendon & Sons, London, 1940, p. 102, which says: “In fact, at every conceivable crisis of the household or village’s existence, *moesti ada slametan* (must have a *slametan*).”
ritual since it is performed mostly in mosques, at pesantren (traditional Muslim boarding schools), and at the graves of the saints and in the homes of traditional santri. But, more importantly, it is central to the imperial cult. Its religious and social goals are defined in terms of Islamic mystical theory, i.e. that slamet is a social and psychological transformation of the sufi notion of peace, blessing, and tranquility. In my opinion, Woodward’s remarks are heavily coloured by his defence of the validity of Javanese Islam as a ‘local Islam’ with its roots in the sufi tradition, which is very much alive in the royal court. Consequently, slametan should be seen from this angle. Woodward then concludes that slametan is originally Islamic, especially the Indo-Iranian one. But this argument neglects the fact that the slametan that was observed is simply slametan performed in the Islamic way. Among the Javanese, the slametan ritual is performed extensively in many areas of life, including their rice-planting activity: for sowing seed, bed-seeding, planting, the time of cleaning up the grass after two weeks, when the paddy is ripe, before the harvest time, and at the time when the dry rice is ready to be stored in the barn. Therefore, the Javanese treat rice with slametan similar to the way they treat the human being: from the time when one is born until one thousand days after one’s death. Each stage of rice cultivation was marked by slametan as a religious rite to invoke the spirit (or rice goddess) and to unite the people. The relationship between the rice-planting activities and slametan is still very noticeable among the Javanese. This aspect seems to be missing from Woodward’s treatment. His notion about the royal slametan, which was carried out at the garebeg maulud as insurance for agricultural fertility and as the royal cult model for village rituals is not accurate since the nature of those two are different. Garebeg Maulud ensures the prosperity of the whole kingdom by re-enacting the mystical power of the king and the pusaka (heirlooms) of the kingdom. It is held on the birthday of the prophet Muhammad. One of the most important village rituals, the bersih desa (cleansing the village from evil spirits), is intended to prepare the way to welcome rice as the incarnation of dewi sri (the goddess of rice) to be stored in the barn and to thank her for the good harvest. That the mosque has become one of the prominent places for public slametan as in the case of garebeg maulud, is, in my opinion, a later process that began after the villages embraced Islam. Therefore, it should not be interpreted as a way of copying the royal cult but as the process by which village life subsists. In seeing the closeness of slametan to the Javanese life cycle as

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82 This is a religious practice found in a rice-growing agricultural community. Similar religious activity can also be seen among Japanese rice-growers. See Inokuchi Shōji, “Folk Beliefs,” in the Kodansha Encyclopaedia of Japan, Kodansha Ltd., Tokyo, 1983, p. 309.
well as rice planting, we have to consider, as Geertz says, that *slametan* is at the core of the Javanese belief that existed before and after Islam appeared in Java. Javanese Muslims consider it a Muslim ritual and are gradually abandoning *slametan* in connection with the cultivation of rice. The reason is probably that most Muslims who converted the native people were traders and growing rice was certainly not very common in Middle Eastern culture; thus, there is no reference to it in either the *Hadith* or the Qur’an. The Javanese Muslims continue to observe *slametan* for the human life cycle because this ritual tradition is able to accommodate this aspect of Islamic mysticism. Among the Javanese Muslims, therefore, *slametan* should be seen as the contextualization of the Islamic faith within the Javanese context.  

As for Javanese Christians, as the core of the Javanese religious life, *slametan* has posed a classic dilemma because their religious life as Christians has been influenced by the colonial mentality and the theological narrowness of the vision of the missionaries in the past who trained Javanese Christians in Western culture. For several decades, Javanese Christians were forbidden even to participate in the *slametan* because it would ‘poison’ their Christian faith. To conduct *slametan* in their house was considered to be more ‘poisonous’ for them. The result is that Javanese Christians have been gradually excluded in one way or another, from their community, the place in which they live. Therefore, it is, indeed, a very crucial issue for Javanese Christians. Yet Harun did not give any response to this issue. My rejection of Budyanto’s view that *Iman Kristen* is a functional-contextual dogmaties is not without grounds. The work has no function for the Javanese Christians because it says nothing about how the Christian faith deals with their local culture, their context. The problem still remains.

86 Cf. Masdar Hilmi, *Islam and Javanese Acculturation: Textual and Contextual Analysis of the Slametan Ritual*, MA Thesis, McGill University, Montreal, 1999, p. 1-2. Even though its theological position is still disputable, *slametan* remains a religio-cultural ritual that accommodates basic Islamic values to the local culture. As a ceremony marking the most important passages in life, it tends to be a strong unifying factor in Javanese society. This debate can be traced in the historical accounts of the development of Indonesian, especially Javanese, Islam. The fact that *slametan* has been and still is a point of dispute between the modernist and the traditionalist (represented by the *nahdlatul ulama*) does not diminish the importance of *slametan* in the structure of Javanese religious culture. The first group, comprised of members of the *Muhammadiyah*, contends, in keeping with its modernist outlook, that *slametan* is not Islamic and should, therefore, be eliminated from Islamic teaching. *Slametan*, much to their dismay, is closely tied to the *abangan* (nominal) Muslim philosophy of life, which encourages belief in ‘non-Islamic’ spirits and other superstitions regarding propitious and unlucky days and numbers considered by an integral part of Islamic ritual and a valid interpretation of Islamic Sufi doctrine. On this debate, see Howard M. Federspiel, *Persatuan Islam: Islamic Reform in Twentieth Century Indonesia*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 1970, pp. 71-74; Cf. James L. Peacock, *Muslim Puritans: Reformist Psychology in Southeast Asian Islam*, University of California Press, California, 1978, p. 44; Cf. Ahmad Haris, “Innovation and Tradition in Islam: A Study on Bid‘ah as an Interpretation of the Religion in the Indonesian Experience,” PhD Dissertation, Temple University, Philadelphia, 1998, pp. 247-263. 

87 *Komisi Adat-Istiadat GKJ*, at the Synod in 1967 in Purworejo, reported that the Javanese Christian’s life is (still) a masquerade with traditional culture. Therefore, the GKJ Synod asserted that “semua upacara yang masih mengandung kepercayaan lama dilarang dan ditiadakan” (all rituals containing old beliefs are forbidden and dismissed). See H. Purnomo dan M. Suprihadi Sastrospono (eds.), *Benih yang tumbuh dan berkembang di tanah Jawa*, TPK, Yogyakarta, 1986, pp. 135-140, especially 139.
It really is a pity that Harun did not mention *slametan* at all when explaining the Eucharist, considering the ‘similarity’ between them (at least as a common religious ritual: a communal feast). I do not know whether it was because he did not realize it or simply ignored it. Here he really is a traditionalist! In my opinion, addressing the issue of *slametan* when explaining Eucharist would have been a good opportunity to respond to this core aspect of Javanese religious life, especially since it is a very crucial issue for Javanese Christians. A very good example of addressing the issue of *slametan* by connecting it with the Eucharist can be found in the dissertation by Aristarchus Sukarto, the former rector of UKDW, who was once one of Harun’s students. Sukarto makes a very good proposal for the GKJ to contextualize and to communicate the Gospel to its community by witnessing to Christ through the Eucharist. It deals with *slametan* as the core of Javanese religious life. Sukarto concludes that seeing that the Javanese are a community that emphasizes the affective aspect of life and the commonality of eating, as shown in their *slametan* ritual, the Eucharist should then become a symbol of the identity of the GKJ on the one hand, and the expression of its faith communicable to its community on the other. The Javanese worldview, which sees reality as a totality, does not separate the role of food in daily life from its religious roles. *Badan wadag* (body and other visible things) are not separate from *jiwa/roh* (soul/spirit). Food and human life are closely intertwined. Thus, contextualizing the Gospel through the Eucharist will touch the affective aspect of the Javanese life, and will provide a point of departure for a deeper acceptance of the Gospel.

Another crucial issue for Javanese Christians is dealing with how they address Jesus. More than a hundred years before Harun published *Iman Kristen*, there were lay Javanese evangelists who began using cultural titles to address Jesus. Among them were Tunggul Wulung who addressed Jesus as *Ratu Adil* (Just King, a messianic figure in Javanese religious thought), and Sadrach Surapranata who called Jesus *Guru Sejati* (true guru, a distinguished and invulnerable Javanese guru), and *panutan* (example). Tunggul Wulung was born in the village of Bangsa-Juwana as *ngabdullah* (servant of God). He was also called Ibrahim, but his co-workers called him Tunggul Wulung (Tunggul Wulung was originally the name of a general who served as deputy to King Jayabaya of Kediri during the first half of the twelfth century. The name Tunggul Wulung might have been chosen because of the heroism of this general). In his early life, Tunggul Wulung lived as a hermit and as a *guru ngèlmu* (traditional Javanese religious teacher), practising asceticism and meditation on the slopes of Mount Kelud in East

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88 In his dissertation, *Man in the Present Javanese Mysticism*, Harun’s approach to Javanese mysticism and religious groups also omits any references to rituals like *slametan*.

Java. The nature of his introduction to Christianity is somewhat obscure since several differing versions exist. He did, however, have contact with various missionaries including P. Jansz, W. Hoezoo, C. Poensen, J.E. Jellesma, and F.I. Anthing. He studied under Jellesma, who baptized him in 1855. It is claimed that he once boasted, “In three days I can gain a greater number of people than Dutch missionaries do in 30 years.” Indeed, at the time of his death his church claimed 1,058 members, while P. Jansz claimed only 150 members after 35 years of work. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Sadrach Surapranata, was a pioneering Javanese evangelist who became the charismatic leader of Javanese Christians throughout Central Java. His community was a unique religious phenomenon since it was the product neither of the Indische Kerk mission nor of any of the other missionary organizations working in Central Java in the second half of the nineteenth century. Because the community was born from the womb of Javanese culture and was nurtured, developed, and shaped within this cultural framework by those who valued the Javanese cultural background, the result was, not surprisingly, an indigenous community with a Javanese cultural outlook. In my opinion, these efforts are very interesting and very important. But Harun did not mention any of them in *Iman Kristen*.

It is not without doubt that Harun, as noted above, was highly influenced in one way or another by the colonial mentality and the narrowness of the theological vision of the missionaries who trained members of the GKJ to think according to Western categories. I suspect Harun chose to avoid Sadrach’s explanation of Jesus, as going beyond the limits of true Christianity and against the principle of Calvinism (which had been the accusation made by Dutch missionaries against Sadrach). Consequently, in Chapter V of *Iman Kristen* Harun addresses Jesus in *Bahasa Indonesia* as *Juru Selamat* (Saviour), *Tuhan* (Lord), *Pengantara* (Mediator) and *Kristus* (Christ). These are common titles for Christians to use in addressing Jesus. I do not know why Harun did not even mention any possibilities of using cultural titles for addressing Jesus, as had been done for more than a hundred years past by lay Javanese evangelists. What is striking is the fact that Harun even refuses to address Jesus as *Guru Selamat*. His argument is based on his idea that Jesus brings salvation, instead of teaching about salvation (as a guru does). It is strange that, as a theologian who emphasizes


91 See Sutarman S. Partonadi, *Sadrach’s Community*, 1988, pp. 1-2. It should be noted that a long time before Banawiratma published his famous book: *Yesus Sang Guru* (Kanisius, Yogyakarta, 1977), there were attempts by Javanese Christians to address Jesus using local cultural titles.


93 Nowadays, *Ratu Adil* is still used by the Javanese Christians in hymns in the title: *Gusti Yesus Ratu Adil*. See Kidung Pasamunwan Kristen Jawa (Javanese Christian Church Hymnal), Yogyakarta, no. 139.

the Bible as our only source, Harun does not regard the Bible (especially the New Testament) as Jesus’ teaching about salvation. For me, Jesus is both Guru Selamat and Juru Selamat because he teaches us about salvation and brings us salvation. That is precisely why Sadrach addresses Jesus as Guru Sejati, a true guru who not only teaches us what salvation is but also brings salvation into our lives, even while we still live in this mundane reality.95 In my opinion, it is crucial for Javanese Christians to understand who Jesus is for them because the Trinitarian concept of God is somehow confusing. Moreover, for Javanese Christians, addressing God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit gives rise to a conflict with their Muslim neighbours who consider it blasphemy.96 It seems to me that Harun did not pay attention to the fact that Jesus is also mentioned in the Qur’an. It is important to note the phrase: Yesus Kristus ya Rohullah (Jesus Christ is the Spirit of God) which is parallel to the Muslim understanding in the Qur’an of Isa Rohullah (Jesus, Spirit of God). Van Akkeren prefers to translate this phrase as “Jesus Christ and the Spirit of God” because he wants this phrase to bear witness to the doctrine of the Trinity. The word Rohullah, however, is actually an additional name for Isa, taken from Qur’an 4:169: wa rohun minhu (spirit of Him, namely, God).97 In my opinion, as a surname, it explains who Isa is, thus His name means that he is the spirit of God. In the Javanese translation, kanga nduwewi rob saka Allah, the phrase means “he who has spirit from God.” This does not point to the third person of the Trinity. Thus, in accordance with a Muslim background, Yesus Kristus Ya Rohullah can be better translated as “Jesus Christ is the Spirit of God.” Actually, exploring the richness of Javanese culture would have brought Harun to a rich understanding of who Jesus is for Javanese Christians. It is a well-established practice in Java to address God as Gusti or Pangeran. Gusti means Lord.98 Pangeran literally means prince, but it is actually (at least according to Javanese thought; there is no linguistic evidence) derived from the word Pa-ngenger-an (Hiding Place or Refuge). In the past, Javanese people hardly met the king face to face. They usually met the son of the king, or the prince. If they had a problem, they would usually seek a hiding place or refuge from the king via his son, the prince. The prince is, so to speak, the representative of the king himself. In my opinion, there is a very strong correlation between Gusti-Pangeran and the biblical concept of Jesus, who is Lord as well as prince (understood as the representative of

96 For further reading on the conflict between Christians and Muslims in regard to the Trinitarian concept of God, see Bima Adi, Ide Monoteisme dalam Islam dan Relevansinya bagi Dialog Islam-Kristen, Widya Sari Press, Salatiga, 2005.
98 For more information on addressing God in Javanese, see Stuart Robson, “Speaking to God in Javanese,” in L’Homme 34, 1994, pp. 134-142.
God himself as well as a hiding place or refuge). God, for the Javanese, is their hiding place or refuge. Javanese Christians often use *Gusti* to address Jesus but rarely use *Pangeran* whereas it is appropriate and gives Javanese Christians a sense of who Jesus is for them in their own context.

For me, it is strange that, on some topics, Harun gives extensive explanations about (and references to) Javanese culture, but does not even mention a word about it in discussing other topics when there are opportunities to do so. It seems to me that, on the one hand, Harun takes every opportunity to confront other religious traditions as well as religions’ understandings when they differ from the Christian faith and, on the other hand, avoids confirming them when there are similarities, relations, or even relevancies between them and the Christian faith. Such a *modus operandi* is found in almost all chapters of *Iman Kristen*.

I agree with Eka Darmaputera who says that the problem is not to choose between the Christian faith and culture. Rather, the most important thing is how we understand the relation between them. The key to understanding the phrase *Christian faith and culture* lies in the word *and*, not merely *Christian faith or culture*. The function of *and* is, then, not to contrast Christian faith with culture in the sense of *madu dan racun* (honey and poison) but to show the strong and inseparable interconnection between them as in *ikan dan air* (fish and water). According to Darmaputera, faith gives *isi* (content) to culture, while culture gives *bentuk* (form) to faith. Therefore, faith without culture has no function. On the contrary, culture without faith has no meaningful substance.99

In conclusion, it is clear that Harun did not open the dialog between Christian faith and local culture widely and deeply. Going by Becker’s guidelines, Harun did not, in my view, respond contextually.100

3. The Christian Faith and Other Religions

It is interesting to note Harun’s claim that he wrote *Iman Kristen* popularly, unlike other dogmatic works, to reach non-Christian readers.101 Indeed, unlike previous dogmatics books, which have a Trinitarian structure,102 *Iman Kristen* is has a theocentrist structure.103 According

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102 1) God the Father, 2) Jesus Christ, and 3) Holy Spirit.

103 Harun basically composed *Iman Kristen* with the following structure: 1) God as Creator, 2) God as Saviour, and 3) God as Redeemer.
to Singgih, this is because Harun is responding to Islam as the majority religion. While Christians in Indonesia in general emphasize the Trinitarian nature of God, Harun explained God in, as Singgih says, Mono-Theocentrist terms. According to Singgih there was already a strong awareness of the context of Java when he was a student at Duta Wacana from 1972-1977. It was recognized that the context of Java is that of kejawen and Islam, and that experts such as Harun Hadiwijono studied these two religions seriously. The idea behind such study, of course, was to be able to defeat them and enable students to see what they call “the weaknesses of Kejawen and Islam.” Therefore, as Yewangoe said, even though Harun pays serious attention to other religions, there was no true dialogue with them. This, in my opinion, can be explained as follows.

As discussed above, the designation of the term sekutu to describe the relationship between God and humankind entails many problems as well as giving rise to the lack of awareness of the understanding of faith. The problems become more complex because the term *Tuhan adalah sekutu umat-Nya* is not understood in the sense that God is the ally of *umat manusia* (human beings) or humanity in general but only as the ally of *umat-Nya* (His flock). In other word, God is only the ally of Christians. It is an exclusive relation. As pointed out by Singgih, it seems that Harun held to the idea that dogmatics is nothing more than teaching about the relation between God and (Christian) ‘believers.’ This leads to a confrontational approach in Harun regarding the Christian faith and other religions. Even though Harun explained God in Mono-Theocentrist terms, the content of his explanation does not support his awareness of the context of Islam. On the one hand, Harun claimed to write *Iman Kristen* in a popular way, unlike other dogmatic works, to be read by people besides Christians (in this case Muslims, and this was shown in the Mono-Theocentrist structure in explaining God). On the other hand (with the designation of the term sekutu to describe the relation between God and humankind in the phrase *Tuhan adalah sekutu umat-Nya*), Harun claimed that this ‘one God’ relates only to a limited group of human beings, that is to *umat-Nya*, Christians. Singgih identified this idea and made an important remark about *Iman Kristen*. For Singgih, Harun does not give any place in *Iman Kristen* to discussing Christians as people who relate to others. Further, Singgih says that, unlike Karl Barth’s dogmatics, there are no ethical

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104 Islam emphasizes the *taw*hid (the oneness) of God.
implications in Harun’s dogmatics. In my opinion, it really is ironic that Harun, a Christian who should “love [his] neighbour as [him]self,” has a confrontational approach to adherents of other religions. In Bahasa Indonesia, the word neighbour in this command is sesamamu, which means ‘those who are like you.’ The problem is that in Indonesia (and other countries), the word ‘like’ here is often understood as referring to religious affiliation, to social status, or even to one’s cultural group. Therefore, those who do not belong to the same religion (are like one religiously), do not deserve to be loved. For me, this is the true root of many problems that have happened or are happening in the world, especially in Indonesia. People do not respect (and even hate) each other when they are not of the same religion, social status, or culture. As long as this view is maintained, there will be no peace in Indonesia. It seems to me that Harun was not aware of this danger. In my opinion, this is not what we would expect from a brilliant theologian like Harun.

In regard to this problem, B.F. Drewes gives us a very critical appraisal of Harun’s discussion of ‘man’ in the third chapter of Iman Kristen. Harun says that there are fundamental differences between Christianity’s and other religions’ ideas about humankind. In his conclusion concerning these fundamental differences, Harun insists that, unlike other religions, the Bible does not teach any kind of dichotomy or trichotomy of the human being. In Harun’s opinion, there is no division into two (body and soul) or three parts (body, soul, and spirit). But it is not clear to Drewes what Harun meant by ‘fundamental differences.’ Drewes, then, proposes that theologians in Indonesia investigate whether the differences meant by Harun really are fundamental. If there are any differences, then we also have to explore the similarities. In line with Drewes, Singgih asserts the need to strengthen shared commonalities between religions in Indonesia. He states that the context of Indonesia in this century is the polarization between religions, especially between Christianity and Islam. The influence of this polarization can be seen from the attempts on both sides to separate themselves from one another by asserting their identities, which have no similarities and even contradict one another. Therefore, Singgih highlights the significance of shared commonalities between them because shared commonalities will lead to communication. Without communication, it will be difficult (even impossible) to have a constructive and meaningful relation between religions. Singgih gives examples of shared commonalities by referring to the translation of the names of prominent figures in the Bible in Bahasa Indonesia: Daud is the

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109 Singgih, Iman dan Politik, 2000, p. 173. It is interesting to note that, as far as I know, there is no dogmatics text written by an Indonesian theologian that has ethical implications in the way Barth’s dogmatics does.


Arabic name for David, Yusuf the Arabic name for Joseph, etc. The Bible in Bahasa Indonesia also uses Allah for God (but with a different pronunciation than the Arabic version). Continuing in his comments on Harun, Drewes highlights that Christian dogmatics needs to be enriched by a deep discussion of Christians’ encounters with other religions so that Christians will be able to clearly recognize their identity (as well as their responsibility together with their fellow humans from different religions) in this world. I agree with Drewes because, in my opinion, it is strange that Harun himself was not aware that there are also fundamental differences between Christianity’s and other religions’ ideas about humankind and fundamental differences between Christians and adherents of other religions. Obviously, Harun places these two different things, ideas about humanity and human beings on a par, on the same level. We cannot treat our fellow human beings who are not Christians differently because of our differing concepts of humankind. Instead, we have to treat all human beings (regardless of their religion, social status, culture, or race) in the same way that we (as Christians) treat ourselves. For me, to “love one’s neighbour as oneself” should be practised by all Christians and even ll human beings. Referring to Yewangoe again, it is true that Harun pays serious attention to other religions, but there is no true dialogue with them. It is impossible to have a true dialogue when there is no equality between both sides. Therefore, the serious attention paid by Harun to other religions is, to borrow Singgih’s remark, nothing more than an attempt to study them in order to overcome them and to enable Christians to see the weaknesses of other religions.

Another important issue Harun discusses, which is closely related to the relationship between the Christian faith and other religions, is predestination. In the third section of the fifth chapter of Iman Kristen, Harun discusses theological debates about predestination in church history since the beginning of the 5th century, looking at the views of Augustine of Hippo, Pelagius, John Calvin, Jacobus Arminius, and Karl Barth.

Harun argues that Augustine identifies the consequences of the fall on human nature. Unfortunately, he does not give a thorough explanation of Augustine’s arguments. Harun states quite quickly that, according to Augustine, after the fall of Adam humankind is now contaminated by sin and can only be redeemed through grace. But not all human beings will be redeemed. This grace is only for those who are elected by God. Their salvation is predestined before they are born. In my understanding, Augustine states that, although human nature was certainly originally created blameless and without any fault (vitium), the

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human nature with which each one of us is now that of Adam, is not healthy. All the good things it has, such as its conception, life, senses, and mind, it has from God, its creator and maker. But the weakness that darkens and disables these good natural qualities, as a result of which that nature needs enlightenment and healing, did not come from the blameless maker but from ‘original sin’ (ex originali peccato), which was committed through free will (liberium arbitrum). For this reason, our guilty nature merits a just penalty. If we are now a new creature in Christ, we are still children of wrath by nature, like everyone else. But God, who is rich in mercy, saves human beings on account of his great love without which neither infants nor adults can be saved. This salvation is not bestowed as a reward for merits but is given freely (gratiae), which is why it is called grace (gratia). For this reason, those who are not made free by that blood are justly condemned because they are not without sin, whether derived from original sin or acquired by evil actions. Augustine here develops the idea that predestination involves God withholding or making available, according to his divine will, the means by which salvation becomes possible. Augustine stresses that the divine judgement that determines who will be saved is beyond human understanding. This is the predestination of the saints and nothing else: the foreknowledge and preparation of the benefits of God, whereby those who are set free are most certainly set free. And where are the rest left by the just judgement of God, except in that mass of perdition in which the inhabitants of Tyre and Sidon were left? They would have believed if they had seen the wonderful signs of Christ. But because it was not given to them to believe, they were not given the means to believe (quiniam ut crederent, non erat eis datum, etiam unde crederent est negatum). On this basis, it seems that certain people naturally have a divine gift of understanding by which they may be moved to faith if they hear the words or see the signs that are adapted to their minds (si congrua suis mentibus). Nonetheless, if, by virtue of a divine judgement that is beyond us, these people have not been predestined by grace and removed from the mass of perdition, then they will not have any contact with either these divine words or deeds that would have led them to believe if they had heard or seen them.\footnote{See McGrath’s interpretation of Augustine-interpretation in McGrath, The Christian Theology Reader, 1995, pp. 218-219.}

Harun, then, explains Pelagius’ confrontational approach to Augustine’s arguments. In short, Harun says that Pelagius rejects Augustine’s arguments on original sin. For Pelagius, humans are born as clean as white paper and are therefore able to merit their salvation, which is diametrically opposed to Augustine’s view, placing considerable emphasis on the role of human works and playing down the idea of divine grace.

As a Calvinist, Harun then presents John Calvin’s views on predestination because this doctrine is of major importance in Calvin. In his view, Calvin declares that some people are
predestined to eternal life and others to eternal death. This doctrine, known as ‘double
predestination,’ affirms that only those who are elected to salvation will, in fact, be saved.
According to Harun, Calvin considered the will of God’s eternal election a “keputusan yang
mengerikan” (horrible decision). But, Harun says, Calvin could not teach anything other than
what is taught in the Bible.\textsuperscript{117} Actually, in his \textit{Institutes} Calvin states that many find this a
puzzling subject in that it seems to be nothing less than capricious and in that, of the whole
human race, some should be predestined to salvation, other to destruction. It will become
clear in the following discussion, however, that such confusion is needless. In any case, the
complexity of this matter reveals both the usefulness of this doctrine and also the very sweet
fruit it brings. We shall never be clearly persuaded, as we ought to be, that our salvation
flows from God’s free mercy until we come to know his eternal election, which casts light on
God’s grace by this comparison: he does not indiscriminately adopt all to the hope of
salvation but gives to some what he denies to others. Predestination, by which God adopts
some to the hope of life and sentences others to eternal death, is not denied by anyone who
wishes to be considered pious. But there are many, especially those who make
foreknowledge its cause, who surround it with all kinds of petty objections. Both doctrines
are indeed located within God, but subjecting one to the other is absurd. In attributing
foreknowledge to God we mean that all things have always been and always will be seen by
him simultaneously; there is nothing future or past to his knowledge, but all things are
present – present in such a way that he not only perceives them as ideas, like things are
present to us in our thoughts or memory, but he truly sees them and discerns them as things
before him. And this foreknowledge is extended throughout the universe to every creature.
We call predestination God’s eternal decree by which he determined by himself what he
willed to become of each human being. For all are not created in equal conditions (\textit{non enim
pari conditione creantur omnes}); rather, eternal life is foreordained for some and eternal
damnation for others. Therefore, as any person has been directed (\textit{conditius}) to one or other
of this ends, we speak of him or her as predestined to life or to death.\textsuperscript{118} For me, it is
interesting that, after explaining Calvin’s view, Harun says that Calvin is “lebih berani” (more
audacious) than Augustine. He does not give further explanation of this, but I have the
impression (or suspicion) that this has to do with how Calvin declares that some people are
predestined to eternal life and others to eternal death. It seems to me that Harun ‘likes’ this
idea and was even influenced by this idea in developing his theology in regard to the
relationship of the Christian faith to other religions. We will discuss this below. Let us

\textsuperscript{117} Harun Hadiwijono, \textit{Iman Kristen}, 1992, p. 290.
\textsuperscript{118} It should be noted that Calvin draws a clear distinction between ‘predestination’ and ‘foreknowledge.’
See P. Barth and W. Niesel (ed.), “Institutes (Ill.xxxi.1,5),” in \textit{Joannis Calvini: Opera Selecta}, Kaiser, Munich,
1931.
continue with Harun’s explanation of Jacobus Arminius’ and Karl Barth’s views on predestination.

In short, Harun explains that Arminius rejects Calvin’s view. For Arminius, humans still retain free will after the fall of Adam, and this free will can be used to accept or to reject God’s grace. Those who accept God’s grace will be saved. Those who reject God’s grace will not. For Arminius, predestination is simply that God knows from eternity who will accept and who will reject God’s grace.

At the end of the discussion on predestination, Harun explains Karl Barth’s views, which are centered in Christ. According to Harun, the debates about predestination in history are not far from the topic of the relation between human free will and God’s free will. There were those who emphasized God’s free will (Augustine and Calvin), and those who emphasized human free will (Pelagius and Arminius). In these debates, Harun says, Karl Barth avoids emphasizing either (human free will or God’s free will). For Barth, predestination has two aspects – election and rejection – and both have been accomplished in Christ. In Jesus Christ, God decides to elect humans who ought to have been rejected because of their sin. In the end of the explanation, Harun comments that even though he disagrees with Barth on some aspects of his views (unfortunately, he does not state which) he does state that Barth gives direction here on how we should address this subject properly.

As usual, Harun does not give any detailed information here about the sources he uses to present Barth’s view. From his *Church Dogmatics*, however, we know that Barth explains that, in its simplest and most comprehensive form, the doctrine of predestination consists, then, in the assertion that divine predestination is the election of Jesus Christ. The concept of election, however, has a double reference: to the elector and the elected. Therefore, the name of Jesus Christ carries within itself this double reference: the One called by this name is both very God and very man. Thus, the simplest form of the doctrine may be divided at once into the two assertions that Jesus Christ is the electing God and that he is also the elected man. In this passage, Barth explains that insofar as he is the electing God, we must obviously – and above all – ascribe to him the active determination of electing. It is not that he does not elect as man: i.e., elect God in faith. But this election can only follow His prior election, and that means that it follows the divine electing that is the basic and proper determination of his existence. Insofar as he is man, the passive determination of election is also and necessarily proper to him. It is true, of course, that even as God he is elected: the Elect of His Father. But because, as the Son of the Father, he has no need of any special election, we must add at once that he is the Son of God elected in his unity with humankind, and in fulfilment of
God’s covenant with humankind. Election, then, is primarily the divine determination of the existence of Jesus Christ and election (being elected) the human.\textsuperscript{119}

Let us now return to Harun’s comment (that Calvin is “lebih berani” than Augustine). My impression (or suspicion) is that Harun likes the idea of Calvin’s double predestination, especially the second aspect: “some people are predestined to eternal death.” Both Augustine and Calvin agree that some people are predestined to eternal life. They differ in that Calvin states not only that some people are predestined to eternal life but also that others are predestined to eternal death. In my opinion, by saying that Calvin is “lebih berani” than Augustine, Harun implicitly refers to the idea that non-Christians (Christians are predestined to eternal life) are predestined to eternal death. For Harun, this is really an audacious view, especially in regards to the relationship of the Christian faith to other religions. The problem is that Harun does not state clearly whether he approves or not of Calvin’s audacious view. But even though Harun states that Barth gives direction on how we should address this subject (predestination) properly, it seems to me that Harun is inclined to adopt Calvin’s view. We can see this from his statements that “Keselamatan hanya berdasarkan kasih karunia, bukan amal” (salvation is based only on God’s grace, not good deeds),\textsuperscript{120} and “menjadi sekutu Allah hanya bersandarkan pemilihan” (being an ally of God is based only on God’s eternal election).\textsuperscript{121} If, as discussed above, Harun claimed that God relates only to a limited group of humans, i.e., \textit{umat-Nya}, Christians, then only Christians are elected or predestined to eternal life and that non-Christians are not elected. In my opinion, this is exactly why Harun recognizes the fact that in the Bible (for example in Psalm 139:16, Acts 17:26, Ephesians 1:11), other possibilities are mentioned regarding \textit{takdir} (the Islamic term for predestination) and so on, which are closer to the Qur’an and the \textit{Hadith}.\textsuperscript{122} If we are not clear on this part, it seems that Harun confirms other religions’ understanding and that Harun is one step further in his move towards a functional-contextual theology. In my opinion, however, Harun uses this part to support his affinity for Calvin’s double predestination, especially the second part: “some people are predestined to eternal death.” Harun even refers to the Bible (Romans 9:10-19) to reinforce his idea that “menjadi sekutu Allah hanya bersandarkan pemilihan.”\textsuperscript{123}

Precisely Harun’s claim that he formulated \textit{Iman Kristen} in a popular way, unlike other dogmatic works, to be read by people besides Christians, only shows his idea that


\textsuperscript{120} \textit{Amal} is an Arabic loanword, which may mean ‘good or notable work,’ but it can also be used for ‘act’ in general, e.g., \textit{sedikit bicara banyak amal} (little talk but lots of action) or \textit{amal baik} (good deeds). See Alan M. Stevans and A. Ed. Schmidgall-Tellings, \textit{A Comprehensive Indonesian-English Dictionary}, 2004, p. 27.

\textsuperscript{121} Harun Hadiwijono, \textit{Iman Kristen}, 1992, p. 298.

\textsuperscript{122} \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 286-287.

\textsuperscript{123} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 288
Christianity is different from other religions and has consequences for how the dialogue between Christian faith and those religions takes place. In my opinion, dialogue should contain, in balance, self-appreciation and self-criticism. In *Iman Kristen*, unfortunately, Harun only emphasized the first and neglected the second.

D. Concluding Remarks

The fact that there are no more recent systematic theologies written by Indonesians, especially Javanese authors, and that Harun’s works are reprinted again and again, shows us that churches and theologians in Indonesia, especially in Java, are not yet ready to change their theological positions. Therefore, as I intend to do in this study, it is urgent that we propose a framework for the GKJ to formulate a contextual systematic theology in the contemporary Javanese context. Here, systematic theology is not necessarily understood as the attempts of humans to master or to have control over God (as many did after the Enlightenment era). We have to be fully aware that we know very little about God. Any attempt at systematizing our knowledge of God will only make sense as long as it starts from and returns to our own context. It does not mean that contextual theology needs a systematic theology. On the contrary, it is systematic theology that needs contextual theology.

Indeed, Harun Hadiwijono’s *Iman Kristen* is an impressive work of systematic theology. Nonetheless, for me, *Iman Kristen* (as a systematic theology work written in Indonesia, especially in the Javanese context in which the Javanese Christians are doing theology) is not a work of contextual systematic theology. It is, more or less, a ‘product’ that indicates the influence of colonial mentality and the narrowness of the theology of the missionaries’ vision in the past. Such a systematic theology is inadequate for the Javanese Christians’ context. I assert this, with reference to the Commission on World Missions and Evangelism of the World Council of Churches that met in Bangkok under the theme “Salvation Today,” which underscored the view that proper theology is a reflection on the experience of the Christian community in a particular place at a particular time. Therefore, it will necessarily be a contextual theology; it will be a relevant and living theology that refuses to be easily universalized because it speaks to and out of a particular situation.\(^{125}\)

\(^{124}\) In this research, the focus is on Protestant dogmatics; thus, no Catholic theologies are listed.

Chapter IV. The Principal Teachings of the GKJ

A. Introduction

1. The Origin of the GKJ

The GKJ is one of five Protestant churches that concentrate on ministry among the Javanese people. As I mentioned early in the introduction to this study, the GKJ, like other Javanese churches, was neither originally nor primarily the result of the work of a foreign missionary society. Such work, which was based on a different culture was not always smooth. Tensions emerged. Bühlmann remarks that the nineteenth century missionaries in Asia generally looked down on Asian culture as a culture that could contribute to the danger of syncretism. As was common in the mission field in Asia, the early Javanese Christians were always seen as people not able to demonstrate the right faith: they were syncretistic, lacking in Christian knowledge, and not willing to abandon old customs. This is the stamp given by nearly all missionaries working in Java to the Javanese Christian community of Coolen in East Java, of Tunggul Wulung from North-Central Java, and especially Sadrach’s community in South-Central Java.

The ‘formation’ of the GKJ began with W. Hoezoo’s baptism of nine Javanese people in South-Central Java, in Banyumas, in 1858. These baptisms were performed in Semarang, since Hoezoo was not given permission by the government to work in places other than Semarang. In 1863, Aart Vermeer baptized about 40 people who had been evangelized by a Javanese Christian called Laban. By 1868 the number of South-Central Javanese Christians (Banyumas, Probolinggo and Bagelen) was about 470. Yet most of them, as C. Guillot observed, were the result of evangelism undertaken by Indo-Europeans and Javanese individuals. After Sadrach and his friends became fully active, the number of converts increased rapidly.

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1 Most books dealing with the Indonesian churches mention only four churches serving the Javanese people: the GKJ, the GKJW (Gereja Kristen Jawi Wetan; the East Java Christian Church), the GJKTU (Gereja Kristen Jawa Tengah Utara; the Christian Church of North Central Java), and the GITJ (Gereja Injili Tanah Jawa (the Java Evangelical Christian Church). The first three are rooted in the Reformed tradition, and the last one in the Mennonite tradition. Beginning in 1981, however, the GKJ in Sumatra became an autonomous church with its own synod. See Akta Sinode GKJ (The Official Record of the GKJ’s General Assembly) XVI, Salatiga, 1981, p. 8. This autonomy was confirmed in the 18th general assembly of the GKJ in 1987, so that now there is also the GKSBS (Gereja Kristen Sumatra Bagian Selatan; The Christian Church of South Sumatra). See Akta Sinode GKJ XVIII, Taman Pustaka Kristen, Yogyakarta, 1987, pp. 64-65.


6 J.D. Wolterbeek, Babad Zending ing Tanah Jawi, de Boer, Purwokerto, 1939, pp. 90-99.

7 Guillot, Kiai Sadrach, 1985, pp. 20-21.
T. Müller-Krüger, citing statistics recorded by missionary Jacob Wilhelm says that by 1889 there were 21 congregations and about 3000 Javanese had been baptized. By 1894, this community had grown to 6374. The important role of the Javanese Christians and Indo-Europeans who were comfortable with Javanese culture in the early period of Javanese Christianity is probably the reason why only a small number (about 150 people) remained aligned with the NGZV when this missionary board expelled Sadrach and his community in 1892. Thus, many of the missionaries of the ZGKN who had to continue the NGZV’s work after 1894 said that they inherited nothing or only stone ruins from the NGZV. The ZGKN’s complaint that the NGZV’s work was a total failure is a fair one. They had to work hard for another 30 years to gather the same number of people that the previous Sadrach community had had. This consumed not only a considerable amount of time but also a great deal of human energy and finance.

Under the tutelage of the ZGKN, the South-Central Javanese Christian Community became an independent church in 1932 and was called the GKJTS (Gereja-gereja Kristen Jawa Tengah Selatan; Christian Churches in South-Central Java), and adopted the confession and church order of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (Gereformeerde Kerken). After World War II, in 1949, the GKJTS and the Javanese Churches in North-Central Java united for a short period, a union that, for many reasons, would last for only about 4 years. Probably because of this, the GKJTS changed its name by dropping the word selatan (south) and became the GKJT (Gereja-gereja Kristen Jawa Tengah). In 1958, responding to the fact that this church also embraced Javanese churches in South Sumatra, the General Assembly of the GKJT decided to change its name again by dropping the word tengah (central), to become the Gereja-gereja Kristen Jawa or the GKJ.

2. The GKJ’s Identity as a Church of the Heidelberg Catechism

Since its emergence as a union of independent churches in 1931, the GKJ has never used the term Reformed (Gereformeerd) as a part of its name. For this reason, J.A.C. Rullmann denies the notion that Javanese Christian Churches are nothing more than the Gereformeerde Kerken (Reformed Churches) in Java; rather, they are the Christian Churches in Java. Of course, the

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10 Wolterbeek, Babad Zending, 1939, p. 132.
12 Ibid., p. 261.
15 See Akta Sinode GKJ XVIII, Taman Pustaka Kristen, Yogyakarta, 1958, article 64.
GKJ was exactly the same as the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands. Yet this does not mean that this church does not express that Reformed identity in its church order, confession, and liturgies.16

In its earliest period, the GKJ was intended to be an independent church based on the church order of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands.17 The most notable feature of this is its presbyterial structure. Because of this, it is not very surprising that, when the GKJ synod was formed on 12 November 1931, it took the Heidelberg Catechism as its confession.18 This is apparent in Article 29 of the church order adopted by the General Assembly of the synod in June 1932, which says: “the teaching should be based on the Holy Scripture, the Old and New Testament, in accordance with the Heidelberg Catechism.”19 Thus, in its earliest days, the GKJ was the only church in Indonesia, besides the HKBP (Huria Kristen Batak Protestan) (the Batak Christian Protestant Church), which had a definitive confession.20 The difference is that the HKBP's confession, even though it makes only a minor reference to the spiritual background of the Batak people, still shows the existence of the Batak context.21 On the other hand, the Javanese Christian Churches accepted a ready-made Western confession, the Heidelberg Catechism. Though not without challenge, it has deep roots and exercises a profound influence on the church. This is apparent in the GKJ's life. The 1973 draft of the statement on mutual collaboration between the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands and the GKJ stated clearly that the GKJ's confession is nothing other than the confession of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands.22 Article 2.3 of the 1984 GKJ Church Order, a revision of the 1932 Church Order, in still maintains the Heidelberg Catechism as the main doctrine of the GKJ.23 A new draft of the GKJ's Church Order was presented to the GKJ Synod Special General Assembly in July 1992. This new draft does not mention the Heidelberg Catechism but states that the GKJ memiliki Pokok-pokok Ajaran, has its own principal teachings or doctrine). It is interesting to note, however,

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19 Ibid., p. 6.
that this *Pokok-pokok Ajaran GKI* (PPAG) is nothing but a simplification of the Heidelberg Catechism.24

The GKI’s strong adherence to the Heidelberg Catechism as its main teaching authority as well as the expression of this teaching in its liturgy and church order may have given the GKI an identity as Reformed.25 Yet this is probably an identity that may prevent the GKI from becoming a (real) Javanese Christian church and may also separate this church from its fellow Javanese churches. Consequently, it might be a factor that prevents the GKI from communicating the Gospel in the Javanese community.

B. **PPAG**

In 1988, the Synod of the GKI published a book on the church’s history, with a critical notation on the urgency to respond to social change, the shifting of norms and values in society accompanying the emergence of Western modernization.26 One year later, the 1989 Synod announced the need to communicate the message of the Gospel to its congregation contextually.27 Eight years later, the Synod of the GKI published its principal teachings, the PPAG.28 As mentioned above, it was compiled to ‘replace’ the Heidelberg Catechism, but it is not that this document is really different from the Heidelberg Catechism. It is more or less the same. It is also perplexing that the GKI did not formulate the PPAG so that it related clearly to the GKI’s own identity. The reason why the GKI preferred to be called the GKI (Gereja Kristen Jawa), remains completely unexplained. Moreover, it has absolutely no link to the Javanese culture and society, which is the context in which the GKI lives.

The existence and identity of the GKI as shown by the PPAG, is, indeed, equivocal. It is not clear but rather perplexing. Because the PPAG is formulated to teach lay Javanese Christians, the members of the GKI, about their Christian faith, the GKI therefore needs to make clear its existence and identity by taking the historical, cultural, and religious context of Java into account. The PPAG should become the basic foundation that shows what the GKI is, and what it believes, in the midst of social change and in the contemporary context of Java.

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26 Sinode GKI, *GKI: Benih yang Tumbuh dan Berkembang di Tanah Jawa*, TPK, Yogyakarta, 1988, p. 170. The format of this book was decided upon by the church council in Indonesia as one volume in a series of many, edited by Frank Cooley and others.
To understand the PPAG clearly, it is necessary to first present a systematic description and some explanation of the views of the GKJ Synod with respect to the PPAG, as follows:

1. **Systematics**

   **Introduction**

   **Chapter 1. The Teaching of the Church**
   Week 1: The Teaching of the Church

   **Chapter 2. The Bible**
   Week 2: The Bible, its Purpose and Authority

   **Chapter 3. God's Salvation**
   Week 3: The Meaning and Essence of God’s Salvation
   Week 4: The Event of God's Salvation
   Week 5: The Triune God
   Week 6: Who Are the Saved and What Attitude Enables Someone to be Saved?
   Week 7: The Journey of Salvation

   **Chapter 4. The Church and Church Order**
   Week 8: Church
   Week 9: The Church’s Task and Calling
   Week 10: Diversity and Unity of the Church
   Week 11: The Order of Church Life
   Week 12: Worship as the Means of Maintaining Faith
   Week 13: The Sacraments as a Means of Maintaining Faith

   **Chapter 5. The Life of the Believer in the World**
   Week 14: Ethical Life
   Week 15: Attitude to the World
   Week 16: Attitude to Culture
   Week 17: Attitude to Science, Technology, and Engineering
   Week 18: Attitude to Secularism
   Week 19: Viewpoint on Citizenship
   Week 20: Attitude to State Power
   Week 21: View of and Attitude to Religions

   **Chapter 6. Some Important Spiritual Legacies in Church Life**
   Week 22: The Ten Commandments of the LORD
   Week 23: The Law of Love
   Week 24: The Apostles’ Creed
   Week 25: Prayer
2. **The Status of the PPAG as a Church Document**

The PPAG was approved in the Limited Assembly of the Synod in 1996. This document attained the status of an official church document that embodied the content of the faith of the church and was a guide to the life of church members. It was declared to be binding from the time it was approved and open to change of status only if approved by the churches by means of a resolution of the Assembly of the GKJ Synod at some time in the future.

3. **Background of its Formulation**

Since its formation as a church synod on 17 February 1931, the GKJ has given official status to the book *Piwulang Ayami Kristen*, which was a Javanese translation of the Heidelberg Catechism of 1563 that had been received by way of the Dutch mother church, the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands, as a legacy of central points of the Christian faith. It functioned as a guide book for the faith and life for the GKJ up to 1996. After using this inherited document for 65 years, the GKJ felt it was necessary to replace the inherited document with a document of its own as a realization of its self-reliance while at the same time answering needs it felt to be very urgent.

This important step, as indicated in the introduction to the 1997 edition of the PPAG had been discussed since 1984, when it became evident at the XVIIth Assembly of the Synod that the GKJ intended to formulate its own teaching. The reasons put forward were the following. **First**, as an independent, self-reliant church it was necessary for the GKJ clarify its own beliefs. **Second**, in keeping with its status as self-reliant or mature, its received inheritance had to be critically re-examined. **Third**, this re-examination had to be undertaken by way of investigating whether this heritage is biblically based. If it became evident that its interpretation is not in keeping with responsible biblical interpretation, then it should be altered. At the same time whatever is consistent with the Bible must be preserved. **Fourth**, because they faced concrete challenges, the doctrine being formulated had to be capable of becoming a guide that could be relevant in responding to these challenges.

The reasons mentioned above can be understood because the Heidelberg Catechism was formulated three and a half centuries ago, in a different nation and to meet needs and to respond to challenges that were different. The Heidelberg Catechism was written by two theologians from Heidelberg, Zakharias Ursinus and Caspar Olevianus, in 1562, based on the teachings of John Calvin, the Reformer in Geneva, Switzerland. In 1563, on the decision of Frederick III, Elector Palentine, it was accepted, as a guide for church teaching in the

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Rhineland Palatinate region of Western Germany. The Heidelberg Catechism was also accepted later by the Calvinist churches in the Netherlands. It was viewed as a fruit of the struggles they experienced in the 17th century, along with other documents formulated by Calvinist churches in the Netherlands, namely: The Belgic Confession of Faith (*Confessio Belgica*), compiled by Guido de Bres in 1561, and the Canons of Dort, 1618 (Five Articles Against the Remonstrants). The aim of the church, in this case the Dutch Calvinist church, was the consolidation of the church according to Calvinist understanding, in the context of the reformation of a church opposed to the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church. The wider context was Western Europe, almost all of which was Christian, while the question of Christianity’s relationship to other religions (except Judaism and in the Middle Ages Islam) was not yet a point of discussion because it had not yet become a concrete issue for them.

The global context was still very narrow because communications were not advanced. People were driving horse-drawn vehicles and ships still sailed under the power of the wind; there were no cars, airplanes, or radio. Science and philosophy were still developing in the opening period of the modern era.

The GKJ was born at the beginning of the 20th century, passing through the periods of colonial rule, Japanese occupation, and the struggle for independence. In this post-colonial modern era, i.e., the era of independence for former colonized peoples that followed World War II, fundamental changes had already taken place. Indonesia was no longer a colony but stood on a par with other nations that valued equality and justice. The GKJ lived in the midst of a complex society in terms of adherence to religion and patterns of belief, namely Islam, Catholic, and Protestant Christianity with its variety of denominations that included the GKJ, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Confucianism, along with several other beliefs. In addition, the GKJ, which had ethnic and cultural nuances, also formed part of the plurality of ethnic groups and languages in Indonesia. The GKJ was part of a society that adhered to *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* (Unity in Diversity) and needed to develop its own way of existing in the society it belonged to.

The GKJ emerged in an era of scientific development that gave birth to technology that revolutionized communications. Large aircraft provide rapid non-stop intercontinental transport; massive cargo ships carry hundreds of thousands of tons of freight to all corners of the globe. Radio satellites make intercontinental conversation as easy as speaking to one’s neighbours. Television programmes penetrate bedroom walls. Education utilizes audio-visual and computer technology to enable students to develop knowledge and skills. Globalization impacts life everywhere in the world. In view of this, the desire of the GKJ to re-examine its

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31 The three documents are often referred to as the three forms of unity, cf. H. Berkhof and I.H. Enklaar, *Sedjarah Geredja*, Badan Penerbit Kristen, Djakarta, p. 191.
inherited teaching, which came from a very different place and time, can be understood. The GKJ now confronts a world that is entirely different from the world of 16th century Germany and the Netherlands when the Heidelberg Catechism was formulated. Because of this, the GKJ strives to act as a people of God responsible for playing a role in God’s work of salvation, i.e., to bear witness.

4. Process of Compilation

Since the desire of the GKJ to compile its own doctrinal standard first arose, as recorded in the Acts of the XVIth Synod in 1981, Article 47, an initiative was made in the area of the Presbytery of Salatiga. Rev. Broto Semedi Wirjotenojo prepared a preliminary draft that was received by the Salatiga Presbytery and was then presented as a preliminary text for the PPAG. The Synod Assembly formed a PPAG Team in 1992, with Rev. Pudja Prijatma as convener and Wirjotenojo as a member, assisted by nine other members: Rev. Widjojo Hadipranoto, Rev. Dr. Kadarmanto Hardjowasito, Rev. Djaka Soetapa, Rev. Sularso Sopater, Dr. J. Sardi Sunarso, Rev. Djimanto Setyadi, Rev. Humphrey Sudarmadi, Rev. Drs. Siman Widyatmanta, and Hadi Purnomo.

The results of the work of the PPAG Team were reported to the XXIst Synod Assembly where it received intensive discussion. This assembly set up a new team to advance the work done by the first and at the same time take account of the proposals arising from the Synod Assembly. This team was chaired by Rev. Djimanto Setyadi. The secretary was Rev. Drs. Sukardi Citro Dahono, and the members of the team were: Rev. Broto Semedi Wirjotenojo, Rev. Drs. Siman Widyatmanta, and Rev. Pudja Prijatma. In addition a Team of Readers was formed consisting of four individuals, Rev. Dr. Sularso Sopater, Rev. Iman Sugiri, Rev. Bambang Mulyatno, Rev. David Rubingan, and all the Presbyteries within the GKJ Synod.

Finally, through a long process that took twelve years, the PPAG was accepted in a Limited Assembly of the Synod in 1996 and ratified as a binding church document. Continuing an old tradition, all church officebearers, whether installed in their office (elders and deacons) or ordained (ministers) appended their signatures as witnesses and promised they would be faithful to the Bible, as expounded in the PPAG that in carrying out their church functions and in daily life.

33 Akta Sinode XVI GKI, 1981, Art. 47, sect. 2: “Menugaskan Dr. Harun Hadiwijono untuk menyusun buku katekisasi baru yang isinya juga memperhatikan konteks Indonesia/Jawa pada masa kini.” (Tasks Dr Harun Hadiwijono with compiling an new catechism whose contents pay attention to the contemporary Indonesian/Javanese context.). Unfortunately, he never wrote this book.
5. **Simplification and Refinement**

Since 1996, when the PPAG began to be used, both positive and negative reactions arose in the field. There are those who feel that the PPAG has fulfilled the GKJ’s need for ‘contemporaneity’ and is sufficient to respond to the concrete challenges of its context. There are also those who consider that the content is presented in a very academic way, with the result that members with a limited education have difficulty understanding it. Problems like this can be expected in such a process. Proposals and suggestions have been taken up in sessions of the Synod since 1996 and a team was set up to refine the PPAG in line with these suggestions.

At the Interim Synodical Assembly of the GKJ in 2000 (Article 54), the Assembly resolved to empower the Deputy for Unity to form a Revision Team with the responsibility to:

a. Refine a section of the contents.

b. Simplify the language.

c. Translate it into Javanese (*krn madya*)

d. Compile a book explaining the PPAG.

This team was comprised of Rev. Simon Rachmadi (Chairman), Rev. Aris Widaryanto (Secretary), Rev. Broto Semedi Wirjotenjo, Rev. Pudja Prijatma, Rev. Djimanto Setyadi, and Rev. Drs. Siman Widyatmanta.

At the XXIIIrd Synodical Assembly of the GKJ in Wonogiri in 2002 the Deputy for Unity reported that the Team was not yet able to complete its task. Because of this, the Assembly charged the Deputy for Unity to appoint a new team for revising the PPAG, with the same task as the previous committee (Article 23). This team comprised: Rev. Andreas U. Wiyono (Chairman), Rev. Aris Widaryanto (Secretary), Rev. Sularso Sopater, and Rev. Bambang Mulyatmo. The outcome of its reflections was reported to and discussed in the Non-Regular GKJ Synodical Assembly in Bandungan – Ambarawa in 2005.

The team had undertaken the task given to it and produced a draft and revised text of the GKJ PPA. The draft and revised text were later examined together with representatives of the Presbyteries of the GKJ, at a meeting prior to a Non-Regular GKJ Synodical Assembly. In the Non-Regular GKJ Synodical Assembly, 14-18 November 2005 in the Wisma Elika in Bandungan near Semarang with the GKJ West Semarang as host, after an in-depth discussion, struggle, and evaluation in the light of the Bible, the revised PPA GKJ was enacted and validated in the end as “PPA GKJ Edisi 2005.”

The enacting and validation of the “PPA GKJ Edisi 2005” did not mean that the PPA GKJ of 1997 was no

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longer valid. The PPA GKJ of 1997 remains valid because the PPA GKJ of 1997 is a source book and an official document of the doctrinal standards of the GKJ. Unfortunately, there are no significant differences between these editions.

6. Continuity and Change

The GKJ maintains the option of continuing in the traditional path of the 16th-century Reformation of the church. Although the Heidelberg Catechism has been replaced by the PPAG, nevertheless the core teaching of the Heidelberg Catechism is still preserved in the PPAG; i.e., that humans are saved solely through the grace of God (sola gratia), through Christ alone (solus Christus), only received through faith (sola fide), and the source of church doctrine is the Bible alone (sola scriptura).

In its independent responsibility to respond to its concrete contextual challenges, together with the changes of time and the culture it experiences, the GKJ developed new ideas about its attitude to other religions and beliefs in its context. Concerning the development of IPTEK (Ilmu Pengetahuan dan Teknologi) (Knowledge and Science), the GKJ was aware that it was impossible to urge its members, some of whom were scholars, to ‘believe without question,’ so it was necessary to develop a new attitude. At the same time, as part of the people and state of the Republic of Indonesia in the process of developing and building its identity, the GKJ also established the principles of its attitude to the state in a critical way.37

7. Approach

Structurally, the PPAG follows a soteriological approach. The principle of salvation is strongly emphasized from beginning to end. We can see this in the key words safety, salvation, and in words associated with salvation scattered throughout this whole document: people who are saved (church members), the perfection of salvation, God’s salvation, God the Saviour; his work of salvation, full salvation, history of God’s salvation, condition of being unsaved, inability to save oneself, principles of God’s salvation, time of salvation, maintaining salvation, the way of salvation, signs of salvation, preserving salvation, saved by his saviour, etc.

A ‘scarlet thread’ runs through its soteriological thinking that can be illustrated by key points. These are as follows. In the beginning God created heaven and earth along with humankind as good. But humanity fell into sin, whereby people now lived in an unsaved condition. Through his love and grace, God was pleased to save humankind through the work of his saviour. God’s work of salvation is woven into the history of human life and carried out by restoring a harmonious relationship through the forgiveness of sins. This

37 Ibid., back cover of the book.
history of God’s salvation is centred on three intact and continuing events: of the calling of the people of Israel, Jesus’ incarnation, and the sending of the Holy Spirit. In the end, God’s salvation by means of the forgiveness of sins brought about through Christ’s work of redemption is extended to all peoples until the end of the age. The church as his people is tasked to witness to God’s salvation. The choice to follow this soteriological approach certainly carries its own consequences because what it yields clearly differs from what other approaches would yield. For example, developments in the explanation of the Trinity, on the tasks of the church, etc. are all affected by the approach taken. Evidently, this approach was chosen because the function is more readily received by people living in this modern era.

That a certain segment of the church membership disagreed with the document must be seen as the reality of the situation because not all members of the GKJ are ready to adopt a modern way of thinking immediately and all at once. What is important is that the GKJ provide an opportunity to foster mutual understanding. It must be recognized that there are different levels of thinking in the history of culture and that differing levels of thinking influence the way people understand problems. For this reason, an effort to understand, and to understand one another, has been developed so that the PPAG can become a tool to spur on the GKJ to become a more effective witness at the beginning of the 21st century.

8. Development

C.A. van Peursen has attempted to understand the development of human thinking by means of a three-stage framework. The three stages he proposes are the mythic stage, the ontological stage and the functional stage. The mythic stage is mirrored in the mythologies of peoples often labelled primitive, who basically demonstrate human outlooks in which people feel surrounded by mysterious powers present in their environment, such as the power of the gods of the natural world or the power of fertility. At the mythic stage humankind trembles when faced with ancient powers and acknowledge that something is present. Humankind feels itself part of all that swirls around it. The mindset that is developed by such people is a participative one. Spells and magic are dominant at this stage. The ontological stage expresses the attitude of humans who no longer feel encircled by mythical powers but wish to examine everything freely. They distance themselves from everything that they previously felt to be constricting. Van Peursen went on to devise a theory about the basic nature of everything (ontology), and the analysis of all existing things. This level of thinking developed in classical culture, which was greatly influenced by philosophy and science. It developed in the West, for example, in the classical Greek period, at a time when celebrated philosophers like

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40 Ibid., pp. 8, 21.
Anaxagoras, Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle were active, and in the east when several schools of Vedanta thought in India reflected this stage of development.\textsuperscript{41} At this stage people work to map everything, unearth the causes of everything that occurs, and present systematic knowledge that can be checked. As subjects, humans distance themselves from everything, and that becomes the object of their investigation. They strive to discover the nature of everything, to understand what it is. In theological discussions of traditional ontology people strive to prove the existence of God. God is investigated with respect to his nature and existence in isolation from the human subject, apart from a direct link with the existence humankind experiences.\textsuperscript{42} The \textit{functional stage} is seen in modern human beings. They are not enchanted by their environment (mythic) but no longer keep their distance from the objects of their investigation (ontological). Rather, they want to establish new relationships with everything in their environment. They emphasize questions in connection with everything. They do not question the existence of things but enquire as to the meaning of things for them – in other words, how something can be experienced and integrated into their lives. Humans seek to change the world. Social life is seen to be the constituent of meaning and organization. They prefer a system that is open, in which reality is not seen as circular or closed (ontological) but as always moving, as a process.\textsuperscript{43}

This framework of three stages or three basic attitudes as discussed above is in fact only a sketch, a tool, we can use. It is then stated that this stage is no longer to be interpreted literally as a stage, as if that means that development progresses through consecutive stages with one stage being replaced by the next. In fact, we must not forget that all stages in this development of the way humankind thinks are found in all of us. What is at stake in this section is the shifting accents, the differing strategies of each stage.\textsuperscript{44} Those referred to as primitive peoples with their mythical fairy tales also knew about practical and technical things and were able to approach things in a functional manner. Conversely, in our modern society we are not free from magical elements. We too can be influenced by the myths or political ideologies. Although there is technical, medical, and scientific understanding, the history of human culture does not demonstrate an upward linear path in and of itself. It can be noted that in recent times a philosophical movement labelled postmodernism has arisen in reaction to modern philosophy. This movement is critical of neutrality and the sovereignty of reason. It rejects the assumption that there are ‘final decisive words’ i.e., it rejects the formulation of the principles, distinctions, and categories that are considered to be unconditionally binding

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Ibid., p. 56 ff.
\item Ibid., pp. 21, 63, 65, 89.
\item Ibid., pp. 18, 87, 91, 92.
\item Ibid., p. 23.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
for all times, people, and places. They also reject the ‘traditional dream’ of a system of explanation that is complete, unique, and closed.  

As already discussed above, the PPAG was prepared and compiled to meet the needs of the GKJ in the modern era, so more emphasis was placed on a functional approach. The triune nature of God is still felt by a majority of GKJ members to be a necessary affirmation. In the PPAG this was presented not in the form of the repeated classical formulations of the Council of Nicaea-Constantinople (4th century CE). Christ is no longer presented according to the formulations of the Council of Chalcedon (5th century CE) which, in keeping with the development of thought in that era, were ontological in nature, but was outlined in a new way in keeping with a functional approach. Thus, it is hoped that dialogue with the wider community, which previously had difficulty in understanding it can more easily be undertaken because the triune nature of God is associated more with the God who works for the salvation of humanity.

The church is also outlined in a functional manner, commencing with an outline that pays attention to the phenomenology of religion, and then proceeds to an outline that looks at the connection with the diverse religious community in Indonesia. The PPAG then dedicates the ninth week to discussion of the function of the church and its task.

Attention to the relationship/connection between the life of the believer and the world, nature, the state, science, and technology are all given extensive space in the PPAG. It is made clear that God’s salvation is entwined within the life of humankind in the world; it addresses the problems of the connection of humanity with nature and the role of humankind as mandatory for God with respect to nature as a task that must be undertaken responsibly; it discusses how believers are to employ their minds to cultivate science, technology, and engineering; it explores how faith needs to function so as to ensure human dignity; it looks at the basic function of state power, human dignity, and basic human rights. The above examples make clear the way in which the functional approach comes to the fore in the PPAG.

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45 Ibid.
46 This is reflected in the Heidelberg Catechism, which was inherited by way of the Piwulang Agami Kristen and has become deeply rooted in the thought of many members of the GKJ.
48 PPAG 1997 P-J 81 ff., 242ff., PPAG 2005 P-J 71 ff., 202 ff..
As noted above, however, not all members of the GKJ are able to follow the flow of thought at the functional level all at once. There are some who are unable to change their paradigm of thought and consequently desire to defend the old. What is important is that all members of the GKJ give a place to differences in the way in which truth is understood, without sacrificing the core of the Christian faith, while at the same time preserving the binding link of love between members of God’s family in Christ.

C. Critical Review

1. Identity of the GKJ in the PPAG

a. Logo of the GKJ

I wish to begin with something that is very simple but also, in my opinion, very important. The front cover of the PPAG has the logo of the GKJ in the form of hands in prayer above a dove, and the two within a gunungan – the mountain-like figure in the Javanese wayang, a symbol of the universe. Beneath this picture is a ribbon with the words Gereja-gereja Kristen Jawa (The Javanese Christian Churches) written in calligraphy similar to Javanese letters. For whatever reason, however, this text was ‘missing’ from the front cover of the 1997 and 1998 editions and only reappeared on the edition of 2005. Yet, on this 2005 edition, while Gereja-gereja Kristen Jawa appears in calligraphy with the GKJ logo, the title of the book is given as *Pokok-pokok Ajaran Gereja Kristen Jawa* (Principals Teachings of the Christian Church of Java) and not *Pokok-pokok Ajaran Gereja-gereja Kristen Jawa* (Principal Teachings of the Christian Churches of Java). The meanings of these two are very different, because the first points to the GKJ as a local church, while the second points to the GKJ as the unity of local churches that work together within the GKJ synod. Evidently, the ‘problem’ of the logo is not limited only to this issue because the PPAG book never clarifies the symbolism and meaning of this logo, even though the PPAG is intended to be the primary, most important, and most precise source for GKJ members seeking clarification about the symbolism and meaning of the logo of the church they are members of. And this is all the more important for Javanese society and culture where symbol is a thing of great importance – even becoming a kind of ideology.

For Javanese people, the world is full of symbolism. This symbolism allows us to reflect on the human condition and to communicate with the Lord. In fact, P.J. Zoetmulder, citing the Serat Centhini, says, “If you wish to penetrate reality, penetrate

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57 Cf. the view of Mircea Eliade that “symbol is a tool or means to know what is holy and what is transcendental,” in Hari Susanto, *Mitos Menurut Pengertian Mircea Eliade*, Kanisius, Yogyakarta, 1987, p. 61.
something that is a symbol of it.” So, it is regrettable that, after placing the GKJ logo on the front cover of the PPAG book, there is no clarification of the symbolism or meaning of the logo. Fundamental questions would be, for example: “Why the gunungan?” and “Why is there no cross?” The questions posed by the readers of the PPAG book remain entirely unanswered. It is not easy (if not impossible) to understand this GKJ really is because the symbol used (while ‘very Javanese’) with the gunungan and (‘very Christian’) praying hands and a dove is not accompanied by any explanation that opens the door to allow readers to enter in.

b. Name of the GKJ (Gereja Kristen Jawa)
Apart from the logo, one important matter the PPAG also ‘forgot’ concerns the name GKJ (Gereja Kristen Jawa). There is no clarification at all about what this name means or what it signifies.

For example, concerning the word Kristen, is it in fact already sufficient to emphasize the Christian character of the GKJ when other churches, like the GKPB (Gereja Kristen Protestan Bali; the Christian Protestant Church of Bali) choose the word protestan to further clarify their identity as a Christian church that became part of a Christian denomination born out of the Reformation? Or does the GKJ in fact desire to discard the ‘Western image’ and so avoided the use of the word protestan? This would certainly be ironic because in reality, the PPAG itself is nothing else but a simplification of the Heidelberg Catechism and because its ‘mother church’ itself now includes the word protestan, since joining with the Reformed Church of the Netherlands to form the PKN (de Protestantse Kerk in Nederland; The Protestant Church in the Netherlands).

Moreover, does the word Java in the name point to an affiliation of this church with the community and culture of Java or ‘only’ to the locus of this Gereja Kristen, i.e. in Java? If the answer is the first new question that arises. For example, why speak of the GKJ (Gereja Kristen Jawa) and not GKI (Gereja Kristen Indonesia) if many of the members in certain areas do not belong to the Javanese ethnic group, or if more Indonesian language than Javanese is used in worship and in formal meetings such as committee meetings within the church environment? Not even the content of their teaching makes any reference to Javanese society and culture, even though this is part of the context of the life of the GKJ,

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58 See Serat Centhini cited by Zoetmulder in Andrew Beatty, Varieties of Javanese Religion, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1999, p. 190. Cf. the view of Fauzi Fashri: “the power of symbol is able to lead anyone to believe, confess, preserve or change one’s perception until that person’s behaviour is in line with reality. The magic potency of a symbol lies not only in its capacity to represent truth but to present reality as well by employing the logic of symbol.” See Fauzi Fashri, Penyingkapan Kuasa Simbol: Apropiasi Reflektif Pemikiran Pierre Bourdieu, Juxtapos, Yogyakarta, 2007,p. 1.

59 As to the name GKJ, the name is translated as ‘Christian Churches of Java’ on the website of the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC); here ‘Java’ only seems to be the locus.
the place where it lives and develops. If it is the second reason, then this is the same as saying that the GKJ does not have any identity but is simply ‘squatting’ somewhere in Java. If this is the case then it would be better simply to join the GKI.

In my opinion, the problem of the name is important because it is linked to identity. We now live in an era of globalization. The world is coloured by global politics, global technology, global economics, and a global market. Furthermore, because of the sophistication of technology and the development of systems of transport that brought interdependence among nations had brought a shrinking of the world so that the country where we live is itself not free of the predicate global, i.e., the global village. In this process, society and the states of the East and particularly Indonesia were faced with a dilemma because, on the one hand, willingly or not, as developing nations, they were ‘forced’ to open themselves to a flood of Western cultural influences for the benefits of developing science and technology. To avoid and close off the dominant cultural influence of the West would have been suicidal, resulting in being left behind in the advancing modern era. On the other hand, materialist philosophy and secularism, which cannot be separated from the Western cultural tradition represented a strong challenge to Eastern cultural values that emphasized religion and divinity in an attempt to find a place to defend its identity. Simuh has called materialist philosophy and secularism a poisonous snare that greatly endangered Eastern cultural values. Thus, the question of how identity can stand firm and not be drowned in the tide of globalization and Westernization, certainly represents an issue of life or death for the nations of the East. Further, he states that in the matter of defending identity, the cultural thinkers of the East are for the most part reconciled to unearthing traditional cultural values to turn them into pillars of support.60

But this is not a simple matter. Kuntowijoyo, for example, has noted that, in the spiritual history of Java, efforts by spiritual groups wanting to embody the ideals of spiritual knowledge and form a spiritual movement as an organized spiritual force always experienced very sharp criticism from materialist groups.61 Kuntowijoyo did not expand further on this, but it is clear that these two (spiritualism and materialism) occupy opposing positions. The former emphasizes the spiritual side of life and the other the material. For me, this indicates that we are unable to to construct an identity by making something absolute and closing ourselves to or avoiding other things that are opposed to our position. This means that we are unable to close our eyes to the fact that other matters are also important and need to be considered. In light of this, Usman Pelly, as cited by Sofyan Effendi, is not going too far when he states that we are confronting twin requirements at this time: preserve our own rich

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culture and to develop a modern national culture at the same time. In my view, these two are not alternatives. Whether we want to or not, we must undertake both.62

In a book on the history of the GKJ, there is an important note about the best attitude the GKJ can have toward the change in norms and values that has occurred alongside the arrival of modernization from the West.63 In brief, it is stated that simply following the flow of modern development and duplicating the experience of the Western world that was traditionally Christian (with the result that the weakness of the church in confronting the challenges of the era is simply repeated) is not an option. What must be be aroused is a prophetic attitude and function on the part of the GKJ because there is a tendency among members of the GKJ not to take concrete action to change the situation that arises, even though the church is the “light of the world” and the “salt of the earth.” In my view, this note is very important because it indicates that there is a desire in the GKJ to adopt a critical stance toward changes that occur while still safeguarding the consciousness of its existence as Gereja Kristen Jawa, which is part of the world in the context of a nation that is in the process of development, i.e., Indonesia.

c. The GKJ as a Denomination

Some ideas concerning the name Gereja Kristen Jawa, as already mentioned above, clearly raise a new question that is no less existential because it has to do with the identity of the GKJ: “What denomination does the GKJ actually belong to?” This question arises from the realization that, since its beginning, the GKJ has never once used the words Gereformeerde or protestan as part of its name. The question arises also in connection with the four reasons that were the background to the GKJ’s decision to write the PPAG.64

First, as an independent church (mandiri) the GKJ must determine its own teaching. In my view, the sense of the word mandiri in this context requires further clarification: Does it point to a condition of absolute freedom from a ‘bond’ (or even a relationship) with any other party at all or to mandiri in the sense of merdeka (independent) as, for example, in reference to Sadrach’s community, the Golongane Wong Kristen Kang Mardika, where mandiri means not wanting to ‘subject oneself’ to the domination/superiority of attitudes like verhollandisering. This would mean that however the GKJ implemented its faith it would no longer be determined by anyone/any group, and thus the GKJ would be free in the expression of its life of faith. Only if it had been intended that this matter be given emphasis in the formulation of the PPAG, would the sentence the GKJ must determine its own teaching, become relevant. Its relevance would certainly be tested further by examining how the three

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64 Sinode GKJ, Pokok-pokok, 1997, p. 3.
following reasons (which became the foundation for the GKJ’s formulation of the PPAG) can truly be realized.

Second, in keeping with its nature and status as independent or mature, the legacy handed down must be examined critically. In my opinion, consciously or not, this sentence really indicates an awareness that the GKJ is a church that cannot yet fully (not to say cannot) determine its teaching itself. Although already feeling mandiri, in reality – whether it wants to or not, whether it likes it or not – is not truly as ‘free’ as it could be. So, if the legacy received is to be re-examined critically, then the GKJ must first of all clearly and firmly indicate how far it can ‘keep its distance’ from the teaching it inherited long ago and in fact acknowledged as its confession of faith. Then the GKJ must clarify the concept critical: Is it confrontational, confirming, or both. Furthermore, it has to be acknowledged that there are matters that we are unable to deny as facts of history. The GKJ was not just created in Java; it was founded through the agency of Western missionaries. Before it existed in Java it was already present in the West. This historical reality is a past that cannot be denied. Psychology teaches us that an individual who denies the past in fact denies himself and because of this has difficulty facing the future. It is the same with contextualization. This does not necessarily mean a rejection of the GKJ’s past. What is rejected is not its past but the sanctification of this past as a measure or standard of truth. What must be done is to ensure that those things inherited from the West do not overpower or dominate or determine the faith experience of Javanese people so that the riches found in Javanese culture itself cannot be offered up as part of this faith experience itself, being squeezed out and finally dying.

Third, this critique is to be undertaken by questioning this inheritance on the basis of the Bible. If it becomes clear that there is an interpretation that is not consistent with responsible biblical interpretation then the inheritance must be modified. At the same time, what is consistent is still to be defended. If this critique is to be ‘measured’ by ‘pitting’ its inherited confession against the Bible, then the GKJ must be able to clarify how its method for measuring or evaluating whether this confession is consistent or not with responsible biblical interpretation because this confession has been considered ‘parallel’ with the Bible for so long. If there are matters that are later considered not consistent with responsible biblical interpretation, the GKJ needs to make clear its basis for that evaluation and to what extent these matters must be changed or maintained. It must be born in mind that no one is able to grasp the whole of the truth that is in the Bible and that neither inherited teachings nor responsible biblical interpretation escape errors and prejudices. So the GKJ must be aware that its critique is not a theological construct that has to be considered

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66 Ibid., p. 6.
a ‘truth of faith’ with the result that everything not consistent with its critique is seen as a ‘misappropriation of faith.’

Fourth, because the challenges it encounters are concrete, the teaching that is formulated must be able to become a relevant support for responding to them. I agree strongly with this fourth reason, but it must also be added that what is concrete is also dynamic. So, the GKJ must clarify what challenges are concrete and dynamic at the present time and how the PPAG is able to be a relevant support. In reasserting its Javanese identity, the GKJ must inevitably formulate its teaching with attention to context. The context meant here is the background, insights regarding the fundamental life of the community, both traditional and modern. There are wide aspects to this, including the encounter with realities in the form of religious pluriformity and poverty, Islam as the largest religious community and thus a major influence on the colour of our Christianity, the challenge of secularism and modernization, ideological challenges, and issues of justice in a number of fields. All this is often alluded to in theological-dogmatic discussions. What I want to underline or emphasize, however, is the fundamental view of life, usually referred to as worldview. There are quite a number of concrete challenges that the GKJ encounters. That all are being responded to is to be appreciated. But one often has the impression that they are not being handled in a coherent manner, without any attempt to grasp and understand the worldview behind them. Singgih gives the example of the kenduren as a dogmatic problem within the the GKJ. In reality, the ritual of the kenduren is only the top of an iceberg, i.e., the worldview. If we go beneath the surface we will in fact be able to see a picture of Javanese people in connection with the harmony of the universe and the Javanese longing for salvation.

A number of decades ago, B.M. Schuurman argued that in the encounter with Javanese people, we should begin with a broad approach. Such an approach always begins from the worldview and will at the same time include various aspects like those mentioned above in a way that is coherent and not fragmentary. Some of the ideas above could be used by the GKJ for consideration in getting greater clarity in the discussion of their teaching.

2. Format

67 A comprehensive study of worldview can be found in the book by Michael Kearney, World View, Chandler & Sharp, California, 1984.
68 Singgih, Berteologi dalam Konteks, 2000, p. 64. The kenduren is a Javanese religious meal, an integral part of slametan.
69 See B.M. Schuurman, Penyingkapan Rahasia Kehidupan, Seri Persetia No. 2, BPK Gunung Mulia, Jakarta, 1977, p. 89. Schuurman was a missionary who taught in the theological institute Balewijata in Malang. He died as a prisoner in a Japanese prison in Malang.
It cannot be denied that the GKJ followed the format of the Heidelberg Catechism fully in compiling the PPAG. This is seen clearly from the question/answer format. Moreover, each formulation of points in the subject matter is always closed with a list of Bible references (only a list, not an explanation). But it is clear that the use of these Bible verses does not necessarily guarantee that the thinking embodied in the articles is the fruit of reflection on the Word of God. There is a tendency to use these verses only as proof texts or sampiran. This tendency is called biblicism and is widely found among traditional congregations and teachers of dogmatics. In my view, we should ‘oppose’ this temptation. The way out, according to Singgih, is as follows. First, we should attempt to undertake a simple interpretation sufficient to be accountable from both the scholarly perspective and from the aspect of the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, i.e., an interpretation that attends to the context of the verse or pericope. People often make the mistake of casually equating context with the Sitz im Leben, whereas context really involves things that precede and accompany a verse or pericope. If the context is considered (not departing from the context), I believe we will not fall into biblicism, which in reality only ‘seizes’ verses to support certain opinions. We are certainly able to reconstruct the Sitz im Leben if we begin from the context, but this can no longer be done by everyone. Second, we should work to develop a dogmatics or, better, a theology that is not too systematic, i.e., not too rigid in structure but is based instead on story. In works on dogmatics we often see people trying to summarize or systematize Bible stories. According to Singgih, this tendency indicates a devaluation of story, as though stories are suitable only for children and primitive peoples when in fact we live the story of our own lives.

According to Singgih, Javanese people still live in a world of story. We can consider how many devotees there are of wayang at wayang kulit performances! Our theology should be a theology of story. The danger of systematization is not absent from the world of biblical commentary. But if we consider the attempts to compile a biblical theology (Old Testament and New Testament), we will find that attempts at systematization also held sway in the world of academic commentary in the decade of the 1960s. At that time the understanding of narration had not yet found its form. One example is the Old Testament theology of

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70 PPAG has 310 questions and quite long answers. It cannot be learned by heart! One might argue that this format is very much in keeping with Javanese literature. For example, suluk (mystical) literature likes to present theological matters by the method of soal (problems, question) and jawab (answer). But it is clear that suluk is written in the form of Javanese poetry known as macapat. See Koentjaraningrat, Kebudayaan Jawa, 1994, p. 316. It is absolutely different with the format of PPAG which is very similar to the format of the Heidelberg Catechism.

71 Perhaps it is more than a matter of the Bible as sampiran, but the biblical texts are used to prove the dogma, which might be understood improperly. So there are three things: 1) using the Bible to prove dogma, 2) interpreting dogma improperly, 3) mixing the language of the Bible and the language of dogma.

Walter Eichrodt, who divided his work into three sections. It first discusses God, then humanity, and then the world, exactly as we often see in works on dogmatics. But the work of Christoph Barth is somewhat different. He begins by considering the aspect of story (particularly in volume 1) and in this respect follows Gerhard von Rad regarding Old Testament theology. Unfortunately, both Von Rad and Barth pay more attention to ‘theology’ than to ‘story’ so we are still awaiting an Old Testament theology that is truly based on story.\(^73\) The task of refraining from systematization is a task for both parties, scholarly interpretation and academic dogmatics. An enterprise like this will certainly not fall into line with the ‘pure’ systematics in the world of traditional Western theology. It is possible that this endeavour will be rejected by Western theology in the same way that the work of Karl Barth was rejected by academic commentators. Nevertheless it is fitting to quote Archbishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa, “Why should we feel embarrassed if our theology is not systematic? Why should we feel that something is amiss if our theology is too dramatic for verbalization...?”\(^74\) Tutu stresses that the African spirit is dramatic, capable of being fully expressed only in song and dance. Verbal-systematic formulations alone are not sufficient and not necessary. Hollenweger is also in agreement with Tutu. In his view, both biblical society and the society of the Third World live in oracularity, i.e., their literature is oral. The Bible was originally oral and only later transcribed. If this is so, it is necessary for the society of the Third World to restore the oracularity of the Bible, which has been ignored by the world of Western academic theology, so that it can meet our own oral traditions.\(^75\) Along with Singgih, I hold that the Bible was not solely oral originally but also literary. Luke deliberately wrote a Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles. There are also parables that were deliberately written, not just copied from existing oral stories.

3. Approach
   a. The Soteriology of PPAG

Although the Heidelberg Catechism was replaced by the PPAG, the core teaching of the Heidelberg Catechism is nevertheless still preserved in the PPAG, i.e., the salvation of humankind is possible only because of the grace of God \((sola gratia)\), through Christ alone \((sola Christus)\), and received only through faith \((sola fide)\), the source of church doctrine is the Bible alone \((sola scriptura)\). Indeed, there have been endeavours to produce differing

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\(^73\) Ibid., p. 61
interpretations, although they still employ Reformation formulations. But these differing interpretations, consciously or not, then introduce soteriological principles that are ‘foreign’ to or even directly opposed to the Reformed tradition, in particular the Calvinist tradition. On the other hand, soteriological principles that are sufficiently dominant in Calvinist tradition fade or ‘disappear’ altogether. There is a tendency in this respect in the soteriology emphasized in the PPAG. For example, in the latter we find freedom (yielded to) humankind to believe (beriman) or not to believe, while the Calvinist tradition holds that if ‘believing (beriman) or not believing’ was left up to humans then no one would believe. Faith must ultimately be seen as a gift of God through the work of the Holy Spirit. Another example is the possibility of the loss of salvation. While the Calvinist tradition is convinced of the perseverance of the saints, the soteriological principles that are sufficiently dominant in the Calvinist tradition do not appear in the soteriology of the PPAG. One example of this is unity with Christ. In the Heidelberg Catechism this principle appears again and again in connection with faith, justification, and renewal of life.

In general, I detect an Arminian understanding in the soteriology of the PPAG. In this view, although humanity has fallen into sin and total ruin, humans still have the freedom and ability to choose God and because they believe (beriman) they are able to be saved. In addition, the Lord knows who will receive his salvation and who will reject it. Based on this knowledge, the Lord chooses those who will be saved. Thus, the Lord’s choice is conditional. So, the salvation of the Lord is thus not limited. Whoever receives it will certainly be saved. Humanity then has the freedom to receive or reject the grace of God, and a person who is saved still has the possibility of falling into sin and destruction.

Issues like these are clearly very contradictory to the Calvinist tradition yet are precisely emphasized strongly in the PPAG. For example, in the section “Who is saved?” the answer is: “God desires that all people should be saved. But in order to be saved a person must confirm his attitude regarding God’s salvation. So, it is not of them selves (not automatically) that all are saved.” Then, on “the attitude of faith and human freedom,” the answer is: “The attitude of belief is a person’s own decision made in his freedom. But humans are able to take this attitude because of God’s help. He helps and enlightens the human heart and mind so that one is able to understand that Jesus is God who came to save humankind. Nevertheless, God continues to maintain humanity in its freedom, so that a
person can accept salvation but also can reject it.” This means that “in freedom human beings remain responsible in respect to the salvation offered as a gift (anugerah). Thus, the salvation of an individual is not fate or destiny.”83 Next, concerning “The Journey toward the Perfection of Salvation,” the response is: “Salvation as the fruit of the saving work of God is already received and experienced by the believer during life on earth. But this salvation still has to achieve its perfection later in fellowship with God in heaven. Because of this, the life of a believer in the world is like a journey of salvation, that is, a journey toward the perfection of salvation.” Within the framework of this journey of salvation there is the possibility that a believer can let go of his faith as the result of temptation, with the consequence that he fails in the journey and is unable to reach the perfection of salvation.84 At the same time, the section concerning “The Role of the Holy Spirit in Aiding Believers along the Path of their Salvation” has the response: “The possibility that the believer will fail to reach the perfection of salvation arises from human weakness itself, among other things because of his inclination which is opposed to the will of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit indeed always helps the believer, but the help of the Holy Spirit does not of itself preserve the faith of the believer. The Holy Spirit continues to deal with the believer as someone who has the freedom to follow or not follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Thus the Holy Spirit continues to place the believer in a situation where he has to struggle, make an effort, and act responsibly with respect to the salvation he has received.”85

In brief, the PPAG’s teaching on salvation is as follows. Because God loves all humankind, God wishes that all people be saved from the punishment for sin. To this end God actively ‘offers’ the gift of salvation to all people, and it is only those people who wish to receive the ‘offer’ of this gift of salvation who will be saved. After an individual enters into the process of salvation, that person’s final salvation depends on whether that individual believes up until his death or lets go of that salvation in mid-journey. Although the Holy Spirit assists this person, he does not block the free will of the person concerned. This is truly very Arminian!

b. The PPAG and the Triune Nature of God
The doctrine of the Trinity is a doctrine that is very important in Christian theology. The rise and fall of Christian faith is truly dependent on the truth or otherwise of this doctrine. All Christian doctrine would automatically collapse if the doctrine of the Trinity collapses because almost all important points in the Christian religion depend on the teaching that

83 Ibid., P-J 57.
84 Ibid., P-J 60.
85 Ibid., P-J 64 and 65.
God is three in one.\textsuperscript{86} If a particular church apparently embraces a Trinitarian doctrine that is false or non-biblical then all the rest of its teaching could be false as well. If its understanding about God is false, then its understanding of the works of God will also be false. What is the case here with the GKJ?

In the PPAG\textsuperscript{87} the formulation Father, Son and Holy Spirit can be clarified as follows. In connection with the events concerning the people of Israel as recorded in the Old Testament, God is known as Father. In connection with the event of Jesus’ incarnation as recorded in the New Testament, God is known also as Son. In connection with the event of the Holy Spirit, as recorded in the New Testament and in the history of the church up to the present time, God is also known as the Holy Spirit.

The terms Father and Son do not refer to a biological connection but speak of the connection between the steps God took in his work of salvation. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are God, one and the same. Thus, as person, God is only one, that is, God. Jesus’ praying to the Father and the Father’s sending the Holy Spirit to Jesus’ disciples is explained as follows: We can understand Jesus as praying to the Father in the sense that Jesus is God who involved himself in human life in a way that was truly human and lived his life in a way that was human too. In praying to the Father, Jesus put himself in the position of taking the place of humankind. We can understand the Father who sent the Holy Spirit to Jesus’ disciples and to believers by reasoning that it was God himself who came and worked as a Power in their hearts to aid them so that they would be able to maintain their salvation.

Now let us compare this with what Albert H. Freundt states concerning the triunity of God in Sabellianism:

Modalistic Monarchianism endangered the true humanity of Christ and obliterated the distinctions within the Godhead. The aim was to make sure that in Christ we meet with no secondary or derived being but with God himself. It was believed that in Christ the Father himself became incarnate as the Son and suffered. Hence the name ‘Patripassianism’ was given to this view. There are no eternal distinctions within the Godhead. God revealed himself in creation as the Father in redemption as the Son, and in sanctification as the Spirit. There is a trinity of manifestation rather than of persons…. The best known exponent of this view was Sabellius, and Sabellianism is another name for Modalistic Monarchianism. It is essentially the view that God is one person who successively reveals himself as Father, Son, and Spirit. When he became Son, he ceased being Father; and so forth. Each was a temporary mode or manifestation of the one true God.\textsuperscript{88}

\textsuperscript{86} See Bruce Milne, \textit{Mengenali Kebenaran}, BPK Gunung Mulia, Jakarta, 1993, p. 90.
\textsuperscript{87} PPAG 2005, P-1 33ff.
If we reflect on the understanding of the triunity of God in the PPAG and the statement by Freundt above, then we quickly become aware that the explanation of the PPAG is overwhelmingly Sabellian. Let us carry the examination further.

The notion of Father-Son God makes a statement about the link between the steps God takes in his work of salvation. The biblical foundation is John 1:1-3: “In the beginning was the Word; this Word was with God and this Word was God. He was from the beginning with God. Everything was made by Him and without Him no single thing came to be from all that was brought to be.” This verse does not say that God the Father became manifest as the Son of God. What it does say is that the Lord Jesus/The Word (who is also God) is a Person who was with the Person God the Father from eternity. The word ‘with’ in verse 2 translates the Greek word προς, which refers to a face-to-face relationship, a relationship that is intimate and personal. For the notion of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as one person, the PPAG appeals to the following biblical verses.

- John 10:30: “I and the Father are one.” Is it true that the word ‘one’ indicates one person? If we read verses 33-36, it will be clear that what is meant by one is one ‘essence,’ that is God. So, the meaning of the saying of the Lord Jesus is that just as the Father is God, so he is also God. This verse then supports the Calvinist doctrine of the Trinity. God is one essence, three persons.

- John 14:9: “Jesus said to him: ‘This long I have been with you Phillip, yet you do not know me? Whoever has seen Me has seen the Father. How then can you say: show us the Father.” This saying of the Lord Jesus is the same as the saying in John 10:30-38, which indicates that the oneness shared by the Father and the Lord Jesus refers to their essence, not their person.

- 1 John 5:7-8: “Because there are three who bear witness in heaven: Father, Word and Holy Spirit; and these three are one. And there are three who give witness on the earth: Spirit, water and blood and these three are one.” Since Spirit, water, and blood are ‘objects’ that differ, so too the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit are Persons who differ. So the word ‘one’ refers to his one essence (God) not one person.

With respect to the notion of two manifestations that are able to communicate with each other, Sabellianism has difficulty in explaining how there can be any communication between two roles of God if those two roles are conceived as roles of one person. Regarding Jesus praying to the Father, the compilers of the PPAG explain that at that time Jesus took on the position of human and not of God. So, at times Jesus was 100% God and at times 100% human. So Jesus was not God and man at the same time. This is clearly in conflict with the Christology embraced by the church fathers and the Reformers. The verses that were to
support the teaching of the PPAG (Philippians 2:7-8; Hebrews 2:14-18) indicate precisely that Jesus is God who became human. He remains God. So when the PPAG explain how the Father gave the Holy Spirit to the disciples, it states that the Holy Spirit is only Power because if the Holy Spirit is spoken of as Person it is clearly impossible for one person to be divided into two. The compilers of the PPAG identified the Holy Spirit with a kind of “authority to rule” so that the will of the person Father could be carried out. This raises the question: Is it true that the Holy Spirit is only a kind of Power given to the disciples so that the will of the Father in the work of salvation might be fulfilled? The Holy Spirit is not a kind of ‘Power’ but a Person. John 14:16 states: “I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, so that He will be with you forever.” Jesus used the third-person singular pronoun for the Holy Spirit, so the Holy Spirit is a Person, not a thing. That the Holy Spirit is a person can be proved in various ways. First, there is proof by way of His presence: He possesses thought (Romans 8:27), feelings (Ephesian 4:30), has will (1 Corinthians 12:11). Second is proof by way of His works: He teaches (John 14:26), leads (Romans 8:14), He commands (Acts 8:29), speaks (John 15:26; 2 Peter 1:21). Third is proof through recognition of what was imposed on Him: He could be deceived (Acts 5:3), opposed (Acts 7:51), condemned (Matthew 12:31), grieved (Ephesians 4:30), insulted (Hebrews 10:29).

There is a passage in the Bible that clearly states that the Holy Spirit and the Father are different persons. As Romans 8:26 states: “So also the Spirit helps us in our weakness; because we do not know how in fact we should pray; but the Spirit himself prays for us to God with cries that are unspoken.”

Thus, it is clear: God is esa/one in his essence but three Persons. The notion of three Persons but equally God who is one is a mystery. It could not be otherwise – how can finite human thought understand God who is infinite? It is Sabellian teaching itself, which thinks it is capable of explaining the existence of God in a way that is so simple to understand, that is not reasonable. Can we put all of the water of the sea into a bottle? That is impossible. But this is what occurred with the PPAG’s explanation of the Trinity. Intentionally or not, the GKJ has adopted Sabellianism, which the Reformers, including Calvin, declared erroneous.

c. The PPAG and Javanese Culture and Other Religions

As I mentioned above, the PPAG does not link up in any way to Javanese culture and society, which is the immediate context of the GKJ. Indeed, in Chapter 5, the 16th week, which discusses “Attitude to Culture,” it is discussed from a variety of viewpoints: “What is culture?” “What does culture include?” “How do believers understand culture?” “What is the attitude of believers

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90 PPAG 2005, P-J 159-163.
to culture?” “What is the objective of believers in reforming and using culture?” But there is nothing at all that refers to Javanese culture. Everything is discussed in general terms. In fact, the answer to the question: “How does a believer understand culture?” is that: “Culture as a fruit of human creativity in fulfilment of the cultural task given by God. Because of human sin, this task has not been free since creation. As a result, culture embodies weaknesses and irregularities.”

This negative nuance is very evident in this understanding of culture. Because this response refers to culture in general, I am certain that understanding Javanese culture itself will certainly not be far removed from the negative nuance. Unfortunately, the actual view of the GKJ on this issue remains unclear. If, for example, it does not have a negative nuance, to what extent does the GKJ truly understand that Javanese culture is the context in which it lives, grows and develops? That there have been many endeavours lately to revive aspects of Javanese culture in worship services in the GKJ is not yet enough to indicate how and to what extent the GKJ is interpreting this Javanese culture as its identity in its life of faith in the midst of society. If this issue obtains its proper place in the PPAG, this will certainly be of great benefit to the members of congregations and to the churches united in the GKJ Synod in better understanding their identity and living responsibly with this identity.

Somewhat differently from the discussion of culture, the sections on other religions are given a greater scope for discussion. The tone here is also more positive. For example, the answer to the question “What is the attitude of Christians toward other religions?” reads: “Believers acknowledge and respect the right of other religions to exist, including the right to be embraced, practised and proclaimed, without necessarily falling into the error of equating all religions. Where necessary, believers defend the rights of other religions that are being treated unjustly.” Then the answer to the question “What basic attitude do believers have toward the adherents of other religions?” is: “Believers stand by two principles, namely: 1. The nature of the human as a social creature that causes them always to live together, and 2. The freedom of every person to decide which religion to embrace. On the basis of these two principles believers open themselves to dialogue and collaboration with adherents of other religions.”

Although given a wider discussion and somewhat more positive in character, the treatment of these questions is still very general. In my view, the GKJ needs to have the courage to identify more firmly and clearly which religions live side by side with the church, and what attitude the church should have to each of these religions. ‘Internally,’ there are

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91 Ibid. P-J 161
92 PPAG 2005, P-J 202-216. There are 15 questions and answers in this section – three times more than the section discussing culture.
93 Ibid., P-J 213.
94 Ibid., P-J 215.
divisions between the Christian (Kristen, Protestant) religion and the Catholic religion. With respect to the GKJ, which *notabene* is a Protestant church (although this is not clearly acknowledged in the PPAG as its identity): can its identity be appropriately indicated as a different body from the Catholic Church? They are, after all, recognized as different religions. Or do these differences not need to be noted? What is its relationship to Islam, which *notabene* is a fellow *Abrahamic religion*? Is the GKJ willing to accept that ‘fact’ and truly coexist peacefully with Islam? It cannot be denied that, historically, the Christian (Protestant) religion ‘shares an identity’ with the Catholic and Islamic religions. This is necessary to find a sufficiently adequate clarification in the PPAG about religions other than the Christian, not only Catholic and Islam, but also concerning the GKJ’s relationship with Hinduism, Buddhism, Konghucu, and the many tribal religions in Indonesia. One of them, *kejawen*, has a close relationship to Javanese culture which is not only the context of the GKJ but also the identity of its daily life.

D. Concluding Remarks

The PPAG is not yet a contextual principal religious teaching in the Javanese context. There are still many issues the GKJ is dealing with. *First of all*, there is the matter of how the GKJ reasserts its Javanese identity. If Javanese Christians were faced during the past history of colonialism with the choice between becoming Christian via ‘becoming’ *londo* (Dutch) or becoming Christian without having to become alienated from their Javanese roots, then the GKJ now faces the challenge of reasserting its identity so that it is not swept away in the process of globalization with all its consequences while at the same time acting dynamically to produce something that is of value to the world in which it exists. In fact, the GKJ had a very good opportunity to clarify all this in the PPAG but, unfortunately, did not do so. *Second*, there is the question of the format of the PPAG. Here I want to highlight the fact that a systematic approach is not unnecessary, but, hopefully, it will not be restrictive and will allow the alternative if a theology of story, one that starts from the human story of this life.*95 Third*, there is the question of the approach of the PPAG. In my opinion, if the GKJ still wishes to ‘adhere’ to Calvinism, it must, willingly or not, ‘reconsider’ its teaching on salvation and the triune nature of God. Because I also want to state carefully that the GKJ may certainly have its own belief system, independent of Calvin, at the same time the GKJ needs to ‘declare’ its identity clearly as well as address the following questions: Is the GKJ going to continue to acknowledge the ‘Protestant blood’ that flows through its body? If so, what kind

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95 See, for example, A.G. Hoekema, “Peran (Oto) Biografi dan Buku Harian dalam Teologi Kontekstual Indonesia berdasarkan Pandangan James Mc Clendon,” in Robert Setio et al., *Teks dan Konteks yang Tiada Bertepi*, Pustaka Muria, Semarang, 2012, pp. 53-72, where he relies on James Mc Clendon, who emphasizes autobiographies and diaries as a main source of a ‘living’ theology.
of Protestant church will it be – Calvinist? Is the present PPAG truly Calvinist? On the other hand, if the GKJ wishes to reduce the ‘Protestant blood’ as much as possible, is it going to be replaced altogether by ‘Javanese blood’? If so, what type of Javanese? Or does the GKJ desire to ‘reconcile’ the Protestant and Javanese aspects in one identity?
Chapter V. A FRAMEWORK FOR FORMULATING PRINCIPAL TEACHINGS OF THE GKJ IN THE JAVANESE CONTEXT

A. Introduction

Apart from the challenge to clarify its identity anew, as explained in the previous chapter, in this century the GKJ confronts a different challenge. The expression ‘global village’ has already become an appropriate term to indicate how increasingly small the world in which we live has become. In the context of religious belief, people from differing religious traditions no longer live in separation but constantly interact with each other. As a consequence, there is a need to make this relationship meaningful and constructive. Alwi Shihab argues that the problems concerning religious communities today are not only about understanding truth but also about how one community associates with the others.1

From the perspective of religious pluralism, E.G. Singgih suggests that the Indonesian context at the beginning of this century has taken the form of a polarization between the major religions within this nation, particularly between the followers of Christianity and Islam. The influence of this polarization is evident in the efforts of both factions to distance themselves from one another, by each presenting identities that have absolutely no commonalities with the other but stress their differences. In this connection, E.G. Singgih stresses the importance of shared commonalities because communication will be functional wherever there are shared commonalities. One example of this is the Bible as a communication symbol. In it we read about how God (Allah) communicated with humanity and how human beings communicated to others what was and is communicated by God, so that all can hear the Good News. When the Bible was translated into the Indonesian language in the past, the translators began from the religious culture shared by Christians and Muslims. So, because of this, we find names in the Bible like Daud, which is the Arabic form of David, Yusuf which is the Arabic form of Joseph, and the name Allah, uttered every day in the prayers of our Muslim brothers and sisters. The Christian religion is different from Islam, and the Bible is different from Al Quran, but there are also commonalities between them, so that both communities refer to Allah as Dia Yang Maha Esa, Pencipta alam semesta – the One Great God, Creater of the universe.

Communication is functional when there are shared commonalities between two or more communities. The name or title Allah in the Bible makes the Bible a symbol for

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1 Alwi Shihab, Islam Inklusif, Mizan, Bandung, 1999, p. 345. Alwi Shihab is a leading authority and Muslim scholar on religious tolerance and pluralism. He was the Indonesian Coordinating Minister for People’s Welfare in 2004-2005 and the Foreign Minister of Indonesia from 1999 to 2001.
communication with our Muslim brothers and sisters who are part of the majority religious community in Indonesia. Singgih also ask why there are proposals to change the name Allah in the Indonesian translation of the Bible. According to him, this proposal arises in the context of an attempt to end the Bible’s role as a communication symbol. If all the shared commonalities that are in the Bible are lost, then the Bible will no longer function as a symbol of communication but rather the opposite: a symbol of non-communication that becomes a barrier to communication. If these shared commonalities are lost because each faction wants to emphasize its own identity, the outcome we will have to face is a polarization between religions. The consequence of this is that there will not be any communication, or it will be difficult to establish a meaningful and constructive relationship between Christians and Muslims in Indonesia.

It then becomes clear that there are challenges that the GKJ must confront in this century. On the one hand, as a consequence of globalization, the reassertion of its identity is a necessity while, on the other hand, from the perspective of religious pluralism, there is the challenge of religious polarization. The latter reminds the GKJ that, in its attempts to reassert its identity, it must not lose those shared commonalities that exist, thus allowing a relationship with another religion, in this case Islam, can develop in a meaningful and constructive way.

I would now like to answer the main question of this study: How can the Serat Widhatama and the Ngelmu Sejati theology of Sadrach Surapranata be retrieved for the purposes of constructing an authentic Javanese contextual theology for the GKJ that improves the deficiency of the current expression of its faith as found in Huran’s Iman Kristen and as expressed in its current main doctrinal statement, the PPAG? I will answer this question by explaining the significance of Harun’s Iman Kristen and the significance of Sadrach’s ngelmu sejati, and propose Widha Utama for a contextual PPAG as follows.

B. The Significance of Harun’s Iman Kristen

1. Harun’s Method

In his introduction to Iman Kristen, Harun Hadiwijono warns us that there are people who insist that explanation about the Christian faith should be taken directly (and literally of course) from the Bible, only from the Bible, and ignore all other sources. These people

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2 For example, there are Christians in Indonesia who propose changing the name Allah in the Indonesian translation of the Bible to Yahweh. For further discussion on this issue, see:
- http://www.in-christ.net/blog/teologi/yahweh_vs_allah_vs_qannadlk_revised_dan_update

As to Islam in Indonesia, there is not a great deal of tension regarding this issue. See:

belong to those we call Biblicists. For Harun, this way of thinking is not correct because the Bible is not a constitution or law. The content of the Bible should be examined thoughtfully, and this cannot be done by one person without falling into the danger of individualism. I agree absolutely with his statement here. The problem, however, is that Harun is not consistent with regards to his own warning. For me, all his explanations and arguments in *Iman Kristen* as discussed above show Harun’s own individualism. Recalling Gerald O’Collins’ statement that dogmatics aims to examine and bring forward all main Christian doctrines coherently and systematically, then, in my opinion, Harun does not do this. Rather, he attempts to bring forward other different doctrines and ‘examine’ them in the light of Christian doctrines. Here Christian (and Harun’s) doctrines are used as a standard for ‘examining’ (i.e. confronting) doctrines that are different from Christian doctrine. The originality of Harun’s method in writing *Iman Kristen* left him trapped in his own situation, whether or not he liberated himself from the traditional model of dogmatics and wanted to move towards a functional-contextual model.

According to Soelarso Sopater, in *Iman Kristen* Harun actually initiated an open dialogue with local cultures. It is not clear what Sopater meant by local cultures and how Harun opened the dialogue with them. His comment certainly must not be detached from the 1970s situation when contextual theology was not yet well developed. Therefore, it was not an open dialogue with the cultures. Indeed, for me, *Iman Kristen* is not an attempt at a functional-contextual dogmatics. It is clear that Harun did not open the dialogue between the Christian faith and local culture widely and deeply. Moreover, it has no function for Javanese Christians since it says nothing about how the Christian faith deals with their local culture, their context. Harun decided not to respond contextually. It was precisely this that A.A. Yewangoe noted. He writes that even though Harun pays serious attention to other religions, a true dialogue with them was not there. It is interesting that Sopater uses the term ‘local culture’ while Yewangoe uses ‘other religions’ as if Harun emphasized either the first or the second. It seems to me that they pay attention primarily to only one of them. Sopater conceivably struggles with the issues of faith and local culture, and Yewangoe with faith and

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4 Ibid., p. 22. Individualism in this context, according to Harun, refers to the idea that every single person has his or her own truth when explaining the Bible.


6 Sularso Sopater, “Saya Tidak Boleh Menoleh ke Belakang,” in A.A. Yewangoe et al., *Kontekstualisasi Pemikiran Dogmatika di Indonesia*, BPK Gunung Mulia, Jakarta, 2004, p. xxxvi. Sularso Sopater, the successor of Soedarmo as professor of dogmatics at STT Jakarta, is a systematic theologian from the GKI and was the General Chairman of the PGI (Persekutuan Gereja-Gereja Indonesia [the Communion of Churches in Indonesia]) for two periods: 1989-1994 and 1994-1999. He was also a member of the Interim Committee of the REC (Reformed Ecumenical Council) from 1988 to 1992.

other religions. One thing that is certain is that these issues receive substantial treatment in *Iman Kristen* (in the sense that each topic regarding the Christian faith is explained extensively in discussion with them). In my opinion, this is the only reason this book is more prominent than others, at least than previous texts on dogmatics published in Indonesia.

Unlike Sopater and almost in line with Yewangoe, Singgih said that it is true that *Iman Kristen* discusses the Christian faith in comparison with other religions’ comprehensions. Being more critical than they are, however he highlighted the fact that the views being compared were neither treated properly nor appreciated adequately as sources or as contexts relevant to the subject being investigated. For Singgih,\(^8\) Harun only emphasized the differences between the Bible and other religious traditions with regard to certain topics. It was a confrontation in the sense that he was explaining away all religious traditions as well as the religious views involved.\(^9\) The approach method of contextual theology, however, involves both confrontation and confirmation, *Iman Kristen* did not do the latter adequately.

2. **Some Alternatives**

To become a truly Javanese church, the GKJ needs to maintain an appropriate openness to and awareness of the context of Java. Therefore, alternative approaches are needed.

As we have already discussed, the designation of the term *sekutu* to describe the relation between God and man in *Iman Kristen* is, indeed, unique because it is not found in other dogmatic works. Nonetheless, it raises many problems. Therefore, a more functional and contextual term is needed. I agree with Martien E. Brinkman who views ‘humankind’ as the “counterpart of God.”\(^10\) If being the counterpart of God is what makes us distinctively human, then this has major anthropological consequences. It means that the relationship to God is not something extra that can be added to human existence but is constitutive for our humanity. According to C. Westermann, to whom Brinkman refers, it means that the uniqueness of human beings consists in their being God’s counterparts. The relationship to God is not something added to human existence; rather, humans are created in such a way that their very existence is intended to entail their relationship to God.\(^11\) Accordingly, I propose a new term, *pamor*, as an alternative to the term *sekutu*. *Pamor* is an Indonesian word that comes from a Javanese word for a specific pattern inherent in the blade of a good *keris* (a wavy double-bladed Javanese traditional dagger). In Javanese mysticism especially, there is

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\(^9\) Ibid., p. 176.


a famous and important philosophical saying: *pamoring kawula-Gusti* (the human-God union) that is depicted in terms of the sophisticated making of a *keris*.

With respect to Brinkman’s position above, the term *pamor* actually refers to humankind’s existence as the counterpart of God. The ‘glory’ of humankind exists in relation to the ‘prestige’ of God, and the ‘prestige’ of God exists in relation to the ‘glory’ of humankind. Humankind as the counterpart of God is, therefore, the ultimate experience of *pamoring kawula-Gusti*, and this is not necessarily an exclusive relationship. Here *Tuhan adalah sekutu umat-Nya* could be replaced by *Tuhan adalah pamor umat manusia*. It often happens that a mistaken understanding of the term *Pamoré Kawula Gusti* arises from the assumption that *kawula* (humankind) becomes *lutuh* (dissolved) and becomes identical with *Gusti* (Lord). This *Pamoré Kawula Gusti* is like the combination of gold and copper to produce *swasa* (an alloy of gold and copper), by fire. Gold or copper or the mixture of both is *kawula*, while what represents *Gusti* is fire. Metal is not fire, but if that metal glows, there is *pamoré*!

In regard to *Iman Kristen* on the relationship between the Christian faith and local cultures, we can learn not to repeat Harun’s approach of explaining all subjects by means of comparison with local cultures *secarabertele-tele* (in an excessively long and trivial way) if our only intention is to confront them or (to borrow Singgih’s wording) to explain away all the traditions involved. In my opinion, the most important thing is that we should pay attention to the need, as Robert J. Schreiter has stated, to *listen to a culture* in doing theology. In doing so, we can maintain our openness to and awareness of the context appropriately because, as Bevans said, our cultural and historical context play a part in the construction of the reality in which we live. Our context influences our understanding of God and the expression of our faith. Furthermore, we have to be aware that, as William P. Russell says, *contextualization has to do with how we assess the peculiarity of the contexts*. Therefore, *listening to a culture* means that we are ready to welcome the richness of our culture as part of our faith. Unlike Harun, who decided not to respond contextually, we should give up our ‘individualism’ and allow the peculiarity of our context a place.

As already mentioned above, Harun claimed that he formulated *Iman Kristen* in a popular way, unlike other dogmatic works, to be read by other people besides Christians. Unfortunately, Harun only emphasized self-appreciation and neglected self-criticism. Even worse, Harun also neglected to appreciate other religions. As an alternative, we need to emphasize not only self-criticism but also other-appreciation. The most important thing here

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12 See Chapter II, part C.
is not about how seriously we pay attention to other religions but how the true dialogue between the Christian faith and those religions can take place fairly. Therefore, in my opinion, there really is an urgent need to formulate a systematic theology fully equipped with discussion about Christians as people who relate to others, with ethical implications, because we, as Christians, coexist with the adherents of other religions. Accordingly, it is very important that the translation of the Bible in *Babasa Indonesia* be revised with respect to, for example, the command to love one’s neighbour as oneself where the Indonesian word for ‘neighbour’ is *sesamamu manusia* (people who are the same as oneself). For me, a better term here would be *semtua manusia* (all human beings). Therefore, we love all human beings.

C. The Significance of Sadrach’s *Ngèlmu Sejati*

As already stated in the introduction, the GKJ is confronted in this 21st century by the challenge on the one hand to assert its identity once again so that it is not swept away in the process of globalization with all its consequences and on the other to work dynamically to offer something that is of use to the world in which it exists. On the other hand, however, the challenge posed by the polarization between religions warns the GKJ against losing the existing shared commonalities in their attempts to reassert their identity so that relations with other religions, in this case Islam, can proceed in a meaningful and constructive way.

After the previous discussion of *ngèlmu sejati* as Sadrach’s contextual theology and its role in the history of Christianity in Java, we will now examine the meaning of Sadrach’s *ngèlmu sejati* theology for the GKJ so that we can engage in theology in context, i.e., the reassertion of its identity and interreligious relations, in this case between Islam and Christianity.

1. *Ngèlmu Sejati* and the Reassertion of Identity

In my view, to discuss the ‘actual’ identity of the GKJ is not easy because, as already mentioned in the introduction, the GKJ is not free of the influence of the church in the West, as evidenced, for example, in its organization, confession of faith, church regulations, music, and most of all theology. The use of the Heidelberg Catechism, which has extended over decades,16 shows that the GKJ does not yet possess a clear theological identity. Apart from that, in fact, the GKJ itself has not formulated those points in its doctrines that have to do with its identity. Because of this, I believe that it is very important for the GKJ to reassert

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16 The PPAG, compiled to ‘replace’ the Heidelberg Catechism, was published in March 1997, about 66 years after the GKJ was founded (1931). It may be noted that the format of the PPAG does not differ significantly from the Heidelberg Catechism, i.e., the question-answer form.
its identity, particularly in connection with doing theology in context. Once again, however, this is not an easy matter because, as Singgih emphasizes,

contextualisation is not just a ‘change in skin colour’ for the church from that which previously reflected Western culture to that which represents local Eastern culture.… [T]he issue of ‘skin’ is unlikely to be discussed apart from the problem of ‘content.’\(^{17}\)

In my opinion, this issue points not only to how the GKJ understands itself in connection to faith in Christ but also to how the GKJ understands itself in connection with the world in which it exists because it is inevitable that its self-understanding cannot avoid with the question of how the GKJ understands the world in which it lives and grows. Because of this, it is very important when Singgih says that:

The world is very important as the place where humankind gropes for its identity.… Christ who was crucified is hidden in the midst of this world behind the whole completely dazzling appearance of this world. This search for identity should not be sought in the spiritual realm considered to be separate from the world but in the midst of the world, the concrete world around us. Faith in Jesus Christ who was crucified is faith that is earthed.\(^{18}\)

Moving on from the above discussion, let us now understand the relevance of Sadrach’s \(ng\text{ê}lmu sejati\) theology for the GKJ for doing theology in context so that it will become clear that Sadrach’s \(ng\text{ê}lmu sejati\) theology is important for the GKJ in understanding itself in connection with faith in Jesus Christ and with the world in which it exists. To focus our discussion, we will concentrate on an understanding of \(ng\text{ê}lmu sejati\) as a contextual theology by Sadrach as we saw in the comparative discussion of the concept of \(ng\text{ê}lmu\) in the \textit{Serat W\text{ê}dhatama} and Sadrach’s \(ng\text{ê}lmu sejati\). For Javanese Christians, the Gospel becomes meaningful only if they truly follow the model of Christ and are willing to embrace the attitude of \textit{lugu}, which means not coming to \textit{ngemohi} their identity as Javanese people.

\textbf{a. \textit{Stigmata} as Signs of a Suffering Christ and the Identity of the GKJ}

As we have already seen, in Sadrach’s \(ng\text{ê}lmu sejati\) theology following the model of Christ is given form in ‘Javanese pietism’ and in the \textit{imitatio Christi}. For the GKJ, this means becoming a church that is \textit{ber budi bawa leksana} (noble-hearted) and \textit{ngudi sajatining becik} (pursuing the good), which must be understood in the framework of the \textit{imitatio Christi}. Christ becomes the example who has to be continually given form in church and social life. To become church, i.e., \textit{ber budi bawa leksana} and \textit{ngudi sajatining becik}, means viewing Christ as a \textit{panutan sejati} (a true example).

The problem now is how the GKJ understands who Christ is at this time because what is to be followed as a model must first of all emerge from an understanding of who

Jesus Christ is. The identity of the church points primarily to the identity of Christ and here it is important for the GKJ to evaluate Singgih’s view of the crucified Christ as the Christian identity. With reference to this opinion, the relevant question for the GKJ in reasserting its identity is whether the GKJ is able and willing to receive Christ with his suffering, whether the GKJ is willing and eager to receive the stigmata, whether the GKJ is willing to bear stigmata as its identity.

Christ who was crucified is in the midst of the suffering of the people in small villages in the interior, who voicelessly witness places of worship built with great effort wrecked or burned; simple people terrorized simply because they belonged to a different tribe or religion; but also in the suffering of the people of Aceh, Ambon, Irian Jaya, East Timor brought about by armed conflict; in the midst of students who demonstrated in the streets against the KKN, who fled when fired on by the army; in the midst of the villages of fishers and farmers who have become apathetic because of the large debts they’ve incurred to keep life going; in the midst of street children in great cities whose lives and honour are not worth half a cent; and in the midst of village mothers who cannot buy milk for their children, who would then become ‘the lost generation,’ undernourished and lacking everything.

In connection with the question above, it is only if the GKJ is willing to bear stigmata as its identity that it will be able to experience inner contentment in the Gospel. Inner contentment is not something ‘ready-made,’ like gifts received passively, just like that, from the Gospel. Inner contentment is not something a person instantly receives when he or she becomes a Christian. As already discussed in the comparative review of the concept of ngèlmu in the Serat Wèdhatama and Sadrach’s ngèlmu sejati, ngèlmu lubung will only kelakon if it is accompanied by laku utama, and this means that the Gospel will become meaningful and give inner contentment only if Christians truly follow the example of the laku utama, Christ. If not, then the Gospel will not be meaningful. The Gospel will not give a sense of calm to the heart. Moreover, if the GKJ is willing to take up stigmata as its identity, then the GKJ will truly be on the way toward the perfect life because the willingness to take up stigmata as identity points not only to a confession but also a readiness and willingness to receive Christ as guru, i.e., as the one digugu and ditiru: not only digugu, as pointing towards obedience to all sayings or teachings but also ditiru, as pointing towards the willingness to follow a model. Because, as we have already seen, the journey toward the perfect life cannot be separated from pitutur (instruction) and wewaler (prohibitions) as taught by a guru whose life must also be imitated, the willingness to take on stigmata as one’s identity truly points to confession, readiness, and willingness to receive Christ as panutan.

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19 Ibid., pp. 6-7. In connection with understanding concerning Christ who was crucified, Singgih touched on stigmata (Christ’s wounds from his crucifixion). This discussion emphasizes that Paul is able to point to proof that he has a relationship with Christ because Paul possesses stigmata: “in my body are the marks of Jesus” (Galatians 6:17). The term Paul uses for marks is stigmata. See LAI, Perjanjian Baru, Yunani-Indonesia, Jakarta, 1989, p. 1326.

Moving on from the above discussion, in reasserting its identity at this time, the GKJ is called to unearth the meaning of the suffering of Christ in this world, so that they can give meaning to the suffering that is occurring at present in their context. This can only be done if the GKJ is convinced that Christ is not a concept but a living person. Christian faith is a matter of relationship with Christ as a living person. In my view, Sadra’s ngelmu sejati theology is important here for the GKJ with respect to reasserting its identity, i.e., by following the model of Christ who was crucified as a living person. For the GKJ, receiving the depiction the ‘face of Jesus in Java’ as a panutan sejati (true example) points to the stigmata as an identity that must be affirmed.

b. The Lugu Attitude: The Struggle around Ethnicism and Confessionalism

I indicated above that a kind of clear formulation of doctrine is necessary concerning the identity of the GKJ. There needs to be clarity, for example, as to why is it called the GKJ, the Javanese Christian Church, if many of its members in certain areas are not from the Javanese ethnic community, or if Indonesian is used more than Javanese in their church life. This is important in order to prevent what Singgih terms etnisisme (ethnicism or tribalism) and konfesionalisme (confessionalism), as a form of compensation for the anxiety of being in the midst of the world.

It cannot be denied that, historically, the GKJ saw itself in both these ‘isms.’ At the very least, this is shown by the fact that, first of all, the word Jawa (Java or Javanese) in Gereja Kristen Jawa indicates that the church is made up of people from the Javanese ethnic community who are its members.21 Second, in terms of theology, the GKJ tends to be oriented toward its mother church, the Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland (the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands). Consciously or not, the blending of these two things has resulted in a ‘stigma’ (not stigmata). This is so first in that, if Javanese people want to become Christian they would be best off joining the GKJ because Javanese people fit in the Javanese church (as if Javanese Christians not becoming members of the GKJ was something reprehensible or irregular). Second, GKJ people are Reformed people.22

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21 I agree with Singgih that ethnicity certainly cannot be ignored. But, as in the case of the GKJ, which maintains its ‘skin’ as the Gereja Kristen Jawa (Javanese Christian Church), it cannot be denied that the use of the word Jawa is closely connected with Javanese ethnicity. The problem, however, is its unconditional nature. It should not be said that salvation is understood as something that can only occur, be directed towards, and possessed by Javanese Christians (read: the GKJ). Usually, an opinion like this cannot be separated from its ‘content’ or the teaching with which the laity been ‘indoctrinated’ by church ‘officials.’ We will see this in connection with confessionalism.

22 Cf. the experience of Partonadi who relates the confession of an elder in a GKJ congregation several years ago: ‘As a Gereformeerd person I am of the opinon that the Javanese gamelan (traditional orchestra) is not appropriate in church.’ See Partonadi, Sadrach’s Community, 1988, pp 232-233.
In connection with the identity of the GKJ, these two things cannot be separated because, in essence, the unconditional disposition that salvation also extends to the Javanese in the GKJ arises because the GKJ follows the teaching of the Reformed Churches, a teaching that arose as a consequence of the the colonial expression of Dutch Christianity as superior to Javanese Christianity. So, the GKJ persists in being called the GKJ because it still maintains this superiority. If the GKJ expression of Christianity is no longer in line with the colonial expression of Dutch Christianity, then it is no longer accurate to call it the GKJ. As a matter of fact, this is the type of stigma that arose.

In a situation like the one outlined above, Sadrach’s ngelmu sejati theology is significant for the GKJ in the reassertion of its identity, i.e., with a lugu attitude, which means not coming to ngemohi its identity as Javanese. But this does not become easy just because the lugu attitude confronts the GKJ first of all in a struggle over its own ethnicity and certainly in its confessionality. So, if the understanding of lugu points toward commitment to preserving its identity as Javanese, then, for the GKJ, this has to do with how the ‘stigma’ which had stuck to them for so long, concerning the GKJ as a Reformed church, can be let go. Because the problem of ‘skin’ cannot be separated from the problem of ‘content’ then it is not simply a problem of changing the name of the GKJ, which has been too long identified with Reformed, because, as argued by E.G. Singgih, contextualization in not simply ‘changing the skin’ of the church. It is correct that, from the aspect of its ‘skin,’ the GKJ is the Gereja Kristen Jawa. It is precisely its ‘content’ that has to be reformulated to become a church with the lugu attitude, with the intention to become golongane wong kristen kang mardika, most particularly in the expression of their Javanese Christianity and in their attempt to do theology contextually, so that the GKJ might thus be able, in a dynamic way, to offer something of value to the world in which it exists. This is the important meaning of Sadrach’s ngelmu sejati, in connection with having lugu attitude, for the GKJ in reasserting its identity.

2. **Ngelmu Sejati and Muslim-Christian Relations**

It has already been explained that, on the one hand, the GKJ’s reassertion of its identity is necessary because of the existence of globalization. On the other hand, however, from the perspective of religious pluralism, the challenge of polarization between religions reminds the GKJ that in its efforts to reassert its identity it must not lose the shared commonalities that exist, so that relations with another religion, in this case Islam can continue in a meaningful and constructive way. Because of this, let us examine now the meaning of ngelmu sejati for the GKJ in addressing the challenge, so that the identity to be affirmed does not become a
barrier to communication with Islam but a foundation on which to build a meaningful and constructive relationship.

a. A Choice: Proclaiming the Gospel à la Sadrach or Christianization

It is important to remember, as explained in the section on the role of the ngelmu sejati for the development of the Christian religion in the context of Islam, that Sadrach greatly valued and understood Islam as the context in which he undertook the proclamation of the Gospel. Understanding the context greatly determined the fruitfulness or otherwise of his proclamation of the Gospel. In addition, Sadrach never tried to seek followers or to convert another person to Christianity. What he did was to proclaim the Gospel as ngelmu sejati, to proclaim Jesus as guru, panutan, and Ratu Adil. If others became Christian in the end this was as the result of deep struggle grounded on adequate knowledge and awareness of what was chosen and decided. I stress this so that it becomes clear that there is a difference between proclaiming the Gospel and Christianization.

At the same time, as explained by Singgih, Christianization is an attempt, undertaken consciously and with planning, with the goal of forming a group of Christians regardless of their affiliation.23 As we have already seen it was something like this that the Dutch evangelists were attempting to do. Their presence was indeed to mengkristenkan (Christianize, and at the same time to mem-Belanda-kan/verhollandiseren/Dutchify) Javanese people, because for them the only true Christianity was Reformed Christianity. Such a tendency, whether conscious or not, also existed in communication with other religions. Islam was no exception. Because of this, as already discussed, having a lugu attitude as the identity of the GKJ must be clarified in order to engage in theology in context. That this becomes the identity that must be explained is very relevant to the reality of the tendency mentioned above. This is why ngelmu sejati is important for the GKJ in communicating with Islam, i.e., the existence of an understanding and awareness of proclaiming the Gospel without it being accompanied by a simple desire to seek followers, let alone to ‘Christianize’ other people. To proclaim the Gospel à la Sadrach means that the GKJ already indicated its appreciation for and comprehension of Islam as the context in which to do theology, and, on this foundation, it might be hoped that communication with Islam would be able to proceed in a meaningful and constructive way.

Nonetheless, what has been described above is only a beginning. The appreciation and comprehension of Islam as the context for doing theology should be followed up by proclaiming the Gospel in the sense of causing the Gospel itself to be present. This means communicating a message of joy. If the presence of the GKJ in the midst of this world is bad news to our brothers and sisters who are Muslims, this could be because the the GKJ’s

23 Singgih, Iman dan Politik, 2000, p. 129.
understanding of the Gospel itself may be deficient or even misplaced. If, for example, Christians go to a splendid church dressed in expensive clothes and driving a luxurious automobile while never having had any evident ‘presence’ in the life of the local community, the majority of whom are from the less advantaged social and economic groups, it is not too much to say that the existence of the Gospel and the presence of Christian people will be taken as bad news, meaning that the core of the Gospel is completely misunderstood. Because of this I propose that the ‘stigmata’ become the identity of the GKJ that must be reaffirmed, so that the presence of the Gospel and thus the presence of the GKJ may become a message of joy in the midst of this world because joy can only be understood in suffering, just as the resurrection of Christ only came about after his suffering and death.

The above discussion argued that the reassertion of its identity (by following the model of Christ and having a lugu attitude) will not become a barrier to the GKJ in furthering its relationship with Islam. Let us now see how, with an identity like this, the GKJ might weave a relationship with Islam that is meaningful and constructive.

b. Ngèlmu Sejati as Anknüpfungspunkt for the Relationship of Islam and Christianity in Java

The term Anknüpfungspunkt means ‘point of contact.’ This term is used here in understanding the problem of contextualization, which is not simply applying some particular concept or system to the local situation (context) but also enquiring whether the concept or system links up with the local understanding of life or worldview.24 Thus, in connection with the above, the existence of an appreciation and understanding of Islam as context, as already discussed, refers to the understanding that Javanese Islam also engages in theology in the context of Java. This is why the expression Islam Jawa (Javanese Islam) exists,25 just as the expression of Kristen Jawa indicates a Javanese Christianity.26

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24 Singgih, Dari Israel ke Asia, 1982, p. 31.
25 See Mark R. Woodward, Islam in Java: Normative Piety and Mysticism in the Sultanate of Yogyakarta, The University of Arizona Press, Tucson, 1989, (Indonesian translation: Islam Jawa, LkiS, Yogyakarta, 1999). Some people believe that being Javanese and being Muslim are two irreconcilable identities. Others believe that one can be both. For some Javanese, Islam may have been a means of gaining yet another source of supernatural power. For others, it was the key to salvation. For still others, it was anathema. Adherence to Islam meant changing significant social customs, notably abandoning pork (but probably not alcohol, to judge from later evidence), burying rather than cremating the dead, and circumcising the young. But it was evidently the case that, in the minds of those who adopted the new faith, older ideas about the supernatural survived formal conversion. See M.C. Ricklefs, Polarizing Javanese Society: Islamic and Other Visions (C. 1830-1930), NUS Press, Singapore, 2007, p. 2.
26 There was sometimes a distinction drawn by the Javanese between Christians who had been converted by European missionaries, who were called Kristen Londo (Dutch Christian), and those who were converted by Javanese proselytisers, who were called Kristen Jawa (Javanese Christian). See Ricklefs, Polarizing Javanese Society, 2007, p. 106.
As is well known, Islam manifests itself in a union of syari'ah (law) and tariqah (a spiritual path often referred to as Sufism or tasawuf mysticism). Syari'ah is a path to God via external signs, while tariqah involves the spiritual or inner aspect more. The human journey to God as al-awwal (The Beginning) and al-akhbir (The End), will reach its goal only undertaken via these two paths: syari'ah and tariqah. The journey through syari'ah and tariqah will bring humans to haqiqah (Ultimate Reality, i.e., God).

In the Javanese context, (Javanese) Muslims understand that humans, living according to pitutur and wewaler (syari'ah) and always hanggayuh kasampurnaning hurip-berbudi bawa leksana-ngudi sajatinining becik (tariqah), will come to kaswuyatan (haqiqah). These three dimensions of the Islamic religion, that is syari'ah, tariqah, and haqiqah, are in harmony with three other things: islam, iman, and ibadah. Historically, islam is made manifest through syari'ah and fiqh, whereas iman was institutionalized through kalâm along with other forms of doctrinal teachings. In the same way, ibadah shows its presence most of all through teachings and life (sufi). The hadith quoted states that ibadah is the deepest understanding and experience that enables humans to “worship God as though humans saw him” (an ta'hu Allâh ka-annaka tariqah). This means that the Sufis always work hard to be aware of the presence of God in the world and in themselves and to do the best they can.

Of course, this 19th-century Islam with a strong Sufi presence in Java cannot be compared with the more recent militant expressions of Islam. Florian Pohl noted that recent media coverage has been marked by a heightened sense that the pesantren (Islamic boarding schools) constitute a ‘problem’ globally as much as to Indonesia’s fledgling democracy. This has been done to the extent that the German magazine Geo declared the pesantren and their kiai (pesantren leader) “die vielleicht größte Gefahr für das Land” (perhaps the country’s...
The rise of militant Islam cannot be separated from the ‘fall’ of what Ricklefs calls the “mystic synthesis.” We can see this mystic synthesis as the Javanese understanding of Sufism, resting on three prominent distinguishing features. The first of these was a strong sense of Islamic identity: Javanese society was a society of Muslims. The second was fulfillment of the five pillars of Islamic ritual life: reciting the confession of faith, ritual prayer five times a day, giving alms, fasting in the month of Ramadhan, and the pilgrimage to Mecca. The third characteristic – perhaps surprisingly for some readers, given the two previous ones – was the acceptance of an array of local spiritual forces, from village spirits, haunted sites and inanimate things ‘alive’ with spirits to the immensely powerful Goddess of the Southern Ocean. According to Ricklefs, the fall of this mystic synthesis was caused by the dramatic change in Javanese society in the 19th-century: 1) the cultuurstelsel (cultivation system), 2) the indisputably high rate of population growth (which was followed by the improvement of communication and transportation infrastructure, which facilitated the transport of products, the integration of Java’s economy into that of the wider world, peasant mobility, private commerce, and the spread of ideas), and 3) Islamic reform and revival.

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30 Accusations of the Saudi encouragement of radicalism in Java also feature prominently in articles. One reads of allegations that militant Muslim organizations exert control over a growing number of pesantren that produce “countless young militants schooled in jihad.” More than any other pesantren, Pondok Pesantren Al-Mukmin in Ngruki, Central Java, has been mentioned repeatedly in the international press and was also implicated by an International Crisis Group (ICG) report as the center for a network of militant Muslims with suspected links to al-Qaeda.31

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31 The key factor underlying the cultuurstelsel output was the investment of Javanese labour in agricultural production for the government. The key to this labour investment was the rising population. See Ricklefs, Polarizing Javanese Society, 2007, p. 14.

32 The peasant population was highly mobile. People moved for many reasons: to escape the burdens of compulsory labour, to take up wage labour, to escape harvest failures, to open up new agricultural lands, to flee oppression by local officials, or to seek opportunities in the growing towns and cities. Roads, lesser paths, and very many bridges were needed to link together the ever-expanding networks of settlements in Java’s countryside. See Ricklefs, Polarizing Javanese Society, 2007, pp. 18-19.

33 The spread of printing played an important role, while the advent of steam shipping and the opening of the Suez Canal greatly facilitated pilgrimage traffic. As the number of Javanese hajis grew, so ideas of reform spread from their Middle Eastern heartland to the towns of Java. Increasing numbers of pesantren were vehicles for transmitting a purified islam. See Ricklefs, Polarizing Javanese Society, 2007, p. 253.
It is important to note that, despite the dramatic changes, Ricklefs admits that the older “mystic synthesis” continued. It was reflected in much of the Javanese literature emanating from the courts of Java. He said that the most famous work was (and is) probably Mangkunagara IV’s *Serat Wédhatama,*\(^{39}\) with its admonition to the youth to follow the example of the founder of the *Mataram* dynasty, Senapati Ingalaga, who met with the Goddess of the Southern Ocean, and, should they turn to the example of the Prophet of Islam, to remember that, “seeing that you are Javanese, just a little is enough.”\(^{40}\) I concur with Stuart Robson who says that “the message of the *Wédhatama* is one of cultural identity. It says: we are Javanese, and we should be true to ourselves and follow our own way in the realm of spirituality …”\(^{41}\)

With this kind of understanding, *ngèlmu sejati* becomes the *Anknüpfungspunkt* or point of contact for Javanese Muslim and Christian communities when Muslim and Christian Javanese are able to be aware, in the midst of this universe, that whether they are Muslims Christians they are still Javanese. *Ngèlmu sejati* becomes the *Anknüpfungspunkt* in Muslim-Christian relations when these Muslim and Christian live according to *pitutur* (instruction) and *wewaler* (prohibitions), as given by their own *guru* (teacher), at the same time imitating their own *panutan* (example). For the Muslim community this would be Muhammad; for the Christian community Christ. Here, I want to make clear that, imitating their own *panutan* (example) should be understood in the framework of thought that always sees Javanese identity as the chief thing to be emphasized. Then *ngèlmu sejati* becomes the *Anknüpfungspunkt* in Muslim-Christian relations when Javanese who are Muslims and Javanese who are Christians together *banggayuh kasampurnaning burip* (strive to achieve the perfect life) in their daily life, are *ber budi bawa leksana* (noble hearted) and *ngudi sajatinings becik* (love and pursue goodness). If all this is done, then truly they will be on the path leading to the same Ultimate Reality, who is known as *Gusti, Al-awwal wa Al-âkhir,* and *Tuhan Yang Maha Esa* (The One Almighty God).

### D. *Wédha Utama: A Proposal for a Contextual PPAG*

#### 1. The PPAG as a *Wédha* that is *Utama*

Javanese theologians, if asked to mention the names of some of the lofty products of their theological literature, might find it difficult to respond. Indeed, no work of theological literature has yet been written that is of such quality that it could be included among its ‘highest literary products’. If the GKJ wishes to look at the prestige enjoyed by *Serat*

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\(^{39}\) Ibid.

\(^{40}\) Here we see the significant role of *laku* (means by which to attain some specific goal) as explained in *pupuh* (song) *Sinom, pada* (verse) 10. See Stuart Robson, *The Wédhatama,* KITLV Press, Leiden,, 1990, pp. 30-31. See also chapter 1, part C2b.

Wédhatama, this status could in fact be attained by the PPAG, and not only as a theological work but primarily by studying how to have the PPAG represent a same ideal of literary beauty. Then, what is no less important, how to make the content of the PPAG weighty, heavy with the authority of teaching on sublime subjects. In other words, the PPAG needs good ‘packaging’ to contain teaching that is also good, outwardly and inwardly, both its ‘skin’ and its content. In this way, the PPAG could not only be included among Indonesia’s ‘highest literary products’ but could also really become wédha (teaching) that is utama (supreme).

If Serat Wédhatama is packaged in the form of Javanese poetry known as macapat, within the compass of 72 stanzas, then the PPAG could be packaged in a different format, not necessarily the same because the significance of the Serat Wédhatama for the formulation of a PPAG that is contextual does not rest solely on its format as macapat but on the fact that it represents an ideal of literary beauty, like a story. As I indicated previously, we need to develop a dogmatics, or, better, a theology that is not too systematic, i.e., one that is not based on rigid definitions but on story (wisdom teachings) because the Javanese people still live in a world of story. Our theology should be a theology of story, a theology that starts from the human story of this life, the story of our own lives. As to how this story must be given the artistic touches to fulfil the criterion of literary beauty in the context of Javanese culture the GKJ Synod is able to make use of an institution that it itself possesses, namely, the LEMKABUJA (Lembaga Kajian Kebudayaan Jawa; Institute for Javanese Cultural Studies). In 2012 this institution sponsored a gathering of Javanese cultural figures from the whole of the GKJ, attended by cultural figures from a variety of traditional artistic and cultural backgrounds (dance [tari], painting [lukis], voice [suara], music [musik], literature [astra], shadow theatre [wayang kulit], Javanese stage drama [wayang orang], batik, mask [topeng], and various other art forms). The topic of this gathering was to confirm that for the future LEMKABUJA would continue to be engaged in bringing colour to the Javanese Christian Churches, so that there would be an application of Javanese cultural values in the spiritual development of the GKJ. I am convinced that if the GKJ seriously intends to formulate principal teachings that are better in form and content, then the task of ‘packaging’ the PPAG in the form of story with an eye to demonstrating its literary beauty could be given to this institution – of course, under the supervision of the GKJ’s own theologians. This PPAG in the form of story could then also be presented as kethoprak (popular Javanese drama) or wayang plays, both wayang orang and wayang kulit. LEMKABUJA has the capacity to undertake this task. At the very least, from the Lokakarya Penyusunan Gendhing-gendhing Liturgi (Workshop for the Compilation of Liturgical Music for the

42 http://www.gkj.or.id/?pilih=news&aksi=lihat&id=431
Gamelan) held in 2013 and organized in collaboration with the Pusat Kajian Seni Religius Fakultas Teologi Universitas Kristen Duta Wacana (The Centre for the Study of Religious Art of the Faculty of Theology at Duta Wacana Christian University) we can see how far LEMKABUJA has progressed in achieving what had been agreed on in 2012. The objectives of that workshop were first to create and compile compositions of liturgical music for the gamelan to meet the needs of congregational worship; second, to deepen the understanding of liturgical gamelan music in keeping with liturgical norms; and, third, to promote closer communication between observers and Javanese cultural participants, particularly in gamelan music, to meet liturgical needs.43 If the elements of Javanese cultural arts could be combined later in the preparation and dissemination of the PPAG in the form of story, then I am convinced that the PPAG will become an artistic theological work because it represents an ideal of literary beauty.

Next, to make the content of the PPAG substantial, weighty with the authority of teaching on sublime subjects, then the GKJ must pay attention to what is termed local literary knowledge, i.e., an understanding of literature reflecting the values of local wisdom. According to the poet John Keats “beauty is truth, truth beauty.”44 This means that literary knowledge that is aesthetic and reflects the values of local wisdom must also contain truth within it. For me, literature is the thought-provoking documents of cultural history, and because of this, as André Lefevere said, literary works must have the content of science, truth, and ideology.45 These three things are intertwined, confirming that literature represents a fragment of deep thought about the world and the hereafter. This is why a beautiful and weighty literary work will embody what H.-G. Gadamer termed Geisteswissenschaften.46 In my opinion, a literary work like this can offer enlightenment for life. Starting from this understanding, it is necessary to think deeply about the compilation of the PPAG, whether it will ‘only’ be a kind of writing that merely gives information, conveys a story, or whether this information and story embrace within them science, truth, and ideology? This means that the content of these principals of teaching must be accountable scientifically, academically, and theologically, embodying truth in the sense of conformity with fact or reality, not information or story that denies reality. For example, if we speak of the identity of the GKJ, this cannot be separated from Indonesia’s long colonial history. These issues must also receive thorough coverage in the PPAG. Many lay members still think that Sadrach ‘established’ or at least

43 http://www.gkj.or.id/?pilih=news&aksi=lihat&id=735
45 Andre Lefevere, Literary Knowledge, Van Gorcum, Assen, 1977, p. 9
46 Ibid., p. 28. Cf. the conclusion by Nicolaus Driyarkara, which explains the Geisteswissenschaften as spiritual and cultural sciences, which study matters in which the human spirit plays a decisive role. See A. Sudiarja, Karya Lengkap Driyarkara. Esai-Esai Filsafat Pemikir yang Terlibat Penuh dalam Perjuangan Bangsanya, Gramedia, Jakarta, 2006, p. 987.
‘founded’ the GKJ. Information or a story like this clearly does not embody conformity with fact or reality. There is a connection with Sadrach in the history of the establishment of the GKJ, and this of course is also something that should be clarified. Then, regarding the problem of ideology, as I have already underlined, it is very important to clarify for the laity what the GKJ’s ideology is. Is it going to continue to acknowledge the ‘Protestant blood’ that flows throughout its body? If so, which Protestant tradition will it endorse – the Calvinist? Is the present PPAG truly Calvinist? But, most important, the PPAG must be able to give enlightenment to anyone who reads it.

2. Ngèlmu iku kalakoné kanthi laku as a key concept

I explained in chapter 1 that the Serat Wédhatama embodies a key concept: Ngèlmu iku kalakoné kanthi laku. It is very important that the GKJ ‘adopt’ this concept so that the PPAG improves in form and content. This begins primarily with the expectation that the PPAG not only include principles for instruction but also that it be able to become ngèlmu lubung (lofty knowledge). Of course, this is not the prime or only goal. The PPAG, if it has already become ngèlmu lubung, is only going to be of use to the laity if it is accompanied by a determination to live according to the view that life possesses a definite rule that must be followed in a disciplined way, by means of a certain practice. This is why the PPAG must also include piwulang (instruction), not merely abstract knowledge or a fanciful story but practical instruction that can be put into effect in everyday life. In this way, the PPAG not only ‘works’ on the level of ideas but also on a practical level. Thus, it is these practical matters that later become relevant in the understanding of berbudi bawa leksana and nyudi sajatining becik (containing guidance toward attaining a noble heart as well as loving and pursuing the good). So, a PPAG that is beautiful and weighty as well as enlightening can be applied practically.

Then, in the framework of the thought of the Serat Wédhatama, these practical matters in the PPAG must be initiated with sincerity of heart. The significance of such sincerity is to give peace. For me, it is very interesting that this sincerity is associated with bringing tranquility or a feeling of calm, of quiet. A state of sincerity is required on the part of a person wishing to carry out this piwulang; he or she must at the same time be able to bring about tranquility. This indication is of great value because it is not uncommon that a person seeks something, even in sincerity of heart, but does not obtain a sense of calm and quiet. The result is that the harmony of his life as a Javanese person is destroyed.47 In my opinion,

47 Franz Magnis Suseno, Etika Jawa-Sebuah Analisa Falsafi tentang Kebijaksanaan Hidup Jawa, Gramedia Pustaka Utama, Jakarta, 1999, pp. 82-137, particularly pp. 133-137, concerning the viewpoint of the Javanese world, within which an understanding of rasa is emphasized and the experience of slamet is
this needs to be emphasized in the PPAG and must indeed be placed at the beginning as a
kind of instruction (petunjuk) on how to read, appreciate, and understand the PPAG, so that all
that will be read later is truly able to bring enlightenment and with the instructions (piwulang)
given one can implement goodness in one’s daily life.

3. Guiding Javanese Christians toward kawruh sangkan paraning dumadi

As I already explained in the introduction, the highest concern of the Javanese people, as
strongly stated by Banawiratma, is the essence and meaning of life itself; the goal is the
perfect life. In Javanese, this is described as banggayuh kasampurnaning hurip (striving after the
perfect life). Emphasis is placed on the questions regarding sangkan paraning dumadi (the
origin and destiny of life). Because of this, wisdom teachings in the PPAG must include
matters associated with this sangkan paraning dumadi.

The easiest thing to be done, for example, would be to recount stories associated with
creation from the book of Genesis up to the end times from the book of Revelation. It is
clear in a ‘literal’ sense that these deal with the question of sangkan paraning dumadi. But this
would certainly become a story that is very ‘general’ and too long. I propose that the GKJ
begin with its own identity, giving information about its name, logo, ‘denomination,’ and, of
course, things that ‘tie in’ with its history. All of this information must, of course, show
conformity with fact or reality. This information is very important at the beginning to indicate
what the GKJ truly is. The story about sangkan paraning dumadi will never attract and will not
have any meaning without the presence of people who are banggayuh kasampurnaning hurip
(seeking the perfect life).

Then, if it is desired that the changes to be made are not too ‘radical,’ the GKJ could
make use of the system of the present PPAG as a kind of ‘pattern’ for arranging stories in an
orderly fashion. After beginning with information about the identity of the GKJ as a kind of
introduction, it would be possible to follow up on this by recounting stories about the Bible.
In the present PPAG, the Bible is given a place in chapter two, and the space given for
information about it is relatively limited. Apart from the issue of how much space should be
given to it in the new PPAG, I recommend that the Bible be introduced as the Book of Life
about sangkan paraning dumadi, and that it talks about Gusti Yesus (Lord Jesus) as the guru who
gives piwulang (instruction), and becomes a panutan (example) for the believer to berbindi bawa
leksana and ngudi sajatining becik find guidance for attaining a noble heart and loving and
pursuing the good), so that at a future time he will experience kasampurnaning hurip
(perfection of life) by experiencing Manunggaling kawula-Gusti. This section must be given a

achieved by way of a situation of tentrem ing manah (quietness of heart), as an awareness. See also pp. 51-
54, particularly p. 54 concerning the condition of tentrem (peace, quiet).

48 J.B. Banawiratma S.J., Yesus Sang Guru, Kanisius, Yogyakarta, 1977, p.120.
place at the very beginning as a kind of foundation and introduction to the GKJ by which one can gain access to the principal teachings later.

In the present PPAG, chapter one contains instruction about “Church Teachings” and chapter four discusses the “Church and Church Order.” I suggest that this section be combined to become one, as chapter three in the new PPAG. At the same time, chapter three of the present PPAG, “God’s Salvation,” could become chapter two. If this is done, then the progression of the stories that begins with the Bible in chapter one will flow well because they will be followed by the principal teachings concerning “God’s Salvation.” Arranging the journey sangkan paraning dumadi is more easily absorbed and understood. In this section the GKJ needs to pay attention carefully to my critical examination in an earlier chapter on soteriology and the triune nature of God so that the identity of the GKJ as a Calvinist Protestant church (if indeed this is what is chosen/defended as its identity) will become clear, so that these principal teachings can later be justified academically and theologically.

The principal teaching concerning “God’s Salvation” could be followed in chapter three by a combination of “Church Teachings” and “Church and Church Order.” It will certainly be necessary to consider how the GKJ would designate each chapter or principal teaching so that it can be ‘dissolved’ into the integrity of the story from beginning to end. What is clear is that in this section there will be greater content of information about the GKJ as an institution and about understanding the church in general. Its nature is very cognitive. Certainly it will be necessary here and there to present piwulang on how the congregation can worship in accordance with the Book of Life and how it can celebrate and/or observe the sacraments appropriately.

Chapter four in the new PPAG could contain the principal teaching from chapter five of the present PPAG, i.e., “The Life of the Believer in the World.” In this chapter piwulang receives a principal place and perhaps dominates the whole chapter. Because of its connection with principal teachings concerning the “Ethical Life,” “Attitude to the World,” “Attitude to Culture,” “Attitude to Science, Technology, and Engineering,” “Attitude to Secularism,” “Viewpoint on Citizenship,” “Attitude to State Power,” and “Viewpoint and Attitude to Religions,” it is necessary that, in addition to material that is informative in nature, this section needs to contain practical instruction on the attitude of the laity. This is because the lay member of the congregation requires, generally speaking, in addition to information, instruction on how he must live his daily life. This is why it would be best for the principal teachings indicated above to also contain issues that are part of the daily life of the congregation in particular and of the life of the community in general, so that berbudi bawa leksana and ngudi sajatining becik can really be undertaken by the congregation. Here, I would
like to emphasize what Pudja Prijatma (also known as Ki Atma) says, i.e., that God’s love is for every human being in this world despite their different backgrounds. Therefore the teaching of the church (the GKJ) should not focus on how to convert them to Christianity (Christianization) but on how Christians can live together with their fellow human beings by loving one another and actualizing the so-called damai sejahtera (peace in all aspects of life) together.49

The final chapter (chapter six) of the present PPAG contains instruction on “Some Important Spiritual Legacies in Church Life.” This would become chapter five in the new PPAG. Because it contains teachings about “The Ten Commandments,” “The Law of Love,” “The Apostles Creed,” and “Prayer,” I do not think this section needs to be dominated by matters of an informative and dogmatic nature. Understanding “The Ten Commandments,” “The Law of Love,” and “The Apostles Creed” is preferably focused on giving piwulang on how to pray properly, in keeping with the Book of Life. It would be useful if the matters clarified in the final section of the Serat Wédhatama on sembah catur were included in this chapter to give piwulang in practical terms on how prayer with raga, cipta, jiwa, and rasa can be fulfilled in everyday life. In this regard, Bambang Subandrio noted that sembah catur could become a liturgical structure for the GKJ in worship because it helps Javanese Christians reveal the depth of their faith as well as their identity.50

In addition to the five chapters referred to above, I think it is necessary to provide an additional section, as a kind of conclusion to the wisdom teachings. This section could have a macapat format like the Serat Wédhatama, containing a brief summary of each of the chapters (1-5) and an expression of the expectations and goals of the GKJ for its life as church in society, nation, and country. This section could later also be read, or even recited or sung, as a prayer in the liturgy on particular occasions, so that the core of these GKJ teachings can be continuously told, shared so that the congregation also is constantly reminded of the principal teachings of their church. Lukas Eko Sukoco51 provides a good example of how to contextualize Sunday sermons by dressing and acting as Semar inWayang Uwong (Javanese human puppet theatre) style, and then gives pitutur (instruction) on how Javanese Christians should live with the attitude of bhudi bawa leksana and commitment to nyudi sajatining beik.

49 Pudja Prijatma was the general secretary of the GKJ synod. He is now known as Ki Atma, the Leader of Padepokan Mardika in Purwodadi, Central Java. See Darsono Eko Nugroho (ed.), Mewartakan Kasih Allah dalam Konteks Indonesia Masa Kini (Proclaiming God’s Love in Today’s Indonesian Context), TPK, Yogyakarta, 2009, p. 131.
50 Bambang Subandrio is the Chairman of the Department of Leadership Development of the GKJ Synod. See Nugroho (ed.), Mewartakan Kasih Allah, 2009, p. 98.
(containing within itself guidance toward attaining a noble heart and loving and pursuing the good).\textsuperscript{52} Therefore, the conclusion of the new PPAG can be delivered to and received by the laity within the Javanese context.

Below is the comprehensive comparison between the current table of contents of the PPAG with the suggested new table of content:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Current</th>
<th>Suggested</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| **Introduction: PPAG’s History** | - The status of the PPAG as a church document  
- Background  
- Process of compilation  
- Simplification and refinement  
- Continuity and change  
- Approach  
- Development | **Introduction: GKJ’s Identity**  
Information about its name, logo, ‘denomination,’ and things that ‘tie in’ with its history. All of this information of course must show conformity with fact or reality and related thoroughly with the story about sangkan paraning dumadi, with the presence of the GKJ that is hanggayuh kasampurna-ning hurip (seeking the perfect life). |
| **Church Teaching** | This chapter contains questions and answers the teaching of the church | **Bible**  
The Bible is introduced as the Book of Life about sangkan paraning dumadi, with Gusti Yesus (Lord Jesus) as the Guru who gives piwulang and becomes a panutan for believers to berbudi bawa leksana and ngudi sojatining becik, so that they can experience kasampurnanining hurip at a future time in experiencing Manunggaling kawula Gusti. |
| **God’s Salvation** | This chapter contains questions and answers about:  
- The meaning and essence of God’s salvation.  
- The event of God’s salvation  
- The Triune God  
- Who are the saved and what attitude enables someone to be saved. | **God’s Salvation**  
In this section GKJ will need to pay attention carefully to my critical examination in an earlier chapter on soteriology and the triune nature of God, so that the identity of the GKJ as a Calvinist church will become clear. |
| **Church Teaching and Worship** | In this section there will be more information about the GKJ as an institution and about understanding the church in general. Its nature is very cognitive. It will certainly be necessary here and there to present piwulang on how the congregation can worship in accordance with the Book of Life and how it can celebrate | |

\textsuperscript{52} See http://www.gkj.or.id/?pilih=news&mod=yes&aksi=lihat&id=1065.
- The journey of salvation and/or follow the sacraments appropriately.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4</th>
<th>The Church and Church Order</th>
<th>The Life of the Believer in the World</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This chapter contains questions and answers about:</td>
<td>In this chapter piwulang will receive a superior place and perhaps dominate the whole chapter. It is necessary that, in addition to informative material, this section also contain practical instruction on the demeanor of the congregation. This is because the lay member of the congregation requires, generally speaking, in addition to information, instruction on how he must live his daily life. It includes issues that are part of the daily life of the congregation in particular and of the life of the community in general, so that berbudi bawa leksana and ngudi sajatining becik can really be undertaken by the congregation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- The church</td>
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<tr>
<td>- The church’s task and calling</td>
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<td>- Diversity and unity of the church</td>
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<td>- The order of church life</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Worship as the means of supporting faith</td>
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<td>- The sacraments as a means of supporting faith</td>
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</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5</th>
<th>Life of the Believer in the World</th>
<th>Some Important Spiritual Legacies in Church Life</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This chapter contains questions and answers about:</td>
<td>Understanding “The Ten Commandments,” “The Law of Love,” and “The Apostles Creed” are preferably focused on giving piwulang on how to pray properly, in line with the Book of Life. The matters clarified in the final section of the Serat Wédhatama, on sembah catur can be included in this chapter to give piwulang in practical terms on how prayer with raga, cipta, jiwa and rasa can be performed in everyday life.</td>
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<td>- The ethical life</td>
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<td>- One’s attitude to the world</td>
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<td>- One’s attitude to culture</td>
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<td>- One’s attitude to science, technology and engineering</td>
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<td>- One’s attitude to secularism</td>
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<td>- One’s viewpoint on citizenship</td>
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<td>- One’s attitude to state power</td>
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<td>- One’s viewpoint and attitude to religions</td>
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<tr>
<th>6</th>
<th>Some Important Spiritual Legacies in Church Life</th>
<th>Summary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This chapter contains questions and answers about:</td>
<td>This section could have a macapat format like the Serat Wédhatama, containing a brief summary of each of the chapters (1-5), and also an expression of the expectations and goals of the GKI for its life as church in society, nation, and country.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- The Ten Commandments</td>
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<td>- The Law of Love</td>
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<td>- The Apostles Creed</td>
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<td>- Prayer</td>
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</tbody>
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If these things are done then I am convinced that when Javanese theologians are asked to mention the names of some of the lofty products of their theological literature, they will cite the PPAG with pride because the PPAG will represent an ideal of literary beauty that has been achieved through the use of noble language appropriate to its subject, its expression
echoing with elegant vocabulary and laden with alliteration and assonance, and clearly also weighty with the authority of teaching on sublime subjects. Because of this, it would not be too much if the PPAG was later considered to be Wédbatama because it contained wédha that is utama.

E. Final Remarks: The PPAG ‘at Home’

This study makes a strong argument for a more contextual theology for the GKJ on the basis of the analysis that its current theology is still too much heir to the confessions of the missionaries that were instrumental in the founding of the church in the 19th century and of the churches in the Netherlands with whom they have maintained close ties since then, churches whose Reformed confessions have their contextual-confessional background in the Protestant/Reformed Reformation in Europe in the 16th century. In searching for an authentic expression of Javanese culture I analyzed the Serat Wédbatama, an important 19th-century poem and its understanding of wisdom. In a second step, I described a contextual Javanese theology in the 19th century, the ngélmu sejati theology of Sadrach Surapranata, a Javanese convert and church leader, whose theology and authority were contested by the missionaries at that time. In a third step, I analyzed Harun Hadiwijono’s Iman Kristen, an influential dogmatic textbook for students of theology in the GKJ since the 1970s, intending to use this case study to show the lack of contextual theology within the GKJ. In the next step, I described the current confessional basis of the GKJ, the PPAG, to show its contextual deficiencies. In a final step, I constructed a theological ‘framework’ in which I harvest the contextual Javanese lessons of wisdom as a way to perfection in the Serat Wédbatama and Sadrach’s theology for contextual principal teachings of the GKJ.

To conclude our discussion above, I want to borrow the phrase Brinkman used: where is Jesus “at home”? By adopting this phrase, I want to underline that the framework for the GKJ for formulating principal teachings in the Javanese context is actually a proposal for the GKJ to make sure the PPAG is ‘at home’ – at home in the sense that it is a non-Western teaching living in the non-Western context.

Of course, we have to be aware that, as non-Western teachings in the non-Western context, the PPAG does not imply that it is 100% Javanese teaching in a pure Javanese context. For me, that the PPAG is ‘at home’ refers to in-between situation: not Western but also not really non-Western. Jung Young Lee, an American Korean theologian, has actually made a theological virtue of this necessity of the in-between situation. He says that in-between situation

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can mean being at home in both or being half at home in both cultures. The in-between that implies an in both can lead to an in-beyond: a rising beyond both cultures from within.  

It could become a source of creativity. Furthermore, Lee sees this in-between situation as very characteristic for Jesus, for both his interhuman relationships and his God-human relationship. Via his incarnation, he moved toward the margins of the divine and on the cross he moved to the margins of the human. Becoming human is the way for the divine to re-enter itself (the human) and self-emptying is the way in which the Son of Man re-enters his own, the divine. In Jesus, God is not separated from humans and humans are not separated from God.

For me, the GKJ should take note of this in formulating the PPAG. In doing so, Javanese Christians will be able to understand the Christian faith in the context of their 'Javaneseness' and at the same time as Javanese Christians, they will be able to live their Javanese-ness in the light of the Christian faith.

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RANGKUMAN

Signifikansi dari studi ini didasarkan pada kebutuhan untuk memformulasikan pokok-pokok ajaran gereja yang kontekstual dalam konteks Jawa, dengan beberapa pertimbangan, yaitu:

1) Sejarah eksistensi dan identitas Gereja Kristen Jawa (GKJ) tidak dapat dipisahkan dari pengaruh badan misi De Nederlandsche Zendings Vereniging dan gereja Gereformeerd di Belanda yang pada masa lalu mengajarkan agama Kristen kepada orang-orang Jawa dengan cara Belanda dan mengakibatkan orang-orang Kristen Jawa terbelenggu dalam waktu yang cukup lama dengan cara Barat dalam kehidupan beragama dan berteologi, 2) Pokok-pokok ajaran yang selama ini digunakan oleh GKJ, misalnya: Katekismus Heidelberg, Iman Kristen, dan Pokok-pokok Ajaran GKJ (PPAG), tidak cukup mengena atau kurang kontekstual, sebab diformulasikan tidak sesuai dengan kebutuhan otentik orang-orang Kristen Jawa dan juga tidak berdasarkan konteks di mana mereka hidup. 3) kenyataan bahwa konteks Jawa itu unik, rumit dan kompleks, sehingga GKJ perlu memahaminya secara menyeluruh, mendalam dan sungguh-sungguh. 4) kemungkinan mengakomodasi Wedhatama yang mempunyai reputasi sebagai literatur kebijaksanaan yang paling menonjol di Jawa sebagai sumber kebijaksanaan lokal, dan 5) kemungkinan mengadopsi dan mengadaptasi teologi kontekstual Sadrach sebagai sesuatu yang mempunyai arti penting bagi GKJ dalam usaha-usahanya untuk berteologi secara kontekstual.

Dalam studi ini, saya ingin mengetahui kerangka pemikiran yang seperti apakah yang dibutuhkan oleh GKJ untuk merumuskan pokok-pokok ajarannya dalam konteks Jawa. Studi ini terdiri dari lima bab, sebagai berikut:

**Bab pertama** berisi uraian menyeluruh disertai analisa mendalam tentang Serat Wedhatama. Serat berarti surat atau kitab. Sedangkan Wedhatama berasal dari kata Wedha, yang berarti pengetahuan atau ajaran, dan tama dari kata utama, yang berarti utama atau luhur. Dengan demikian, Serat Wedhatama berarti sebuah surat atau kitab yang berisi ajaran yang luhur atau pengetahuan yang utama. Serat Wedhatama terdiri dari 4 pupuh (lagu) serta 72 pada (bait) yang terbagi atas: pupuh Pangkur 14 pada, pupuh Sinom 18 pada, pupuh Pucung 15 pada, dan pupuh Gambuh 25 pada. Sebagai sebuah puisi didaktik, Serat Wedhatama menyajikan secara sistematis pengajaran yang luhur sebagai berikut:

**Pangkur.** Secara keseluruhan, seperti yang menjadi konsep kunci pada pupuh ini, Serat Wedhatama memuat pengajaran mengenai ngelmu luhung atau hikmat yang luhur. Kata ngelmu itu sendiri bisa dipahami sebagai ilmu atau pengetahuan tentang sesuatu.
Namun dalam pupuh ini, kata *labung* menunjukkan adanya kualitas tertentu yang membuatnya mengandung pemahaman yang lebih dalam dari sekedar pengertian *ilmu*. Dalam hal ini adanya pendapat yang memahami *ngèlmu* sebagai *ilmu* rabasia, yaitu pengetahuan tentang sesuatu yang membuat orang merenungkan misteri kehidupan, dapat menjadi salah satu contoh bahwa kata *ngèlmu* tidak bisa dilepaskan dari pemahaman eksistensial orang Jawa mengenai keberadaan dirinya di tengah-tengah alam semesta ini. *Pupuh Pangkur* diakhiri dengan seruan *mulane wong anom sami* (oleh karena itu wahai orang muda), yang mempunyai asosiasi dengan bunyi *sinom* dari kata *anom*, yang merupakan seruan kepada *wong anom* (orang muda), untuk melakukan sesuatu, yang dijelaskan pada pupuh selanjutnya, yaitu *Sinom*.


*Pucung*. Setelah *Pangkur* menjelaskan apa itu *ngèlmu* (*labung*), dan *Sinom* menguraikan *laku* (*utama*), maka *Pucung* merupakan kombinasi dari kedua konsep kunci tersebut. *Ngèlmu iku kalakoné kanthi laku utama*. Dalam kerangka pemikiran *Serat Wédhatama*, maka hal itu berarti bahwa *ngèlmu* *labung* hanya akan *kelakon* (terjadi) jika disertai *laku utama*, dan itu pun harus *dilekasi* (dimulai) dengan *kas* (kesungguhan hati). Tegese *kas* (arti kesungguhan hati) yang dimaksud adalah *nyantasani* (memberi kesentuaan). Supaya *ngèlmu* bisa *kelakon* adalah bahwa keadaan *kas* untuk memulai *laku*, selain bersifat *nyantasani*, haruslah disertai dengan komitmen untuk *setya bnde panyeke dur angkara* yaitu kebutuhan tekad atau keteguhan hati untuk mengalahkan kejahan.


Sebagai kesatuan *piwulang* (pengajaran) mengenai konsep *ngèlmu* dalam budaya Jawa, seluruh pemahaman di atas memuat didalamnya ajaran untuk *ber budi bawa leksana* (berhati mulia) dan *ngudi sajatining beik* (mengusahakan kebaikan); serta *pitutur* (nasehat) dan *wewaler* (larangan) yang sangat dibutuhkan oleh orang Jawa supaya pada saat *banggayub kasampurnaning hurip* (berusaha mencapai hidup sempurna) tidak tersesat,
sebaliknya, bisa mengarahkan kepada kawrub sangkan paraning dumadi (pengetahuan tentang asal dan tujuan segala apa yang diciptakan), yang dapat dipahami melalui pengalaman manusia “bersatu” dengan kasunyatan atau realitas tertinggi, yang dikenal sebagai Tuhan, atau dalam bahasa Jawa disebut dengan ungkapan pamori kawula gusti.

**Bab kedua** berisi penjelasan mengenai kehidupan Sadrach sebelum menjadi Kristen dan masa sesudahnya berdasarkan nama yang dia gunakan dengan pertimbangan bahwa bagi orang Jawa perubahan nama menandakan peristiwa penting dalam kehidupannya. Selanjutnya, diuraikan perkembangan komunitas Sadrach, sebagai latar belakang penting yang mendukung penjelasan mengenai apa itu ngèlmu sejati sebagai teologi kontekstual Sadrach (disertai tinjauan komparatif antara konsep ngèlmu dalam Serat Wédhatama dengan ngèlmu sejati Sadrach), perannya dalam sejarah kekristenan di Jawa (disertai tinjauan kritis terhadap perbedaan pendapat antara Sutarman S. Partonadi dengan Th. Sumartana mengenai peran Sadrach dalam sejarah kekristenan di Jawa).

Dinamika kehidupan Sadrach (khususnya yang mulai nampak dalam pemilihan nama Sadrach, dan Surapranata) serta dinamika kehidupan komunitasnya, secara tidak langsung sebenarnya adalah pengejawantahan dari “… reaction against the colonial expression of Dutch Christianity as superior to Javanese Christianity.” Sementara itu mengenai kehidupan Sadrach sebagai Radin, saya mempunyai pendapat yang berbeda dengan banyak pihak yang selama ini menekankan bahwa nama Radin menunjukkan asal dan keadaannya dari keluarga miskin dengan status sosial rendah. Saya berkesimpulan bahwa asal-usulnya adalah sebuah misteri. Yang bisa dianggap sebagai petunjuk adalah: tahun kelahirannya, yaitu sekitar tahun 1835; tempat kelahirannya, yaitu di sekitar Demak; dan bahwa pada masa kecilnya dia dipanggil atau disebut (bisa jadi bukan bernama) Radin (dengan memperhatikan adanya kemungkinan bahwa ia bergelar Raden. Jadi, Radin tidak menunjuk pada nama diri tapi pada gelar). Kesimpulan ini didukung data yang mengarah pada kemungkinan bahwa Sadrach adalah seorang bangsawan, seperti berikut ini: 1) Adanya sebuah literatur yang menyebutkan bahwa dia adalah putra dari Bupati Pati yang kedua. 2) Manuskrip Karangjasa (A dan B), yang menyebut mengenai orang tua Sadrach, selalu menggunakan istilah Romo-Ibu yang lazim digunakan keluarga bangsawan (atau mereka yang mempunyai status sosial-ekonomi tinggi), dan bukan Bapa-Biyung, yang lazim digunakan masyarakat biasa. 3) Sadrach dianggap sebagai anak mas oleh Mr. Anthing, padahal beberapa pengikutnya dan bahkan anak-anak Tunggul Wulung yang lebih dulu tinggal bersamanya tidak mendapatkan perlakuan istimewa ini. 4) Sadrach diangkat sebagai anak oleh pasangan suami-istri Stevens-Philips dan dengan demikian mendapatkan tempat yang sejajar
dengan Kangjeng Pangeran Kutoardjo yang sudah lebih dahulu diangkat sebagai anak. Jika Sadrach adalah orang biasa, tidak mungkin dia (yang pada waktu itu berada dijaman kolonial dengan suasana feodal yang kuat) disejajarkan dengan seorang calon Bupati. 5) Ketika menyambut Bupati Kutoardjo dan Raden Ajoe, yang datang mengunjungi putranya, Sadrach tidak menyembah tapi mengulurkan tangan (bersalaman). Orang biasa pastilah tidak berani bersikap seperti ini karena bisa kualat. 6) Penambahan nama Surapranata pada nama Sadrach untuk menunjukkan kedudukan barunya sebagai pemimpin jemaat yang berani mengatur. Penambahan nama karena kedudukan biasanya dilakukan oleh para priayi. Nama yang dipilih juga bukan nama biasa, karena di dalamnya terdapat tanggung jawab yang berat. Sementara itu, orang biasa biasanya hanya mengenal nama kecil dan nama dewasa, dan sangat menghindari penggunaan nama yang mengandung tanggung jawab yang berat, karena khawatir tidak kuat menyandang nama itu. 7) Pada saat meninggalnya, peti mati Sadrach dibungkus dengan kain batik parang barong, yaitu pola batik yang hanya diperuntukkan bagi bangsawan keraton. Jika benar, seperti yang diindikasikan oleh uraian tersebut, bahwa Sadrach adalah seorang bangsawan, maka hal ini menunjukkan bahwa Sadrach telah benar-benar meneladani Kristus yang tersalib dengan menyangkal dirinya sedemikian rupa supaya dia bisa hadir di tengah-tengah penderitaan rakyat jelata pada jaman edan, sekaligus menunjukkan bahwa dia bukan hanya mewartakan Injil, tapi menghadirkan Injil melalui kehidupannya supaya kesukaan itu tidak hanya sekedar merupakan kabar, tetapi benar-benar dirasakan. Yaitu Injil yang membawa kelepasan dan kebebasan sebagai manusia yang mempunyai harkat dan martabat, yang layak untuk “o na en stoel zitten”, dan mempunyai hak untuk menentukan sendiri kehidupanya dalam hal apapun, termasuk dalam kehidupan iman.

Ngèlmu sejati merupakan sebuah teologi kontekstual yang otentik dari Kiai Sadrach Surapranara, yaitu yang menunjuk pada: 1) Pewartaan Injil sebagai sanyatanning ngèlmu karena nyata-nyata memberikan rasa tenang dan kepuasan yang sangat mendalam di dalam hati (gave inner contentment); yang memberikan jawaban atas sangkan paraning dumadi atau misteri kehidupan (answered the secret of life); dan menuntun pada jalan menuju kasampurnaning hurip atau kesempurnaan hidup (guided humans on the way to perfection). 2) Pewartaan Injil seperti tersebut di atas, yang dipahami tidak terlepas dari overlevering atau penyampaian “Wajah Yesus di Jawa” sebagai Guru, Panutan dan Ratu Adil; serta adanya sinkretisme (pemberdayaan segala potensi untuk menghadapi musuh bersama, yaitu verbollandiseren) dan Bijbelse trouw (kesetiaan pada Alkitab). 3) Penilaian dan pemaknaan Sadrach atas ngèlmu sebagai sesuatu yang peculiar, yang istimewa di Jawa, seperti yang telah ditunjukkan dalam tinjuan komparatif terhadap konsep Ngèlmu.
dalam *Serat Widhatama* dan *Ngélmu Sejati* Sadrach. Dari hal tersebut, menjadi jelas bahwa sebagai orang Jawa Kristen, Sadrach telah menunjukkan perjuangan dan perlawanan terhadap ekspresi kolonial dari Kekristenan Belanda yang merasa lebih super dari Kekristenan Jawa, seperti yang dinyatakan oleh P. Quarles van Ufford sebagai “… reaction against the colonial expression of Dutch Christianity as superior to Javanese Christianity”. Terlebih lagi, dalam perjuangan dan perlawanan dengan segala bentuk dan dinamikanya itu Sadrach telah menunjukkan sebuah contoh teologi kontekstual yang otentik melalui teologi *ngélmu sejati*.

penghargaan dan pemahaman terhadap Islam sebagai konteks berteologi. Oleh karena itulah dapat dimengerti jika, dalam hal-hal tertentu, Sadrach mempertahankan shared commonalities yang ada seperti penggunaan kata *mesjid* untuk tempat ibadah, dan kata *gahadat* untuk pengakuan iman. Selain itu, karena Injil diberitakan sebagai ngèlmu sejati maka ada pemahaman dan kesadaran untuk mewartakan Injil tanpa disertai keinginan untuk sekedar mencari pengikut atau bahkan mengkristenkan orang lain. Sebab yang ingin dibagikan bukan agama Kristen-nya, tetapi Injil itu sendiri, yaitu karab kesukaan.


*Kedua*, mengenai “Iman Kristen dan Budaya Jawa”. Menurut saya, sangat aneh

Bab keempat berisi penjelasan mengenai Pokok-pokok Ajaran GKJ (PPAG), yang terdiri dari uraian mengenai asal-usulnya, sistematika penulisannya, statusnya sebagai dokumen gerejawi, latar belakang dan proses penyusunannya, penyederhanaan dan penyempurnaan isinya, kesinambungan dan perubahan yang terjadi, serta pendekatan dan perkembangannya. Secara khusus dalam bab ini saya melakukan tinjauan kritis terhadap: 1) Identitas GKJ dalam PPAG, 2) Format penulisan PPAG, dan 3) Pendekatan yang diambil oleh PPAG.


mentransformasikan, sedangkan literatur yang ditulis hanya memberi informasi saja. Memang, perumpamaan-perumpamaan misalnya juga ada yang sengaja ditulis bukan sekedar disalin dari kisah oral yang sudah ada. Pendekatan verbal-sistematis bukannya tidak perlu. Tetapi, kiranya jangan ketat dan seyogyanya memberi alternatif bagi suatu teologi cerita, teologi yang bertolak dari cerita manusia mengenai hidup ini.


Ketiga, mengenai PPAG dan budaya Jawa serta agama-agama lain. Dari beberapa poin mengenai kebudayaan yang dibahas dalam PPAG, sama sekali tidak ada sedikitpun yang menyinggung tentang kebudayaan Jawa. Semuanya dibahas secara

Bab kelima berisi usulan kerangka pemikiran kepada GKJ untuk merumuskan pokok-pokok ajarannya dalam konteks Jawa, dengan mempertimbangkan tinjauan kritis terhadap Iman Kristen dan teologi kontekstual Sadrach sebagai sesuatu yang signifikan. Aplikasi Serat Wédhatama dalam merumuskan pokok-pokok ajaran GKJ yang kontekstual menjadi semacam kesimpulan dan penutup dari bab terakhir ini.

Arti penting tinjauan kritis terhadap Iman Kristen dalam rangka merumuskan pokok-pokok ajaran GKJ terkait beberapa hal sebagai berikut: Pertama, metode pendekatan teologi kontekstual kena-mengena dengan konfrontasi dan konfirmasi. Dalam Iman Kristen, hal ini tidak tercapai secara memadai sebab Harun menekankan perbedaan antara Alkitab dan tradisi keagamaan lainnya. Dapat dikatakan, Harun hanya menekankan self-appreciation dan mengabaikan self-criticism. Metode pendekatan seperti ini bersifat konfrontatif, dan hal ini tentu harus dihindari oleh GKJ. Kedua, Sebagai alternatif, adalah sangat mendesak supaya GKJ tidak hanya memberi tempat pada self-criticism tetapi juga untuk menekankan other-appreciation. Yang paling penting di sini bukan tentang serius kita memperhatikan agama-agama lain, tapi bagaimana dialog sejati antara iman Kristen dan agama-agama lain itu dapat terjadi dalam kesetaraan. Oleh karena itu, menurut saya, itu benar-benar merupakan sebuah kebutuhan mendesak untuk merumuskan suatu pokok-pokok ajaran yang dilengkapi dengan diskusi tentang orang Kristen sebagai orang yang berhubungan dengan orang
lain, dengan implikasi etis, karena orang Kristen hidup berdampingan dengan penganut agama lain.

Teologi ngèlmu sejati Sadrach mempunyai arti penting bagi GKJ untuk berteologi dalam konteks, yaitu dalam menegaskan kembali identitas dan dalam menjalin komunikasi dengan Islam. Arti penting ngèlmu sejati bagi penegasan kembali identitas GKJ menunjuk pada: 1)Meneladani Kristus yang tersalib sebagai pribadi yang hidup. Bagi GKJ, menerima gambaran “Wajah Yesus di Jawa” sebagai panutan sejati menunjuk pada stigmata sebagai identitas yang harus ditegaskan. 2)Bersikap lugu, yang berarti berusaha untuk melepaskan “stigma” etnisitas dan konfesionalitas yang selama ini melekat, dan berusaha mewujudkan diri menjadi golongan wong kristen kang mardika, dalam usahanya untuk berteologi secara kontekstual supaya dengan demikian GKJ bisa secara dinamis menyumbangkan sesuatu yang bermakna kepada dunia di mana dia berada. Sementara itu, arti penting ngèlmu sejati bagi GKJ dalam menjalin komunikasi dengan Islam menunjuk pada: Mewartakan Injil a la Sadrach, yang berarti menunjukkan penghargaan dan pemahaman terhadap Islam sebagai konteks, disertai pemahaman dan kesadaran untuk mewartakan Injil tanpa disertai keinginan untuk sekedar mencari pengikut atau bahkan mengkristenkan orang lain. Dengan dasar ini maka diharapkan komunikasi dengan Islam bisa berjalan dengan baik, bermakna dan konstruktif. Selanjutnya, ngèlmu sejati mempunyai arti penting bagi GKJ dalam menjalin komunikasi dengan Islam karena berfungsi sebagai Anknüpfungspunkt, yaitu ketika orang Jawa (yang beragama) Islam dan orang Jawa (yang beragama) Kristen:


Prestise yang dimiliki oleh Serat Wèdhatama sebenarnya juga bisa dinikmati oleh PP.AG. Tidak semata-mata PP.AG sebagai sebuah karya teologis, tapi pertama-tama, bagaimana membuat PP.AG juga bisa representing an ideal of literary beauty, to be sought in the use of noble language appropriate to its subject, with elegant vocabulary and laden with alliteration and assonance. Setelah itu, yang juga tidak kalah penting adalah bagaimana membuat isi PP.AG bisa berbobot, heavy with the authority of teaching sublime subjects. Dengan kata lain,
SAMENVATTING

Het belang van deze studie is gelegen in de noodzaak om de hoofdzaken van de geloofsleer van de kerk op Java contextueel te formuleren. De volgende overwegingen gelden daarbij:

1) De geschiedenis van het bestaan en de identiteit van de Gereja Kristen Jawa (GKJ) kan niet losgerekend worden van de invloed van de Nederlandsche Zendings Vereeniging en de Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland.

2) De leer, die tot nu toe door de GKJ wordt gebruikt, is in hoofdzaak onvoldoende contextueel.

3) De Javaanse context is uniek, ingewikkeld en complex.

4) Het geschrift Wédhatama kan mogelijk worden toegepast als bron van inheemse wijsheid.

5) De contextuele theologie van Sadrach kan mogelijk worden geadopteerd en toegepast bij de pogingen van de GKJ om contextueel te theologiseren.

In deze studie wil ik nagaan, welk raamwerk van denken nodig is voor de GKJ om de hoofdzaken van haar leer te formuleren in de Javaanse context. De studie bestaat uit vijf hoofdstukken.

Hoofdstuk I geeft een algemeen overzicht en diepgaande analyse van de Serat Wédhatama. De Serat Wédhatama bestaat uit vier pupuh (zangen) met 72 pada (strofen), te verdelen in Pangkur (14 strofen), onderricht bevattende over ngélmu lubung (verheven wijsheid); Sinom (18 strofen), over het onderricht aangaande nulada laku utama (het tonen van een voorbeeldig en voortreffelijk gedrag); Pungung (15 strofen), handelend over ngélmu iku kalakoné kanthi laku (deze wijsheid wordt in praktijk gebracht vergezeld van waarachtige innerlijke ervaring en praktijk); en Gambuh (25 strofen), gewijd aan het onderricht van sembah catur (vier soorten verering), te weten raga (lichamelijk), cipta (meditatief), jîwa (psychisch) en rasa (ondervinding, gevoel). Als totaliteit van de piwulung (onderricht) aangaande het concept van ngélmu in de Javaanse cultuur omvat bovenstaand inzicht een leer aangaande ber budi bawa leksana (een verheven hart hebben) en ngudi sajatining becik (goedheid betrachten); alsmede pitutur (raadgevingen) en wewaler (verboden), die Javanen zeer nodig hebben, opdat ze, als ze proberen een volmaakt leven te leiden (hanggayuh kasampurnaning hurip), niet op een dwaalspoor komen, maar integendeel zich kunnen richten op kawruh sangkan paraning dumadi (kennis van oorsprong en doel van al het geschapene); dit kan worden begrepen door de menselijke ervaring van ’een-zijn’ met de kasunyatan of hoogste realiteit (ook wel gekend als Heer). In het Javaans wordt dit omschreven als pamoré kawula gusti.

Hoofdstuk II bevat een uiteenzetting over het leven van Sadrach voor hij christen werd en daarna, op grond van de namen die hij gebruikte; daarbij moet worden opgemerkt dat voor Javanen het veranderen van je naam een teken is van een belangrijke gebeurtenis in je leven. Vervolgens wordt de ontwikkeling van de communitie van Sadrach geanalyserd als een belangrijke ondersteuning van de vraag, wat ngélmu sejati is, de contextuele theologie van Sadrach. We laten dit vergezeld gaan van een vergelijking tussen het concept ngélmu in de Serat Wédhatama en ngélmu sejati bij Sadrach. Ook lichten we diens rol in de geschiedenis van het christendom op Java toe, mede aan de hand van een kritische beschouwing van de verschillen in inzicht van Sutarman S. Partonadi en Th. Sumartana aangaande Sadrachs rol in die geschiedenis. De dynamiek van het leven van Sadrach, in het bijzonder zichtbaar wordend in de keuze van de namen Sadrach en Surapranata, en de dynamiek van het leven van zijn gemeenschap, vormen feitelijk indirect een manifestatie van de ‘…reaction against the colonial expression of Dutch Christianity as superior to Javanese Christianity.’ Ngélmu sejati is een authentieke contextuele theologie van Kiai Sadrach Surapranata; ze wijst op:
1) De verkondiging van het evangelie als *sanyataning ngèlmu* (verwezenlijking van de wijsheid), want dat geeft een gevoel van rust en diepe bevrediging in het hart; het verschilt een antwoord op het mysterie van het leven, oftewel *sangkan puraning dumadi* en wijst een weg naar de volmaaktheid van het leven (*kesampurnaning*).

2) Het verstaan van de bovengenoemde verkondiging van het evangelie staat niet los van de overlevering of overdracht van het ‘gelaat van Jezus op Java’ als *Gurar, Panutan en Ratu Adit* (leraar, leidsman en rechtvaardige vorst); ook staat het niet los van de vraag van *syncretisme* (zich met inspanning van alle krachten verweren tegen de gezamenlijke vijand, namelijk *verhollandiseren*) en bijbelgetrouwheid.

3) De waardering en verklaring door Sadrach van *ngèlmu* als iets specifiek Javaans, zoals wordt aangetoond in de vergelijkende beschouwing van het concept *ngèlmu* in de *Serat Widhatama* en *ngèlmu sejati* bij Sadrach. Als een authentieke vorm van contextuele theologie speelt *ngèlmu sejati* daarnaast een belangrijke rol in de geschiedenis van het Javaanse Christendom. In de gemeenschap van Sadrach kreeg het gestalte als een vroomheid van het dagelijkse leven, een Javaanse vorm van piëtisme of *imitatio Christi*, namelijk *ber budi bawa leksana* (een verheven hart hebben) en *ngudi sajatining becik* (het goede nastreven) samen met Christus als voorbeeld. En het werd gerealiseerd in hun vrijheid van expressie van het geloofsleven. Bovendien is de belangrijke rol van *ngèlmu sejati* ook zichtbaar in de ontwikkeling van het Christendom op Java, in het bijzonder in de sfeer van het platteland en in die van de islam als context, waarbinnen de gemeenschap van Sadrach leefde.

**Hoofdstuk III** bevat een kritische analyse van Harun Hadiwijono’s systematisch-theologische werk *Iman Kristen* (Christelijk Geloof), dat tot de dag van vandaag door de GKJ wordt gebruikt. Kortweg kan deze kritische beschouwing als volgt worden verduidelijkt.

Allereerst, het heeft een uniek karakter. Volgens Budyanto is het bewijs voor de oorspronkelijkheid van de door Harun gebruikte methode te vinden in zijn poging om zich los te maken van het traditionele ontologische model van dogmatiek, ten gunste van een functioneel-contextuele dogmatiek. Ik ben het eens met Budyanto, dat Harun probeert om zich te bevrijden van dat traditionele, ontologische model. Ik betwijfel evenwel, of *Iman Kristen* beschouwd kan worden als een streven naar een functioneel-contextuele dogmatiek. Dat wordt bijvoorbeeld duidelijk waar Harun de bijbel een plaats geeft, die normatief is, meer verheven boven en zelfs strijdig met alle perspectieven van de religieuze traditie die eerder zijn genoemd. Hij geeft aan zijn concept van de bijbel geen ruimte voor een dialoog met andere religieuze tradities en diept de concepten van andere religieuze tradities ook niet uit om de christelijke opvattingen over God te verrijken. Naar mijn opvatting is dit daarom geen poging tot contextualisering van de theologie.

Ten tweede is het, wat de verhouding van christelijk geloof en Javaanse cultuur betreft, merkwaardig dat Harun de bijbel een plaats geeft, die normatief is, meer verheven boven en zelfs strijdig met alle perspectieven van de religieuze traditie die eerder zijn genoemd. Hij geeft aan zijn concept van de bijbel geen ruimte voor een dialoog met andere religieuze tradities en diept de concepten van andere religieuze tradities ook niet uit om de christelijke opvattingen over God te verrijken. Naar mijn mening heeft Harun zelfs besloten om niet contextueel te reageren.

Ten derde, wat de verhouding tussen christelijk geloof en andere religies betreft, was er volgens E.G. Singgih in zijn jaren als student aan de theologische school Duta Wacana (1972-1977) reeds een sterk bewustzijn van de Javaanse context.
(Kejawen) en de islam, en bestudeerde een geleerde als Harun deze twee religies serieus. Het was Haruns idee echter om ze te bestuderen met de bedoeling ze te overtreffen en om uit te vinden, waar de zwaktes van de Kejawen en de islam gevonden konden worden. Al gaf Harun serieus aandacht aan andere religies, toch was er volgens Yewangoe geen sprake van een werkelijke dialoog met ze. Naar mij oordeel moet een evenwichtige dialoog zowel self-appreciation als self-criticism bevatten. Helaas beklemtoont Harun in Iman Kristen slechts het eerste en verwaarloost hij het tweede.

Hofdstuk IV geeft een uitleg van de Pokok-pokok Ajaran GKJ (Hoofdlijnen van de geloofsleer van de GKJ, PPAG), bestaande uit een analyse van de herkomst van dit document, van de systematiek ervan, van zijn status als kerkelijk document, achtergrond en proces van totstandkoming, vereenvoudiging en vervolmakking van de inhoud, de continuering en veranderingen die zijn aangebracht, alsmede de benadering en ontwikkeling ervan. In het bijzonder kijk ik in dit hoofdstuk kritisch naar de volgende punten.

Ten eerste, welke identiteit van de GKJ komt in de PPAG naar voren? Het gaat daarbij om de symboliek in het logo van de GKJ, dat gebruikt wordt, en het kalligrafisch opschrift Gereja-gereja Kristen Java (Christelijke Kerken op Java) en daarnaast om de naam Gereja Kristen Java (Christelijke Kerk op Java). In het PPAG geschreven wordt in het geheel geen uitleg gegeven over de symboliek en betekenis van het logo of over de naam GKJ.

Ten tweede, het format van het geschreven. Het kan niet worden ontkend, dat de PPAG helemaal het format van de Heidelbergse Katechismus volgt. Dat wordt duidelijk in de opzet van vraag-antwoord. Het is juist nodig een niet al te systematische theologie te ontwerpen, die op verhalen berust. De Javaan leeft immers nog in een wereld van verhalen. Een verbaal-systematische benadering is natuurlijk niet overbodig. Maar liever niet te strak en bij voorkeur met alternatieven voor een narratieve theologie, die begint bij het menselijk verhaal over dit leven.

Ten derde, de benaderingswijze in de PPAG. Drie kwesties heb ik dienaangaande kritisch geanalyseerd. Allereerst, de soteriologie die werkelijk zeer Arminiaans is! Vervolgens, de triniteit van God die heel Sabelliaans wordt opgevat. Dit is strijdig met de overtuigingen van de reformator, inclusief Calvijn. Natuurlijk kan en mag de GKJ een eigen geloofssysteem hebben, onafhankelijk van Calvijn, maar dan moet de GKJ haar identiteit duidelijk uitleggen. Tenslotte de verhouding tussen PPAG en de Javaanse cultuur en de andere religies. De PPAG bespreekt het begrip cultuur op verschillende plaatsen, maar daar komt de Javaanse cultuur in het geheel niet ter sprake. Alles wordt slechts in algemen termen aangeduid. Zelfs is er duidelijk een negatieve tendens aanwezig als het om het begrip cultuur gaat. Vergeleken met de behandeling van het begrip cultuur, krijgt de uitleg van kwesties die gerelateerd zijn aan andere religies veel meer ruimte; daar is ook een meer positieve nuance aanwezig. Toch blijft de gegeven uitleg ook daar heel algemeen.

Hofdstuk V ontwerpt voorstellen zodat de GKJ de hoofdlijnen van haar geloofsleer in de Javaanse context kan formuleren, met inachtneming van een kritische beschouwing van Haruns Iman Kristen (opdat de GKJ zowel ruimte geeft aan self-criticism als aan self-appreciation) en met inachtneming van de contextuele theologie van Sadrach als belangrijk element, in het bijzonder ten aanzien van het opnieuw vaststellen van de identiteit van de GKJ en het communiceren met de islam. Bij wijze van conclusie en slot geef ik door middel van een vergelijkende tabel ook aan hoe de Serat Widhatama door de GKJ gebruikt kan worden bij het herformuleren van een herziene PPAG; daarin worden ook elementen verwerkt van sangkan paraning dunadi (kennis van oorsprong en doel van het leven) en positioneer ik de GKJ als een subject, dat zich bevindt op de weg naar het bereiken van de volmaaktheid van het leven (hanggeyub kasampurumaning hurip).
CURRICULUM VITAE

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▪ GAMBAR ALLAH dalam Teologi Feminis Chung Hyung Kyung, Yogyakarta, 2005.