

RESPONSE PAPER TO JORGE JULCA AND GIFT MTUKWA  
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*Response to Jorge Julca*

I agree with Jorge L. Julca's opinion that the mission to preach the gospel must be preceded by knowing of Jesus Christ. Who is he? Who is Jesus Christ in the world's view? And who is Jesus Christ according to me? Jesus' question to Peter is a question for all of us. "Who do people say that I am?" And then, who do you say that I am?" (Matt. 16: 13-17). The question is both a reflection and a confession of who Jesus Christ is. It becomes the most important question to answer before stepping out on mission. The mission begins with a true and biblical knowledge of Jesus Christ. How will we preach Him if we do not know Him well?

This paper will respond using the same format and also add some important points related to the circumstances occurring in Indonesia. So, using the same points will show how its application can be applied in the Indonesian context. It is to be hoped that this facilitate right viewpoints and experiences based on mission contextualization in each country.

*Theological Basis for a Christological Paradigm of Mission*

We find three theological key moments to chart a way forward in our missiology: His incarnation, His crucifixion and death, and His resurrection. These are chosen because these topics form the most important parts of building the identity and image of Jesus Christ. Of course when discussing all the points, the image about Jesus Christ in every country, culture and ethnic will vary greatly, depending on the background that shapes the perception of the community.

This happens similarly in Indonesia. Indonesia has a complex, pluralistic, and very heterogeneous population. There are six accepted major religions: Moslem, Protestant, Catholic,

Buddhist, Hindu and Confucian. Moslem is the majority religion. There is about 85.2% Moslem and 14,8% are other religions. So Christians are the minority. Similarly, there are 1340<sup>1</sup> ethnicities in Indonesia, the largest being Javanese. In 2014 the Javanese ethnicity comprised one hundred million, (40%) of the population of Indonesia's 250 million people.<sup>2</sup> So it is very important to understand each of groups. A clear and accurate understanding of these communities will be very helpful building a mission bridge to them.

*The Incarnation of Jesus: God became like us.*

*“The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us...” (John 1:14).*

The basis of Jesus' incarnation is written in John 3:16, “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son...”. God's love for human beings is the motivation of God's work of salvation to humankind that was accomplished through the body of Jesus, “...Reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation” (Colossians 1:22). Christ became man and lived with men. With a human body he experienced being human. Physically, Christ was a human and felt what what humanity feels. He was perfect in His existence as a human being. He is was also perfect in His existence as God. In Hebrews 2:14 it states, “Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil”.

In the beginning of his Gospel John wrote : “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. . . . The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us...” (John 1:1-2 ; 14). Christ has existed

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<sup>1</sup> Kewarganegaraan Indonesia 2010

<sup>2</sup> Sejarah Kewarganegaraan Indonesia 2010.

from the beginning. He is the Word, and the Word dwells among men. Jesus' presence in the midst of humanity was the existence of God's presence in the midst of humanity. For Muslims, Jesus Christ has a special place. The Qur'an knows Him as Isa Almasih, a Prophet and who has followers. Anton Wessels writes that the picture of Jesus in the Qur'an remains a decisive influence in Islam for the future.<sup>3</sup>

In Arabic, “Word” is *Kalam*. The *Kalam* of God means the Word of God. In the Christian perspective, the *Kalam* of God is Jesus Christ. Moslems also know the term *Kalam Allah*. This is a popular term for Moslems. The *Kalam Allah* is their book, the Qur'an, in which all the words of God for humankind are written. This means that by using the term “Word of God,” Moslems will understand it as the Word of God, and Christians understand that this is Jesus Christ, the Word that became human.

*Kalam Allah* can be a bridge to communicate the Gospel to Moslems. However, outside the context of communicating the gospel, Christians in Indonesia need to be careful and wise. Prudence and wisdom are needed to avoid friction with other people or groups of people. “Tribe - Religion – Race” is a sensitive and conflict-prone issue in society.

*The Crucifixion and Death of Jesus:*

*His sacrifice as the supreme evidence of love.*

*“But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom. 5:8).*

The passion and death of Christ on the cross is a demonstration of God's love for man. Through His death on the cross, Jesus Christ suffered in many ways. He experienced physical

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<sup>3</sup> Anton Wessels, *Memandang Yesus: Gambaran Yesus Dalam Berbagai Budaya*, BPK Gunung Mulia, Jakarta, 1990, p. 35.

suffering because of being persecuted and hurt. The wounds and the blood He shed are a proof of His suffering. This painful and humiliating manner of death increased his mental suffering. As a human being, he experienced perfect, or full orb, suffering Christ's death at the cross became a moment of exchange, the punishment that man must receive for sin with eternal salvation. "But we do see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for a little while, now crowned with glory and honor, because he suffered death so that by the grace of God he might death for everyone. . . And free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death" (Ibrani 2: 9, 15).

WA Criswell writes :

Man has another fear of death, because he does not know for certain what exactly is behind death. Our Savior came to save us from this fear, through His victory over death and the grave. We now no longer experience death; we understand death as the entrance into Heaven. It is the voice of God who welcomes us into His Kingdom because of Jesus' atoning sacrifice. The atonement of Jesus makes death an entrance to the His Kingdom. Death is the gateway to heaven, the entrance into His Kingdom. Through the sufferings of Jesus we may enter into the Kingdom of God.<sup>4</sup>

So what does the cross mean for Christians today? The cross is not merely a symbol of the suffering and sacrifice of Christ, but also the identity of Christians. The cross becomes a vital part to build faith in Christ. In Indonesia, as one of the religions recognized by the government, Christianity does not always have good connotations. This originated from the history of the Nation. Christianity entered Indonesia through a missionary from Europe that came with the start of colonialism in Indonesia. The colonization, which lasted for more than 350 years brought a lot of suffering to the people. Until now, the perception that Christianity is the religion of the colonists is still inherent in the memory of the people. It is no wonder that in Asia, the image of

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<sup>4</sup> WA. Criswell, *Pencipta dan Penebus : Teologi dan Kristologi*, Jakarta, STTI Philadelphia, 2016,p.117

Christ is often termed "colonial Christ."<sup>5</sup> The dominance of Moslems as a majority group applies in all spheres of life. It has resulted in little opportunity for minority groups to experience equality and justice in life. It is not an exaggeration when the responder states that openly showing the symbol of the cross indicates courage in expressing one's identity as a Christian. Because usually, one's identity is actually hidden to avoid social pressure in society.

*The Resurrection of Jesus: Hope in Christ in Facing of a World of Despair*

*"For what we preach is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord..." (2 Corinthians 4:5)*

The resurrection of Christ became the core of the Christian faith. Jesus is alive! He is in the midst of a church that believes in Him. He says that where there are two or three people gathered in His name, He will be present among them.. Jesus is with us. He lives! "Where O death, where is your victory? Where O death, is your sting?" (1 Corinthians 15:55). Jesus overcame death. The power of death has no power over Him and all of us take part in His resurrection. No other human being in this world can defeat death and the power of Satan other than Jesus. He proved His power as God through His resurrection.

After Christ rose from the dead, he ascended into heaven and from that time until now believers await His return to reign as King. "Men of Galilee...why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven" (Act 1:11). Now, we are all looking forward to the time when the promise is revealed.

The majority of Indonesians are Javanese (41%). There is a mythology in the Javanese culture, *Ratu Adil*, the King of Justice. The mythology reveals that there will come a leader who

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<sup>5</sup> Anton Wessles, *Memandang Yesus : Gambaran Yesus Dalam Berbagai Budaya*, BPK Gunung Mulia, Jakarta, 1990, p. 21

will be a savior; He will bring justice and prosperity to his people. The king is also called "Erukro." Sartono Kartodirjo writes: there are two kinds of Ratu Adil movement. The First: this worldly orientation (aggressive, radical and revolutionary). The second: other worldly orientation (spiritual, hope).<sup>6</sup> Some Javanese eagerly await the figure of *Ratu Adil*. They believe that someday someone will be able to free them from the pressures of life: sickness, poverty, and other suffering.

The figure of Jesus Christ as the Divine King meets the criteria of a Ratu Adil, so this point can be used as a bridge in communicating the gospel to them. *Ratu Adil* as the source of hope and liberation is the same as Jesus Christ which is the hope of the Christian faith for eternal life.

#### *Conclusion to Julca Response*

Through the deep observation of Christology, we recognize three important moments in Christ that can be used as a bridge to bring the Gospel to everyone. These three entrances to the Gospel are: His incarnation, His suffering and death, and the Resurrection. Getting to know the socio-cultural context very well is indispensable in finding and building bridges that can connect and deliver the Gospel to everyone.

#### *Response to Mtukwa*

In the paper written on the basis of 1 Thessalonians 2: 1-12, there are several principles from Paul's missionary efforts to reach others for Christ. Certainly the context of the place and

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<sup>6</sup> Sartono Kartodirjo, in *Menyongsong Ratu Adil*, Bambang Noorsena, Yogyakarta, Yayasan Andi, 2003, p.77

people cannot be ignored, because in order to be effective all context elements them formed the evangelistic pattern Paul used.

Thessalonica was a heterogeneous city. Many Greeks and Jews and other groups were in it. The Thessalonian church was pioneered by Paul with the congregation predominantly Greek. Before they became Christians, they were kafir. Many of Paul's followers were upper class people (Act 4:17). The Thessalonians were a growing congregation, both in number and quality of faith. Under these circumstances, there was always the potential for apostasy in the church, so in his letters Paul insisted on the importance of keeping the faith -against the assaults of the deceivers (2 Thessalonians 2: 2). Paul's view of the Thessalonians is recorded in 1 Thessalonians 1: 8. Their strong and unquestioning faith had been reported not only in the realm of Achaia and Macedonia, but also elsewhere. The Thessalonians were the crown of Paul's ministry.

### *The Principle of Self-Emptying*

In the discussion of “The Conduct of the Messengers” (p.7-8), the author gave quotes regarding the principle of self-emptying as follows:

Paul, just like Christ, renounced his rights and did not use them for his own selfish desires, even though, he had the right to do so, he chose to forego his privileges choosing love to be the expression of his gospel. F.F. Bruce is right when he says "No other attitude would befit the preachers of a gospel which proclaimed as Lord and Savior one who **“emptied himself”** (Phil 2:7) for the enrichment of others". The similarity of *en mesō humōn* (among you) with *en mesō humōn* (Lk. 22:27) is undeniable. Jesus's ministry was characterized by service to others and is here embodied by the missionaries. For Paul, functioning as a slave of Christ and for others became his **modus operandi**.

The author explains the basic attitude of Paul who chose to give up all his rights as an Apostle and leader of the church, and chose to struggle to make his own livelihood. Although he had

the right, he chose not to take advantage of the ease such a right would provide for him. Some of the principles and truths that can be gained from this issue are as follows:

*Jesus as the Founder*

Jesus' ministry and work of salvation to mankind starts from the point of self-emptying (Philippians 2: 7). The term "likeness of God" (*morphe theos*), speaks of the essence and qualities of God that Jesus possessed, before and after he became human. The Bible declares that Jesus is God.

The term "self-emptying" is *kenosis* (Greek) from the root word *kenoo / kenoun*, meaning: to make empty, make of no reputation. The word "emptying Himself" in verse 7 does not say that He abandoned His divine attributes. It deals with the context of him taking the form of a servant who was willing to obey and did not take into account His own concerns and needs. Thus, the act of Christ's *kenosis* means that Christ did not abandon any of his divine attributes at the time of his incarnation, but He voluntarily limited the free use of these divine attributes according to His purpose, to live among men with all its limitations and suffer death as a sacrifice for the sin of man. Jesus was divine in existence.

His choice to be a servant was a sacrifice, not only to be of very low social status in the midst of society, but also of severe psychological consequences because of the term "servant" (*doulos*), meaning slave / servant whose right to life is entirely in the hands of his master. He must obey and faithfully serve his master unconditionally.

In verse 8 : Jesus was obedient unto death. The term "obedient" (Greek: *hupekoos*) means: submissive, obedient. Death on the cross was the most abject and shameful punishment. To the Jews, to die on the cross was the curse of God. So, as a human being, he -had the lowest status (servant) and the most despicable way of death (crucified).



*Paul As Imitator*

The choice to be a servant also has some implications. In Luke 22:27 – having the status of a servant meant that Jesus would always be among human beings, especially the communities to which they were to reach and win, the Jews and the disciples. This is in line with Paul's evangelistic pattern. He followed Jesus as his model of evangelism. Jesus has made the model for the gospel and he started from the point of emptying oneself and becoming a servant to all people. Similarly Paul begins from the point of consciousness to respond to God's call to preach the Gospel. Paul's subsequent emptying process is through the "release" of his rights as an apostle and church leader, making the choice to work for his livelihood as a tent maker and by doing so mingle with many people and interact for the sake of the Gospel. Paul's decision was to serve, to not be a burden to the church, and to live with his congregation. It is the way he chose to reach as many people as possible for the Gospel.

Quoting Paul's writings in the context of his overriding interest of spreading the Gospel, in 1 Corinthians 9: 19-22 are written several principles relevant to the idea of self-emptying as found in Philippians 2: 7. In 1 Corinthians 9:19, Paul writes that he is actually a free man who has the freedom to choose, but he consciously chooses to be a servant for all. The word "servant" in this passage has the same meaning from the word *douloos*, from the word *duolos*, which has the same meaning as the "servant", spoken of in Philippians 2: 7. So, Paul is not only using the same way as Jesus, but also choosing the same role as Jesus chose, to be a servant. Paul's "disposal of rights" principle to reach as many people as possible for Christ appears in the following principles below :

*“I became as...”*

In approach to a particular group, the Apostle Paul made himself like the group of people he would reach (verses 20, 21, 22). "I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some". The apostle Paul *renounced* his old identity and took on the role of one of the communities of context he would reach. The word *renounced* means to abandon or refuse to engage or support. Paul is still a human being, but he can not completely abandon his cultural identity. He still a Jewish but he chooses to as far as is possible become like those he is trying to reach. Paul would always have the identity he learned from his people group, he can not humanly totally leave it behind. However, he can choose to lay it aside and as much as possible become like those he has come to serve. He will never be 100% like the all the Thessalonians, too... but he is purposefully and intentionally as much as he can laying aside his cultural background and picking up the Thessalonian culture and living within its context. Paul identifies himself as a target group through: understanding their perspectives, living with them, and doing their habits (which are not contrary to the gospel). He is willing to be like anyone as long as he can reach more people for Christ. This is what Paul did to reach out to the Thessalonians.

*“That I may win ...”*

Taking the attitude of "becoming as ..." is done for a clear primary purpose: "that I may win those people unto Christ" (verses 19, 20, 21). Paul likened his purpose to Christ's purpose for winning as many as possible for Christ. This is achieved by: giving his own life, time, energy, attention, feelings (love), money, totally for a purpose, that is to be as much as possible for Christ (external purpose) and for his part in the gospel (internal purpose).

*The Model For Indonesian Context*

Indonesia is an archipelagic country, composed of 17,504 large and small islands<sup>7</sup> with a population of over 263,846,946 in 2016<sup>8</sup>. Indonesia is the fourth most populous country in the world and the most populous Moslem country in the world with a population of 220 million or 85.2% of the population. Protestants (8.9%), Catholics (3%), Hinduism (1.8%), Buddhist (0.8%) and others (0.3%) including Confucianism. There are more than 300 ethnic groups, 1,340 tribes<sup>9</sup> and 1158 languages.<sup>10</sup>

So many diverse tribes exist in Indonesia with differing customs and cultures which has resulted in varying approaches in evangelism also. Each region has its own traditions and cultures. Some areas are tolerant of heterogeneity, whether religious, ethnic and racial. But there are also areas are closed to diversity. Opening churches in Indonesia requires a special strategy because of government regulations. And that is not easy in these days. Testifying about Christ and sharing the Good News with someone, especially Moslems, needs a special approach to avoid conflict within society. Especially in the last decade, the issue of the “Tribe - Religion – Race” has become something quite sensitive that can easily cause turmoil in society. This matter needs careful attention in doing evangelism.

Paul’s approaches in sharing the Gospel are very relevant to the context in Indonesia even though the prior research and observation was intended for the context of a different community. Loving, sincere, and pure, not sweet-minded and self-absorbed, with transparency and no hidden agenda are compassionate characteristics that are needed to approach the context community (1

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<sup>7</sup> Merdeka News, 19 Agustus 2017, accessed at 12/12/2017

<sup>8</sup> Bps.go.id

<sup>9</sup> Kewarganegaraan Indonesia 2010

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Thessalonians 2: 3-5). The principle of servant willingness and willing to live out "I became as..." will help the servant of God enter these contexts (1 Corinthians 9: 19-22).

Knowing and understanding the community requires thorough research. Research on the characteristics of a community needs a relatively long time, it is expensive and needs a good clear focus. Research is part of the planned strategy. Different areas will have different cultures. Cultural differences will determine differing approach models. A specific strategy for a specific community. So many Indonesians do not know the gospel of Jesus Christ. Indonesia needs the touch of mission, which will lead them to Jesus.