



Mechanical Solidarity as precipitating factor in establishing Ethnic Churches in Bandung in the first half of the 20th Century

Amos Sukamto

INTI Theological Seminary Bandung, Indonesia
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3589-9736>

Rudy Pramono

Pelita Harapan University, Indonesia
Corresponding author
Email: rudy.pramono@uph.edu
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3430-2942>

Chandra Han

Pelita Harapan University, Indonesia
<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6083-1074>

Panca Parulian S.

INTI Theological Seminary Bandung, Indonesia
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0438-3542>

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Abstract

The spirit to construct unity among the various ethnic groups in the early 20th century in Indonesia did not significantly influence the church. In the church under the zending in Bandung, West Java province, what happened was in fact the opposite. The church was unable to break down ethnic barriers among its members. Why? By using historical methods and analysis based on Durkheim's theory of solidarity, the following conclusions are drawn: Chinese and Javanese ethnic communities tend to have high levels of mechanical solidarity. This can happen because (1) the ethnic Chinese congregation in terms of numbers is huge. They come from a circle of family groups, so that they tend to form mechanical bonds of solidarity based on blood relations. (2) The social status of the Chinese ethnic group is in the second category below Europeans and above the local population, so that it creates a feeling of superiority compared to the indigenous congregation. The Javanese congregation, although in terms of numbers, is not too large, among them some people have enough influence (elite) so that the tendency to maintain their Javanese existence is quite strong. (3) Social polarization based on ethnic similarities eventually stimulates other communities to create their own/separate communities; and (4) External influences, namely the NZV policy that places the Chinese ethnic group above the local ethnic group and developments at the national or international level are also factors that trigger the formation of ethnic churches in Bandung.

Keywords: Ethnic Church, Chinese, Javanese, Sundanese, Bandung.

Introduction

The early 20th century was the emergence of nationalism spirit and national unity in Indonesia, culminating in the Youth Pledge of October 28, 1928. However, in church life, such a spirit of unity and nationalism did not appear. Eka Darmaputera, an Indonesian theologian, said that the echo of nationalism spirit had not yet penetrated the church life. Dutch politics that divides based on ethnic groups still had a strong influence in the church (Darmaputera, 1986) that the nature of nationalism did not occur. The thought of Darmaputera is intriguing, as he even gave a challenge, as well as an entrustment to



historians to research the issue. This article attempts to address the challenge of Darmaputera.

This research employed a historical and sociological approach. In this article, the first to be examined was a brief history of the development of Christianity in Bandung. Second, the formation of ethnic churches in Bandung, and the third is the analysis of the building of ethnic churches in Bandung by adopting Emile Durkheim's theory of solidarity. Durkheim distinguishes between mechanical solidarity, or solidarity by similarities, and organic solidarity (Durkheim, 1984). Mechanical solidarity is usually found in simple society; mechanical solidarity is created by collective awareness, collective rituals, and growth in the same culture (Turner, 2012: 99). In Asia, some of the most decisive factors are blood relations, one clan, one ethnic / tribe, one village, neighbouring family groups tend to develop a sense of solidarity (Wach, 1948: 80–81), one religion (one religious sect, one church, one church denomination), or institution relations (Kuntowijoyo, 2017: 211). In an advanced society, solidarity tends to be more heterogeneous than mechanical solidarity begins to fade and is replaced by organic solidarity (Turner, 2012). Organic solidarity occurred in the community when there is a common interest in facing the enemy or it was based on negotiations, coalitions, and agreements (Durkheim, 1984).

The history of Christianity development in Bandung in the first half of the 20th century

The history of Christianity in Bandung, particularly Protestant Christianity, separated from three Zending personnel, Albers, Van der Linden, and Grashuis, in 1863 (Coolsma, 1901: 113). As these three Zending missionaries did not obtain a work permit from the Dutch colonial government, they moved to another region. Albers moved to Cianjur while V. d. Linden went to Cirebon. Grashuis continued to study language di Bandung, stay a while in Buitenzorg (Bogor) then returned to the Netherland at the end of 1965 (Coolsma, *De Zendingseeuw Voor Nederlandsch Oost-Indië*, 113). The attempts to spread Christianity among local people in Bandung were re-conducted on January 10, 1870, by A. Geerdink. He initially worked in Cianjur and after obtaining permission from the Dutch colonial government Geerdink then moved to Bandung. About 40 people attended the service, and 20 Europeans took a catechism class. Non-European congregations are former soldiers from the Ambonese tribe (*Ambonneesche Christensen*) (Coolsma, 1901).

In the magazine *Organ der Nederlandsche Zendingsvereeniging* July 28, 1876, Geerdink expressed his experiences about the difficulty of spreading the gospel among the Sundanese people. Islamic religious leaders challenged such a work that the Sundanese were afraid to become Christians (Geerdink, 1877: 83–85) Eventually, Geerdink turned his work to writing a Sundanese-Dutch dictionary (*Soendaneesch-Hollandsche woordenboek*) published in 1875 ("Boekhandel," 1875; R.E. Kerkhoven, 1875: 44). Geerdink's health deteriorated that he returned to the Netherlands in November 1877 (Coolsma, 1901). Although Geerdink did not baptize anyone in Bandung, he succeeded in making some disciples. For example, in the letter of Zending Albers on 14 April 1885, Dejan, who lived in Cianjur, was a former student of Geerdink. The Chinese Goan Hok was also the fruit of Geerdink's work. In 1899 Coolsma also saw among the audience in Bandung, a Chinese woman who confessed that she was a former student of Geerdink (Coolsma, 1901). Geerdink's work was continued by two young Sundanese, namely Titus and Lukas, who were educated by C. Albers as a zending in Cianjur. In January 1885, the two young Sundanese arrived in Bandung. The results of Titus and Luke's work were evident in gathering local people such as those from Indo-Europe, the Sundanese, the Chinese, and the Ambonese, in the worship service. This was also evident in constructing a worship building on a land in Kebon Sirih that belonged to a member of the congregation who was Ambonese. On April 12, 1885, the community comprised of 45 people with four people of Sundanese ethnic origin. Albers strongly urged that the worship service could also use the



Sundanese language. The young Sundanese evangelists performed well with the result that some Sundanese expressed their willingness to embrace Christianity (Coolsma, 1901).

The presence of the Chinese congregation began when Goan Hok was baptized on December 9, 1888. Goan Hok, who was Geerdink's student (Coolsma, 1901) provided one of the rooms in his new home to be used as an evangelistic room (*Evangelisatie lokaal*) (Coolsma, 1901). On July 4, 1889, De Haan (Zendeling Sumedang, at this time Bandung was under the supervision of Sumedang) began to use the room, and many Chinese came to attend a fellowship in this house (Coolsma, 1901).

The outspread of Christianity in Bandung to local people began to make progress after zending B.M. Alkema A. Pennings and Alkema arrived in Batavia on November 20, 1893, (see "De Broeders Pennings En Alkema," *Orgaan Der Nederlandsche Zendingsvereeniging* 12, 1893: 188. - December 5, 1893). Alkema employed several strategies in his work. The first strategy was to build facilities for zending mission works: the pastor's house and church building was first. In 1896 the pastoral residence for the zending staff was built and in 1898 a church building was completed with the right and left sides of the room were used for classes which are now located on Jl. Kebonjati. This church provides 150 seats. It is 15 meters long and 10 meters wide. Next to church is a school hall with 12 meters long and 6 meters wide. Each of these rooms is then divided into two. Thus there were four rooms for the school with 6 square meters for each room. On April 24, 1898, the building was inaugurated before the authorities (Coolsma, 1901).

The second strategy was through Bible research and the sale of biblical books. However, this strategy was opposed for several reasons: books are not well appreciated; people are mainly illiterate; people did not understand the book's content. Alkema argued against the opposed reasons, one of which was by not giving books for free but paying for the books (Alkema, 1896: 20–26). The third strategy was by using the local language. After Alkema worked in Bandung on December 24, 1893, the worshippers began to use the Sundanese language. The fourth strategy was to open a school, and it developed rapidly. The fifth strategy was to fulfill the needs of having educated personnel. This strategy led Alkema to open a *Zendingkweekschool* (Missionary Training School) in February 1902 (Borst, 1913: 27). The sixth strategy was to provide health services, namely Immanuel Hospital in Kebonjati on September 23, 1910 (Djalimoen, 1959a: 6).

On Christmas 1894, Alkema baptized his first-born fruit from the Chinese tribe, Yoe Ong Pauw (from Cirebon), named Yoe Sin Wie (Coolsma, 1901), and in 1896 Alkema baptized his first-born fruit from the Sundanese tribe, a coachman named Djoemad, who always drove his Bible cart (Coolsma, 1901). The year 1899 was prominent because the number of Christians, both Sundanese and Chinese, had developed well. Alkema put this in *Orgaan der Nederlandsche Zendingsvereeniging* with the title *Nieuwe zegeningen te Bandoeng* (New Blessings in Bandung) on October 10, 1899. The efforts of Alkema and his colleagues (Titus) yielded good results. For example, on Easter day, Djoemad's wife converted to Christianity and was baptized (Coolsma, 1901) also on Pentecost, a Sundanese named Abu and his wife and child were baptized. A student at the missionary school also converted to Christianity as Coolsma stated, "... moments before the Baptism, his mother declared that he would be circumcised, but he said he did not want to be circumcised, as he declared: "I am not a Muslim, I am a Christian" (Coolsma, 1901).

At Easter 1899, the congregation of Chinese ethnic increased by four people. Tan Sioe Ho, who was free from opium, was allowed to join the worship service. On 24 September 1899 ten people were baptized, one was a young Sundanese woman who married a Chinese Christian, (Alkema, 1900: 7) and nine were the fruit work of Thung Goan Lok Hartono used the name Thung Goan Hok in Chris Hartono, Orang Tionghoa Dan Pekabaran Injil

(Yogyakarta: Taman Pustaka Kristen (Angotta IKAPI, 1996: 26–27); Goan Hok was baptized in 1888 and Thung Goan Lok who was baptized in 1894. He spread the gospel to his families such as to Tan Goan Houw (son-in-law of Thung Goan Lok) with her husband and 4 children and a maid, and then Goan Lok's daughter with her 12-year-old son (Alkema, 1900). According to Alkema, since becoming a Christian, Goan Lok had brought 27 adults, and most of the children were from his family and they became Christians (Alkema, 1900). The number of congregations from the Chinese ethnic group increased rapidly compared to the local population. According to Bliet, based on the 1902 annual report, more than half of the congregation were Chinese - about 50 people in all (Bliet, 1939: 90).

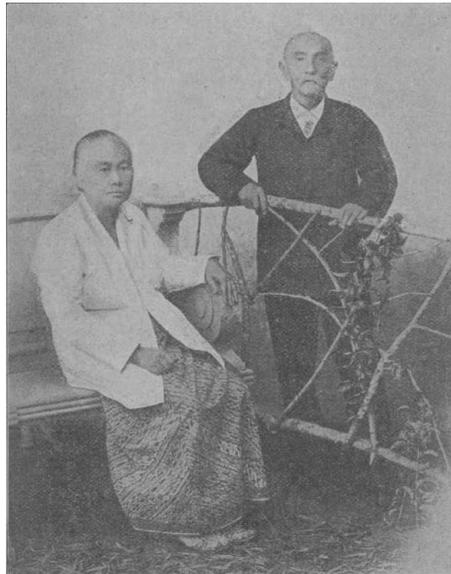


Figure 1. Thung Goan Lok and His Wife (Alkema, 1900)

Christians from Central and East Java began to come to Bandung at the beginning of the 20th century. They were interested in working at the polyclinic founded in 1901 (Rooseboom, 1908) (later to become the Immanuel hospital) and the Teachers School (*kweekschool voor Inlandsche helpers*) launched in February 1902 (Rooseboom, 1908). Several of them worked for the Dutch East Indies government in Bandung. They joined the Zending congregation in Kebon Djatiweg (*Jalan Kebonjati*) and formed a small group that held services in Javanese starting in 1926 (Sularso, 1995: 18).

On July 1, 1922, zending Iken made a report on the progress of spreading the gospel in Bandung in the *Organ der Nederlandsche Zendingsvereniging* stated that the congregation consists of 418 people, of whom 255 are indigenous and 147 are Chinese, while there are about 16 Europeans (Iken, 1922: 88). The spreading of the gospel was also carried out outside Bandung. Every week the ministers held fellowship in Cimahi, Awiligar, Babakan, Ciparai, and Cicaheum, while Padalarang was visited every two weeks and Banjaran every month (Iken, 1922). The established schools were also well developed; the Sunda School for boys had 113 students, while for girls were 54 students. The Maleisch-Chineesche (Malay-Chinese) School for boys was 60 and 111 girls (Iken, 1922). The 1922 annual report provided information that every Sunday sermon was delivered in Sundanese, except when Tan Goan Tjong led the service as he preached in Malay. This meant that until 1922 there was no separation between the Chinese and the local population (Bliet, 1939).

The Formation of Ethnic Churches in Bandung in the First Half of the 20th Century

From 1905, the mission of NZV in Bandung began to separate both the congregation and school students between the Chinese ethnic and the local community. This separation



culminated in March 1924 when the Chinese Church Council (*Kerkeraad*) was formed, and congregational services were still held in the same building but at different times. The NZV zendeling strongly supported such a separation, and even in 1924, the NZV sent F.W.H. Hoppe then A.J. Bliet, and A.K. de Groot, who were devoted to minister among the Chinese congregation, while J. Iken suggested that the Chinese community use a separate building, the former Immanuel Hospital starting December 25, 1924 (Bliet, 1939; Sukanto, 2019: 397). This separation increased the cultural distance between the Chinese ethnic group and other local population groups with the result that the assimilation process became more difficult to be carried out effectively.

Due to the national and international developments, the need for Chinese Christian leaders to have an independent Chinese church began to emerge (Hoppe, 2006: 535). To accommodate this need, a conference was held from 25-27 November 1926, establishing *Tiong Hoa Kie Tok Kauw Hwee* (THKTKH) or the Chinese Christian Bond (BKT). However, according to Hoppe's notes, the direction of Chinese nationalism is not in Europe or the Indies but back to the Chinese language and culture and still bonded to China (Hoppe, 2006). In 1932 the NZV board responded through a letter to a small conference in Bandung and urged the separation between the Chinese and local populations (van den End, 2006c: 583). On November 14, 1934 the church minister was Tan Goan Tjong, who had been actively serving for quite a long time—in 1922 in his article, Iken mentioned three people who regularly visited the congregation, Markoes Elia, Goan Tjong and Djoni Abednego (Iken, 1922)—and they were ordained as pastors by NZV at the Pasundan Church in Kebon Djatiweg (Barat, n.d.: 11). He was the first Chinese pastor in West Java, even Bliet said for many years he was the only Chinese pastor among the Chinese congregation in West Java.¹ On October 1, 1935, *De Indische Courant* stated Tan Goan Tjong, the pastor of the Chinese Christian Community in Bandung, commemorated the day of his 30 years ministry (Tan Goan Tjong, 1935: 14).

In 1936 the Chinese congregation was declared independent (Bliet, 1939) and statistics in 1939 showed that the Chinese Christian congregation in Bandung had reached 220 congregations (Bliet, 1939). On February 26, 1939, the church information in the newspaper published an advertisement for Sunday worship at *Chineesche Protestantische Kerk* in Kebondjati street at 10 am served by Tan Goan Tjong. ("Zendingkerk 'Het Nieuws van Den Dag Voor Nederlandsch-Indië,'" 1939: 6). On March 25, 1939, a Sunday service was conducted to fulfill the needs of the Hokkien Chinese group, led by Tan Thian Tjong in the afternoon at 15.30 (*Chineesche Protestantische Kerk*, 1939). Tan Thian Tjong has ordained a reverend to serve the Hokkien Chinese group in 1940 (see picture 2) (Barat, n.d.). This church then split into two churches, GKI Jabar Kebondjati No. 100 and those who speak Hokkien dialect moved to Jl. Gardujati 31 (now 51) and still called GKI Jabar (Barat, n.d.). GKI Anugerah anniversary book a Chinese church namely Hoa Kiao Tong Hwee (now GII Hok Im Tong) was mentioned. In 1949 members of the Hok Cia-speaking congregation separated themselves and formed an independent congregation named Hoa Kiao Kie Tok Kao Hwee (now GKI Anugerah) on Jl. Irsad 5 Bandung (Setia et al., 1999: 113).

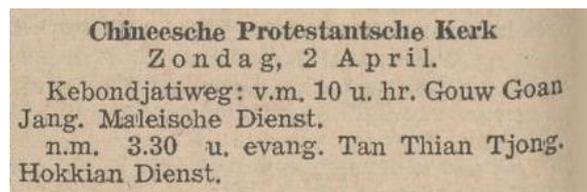


Figure 2. Chinese Protestant Church Advertisement Jl. Kebondjati ("Chineesche Protestantische Kerk," 1939)



What about the congregations that come from the Sundanese, Javanese, Sangir, and Batak ethnic groups? In the beginning, the Javanese ethnic group joined this congregation. Three years after the establishment of THKTKH, in the Immanuel Hospital, a community of Javanese and Sundanese ethnic groups formed *Wargi Kristen Pasoendan* organization in 1929. On January 6, 1930, they set organization polity. At the preamble of the organization polity, it was stated clearly that the *Wargi Kristen Pasoendan* is an organization for Sundanese and Javanese Christians (van den End, 2006a: 565). Even in article 6 regarding members, it is noted that the regular members are Sundanese and Javanese Christians living in West Java. Outstanding members of the population from other ethnicities agreed with the organization's principles and goals (van den End, 2006a). In a community with diverse nationalities, where building solidarity based on race is impossible, they tried other alternatives in building solidarity, one of which was based on religion and shared interests. In *Wargi Kristen Pasoendan*, various reasons stated various difficulties faced by local Christians (they called themselves *Boemipoetera* Christians). This can also be such a form of subtle protest against *zending*. The challenges they faced were:

1. They were not only alienated from their nation, but their living standard was still far from their Moslem friends in terms of cultural, political, and especially economic progress. Because of this kind of backwardness, they are often stigmatized as *orang jang bodo dan doengoe, jang soedah maoe diperdajakan orang Belanda* (the fool and stupid people, who the Dutch have exploited) (van den End, 2006a). They do not deny what de Groot's statement that, *De Christenen zijn voor het merrendeel van de armste en domste dessa-bewoners* (See Groot, 2006: 536) (most Christians are among the poorest and most ignorant villagers) (van den End, 2006a).
2. They also compared themselves to Christians in East Java, Manado, Batak, and Ambon. They understood they were far behind in terms of numbers, social economics, and even intellectually (van den End, 2006a).

Based on the struggle for common interests shared the same condition, Javanese and Sundanese Christians form an organic solidarity bond manifested in the *Wargi Kristen Pasoendan* organization. The affirmation of the ordinary members consisting of Sundanese and Javanese living in West Java proves that the number of Javanese groups is quite large.

Based on these facts, it is plausible to say that what happened among the Chinese will also happen among the Javanese. The mechanical bond of solidarity among the Javanese, even though they have formed organic bonds with those who are not Javanese, did not mean that it will simply disappear. Later, the Javanese also formed a group of fellow Javanese to establish the Javanese Christian Church (GKJ). Before founding the *Wargi Kristen Pasoendan* organization, the Javanese group had also begun to hold worship in the Javanese language. Sularso even recorded such worship has been held since 1926 (Sularso, 1995).

Based on the record of Djalimoen on January 12, 1927, there was a Javanese Kasdo Tjokrosiswondo ordained as a pastor to serve the Javanese congregation. Perhaps in this year, he was not ordained as a pastor but as a minister among the Javanese community (Djalimoen, 1959b: 20). Two reasons, first, on the same note, Djalimoen wrote that on November 18, 1934 for the first time three indigenous pastors were ordained, Madiwidjaja Sarean for the Sunda congregation, R.K. Tjokrosiswondo for the Javanese assembly and Tan Goan Tjong for the Malay and Chinese communities (Djalimoen, 1959a). Second, based on van den End's records, Tjokrosiswondo was ordained as a pastor of the Sunda congregation in Bandung in 1934 (van den End, 2006b: 817). Tjokrosiswondo came from Central Java. At first, he was a *Hollandsch-Inlandsche School* (HIS) student, a Dutch school for indigenous people and *Kweekschool* (School for Teacher Education). After graduating from this school, he became a teacher at HIS (van den End, 2006b).

It is unknown how many congregations came from Java, but it was believed that there were several of them, thus, it was necessary to hold worship in the Javanese language. Several Javanese congregations worked for the Dutch government, such as Roeslan Gadroen He began to work in the eye hospital in Bandung on August 1, 1937. "D.V.G.," *Het Nieuws van Den Dag Voor Nederlandsch-Indië*, August 9, 1937, 20. worked at the Eye Patients Hospital in Bandung, Saoul Adam as a teacher (van den End, 2006b) Soeprobo Nicodemus the Bandung City Council, ("Gemeenteraad van Bandoeng. (Van Onzen Correspondent.) *Verschillende Onderwerpen*," 1927: 1) and R. Andreas Sastrohoesodo as a doctor at Immanuel Hospital (van den End, 2006b). The essential positions of these Javanese congregations also seemed to influence the strengthening identity of the Javanese congregations under the NZV zending, which eventually formed their worship in the Javanese language.

With such a situation, NZV divided the service based on ethnic groups, namely:

1. The Sundanese congregation is served by *Zendeling* and Bible teachers J. Tan Goan Tjong and K. Tjokrosiswondo (*Zendingskerk*,1939).
2. Its own teacher, K. Tjokrosiswondo, served the Javanese congregation.
3. Mixed congregations (Batak, Sangir, Ambon) were specially served by J. Tan Goan Tjong.
4. Tan Goan Tjong also served Chinese and full-blooded Chinese congregations. Then the conservative Chinese congregation was led by Tan Tian Tjong (Djalimoen, 1959b).

In the advertisement of Sunday worship service on February 26, 1939, it was mentioned that in the *Zendingskerk* located at Kebon Djati 46, conducted two Sunday worship services, at 09.00 am in public worship led by H.R. Muaja, and 17.00 which service was held in Javanese and ministered by Soeprobo Nicodemus.² From this congregation, the Javanese Christian Church (GKJ) was established at Jalan Merdeka No. 28 Bandung.



Figure 3. Chinese Protestant Church Advertisement Jl. Kebonjati("Chineesche Protestantsche Kerk," 1939)

With the purpose to unite churches based on the language (tribe or ethnic), in 1930 the NZV constituted a Church Council (Assembly) whose board accommodated all groups with the following composition: Chair: H.D. Woortman, Vice Chairman: H. Lasschuit (representing NZV), Author: K. Tjokrosiswondo (Javanese congregation), Treasurer: J. Tan Goan Tjong (representing Chinese congregation), Members: S. Adam, M.W. Sarean, A. Siregar, M. Elia (representing the Sundanese congregation and Batak) (Djalimoen, 1959b). But still, such an organization structure was considered not representative of every ethnic group, thus in early 1934 the composition of the Church Council board was divided into four groups, namely: the Sunda Congregation with the chairman Madiwidjaja Sarean, the Javanese Congregation with chairman K. Tjokrosiswondo, Chinese congregation with J. Tan Goan Tjong as chairman, and a Malay congregation with chairman Tan Goan Tjong (Djalimoen, 1959b).



Based on the results of his four months of research in West Java, Kraemer recommended NZV to release the congregations under his shepherding (Pasundan, 1959: 28). Following up on Kraemer's recommendation, on Wednesday, November 14, 1934, a conference was held which was attended by delegates from the congregations ministered by the NZV (Djalimoen, 1959b). The meeting resulted in a new chapter in the history of NZV's zending mission work. On Wednesday, November 14, 1934, starting at 11 at Jl. Kebonjati 46 Bandung and attended by delegates from all congregations of the West Java Pasundan Christian Church and delegates from other churches in the city of Bandung as well as all *Zending* pastors in West Java, *Oorkonde* was read by N.A.C. Slotemaker de Bruine deputy leader of the NZV who declared the establishment of the Pasundan Christian Church (Djalimoen, 1959a; Pasundan, 1959).

The highest authority in the church administration was *Rad Ageng* (Great Assembly, namely the assembly of church delegates). In the first session, the first daily *Rad Ageng* (Great Assembly) administrators were elected as follows (Synod of the Pasundan Christian Church, 1959: 28): Chairperson: Ds. J. Iken, Author: Ds. D. Abedenego, and Treasurer: Tan Goan Tjong. By the regulations in force in the Dutch East Indies (*Indisch Staatsblad* 1927 No. 156, gew 1927 No. 532, in 1936 the Pasundan Christian Church, which at that time was called *de Christelijke Kerk van West Java*, was ratified as a church with the status of a Legal Entity. (*Nederlandsch Zendings-Jaarboekje 1937-1939*, 1938: 83–84; Soejana, 1974: 44–45)

Until 1938 the union fellowship among the various ethical congregations was well ministered. They still published together in the Pasundan Church Preacher's monthly magazine. However, towards the end of 1938 the fellowship began to drift apart. On November 12, Tiong Hoa Kie Tok Kauw Hwee as a forum for the union of Chinese churches was officially established, and the Kebonjati Chinese congregation became one of its members. This union fellowship ended after the *Bandung Lautan Api* incident. In this incident, some of the congregation fled and after the incident the fellowship slowly disappeared. Both the Chinese and the Javanese congregations had separated themselves from the Pasundan Christian Church. Djalimoen described this situation as follows: "After the security was restored, then gradually, the members of the congregation came back again. But meanwhile, the Chinese Church was independent. The Javanese community moved to the Evangelization Stand on Jalan Pasirkaliki and the previously less visible fellowship, which gradually became so tenuous that the congregations seemed not to care about each other" (Djalimoen, 1959b).

Analysis

As mentioned previously, although the territory of Zending NZV, was in Sunda region, people who turned to be Christians and joined NZV were not only from the Sundanese community but also from immigrant ethnic groups such as the Ambonese, Chinese, Javanese, and according to Tjokrosiswondo's records there are also immigrants of Sangir and Batak ethnics (Djalimoen, 1959b). This ethnic diversity was the background for the establishment of Ethnic churches in Bandung. The church was still unable to dilute the ethical/tribal barriers that were stifling.

From the general context of developments in Indonesia, what happened in the church world was not in line with what happened outside the church. At the dawn of the 20th century, the atmosphere of Indonesia was marked by the rise of a national awareness to break away from Dutch colonialism and a strong desire to establish a national unity called 'Indonesia'. This awareness began with the birth of Boedi Oetomo (BO) on May 20, 1908, Sarekat Islam on November 11, 1912. Such a national awareness culminated in the proclamation among the youth by taking the oath "One Homeland, One Nation, One Language" in 1928



(Kartodirdjo, 1992: 59). The reason behind this unparalleled situation between what happened in Indonesia and in the church was the strong mechanical solidarity in the church, specifically among the Chinese and Javanese ethnic groups.

Several arguments to explain the strong mechanical solidarity in the church, particularly among the Chinese and Javanese are: First, their number was quite large, 147 people (35.2%) of the entire NZV congregation in Bandung. Though the indigenous congregations are 53.8% larger in number, they came from various ethnic groups, Ambonese, Javanese, Sangir, and Batak (Zendingskerk, 1939). In NZV's mission region such as Indramayu, Bogor, Bandung, more Chinese people became Christians than local people (Dijkstra, 2006; Zegers, 2006). Zegers from the outset had stated the difficulty of uniting the Chinese with the local people (Zegers, 2006). The reason behind this was the division of social status created by the Dutch East Indies government, ethnic Chinese (included in the *Vreemde Oosterlingen* East Foreigner group) were higher than local people (*Inlanders*) but lower than Europeans (*Europeanen*). According to Hartono, the result of this division is very influential on the attitude of the Chinese; towards Europeans, they felt inferior and towards local people, they stood superior (Hartono, 1996). The meeting space between the Chinese and the natives were mainly within the boundaries of trade in the Chinatown complex, shops, and markets. In addition, the Chinese role as intermediaries between the Dutch and the natives, such as tax collectors, distribution of opium, and pawnshops, created resentment among the natives towards them (Kartodirdjo, 1992).

At first, the *zendeling* expected the Chinese could be intermediaries between them and the local people, but this expectation was unlikely to be realized (Dijkstra, 2006). Even Crommelin's letter to the NZV Central Board explicitly suggested segregation of ethnics would solve the issue. The argument was because Chinese teachers received higher salaries than indigenous teachers, and conversely, Indigenous teachers were less respected in the Chinese congregation (Crommelin, 2006: 516).

The Javanese congregations under the Zending NZV are not as large as the Chinese, but they come from people who are influential, some of whom worked as doctors at the Zending Hospital and at the Dutch government hospital. The argument that the Javanese conduct their worship in Javanese was because they did not understand Malay was exaggerated (Sularso, 1995). These Javanese nomads, like the Chinese, lost their collective roots; thus, they attempted to rediscover that atmosphere, and worship using Javanese was a way to find what was likely lost. The language and culture were used as a means of binding mechanical solidarity between them. Certainly, in an atmosphere of worship, using the Javanese language could be therapeutic healing for those who miss their hometown.

Second, most of the ethnic Chinese congregations come from family groups (i.e., the Thung Goan Lok family), thus in Durkheim's thinking, these Chinese congregations were categorized as mechanical solidarity, the solidarity formed because of blood relations and also similar clan, tribe, or ethnic groups, also one common language. According to Wach, the degree of blood relationship is very decisive in forming social cohesion in Chinese society (Wach, 1948). Such mechanical solidarity was carried over when they arrived in Indonesia. As mentioned precisely by Alkema, the Chinese in Buitenzorg (Bogor) who converted to Christianity remained strong when all their family converted to Christianity, but if they were alone in their family, they would then be weak in Christianity (Alkema, 2006: 352–353).

Third, the formation of new economic and social institutions generated a new social polarization that discarded people from their communal solidarity. As a result, they try to find new social solidarity in religious communities within their environment to rediscover their lost collective identity (Kuntowijoyo, 2017). When someone is uprooted from their socio-cultural



roots, they will be uprooted from their communal solidarity so that they will build new bonds of solidarity. The new bonds of solidarity used to be made in the following order: first, based on blood and ethnic relations. If their number is large, they tend to stay in the group. Second, if their number is negligible and ethnically diverse, this group would look for another basis for their bond of solidarity, which was religion or common interests. Based on religious ties and common interests, they formed Durkheim's organic solidarity. At first, the Chinese were still united with the indigenous people in the NZV zending congregation. When their numbers increased, mechanical solidarity bonds began to establish and eventually fashioned separated groups from the indigenous congregation. It did go further since the Chinese community itself also consists of various tribes such as for example the Hokkien, and Hokchia. They also fashioned mechanical solidarity bonds based on their specific ethnic group, which finally established other local churches independently.

Fourth, the influence of broader external factors is important. At the dawn of the 20th century, the Chinese community organizations such as *Tiong Hoa Hwe Koan* established a school whose teaching was characteristically Chinese and propagated (Neo)-Confucian principles. The influence of this organization on Chinese Christians was enormous. In Sukabumi, the leader of this organization was a church member Yoe Tjai Siang, son of Yoe Ong Pauw in Cirebon. In 1907 he was excommunicated from the Sukabumi church, (see van den End, Sumber-Sumber Zend. Tentang Sej. Gereja Di Jawa Barat 1858-1963, 346). Churches were formed in Batavia in 1900, which had subsidiaries in almost all Java. In the international community in 1922, the National Christian Council was established to bring the formation of *Chung Hui Chi Tu Chiao Hui* (Church of Christ in China) in 1927 (Hartono, 1996). These external broader developments inspired Chinese Christian leaders to unite churches whose members were primarily ethnic Chinese (Hartono, 1966).

Conclusion

The development of Christianity in Bandung in the first half of the 20th century was inseparable from zending missionaries such as Albers, Linden, Grashuis, and Geerdink. The zending ministers who succeeded in forming local congregations and making disciples of local people were Geerdink, and Goan Hok who initiated the fellowship of the Chinese community in Bandung. The significant development of Christianity began with the presence of B.M. Alkema, who built a church building and manse for church workers in 1886, provided biblical books, used local languages in worship service, established a missionary training school, and opened a hospital. Alkema contributed to the development of local congregational fellowship as there was no separation between the Chinese and the local population until 1922.

The formation of an ethnic church in Bandung in the first half of the 20th century was condensed in March 1924 when the Chinese Council of Churches was formed with different worship services in the same church. This was supported by the NZV zendeling, which caused a cultural distance between ethnic Chinese and local population groups. The independent Chinese church began in 1926, with the founding of *Tiong Hoa Kie Tok Kauw Hwee*, which emphasized Chinese culture and language. The Chinese Church was declared independent in 1936. Apart from the Chinese, congregations from the Javanese and Sundanese ethnic formed the *Wargi Kristen Pasoendan* in 1929. Like the process of developing the Chinese Church, the same was done in the Javanese ethnic community. Starting with worship service in Javanese, then they established a Javanese Christian Church.

The church can still not break down ethical barriers because the ethical communities tend to have strong bonds of mechanical solidarity. When focusing on the Chinese community, several issues are obvious; first, the position as the majority in the church community and



the division made by the NZV that placed the Chinese ethnic group higher than the local ethnic group. Second, the mechanical solidarity of the Chinese ethnic group emphasizes community relations based on blood relations. Third, social polarization based on ethnic similarity stimulates other communities to create their own separated communities. Finally, the formation of ethnic churches is also influenced by developments at the national or international level.

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Author's contributions

All authors contributed equally to this work.

Ethical consideration

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Data sharing is not applicable to this article as no new data were created or analysed in this study.

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