

THE CHANGING LANDSCAPE OF ECUMENISM

Reflections from Indonesia and Europe

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MAPPING

Introduction

This first section includes the contributions made to draw a map of the ecumenical landscape in both Indonesia and Europe.

Andreas Yewangoe introduces the reader to the history of institutional ecumenism in Indonesia since the Republic of Indonesia came into existence. In 1950 the Council of Churches in Indonesia was formed and the stated goal was the foundation of a single Christian Church in Indonesia. The intrinsic debate then and ever since has been how this goal of ecumenism should be understood: structural or functional? Positive steps in this process are cited like the change of name into Communion of Churches in Indonesia in Ambon 1984. And the acceptance of the so-called Five Documents of Unity. Over the years the number of DGI/PGI churches has grown from 26 to almost ninety and the question is raised whether this is a sign of progress or not. Yewangoe's contribution also sketches the landscape of the other major ecumenical organisations like those of the Evangelical Churches and Organisations and the Pentecostal Churches, as well as the Bishop's Conference of Indonesia. However Ecumenism as such should not be the ultimate goal but a means to an end, i.e. a world fit for habitation, something Yewangoe among others recognizes in the ecumenical model of the Protestant Church in the Netherlands, its 33 Indonesian partner churches and the PGI itself. In an interesting map of the recent situation 2008 Yewangoe gives details on membership in the main protestant nationwide ecumenical institutions.

Huib Lens starts with a description of the various – sometimes opposing – concepts of ecumenism in the four main streams of Christianity: Roman Catholic, Orthodox, Anglican and Protestantism. In some more reflections on the theme of ecumenism the tension between structural and functional ecumenism also is highlighted, among other referring to Leo Koffeman's division of three dimensions of ecumenism: theological, ecclesiastical and spiritual. Briefly considering ecumenism at the local, the national and the global level he focusses on the ecumenical landscape at the European level. The main focus is on structural and formal ecumenism in this continent. A special reference is made to the growing importance of engaging migrant churches in ecumenism.

Paul Oppenheim discusses the ecumenical landscape in Germany which is dominated by the two large Christian churches, i.e. the Roman Catholic Church and the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD-Lutheran, Reformed and United). The two traditions of Christianity both have about a third of the German population. The remaining third is mostly not affiliated to any religion at all, and smaller numbers belong to other denominations, migrant churches or are adherents of other religions of which the Islam is the largest and still growing. Oppenheim elaborates more on the relationship between Catholics and Protestants, the EKD and the re-vitalization of the "Volkskirche" and the migrant communities. He concludes by reflecting

on the unique religious situation in Germany explaining the way in which structural ecumenism is given shape.

Leo Koffeman offers us a commentary on the contributions of Yewangoe and Oppenheim. He is of the opinion that these sketches of the ecumenical landscapes of Indonesia and Germany are characteristic of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the ecumenical movement at the beginning of the 21st century. There is uncertainty all around where it comes to goals, methods and subjects of the ecumenical movement. In order to analyse possible ways to go a deeper understanding of 'What ecumenism is?' is developed. It proposes that the concept of an ecumenical learning process is helpful to describe and understand the ecumenical movement. Several examples are given. The tension between structural and functional ecumenism appears at the surface again when it comes to the church and the world. As Hoedemaker has stated ecumenism is a process in the framework of the communication of the Gospel in the world. Here mission and ecumenism are bound together theologically but also on the ground, i.e. Indonesia and Europe. The question of the necessity of a new forum, in this case the Global Christian Forum, is asked as well as the quest for an ecumenical quality. For the latter the attributes mentioned in the Nicene Creed are brought to the fore: the Church is one, holy, catholic and apostolic.

In the last contribution of this section on mapping *Jane Beckx* critically gives a view from the perspective of migrant churches on the field of ecumenism. In migrant circles ecumenism is often still thought to be an issue between Roman Catholics and Protestants and therefore does not seem to be an issue to invest much time and effort in. Sometimes the competition within Protestantism is felt more pressing as an ecumenical challenge both in Indonesia as it is in Europe than Protestant-Roman Catholic ecumenism. Trying to head for more unity in some cases even brings about more separation if Christian norms and values differ too much between the churches and Christian communities. Also there seems to be a distance between ecumenism as seen from the point of view of the leaders or from the people's perspective. After introducing SKIN as a platform of migrant churches rather than an ecumenical council she puts the question whether Ecumenism is a human effort or – likewise Yewangoe puts it – a grace of God.