



Doing Church Missions in Indigenous Community Poverty-Stricken Remote Rural Areas: Lessons from Indonesia

Roedy Silitonga

Universitas Pelita Harapan, Jakarta, Indonesia

Email: roedy.silitonga@uph.edu

<https://orcid.org/my-orcid?orcid=0000-0002-4368-3281>

Corresponding author: roedy.silitonga@uph.edu

Pantjar Simatupang

Graduate School Universitas Kristen Indonesia, Jakarta, Indonesia

Email: pantjar@gmail.com

<https://orcid.org/my-orcid?orcid=0000-0002-0789-2406>

Doi: <https://doi.org/10.46222/pharosjot.104.322>

Abstract

God calls his ecclesial church to go out to proclaim his Gospel to all creation and baptise, teach, and make all nations his disciples. Local churches, particularly in Indonesia, commonly carry on the calling by using the so-called *One Duty* (the *Missio Dei*)-Three Tasks (*koinonia*, *martyria*, *diakonia*) tasks. Reality shows of not uncommon partial and unbalanced implementations of the three tasks, mostly heavy focused on *koinonia* but less in both *martyria* and *diakonia*. The study objective is to assess implementation of the church missions view of drawing general lessons for a more effective implementation. The study was conducted at a small-sized church congregation in an indigenous community in a remote rural local area, using a mixed literature review, field observation and interviews, and conceptual synthesis methodology. The key findings are that mission fields are diverse and wide and requires contextual missions, the *diakonia* task plays a pivotal role, and a small size of congregation is good for quality-oriented missions, the Strength Gift Based Community Development conducted in a holistic integrated transformational mission is an appropriate approach. The study contributes to interdisciplinary understanding and formulation of basic principles in doing integrated missions by local churches, particularly in rural areas with indigenous community, remote location, and poverty-stricken mission fields.

Keywords: Local church, church missions, Gift-Based Community Development, remote areas, indigenous cultures.

Introduction

God calls His church to go and preach His gospel to all creation and baptize, teach, and make disciples of all nations. Local churches, particularly in Indonesia, commonly carry on the calling by using the so-called *One Duty* (the *Missio Dei*)-*Three Tasks* (*Koinonia*, *Diakonia*, *Martyria*,) missions. A local church is a specific physical church located in a particular location with definitive ecclesiastical members, regular fellowship, and organized governance. Local churches are the key agency in the implementation of the *Missio Dei* particularly in church plantings in frontier mission fields.

Reality shows us the not uncommon partial and unbalanced implementations of the three tasks, mostly heavily focused on *koinonia* (fellowship communion) but less in both *martyria*



(witnessing) and *diakonia* (serving). Dr. Mery Kolimon, a church synod chairman in Indonesia frankly admitted that churches in Indonesia pay less attention to community development (*diakonia*) and it is rooted in pietism theology that prioritizes faith formation and heavenly kingdom matters since the inception of early history of evangelization in Indonesia. The rural youths prefer to be migrant workers abroad, leave the church congregation and abandon the gifts of abundant lands in their villages (Menda, 2017). Hamu et al. found that members participation in churches fellowships in Kalimantan, Indonesia, has been declining because they prefer to go working for a livelihood even on Sundays and other days of their church congregation activities. Hamu et al have made a call for the diaconal missions to implement a holistic integrated church mission (Hamu et al., 2023). Our anecdotal observations support the allusion of the partial and unbalanced implementation of the so called *One Duty - Three Tasks* by the local churches in Indonesia that motivate us to do this study.

Accordingly, his study is conducted to assess implementation of the church missions view of drawing general lessons for a more effective implementation. The empirical study was conducted at the Indonesian Muria Christian Church (GKMI) Sola Fide Tekalong, Mentebah, Kapuas Hulu in West Kalimantan. The study contributes to interdisciplinary understanding the strengths, challenges, opportunities, and formulation framework of conducting missions in rural areas, particularly with indigenous communities in remote locations, and in poverty-stricken mission fields.

Theological Foundation of the Local Church Missional Duty

Jesus states: “Peace be with you; as the Father has sent Me, I also send you.” (John 20:21). Jesus’s words clearly say that God’s missional intention is to include three interrelated missioners with sequential implementation: God, Jesus Christ, and the ecclesial church. God is the first missioner who has created man and all of the creation for the purpose of establishing the God Kingdom in the earth like it is in heaven where man and creation live in *shalom*, glorify the Holy Almighty God. The men, however fell into sin that consequently made them live in a destitute state and all creation groans and travails in pain. God’s mission is to restore his Kingdom in the earth like it is in heaven through His own mission of salvation. It is for the salvation mission that God’s sent Jesus His Son, into the world and He then sends the ecclesial church to continue the mission after He has risen from the dead, to prepare the eternal life in heaven for all of his people and then He sent the Holy Spirit to work with them. We may say therefore that churches do not have a mission. Their duty is to do missions for pursuing the Triune God’s Mission.

God as Missioner

God’s mission is God’s eternal plan (Tomatala, 2003:19) which He carries out on this earth through His Son and then His *ecclesia* or church is there to glorify Him in every area of life. For Bosch, it is an attempt to win the world in a Christian perspective in the relationship between God and His creation with all the problems and needs of life (Bosch, 2006:13-17). For the author, the church does not separate itself from the world because God sent it to this world to bring peace (*shalom*). The church, which is God’s people as His stewards on this earth, is reflected through the fellowship with God through His mandated mission. God’s mission comes from Him alone and belongs to Him, man and his people are simply expected to do God’s will with the full awareness that their stewardship as servants centres on Him. God reveals His mission through stories in the Bible, which are organized into continuous narratives. There are four major parts of narrative depicted in the Bible, namely: Creation, Fall, Redemption, and Consummation (Ryken, 2016:35-36). These four parts of narrative are present in the complete unity of God’s mission comprehensively. They are dissected particularly with a focus on reconstructing God’s mission on earth through His church.

In the Creation narration, God’s mission is expressed in two parts. First, at the time of man’s creation as recorded in Genesis 1:26-28, where there is God’s mission for human beings to



fill the earth through marriage and subdue it, for the earth to be stewarded properly. Second, when human beings were placed in the Garden of Eden as written in Genesis 2:15-17, where there was God's mission for Adam and his descendants to work and maintain the earth as an act of worship to God with His covenant provisions. These two parts are still applicable now although human beings have sinned against God and the condition of the earth is no longer as it was in before. After the Fall narration recorded in Genesis 3 - Genesis 11 is written openly about humanity's fall. In this part of the narration, God revealed his mission in two parts. First God's mission for the restoration of relationship with God through his only Son as found in Genesis 3:15; Second, God's mission for the restoration of human relationship with self, others, and natural environment as written in Genesis 9:1,7,11. Both missions of God were written implicitly and directly to Adam and to Noah. Adam represents all of mankind, and Noah who continued it as representing humanity-whom God previously punished with a flood. Furthermore, the existence and life of humans on earth will be continued by Noah and his descendants until the end of time. God's plan to restore the earth and everything in it thus continues through Noah, his children, and descendants to this day, even until the end of time. God's providence for His creation is granted to man through His general revelation.

Jesus Christ as Missioner

The narrative of redemption begins with God calling Abram out of Ur of the Chaldeans to become the father of all nations and start a renewal of human life in a place different from where he came from. God reveals His mission through Abraham, his descendants, and His people to be a channel of blessing for all nations through the path of restoring relations with Him and restoring life on earth. This recovery begins with one's relationship with self, others and with the natural environment. This narrative of redemption is written from Genesis 12 – Revelation 20, which is entirely centered on the presence of Jesus Christ, the incarnate Son of God. This mission of God is centered on Jesus Christ, who represents God because He is His Son and represents humanity because He has incarnated as a true human being on this earth. God's providence for His work is granted to His chosen people through His special revelation. The story in Genesis 12 is a cultural intervention by God to choose a people as a preparation for Jesus' cultural redemption project (Crouch, 2013). Jesus has revealed Himself on this earth to carry out God's mission perfectly and completely, both bringing people back to God through His death and resurrection and encouraging each of His disciples to work to redeem their environment through the restoration of life on earth with all works created for the welfare of mankind. The church does not stop at the proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus to mankind but also in parallel carries out the redemption of the cosmos through the good works and deeds provided by God (Ephesians 2:20; Philippians 2:12-13).

Jesus stated His Mission and His God-designed strategy, which is written in the Gospel of Luke 4:18-19, namely (1) He preached Good News to the poor; (2.) He proclaimed the deliverance to the captives and sight to the blind; (3) He liberated the oppressed; (4) and He announced the year of the Lord's favor had come. The focus of the Mission is the people living on this earth, who are in a deplorable condition. God has given the direction and purpose that the church should carry out on this earth through four concrete and relevant steps throughout the ages.

Church as Missioner

The church is present in this world to implement God's mission. The visible and institutional church is the representative of God's kingdom to carry out his will. The invisible and visible church is essentially a communion sanctorum, however the invisible church is a church as perceived by God, a church that consists of believers, while the visible church is the one seen by man, which consists of people who confess Jesus Christ, together with their children, and therefore are also called the fellowship of believers (Berkhof, 2019). God calls his chosen people (*laos*) to have a peaceful relationship again with him through Christ by the Holy Spirit



(Nicolaidis, 2010). This noble call forms the fellowship of believers in all places and times to bring God's peace on earth among mankind in the context of their respective life. The church works on this earth with the power and strength of God which impacts other people in every context of times. The Church's duty is to pursue God's Mission according to Jesus Christ's Great Commission: "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19). And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation (Mark 15:16).

The restoration through Christ's redemption will be perfected by the Lord Jesus Christ in the new heavens and earth that God has provided for His people at His second coming. However, the restoration has been started by the church on this earth, even though the church will face challenges and difficulties to fulfill it. Every believer everywhere and at any time, personally and institutionally, has been sent by God to carry out His mission on earth completely, holistically, and comprehensively until the end of time. Thus, the church not only carries out the mandate of the Gospel but also carries out the cultural mandate as a unit to fulfill God's mission on this earth (Ryken, 2016:127). All of this is carried out in the sense that God works in all things for the good of mankind, as well as His people or His *laos* (nation) on the earth that He created (Nicolaidis, 2010).

The church as an organism and organization represents the kingdom of God to carry out His mission on earth, both locally and globally throughout the ages. The basic principle of God's mission is to restore everyone's humanity to its identity. Purnomo and Sanjaya remind Christians that God's mission is the unchanging task of the church to transform changes with strategies adjusted from time to time (Purnomo & Nurdin, 2020:91-106). Meanwhile, Stevanus revealed the reality that generally church missions pay less attention to the socio-cultural context and socio-economic needs. The mission focuses on the preaching of the gospel, or the spirituality of the people encountered (Stevanus, 2021:105-115). This local church is struggling to carry out God's mission through social educational and socio-economic programs and activities in a gradual and sustainable manner.

It is important for the church to have deep thoughts about God's mission in order to understand it comprehensively. God's Mission is not only a burden for missionaries or church officials, but also a burden for every member of the church as a member of His body (Susanto, 2019:62-80). The church sets itself to implement God's mission institutionally so that its actualization in society accelerates. The church implements God's Mission as the representative of God's kingdom among mankind on this earth. The church missions are the implementation of the God's missions. Therefore, the church needs a strategic program that is relevant and contextual to adapt to the needs of the congregation and community at large so that there is the progressive achievement of His Mission.

On the other hand, according to Paulus Lie, the church (*needs to*) maps community problems around the local church and makes social analyses (Lie, 2010:16) so that God's Mission can be carried out appropriately, properly, and correctly. Local churches deal directly with the needs of the congregation and society in general. But the presence of local churches in a certain area is not only for the benefit of their members. Local churches should also have an impact on the local population. A church that lives in God's eternal life through His works is what is needed. Abraham Kuyper reminded everyone who understands eternal life to have the sincerity to understand the values of a human life on this earth throughout the ages (Kuyper, 2011).

Dever explains that true Christianity can be linked to God's Mission on this earth which is doxological in nature. Realistic Christianity acknowledges the negative aspects of our planet, our life, our nature, and our hearts. But genuine Christianity does not eventually take a morally neutral or pessimistic stance, forcing us to merely adapt and acknowledge the reality of our fallen nature. The news that Christians should be aware of things isn't just about how corrupt we are on a widespread scale; it's also about how lovely God's design is for us



because He is aware of why we were formed in the first instance (Dever, 2021). The church should already know and understand God's beautiful plan revealed in His Mission on earth for His people. The church must continue to struggle against world conditions that lead to pessimistic attitudes and actions over the conditions of poverty, blindness, and human oppression. The church should be at the forefront of leading the renewal of life in every sphere of life.

Tim Keller stated "The kingdom is the renewal of the entire world through the influx of supernatural power. As everything is brought back under the rule and authority of Christ, it will be restored to health, beauty, and freedom (Corbet and Brian, 2014:12)." God's Mission on earth carried out by Jesus Christ is holistic in nature restoring His disciples in relationship to God, to self, to others, and to the natural environment. When the church is present in a certain location, the church is there to restore these relationships. The church also bonds relationships in a dynamic and pluralistic society (Lie, 2010:190). Yesri Talan has explained that the Mission in the view of God's Government includes the restoration of humanity (congregation and local population) which acts to transform the poor and neglected people to restore their lives before God and humans (Talan, 2020:214).

The Lord Jesus mandated His disciples to be His witnesses and make disciples of all nations (Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 1:8). There are three ways that Jesus' disciples act as His witnesses (Acts 2:41-47; 4:32-37). First, fellowship in a certain place to pray together, praise God, and receive teaching from God's word. Second, sharing blessings with others in need for daily needs, to care for one another. Third, witnessing the gospel message to anyone who has not heard it or has not made a decision to follow Jesus Christ. The three ways of the disciples were formulated by the church into three tasks of the church institutionally and personally, namely *koinonia*, *diakonia*, and *martyria*.

Meanwhile, the Roman Catholic Church calls it the five tasks consisting of *koinonia*, *liturgy*, *kerygma*, *diakonia*, and *martyria* (Tawa et al, 2021:180-181). In fact, *liturgy* and *kerygma* are already included in *koinonia* but are more specialized. *Liturgia* relates to the celebration of sanctification and *kerygma* relates to the proclamation of God's word to God's people. Another interesting thing is that *diakonia* either in the construction of three tasks of the church or the five tasks of the church, is to realize fellowship between people by caring for each other and serving in the hardships of life faced by others. Meanwhile, the task of *martyria* or *martyria* is realized through the witness of every believer in the midst of society with socio-economic contributions that are relevant to the needs and context posed. The mission of the church through the *martyria* task is based on the principle of bringing peace and prosperity actively and creatively by helping others in the midst of the surrounding community (Anjaya & Arifianto, 2021:6-7). Churches in Indonesia generally adopted the so-called *One Duty* (the *Missio Dei*)-*Three Tasks* (*koinonia*, *diakonia*, *martyria*) as their missional framework.

Methodology

The study was conducted using a combination of a literature review and a qualitative field study. The literature review was conducted so as to identify the research problems, formulate a research framework, conceptualize the church missions, and discuss the research findings. The literature search was conducted using the snowballing technique and relevant articles and books etc were used (Wohlin, 2014:321-330). The field study was intended to assess an empirical implementation of the Three-Task missions of the church in responding to God's call to pursue His Great Commission. The case study was conducted at the Indonesian Muria Christian Church (GKMI) Sola Fide Tekalong, Mentebah, Kapuas Hulu in West Kalimantan. The field observations and interviews were conducted by RS (the first author) in August 2018 and April 2019 after obtaining necessary ethical consent. Due to the pandemic Covid-19 restrictions, the interviews could only be continued via telephone involving the Priest and Deacon of the church as the key participants in April and June 2022. The field data was used to get a general and specific empirical description as well as to dig out biblical and theological



viewpoints in order to formulate lessons learned and the new concept of integrated local church missions, particularly in rural Indonesia. As a way of validation, confirmation of the findings was conducted by interviewing the priest of the church in April 2023. No participants were incentivised in any way to participate, and they could leave at any time. All were thus volunteers in the study.

Results

The Mission Core Values and Framework

The GKMI SFT is a member of the Gereja Kristen Muria Indonesia (The Muria Christian Churches of Indonesia). That is, they belonged to the Anabaptist Movement, Mennonite denomination, fruit of the Dutch Mennonite Mission in Indonesia in the second half of the 19-century (Nugroho, 2021:85-104). The Anabaptists have three sacred core values:

- (1) Jesus is the center of our faith. Christianity is discipleship. It is following Jesus in everyday life.
- (2) Community is the center of our lives. The church is a brotherhood or family. Members not only commit themselves to Christ, but also individually and voluntarily to each other.
- (3) Reconciliation is the center of our work. Followers of Jesus must always have an ethic of love and nonresistance. As transformed persons, they should seek to be reconcilers who reject involvement in violence and war.

Being a Christian from an Anabaptist perspective is a combination of believing in Jesus, belonging to community, and behaving in a reconciling way. Followers of Jesus have an ethic of love and nonresistance. As transformed persons, they seek to be reconcilers who reject involvement in violence and war. Peace is the virtue that must be proclaimed. Salvation is not only in the eternal life after death but also on life in this world. Mission is directed to both Christians and non-Christians through real actions. The aim is a Christian quality life rather than growing the numbers of new converted Christians and church plantations (Becker, 2015). It should be clear that the Mennonite churches' practical framework of doing church missions for pursuing the God's Mission and this is almost the same from the mainstreams of either Protestant churches or Roman Catholic churches. For Mennonite churches, the aim of the church mission is peace and reconciliation through forgiveness and life transformation to become Christ-like in attitude and actions, whereas mainstream churches aim at salvation and life transformation through forgiveness and faith in Jesus Christ. The performance indicator of the Mennonite missions is a Christian's quality life.

Accordingly, the natural practical implementation of the church tasks of the Mennonite denomination are different from the mainstream denominations. The Mennonite approach is that they are small, peaceful, participatory, and a family like communion of congregation (*koinonia*), with abundant gifts of both material and spiritual living oriented *diakonia*, and with a peaceful approach to *martyria*. We may say that GKMI SFT follows an integrated *One Duty* (the *Missio Dei*)-*Three Tasks* missional framework.

Contextual Environment of the Mission Field

GKMI SFT is located in Tekalong Village, Mentebah District, Kapuas Hulu Regency, West Kalimantan Province, Indonesia. The indigenous people are of Dayak Mentebah tribe, Dayak Suru' or Suru' Mentebah sub tribe. In 2020 there were 361 households in the village with a total population 1009 persons of which 68.70% were Christians who are not Catholics, 27.84% were Catholics, 3.37% were Moslems. There are four churches in the village, all are of a smallish size: GKMI SFT with 17 family members, the Pentecostal Church has 20 families as members, the Protestants have 50 families as members, and the Roman Catholic

have 40 families as members. Although almost of the population already have a formal religion, in reality they mostly all remain practicing their indigenous beliefs and rituals that are not in line with their religions teachings. Discipling the Gospel practice by church members remains an issue of internal church evangelization.

Of the total employed population 43.51% were in agriculture and 20.61% were self-employed workers (data.kalbarprov.go.id, 2020). The agriculture is dominated by food crop farming (predominantly rice) for family subsistence and rubber plantation for a cash income. The self-employed jobs include forest hunting, particularly the high-priced eaglewood/*gaharu* (*Aquilaria* sp). The villagers may spend weeks or even months in the jungle doing the shifting farming and forest product hunting that may affect their participation in church activities. People have been concerned over the risks caused by the shifting farming and illegal forest hunting that may endanger forest ecosystems and their sustainability. The village youths mainly tend to emigrate out of the village and this fact also affects the growth of the church congregation.

Tekalong village is blessed with abundant of natural resources, particularly large areas of tropical rain forest with rich forest-based resources such as woods, rattan, and wild animals. In addition, Tekalong village is one of the top-10 tourist destinations in West Kalimantan province, particularly with its unique and beautiful 'Lubuk Semah' river, with its clean water where people can do snorkeling in the middle of jungle (Maskartini, 2018). Tourism related business enterprises would be the rising star in Tekalong village. In short, Tekalong village is a 'field of the Lord' which has ample opportunities for doing the God's Mission.

Doing the Missions

The GKMI SFT church has been established since September 4, 1994, initially with only 6 family members. Presently (2023), there are 17 families plus one family of a local pastor (Figure 1), consisting of 40 adults, 7 teenage youths, and 12 children. The church is indeed small in size and grows moderately at about 4%/year. Measure by the number of members, the GKMI SFT church is in fact the smallest church in the village. This is in line with the Anabaptist framework that prioritizes the quality spiritual formation rather than the quantity of the church members. Some youths tend to migrate to the nearest town or outside of West Kalimantan to work and usually return to their hometown every year at Christmas time. In that period, those who come to worship tend to fill the small church.

In working on the mission of the church, every member of the congregation is involved and participates in it. Men and women, church officials and congregants, parents and children- all participate according to their respective proportions in working on diaconal missions. Indeed, in the context of a local church with a small congregation, there is generally a sense of cohesiveness and caring for one another. The church is like a big family that loves all its members and fights together to declare themselves followers of Christ.



Figure 1: Places of Worship and Congregation of GKMI Sola Fide Tekalong

In conventional typology of One Duty Three-Tasks of Church, GKMI SFT carries out three main ecclesiastical services, namely: *koinonia* (fellowship communion), *diakonia* (social services) and *martyria* (witnessing). *Koinonia* is implemented by carrying out public service and Sunday School every Sunday morning at the Church Building and family services every Wednesday night at the congregation's house. One of the great challenges is the low attendance of the adult men in regular weekly fellowships because they go to the forest or jungle for cultivation of crops, farming and searching for wild forest products including inter alia *belian* wood (*ulin*, iron wood, *Eusideroxylon* sp.) and eaglewood/*gaharu* (*Aquilaria* sp) to fulfill their families material needs. They may stay in the jungle or forest for some weeks or even months. This clearly indicates that pressure of physical needs may inhibit the church missions', including even *koinonia* in this case.

Martyria is rarely carried out. According to the church elders, the reason for the *martyria* inactivation was that the residents around the church neighborhood are already believers of other religions (Islam) and indigenous beliefs. From this reason we may infer that for the church elders, *martyria* is a mission of proclaiming the gospel to non-Christians. This is a classical interpretation of *martyria*. This may also include a consequence of the Mennonite missional framework particularly the ethic of love and seek to be reconciler. The mission of the church as a peacemaker by witnessing the expression of identity as a disciple of Christ in the midst of a pluralistic society is courageous and humble (Anjaya & Arifianto, 2021:6). *Diakonia* task routine activities are carried out internally for congregants who are grieving or ill as well as other social services including a love feast "lunch together" once a month at the church and distributing 2 kg of rice once a month to the congregation and residents in need, including non-Christians. Those routine *diakonia* activities are caritative in nature. Of interest is the church's new initiative to implement three developmental activities, namely (1) Establishment of a reading house for children; (2) Handicraft workshops; and (3) Farming initiatives.

The Reading House is built the front room or living room of the Church building by providing reading books with various titles, both Christian books and general books and materials to do learning by playing (Figure 2). This Reading House is intended for children of congregations and also children around the church neighborhood. The coordinator and voluntary teachers of the Reading House are members of GKMI SFT and are all female. They search for and collect Christian and general books from various sources, both from the congregation and from donors. Books were obtained from donors from outside West Kalimantan. There are 200 Christian books and 100 general books available in the Reading House for every child to read. They are still hoping for new or used book donors to increase the number of reading books for the congregation and local residents. Before the Covid-19 pandemic, the average presence at this Reading House was 40 children, from kindergarten children to junior high school children. But during the pandemic (2020-2021), there were only around 15 children in attendance daily. Since 2022, children who came to the learning house have increased significantly in number. The attendees include preschool children who come to play and see the pictures as well as their parents who accompany them.



Figure 2: Reading House Program Activities in GKMI SFT

The handicraft workshop is operated by the adult congregation members who make various indigenous handicrafts such as plates, spoons, mortar boards, wooden tables and tools made of the *belian* wood (Figure 3). The *belian* wood (*ulin*, iron wood, *Eusideroxylon* sp.) is a high price wood because of its strength, hardness, and endurance. The *belian* tree is endemic in Kalimantan, particularly in Kapuas Hulu region. The *belian* trees have been increasingly scarce and need to be preserved through plantations being created. Initially the handicraft workshop of the GKMI SFT congregation was natural and tradition based. Regency Office Industrial Service had workshops for artisans to join training for upgrading their skills so that they would be capable of producing and marketing of *Tekalong* indigenous souvenirs. This certainly increased the income from the handicraft enterprise. The *belian* tree has been increasingly hard to find in wild forests. The congregation has pledged its intension to plant *belian* trees on its own land so that the workshop would be self-reliant on the key raw material supplies. This initiative would also be a good example for the other communities in order to promote the *Belian* tree plantation campaign that should be beneficial for wild forest preservation initiatives.



Figure 3: Handicraft Program Activities in GKMI SFT

Farming activities are carried out by members of the congregation on about one hectare of the land owned by the GKMI SFT church. They plant various trees, tubers, and vegetables (Figure 4). Farming products are sold around the Church neighborhood among the locals. Of interest, is the congregation intention to plant *Belian* trees in either the church's or household members' own lands. The church's land has been planted with cassava and crops and will soon be harvested. The next plan of the church and congregation is to work on another church's land for planting oil palm in an area of one hectare. This agricultural business does not require transportation costs for marketing. Thus, the benefits of this program are immediately felt by the church services, congregations, and the surrounding community.



Figure 4: Agricultural/Plantation Program Activities in GKMI SFT

Discussion

Although still in its early stage, GKMI SFT experience in doing its call of duty to pursue God's mission reveals some important lessons that we believe should be useful in designing a



workable framework of conducting local church missions, particularly in remote poverty-stricken rural areas in Indonesia as well as in other developing countries, as we elaborate upon below.

The Mission Fields Are Diverse and Remains Wide

The Great Commission does not only call for proclaiming the Gospel to all nations but more importantly to also for making disciples, baptizing them, and teaching them (Matthew 28:19-20). This indicates that doing mission does not end at a personal proclamation of repentance and acceptance of the Gospel but should be a continuous process for supporting a gradual Christian spiritual formation and embodiment. In fact, Christian belief in some of the already baptized is in fact fading and many may have reconverted to being non-Christians. Accordingly, an important field mission that is at risk of unintentionally being overlooked is the internal church congregation itself. This case study indicates that although some claim to be new born Christians, in reality they remain adherents of indigenous beliefs and rituals that are contrary to Christian teachings. Such practices of syncretism or double religious belonging are not uncommon particularly in remote rural areas of Indonesia and developing countries as well (Tan, 2010:250-264). Doing church missions should also therefore be field contextual specific. With such a diverse contextual environment, church missions should also be adapted, and hence its contents would also be diverse. The Anglican Church Five Marks of Mission may be used as reference in formulating the content of church missions: (1) to proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom, (2) to teach, baptise and nurture new believers, (3) to respond to human need by loving service, (4) to transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and pursue peace and reconciliation, and (5) to strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth (anglicannews.org, 2020). It goes without saying that the case of GKMI SFT missional enterprise is actually in line with the Five Marks of Mission concept.

Pivotal Roles of Missional Diakonia

As Jesus says, man shall live by God's gifts of both the bread of eternal life from heaven and the bread for living in the world (Matthew 4:4). It is logical to accept that the research findings are consistent with the view that material poverty undermines church health and hampers its mission implementation (Hamu et al., 2023). Congregation members participation in church activities are low because they would rather go searching for their material needs for living even on Sundays. *Diakonia's* task that is intended for assuring basic needs for decent living in the world is a necessary condition for doing the *koinonia* and *martyria* tasks particularly in mission fields of non-Christian communities as well as in early converted or even in mature Christian communities. Moreover, the *diakonia* task is a deeds and signs mediated approach to proclaiming the Gospel (Romans 15:18-19). It can be said that the *diakonia* task plays a pivotal role in doing the *diakonia* and the *martyria* task.

Strength Gift Based Community Development

The *diakonia* missions implemented by the GKMI SFT was smartly designed using the *Strength Gift Based Community Development* approach. The learning house activity is supported by female teachers, human capital of the church members, who are ready to serve as volunteers. The indigenous handicraft enterprise is designed to take advantage of the *Belian* wood, a unique forest product of the locality (natural capital gift), the Dayak Suru' indigenous cultural capital, the Tekalong Village brand name of unique tourist destination, and the indigenous artisans that are members of the church. The farm enterprise uses the land which is owned by the church and operated by housewives that are members of the church. The handicraft enterprise will likely grow significantly as Tekalong Village develops to become a tourism-based economy. With that perspective, the congregation intention to plant *Belian* trees would be a way out to solve the problem of low participation in church fellowship, as many of the church members have to go hunting for many days in the forest



and jungle. A *Belian* tree plantation would also be useful for forest preservation which is part of the church missions as the caretaker and custodian the God's creation.

Small is Beautiful

The case study indicates that the small size church is capable of effectively conducting a holistic integrated transformational mission as it facilitates a family-like fellowship communion. The bonding between members is strong as it is founded based on sympathy, thrust and solidarity, whereas any differentiating factors are liquidized that makes no need for linking each other such that the community becomes a peaceful unified body of the same feeling and aspiration and hence facilitates for bridging interconnections with external stakeholders. Bonding, linking, and bridging are the key functional factors of social capital. In contrast, in a large size congregation it is logical to accept that interpersonal contacts are less frequent, members differentiation into group particulars is more eminent and members' aspirations are more diverse and hence congregation community is generally less solid to become a strong social capital base for supporting an effective church mission. In addition, remote rural areas in developing countries are generally characterized by sparse distribution of residential houses and in adequate transportation infrastructures that makes a small size local church more appropriate in easing the members face to face meetings in a fellowship communion.

Holistic Integrated Transformational Mission

The case study also teaches that the *One Duty Three-Tasks* framework in doing church mission leads to componential implementation of the *koinonia*, *diakonia* and *martyria* tasks. The three components are not only interrelated in synergy but also an instrument for each other, particularly in indigenous communities in remote areas, and in poverty-stricken mission fields. As an example, if *diakonia* missions improve the welfare of the congregation members then the pressure to go out for livelihood on Sundays or other days of fellowships would also be reduced and hence the *koinonia* missions would also be enhanced. If congregation members enjoy the gifts from the *diakonia* task, then the Triune God will be glorified and there will be no temptation to return to their indigenous gods for help for daily life and hence the *martyria* tasks would be enhanced. On the other hand, *diakonia* and *martyria* tasks should also be complemented in synergy with *diakonia* tasks. In conclusion, the old concept *One Duty-Three Tasks* that is implemented partially and *koinonia* should be focused and reconstructed to become a holistic integrated transformational missional framework.

Recommendations

We propose two recommendations in each of the macro policy and micro practical levels. At macro policy level we suggest that the church leaders, in Indonesia in particular, review the existing narrative and directive of the Three Missions One Duty of the church to address the seemingly wide practice of being very focused on *koinonia*, a little on *diakonia* and less on *martyria*. The three church tasks should be implemented in a balanced composition and synergistic interrelationship to become a truly integrated and holistic One Duty Three-Tasks effort. This policy change is imperative in promoting development of missional local churches. At micro practical level, we suggest that the missional *diakonia* should be implemented with the Strength-Asset Based Community Development which is focused on God's grace of gifts to each member of the congregation and the congregation community in common. This recommendation is basically a shift from the existing which has long been the practice of a *caritative* approach. This is in line with a new interpretation of the Great Commission proposed by John Kwasi Fosu: "Making disciples does not only involve converting people to Christ but it entails incarnating and enabling them to meet their social, spiritual and physical needs" (Fosu, 2022:148-159). This is to say: "doing livelihood development for doing God's mission, first for the ecclesial church and then for the neighborhood as a whole".



Conclusion

The study finds that mission fields are diverse and wide, and that they require contextual missions, and the *diakonia* task plays a pivotal role to support and complement the *koinonia* and *martyria* in synergy. A small size of congregation is good for quality-oriented missions. The three church tasks should be implemented in balanced composition and in a synergistic interrelationship to become truly integrated and holistic in 'One Duty Three-Tasks'. This policy change is imperative in promoting development of missional local churches. At a micro practical level, we suggest that the missional *diakonia* should be implemented with the Strength-Asset Based Community Development which is focused on God's grace of gifts to each member of the congregation and the congregational community at large. The study contributes to interdisciplinary understanding and a mission framework formulation in rural areas, particularly within an indigenous community, in a remote location, and in especially poverty-stricken mission fields.

References

- Anglican Consultative Council. (2020). "The Anglican Communion's Five Marks of Mission: an introduction". <https://www.anglicannews.org/features/2020/02/the-anglican-communions-five-marks-of-mission-an-introduction.aspx>. Accessed on April 26, 2023.
- Anjaya, C. E. & Arifianto, Y. A. (2021). Mengembangkan Misi Gereja dalam Bingkai Moderasi Beragama, *Thronos: Jurnal Teologi Kristen*, 3(1), 1-10.
- Becker, P. (2015). *What is an Anabaptist Christian? Misio Dei* #18. Elkhart: Mennonite Mission Network.
- Berkhof, L. (2019). *Berkhof's Systematic Theology Revised*. <https://www.lulu.com/>
- Bosch, D. J. (2011). *Transforming mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission (No. 16)*. Orbis Books: New York.
- Corbett, S. & Fikkert, B. (2014). *When Helping Hurts: How to Alleviate Poverty Without Hurting the Poor... And Yourself*. Moody Publishers: Chicago.
- Crouch, A. (2013). *Culture Making: Recovering Our Creative Calling*. InterVarsity Press.
- Dever, M. (2021). *Nine Marks of a Healthy Church*. Crossway.
- Fajarini, U. (2014). *Peranan Kearifan Lokal dalam Pendidikan Karakter, SOSIO-DIDAKTIKA: Social Science Education Journal*, 1(2), 123-130.
- Fosu, J.K. (2022). Biblical Approach to Development: A Theological Reflection from the Perspective of Burkan Pentadic Criticism. *E-Journal of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences* 3(4), 148-159. [Available online at <https://doi.org/10.38159/ehass.2022345>].
- Hamu, F., Sihombing, A., Prasojo, Z., Martasudjita, E. & Firmanto, A. (2023). Liturgical transformation of Diocesan Church in Palangkaraya, Indonesia, *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies*, 79(1). [Available online at DOI:10.4102/hts.v79i1.7850]
- Hulu, E. (2020). Misi Allah pada Masa Intertestamental, *Jurnal Teologi Berita Hidup*, 3(1), 110-119.
- Kuyper, A. (2011). *The Problem of Poverty*, ed. James W. Skillen. Sioux Centre, IA: Dordt College.
- Lie, P. (2010). *Mereformasi Gereja*. Yogyakarta, Andi.
- Maskartini. Yuk ke Lubuk Semah, Objek Wisata di Desa Tekalong Kapuas Hulu. (2018). *Tribune News* 26. [Available online at <https://pontianak.tribunnews.com/2018/11/26/yuk-ke-lubuk-semah-objek-wisata-di-desa-tekalong-kapuas-hulu>].



Menda, W. (2017). *Mencari Bentuk Pengembangan Ekonomi Desa dan Wirausaha Pemuda GMT*, [Available online at <https://sinodegmit.or.id/mencari-bentuk-pengembangan-ekonomi-desa-dan-wirausaha-pemuda-gmit/>]. GMT Web. Accessed April 19, 2023

Nicolaides, A. (2010). The Laos tou Theou – an orthodox view of the “people of God”, *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies*, 66(1), [Available online at DOI:10.4102/hts.v66i1.372].

Nugroho, T. (2021). Misi dalam Gereja Anabaptis Abad XVI: Tinjauan dari Perspektif Paradigma Misi menurut David J. Bosch, *Jurnal Teologi*, 10(01), 85-104. [Available online at DOI:10.24071/jt.v10i1.3392].

Purnomo, Aldrin dan Nurdin Sanjaya. (2020). Tantangan dan Strategi Gereja Menjalankan Misi Allah dalam Menghadapi Penerapan Industri 4.0 di Indonesia, *Diegesis: Jurnal Teologi Kharismatika*, 3(2),(91-106).

Ryken, P.G.. (2016). *Christian Worldview: Mengembalikan tradisi Intelektual Kristiani*. Jakarta: Perkantas.

Stevanus, K. (2021). *Rekonstruksi Paradigma dan Implementasi Misi Gereja Masa Kini di Indonesia*, *JURNAL EFATA: Jurnal Teologi dan Pelayanan*, 7(2)105-115. [Available online at <https://e-journal.sttiman.ac.id/index.php/efata/article/view/45/0>].

Susanto, H. (2019). *Gereja Yang Berfokus Pada Gerakan Misioner*. *FIDEI: Jurnal Teologi Sistematis dan Praktika*, 2, 62-80.

Tan, K-S. (2010). *Can Christians Belong to More than One Religious Tradition?* *Evangelical Review of Theology* 33(3), 250-264.

Tawa, A. B., Zefanya, M. F. & Ronisius, R. (2021). *Partisipasi Orang Muda Dalam Panca Tugas Gereja di Stasi Santo Petrus Belayan*, *Theos: Jurnal Pendidikan dan Teologi*, 1(6), 180-181.

Tomatala, Y. (2003). *Teologi Misi*. Jakarta: Leadership Foundation.

Wohlin, C. (2014). “*Guidelines for Snowballing in Systematic Literature Studies and A Replication in Software Engineering*.” In Proceedings 18 International Conference on Evaluation & Assessment in Software Engineering, 321-330. [Available online at DOI:10.1145/2601248.2601268].

Conflict of Interest Statement: *The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.*



This article is open-access and distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution Licence

The use, distribution or reproduction in other forums is permitted, provided the original author(s) and the copyright owner(s) are credited and that the original publication in this journal is cited, in accordance with accepted academic practice. No use, distribution or reproduction is permitted which does not comply with these terms.