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HISTORY AND DYNAMICS OF JAVANESE CHRISTIANITY IN TEGAL, CENTRAL JAVA, 1862-1942

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Abstract

This article examines the history of Christianity in Tegal as the place where the Nederlandsche Gereformeerde Zendingsvereniging (NGZV) first worked in Central Java in 1862. Aart Vermeer, whom the NGZV sent, opened a new area in north Tegal and established a Javanese Christian community there. Growth was insignificant until 1904 when Neukirchener Mission, or De Bond van Zending van de Salatiga Zending op Java (Salatiga Zending), replaced the NGZV and served Tegal's Christians until approximately 1942. The data in this historical research came from archives, documents, newspapers, and records related to the research theme. Based on the historical search, it was found that the history and growth of indigenous (Javanese) Christianity in Tegal could not be separated from a place called Muaratua which became the initial landscape. The ministry transitioned from NGZV to Salatiga Zending, which influenced the pattern of service to Christian groups in Muaratua and Tegal in general.

Keywords: church history, Javanese Christianity, Muaratua, Nederlandsche Gereformeerde Zendingsvereniging (NGZV), Salatiga Zending

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SEJARAH DAN DINAMIKA KEKRISTENAN JAWA DI TEGAL, JAWA TENGAH, 1862-1942

Abstrak

Artikel ini menelaah sejarah perkembangan kekristenan di Tegal sebagai tempat dimana pertama kali Nederlandsche Gereformeerde Zendingsvereniging (NGZV) berkarya di Jawa Tengah pada tahun 1862. Aart Vermeer yang diutus oleh NGZV membuka wilayah baru di utara Tegal dan membangun komunitas Kristen disana. Pertumbuhannya tidak cukup signifikan hingga pada 1904, Neukirchener Mission atau De Bond van Zendeling van de Salatiga Zending op Java (Salatiga Zending), menggantikan NGZV melayani umat Kristen Tegal hingga kurang lebih tahun 1942. Data dalam penelitian sejarah ini berasal dari arsip, dokumen, koran serta catatan yang berkaitan dengan tema penelitian. berdasarkan penelusuran historis tersebut ditemukan fakta bahwa sejarah dan pertumbuhan kekristenan pribumi (Jawa) di Tegal tidak bisa dilepaskan dari sebuah tempat bernama Muaratua yang menjadi lanskap mula-mula. Pelayanan beralih dari NGZV ke Salatiga Zending, yang mempengaruhi pola pelayanan kepada kelompok Kristen di Muaratua dan Tegal pada umumnya.

Kata-kata Kunci: sejarah gereja, kekristenan pribumi, Muaratua, Nederlandsche Gereformeerde Zendingsvereniging (NGZV), Salatiga Zending

Introduction

From a political standpoint, the government of the Dutch East Indies exhibited a discernible selectivity in the issuance of operational permits to missionary entities. Following confrontations with various grassroots resistances, notably exemplified by the Diponegoro War (1825-1830), the Dutch administration placed a premium on restoring social, economic, and political stability.¹ Policies perceived as potentially detrimental to economic advancement were rigorously curtailed. Until June 1950, the Dutch colonial administration enacted regulations primarily aimed at prohibiting missionary activities. For instance, the Dutch East Indies Protestant Church (*Indische Kerk*) found itself constrained in its operational latitude, as its activities were heavily contingent upon the permissions and regulations dictated by the

¹ Th. Van den End, *Ragi Carita 1: Sejarah Gereja di Indonesia 1500-1860*, (Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 2011), 197-198.

Dutch government.² The policies of the Dutch Colonial Government, unfavorable towards missionary endeavors, drew criticism from the *Nederlandschzending Vereeniging* (NZV). During the ascendancy of the Dutch East India Company (VOC), there appeared a discernible inclination towards opportunism, prioritizing the preservation of spice trade interests over fostering the evangelical zeal espoused by missionary institutions. The NZV subsequently censured the VOC with the poignant expression, "... it is the pepper that compelled the VOC to engage in various acts deemed 'ignoble'."³

The Dutch political policies, which were not particularly conducive to the interests of missionary institutions in Java, prompted a divergence in the landscape of evangelism, extending beyond the confines of these establishments to encompass a spectrum of other actors. In East Java, the dissemination of Christianity was spearheaded not only by missionary institutions but also by enterprising individuals, independent agents, and subsequently, Indigenous Javanese converts.⁴ Figures of note include Johannes Emde in Surabaya (from 1851) and Coenrad Laurens Coolen in Ngoro (from 1830). A similar pattern emerged in Central Java, where affiliates of missionary organizations played a significant role in spreading the Gospel.⁵ Meanwhile, in Batavia and its adjacent areas, Frederik Lodewijk Anthing, serving as the vice-chairman of the Supreme Court, undertook commendable efforts in propagating the Gospel among the indigenous populace. Anthing advocated for indigenous leadership in evangelization, believing that winning the hearts of the native population necessitated initiatives led by their own kin. This marked a pivotal moment where endeavors aimed at the Bumiputra began to garner attention within the Java Region.

The spread of Christianity among the Indigenous in Tegal, Central Java began around 1860. Two indigenous teachers; Johannes Vrede (another source writes Verde) and Laban, students of the "Bible School" managed by FWL Anthing in Batavia,⁶ came

² Mufti Ali, *Misionarisme di Banten*, (Jakarta: Kompas Gramedia, 2021), 73.

³ Ibid., 69.

⁴ Amos Sukamto, "The Role of Entrepreneurs in the Development of Protestant Christianity in East Java in the Nineteenth Century." *International Journal of Asian Christianity*, Vol. 6, No. 2 (2023): 184-207.

⁵ C. Guillot, *Kiai Sadrach: Riwayat Kristenisasi di Jawa* (Jakarta: Grafiti Press, 1985); Soetarman Soediman Partonadi, *Komunitas Sadrach dan Akar Kontekstualnya: Suatu Ekspresi Kekristenan Jawa pada Abad XIX* (Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 1981).

⁶ F. Lion Cachet, *En Jaar Op Reis in Dienst Der Zending* (Amsterdam: JA Wormser, 1896), 270, 481.

to Tegal to preach the gospel. Vrede and Laban were sent to Tegal due to discussions between Anthing and Adriaan Anton Maximiliaan Nicolaas (AAMN) Keuchenius (1825-1894) who served as Tegal's Resident. Both government officials were members of the lay-founded evangelistic organization, GIUZ (*Genootschap voor In-en Uitwendige Zending*) with E.W. King and Izak Esser in 1851 in Batavia.⁷ The organization focused on ministry to the indigenous people and believed that the two evangelists could pave the way for a broader outreach in the northern coastal area of Central Java.

The *Nederlandsche Gereformeerde Zendingsvereniging* (NGZV), which was established on May 6, 1859, and incorporated on October 19, 1859,⁸ also worked in the Dutch East Indies. Representatives from the GIUZ and the NGZV drew out the preaching region in the Dutch East Indies, and Anthing requested to the NGZV that they work in Tegal for the first time. GIUZ further told NGZV that two native preachers had previously cleared land in Tegal and requested assistance from NGZV. There are no documents to demonstrate how Vrede and Laban's labor progressed, or whether anyone was baptized or not. J.D. Wolterbeek only mentions that there was already a group of Javanese prepared to learn.

The NGZV's first evangelist, Aart Vermeer, then formed a Christian community on the north shore. On January 25, 1863, 37 Javanese were baptized for the first time, including 19 adults and 18 children. The "*Inlandsche Christengemeente te Tegal*" or Indigenous Christian Congregation in Tegal was formed as a result. Vermeer began his work at Tegal on November 1, 1862, as a *Zendeling* for the NGZV. Despite his lack of knowledge of Javanese culture, the rewards of his labor were visible two months later. He was not alone; Laban and Hebron Lelie, two Javanese Gospel Teachers (*Guru Injil*) trained by FWL Anthing, also worked with him. Given the *Zendelings'* low cultural awareness, the work of the Gospel Teachers was critical in the development of Christian communities.

On December 31, 1863, the government was ready to execute a document of land grant in Muaratua (now in Muarareja Village, Tegal) for the Javanese Christian Congregation. A unique place was constructed in the new place for the Christians. Although Vermeer was drawn to the southern, mountainous region, Keuchenius assigned the *Zendelings* to work among the fishermen. By 1864, the Javanese Christians had relocated to Muaratua, which was then known as Klein-Bethesda or Little Bethesda. The expansion in Muaratua did not match expectations. On June 1,

⁷ J. D. Wolterbeek, *Babad Zending di Pulau Jawa* (Yogyakarta: Taman Pustaka Kristen, 1995), 61.

⁸ Cachet, *En Jaar Op Reis in Dienst Der Zending*, 481.

1894, the NGZV took over responsibility for Muaratua to *De Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland*, or GKN. In reality, until 1903, the GKN was unable to assist the Muaratua congregation. Until Muaratua was handed to Salatiga Zending's custody in 1904. Karl Raatschen was eventually assigned as a minister in Muaratua after 48 years without one. However, due to the dismal state of the infrastructure, he attempted to find a spot in the town center. Raatschen and the Tegal Christian congregation successfully established a church on July 8, 1934.

The purpose of this article is to explain two major research questions: (1) the development of Javanese Christianity in Tegal, with Muaratua as the first nucleus of its movement, and (2) changes in ministry and activity created by zending institutions in Tegal during the NGZV and Salatiga Zending periods. This question emphasizes the scenario in which Christianity grew in Muaratua in its early days, which had its own background and purpose. Furthermore, the ministry transition from NGZV to Salatiga Zending required changes. It undoubtedly influenced the pattern of service to Christian groups in Muaratua and Tegal in general.

A study on Indigenous Christianity was conducted by Phillip van Akkeren when he examined the community in East Java. Through his investigation of the work done by individuals like Coenrad Lauren Coolen, Akkeren effectively demonstrated the existence of Christian community rooted in Javanese value and traditions.⁹ This pattern was also evident in the work of Anthing in Batavia and its surrounding areas before it was later taken over by the *Nederlandsche Zendings Vereeniging* (NZV).¹⁰ In the Central Java, a local missionary named Kiai Sadrach played a significant role in propagating Christianity. He is known to have successfully spread Christianity in a manner closely aligned with the Javanese people's mindset. Additionally, Sadrach established the *Golongane Wong Kristen Kang Merdiko* (Independent Javanese Christian Community) to affirm and assert their identity as an Indigenous Christian community.¹¹ A similar pattern can be observed when analyzing the growth of Christianity in the eastern part of Central Java,

⁹ Phillip van Akkeren, *Dewi Sri dan Kristus: Sebuah Kajian tentang Gereja Pribumi di Jawa Timur* (Jakarta: Gunung Mulia, 1995).

¹⁰ Koernia Atje, *Benih Yang Tumbuh II: Suatu Survey Mengenai Gereja Kristen Pasundan* (Bandung: Badan Pekerja Sinode Gereja Kristen Pasundan, 1975); A.J Bliet, *Mr. L. F. Anthing*, *Lichstralen op den Akker Der Wereld*, No. 1, 1938.

¹¹ C. Guillot, *Kiai Sadrach*; Partonadi, *Komunitas Sadrach dan Akar Kontekstualnya*.

particularly in the foothills of Mount Muria, through the efforts of Kiai Ibrahim Tunggal Wulung.¹²

By delving into literature that explores Christianity in Java or Central Java in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, there is the field study for the examination of missionary work in Tegal. Not enough works have examined how the Gospel was spread in the northern region of Central Java, especially Tegal. Although there are books that try to explain glimpses of preaching activities from various places, the description of events in one locus is done by photographing the general object, not the dynamics of service, society, or conflict within it.¹³ Another fact is that there is no work that helps explain the time, actors, and patterns of Christian development in Tegal. The space that is still available is wide, trying to be filled through this study.

The central thesis of this article is that NGZV seeks to establish a distinct territory inhabited by Christians, separate from the general population. Muaratua, a region situated on the northern coast of Tegal, was chosen for the purpose of fortifying the Indigenous congregation's faith. This pattern is not entirely novel, as a similar endeavor was previously undertaken by the NZV in Pasundan. Through this approach, it becomes evident that NGZV's maintenance of the Muaratua congregation predominantly reflects stagnation rather than significant progress. Ultimately, NGZV redirected its services from Muaratua to Salatiga Zending. Regrettably, instead of fortifying the congregation, Salatiga Zending relocated the service center to the city, abandoning Muaratua. My analysis concludes that this pattern, initiated by Vermeer through the formation of an exclusive social group, does not appear to engender long-term resilience. Naturally, multiple factors contribute to this situation. Nevertheless, NGZV acknowledges that the congregation in Tegal, in general, is not thriving as robustly as those in other service areas.

In spite of my interest in Javanese Christianity for a while, my focus on the Muaratua region began in June 2022. I spent almost three months looking for sources, making observations, and digging through archives relating to this topic. While collecting archives and books, I gradually began writing until this paper was completed. When I decided to begin my investigation, the first thing I did was gather books about Muaratua's history. Despite the fact that there are numerous publications on the history of Christianity in Indonesia, they all seem to have the same tone and

¹² S.H. Sukoco dan Lawrence M. Yoder, *Tata Injil di Bumi Muria: Sejarah Gereja Injili di Tanah Jawa-GITJ* (Semarang: Pustaka Muria, 2010).

¹³ Th. Muller Kruger, *Sedjarah Geredja di Indonesia* (Jakarta: BPK, 1966). Th. van den End, *Ragi Carita: Sejarah Gereja di Indonesia 2: 1860an sampai Sekarang* (Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 1989); Karel Steenbrink and Jan S. Aritonang, eds., *A History of Christianity in Indonesia* (Leiden: Brill, 2008).

lack supporting narratives. As a result, I looked for information from other sources, such as newspapers, magazines, documents, and letters that could depict the situation on the ground.

In this article, following an exposition of the contextual background, the research inquiries at hand, and the employed research methodology, I will delve into a comprehensive examination of the historical roots of Muaratua and Muarareja, alongside an exploration of the Christian communities situated within this geographical region, as well as a broader perspective on Tegal itself. Subsequently, our discourse will shift its focus towards a detailed portrayal of the evolution of Christianity in Tegal during the NGZV ministry. This narrative encompasses an elucidation of the initial circumstances surrounding baptism and the subsequent migration towards Muaratua. The ensuing section will meticulously explore the intricacies of how NGZV facilitated the transfer of the Muaratua congregation to the auspices of Salatiga Zending. Finally, the article will conclude with trajectories for further research.

Origins of Muaratua and Muarareja

Muarareja is an administrative hamlet in Kecamatan Tegal Barat, Tegal City. It shares a boundary with Kaligangsa Brebes to the west. Kecamatan Margadana lies to the south, and Tegalsari Village is to the east, with the Java Sea to the north. Because Muarareja is located on the sea's edge, it's not a surprise that there are a lot of fishermen there, though not as many as in Tegalsari.

Until the mid-1980s, Muarareja, which at that time had the status of a village, was one of the areas in Kecamatan Sumurpanggang, Kabupaten Tegal. Based on Government Regulation No. 7 of 1986 concerning Changes in the Boundaries of Kotamadya Tegal and Kabupaten Tegal, Muarareja Village was moved and included as part of Kecamatan Tegal Barat, Kabupaten Tegal. Muarareja's status changed from a village to a sub-village with reference to Tegal City Regional Regulation No. 2 of 2002 concerning the Change of Villages in Tegal City into Sub-villages. What was Muarareja like in the past?

The name Muarareja did not exist in the Dutch Topographic Map of 1916. There were various place names in the area that are now known as Muarareja, including Moearatoea, Moearanjar, and Kadjongan. The three location names are still well known in the community, albeit with slightly altered toponymy. Muaratua is pronounced "Maratua" and Muaraanyar is pronounced, "Mlanyar." Indeed, the name Muaraanyar is still used for a market in Muarareja Village. *Dukuh/Dusun* Kajongan, for example, is still used as the name of a tiny locality within Muarareja. In the Dutch Government Almanac no. 1 of 1929, the name

Muarareja is also not found. The *Regentschappen* (Regency) of Tegal had seven districts (*kawedanan*); Tegal (whose capital was Mangkukusuman/Mangkoekoesoeman), Adiwerna, Soeradadi, Slawi, Pangkah, Balapulung, and Boemidjawa. There were 4 *kecamatan* (*onderdistrict*) under the Tegal Kawedanan; Mangkukusuman, Tegalsari, Sumurpanggung, and Kramat.¹⁴ An alphabet of administrative regions compiled by W. F. Schoel in 1930, inventoried the villages under the Sumurpanggung Onderdistrict as Debongkidoel, Debongkoeloen, Debonglor, Kalinjawatkoelon, Kalinjawatwetan, Soemoerpanggung, Tjabawan, Toenon, Kaligangsa.¹⁵ All of these were areas that prior to 1986 existed in Kecamatan Sumurpanggung, Kabupaten Tegal. However, the names Muarareja, Muaratua, or Muaraanyar were not found there.

Geographically, Muaratua and Muaraanyar are actually closer to Tegalsari. So, it is possible that this area was administratively managed by the Tegalsari *Onderdistrik*. However, on March 8, 1928, *De Locomotief* newspaper reported the position of Muaratua (written Moeara-Toewa) which indicated that the area was in Sumurpanggung (written Soemoer-Panggoeng).¹⁶ *De Locomotief* reported bad weather on Sunday afternoon (March 4, 1928). “Sunday afternoon, a severe thunderstorm raged on the north coast, during which three houses of the Indigenous [sic] in Meara-Toewa Village (Soemoer-Panggoeng) were blown away. In Kota Tegal, lightning struck and several coconut trees were uprooted by the storm. Fortunately, there were no victims of this accident,” wrote *De Locomotief*. A somewhat clearer picture is recorded in the book *De Visschersvereniging te Tegal*.¹⁷ In the note discussing the fishermen’s association in Tegal, it was stated “*Zij omvat de desa’s Tegalsari, Asemtiga en Pendjalan in het onderdistrict Tegalsari, Moeara Anjar en M. Toewa in het onderdistrict Soemoerpanggung.*”¹⁸ Based on this explanation, it can be understood that Muaratua and Muaraanyar are in the Sumurpanggung area. However, it is interesting to observe, because the writing assumes Muaraanyar and Muaratua as two different villages. Meanwhile, in the Dutch government’s administrative almanac, both are not found as village names.

¹⁴ *Regerings-Almanak voor Nederlandsch-Indie 1929*, 708.

¹⁵ *De Locomotief*, March 8, 1928.

¹⁶ W.F. Schoel, *Alphabetisch Register Van De Administratieve- (Bestuurs-) En Adatrechtelijke Indeling Van Nederlandsch-Indie, Deel I: Java dn Madoera* (Batavia: Landsrukerrij, 1930).

¹⁷ *De Visschersvereniging te Tegal* (Batavia: Javasche Boekhandeld & Drukkerij, 1913), 8.

¹⁸ “These villages include Tegalsari, Asemtiga and Penjalan villages in Tegalsari District, Muaraanyar and Muaratua in Sumurpanggung District...” Ibid.

There is no documented story of how Muaranyar, Muaratua, and Kajongan were merged into Muarareja. According to one source, the “Two Estuaries” were united in 1942 when the Japanese took over the government of the Dutch East Indies. Muarareja, a settlement in Sumurpanggang, Kabupaten Tegal, grew from the two territories separated by the Kemiri River.¹⁹ The land certificate and land book for the church area in Muaratua, issued on January 11, 1972, states that the area is in “Muara-Tuwa Village” (written *Ketjamatan*) Kecamatan Sumurpanggang, Kabupaten Tegal.²⁰ Although Muarareja is a new (administrative) area, Muaratua itself is a historical designation, just like Muaraanyar. The name Muaratua, because of its location on the coast, is often mentioned (in newspapers, books, and Dutch East Indies government documents) in connection with marine issues. The December 14, 1938 edition of “*Algemeen handelsblad voor Nederlandsch-Indië*” reports that on October 24, the Assistant Wedana gathered the fishermen at the Tegalsari bekel’s house to listen to their complaints about the diminishing fish catch.²¹ According to the news, the fishermen gathered came from coastal settlements such as Muaraanyar, Muaratua, Tegalsari, and Mintaragen (Pendjalan).²² They claimed that their catches had decreased, despite the fact that the price of fish had remained relatively consistent at 9 cents per kilogram. Fishermen used to make 25-150 cents per day, but this has dropped to 3, 4, or 5 cents in the previous four months. Malaria was another issue at Tegal. Paving roads and fortifying coastal areas were critical in the fight against the epidemic.²³ The government agreed to allocate funding, particularly for road improvements in the northern region. Although not all roads need repair, those in the Muaratua region were in desperate need. Malaria was also mentioned in the 1936 Health Report in Muaratua.²⁴ Muaratua had a lot of mosquito nests, so it should need to be treated right away.

Muaratua was also mentioned in *Algemeen Handelsblad voor Nederlandsch-Indië* when reporting on the activities of the Muhammadiyah Scouting Movement, Hizbul Wathan.²⁵ On one

¹⁹ Sumarsono, et al., *Peranan Wanita Nelayan dalam Kehidupan Ekonomi Keluarga di Tegal, Jawa Tengah* (Jakarta: Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 1975), 15-16.

²⁰ *Sertipikat dan Buku Tanah 1972*.

²¹ *Algemeen Handelsblad voor Nederlandsch-Indië*, December 14, 1938.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ *Algemeen Handelsblad voor Nederlandsch-Indië*, October 24, 1939.

²⁴ W. F. Theunissen, P. H. Olivier, and W. K. Mertens, *Mededeelingen van den Dienst der Volksgezondheid in Nederlandsch-Indië*, Jaargang XXV No.3, 1936, 249-250.

²⁵ *Algemeen Handelsblad voor Nederlandsch-Indië*, February 17, 1927.

Sunday in January-February 1927, members of the scouting organization, which was then called “Padvinder Muhammadiyah”, distributed clothes to residents in need. This humanitarian work was carried out by eight young guys. Two of them traveled to Debong, two to Randugunting, and two to Muaratua. Two others gathered donations of additional clothing to be handed to the needy the next week. The publication was unambiguous in its praise for the Hizbul Wathan members’ efforts. The effort is admirable, and people in Tegal may fully support Hizbul Wathan’s initiatives by donating a large amount of worn clothing. Muaratua existed as a name for a region in early twentieth-century news reports. In reality, if you go back far enough, it may be a long-standing classification. Muaratua was administratively removed due to later circumstances.

Muaratua and Christian Congregations in Tegal

In addition to the Indigenous Muaratua congregation, there were other Christian groups in Tegal that also existed as represented in houses of worship. The 1916 Topographic Map shows two houses of worship—a Catholic Church and a Protestant Church. In Tegal City (now), the Catholic Church in question is the Tegal Sacred Heart of Jesus Catholic Church on 128 Captain Ismail Street, Kraton, West Tegal, Tegal City. On the 1916 topographic map, if examined closely, the position of the Catholic Church is not the same as it is today. In the history of the development of the Sacred Heart of Jesus Tegal Church, there was indeed a change of place. Previously, this small church building was around Jalan Bandeng (now) or west of Tegal Harbor. This area is also known as “Dukuh Kandangmenjangan.” The building was built and used around 1895-1910.²⁶ The Catholic Church then moved around the 1940s to its current location.

In addition to Indigenous Christianity, church life was also conducted at the “*Protestantsche Kerk*,” where the congregation was mostly Dutch officials and employees.²⁷ “The *Protestantsche Kerk* was located at 12 Kraton-Zuid Street in Tegal. Currently, the church is used by the Protestant Church of Western Indonesia (*Gereja Protestan di Indonesia bagian Barat*; GPIB), which is located at 39-41 Dr. Soetomo Street in Tegal City. Previously, the “*Protestantsche Gemeente te Tegal*”²⁸ congregations had a house of worship located further north. On the 1916 Topographic Map and the 1926 Map of the Port Area in Tegal (*Havengebied van Tegal*), the location of the *Protestantsche Kerk* can be recognized. It was opposite the *Gevangenis* or what is now the Penitentiary. The name of the

²⁶ Buku Kenangan 90 tahun Paroki HKY Tegal.

²⁷ *De Locomotief*, August 21, 1934.

²⁸ *Algemeen Handelsblad voor Nederlandsch-Indië*, June 13, 1930.

street where the church stood, on the map of the harbor, was written “*Kerkstraat*” or Church Street.

The newspaper “*De Preanger Bode*” on July 28, 1899, reported that the board of the Protestant Christian congregation in Tegal applied for and amounted to 25,000 Gulden, but was rejected.²⁹ The congregation reapplied for the same amount to build a church five years later.³⁰ The move took place around August 1934. The pastor who served in Tegal from 1932-1936, Willem Volgers, had received a donation of 100 guilders for the construction of the new church and there would be an additional 100 guilders from other parties.³¹ The government had approved the usage of the site for the new church building. Construction is planned to commence after the rainy season, with the church ready by May or June 1935 and seating approximately 130 people. This meant a significant improvement for the Tegal Protestant church and significant success for the pastor who worked tirelessly to achieve it.³²

On a Sunday morning in June 1935 (probably June 9, 1935), the service at the Tegal *Protestantsche Kerk* was led by Pastor Lindeyer. After the service, Pastor Lindeyer gave a speech in connection with the construction of the new churchyard.³³ *De Locomotief* released a photograph of the newly completed and inaugurated church on September 10, 1935, with the description “Photo of the new Protestant Church in Tegal, whose inauguration has recently taken place. The church building’s tower visible at night.”³⁴

By 1940, therefore, there were at least three Christian congregations (other than Catholic) formed and worshipping in three different places. First, there was the *Protestant Kerk* on Jalan Kraton Zuid 12. Second, there was the *Zendingskerk*, also on Kraton Zuid (now used by the Javanese Christian Church on Jalan Dr. Soetomo 34). Third, there was the congregation at *Zendingskerk* Muaratusa (now used by the Javanese Christian Church at Muarareja).³⁵ While the first congregation was largely Dutch, the *Zendingskerk* was filled with Javanese and Chinese people (who eventually split and formed the Indonesian Christian Church). Meanwhile, the Muaratusa congregation includes Javanese. The

²⁹ *De Preanger Bode*, July 28, 1899.

³⁰ *De Locomotief*, September 08, 1903.

³¹ *De Locomotief*, August 21, 1934.

³² *De Locomotief*, August 21, 1934.

³³ *De Locomotief*, June, 1935.

³⁴ *De Locomotief*, September 10, 1935.

³⁵ This can at least be seen from the service schedules in the three churches. *Algemeen Handelsblad for Nederlandsch-Indië*, February 10, 1940.

Muaratua and *Zendingskerk* congregations will be elaborated on in the following section.

Tegal During the Ministry of NGZV-GKN 1862-1903: Vermeer's Role and the Early Baptism of the Indigenous People

The NGZV dispatched an evangelist called Aart Vermeer (1828-1891) to Tegal. Vermeer landed in Batavia on April 12, 1862, after being ordained on December 23, 1861, in Harleem (Netherlands), and then continued his voyage till he reached Tegal on June 14, 1862. Vermeer, who was 34 at the time, began working lawfully at the Tegal Presidency on November 1, 1862.³⁶ When Vermeer landed in Batavia, he learned that Johannes Vrede would be unable to accompany him to Tegal to preach. Anthing instead dispatched Hebron Lelie, a native gospel instructor, to join Vermeer and Laban. Vermeer traveled from Batavia to Tegal with Hebron Lelie. Vermeer rented a Javanese-style house and went about his business joyfully.³⁷

Vermeer's labor was made easier by the assistance of Laban and Lelie, as well as the full backing of Resident Keuchenius. Laban, who was fluent in Javanese gospel preaching, had built a room in which roughly 30-40 Javanese people attended each meeting. This fact raised the likelihood that a Javanese Christian congregation would be established in this location shortly. Keuchenius' path was equally well-defined. As a government officer, he did not obstruct Vermeer's message in any manner. Tegal, in reality, was a "*heerlijk veld*" or fertile field for missionary work, according to Keuchenius.³⁸ There was no doubt that the city would see very positive benefits. Ideally, the missionaries who would be deployed to Java would be able to communicate in Javanese. Time should be set up to learn this indigenous language, which will facilitate communication. One year is sufficient to equip the zendeling. If there was no advancement in the language, the zending organization might decide whether or not to continue its work. Vermeer faced problems in mastering the Javanese language.³⁹ To explain Christianity to the people of Tegal and its surroundings, he depended extensively on interpreters. Vermeer's Malay vocabulary was limited, so the locals had to learn the language as well. Vermeer, on the other hand, was not particularly enthusiastic about language study. Despite his lack of language practice, Vermeer attempted to focus on service. He expanded the

³⁶ Cachet, *En Jaar Op Reis in Dienst Der Zending*, 482.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Wolterbeek, *Babad Zending di Pulau Jawa*, 62.

function of his home to include not just a household but also a church where school-like activities could be carried out.

On January 25, 1863, 37 Javanese, 19 adults, and 18 children, were baptized in Tegal for the first time.⁴⁰ After the native evangelists inquired about knowledge of Christianity such as the *Dasatitab* (ten commandments), statement of faith, and so on, Laban's hands were placed on their heads. The first "*Inlandsche Christengemeente te Tegal*," or Javanese Christian congregation, was organized in Tegal. For the first time, Vermeer offered a sermon in Malay at the baptism. Here, challenges began to arise. Vermeer found it difficult to carry out his ministry because of the scattered location of his congregation. He felt that he could not supervise his members in this situation. Hence, Vermeer thought of uniting his congregation in one special area not to mention the potential for disruption to this new congregation that came, primarily, from people who did not like the presence of these Christians.

Indeed, the challenges persisted even upon their settlement in Muaratua. Following the Indigenous congregation's worship each Sunday, they were summoned for interrogation by the local village chief.⁴¹ During these sessions, conducted at the chief's residence, inquiries veered away from matters pertinent to village affairs or vertical issues. There was a palpable suspicion that these interrogations were motivated not solely by their newfound religious convictions but also by the assistance received from the government. Such circumstances bore the potential to significantly hinder the growth trajectory of the congregation's membership. Recognizing the imperative of addressing this obstacle, Vermeer discerned the necessity of establishing a dedicated communal space for these new congregants.

With this in mind, Vermeer applied to Tegal's residence for land in the mountains where he might live with the Javanese Christians. If properly cultivated, the land would provide fruit that would greatly help the mission in the future. Vermeer was adamant that the area be farmed by Javanese under the supervision of Europeans paid around 60-70 guilders per month. If the land was successfully cultivated, other land may be cultivated in the same

⁴⁰ Cachet, *En Jaar Op Reis in Dienst Der Zending*, 484. Wolterbeek, *Babad Zending di Pulau Java*, 62.

⁴¹ *De Standaard*, February 2, 1892.

manner. This would eventually result in a large number of self-sufficient and sustainable Christian settlements.



Image 1: Zendinglings and their assistants who worked in Tegal. A. Vermeer and H. Stooove are seated in front. Behind from left to right, Jonathan, Laban, Hebron, Leonard, Simeon, and Daan. Source: Lion Cachet, *En Jaar Op Reis in Dienst Der Zending*, 495.

Resident Keuchenius, on the other hand, was not on board with this proposal. Christians had to live below or in the city for him. They belong among the Muslims. As a result, these Javanese Christians might welcome others to believe in the Savior via their own words and actions, becoming “salt” for the growth of God’s Kingdom.

Vermeer was a little saddened when he heard Keuchenius’ decision. Not only was he not going to go to the hilly region, but he was also afflicted by other troubles, leaving him in despair. Vermeer became ill as a result of disagreements between Lelie and Laban, illegal activities perpetrated by his flock, and other factors. In truth, the Resident did not reject all of Vermeer’s proposals. Keuchenius’ argument was just over the location, but since they were both in one area not far apart, it didn’t matter. Muaratua (ancient spelling, written in three variations Moearatoea, Moearatoowa, Moearatoewa) was chosen as the location. Vermeer visited Muaratua in 1864 (possibly early that year) to see the land

that Keuchenius said was ideal for founding the Kingdom of God. It was bounded by, the sea to the north, communities to the east and south, and a free area to the west of the Muaratua area.

Keuchenius had a specific reason for selecting Muaratua, which is near the sea, as a location to plant the seeds of the mission. He was influenced by the fact that the Savior “preached the gospel primarily along this sea and that His first disciples were fishermen.” So he wanted to do what he thought was important, to do His work on the seashore and among the fishermen.⁴² At the suggestion of AAMN Keuchenius, Aart Vermeer weighed and negotiated his thoughts with Keuchenius’ offer. If he accepted the Resident’s offer, it meant he would have to give up his plans to cultivate land in the mountains. Muaratua’s soil was not suitable for growing rice. Nor would it be possible to graze cattle there. Drinking water might not be easy to come by, not to mention other disturbances such as mosquitoes and small animals.

However, there are some situations in which Muaratua can be useful. Cotton, coconut, and mango trees were plentiful. Vermeer believed that planting hundreds of coconut palms in the present would have a very profitable outcome a few years later. Oil mills would be built first, followed by cotton mills. Despite the fact that a lot of money would be spent, the earnings would be increased. This strategy would lead the Javanese Christian congregation to financial independence as well as gratitude and acknowledgment for its efforts. Vermeer accepted Resident Keuchenius’ offer after considering the benefits. The government then granted the Muaratua site to the Javanese Christian Congregation in Tegal, allowing for the construction of a church, a school building, and a portion of the cemetery. On December 31, 1863, the land grant deed was signed.⁴³ Given the legal system in place at the time, the Resident’s gift was audacious, since it rejected the Javanese Christian community’s lack of legal standing.

Indigenous (Javanese) Congregation Moves to Muaratua

Two years later Vermeer moved with the Javanese Christian group to Muaratua.³⁶ This move may have occurred in 1865, at the time of the land deed signing. If the calculation is based on the first visit with Keuchenius, the relocation to Muaratua took place in 1866. Wolterbeek, on the other hand, claimed that the migration to Muaratua occurred in 1864.⁴⁴ In Muaratua, Vermeer lived in a Javanese house. For the sake of developing and financing

⁴² Cachet, *En Jaar Op Reis in Dienst Der Zending*, 491.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 492.

⁴⁴ Wolterbeek, *Babad Zending di Pulau Jawa*, 62.

the mission, he and the congregation there began to utilize a land plantation near government land and planted young coconut trees on it. The *Nederlandsche Gereformeerde Zendingsvereeniging* (NGZV) supported Vermeer's activities and provided 500 Gulden. In its development, this financial matter then caused problems between him and the NGZV as well as third parties who also invested. Muaratua was given the name "Klein-Bethesda" (Little Bethesda) by Vermeer.⁴⁵ Vermeer's intention with this naming was to introduce Muaratua as a haven of spiritual recovery rather than a location where the occupants were people with mental disorders.⁴⁶ Laban gave classes in Javanese in this "Little Bethesda." Vermeer was in attendance. A children's school was also established.

Since living alone in Tegal, Vermeer had earnestly requested that the NGZV send someone to assist him, particularly in reaching difficult levels. On March 5, 1865, the NGZV dispatched Hendrik Stoove to Muaratua. An indigenous helper, Hebron Lelie, also spread the message to Tanjungsari, Pemalang, where a Christian community grew.⁴⁷ By 1867, the Indigenous Christian community at Muaratua had grown to 65 people, including 32 children. Tanjungsari, on the other hand, had 20 adults and 16 children. Hebron taught 18 boys and 8 girls in Muaratua, as well as 6 boys who were not regulars; at Pemalang, he taught 4 males and 10 females.⁴⁸

The NGZV approved Vermeer's request to relocate from Muaratua to Purbalingga. Simultaneously, on September 29, 1867, the NGZV appointed Stoove as pastor in Tegal. Vermeer's family and some Muaratua residents moved to Purbalingga in the middle night on October 9-10, 1867. On October 31, 1865, Vermeer married Augusta Letz at the Rehoboth Church, Mister Cornelis (Jatinegara). The Muaratua congregation was heartbroken by Vermeer's relocation to Purbalingga. Indigenous Christianity was declining rather than rising. Stoove did not appear to have the same vision as Vermeer when it came to controlling Muaratua. There were frequent misunderstandings between Stoove's in-laws and the indigenous Gospel Teachers, including their disputes with other Javanese. Due to his inability to manage Muaratua, Stoove finally raised the white flag. He tendered his resignation to the NGZV, and from January 1, 1869, Stoove became a civil servant, the head of a government-owned salt warehouse. Muaratua now had no pastor.

The NGZV soon realized the situation in Muaratua. Phillipus Bieger was sent to Muaratua and arrived in Tegal City on

⁴⁵ Cachet, *En Jaar Op Reis in Dienst Der Zending*, 493.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Wolterbeek, *Babad Zending di Pulau Jawa*, 62.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

February 4, 1871. Bieger originally received 13 days of training from Vermeer before serving in Muaratua. Vermeer introduced him to the Javanese character, nature, and various aspects of Javanese society, including the language. As a result, Bieger assiduously mastered the indigenous community's language. Vermeer secretly had reservations about Bieger's ability to care for Muaratua. Vermeer met Bieger while they were both students at the Amsterdam Seminary. Bieger's wife, Zuster Clara Rothpletz, was very helpful in his duties. Zuster Clara was very fond of the Javanese people, an attitude that made the distance between them and the Javanese people more manageable. However, Zuster Clara died on September 11, 1871, and was buried in Muaratua. At that time, the Muaratua congregation numbered 71 people, and each service was attended by 50 people. While serving the Javanese Christians in Muaratua, Bieger saw that they were not perfect Christians. In life, these indigenous people who have accepted Christ still practice clinics, mysticism, and superstition so that many sins are still committed and knowledge of the scriptures is still very weak.⁴⁹ Not only the people but even Hebron Lelie and Laban, who helped teach the gospel, were considered incompetent by Bieger so they were dismissed. Two other native teachers, Jonathan Sarija and Simeon, were also deemed incompetent although they were not dismissed.

The relationship between Bieger and the people of Muaratua eventually became strained. The Javanese Christians considered Bieger too conservative while Bieger viewed them as a congregation with an imperfect Christian faith. As a result of this attitude, the Muaratua congregation eventually did not grow, with only about 70 people. The NGZV then sent HFW Uhlenbusch who arrived in Tegal on March 21, 1876. The Bagelan Presidency at that time asked for a pastor and the NGZV agreed. Uhlenbusch was projected to replace Bieger in Muaratua, after first receiving training from Bieger. On January 27, 1877, the first working meeting or conference of Gereformeerd pastors was held in Muaratua which was attended by three pastors; Uhlenbusch, Bieger, and Vermeer who came from Purbalingga. Vermeer was elected president and Bieger secretary. No Javanese took part in the conference. One of the decisions was for Bieger to move to Bagelan and Uhlenbusch to become a pastor in Muaratua. Bieger then moved on January 11, 1878.

Unfortunately, Muaratua was once again beset by unrest. Uhlenbusch did not do any better than Bieger. On August 20, 1885, Uhlenbusch was expelled from the pastorate and dismissed after

⁴⁹ Ibid., 73

an examination of his humiliating deeds revealed that he had slipped into sin. Uhlenbusch faced difficult circumstances, and based on an investigation undertaken by Peter Jansz and Jakob Wilhelm, he was forced to accept this unfavorable conclusion. Except for Gospel Teacher Jonathan Sarija, Muaratua was once again without a Pastor.

After Uhlenbusch left, the Muaratua congregation was cared for by Pastor Jakob Wilhelm, who was then in charge of Purworejo. Not only Muaratua, but Wilhelm also fostered congregations in Pekalongan. Because of his love for the congregation, Wilhelm often visited Muaratua on foot. Wilhelm was also familiar with a very influential person in the life of the Christian community in Java, Kiai Sadrach. Unlike Bieger, Wilhelm was more able to accept the presence of Javanese people with all their culture, including maintaining an equal relationship with Sadrach. However later, at one time, Wilhelm had to reluctantly sign the decision that Sadrach was a heretical teacher and had to be eliminated.⁵⁰ Wilhelm's decision, however, did not come purely from his heart, as it was nothing more than the decision of Frans Lion Cachet, the NGZV envoy assigned to make reports on the work of evangelists in the NGZV region.

In 1889, Hortsman, a Salatiga Zending pastor, moved to the NGZV. Horstman moved to Pekalongan in 1890 and served the congregations in Tegal and Pekalongan. After gaining overflow congregations in the two regions, Hortsman soon discovered Javanese people who practiced Christianity with a strong mystical spirit. Wilhelm's death on March 3, 1892, caused Sadrach's Christians to have a higher status because Wilhelm established an equal relationship. This is why most of Sadrach's followers (Banyumas, Pekalongan, and Tegal) did not recognize Horstman. Only the Muaratua and Purbalingga congregations still recognized Hortsman and the NGZV. To Horstman, Lion Cachet proposed that the ruins of the zending house (*Zendinghuis*) in Muaratua should be demolished while others were repaired. If Horstman stayed in Muaratua, he would have a proper residence with several rooms and a reception room. Meanwhile, a native teacher could live behind his house.

The land owned by Zending could be handed over to Simeon Wasman, the foreman of the medical center in Muaratua. Arrangements may be established for the land's output, with a portion of the harvested coconuts going to the church treasury. The church, on the other hand, would have to be repaired and cleaned at great expense, as it would be difficult to rely on volunteer money. Following that, it was critical to keep the church clean as

⁵⁰ The reasons why Sadrach must be eliminated, see Partonadi, *Komunitas Sadrach dan Akar Kontekstualnya*, 205-214, 220-240.

well as the school maintained in case there would be teachers again one day. Officials in the Muaratua area were also cautioned not to disturb the residents of “Klein-Bethesda.” Residents were instructed to be well-behaved, calm, and tidy in order to keep life going smoothly.

Despite being a congregation loyal to the NGZV, Muaratua never developed. Many of the Muaratua congregation eventually moved to the southern region. After Horstman returned to the Netherlands, Muaratua was cared for by a native teacher who had been around since the Uhlenbusch period, Jonathan Sarija. After Sarija, Muaratua was led by another native, Mesach Elifas. He is a Javanese native from Kertayasa, Purbalingga. His father, Gameng alias Elifas was one of the 10 people baptized by Vermeer on May 5, 1866.



Image 2: Javanese Christian in front of Muaratua Manse
Source: Lion Cachet, *En Jaar Op Reis in Dienst Der Zending*, 487

In the Netherlands, a new organization called “*De Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland*” (commonly known as GKN or Gereformerd) was formed in 1892. They agreed that it was the church’s obligation, not the association’s, to propagate the gospel. This was also agreed upon by the NGZV. So, on June 1, 1894, the NGZV Zending was given over to the Gereformerd Church, effectively transferring the NGZV’s whole functioning territory to the Dutch East Indies. According to the Gereformerd Church’s 1896 report, the land at Muaratua, with the church building, courtyard, and damaged pastory, was 38,000 square meters, which was worth 3500 Gulden in 1877.⁵¹ The Gereformerd, on the other hand, was unable to govern the entire NGZV region, including Muaratua. Following Horstman, Muaratua was only visited twice by Gereformerd officials, Pastor Adriaanse and Pastor

⁵¹ *Rapport van Deputaten tot de Zending aan de Generale Synode der Gereformerd Kerken in Nederland*, 1896, 8.

Ruyseaners. This was a difficult situation for the congregation, which was devoted to the NGZV and the Gerefoormerd. Furthermore, they had already decided unanimously not to follow Sadrach. Muaratua's devotion to zending was not returned.

The Muaratua congregation lived without the care of a pastor after Hortsman's death until 1903. Meanwhile, the GKN was also unable to handle the Tegal, Pekalongan, and Kedu areas. The people in Muaratua then expressed their concerns about faith formation to two pastors from Salatiga Zending (*Neukirchener Mission* or *De Bond van Zendeling van de Salatiga Zending op Java*); AHO. Heller in Kendal and Friedrich Kamp (Salatiga). Both agreed to do ministry in Muaratua (including Tegal and Pekalongan) if the Gereformeerde Church finally agreed to hand over Tegal and Pekalongan to Salatiga Zending in 1904. A new era of care began.

From NGZV-GKN to Salatiga Zending: 1904-1942

Salatiga Zending sent August Jungst who was working in Ambarawa in 1904. Jungst was stationed in Pekalongan. However, he did not have much success in preaching. There was no Christian congregation in Pekalongan. Meanwhile, Christians around Pekalongan mostly followed Kiai Sadrach, who at that time already followed the Apostolic teachings (*Apostolische Kerk*). This movement traces its roots back to its founder, Edward Irving, a Scottish Presbyterian minister. From this movement emerged a new denomination known as the *Hersteld Apostolische Zending Gemeente*. In the Dutch East Indies, the work of the *Apostolische Gemeente* began in 1880 with the arrival of apostles such as G.J. Hannibals and J.G.R. Jacobs from the Netherlands. Sadrach attended worship services several times with the Apostolic Church congregation in Magelang, before traveling to Batavia to be consecrated as a new apostle by Hannibals.⁵² Apart from Jemaat Muaratua, there were a few Christians in Temuireng (Pemalang) and Gejlig (Pemalang) who wanted to be served by Salatiga Zending.



⁵² Partonadi, *Komunitas Sadrach dan Akar Kontekstualnya*, 103-104.

Image 3: Muaratua (written Moearatoewa) became part of Salatiga
Zending ministry area

Photo: on Appendixes of *Overzicht van het ontstaan en de ontwikkeling
der Salatiga-Zending*, 1911)

Mesach Elifas led the Muaratua congregation, which had previously declined to join Kiai Sadrach. However, once Salatiga Zending took over the care, Rabbi Eliezer maintained the work in Muaratua until his death in 1934. Rabbi Mesach Elifas also relocated to Purbalingga. Elifas' children Michal, Pricila (born February 15, 1895), and Maria (born February 4, 1899)⁵³ were born in Muaratua. Many congregations in Muaratua and Tegal in general relocated to the south in the Gereformeerd area, resulting in a decrease in the Muaratua congregation. Nonetheless, Eliezer continued to serve Muaratua zealously.

In 1933, Heinrich Raatschen, who had been director of the *Normaalschool* in Tingkir (southeast of Salatiga), was posted to Tegal. Counting after Uhlenbusch, the Muaratua congregation lived for 48 years without a pastor. Raatschen did not stay in Muaratua as did the zending from the NGZV. The manse there had been demolished because it was no longer considered habitable. Raatschen finally looked for a house in the middle of the city, no longer on the seafront of Muaratua. He rented a house at Kraton-Zuid number 1 to live in and use as a place of worship. Shortly afterward, Raatschen bought a house not far from his rent, a place at Kraton-Zuid 30 (Jalan Dr. Soetomo 32) which consisted of two buildings; one was used as a residence and the other as a drip warehouse for the B.P.M company,⁵⁴ which later became the location for regular services.⁵⁵

The congregation around Tegal grew slowly, and certainly not rapidly. There were approximately 100 congregations in the area. Salatiga Zending finally succeeded in establishing a church in 1934 a year after Raaatschen's arrival. The church, which later became known as the *Zendingskerk*, was inaugurated on Sunday morning at 10:00, which coincided with July 8, 1934.⁵⁶ Raatschen presided over the inauguration of *Zendingskerk*. The event drew a large number of attendees from Europe and Java. There were also Gereformeerd Church representatives there.⁵⁷ Raatschen spoke to

⁵³ Sejarah GKJ Purbalingga, tt.

⁵⁴ The possibility referred to in the "*De Locomotief*" regarding BPM is *Bataafsche Petroleum Maatschappij*, a subsidiary oil company of Royal Dutch Sell.

⁵⁵ *De Locomotief*, July 7, 1934.

⁵⁶ *De Locomotief*, July 9, 1934.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

the audience about the history of zending in Tegal and the significance of the church for Tegal's Indigenous Christians. Previously, Javanese Christians in the city center had to trek north to Muaratua Church to worship, but they now have their own place of worship. Mas Sajid Santodirdjo, a native instructor, took the pulpit after Raatschen and spoke in Javanese. Volger, the pastor of the "Protestanche Kerk," prayed to end the first service at the new church.

Raatschen's presence created a new atmosphere for evangelization in Tegal. In addition to Muaratua, there were small congregations that asked to be served such as in Kejambon area, the Provincial Hospital, and the Brebes area. New congregations also emerged in Cibawan (led by Satimin), Limbangan-Brebes (led by Singodimejo), Mlodok (Balapulang area), Temukerep (Larangan-Brebes), and Slawi.⁵⁸ Raatschen worked very hard to build up the church in Tegal. He sacrificed not only his mind and time for pastoral work but also his physical strength. At one point he had a road accident when he slipped. Raatschen suffered injuries to his shoulder and head, but nothing serious.

In "Sipataboenan," a Sundanese-language mass media in Bandung, news about Raatschen's accident was published on October 30, 1935: "Noeroetkeun bedja Aneta ti Semarang, pandita Raatschen, anoe noempakan motor di deukeut Slawi, geus pinanggih katjilakaan, babakuna lantaran selip. Koe sabab kitoe ieu pandita teh nepi ka tatoe dina taktakna, malah aja toelang igana anoe potong. Sadjaba ti eta otakna robah ngan benteu sakoemaha. Noe tjilaka dikirimkeun karoemah sakit."⁵⁹ [Based on a report from Aneta [News Agency] in Semarang, Pastor Raatschen, who was riding a motorcycle in Slawi, had an accident, due to a slip. As a result, he suffered injuries to his shoulder and even a broken rib. Not only that, he also suffered a concussion, although it was minor. He was sent to the hospital]

Salatiga Zending held a conference at *Zendingkerk* Tegal on February 8-11, 1937.⁶⁰ The conference itself was attended by 12 zendeling and 3 zending zuster. Salatiga Zending worked among the indigenous people and in the last year (1936-1937) a total of 538 Javanese and Chinese were baptized. This brought the number of Indigenous Christians in the Salatiga Zending area to 6000. Christian congregations were formed in 13 new places. The conference also discussed a change in the composition of the pastors at Salatiga Zending. Raatschen was given a one-year leave of absence. The Raatschen family hoped to leave Tegal by mid-March 1937.

⁵⁸ Purwati, "Sejarah dan Perkembangan Gereja Kristen Jawa (GKJ) Tegal tahun 1975-1990," (skripsi, Universitas Sanata Dharma, Yogyakarta, 1993

⁵⁹ *Sipataboenan*, October 30, 1935.

⁶⁰ *De Locomotief*, February 16, 1937.

Wilhelm Fastenrath took up the Christian ministry in Tegal after Raatschen died. In 1907, Wilhelm married Anna Eickhaus-Fastenrath. Fastenrath studied Javanese at Ungaran before serving in Tegal. Fastenrath was in office until 1938.⁶¹ After Fastenrath was relocated to Semarang, Johannes Damschen, who had completed his language studies, briefly served the Javanese Christian congregation in Tegal in 1939.⁶² In 1940, he was incarcerated shortly after.⁶³ After Damschen's internment, the Tegal congregation was led by Wilhelm Plaum.⁶⁴ Plaum had previously ministered in Pekalongan before being sent to Tegal by Salatiga Zending.⁶⁵ Plaum, like Damschen, was not in Tegal for long before being detained by the Dutch.⁶⁶

Although Plaum did not stay long in Tegal, he was surrounded by many Javanese assistants, including Ramli, Yohannes, Singodimejo, and Prawirotirto. The latter, whose full name was Madimin Prawirotirto, was a Gospel Teacher who assisted the zending in Tegal since the Fastenrath era. In 1937, Prawirotirto was transferred to Purwodadi and returned to Tegal around 1939-1940.⁶⁷ In the run-up to World War II (starting in 1940), Salatiga Zending's territories, including Tegal, became unreserved as many German pastors were interned. On the other hand, Salatiga Zending itself did not appoint indigenous pastors, except for Gospel Teachers. Until then, on September 11, 1939, or shortly before the outbreak of the Second World War, a native from Pemalang, Soemono Kartosoegondo, was appointed as a pastor in charge of the Pekalongan Presidency replacing Plaum who was transferred to Tegal.⁶⁸

Conclusion

The development of Christianity is characterized, in part, by the efforts of zending, through Vermeer, to build a kind of "Christian Village." It is easy to explain this situation as the desire

⁶¹ In the *Regeerings Almanak voor Nederlandsch-Indie in 1939* Fastenrath was still listed as the servant of "Salatiga Zending" in Tegal. However, in the *Regeerings Almanak* of 1940, his name is no longer found.

⁶² *Algemeen Handelsblad voor Nederlandsch-Indië*, June 10, 1939.

⁶³ *Regeerings Almanak voor Nederlandsch-Indie of 1940* and <http://resources.huysgens.knaw.nl/zendingoverzeeskerken/RepertoriumVanNederlandseZendings-EnMissie-archieven1800-1960/gids/bijlage/bijlage2>.

⁶⁴ *Regeerings Almanak voor Nederlandsch-Indie 1940*.

⁶⁵ *Regeerings Almanak voor Nederlandsch-Indie 1939*.

⁶⁶ In the *Regeerings Almanak voor Nederlandsch-Indie of 1942*, there were no longer any zending from Salatiga Zending who were placed in Tegal.

⁶⁷ Chr. G. F. de Jong, *De Gereformeerde Zending in Midden Java, 1931-1975* (Zoetermeer: Uitgeverij Boekencentrum, 1997), 376-377.

⁶⁸ *Regeerings Almanak voor Nederlandsch-Indie 1942*.

for concentration for its members. In addition, this method was also considered to facilitate the application of Christian moral rules. Not only in Muaratua, but also zending schemes to create new colonies for Indigenous Christians were also carried out elsewhere in Java. In Pasundan, four colonies are designed by the *Nederlandsche Zendingsvereniging* (NZV); Pangharepan, Palalangan, Cideres, and Tamiang.⁶⁹ The difference is that what the NZV did was an official zending scheme, while Vermeer did it on his own initiative.

Was Vermeer's work successful? If you read the history of the group up to this point, he can be said to have succeeded. This result, however, must be interpreted as growth rather than development. As previously stated, the Muaratua group maintains its existence despite having lost a zendeling, moving between foster homes, and being in the midst of turmoil. Vermeer's decision to locate the congregation in the north gave it a distinct feel because the small congregation established a small colony that was interwoven with two other axes: the church and the cemetery.

The development of Christianity in Tegal, once again, cannot be separated from the role of Muaratua as its theological locus. After baptizing the Javanese natives in 1863, Vermeer settled them in Muaratua the following year. In fact, Vermeer wanted to land in the south, near Mount Slamet. But the resident directed him to the north so that the gospel could be delivered to the fishermen.

Along the way, Muaratua went through phases where they lived under different zending care. After the NGZV, *Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland* (GKN) found it difficult to provide optimal service to the Muaratua congregation, starting in 1904, this group began to be served by Salatiga Zending. Approximately 30 years after providing services, although not intensely enough, Salatiga Zending began to look for alternative places other than Muaratua for faith formation. Finally, Salatiga Zending's delegate at the time, Heinrich Raatschen, managed to build a church in Tegal City. Since that era, the spotlight has been on Tegal rather than Muaratua. Inter-church activities such as conferences were also held in the city. As a result, Muaratua became a subsidiary of Tegal.

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⁶⁹ Tedi Kholiludin, *Bertumbuh di Barat Jawa: Riwat Gereja Kristen Pasundan* (Semarang: eLSA Press, 2021); Koernia Atje, *Sejarah Komunikasi Injil di Tanah Pasundan* (disertasi, Sekolah Tinggi Teologi Jakarta, 1997).

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