

The History of Protestant Mission on Nias and the Batu Islands (1865-1965)

1. Introduction

In this paper the author presents a brief overview on the history of Christianization on Nias and the Batu Islands.¹ Himself being a former missionary in the service of the Niasan Protestant Church (BNKP), he does so from a Protestant perspective. The timeframe is limited to the years 1865 to 1965, but more attention is given to the period until 1942 when mission and church work was under the supervision of European missionaries. Later, Protestant missionaries no longer held positions of leadership in Niasan Protestant churches.

2. The Missionary Societies

After a preliminary missionary attempt, in 1832, by missionaries of the Roman Catholic Paris Foreign Missionary Society (*Société des Missions Étrangères*)², which had been too short to result in any substantial encounter, Christianity entered the life of the Ono Niha in the second half of the nineteenth century through the agents of two Protestant missionary societies.³ The larger of the two was the Rhenish Missionary Society (RMG)⁴, centred in Barmen (now Wuppertal⁵), Germany. The smaller Dutch Lutheran Missionary Society (DLM)⁶, centred in Amsterdam, The Netherlands, sent its missionaries to the Ono Niha on the Batu Islands.

2.1. The RMG

The spiritual roots of the RMG, founded in 1828⁷, are the Pietism⁸ and the Revivalism⁹ of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in the Union¹⁰ churches of the Rhineland and Westphalia. Among the supporting congregations there were many of a Reformed character, especially in the Siegerland.¹¹ Others, especially in the Ravensberger Land¹², were Lutheran. Their common devotional character, however, smoothed out sharp differences between Calvinism and Lutheranism.

Pietism and Revivalism has remained the strong undercurrent of the Rhenish mission throughout its history. However, at times the eschatological hope of the Kingdom was overlaid with or distorted by a tendency to equate Christianity with Western civilization.¹³

Characteristic of the mission theology was its grappling with the relationship between Gospel (i.e., Western Christianity) and "heathen" culture. Friedrich Fabri¹⁴, director of the RMG for 28 years (1857-1884) and a leading figure in the colonialist movement in Germany, applied the principle of a total break with the past to the colonial context in a radical sense, declaring Western Christian culture to be an absolute standard for all nations. Christian mission had, willy-nilly, to serve the interests of colonialism, and vice versa.

Though Fabri influenced a whole generation of missionaries who worked on Sumatra, including Nias and the Batu Islands, the more moderate concept of Gustav Warneck, the "Christianization of the Nations" (*Volkschristianisierung*), eventually prevailed in the

RM. However, it was also supportive of Western colonialism and authoritarian paternalism, and certainly uncompromising concerning primal ("animist").

2.2. The DLM

The Dutch Lutheran Missionary Society (DLM)¹⁵ was founded in 1872 in Amsterdam. It became the meeting point for all conservative, often pietistic, mission-minded Lutherans from both Dutch Lutheran churches in The Netherlands at that time.¹⁶ Its primary objective was to start its own Dutch-Lutheran mission abroad, making a distinctly Lutheran contribution in building the Kingdom of God among the "heathen".¹⁷

From 1885 onwards, there was also close cooperation between the RMG and the DLM.¹⁸, stipulating that in future the DLM would recruit all its missionaries from the RMG. Although, as of 1917, the DLM began training its missionaries at the Dutch School of Mission of the Cooperating Mission Agencies in Oegstgeest (near Leiden, The Netherlands)¹⁹, it maintained close cooperation with the RMG until the 1930s.

In Oegstgeest, the Ethical Theology had a rather positive approach to non-Western and non-Christian indigenous cultures, and even – to a certain extent – to primal religion.²⁰ Unfortunately, only one missionary to the Ono Niha, Willem L. Steinhart, had enjoyed an education of this nature in Oegstgeest.

3. Difficult Beginnings of Missionary work on Nias (1865-1890)

During the "difficult beginnings"²¹ of missionary work on Nias, the impact of Christianity on Niasan society was very limited. Ernst Denninger was the first RMG-missionary who had contacts with an Ono Niha community, albeit initially in Padang (1861-1865) rather than on Nias. In this town on the West Coast of Sumatra, there were numerous Ono Niha, living in close communities in special settlements.²² Many of them had been brought over from Nias as slaves and were working as servants and dockers.²³ In 1862, Denninger baptised the first Ono Niha in Padang, a woman called Ara who was given the Christian name of Gertruida Christina.²⁴ She later joined the Roman Catholic parish in Padang.

While still in Padang, Denninger applied to the Board of the RMG in Barmen, as well as to the colonial government for permission to start a new mission on Nias.²⁵ The RMG procrastinated in giving its official approval.²⁶ Fortunately, Denninger received the necessary permission from the colonial authorities on 13 August 1865.²⁷ Although still lacking an official instruction from Barmen²⁸, he departed for Nias via Sibolga, arriving on 27 September 1865. This date was later acknowledged by the RMG as the beginning of a new, independent mission and is celebrated by Protestants as the birthday of the church on Nias. Denninger, his wife, and their daughter Karolina²⁹ – who had returned from Germany in order to nurse her mother – settled in Gunungsitoli in the "European quarter".³⁰

From 1872 to 1873, Denninger was assisted by Johann W. Thomas³¹, who thereafter founded a second mission post in Omböлата. In 1873, Friedrich

Kramer arrived. The latter soon built up catechetical classes in Onozitoli (Niasan suburb of Gunungsitoli) and Hilina'a (seven kilometres from Gunungsitoli). Among them was also the chief of Hilina'a, Jawaduha Zebua. On Easter Sunday, 1874, the first 25 men and women from Hilina'a and Onozitoli were baptized by Denninger and Kramer.³² Eventually, after Denninger had had to leave Nias on 10 August 1875 for sick leave in Batavia, Kramer assumed the leadership of the station.³³

Heinrich Sundermann³⁴ arrived at the beginning of 1876. Like Thomas, he first spent some time in Gunungsitoli. In 1878, after having obtained the consent of Oroisa, the highest-ranking chief, Sundermann founded a third mission station in Dahana, near Gunungsitoli.³⁵ From Dahana, he penetrated the neighbouring districts of Tumöri and Sihare'ö.

Very early on, the missionaries began to train some indigenous men to assist them in school. After the first congregations had been founded, some of the responsibility was delegated to indigenous leaders, at first mainly to the Christian chiefs, but later increasingly to the teacher-preachers and the elders.

The missionaries initially treated the local people as guests, offering them small gifts. Gradually, however, as they became more fluent in the Niasan vernacular, and by using Western medicine and education as strategic means of evangelisation, the German missionaries managed to gain a foothold in Niasan communities which had already been subjugated by the Dutch, particularly within the parameters of the *Rapatgebiet*³⁶ on Nias. A few Christian chiefs, such as Ama Mandranga of Sifalaete, who assisted Missionary Sundermann, as well as some of the teacher-preachers, played a significant role in communicating the teachings and the policies of the mission to their fellow countrymen. Outside the *Rapatgebiet*, however, especially in South Nias, where the intimidating influence of the colonial government was not so strongly felt, the missionaries were not able to stand their ground during this period.

4. Expansion of the Missionary Work on Nias (1890-1915)

The most prominent characteristic of this second period of Christianity on Nias is the expansion of the mission beyond the *Rapatgebiet*.³⁷ The year 1890 marks the beginning of a continuous process of successful penetration of missionary activities into areas beyond the direct control of, though under some degree of protection by the colonial authorities. After 1908, when the Dutch subjugated the whole of Nias, RMG missionaries established themselves permanently in South Nias. Parallel to this geographical expansion, there was a rapid numerical increase in church membership.³⁸ The increase in the number of stations and branch congregations necessitated a further consolidation of the ecclesiastical structures. Whereas at the end of the previous period there had been merely three viable but struggling stations on Nias, all of them within the *Rapatgebiet* (on the Batu Islands, the work had just begun and no Ono Niha had as yet been baptised), in 1915 there were fourteen rapidly growing stations, encompassing 120 branch congregations³⁹, located

throughout the island of Nias, as well as two stations, encompassing some fifteen branch congregations, on the Batu Islands.

By 1908, the whole of Nias and the Batu Islands had been subjected to colonial rule.⁴⁰ Eagerly supportive of the "Ethical Politics" of the Dutch government, implemented as of 1901⁴¹, the German missionaries willingly cooperated with the colonial authorities. Whereas, this did bring about many positive developments in the fields of medical service, education and the development of infrastructures, it was also entailed support for military "pacification" and forced labour (*rodi*).

The yoke of colonialism and the systematic destruction of the primal religion resulted in a spiritual vacuum in the communal psyche of the Ono Niha and paralysed the *adat*. The primal religion had been the central nerve of the cultural identity. The eradication of this root necessarily resulted in a serious identity crisis. In the midst of this devastation, however, a new national identity, based on the new law of God (*huku Lowalangi*), was already beginning to take shape in some parts of the Niasan population.

5. The Great Awakening on Nias (1915-1930)

The Great Awakening, or "the great repentance" (*fangesa dödö sebua*)⁴², which spread over the whole island in several "waves"⁴³ from 1915 until 1930⁴⁴, was the most significant period in the history of Christianity among the Ono Niha. It was the time of a victorious, conquering Christianity, voluntarily borne by the Ono Niha themselves, but significantly influenced by the attending political and economic circumstances. The number of Christians more than quadrupled during this period.⁴⁵

This revival movement was also an indigenous missionary movement, resulting in the communal metamorphosis of Niasan society. While it may be argued that it was a communal surrender to the new ruling order, it certainly released tremendous energy and the creativity to construct a totally new corporate identity. Its impact, however, was largely limited to the social realms of the family, the village (*banua*) and the church. The missionaries anxiously prevented its expressing itself politically, let alone in terms of Niasan national independence from Holland. Though the awakening cooled down after 1930, the maturity gained from it was a prerequisite for the Niasan Church's achieving ecclesiastical independence in 1936.

6. Beginnings on the Batu Islands (1889-1919)

A second missionary front was opened by the DLM among the Ono Niha on the Batu Islands in 1889. Johannes Kersten was the first DLM missionary on the Batu Islands.⁴⁶ In October 1887, the DLM decided officially to begin missionary activities on the Batu Islands.⁴⁷ On 11 February 1889, the government permission was granted.⁴⁸ Kersten's wife Christine and a Batak *guru* by the name of Johannes Lumbantobing⁴⁹ arrived on Pulau Tello on 25 February 1889, the official beginning of the Batu Island-mission. Due to the hard physical work in the extreme tropical climate, Kersten fell seriously ill. The doctor advised him to return to Europe⁵⁰, which he

did on 21 June 1890. Back in Germany, he soon died.⁵¹

Christian W. Frickenschmidt⁵², who had arrived on Pulau Tello on 31 December 1889, carried on Kersten's work. He was a man of the solid but simple Lutheran spirituality of Ludwig Harms.⁵³ His wife, Katharine Ostermeier⁵⁴, who died after childbirth on 2 June 1894, had played a significant role as a liaison between the missionary and both the Ono Niha and the Chinese women on Pulau Tello.⁵⁵

In June 1894, Frickenschmidt was joined by August Landwehr⁵⁶. Landwehr started a second mission station, including a mission school, on Sigata on 16 January 1896. Both his first wife, Agnes Kämpfer⁵⁷, who died on 13 November 1905, and his second wife, Paula Simoneit⁵⁸, dedicated themselves to the service of women and children, as well as to nursing in the mission hospital.⁵⁹ In 1916, the Sigata missionary's place of residence was officially moved to Pulau Tello and the mission work became centralized⁶⁰, the main reason being that Sigata was too unhealthy a place.⁶¹ On the first Sunday of Advent, 27 November 1892, holy baptism was administered to the twelve "first fruits" of Pulau Tello.⁶² The DLM considered this date to be the "founding day"⁶³ of the Batunese church. On Easter, 16 April 1900, the fifteen "first fruits" of Sigata, from the village of Bawö Sitöra, were baptised by Landwehr.

As had been the case on Nias, the witness of some influential former adherents of the primal religion (i.e., nobility and traditional priests/priestesses) who had converted to Christianity was also essential to the interpretation and expansion of the Christian message on the Batu Islands. Special mention has to be made of a noble couple, Lugu and Lai Hulandro⁶⁴ on Pulau Tello⁶⁵ and aristocratic women on Sigata, Fija Wanaetu⁶⁶ who was the catalyst behind the Christianisation of this second centre of missionary activities. Initially, there had also been support from the royal family of the Batu Islands.⁶⁷ Raja Alam Laut I never became a Christian, but sent his son and heir to attend mission school and church services.⁶⁸ Alam Laut II, who was, after the death of his father in 1902, approved as regent by the colonial government, lost all formal power in 1915, when Nathanael Ziliwu, a former *guru* of the DLM, became *demang*.⁶⁹ The fact that the raja became opposed to Christianity and took a second wife⁷⁰, was a heavy blow to the developing church. Polygamy was usually punished with excommunication, so that the chance of winning the *raja* over to Christianity had become virtually null and void. Since a part of the royal family had already converted to Islam, the fear was that Alam Laut would follow suit. But he did not convert to Islam. Instead, as he grew older, the Christian education he had received in his youth came back to him again and, on 7 November 1925, the *raja* was baptised in Koto Bulu'aro, the old royal village.⁷¹ Only a few weeks later, on 8 January 1926, Alam Laut II died. He received a Christian burial. The raja's conversion, however, had come too late to have any significant impact.

7. Growth of Christianity on the Batu Islands (1919-1942)

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Since 1919, a new generation of Dutch missionaries on the Batu Islands brought about much development in the congregations. Willem F. Schröder⁷² arrived on Pulau Tello on 6 November 1919 and Willem L. Steinhart⁷³ on 31 December 1924.⁷⁴ Schröder represented pietistic orthodox Lutheranism, at the time still dominant in the DLM, while Steinhart had a more cultural, less dogmatic manner. This became particularly clear in matters concerning the indigenous culture of the Ono Niha.⁷⁵ Despite these differences, however, they both brought some renewal to Christianity on the Batu Islands. In contrast to their German predecessors (and temporary colleagues), they placed an emphasis on pastoral counselling by making home visits, not only to Christians but also to non-Christians, feeling that the best method of reaching people was not only through the missionary sermon, but also through the "mission-chat" (*zendingsgesprek*) during a house visit.⁷⁶ Among their other virtues were efficient church management and intensive study of the indigenous culture. Schröder, who was the administrator, invested much energy in developing more democratic (i.e., presbyterial-synodal)⁷⁷ church structures, while Steinhart excelled in thorough, internationally acknowledged studies of the culture of the Ono Niha. During this period, Christianity spread to remoter regions, such as Tanjunga Saeru on Tanah Masa and Tanah Bala.

8. Steps towards an Independent Church on Nias

During the 1930s, certainly encouraged by the recent founding of the HKBP-synod in 1930, efforts were undertaken to prepare the Niasan church to stand on its own feet. An important motive, which was particularly felt by the RMG, was the world economic crisis. While the "three-self-formula" (self-support, self-governance and self-propagation) was claimed to be the theological basis⁷⁸, on the part of the Ono Niha the quest for ecclesiastical independence had also been inspired by the struggle for national freedom (*merdeka*).

The first synod on Nias, held in November 1936 in Gunungsitoli⁷⁹, was called an *owasa sinode*.⁸⁰ At its opening, four thousand people were present.⁸¹ The 26 members of the synod, consisting of fourteen *satua Niha Keriso* from the seven church circuits (*resor*), two *sinenge*, two *guru*, two *pandita*, two *pegawai negeri* and four missionaries, subsequently decided on a church order and the formation of a Niasan church.⁸² The name was to be "Banoea Niha Keriso Protestant ba danö Nias" (B.N.K.P.-Nias). In 1948 this changed to BNKP.⁸³

The founding synod of the BNKP had established a church-organisation which somewhat resembled the German church structures at that time. On the other hand, though presbyterial-synodal in character, suggestions by Niasan members of the synod to provide for traditional Niasan models were not taken into consideration. Instead, the church was given a hierarchical organisation with the positions of leadership tightly in the hands of the missionaries.

9. Challenges to Christianity on Nias and the Batu Island

Protestant Christianity on Nias and the Batu Islands, which had, in the 1930s, become the most powerful social factor, was challenged by groups, movements and organisations not part of the colonial and ecclesiastical status quo.

9.1 Primal Religion

Throughout this period, primal religion remained a major challenge to Christianity on Nias and the Batu Islands. Although the institutions of primal religion, such as the priesthood (*ere*), the rituals and the sacrificial feasts, gradually disappeared from public life, the veneration of the ancestors, inseparably linked to the ancestral images (*adu zatua*), was continued, albeit secretly, by many Christians.

9.2 Islam

On Nias, stronger communities of Muslims were to be found only in certain ports and marketplaces, such as Gunungsitoli, Miga, Olor, Lahewa, Bio'uti, Darodaro Balaikha and Teluk Dalam. On the Hinako Islands, some of the noble families had converted to Islam. Before the Christian missionaries arrived, the question of allegiance to or the rejection of Islam had been largely settled on Nias. The mission, however, occasionally disturbed the balance between the traditional and the Islamic communities on Nias.⁸⁴ Sometimes, both Muslims and Christians, putting pressure on the traditional chiefs to make a choice, usually in favour of Christianity, initiated frightening propaganda.⁸⁵

As on Nias, Islam had entered the Batu Islands before Christianity through immigrants from abroad. However, on most of the Batu Islands the situation was less settled than on Nias. The islands of Pini and Hibae off the eastern coast of Tanah Masa were Islamic strongholds. Christianity was also unable to penetrate a few Muslim villages on Pulau Tello.⁸⁶

As the Christians became greater in number and Christianity more powerful because of its privileged relationship with the colonial authorities, however, the Muslims began to challenge its dominance. By the end of the 1920s, there was a "race" between Christianity and Islam for the remaining "heathen" areas on the Batu Islands. This "race" was much more widespread and was carried out more openly than that on Nias had been.

9.3. Seventh-Day Adventism

In 1874, Seventh-Day Adventist (SDA) missionaries began to operate abroad, also, reaching Indonesia at the beginning of the twentieth century.⁸⁷ First influences on Ono Niha society are reported in January 1913.⁸⁸ During the next fifteen years, the SDA gradually infiltrated the Batu Islands, where it played an earlier and more threatening role in relation both to the Protestant mission and to the colonial authorities than it had on Nias.⁸⁹ The Dutch Lutheran missionaries protested, but the SDA appealed to the Governor-General in Batavia.⁹⁰ The SDA managed to gain a few followers and to confuse many others. For some, like Nathanael Ziliwu, a former teacher-preacher and as of 1915 *demang* of the Batu Islands, this new church – not being part of the colonial status quo – was attractive for political reasons.⁹¹

Activities of SDA on Nias are recorded as of 1932⁹², concentrating on the central and southern areas (i.e., Sifaoro'asi, Hilisimaetanö and Hilisatarö).⁹³

9.4. Communism

The Communist uprising on the Batu Islands in May 1926 seems to have been a preliminary attempt by the "Red Unions" (*Sarekat Merah*) in West Sumatra⁹⁴ to initiate an Indonesia-wide revolution.⁹⁵ The instigators of the rebellions defamed Christianity as an instrument of Dutch oppression and sought to arouse dissatisfied Muslims who had fallen victim to the colonial status quo.⁹⁶

Erupting at Labuan Hiu, an Islamic village on the Batu Island of Pini, the uprising soon swept over to Pulau Tello. Schröder and his family had just departed for a vacation in the Bataklands⁹⁷, but Steinhart was on his mission station. He calmed down the congregations, where panic and chaos had broken out⁹⁸, and reorganised the teacher-preachers, who were fleeing from the more remote islands.⁹⁹ Eventually, military from Padang and Gunungsitoli suppressed the rebellion.¹⁰⁰ The subjugation of the Communist uprising resulted in a "run" on the church on the Batu Islands. The worship services were celebrated with great intensity and gratitude.¹⁰¹ Numerous non-Muslims who had supported the Red Unions now turned to Christianity, in order not to be considered communists.¹⁰² The number of Christians rose from 1002 in 1926 to 1146 in 1927¹⁰³, an increase of approximately 14%. This temporary challenge of Christianity by Communism was confined to the Batu Islands and did not affect Nias.

9.5. The Fa'awösa

The *fa'awösa*¹⁰⁴ was a charismatic-prophetic movement, principally Christian, but incorporating strong elements of the primal religion of Nias and later also of Islam (i.e., using the crescent and star in addition to the cross as symbols¹⁰⁵). It began in Sogae'adu under the leadership of Toma Lömbu, usually called Ama Wohakhi, around 1930 and was directed against the authoritarian way in which the missionaries led the church.¹⁰⁶ There were "speaking in tongues", invocation, exorcism, and open sectarianism.¹⁰⁷ The fact that polygamy was considered by the *fa'awösa* to be no problem made the movement popular among some of the chiefs.¹⁰⁸ One of their slogans was: "The church of the missionaries is the church of the law; people who are rooted in the Gospel do not need church discipline".¹⁰⁹ Another slogan was more political: "separation from Europe".¹¹⁰

On 28 November 1936, the *fa'awösa* broke away from the "B.N.K.P.-Nias".¹¹¹ When Ama Wohakhi died on 21 July 1938, his followers took an oath at his grave to carry on the struggle of the *fa'awösa*.¹¹² It lingered on under the leadership of *Guru Samu'eli*. Probably by this time, its name had changed to "The Fellowship in the Spirit" (*Angowuloa Fa'awösa khö Geheha*, AFG). In 1944, a part of the AFG split off, naming itself "The Fellowship in Jesus" (*Angowuloa Fa'awösa khö Yesu*, AFY).¹¹³

10. The End of Missionary Supervision (1940/1942)

On 10 May 1940, Hitler's army invaded the Kingdom of the Netherlands. On that same day, the order was issued to intern all German nationals in the Dutch East Indies, including all 43 missionaries of the RM on Sumatra, Nias and Mentawai. On Nias, all German men were detained on 10-11 May 1940 and soon taken to Fort de Kock on Sumatra.¹¹⁴ The leadership of the church was transferred to Niasan office-bearers.¹¹⁵ One day later, on May 12, the fifth synodal assembly of the "B.N.K.P.-Nias" began in Gunungsitoli.¹¹⁶ It was called the "synod of grief"¹¹⁷, since, for the first time, the church on Nias was bereft of its missionaries. A new synod board was elected and *Pandita* Atöföna Harefa became the first Niasan *ephorus*.

On 14 May 1940, the Mission Consulate in Batavia officially assumed responsibility for the RMG missions in the Batakland and on Nias, and the "Batak-Nias-Mission" (*Batak-Nias-Zending*) was formed to assume responsibility for the assets of the RMG on Sumatra, Nias and Mentawai.¹¹⁸ A number of missionaries from other Dutch missionary societies were transferred to Sumatra and Nias to fill some of the gaps caused by the detention of the RMG missionaries. In addition to others, Missionary Schröder was transferred from Pulau Tello to Gunungsitoli in July 1940, reducing the missionary influence on the Batu Islands to a minimum. When Schröder was interned in the Japanese detention camp in 1942, the missionary work came to a complete stop.

11. Independent Batunese Church (1945) and merger with the BNKP (1960)

On 10 August 1945, after the Japanese had retreated from the Batu Islands, the indigenous Christian leaders proclaimed their independent church: *Banua Keriso Protestan* (B.K.P.).¹¹⁹ The synod board (*pengurus besar*) consisted of nine members¹²⁰, including Assistant-*Pandita* Sokobamböwö Nehe of Sigata as president and *Pandita* Kana Wa'ambö as minister-in-charge (*pandita umum*) - a kind of *pastor* *pastorum*.¹²¹ The treasurer was *Mantri* Kajoe Hondrö.¹²² The BKP was, however, never acknowledged by the Indonesian government and played no significant role in the development of the Batu Islands.

During the Indonesian War of Independence (1945-1949), Pulau Tello was firmly in the hands of the Republican Army. When, in February 1947, Steinhart made an attempt to continue his work on Pulau Tello, the leader of the BKP, *Pandita* Kana Wa'ambö, rejected this albeit under some pressure from the Indonesian Republican forces. The DLM believed this to be "handwriting on the wall", and took the decision to terminate all missionary activities on the Batu Islands and to transfer the responsibility to the RMG. In the 1950s, the BKP was in an even greater state of devastation than the BNKP. In July 1959, a delegation of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) visited the Batu Islands and advised the BKP to merge with one of the neighbouring churches.¹²³ Both the BNKP on Nias and the HKBP in Batakland were taken into consideration. The advantage of joining this HKBP would be that the BKP would automatically become a member of the LWF, which was in accordance with its confessional (Lutheran) status.

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On the other hand, joining the BNKP would also have clear cultural advantages, since the Batu Islands had much greater similarities in language and *adat* to Nias than did the Bataklands. Furthermore, since 1928, the Batu Islands had become part of the regency (first *onderafdeling*, then *kabupaten*) of Nias. These cultural and political considerations eventually tipped the scales in favour of the BNKP.¹²⁴

The prospect of unification between the BKP and the BNKP was discussed favourably during the twenty-fourth synod of the BNKP on 14-18 May 1959 in Teluk Dalam. Subsequently, the annual synod of the BKP, held in August 1959 on Pulau Tello, took a decision to unite.¹²⁵ On 3 June 1960, the twenty-fifth synod of the BNKP, meeting in Omböläta, resolved that the BKP merge into the BNKP.¹²⁶

To overcome the problem of the inefficient church leadership on the Batu Islands, the RMG to send, from June 1964 until May 1968, Rudolf Heering¹²⁷, an ordained theologian of the Rhenish Church, as instructor for this "special resort".¹²⁸ As all other Protestant missionaries who worked on Nias and the Batu Islands after, in 1950¹²⁹, relations were restored between the BNKP and the RMG, he functioned only an advisor to, and no longer as supervisor over the Niasan church workers, as had been the case before World War II.

¹ Three large islands (Tanah Bala, Tanah Masa and Pulau Pini) and 48 smaller islands situated to the south of Nias off the West Coast of Sumatra, between 0° 10' Northern Latitude and 0° 45' Southern Latitude and between 97° 50' and 98° 35' eastern longitude. The administrative centre is Pulau Tello. Cf. *ENI* 1 (1917), p. 207.

² Cf. A. Reid, *The French in Sumatra and the Malay World, 1760-1890*, 1973, pp. 205-208; J.M. Hämmerle, *Sejarah Gereja Katolik di Pulau Nias*, 1985, pp. 3-9; U.M. Telaumbanua, *Evangelization and Niasan culture*, 1993, pp. 90-96; R. Mittersakschmöller (ed.), *Joachim Freiherr von Brenner-Felsach: Eine Reise nach Nias*, 1998, p.23; K. Steenbrink, *Catholics in Indonesia 1808-1942*, vol. I, 2003, pp. 11, 20; F. Huber, *Das Christentum in Ost-, Süd- und Südostasien sowie Australien*, 2005, p. 178. The missionaries were Jean-Pierre Vallön and Jean-Laurent Bérard, as well as a Niasan couple from the island of Penang, referred to as the catechist Francisco and his wife Sophie. Roman Catholic mission work started again, now successfully, in 1939 and expanded significantly in the 1950s and 1960s.

³ Societies were free associations of persons of similar interests with the purpose of achieving common goals, cf. W.W. Mijnhardt, *Het Nederlandse Genootschap in de achttiende en vroege negentiende eeuw*, 1983, pp. 76-101; J. Boneschanker, *Het Nederlandsch Zending Genootschap in zijn eerste periode*, 1987, pp. 24f.

⁴ "Die Rheinische Missionsgesellschaft".

⁵ "Wuppertal" (valley of the Wupper) is a region situated along the river Wupper in the Rhineland, bordering on Westphalia (Germany). The city of Wuppertal was founded in 1929.

⁶ "Nederlandsch-Luthersch Genootschap voor In- en Uitwendige Zending". English abbreviation: DLM.

⁷ The establishment of the RMG was the result of a union of four smaller missionary societies, the "Die Elberfelder Missionsgesellschaft" (founded in 1799), "Die Barmer Missionsgesellschaft" (1818), "Die Kölner Missionsgesellschaft" (1822) and "Die Missionsgesellschaft in Wesel" (1822).

⁸ Eduard Kriele, *Die Rheinische Mission in der Heimat*, 1928, pp. 9-17. "Die Rheinische Mission ist ein echtes Kind des niederrheinischen Pietismus" (The Rhenish Mission is a genuine child of the Lower Rhine Pietism), quotation on p. 9.

⁹ The revivals in Germany in the nineteenth century took place parallel to the "Evangelical Awakening" in the Anglo-Saxon world, cf. F.W. Graf et al., "Erweckung/Erweckungsbewegungen", in: RGG4 II (1999), pp. 1490-1499; U. Gäbler, "Enkele kenmerken van het Europese en Amerikaanse Réveil", in: *Documentatieblad voor de Nederlandse Kerkgeschiedenis na 1800*, 13/33 (1990), pp. 2-16; Gäbler has shown that the aims of this movement were very similar in Europe and in North America. The expectation of the nearness of the second coming of Jesus Christ caused a sense of crisis. The true believers had to be gathered and build the Kingdom of God. Personal faith, mission and charity were the true answers against atheism and secularism.

¹⁰ Unification of previously Lutheran and Reformed churches. "Unierte" (from Latin *unire*) means "united". In response to an urgent request of the Prussian King, Friedrich Wilhelm III in 1817, the Lutheran and Reformed territorial churches in Prussia began to form an administrative Union, practicing intercommunion and intercelebration. Within this *Union* (in the west, including the provincial churches in the Rhineland and Westphalia), the individual congregations can opt to be Lutheran or Reformed or United, whereby the United congregations can opt to use either Luther's catechism or the Heidelberg Catechism

¹¹ Siegerland is the area around the town of Siegen in the (former) Prussian province of Westphalia. According to Missionary Edmund Sartor, the later awakening on Nias was very similar to the one he had experienced in Siegerland in his youth; cf. E. Sartor, "Jahresbericht 1919 über die Station Sa'ua" (RMG 2.769).

¹² The awakening in Ravensberger Land in the (former) Prussian province of Westphalia, between the Teutoburg Forest and the Wiehen Mountains, was influenced by the Moravian Brethren and the Deutsche Christentumsgesellschaft in Basel (1780-1839). It spread from Gütersloh (Revival sermons of Volkening in 1826) and Steinhagen (first mission festival in Ravensberger Land in 1835) to Herford, Bünde, Jöllenbeck, Bielefeld, Minden (on the northern edge of the Wiehen Mountains), and other places. Cf. Th. Sundermeier, *Erweckung in Ravensberg*, 1962. Concerning the Deutsche Christentumsgesellschaft, cf. H. Weigelt, "Deutsche Christentumsgesellschaft", in: RGG4 II (1999), p. 246.

¹³ Cf. J.C. Hoekendijk, *Kerk en volk in de Duitse zendingwetenschap*, 1949, pp. 36-38. This arrogant "Germanising" of the Gospel – sickening, in hindsight – comes out clearly in the sermons of Friedrich W. Krummacher, cf. H. Schroeter-Wittke, *Unterhaltung*, 1999, pp. 167-168.

¹⁴ Friedrich Fabri had a theology of the Kingdom of God, but he differentiated – at least as far as his choice of language was concerned – between his "biblical", his "historical" and his "practical" perspectives of the world, a view widely held around the turn of the century, cf. H. Beyer, "Friedrich Fabri über Nationalstaat und kirchliche Eigenständigkeit, Mission und Imperialismus", in: *Zeitschrift für Bayrische Kirchengeschichte* 30 (1961), pp. 82, 87, 94-96.

¹⁵ "Nederlandsch Luthersch Genootschap voor In- en Uitwendige Zending" or "Luthers Genootschap", cf. C.Ch.G. Visser, *De Lutheranen in Nederland*, 1983, pp. 135-136, 154.

¹⁶ The "Evangelisch-Lutherse Kerk" (founded in 1566 in Antwerp; later, the centre of the church moved to Amsterdam) and the "Hersteld Evangelisch-Lutherse Kerk", a schismatic group acknowledged as a church by the state

on 7 August 1835 (by Royal Decree). The DLM recruited its members, supporters, and later its missionaries, from both churches. In 1952, the Dutch Lutherans were reunited as the Evangelical-Lutheran Church in the Kingdom of the Netherlands. Cf. C.Ch.G. Visser, *De Lutheranen in Nederland*, 1983, pp. 9-19, 107-112, 120, 151-153. J. Hallewas, *Lutherse Wereldzending NU*, 1955, p. 4. "Conservative" in this case is intended to mean cultivating a distinct Lutheran identity and rejecting the positions of liberal theology.

¹⁷ Speech held at the commissioning service held on Wednesday, 20 April 1887 in the Old Lutheran Church in Amsterdam, EVB, 5/3 (1887), p. 63 ("medehelpen Zijne Kerk in Lutherschen geest op te richten").

¹⁸ On 11 August 1886, an agreement between the DLM and the RMG was signed. Cf. "Notulen Hoofdbestuur", Amsterdam, 8 February 1886 (GAA 552/2); "Correspondentie Hoofdbestuur" (GAA 552/19); cf. U. Hummel, "Die Zusammenarbeit zwischen der Rheinischen Missionsgesellschaft und der Niederländisch-Lutherischen Missionsgesellschaft in Ausbildung und Verkündigung", in: *Monatshefte für die Ev. Kirchengeschichte des Rheinlandes* LIV, 2005; cf. U. Hummel, *Sirihpruim en kruis*, 2002, pp. 109-111.

¹⁹ Cf. S.C. Graaf van Randwijck, *Handelen en denken in dienst der zending*, 1981, vol. II, pp. 683-694.

²⁰ The Ethical Theology combined a scientific approach (e.g., historical-critical exegesis) with the confessional teachings of the church and personal faith-experience.

²¹ Cf. A. Schneider, *Turia*, 1965, pp. 7-17. Schneider calls the period 1865-1890 "schwerer Anfang" (difficult beginning), referring mainly to the difficulties of the missionaries. W. Gulö, *Benih yang Tumbuh XIII*, 1983, pp. 5-13, follows Schneider's lead (*masa permulaan yang sulit*).

²² According to W. Gulö, *Benih yang Tumbuh XIII*, 1983, p. 6, there were about 3000 Ono Niha in Padang at that time; other sources mention 5000-6000 (cf. *De Rijnsche Zending*, 1870, pp. 82-83). The Ono Niha constituted the largest non-Malay community in Padang in the nineteenth century.

²³ The Niasan slaves were brought over to Padang by the Dutch and settled there after they had obtained their freedom, cf. *ENI* 3 (1919), p. 29.

²⁴ BRMG, 1874, p. 208.

²⁵ The request to the Governor of the West Coast of Sumatra was made on 2 March 1865. Denninger reported this to the RMG on 29 March 1865 (cf. letter Denninger to RMG, 29 March 1865, RMG 1.793). Denninger had begun requesting a mission to Nias as from 1862, both of the RMG and of the Governor-General. The latter supported the assignment of a Protestant missionary to Nias for educational reasons and began suggesting it to the RMG in 1862, cf. letter Denninger to RMG, 29 March 1865 (RMG 1.793); E.E.W.Gs. Schröder, *Nias*, 1917, p. 755; *Toeria*, 2/3 (1915) and 2/6 (1915).

²⁶ A mission to Nias was considered to be only part of the mission among the Batak; cf. G. Menzel, *Die Rheinische Mission*, 1978, p. 83.

²⁷ BRMG, 1865, p. 378.

²⁸ There had been no formal decision of the deputation, nor had the general assembly given its permission, cf. E. Kriele, *Die Rheinische Mission in der Heimat*, 1928, p. 200.

²⁹ Karolina (called Lina) Denninger was born in Bintang (Borneo) on 24 August 1848. She arrived in Padang in July 1864 and in September 1865 accompanied her parents to Nias. In 1869, she married the Dutch military physician Van der Veen on Nias. Later, they moved to Buitenzorg (now Bogor) on Java, where Doctor van der Veen died on 29 March 1875. Ernst and Sophie Denninger also had a son, Elias, born on 1 January 1851.

³⁰ Cf. *Kom over en help ons!* 8 (1866), pp.113-119; A. Bonn, *Die Sonne geht auf über unseren Bergen*, 1940, p. 15.

³¹ Johann Wilhelm Thomas (13 June 1843 Eibach, Nassau – 30.12.1900 Humene, Nias).

³² Cf. *BRMG*, 1874, pp. 207-208.

³³ Denninger never returned to Nias, but died in Buitenzorg on 27 March 1876.

³⁴ Heinrich Wilhelm Sundermann (29 October 1849 Ladbergen – 24 April 1919 Göttingen). Cf. *Zum Gedächtnis: D. Heinrich Sundermann*, in: *BRMG*, 1919, pp. 57-59; *BRMG*, 1961, pp. 147-155; U. Hummel, "Sundermann", in: *RGG*⁴ VII (2004), p.1903.

³⁵ Cf. H. Sundermann, *Die Insel Nias und die Mission daselbst*, 1905, pp. 98-99; later, Oroisa strongly opposed him.

³⁶ The *Rapatgebied* was an area under Dutch Colonial jurisdiction, which extended sixteen kilometres to the north and sixteen kilometres to the south of Gunungsitoli. Cf. *ENI* 3 (1919), p. 28; also F. Zebua, *Kota Gunungsitoli*, 1996, pp. 94-95. Zebua gives a description of the borders of the *Rapatgebied*, which is similar to the present sub-district of Gunungsitoli.

³⁷ Cf. W. Gulö, *Benih yang Tumbuh XIII*, 1983, pp. 10-13, calls this period "The Period of Expansion" (*Masa Penyebaran*).

³⁸ Between 1894 and 1899 the number of members increased by 104%, from 2106 to 4334 (*BRMG*, 1900, p.181).

³⁹ In 1900 there had been eleven stations, including Padang on Sumatra, with 5000 members.

⁴⁰ Cf. Tim Penyusun, *Sejarah Perjuangan Rakyat Nias*, 1989, pp. 25-50. In 1908 Nias became a Section or *Afdeeling* under its first Assistant-Resident Van Vuuren (1908-1913).

⁴¹ As of the end-1870s, the anti-revolutionary policy of "ethically responsible politics" was pioneered in the Netherlands by Abraham Kuyper, a leader in the church (*Gereformeerde Kerken*) and in politics (Anti-Revolutionary Party). Similar demands for a more humane policy concerning the colonies had sprung up in the United Kingdom. When Kuyper became Prime Minister in 1901, the Head of State announced in her Queen's Speech that it was the duty of the Netherlands as a Christian country to improve the situation of the indigenous population in the colonies and for the government to support the Christian mission. By providing humanitarian development aid, the mission would be able to repay some of the debt which the state owed its exploited subjects (*eere-schuld*). Major roles in the implementation of this policy were played by A.W.F. Idenburg, minister of colonies in 1902-1905, 1908-1909 and subsequently Governor-General of the Dutch East Indies (1909-1916), and J.B. Heutz, Governor-General 1904-1909 (cf. S.C. Graaf van Randwijck, *Handelen en Denken in dienst der zending*, vol. I, 1981, pp. 217-251; G. van Klinken, *Minorities, modernity and the emerging nation*, 2003, pp. 18-24).

⁴² This is a unique term for an awakening. It is not certain whether it originates from Christian Ono Niha or from the missionaries. Cf. Felix Meier-Hedde, *Die „Große Reue“ auf Nias*, 2003, pp. 13-14. The term "Awakening" is the translation of the German *Erweckung* (Dutch: *opwekking*), first used by the Pietists of Halle, Germany, in the eighteenth century. Subsequently, "Great Awakening" was used to refer to the awakening in Northern America in the eighteenth century, cf. F.W. Graf et al, "Erweckung/Erweckungsbewegungen", in: *RGG*⁴ II (1999), pp. 1490-1499.

⁴³ The term "waves" of awakenings is used, among others, by A. Pieper, *Die Auswirkungen der Erweckung auf Nias*,

1928, p. 3 (*wellenartige Weiterbildung*) and A. Schneider, *Turia*, 1965, p. 37 (*in verschiedenen Wellen*).

⁴⁴ Usually, the Great Awakening on Nias (*fangesa dödö sebua*) is dated roughly from 1916 until 1930. Fahede Mendröfa, quoted by W. Gulö (*Benih yang Tumbuh XIII*, 1983, p. 16), divides the awakening into four phases, 1916-1919, 1920-1921, 1922-1924 and 1928-1930, without giving any further specifications. T. Müller, *Die „große Reue“ auf Nias*, 1931, pp. 25-52, also has four phases, but dates and titles them differently, as follows: 1916/17 (*Die große Erweckung*), 1917-1922 (*Die Zeit der „kleinen Dinge“*), 1922/23 (*Die Erweckung im Jahre 1922/23*), 1923-1930 (*Letzte Regungen*).

⁴⁵ 1914: 17 795 baptised Christians, 9000 catechumens, 120 congregations; 1922: ca. 52 000 baptised Christians (alternative counting: 49 877), 30 000 catechumens; 1926: 65 000 baptised Christians (alternative counting: 70 000), 23 000 catechumens; 1929/30: ca. 84 000 baptised Christians, ca. 13 300 catechumens, 164 congregations.

These statistics do not include the Batu Islands. Cf. *Toeria*, 2/2 (1915), *Toeria*, 10/4 (1923), *Toeria*, 11/3 (1924); R. Wegner, *Die Erweckungsbewegung auf Nias*, 1924, p. 54; J. Warneck, *Die Volkskirchen auf Sumatra und Nias*, 1927, p. 29; A. Pieper, *Die Auswirkung der Erweckung auf Nias*, 1928, pp. 22-23; A. Schneider, *Turia*, 1965, p. 34; W. Gulö, *Benih yang Tumbuh XIII*, 1983, pp. 16-21.

⁴⁶ Cf. *EVB*, 5/3 (1887), p. 63. He wanted, initially in Tanjung Sakti in the Pasemah Ulu Manna on Sumatra, to spread the Kingdom of God among the heathen in the spirit of our Lutheran church ("medehelpen Zijne Kerk in Lutherschen geest op te richten"), in order to pre-empt the further expansion of Islam. Cf. letter Resident of Bencoolen to DLM, 30 September 1885; he quotes a certain Bettink, who had visited the area and held that, due to Muslim influence, it was no longer "heathen" ("Ambtelijke Correspondentie", GAA 552/32). When Kersten arrived in the Pasemah Ulu Manna, the mountainous border area between Bencoolen and Palembang, he found that the station of his predecessor, Asmus Festersen, was destroyed and a Roman Catholic priest, Jan (Joannes) P.N. van Meurs, had just arrived. In 1888, the DLM decided to give up Tanjung Sakti as missionary area. Cf. "Notulen Buitengewone Vergadering van het Hoofdbestuur", Amsterdam, 6 January 1888 (GAA 552/2); W.F. Schröder, *De Zending op de Batoe-Eilanden*, 1927, pp. 6-7. Cf. article by Carl F. Westermann, in: *Algemeen Handelsblad*, 27 December 1896 and 7 January 1897; K. Steenbrink, *Catholics in Indonesia 1808-1942*, vol. I, 2003, pp. 65-66.

⁴⁷ Cf. "Notulen Buitengewone Vergadering Hoofdbestuur", Amsterdam, 12 October 1887 and 7 December 1887 (GAA 552/2). It seems that at this stage the Batu Islands were confused with the islands of Mentawai further south. Cf. letter of the DLM to the Minister of Colonies, cf. "Notulen Hoofdbestuur", Amsterdam, 8 November 1888 (GAA 552/2). In this, the DLM followed the advice of RMG Inspector August W. Schreiber. The reason was that there was a Dutch administrative officer on Pulau Tello who would be able to provide the missionary protection, *EVB*, 19/3 (1901), p. 66.

⁴⁸ Cf. "Notulen Hoofdbestuur", Amsterdam, 2 May 1889 (GAA 552/2).

⁴⁹ Cf. G.O. Reitz, "A report of the Church in the Batu Islands", 1959, p. 2; W.F. Schröder, *De Zending op de Batoe-eilanden*, 1927, p. 14. Lumbantobing had previously served the Mennonite mission in Pakantan, Sumatra.

⁵⁰ "Aerztliches Attest", Dr. Elogner, Padang, 12 June 1890 (GAA 552/30).

⁵¹ Cf. C.W. Frickenschmidt, *Erinnerungen aus Pulu Tello*, 1895, p. 13. On 27 July 1890, J. Kersten arrived in Amsterdam. On 30 August 1890, he died in Leverkusen

(Lennepe), Germany. His widow later took upon herself the education of her daughter and the two daughters of Frickenschmidt. On 18 April 1918, she died of a stroke in the mission-house in Barmen.

⁵² For Frickenschmidt's bio-data, cf. Wilhelm Frickenschmidt Junior, "In Memoriam", in: EVB, 53/3 (1935), pp. 57-60. Frickenschmidt arrived in Padang in May, 1888.

⁵³ Ludwig G. Harms (5 May 1808 Walsrode – 14 November 1865 Hermannsburg). Leader of the Awakening and founder of the Hermannsburg Mission.

⁵⁴ Katharine Ostermeier, sometimes "Ostermeyer" (27 June 1867 Lindau – 2 June 1894 Pulau Tello).

⁵⁵ C.W. Frickenschmidt, *Unter den Palmen von Pulu Tello*, 1929, 9ff. People of Chinese descent had settled on Nias as merchants in the nineteenth century; cf. F. Zebua, *Kota Gunungsitoli*, 1996, pp. 98-99.

⁵⁶ August Landwehr (6 May 1864 Werther – 9 October 1912 Mühlhausen).

⁵⁷ Agnes Kämpfer (1873 Barmen – 13 November 1905 Sigata).

⁵⁸ Paula Simoneit (1883 Sumatra – 1957 Freiburg).

⁵⁹ Cf. A. Landwehr, *Dem Andenken der Frau Missionar Landwehr geb. Agnes Kämpfer*, 1906, pp. 5 – 13. There were small DLM mission hospitals on Pulau Tello and on Sigata (until 1916). After World War II and the War of Independence, the hospital on Pulau Tello was handed over to the Indonesian government.

⁶⁰ By August 1916, when the re-centralisation was accomplished, there were eleven mission posts on the Batu Islands; cf. letter Frickenschmidt to DLM, Pulau Tello, 7 August 1916 (GAA 552/35).

⁶¹ Cf. EVB, 43/1 (1925), p. 9. Frickenschmidt always denied that Sigata was more unhealthy than Pulau Tello.

⁶² Cf. "Notulen Hoofdbestuur", Amsterdam, 30 January 1893 (GAA 552/2). The names of the first fruits of Pulau Tello are mentioned by Frickenschmidt in *Toeria Hoelo Batoe*, 4/11 (1932). They were: Defaö (the chief of Bawö Norahili; father of Mandija), Saronatola, Dawa (a former Muslim), Mandija (who later became the first guru), Sombuyu Li (brother of Mandija), Tjadi (brother of Mandija), Sowuagere, Utia, Kamao, Safusi Uli, Mani and Falaete Ambö.

⁶³ Cf. EVB, 51/2 (1933), p. 36 (stichtingsdag). The BNKP does not celebrate this day.

⁶⁴ The meaning of this family name is "Dutch ear of wheat". While there is no indication that this family was of (mixed) Dutch origin, it is likely that they were descendents of former immigrants.

⁶⁵ Cf. annual report of Frickenschmidt to DLM, Pulau Tello, January 1909 (GAA 552/35).

⁶⁶ Her clan-name (*mado*) is often referred to as "Wanaoetoe" (i.e., W.F. Schröder, *De Zending op de Batoe-eilanden*, 1927, p. 45). This seems to be a wrong spelling, since such a name is unheard of in Ono Niha society.

⁶⁷ Cf. L. Horner, *Batoe-eilanden, ten westen van Sumatra gelegen*, 1840, pp. 368-370. At the time of Horner's visit in 1938, the *raja* of Koto Bulu'aro was not as powerful and rich as some other chiefs, e.g., the chiefs of Pulau Tello, Lorang and Sigata; cf. also W.L. Steinhart, *Niassche Teksten III-XXVI*, 1937, pp. 79-80.

⁶⁸ In December 1898, the son of the *raja* accompanied Frickenschmidt to the Bataklands, in order to see for himself what a Christianised indigenous people could be like. Cf. EVB, 19/3 (1901), p. 71.

⁶⁹ Nevertheless, the *raja* retained considerable moral authority inside the Ono Niha community. W.F. Schröder, "Schetsen uit Tello", in: EVB, 43/1 (1925), pp. 6-7.

⁷⁰ Cf. letter Frickenschmidt to DLM, Pulau Tello, 29 June 1915 (GAA 552/35).

⁷¹ His knowledge of the Bible was astounding. Cf. W.F. Schröder, *De Zending op de Batoe-eilanden*, 1927, pp. 109-110.

⁷² Willem Frederik Schröder (25 November 1889 Amsterdam – 14 June 1969 Amsterdam).

⁷³ Willem Leonard Steinhart (29 July 1898 Amsterdam – 9 June 1982 Utrecht).

⁷⁴ Steinhart first arrived on Pulau Tello on 5 June 1924, but left again two days later for Nias. Under the guidance of H. Rabeneck in Hilisimaetanö he studied the Niasan language until December 1924. Schröder and Steinhart both originated from Amsterdam, but they came from different ecclesiastical and educational backgrounds. Schröder was a member of the Restored Evangelical-Lutheran Church and the last student of the DLM in Barmen; Steinhart was from the Evangelical Lutheran Church and the first to be educated in the Dutch School of Mission of the Cooperating Mission Agencies in Oegstgeest.

⁷⁵ Using Niebuhr's vocabulary, Schröder's position could best be described as "Christ against culture", and Steinhart's approach as "Christ and culture in paradox". Cf. H.R. Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture*, 1951/2001, pp. 45-82, 149-189.

⁷⁶ Cf. EVB, 44/4 (1926), p. 66 ("huisbezoek de eenige methode om de menschen te bereiken").

⁷⁷ The Lutheran churches in the Netherlands never had a hierarchical, let alone an Episcopal, structure like many other Lutheran churches. The Church Councils show similarities to the Reformed tradition (i.e. elected elders and deacons, who work together with and not under the supervision of the ministers).

⁷⁸ In 1933, the Conference of Missionaries in Ombölatä used the "three-self" vision as the theological justification for resolving that an "independent" Niasan church be formed. The eventual results were, however, rather modest. Cf. "Protokoll Nias-Konferenz" 1933, p. 2 § 3 (RMG 2.782). The "three-self" formula (self-governing, self-supporting and self-extending) goes back to the Anglican Henry Venn (1724-1797) and the Congregationalist Rufus Anderson (1796-1880), cf. J. Verkuyl, *Contemporary Missiology*, 1978, pp. 184-187.

⁷⁹ The Synod Assembly met from Sunday, November 8, until Wednesday, November 11, 1936; cf. "Protokoll der 1. Synode, 9-11 November 1936" (RMG 2.804); *Toeria*, 23/12 (1936).

⁸⁰ An *owasa* is the highest-ranking traditional pig-feast, convened in order to enable the donor to ascend to the highest social position, i.e., that of a *balugu* in North Nias or that of a *balö si'ulu* (a leading chief) in South Nias.

⁸¹ There were, altogether, seven hundred choir singers, in addition to one hundred trombonists, all of whom had prepared themselves for this great event for more than three months. The guests of honour were the three surviving "first fruits" of Hilina'a, who had been baptised in 1874. Cf. *BRM*, 1937, pp. 208-211. Cf. *Toeria*, 23/12 (1936); cf. G. Menzel and H. Schekatz, "125 Jahre Evangelium auf der Insel Nias", in: *In die Welt für die Welt*, 27/3-4 (1991), pp. 11-16. The first-fruits were: N. Go'e, Ama Zilasi and Ina Gabonoa.

⁸² The agenda was prepared by the Nias Conference, cf. "Konferenzen Nias 1930-1936" (RMG 2.782).

⁸³ When the Niasan church was acknowledged by the government in March 1938, the provisional name was maintained, cf. "Besluit No. 138" dated 18 March 1938 (cf. RMG 2.804). On 14 December 1948, the church was registered as Banua Niha Keriso Protestan, abbreviated as BNKP ("Lembaran Negara No. 38 YO 14 Desember 1948 No. 1857/18/AK/48").

⁸⁴ Especially after the first baptisms of former adherents of the primal religion, there was an occasional and temporary commotion in areas with a stronger Islamic population. Cf. A. Lett, *Im Dienst des Evangeliums auf der Westküste von Nias*, vol. IV, 1901, pp. 3-6. In a single case, in North Nias, the expansion of Christianity was temporarily hampered by

the Islamic community, but there was no violence. Cf. *JBRMG*, 1914 (1915), p. 108.

⁸⁵ E.g., *Balugu Tödölala* of Ombölata. Concerning the "propaganda war", cf. *BRMG*, 1878, pp. 72-82.

⁸⁶ Bayaraja, Rafarafa, Simaluraja, etc. One of the Islamic centres on Pulau Tello was Sinuru, where an impressive mosque was built in 1925. An influential, moderate haji by the name of Tuada si Batua lived here. When asked where a Muslim should say his ritual prayers in a Christian village, he answered: "in the Christian house (i.e., church, U.H.), because they also believe in the God of the Muslims". Cf. *EVB*, 44/1 (1926), p. 4.

⁸⁷ Cf. G.R. Knight, "Adventisten", in: *RGG*⁴ I (1998), pp. 127-129. Ralph Waldo Munson began SDA activities in Padang on 1 January 1900, cf. Jan S. Arironang, *Berbagai Aliran di dalam dan di sekitar Gereja*, 1995, p. 288.

⁸⁸ Batua, son of Lege Zato, a prominent Christian on Pulau Tello, had joined the SDA in Padang. Cf. letter Frickenschmidt to DLM, Pulau Tello, 3 January 1913 (GAA 552/35).

⁸⁹ First activities of the SDA on Nias are recorded in 1932.

⁹⁰ Cf. *EVB*, 46/2 (1928), pp. 38-39; 46/3 (1928), p. 52. The chief protagonist of the SDA on the Batu Islands was Sitefano, an albino from North Nias. He launched his missionary activities from Siberanu, near Pulau Tello. In June 1927 he received support from a Western SDA missionary, called Judge. Even though, in order not to provoke the Dutch Lutheran missionaries, the SDA missionaries claimed to work only among the Muslim population, in fact their propaganda was aimed primarily at Protestants who resented paying the annual church contribution.

⁹¹ Cf. *EVB*, 47/2 (1929), p. 38. There were rumours that the *demang* had secretly supported this sect, since its activities ceased after he had been removed from office in 1928. Nathanael Ziliwu had to stand trial in Gunungsitoli on charges of corruption.

⁹² Cf. Ch. 4.8.3.

⁹³ Cf. *Toeria*, 22/2 (1935) p. 17; *BRM*, 1937, p. 13.

⁹⁴ Quotation in N. Tarling, *Southeast Asia: a modern history*, 2001, p. 374.

⁹⁵ *Ibid*, pp. 373-375; cf. R. Cribb, *Historical Dictionary of Indonesia*, 1992, pp. 304, 347. The Red Unions were affiliated with the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) founded in 1920. Initially, they worked under the cover of Islam, but they were expelled by the Islamic Union (*Sarekat Islam*) in October 1921. Larger rebellions, instigated by the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI), followed in November 1926 in Banten and in January 1927 in Minangkabau.

⁹⁶ Cf. *EVB*, 45/2 (1927), pp. 59-61.

⁹⁷ Cf. *EVB*, 46/1 (1928), p. 3. Schröder had left Pulau Tello on Friday, 21 May 1926, which was about the beginning of the rebellion on Pulau Pini (Fene), cf. *EVB*, 51/1 (1933), p. 8.

⁹⁸ Cf. *EVB*, 46/1 (1928), pp. 4-5.

⁹⁹ Two of them, Fae'ö Gamuata and Wania, had been mishandled and were in serious condition, both physically and mentally. Cf. *EVB*, 46/1 (1928), pp. 4-5.

¹⁰⁰ Cf. letter A. Momeyer to the Board of the RMG, Gunungsitoli, 4 June 1926 (RMGG 2.787). Initially, twenty soldiers from Padang were deployed and then twenty more followed from Nias.

¹⁰¹ Cf. *EVB*, 46/1 (1928), p. 5.

¹⁰² Cf. *EVB*, 46/1 (1928), p. 5. Cf. letter Steinhart to Board DLM, Pulau Tello, 27 January 1927 (including annual report for 1926), GAA 552/39. Many of these opportunists later apostatised again, but a considerable number became loyal to the church.

¹⁰³ Cf. *EVB*, 46/2 (1928), p. 34.

¹⁰⁴ Also called *sekola wa'awösa* (community school), cf. W. Gulö, *Benih vang Tumbuh XIII*, 1983, pp. 19-20; A.

Schneider, *Turia*, 1965, pp. 52-54; H. Kayser, *Aspekte des sozio-kulturellen Wandels auf Nias*, 1976, pp. 92-93.

¹⁰⁵ Cf. W. Gulö, *Benih vang Tumbuh XIII*, 1983, p. 20 (cf. n. 23); Lothar Schreiner calls it "a kind of Krislam" (a mixture of Christianity and Islam). In 1960, the Indonesian government prohibited the depiction of the crescent together with the cross; cf. L. Schreiner, "Besuch auf Nias", in: *BRM*, 110/1 (1960), p. 7.

¹⁰⁶ Cf. W. Müller, "Stationsberichte" 1937-1938 (RMG 2.772). Cf. G.O. Reitz, "Report on Nias", 1957, p. 5. Toma Lömbu was born in 1878 in Tuhemu'asi. Cf. "Absplitterungen von der BNKP", in: "Die Selbständigkeitsbewegung im Sogae'adoegebiet, Nias, Mai 1937" (RMG 2.815); *BRM*, 1932, pp. 286-293; cf. A. Schneider, *Sekola wa'awösa*, 1941, pp. 303-311.

¹⁰⁷ Cf. *JBRM*, 1932 (1933), p. 40. Cf. "Die Selbständigkeitsbewegung im Sogae'adoegebiet, Nias, Mai 1937", p. 2 (RMG 2.815). Some pupils of Ama Wohakhi called themselves "Disciples of the School of Jehovah".

¹⁰⁷ Cf. *BRM*, 1932, pp. 289-293.

¹⁰⁸ Cf. *BRM*, 1939, pp. 72-73.

¹⁰⁹ Cf. A. Schneider, *Sekola wa'awösa*, 1941, p. 307.

¹¹⁰ Cf. *BRM*, 1934, p. 219; cf. U. Rottschäfer, *Heinrich Rabeneck*, 1989, p. 88.

¹¹¹ Cf. "Die Selbständigkeitsbewegung im Sogae'adoegebiet, Nias, Mai 1937", p. 2 (RMG 2.815).

¹¹² Cf. W. Müller, "Stationsberichte" 1937-1938, Sogae'adu (RMG 2.772).

¹¹³ Walter Freytag valued the fa'awösa principally as "an authentic approach of genuine spiritual experience", but since it caused divisions and strife among the Christians and was not bound solely to the Word of God, it had become "worse than paganism", W. Freytag, *Randbemerkungen*, 1941, p. 320.

¹¹⁴ Cf. *BRM*, 1940, p. 158 and p. 200; *BRM*, 1941, pp. 3-4. Later they were transferred to Koetatjane, North Sumatra.

¹¹⁵ In a letter smuggled out of the camp, the missionaries transferred the leadership to *Pandita* Atöföna Harefa (cf. F. Zebua, *Kota Gunungsitoli*, 1996, p. 103). He was then elected *ephorus* by the Synod Assembly.

¹¹⁶ Cf. A. Schneider, *Turia*, 1965, p. 64.

¹¹⁷ "Trauer-Synode", cf. A. Schneider, "ER segne unseren Eingang mit dem Evangelio", in: *In die Welt für die Welt*, 1/8-9 (1965), pp. 158.

¹¹⁸ The "Emergency Mission Board" (*Zendingsnoodbestuur*) was formed shortly after 14 May 1940 to assist the Mission Consul, Maarten de Niet; cf. *Verslag van het Zendingsconsulaat*, 1946, pp. 6-7. Cf. G. Menzel, *Die Rheinische Mission*, 1978, pp. 349-353.

¹¹⁹ Cf. A. Steinhart, *1889-1989. 100 jaar Kerk op de Batu-eilanden*, 1989, pp. 5, 11.

¹²⁰ The Vice-President Philemon Laowö, the Secretary-Treasurer Janani Hondrö, plus five Commissioners: *Sinenge* Hasameföna Wanaitu from Sigata, *Sinenge* Nibadji Zamili from Lorang, *Sinenge* Amaodula from Marit, and two elders, Martin La'ia and Salomon Laowö, both from Pulau Tello; it is possible, that the elders Nifae'ö Sarumaha and Siwariföna Garamba acted as substitutes for the above-mentioned Martin La'ia and Salomon Laowö (cf. G.O. Reitz, "A Report of the Church in the Batu Islands", 1959, p. 5).

¹²¹ Minister-in-Charge Kana Wa'ambö, Assistant-*Pandita* Sokobamböwö Nehe and Assistant-*Pandita* Janani Hondrö, plus twelve *guru* or *sinenge*: Sana Zörömi (Bawönorahili, Pulau Tello), Aseri Maduwu (Sigese, Sigata), Hasanisumba (Bötua), Benyamin Sarumaha (Hayo), Niwiu Bahuku (Fono), Paramaina Bu'ulölö (Balögi'a), Da'u Ladjira (Lumbui, Tanah Bala); Rubeni (Eho, Tanah Bala), Pile Maduwu (Hiligebo, Tanah Masa), Ondröita La'ia (Hiligebo, Tanah Masa), Ama Udula (Mari) and Nibadji Zamili (Luahanidanö, Lorang); cf. G.O. Reitz, "A report of the Church in the Batu Islands", 1959, p. 5.

¹²² Kajoe Afore Hondrö had been a member of the Church Council and the Electoral Commission for electing elders on the other islands since 1934, cf. *EVB*, 53/2 (1935), p. 39. When W.F. Schröder had to move to Gunungsitoli in 1940, Hondrö, Fae'ö Gamuata, and Kana Wa'ambö were entrusted with the leadership of the Batunese Church (cf. A. Steinhart, *1889-1989. 100 jaar Kerk op de Batu-eilanden*, 1989, pp. 44-47).

¹²³ Cf. G.O. Reitz, "A report of the Church in the Batu Islands", 1959.

¹²⁴ These reasons were explicitly mentioned by *Ephorus* Mendröfa in a meeting with the RMG, cf. "Protokoll Indonesien Kommission", Wuppertal, 28 April 1961, p. 2 (RMG 514).

¹²⁵ Cf. "Notulen Pengurus BNKP", Gunungsitoli, 21 September 1959 and 30 September 1959: "Penggabungan B.K.P. Pulau Tello menjadi satu Ressort istimewa pada B.N.K.P. Nias harus dirembak (sic) bersama sjarat²nja kalau datang utusan dari B.K.P." (RMG 3.406).

¹²⁶ Cf. A. Steinhart, *1889-1989. 100 jaar Kerk op de Batu-eilanden*, 1989, pp. 5, 12. Though the report of the Synod does not explicitly mention the merger, it is put on the agenda for 8.³⁰-10.⁰⁰ on 3 June 1960 (cf. "Tertip Atjara Rapat Synode ke 25 di Ombölata", RMG 2.804). W. Gulö, *Benih yang Tumbuh XIII*, 1983, p. 24, incorrectly places the merger in 1961. *Ephorus* S. Mendröfa explicitly mentions the merger in 1960, cf. "Protokoll Indonesien Kommission", Wuppertal, 28 April 1961, p. 2 (RMG 514); cf. *BRM*, 111/6 (1961) p. 116.

¹²⁷ Heering worked on Nias and the Batu Islands from Mai 1963 until September 1973.

¹²⁸ During his time on Pulau Tello, the Rhenish Church accepted a sponsorship for the Batu Islands, cf. "Protokoll der Mitarbeiterkonferenz der Rheinischen Mission", Gunungsitoli, 3 October 1963 (RMG 514); cf. Paulgerhard Lohmann, "Neuanfang auf den Batu-Inseln", in: *In die Welt für die Welt*, 1/4 (1965), pp. 68-71. When, in 1966, the thirty-first synod of the BNKP was held on Pulau Tello, this was an indication that the merger of the Batunese church into the BNKP had also taken place emotionally.

¹²⁹ For the correspondence between RM and BNKP as of 1950, cf. RMG 2.805. In 1951, Mr. and Ms. Thomsen, both physicians, returned to Nias, followed in the next year by two theologians and two deaconesses. In the early 1960s, about sixteen Protestant missionaries worked in the BNKP.

