

AN APPROACH TO THE MINISTRY  
OF CATECHISATION FOR  
THE JAVANESE

**A THESIS**

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A B S T R A C T

This thesis entitled "An Approach to The Ministry of Catechisa-  
tion for The Javanese" was abstracted as follows :

A. Javanese Identity.

The Javanese, who comprise about one half of Indonesia's total population have a "uniqueness" no found other tribal groups. Their "uniqueness" involves these facts: (a) Their social structure is feudalistic in nature, (b) their spiritual system is syncretistic combining a monotheistic-pantheistic view of God with animism, dynamism, mysticism, Hinduism and Islamism in order to affect their understanding of salvation.

Theoretically their "uniqueness" should have been dissolved by the flow of modernistic current, but in fact this has not happened. Instead we discovered that the influence of modern values is not more than skin deep while the foundational view remained unchanged. For example, there are still many persons who believe more fully to the pawang hujan, one who may prevent unwanted rain from falling at a particular place, than in the knowledge of meteorologists. In the construction of an important building, matters are placed in the hands of a Kyai or mystical teacher from the beginning or its planning until final implementation. Before the cornerstone is laid, a buffalo's head must be buried in order to free the building and the occupants from unwanted disturbances. There are also rites to be performed which encompass ones entire life from that of the fetus until the 1000<sup>th</sup> day of

the person's death. There are also other ceremonies carried out by ordinary people as well as by those of the noble class, even the head of state. Traditional ceremonies are also taken by the transmigrants to their new settlements in the outer islands especially those transmigrants who comprise an entire village (bedholdesa).

B. Christian Religious Education is The Church's Responsibility.

Christian Religious Education in general and catechisation in particular form part of the complex responsibility of the church. Catechisation is especially important since through it persons become members of the church, both those who were raised in Christian families and others who are baptized as adults and become members. After becoming members, the church continues to nurture them through adult education and by encouraging regular attendance at worship services in order for them to become stronger in their faith and more at peace with themselves.

C. Catechisation Ministry in GKJ (Javanese Christian Church).

The ministry of catechisation in the GKJ until the present involves a style which tends to issue in confrontation and indoctrination. This is so because of its dependence upon the Heidelberg Catechism which grew out of XVI century European church's struggle with the Papacy and often results in tension.

D. An Approach to the Ministry of Catechisation for The Javanese.

In view of the situation just mentioned, catechisation needs a new approach. This requires a teacher's listening to the learner's view.

and thoughts. If necessary these are then corrected on the basis of the Bible. If Students are able to express themselves openly in a secure environment, the weaknesses of Javanistic views can be indicated and persons led to embrace a new understanding. Such an open approach is much different from that of confrontation and indoctrination which tends to result in "tension", something anathema to Javanese. According to the scope of the catechism outlined there are four basic units, God, Man, Salvation and Way To Appropriate Salvation.

E. Notes and reflections.

Even though the author acknowledges that this approach has come from one who is member of the GKJ and that Javanese are the main supporters of the GKJ, the ideas advanced cannot be considered a GKJ monopoly. Catechisation is a responsibility of the whole church leading to membership for all persons, including Javanese, in Christ's Body experiencing oneness together.

Finally we must not close our eyes to the fact that regional cultural art has a considerable role and influence on Indonesian people either negatively or positively. Therefore one should use cultural forms selectively so that the resulting expressions of Christian faith will draw from and be infused with regional culture. In this way the new fruit of faith will be healthy and fresh.