

CHAPTER TWELVE

KALIMANTAN OR INDONESIAN BORNEO

Borneo is, after New Guinea, the largest island of the Indo-Malayan archipelago and together with the somewhat larger Greenland these are the largest islands of the world. Kalimantan, the Indonesian section of the island of Borneo, covers two thirds of this giant territory. It is five times the size of Java, but in 2003 Java counted 130 million inhabitants while Kalimantan only had 11 million. Therefore it was for a long time considered to be under-populated. That was the reason why the Soeharto government, between 1967 and 1998, intensified earlier programmes of transmigration, resettling poor farmers from Java, Bali and Madura on small pieces of land. In combination with the large-scale deforestation, for the export of tropical wood and for the new rubber and oil-palm plantations, this programme has caused a tremendous change in the landscape of the island that is much less fertile than its smaller southern neighbour, Java.

The native population of Kalimantan is divided into Malay people and people of many tribes, commonly summarised under the name of Dayak. This is also a religious division. Muslim influence arrived in the major harbours from the fifteenth century and extended upstream along the large rivers. Accepting Islam was identical with the turn towards Malay language and culture and this is also the common expression for accepting Islam (*masuk Malayu* or 'entering Malayness'). The most important sultanates were from the Northeast to the South and then to the Northwest:

1. Kutai, the more traditional old town, with a weak Sultan residing in Tenggarong, some 30 km upriver from Samarinda. This sultan was, about 1900, the richest man of Kalimantan, due to his revenues from coal and oil, found in southern Balikpapan. After the Catholics had founded a mission post in Laham in 1907 he protested for some time, but he ceded the whole Upper Mahakam territory to the Dutch for NGL 12,990 extra income per year 'for the Sultan and the Rulers of his Realm.' Samarinda, the sea harbour on the river Mahakam and the more southern town of Balikpapan were basically European-Chinese settlements in this region. The museum in Tenggarong still bears the name of King Mulawarman, the Hindu ruler who is mentioned in a Kutei inscription, the oldest written document of Indonesia and probably dating about 400 CE.

2. The Sultanate of Banjarmasin was from about 1500 until its abolition in 1860 the most important religious and cultural centre in Kalimantan. It fostered a combination of Javanese and Malay traditions, including the shadow plays of the wayang. The so-called Banjarmasin War, basically an internal quarrel for succession within the sultan's dynasty, had started in 1859 with the murder of

two Protestant German missionaries. Mission activity was soon resumed in the upriver area, but the coastal region of Banjarmasin was labelled as 'fanatic Muslim' and until the 1930s no mission work in the Malay region was allowed.

3. The Pontianak sultanate was ruled by a family of Arab descent, with the charisma of the *sayyid*, descendants of the prophet. The al-Gadri dynasty that had ruled the region of the mighty Kapuas River since 1770 was quite pragmatic in its relations with the Dutch who more and more dominated the political life of the region. Pontianak is the city with the highest average Chinese ethnic population of Indonesia: about 30% in 2000.

4. The Sultanate of Sambas was outspokenly Islamic, but with mystical connections. Like the Pontianak rulers they claimed to be offspring of the prophet Muhammad and used the title of *sharif* to indicate this. They were in the nineteenth century active promoters of the Qadiriyyah brotherhood, but at the same time they were willing to cooperate with the colonial power. During the Japanese occupation the drastic measures of the foreign power in West Kalimantan were not restricted to the common people. All members of the Sultanate's family were beheaded in 1944, except one grandson.

There were some centres of Islamic learning in the 'Malay-Islamic zone' of Kalimantan, especially in the Banjarmasin region. Some 12 km north of Banjarmasin the village of Dalam Pagar, the former residence of Shaikh Arsyad al-Banjari, the famous early nineteenth-century saint, had been turned into the most frequently visited shrine of Kalimantan. Dalam Pagar was also the most impressive centre of Islamic learning of Kalimantan.¹ Sambas produced in the nineteenth century a famous teacher of the Naqshbandi brotherhood, who moved to Mecca where he taught in the last decades of that century. He is known as Shaikh Ahmad Khatib Sambas. The town had renowned religious administrators, who also taught Islamic law and mysticism. In the 1930s Shaykh Muhammad Basyuni 'Imrān of Sambas wrote a question to the Arab-Egyptian journal *al Manār*, "Why are the Muslims backward, and why are other nations so advanced?" This became the start of the well-known book by the Lebanese poet, journalist and polemicist Shakib Arslan, published in Arabic in 1351 H or 1932 CE that was published later in English translation as *Our Decline and its Causes*. Both the question and the answer may give some idea of the style of Malay Islam at the eve of independence.

Protestant and Catholic missionaries very seldom addressed the Malay Muslims of the coastal regions in relation to their religion. It was commonly taken for granted that it was impossible to hope for conversions and there are very rare cases of disputes or debates on religion. There was a continuing complaint among missionaries about the favoured position of Malay people. Also in West Kalimantan, where there were many non-Malay people especially in the middle and upper Kapuas region, there were no Dayak government

¹ Steenbrink 1984:91–100.

officials, no nurses, and no teachers outside the mission stations until 1947. Extending far upriver there were lower Malay rulers, dependent upon the Sultans of Pontianak and Sambas, who ruled from the trading stations along the river. They could, without protest, demand forced and unpaid labour from the Dayak, use their land for rubber plantations and urge them to embrace Islam. In the missionary circles the Dayak were considered as people without defence who could easily be exploited by the Malay.²

Comparative statistics of Muslims and Christians in Kalimantan³

	East Kal.	South Kal.	Central Kal.	West Kal.	Total
Muslims 1971	500,726 68.44%	1,635,146 96.24%	383,793 54.68%	862,723 42.7%	3,382,388 (out of 5,152,571) 65.65%
Muslims 2000	2,077,428 85.02%	2,888,001 97.05%	1,335,290 74.14%	2,151,056 57.62%	8,451,775 (out of 10,953,004) 77.16%
Christians 1971	124,825 17.06%	22,335 0.26%	114,523 16.32%	361,928 17.92%	623,611 12.10%
Christians 2000	338,015 13.83%	43,649 1.47%	311,924 17.32%	1,269,553 34.01%	1,963,141 17.92%

These statistics show the enormous differences between regions. While South Kalimantan is one of the most homogeneous Muslim provinces in Indonesia (more or less equalling provinces like West Sumatra or Southeast Sulawesi), Central and West Kalimantan show many more Christians. The overall picture, however, would become more visible if we would look at Kalimantan as a circle with the outer segments (the more densely populated coastal regions) as the Muslim dominated part, while the inner circles, the less densely populated inner regions, upriver and more mountainous, show a much stronger Christian presence. However, even in these regions the Muslims dominated the commercial settlements and small towns since the early twentieth century, and therefore there are no dominant Christian districts or regions in Kalimantan, as were created in the twentieth century in Flores, Timor, Sulawesi and Sumatra.

There were many Chinese migrants to Kalimantan, especially to the Western districts. The Chinese came from the mid-eighteenth century for work in the gold mining area north of Pontianak. They formed *kongsis* to share their work

² Examples in Van Hulten 1983-I:125-135.

³ After Suryadinata et alii 2003:108-138.

and profits. Through combination of larger *kongsis* they could live for a long period completely independent from the sultans' authority. Also under Dutch colonial rule (after 1819) they could live under Chinese officers, who were little more than tax collectors. After the gold sites were exhausted in the first half of the nineteenth century, there were numerous small wars between the *kongsis* until they were disbanded. In the twentieth century a new wave of Chinese migration started, concentrating on rubber plantations and trade. In 2000 West Kalimantan was, after Bangka-Belitung (11.54% ethnic Chinese), the province with the highest percentage of ethnic Chinese: 9.46%. This is also shown in the religious statistics for West Kalimantan: 6.41% Buddhists in 2000 (239,408), while the figures for the rest of Kalimantan were all below 1% in that year (0.13% in Central Kalimantan).⁴ In the 1971 government statistics there were only 3,811 Buddhists counted in West Kalimantan, but these were balanced by the high figure for Confucians in that year: 132,974 or 6.58%. In the 2000 census Confucianism could no longer be registered as religion. Therefore we should consider the high figure for Confucianism in 1971 and for Buddhism in 2000 as the indication for those ethnic Chinese who had not opted for Christianity or (in much smaller numbers) for Islam.

In the 2000 census the figures for Hinduism were generally very low in Kalimantan: West Kalimantan 0.21%, East Kalimantan 0.27% and South Kalimantan 0.46, but they reached 7.87% in Central Kalimantan (against a meagre 0.87% in 1971).⁵ This relatively high figure for Hinduism in Central Kalimantan can be explained only in very small part as a sign of the migration of Balinese farmers to this province. Rather, it must be seen as the continuation or even revival of traditional Dayak religion. After the island of Bali (with 87.44% Hindus) Central Kalimantan is by far the region with the highest percentage of Hindus, according to the official register of affiliations, followed by Central Sulawesi (3.84%), and Southeast Sulawesi (2.21%), and West Nusa Tenggara (the Balinese of Lombok: 2.66%). This is another unique feature of religious development in Kalimantan. Traditional religion could survive longer, was stronger and more persistent than anywhere else in the archipelago. Why? Was it a stronger sense of traditional religious identity that prevented the quite common schedule of a race between Islam and Christianity, and traditional communities opting for one of the two only? Was there a growing Dayak resistance against Islam and Malay identity, while Christianity could not give a satisfying answer to the new needs of the Dayak population? Was it a matter of some powerful and charismatic individual persons who created a viable alternative? The introduction to this section of the history of

⁴ Suryadinata 2003:126.

⁵ Suryadinata 2003:122.

Christianity is not the place to go deeply into these questions. We only want to stress that the creation of Kaharingan as a religious identity of its own (albeit under Indonesian law as a sect or special tradition within the global religion of Hinduism) is a quite exceptional development in Indonesian religious life during the last five decades. It began in late 1956 when Ngaju Dayaks started a rebellion against the Muslim and Banjarese domination of the Province of South Kalimantan within the new Indonesian Republic. M. Mahar and Tjilik Riwut led this rebellion that took the name of *Gerakan Mandau Talawang Pancasila* or “Movement of the Cutlass and Shield Pro Pancasila.” The latter was baptised a Protestant in the 1920s, turned Catholic in relation to his marriage in Central Java in the 1940s. In the 1950s he became the ‘Prophet of Kaharingan.’ The rebellion succeeded in the establishment of a separate province of Central Kalimantan that had been formally declared already in May 1957. Riwut, a major in the Indonesian army who had had a quite important role in the fight against the Dutch for Central Kalimantan in 1946⁶ became the first governor of the new province and he immediately re-allocated the money that had been donated by the central Ministry of Religion for the building of a mosque in the new capital, Palangkaraya. Instead of building a grand mosque, he took the initiative of constructing a modest mosque, a Protestant church and a shrine for the traditional religion.

Dayak people had no specific word for religion, let alone for Dayak religion as distinct from other religions, but in the mid-1940s already a new term for Dayak religiosity had come into use as an alternative for derogatory words like paganism or heathendom. This was *Kaharingan* meaning life in the double connotation of the source of (the water of) life and the Supreme Deity who with his wife had created the world. In various forms this name Kaharingan became known among different tribes from South Kalimantan up to North Borneo (Sabah). In 1980 Kaharingan became officially recognised as a branch of Hinduism and it had a modest but quite solid development especially in Central Kalimantan.

In 1955 one Koik produced a booklet with texts and rituals that he proudly gave the title *Bibel Kaharingan*. A Dayak political party distributed the booklet.⁷ In the early 1970s a *Majelis Alim Ulama Kaharingan Indonesia* (MAUKI, Council of Religious Teachers of Indonesian Kaharingan) was established, renamed *Majelis Besar Agama Hindu Kaharingan* or MBAHK, Supreme Council of Hindu Kaharingan Religion, after the official recognition of 1980. In the ceremony that was held at the major shrine, the Balai Kaharingan of Palangkaraya, on 30 March 1980, to highlight this recognition,

⁶ Van Dijk 1981:220.

⁷ Miles 1976:127.

the Director General for Hindu Affairs of the Ministry of Religion, Ida Bagus Oka Puniatmadja referred to the discovery of ancient Hindu relics in Kutei and concluded that it was entirely possible that the adherents of Kaharingan were in fact the oldest followers of Hinduism in the archipelago.⁸ In the 1970s MAUKI published a number of texts on the creation myth, prayer books, a guideline for performing marriage and one for burials, besides some other topics. Many of these texts were collected in 1973 in the *Buku Ajar Agama Kaharingan* (Book of Instruction in the Kaharingan Religion) that was a major step towards institutionalisation of the Kaharingan religion. In 1995 it was revised by MBAHK as *Talata Basarah*, after the weekly public ceremony of Basarah that was instituted in 1981 on Thursday evening, undoubtedly after the example of weekly common prayers by Muslims on Friday and by Christians on Sunday.⁹ One of the major activities of the MBAHK is the design and organisation of the great rituals for the final burial of people. Because of the great costs and the many people involved, sometimes up to 2,000 dead receive their final ritual or *tiwah* in one extended ceremony. People from several Dayak tribes of South and Central Kalimantan can be served in these ceremonies that show in this way a unified 'Dayak religion.' As in similar great funeral ceremonies in the Toraja and Batak regions, there is also active participation at a *tiwah*-ceremony by Christian and some Muslim members of the community. This already shows that "most of those who call themselves Christians have dual religious adherence."¹⁰ As is shown by Douglas Miles, Islamic principles are more strict and exclusive than Christian ones and therefore "Islam and Kaharingan are fundamentally irreconcilable as social ideologies."¹¹ This has led to a great number of people practising double or even multiple loyalties. The tension and its solution are probably best formulated in a quotation from an elder Dayak, "Religion or *agama* honours God; our traditional beliefs or *kepercayaan* honour our ancestors."¹²

It was against this background that the Capuchin Friar Donatus Dunselman (born 1901 and in the Kalimantan mission since 1933) reflected upon the encounter between Dayak people and Western Christianity. Dunselman was in a Japanese prison between mid-1942 and late August 1945. Dunselman was a keen observer of the language and culture of the Mualang Dayak of Sejiram and the Middle Kapuas region. On the religious practice of these people he stated that Dayak religion was not a static and 'pure' practice, but a living and often quite syncretistic view of life:

⁸ Schiller 1997:119.

⁹ Schiller 1997:122–123.

¹⁰ Miles 1976:98.

¹¹ Miles 1976:99.

¹² In Davidson 2003:6.

Some Dayak Christian families still put their daily food on copper plates that before were used for pagan sacrifices. They use the configuration that was used by pagan priests. We are requested to say a *benedictio mensae*, a table blessing over this food as a substitute for the pagan prayer. In the beginning of my work in Kalimantan, I often obeyed these requests, especially with people who had started catechism classes. Sometimes I took the red, Chinese joss sticks out of the plates: the Dayak is fond of syncretism.¹³

Besides the great funeral ceremonies, Kaharingan continues a set of taboos, rules, small rituals at home, known under the common name of *hadat* or tradition, customs. For some of these the ritual specialists, the *basir*, are needed, because they are familiar with the ritual language and the ceremonies.

This is the cultural, ethnic and religious environment that has set the conditions for the arrival of Christianity since the nineteenth century: starting not from the coastal regions, as was the case with Islam, but from the upriver towns of the inland territories of this vast island. Christianity was part of a process of change that had started already several centuries before, with the arrival of Muslims in the coastal settlements. Initially, Christianity came also in confrontation with traditional society and religion, but gradually moved towards a more harmonious relationship with Dayak culture and, as we will see below, sometimes functioning even as a firm consolidator of elements of traditional Dayak culture.

German missionaries starting from Banjarmasin in the 1830s

Apart from the Catholic priest Antonio Ventimiglia who will be mentioned below, there was no Christian presence in southern Kalimantan until the 1830s, when the first missionaries of the Rhenish Mission arrived. The *Rheinische Missionsgesellschaft* (RMG) was established in Barmen in 1828. Their mission magazine published in 1830 a lively description by Walter Henry Medhurst who visited West Kalimantan and Banjarmasin in 1829. The mission leadership received further information from a retired Dutch colonial official in the Rhine region and in 1834 sent two German missionaries to the Dutch colony. The colonial administration was not really happy with the foreign missionaries and only in 1836 were they given permission to start their work in Banjarmasin. Between 1834 and 1859 the RMG could send 20 missionaries to the region but many of them died within a few years and there were, until the beginning of the Hidayat Rebellion, never more than 7 missionaries working in the region. Their solid organiser was J.H. Barnstein who from 1836 until

¹³ "In het begin heb ik dit dikwijls gedaan, vooral bij jonge catechumenen, al heb ik ook eens de rode, Chinese wierookstokjes eruit getrokken; de Dajak is nl. tot syncretisme geneigd." Dunselman 1949:101.

his death in 1863 served the small European congregation of Banjarmasin, managed the sending of food and other necessities to the inland stations and also printed the pamphlets that were the major means of propagation of the Christian faith.

The RMG missionaries realised that they could not secure a harvest in Muslim dominated Banjarmasin but had to go as far as possible inland, “to win the race with Islam.”¹⁴ In 1838 the first mission post was built in Bethabara, 40 km inland along the Kapuas. Later posts were started even further inland. In the early 1850s a post in Maanyan, 300 km inland along the other major river, the Barito, could be opened.

There were two gifted linguists among the early German missionaries. Johann Friedrich Becker was among the first missionaries arriving in Kalimantan in 1836. He translated the first selection from the Gospels and Acts into Ngaju Dayak. After 1843 he was assisted by August Hardeland who had learned some Greek in Germany. In 1846 they were able to publish a full translation of the New Testament (printed in Cape Town, South Africa). Becker died in 1849 and Hardeland continued the linguistic work. In 1855 he finished the translation of the Old Testament, a work that still was in use in the Evangelical Church of Kalimantan (GKE, *Gereja Kalimantan Evangelis*) until the end of the twentieth century. Only in 1999 were a new translation of the New Testament, and in 2004 of the Old Testament, published. Hardeman also wrote a grammar of Ngaju Dayak. He used colloquial speech and not the complicated ceremonial language used during the rituals of traditional Dayak religion. In line with the spirit of the time he had little respect for that aspect of Dayak society.¹⁵

The early missionaries had one peculiar method: buying slaves who thereby gained their freedom. In the period 1836–1859 not less than 1,100 were bought. This method was also applied in other regions but never on such a large scale. The missionaries brought considerable sums of money for this purpose from Germany. However, there was no direct or explicit compulsion to accept Christianity. In 1859 the number of baptised converts was only 261.

In 1859 the Banjarmasin War or Hidayat Rebellion took place. This was the attempt of Prince Hidayat to become the successor to the throne of the sultanate instead of his half-brother Tamjidullah, the candidate of the colonial administration. As part of the violence that accompanied this trouble several colonial buildings, a coal-mining establishment and also several mission posts were attacked. Four missionaries and several members of their families were killed. A number of Christians had to renounce their new faith, because they

¹⁴ Müller-Krüger 1968:177.

¹⁵ Swellengrebel 1974:97–111.

were identified with the foreign power. Only the chief of the Maanyan tribe defended the missionaries in his region. But they left the area also and the initial work was considered to be lost. The Dutch abolished the sultanate and the region was placed under direct military control.

*The reactivation of the Rhenish Mission in 1866 from South Kalimantan.
The GKE, Gereja Kalimantan Evangelis since 1935*

Only in 1866 could missionaries return to South Kalimantan. Initially, they were not allowed to stay in isolated mission posts, far inland. They had to remain close to the military barracks. The missionaries of the RMG in Kalimantan worked along the same method and with similar personal and financial resources as their RMG colleagues in Batakland. But the results were quite different. Notwithstanding a large network of mission stations and schools, in 1911 the number of baptised had risen to 3,000 and in 1935 only 10,000 had accepted Protestant Christianity in South Kalimantan against 100,000 Batak Christians in 1911. In that same period the influence of Islam had grown probably much faster than that of Christianity. As a reason for the rather meagre results in this region, the first Dayak Christian historian, Fridolin Ukur, has suggested the very weak social structure of the Dayak people. There was no central power, not geographically and not along tribal lines. No king or tribal chief could be converted who could have taken the lead in a mass conversion. Dayak tradition was strongly supported by chiefs of clans, heads of family and the religious ritual specialists, the *balian*. Their influence continued in Dayak society. Although their services were rather expensive (and therefore Christianity was, like Islam, cheaper than traditional religion), converts could no longer continue their traditional religious duties and therefore were expelled from their families or at least at major ceremonies considered as outcasts. Muslims therefore built new villages, but Christians mostly tried to seek compromises. Although Christianity was seen to be in line with modernity and also supported by the hygienic measures of the colonial government, such as the ban on great longhouses for extended families, growth remained very modest. Some scholars blame the exclusive attitude of Christian ministers with regard to local customs for this meagre result, stating that Islam showed a much more lenient attitude.¹⁶ Others, however, claim that the firm position of Islam against alcohol and pork in fact has given it more strength in winning souls. Douglas Miles saw a dual religious adherence on the part of

¹⁶ Van den End 1989:168.

many Christians, few of whom ceased to participate in pagan rites, “Islamic principles... obstruct a convert’s regression to traditional custom.”¹⁷

After World War I, the RMG could no longer guarantee support for mission work in the region and between 1921 and 1926 the like-minded Basel Mission took over the responsibility for their activities. They led the small community to an independent church in 1935. It was spread over a wide territory: along a coastline of some 1,300 km (from Banjarmasin to Kota Waringin) and more than 600 km inland. This was an area with very difficult connections where most posts could be reached only by canoe or by walking. In 1902 a modest seminary for native preachers was opened in Kuala Kapuas, since 1926 developed as a seminary in Banjarmasin. In 1935 the first five ministers were ordained in the *Gereja Dajak Evangelis* as it was called until 1950, when the tribal designation was dropped for a territorial indication, *Gereja Kalimantan Evangelis* or Evangelical Church of Kalimantan. Nine more followed these first native ministers in 1937. Until 1942 an expatriate missionary was the leader of the synod, but already during the Japanese period leadership became fully Dayak.

The GKE that grew to some 260,000 members in 2005 became after 1945 more and more a part of Indonesian Protestantism. In 1950 already a Javanese and a Batak became members of its synod and because Kalimantan has more and more become an area of migration, many other ethnic groups have filled its membership. Although the GKE is numerically weak in South Kalimantan, Banjarmasin remained the seat of the synod and the theological school. Medical work shrunk drastically after independence and also in the field of education the great efforts of the colonial period could not be continued in the same grand style. The GKE, however, became more active in the field of agricultural development through pilot projects, training courses and credit unions.

In Pontianak members who had migrated from southern Kalimantan founded the GKE in 1963, lead by E.D. Tundang, head of the Government Plantation Office of West Kalimantan. He established a branch office of the GKE Synod for that region. Among the first four evangelists we find a Batak, J.P. Hasibuan who lead the GKE members in Singkawang and a Javanese Wibisono, who was the central figure for GKE in Bagok. This showed the development of this Dayak church towards an ethnically mixed Protestant church in Kalimantan. Although other national Protestant churches like the (Chinese) GKI and the GPIB (heir to the *Indische Kerk*) are also established in Kalimantan, finally the GKE became the major Protestant church in the whole of Kalimantan.

¹⁷ Douglas Miles 1976:98–99.

The most important congregations of the GKE are still those in the southern part of the island, in the new province of Central Kalimantan. In its new capital Palangkaraya the GKE established in 1985 its most prestigious institution, the *Universitas Kristen Palangkaraya*. In line with its mission for this region the first two faculties were for fishery and cattle breeding. A training course for teachers of religion was also included in this university, besides a faculty of social science and a faculty of science.

The Catholic beginning in West-Kalimantan, and a modest start in some eastern districts

In February 1688 the Italian Theatine priest Antonio Ventimiglia paid a short visit to Banjarmasin. He returned the following year in the company of a few colleagues. It is reported that he died in 1693 and that this was the end of the first missionary effort in Kalimantan. Not much is known of his activity. It has been speculated that he worked among Dayak who were still independent from the authority of the Muslim Sultan of Banjarmasin. During conflicts between the Dayak tribe and the Sultan, Ventimiglia could have been killed by order of the Sultan.¹⁸ Prefect Lambertus Prinsen mentioned in a report of 1825 that there was in Borneo (Kalimantan) a region “where pagans venerate the cross and images of the saints, a proof of the presence of Catholicism in former days.”¹⁹ In line with this tradition his successor Johannes Scholten suggested in 1844 that the Dayak population was ready to be evangelised, “because they keep traditions that they consider of supernatural origin.” This may have been the reason why in the 1847 concordat between the Dutch government and the Vatican the island of Borneo/Kalimantan was mentioned as a possible mission area “but Catholic missionaries will not settle along rivers where already other missionaries are established.”²⁰

These great hopes did not lead to a Catholic initiative prior to the last decade of the nineteenth century. The first Catholic priests who started work outside Java made contacts with Catholic Chinese in Bangka and from there also Catholic Chinese were visited in West Kalimantan. During a visit to Singkawang in 1865, the Jesuit J. de Vries walked through the Chinese quarter of the town and came in contact with several Catholics of Chinese descent, one even with a certificate qualifying him as a catechist.²¹ More Chinese Catholics,

¹⁸ Coomans in: Muskens 1974–IIIa:399. Wessels 1935:220 after the Dutch traveller Jacob Jansz de Roy.

¹⁹ Steenbrink 2003–I:236: “*In insula Borneo est regio ubi ab infidelibus cruces et imagines Sanctorum venerantur, signum quod olim religio Catholica ibidem extiterit.*”

²⁰ Steenbrink 2003–I:250 and 256–257.

²¹ Boomgaard e.a. 1997:78.

probably already baptised in China, Penang or Sarawak before migrating to this region, were met at later visits of priests. In 1876 a church building was consecrated in Singkawang, served by a salaried catechist. In 1885 Singkawang was selected as the place for a permanent post for a resident priest who from this place had to serve other places in West Kalimantan. On these pastoral journeys the priest went as far as Bangka and even Medan. In some years the priest resided in Singkawang for only two months, leaving the routine work to the Chinese catechist. From Singkawang also an inland mission to the Dayak of Sejiram commenced in 1890. For this inland mission a Manadonese teacher was hired who started a school in 1892. Unfortunately, the West Kalimantan mission was one of the many new endeavours that had to be closed in the later 1890s, due to the lack of mission personnel. In 1896 the permanent station of Singkawang was closed, followed in 1898 by the inland mission of Sejiram. The statistics for 1903 mention 191 Chinese Catholics in Singkawang and other parts of West Kalimantan. The 467 baptisms of the inland Dayak mission of the 1890s were already left out of the statistics by that time.²²

In 1905 the Catholic mission enterprise was resumed with the arrival of the Capuchin Friars as successors to the Jesuits, who were retreating from the outer islands in the period 1903–1918 and concentrated their work on the island of Java. In the first decade of their new mission, the Capuchins (re-) developed eight permanent mission posts in West Kalimantan. Four of these concentrated on the Chinese of the coastal region: Singkawang (1905), Pamangkat (1907), Sambas (1908), and Pontianak (1909, also the seat of the Apostolic Prefect, because the centre of the government was there). Four focused upon the far interior and the Dayak population, Sejiram (1906), Laham (1907: not upstream on the Kapuas but starting from Samarinda upstream on the Mahakam), Lanjak (1909, in 1913 removed to Benua Martinus) and Putussibau (1913). Some of these posts like Lanjak and Putussibau were more than 1,000 km upriver along the Kapuas. From these stations the mission ‘moved back’ towards regions closer to the coast like Sanggau (1928) and Sintang (1932). The major reason for this ‘moving backward strategy’ was the desire to start in a pure Dayak area, to establish a solid mission among this population in the race with Islam for the interior.

The only mixed station, where both Chinese and Dayak were served, was Nyarumkop (1916). This latter settlement, a Dayak enclave amidst a large region with many ethnic Chinese, not far from Singkawang, was developed as the major educational centre for the West Kalimantan mission. It was to become the training centre for teachers (who in the first decades were sought from Minahasa and Flores). In some mission documents even the grandiose

²² Steenbrink, 2003–I:59–62 and 461.

word *schoolstad* or 'educational town' was used for the complex of dormitories, schools and houses for teachers, clergy and other religious personnel like the sisters. Education in Nyarumkop concentrated on Malay instruction and until 1939 the highest type of school was the extended five-year primary school or *Standaardschool*, an extension of the basic three-year primary school that was the lowest type of education in Indonesia at the time. There were also some vocational courses, in 1939 for some 13 boys in agriculture and 42 in carpentry and machine repair, for 78 girls in the household and domestic economics. Further education for the girls was planned in order to have some relatively well educated Catholic girls who had spent some times in the disciplined boarding school of the sisters, and who were to become wives of teachers and heads of villages. In all, the number of pupils was very modest, like anything in the Dayak mission previous to the explosion of conversions in the late 1960s.

Although the majority of pupils were Dayak, there was a small minority of Chinese pupils in Nyarumkop as well. They were educated to become catechists among their community and/or teacher at the nine Chinese-language primary schools that were established since the late 1920s. For the Chinese population initially only Dutch-Chinese schools and a single English-Chinese school were established.

Catholic Schools for Chinese in West Kalimantan in 1939 (after Jaarboek 1940)

	Schools	Boys	Girls	Total
Dutch-Chinese Schools	7	791	621	1412
English-Chinese Schools	1	200	76	276
Chinese language primary schools	9	526	247	773

As in other places, Catholic strategy towards the Chinese population concentrated on schools, most often on Dutch-language primary schools of the highest level available for this kind of population. Besides, there was a Saint Anthony's Hospital in Pontianak, served by the Veghel Sisters since 1921. The result of this was that the mission personnel, until the late 1930s, was quite unevenly divided over the Chinese and Dayak missions. In 1939 113 sisters of the 133 worked in the four stations Pontianak, Singkawang, Sambas and Pemangkat, serving mostly Chinese and European people. Of the 42 religious brothers 19 worked in Pontianak, 13 in Singkawang and one in Sambas leaving only 9 for the more specific Dayak stations. In 1939 the capital Pontianak counted 1,058 Catholics, 210 of them Europeans and the rest mostly Chinese: 8 priests, 19 religious brothers and 42 sisters served them. With the exception of six sisters

these were all Dutch. This is just one example of the great number of foreign mission personnel working in the major cities for the European and Chinese population of the colony. In Dayak territory much more work was delegated to Florenese, Manadonese and a growing number of Dayak teachers.

The quick opening of so many mission posts by the Capuchins was not only related to the rivalry with Islam. The early start of a permanent post in Pamangkat (1907) and Sambas (1908) was also related to the fear that Methodist missionaries, already present in Pontianak since 1906, but without a permit to work as missionaries because of the earlier presence the Catholics, would start a mission in these places. Besides an American missionary in Pontianak, C.M. Worthington, teaching English at a private Chinese school, there was a Chinese medical doctor from Penang, U Chim Seng, who had sent some twelve salesmen with medicines and small missionary tracts to work in the region. Notwithstanding protests from the Catholics, the Methodists received formal permission in 1908 from the Governor General to continue their mission. However, it would not yet be successful. In 1909 Worthington went on leave to the USA and after his return was nominated for Batavia, while U Chim Seng returned to China for health reasons. This was the end of this short Methodist mission that claimed some 210 members in Pontianak, Singkawang and Sambas in 1909.²³

As with the Methodists also among the Catholics, work among the Chinese was for a large part done by Chinese teachers and catechists. Some of the few who are mentioned in the mission documents that usually pay more attention to the Western missionaries deserve a place here. First is the *singseng* or catechist A. Kang in Singkawang who bridged the period between the Jesuit presence (until 1896) and the arrival of the Capuchin Friars in 1905 and still for many years since then. In cooperation with the Dutch *controleur*, Kang became in the early 1900s the coordinator of an effort by the Chinese of Singkawang to establish an asylum for Chinese lepers some 3 km outside the town. Different from the Malay and Dayak lepers, the Chinese could not live amongst their families. In 1909 the asylum had 16 lepers, half of whom turned Catholic. In 1912 a group of 19 lepers from Pontianak was also sent to the Singkawang asylum. In 1917 the Dutch Sister Cajetana, a nurse, started work in the small asylum that gradually developed into a well-equipped hospital for (mostly Chinese) people of the region suffering from leprosy.²⁴

Another noted Chinese Catholic of West Kalimantan in this early period is Bong Sjoen Khin. He was born in 1902 in Montrado, some 30 km. from Singkawang. He went to the Chinese primary school, set up by the mission. Priests regularly visited the town of Montrado from Singkawang. In 1926

²³ Daulay 1996:140–143.

²⁴ Aster 1957:194–207.

he expressed his wish to become a priest, went to the Netherlands where he pursued further religious studies and returned in 1934 to the Indies as the Capuchin Friar Pacificus Bong. He worked as a parish priest in Singkawang, but remained a very modest man. Amidst the quite informal Capuchin Friars, known for their joyful life-style, he was described by a Dutch observer as,

A small, quiet man with a soft voice and quiet manners. In company his presence was barely noticed, because he does not say much and only gives his opinion when asked for it. But then he would give it in short, but precise wording, identifying the matter in a touching way. Someone who knows how to listen, surprising everybody by his balanced wisdom free from emotions.²⁵

During the Japanese occupation the new ruling elite claimed all Catholic buildings, with the exception of the hospitals. Father Bong moved to a private house outside Singkawang with some of the nine Chinese sisters who were already in the Pontianak Vicariate by that time. Notwithstanding his quiet life-style and efforts to remain as invisible as possible, he was taken prisoner because of a statement by a Dayak teacher/catechist who had talked about his wish that the interned Dutch missionaries would return. It was a blessing in disguise because in this way he escaped the bloody terror of late 1944 that caused the death of some 1,400 prominent people in West Kalimantan.²⁶ Pacificus Bong died 11 October 1965 in Singkawang.

It is very difficult to estimate the percentage of Kalimantan Chinese that accepted Catholicism in the period between 1945 and 2000. Chinese were never dominant among the Catholics (as they became in dioceses like Jakarta with 45% of the Catholics or in Bandung with 49.9%). They are small in number in the Kalimantan region where they are the most significant minority group in the diocese of Pontianak. But here also the number of Chinese faithful among the Catholics is even lower than the provincial statistics show for the Chinese population as a whole. What are the reasons for this low figure of Chinese converts to Catholicism in regions with such a high Chinese presence? Is Chinese cultural and even religious identity in these regions (West Kalimantan, Bangka, Belitung and Riau Islands) stronger than in the big cities? Is Chinese Catholicism more an urban than a rural phenomenon? Was there not enough support for Chinese identity among Catholics? This is suggested by Somers Heidhues:

The Catholic Church has strongly supported Indonesianisation since the 1960s and discouraged exclusively Chinese activities. Although some parishes are, by reason of their location, still largely Chinese, the church does not desire ethnic separation, and the liturgy is in Indonesian or a regional language.²⁷

²⁵ The judgement by Capuchin Friar Gentilis Aster 1957:162.

²⁶ Aster 1957:162–172.

²⁷ Somers Heidhues 1998:166.

In some places in West Kalimantan where there is a Chinese majority in parishes, as in Pontianak, Singkawang, Pemangkat and Sambas, the liturgy is sometimes celebrated in one of the Chinese dialects, Hakka being the most favoured. It is quite striking that the most prominent national Catholic weekly of Indonesia devoted an article to this practice and had as comment, "Chinese inculturation in Kalimantan should be a temporary affair." The Capuchin scholar Huub Boelaars quoted this opinion with the comment, "Should Chinese be more strictly Indonesian than the other Indonesians?"²⁸ This matter will be discussed more in detail in chapter nineteen. To support the analysis given above we quote below the last reliable figures from 1980. Especially the figure for Chinese Catholics totalling some 9,102 for the whole of West Kalimantan against more than 300,000 ethnic Chinese in this province in 1980, is very meagre: not much more than 3% of the ethnic Chinese had formally embraced Catholicism.

*Kalimantan Catholics according to ethnic origin*²⁹

	Banjarmasin	Ketapang	Pontianak	Samarinda	Sanggau (then Sekadau)	Sintang
Dayak	16,429 69.0%	20,020 93.2%	103,250 90.4%	28,709 73.6%	31,200 95.3%	36,531 96.7%
Chinese	2,929 12.3%	752 3.5%	7,747 6.8%	1,521 3.9%	524 1.6%	831 2.2%
Javanese	3,548 14.9%	236 1.1%	2,468 2.1%	3,667 9.4%		
Florenese	381 or 1.6%					
Other	523 2.2%	473 2.2%	800 0.7%	3,940 10.1%	1,015 3.1%	416 1.1%

As already mentioned above, the new missionary initiative of the Capuchin Friars of 1905 had reopened the inland station of Sejiram in 1906, some 600 km upstream from Pontianak on the Kapuas and by 1913 already three more inland stations had been founded at even greater distance. One negative criterion for establishing these inland posts was that no Malay and no Chinese should be present. Therefore quite remote places were selected. There was the quest for the 'real Dayak' not yet influenced by the mighty tradition of Malay Islam. Perhaps we should add some reservations to the easy use of this terminology. In his two-volume autobiography Capuchin Friar Herman-Jozef

²⁸ Boelaars 1991:347.

²⁹ Boelaars 1991:420-423.

van Hulten, who served as a missionary in West Kalimantan from 1938 until 1974, noted that there was a great difference between various Dayak tribes. The Iban who were seen as mostly Sarawak Dayak but aggressively seeking land also in Dutch and later Indonesian Kalimantan, are described by Van Hulten as really cosmopolitan travellers. After clearing the forest in the beginning of the dry season, they left agriculture to the women and many of the men sought some money and adventure by working on boats. "Many of them are well-travelled persons. Quite a few of them have been in Jakarta, some even in Singapore."³⁰ Some of them could rise to important functions in Indonesian society, although many of them remained illiterate and poor.

The first post in the middle Kapuas region, Sejiram, in fact served for a long time as a link to the other stations. The small town itself was a mixed Malay-Chinese settlement for trade and administration. A church and school-cum-dormitory was opened and in 1927 a modest hospital. To finance this undertaking a rubber plantation was started that counted some 80,000 trees in the best period, the 1920s.

As a second post, Lanjak amidst the great lakes north of the upper Kapuas was selected in 1909 but there proved to be too few people to start even a school. In 1913 this settlement was moved to Benua Ujung, meaning "the most remote place," later renamed Benua Martinus after Martin van Thiel, the generous Dutch entrepreneur who provided the funds for this mission. The immediate reason for the move to Benua Martinus was the presence of some 16 Sarawak Dayak who fled their country because of a murder committed by one of them. They visited the station of Lanjak in 1909 to see whether the priests who had recently arrived there were of the same kind of Christians they had known in Sarawak. This contact was encouraging enough to stimulate a removal to what was later called Benua Martinus. A school with a dormitory was opened, because in the immediate region there were not enough children to establish a school. This would, for a long time, remain one of the great problems of the inland Dayak mission: the sparsely populated areas that made the classical mission method of starting village schools impossible. The need to add dormitories to a school and to provide food and living for the pupils who came from different places, made the mission very expensive and somewhat ineffective. Nevertheless, a school-cum-dormitory was started in Benua Martinus in 1916. The section for girls failed, although the Franciscan Sisters (Veghel branch, later from Asten) did their best to do well for their pupils. Not only priests and catechists, but also the sisters thereupon decided that touring the countryside was more effective than collecting pupils in schools. In 1938 the station of Benua Martinus, including the various outposts where

³⁰ Van Hulten 1983–I:33.

catechists worked, could claim only 520 baptised Catholics. This would grow to 5,612 in 1996.³¹ In the late 1990s there was a slight majority of somewhat more than 50% Muslims in the middle and upper Kapuas diocese of Sintang, with only 20% Catholics, a smaller number of Protestants and still quite a few people undecided or more firmly devoted to traditional religion.

The same pattern of efforts to establish strong Dayak centres with quite poor results for the first decades is also seen in the station of Putussibau (the government administrative centre in Upper Kapuas) and nearby Bika, transformed into *Rumah Nazareth* by the Capuchin Friars, as well as in Laham, the mission post in Upper Mahakam that was established from Samarinda and therefore is now considered to be part of East Kalimantan.

For the expansion in the Middle Kapuas Basin, the Catholic mission had to overcome several difficulties. The important administrative centre of Sanggau was under the jurisdiction of the *Panembahan* of Sanggau, a Muslim, formally subjected to the Sultan of Pontianak. In 1922 he prohibited the erection of a school by the Catholic mission, but after pressure from the Dutch *controleur* he donated land for a mission compound that would include a church, school, dormitory and a hospital. He sold a prosperous plantation with 12,000 rubber trees to the mission. Bika or Rumah Nazareth was erected because Putussibau was in fact, as an administrative and trading post, a common place for Malay and Chinese people, while the mission wanted to seek its strength in the presence among a purely Dayak population.

As already mentioned above, the station of Laham was opened in 1908 after the Sultan of Kutai had sold his authority over the upriver areas of the Mahakam to the Dutch colonial government. Laham was situated outside the traditional trade posts, just some 30 km inland from the administrative post of Long Iram that was deemed not suited because this administrative post was only populated by Malay and Chinese traders. Long Iram was still some 75 km below the great falls in the river Mahakam that caused a greater barrier in communications. It was hoped that this would be a good starting point for further activities in the interior. However, there were many impediments that caused a delay in the progress of the Catholics here. First, in the 1930s the *Christian and Missionary Alliance* (CAMA) settled along the Kayan and Sesayap and later claimed this territory as theirs. Because of the difficult transport along the Mahakam, it was decided in the 1920s that the centre of the mission should be transferred from Laham to more downstream Tering, where a permanent post was opened in 1928, with boarding schools and a dispensary served by Franciscan Sisters of Asten.

³¹ *Jaarboek 1940*:161; *Buku Petunjuk Gereja Katolik Indonesia 1997*:287–289, where also the parishes that had started from Martinus were taken into consideration.

Only in 1936 were two permanent posts opened upstream of the cataracts, but the breakthrough for Catholicism came in this region in the Japanese period when two native prophetic movements prepared the way for a more vibrant change in the culture and religion of the Dayak in the Upper Mahakam region. The first is connected with the name of Bo'Jurai, a Pnihing Dayak from Long Cihang. Close to this village were caves that were believed to be the dwellings of ancestral spirits. Bo'Jurai received visions that the spirits had left the region and had lost their power. Therefore he felt urged to break the taboo of entering the caves. His co-villagers saw him enter the caves and come back, without being harmed and also without negative effects for themselves. This was the beginning of a movement to do away with the traditional religion. It has been speculated that this was also a subversive social movement directed against the feudal class of *hipui* who could dominate society through the taboos and the many fines they imposed on tribal people for many common offences against the numerous taboos that ruled traditional Dayak society.³² Bo'Jurai himself never even converted to the new faith, but boys of the Pnihing tribe who had for some years attended the school in Laham interpreted his experiences. They urged the tribe now to accept the Catholic faith as the new religion and started to teach the catechism in nearly all Pnihing villages. A schoolteacher translated prayers and hymns into the Pnihing language. A Javanese teacher, Mas Prawira, who had moved to Long Pahangai in 1941, was during this period in fact the leading advisor for one of the few massive conversions in this region.³³

Another prophetic movement took place in mid-1945 in the hamlet of Long Isun, on the Mareseh, a tributary to the Mahakam and in the territory of the Busang Dayak. Some Juk Kavung had received revelations that the ancestors would return to the earth and therefore the village should be prepared in a proper way. Juk Kavung was associated with two young men who had received their training in the school of Laham. They suggested that the new greetings should be partly in Arabic *Assalam Alaikum* and partly in Latin *Laus Deo, Dominus Vobiscum* and *Sursum Corda* (resp. 'Praise be to God,' 'The Lord be with you,' and 'Lift up your hearts'). In advance of the return of the ancestors all noise should be avoided. Barking dogs and cackling chicken should be killed. The people were trained to chant Catholic style Alleluias. When the arrival of the ancestors did not come about, Juk Kavung ordered that the houses should be painted white and many utensils used for traditional ceremonies should be destroyed. When storage of food was exhausted, many people had to sell their valuables in order to buy food. Only when the Japanese surrendered and Father Arts returned to the mission of the Upper Mahakam did the movement

³² Coomans 1980:110.

³³ Coomans 1980:111-112, on the basis of the mission diary of Long Pahangai.

return to less dramatic expressions and this caused an increase of conversions to Catholicism in the region.

The two cases above show glimpses from the real process of cultural and religious transformation that took place in Dayak society. In the 1950s the Catholic mission claimed that along the Mahakam, upstream from the great falls, about 90% of the population had embraced Catholicism. Below we will discuss in somewhat more detail the real meaning of this great transformation.

Another region where Catholicism started in the pre-independence period was the rolling hills of the Tunjung region in East Kalimantan, between the Mahakam and its tributary the Kedang Pahu. This is a well-populated area with much larger villages than those along the Mahakam. This region was still directly under the authority of the Sultan of Kutai who protested for some time against the arrival of the missionaries. Only after some local chiefs had pleaded in favour of the schools of the Catholic mission did he agree to the establishment of a mission post. Barong Tongkok became the centre of Catholic activities in this region that only very slowly and partially accepted a new religious identity. In the late 1980s the total number of people in this region was 23,511 of whom 3,763 were Catholic or 16%.³⁴

Religious transformations of Dayak Catholicism, 1945–2000

The influence of the Japanese period upon the history of Indonesian Christianity is often ambiguous. It is without any doubt that it brought the end of Dutch colonial rule and therefore also the end of the privileged position that Christian mission experienced during that period. It was a period without foreign clergy and in many places without any presence of the clergy that was and still is very dominant in Catholic religious life. Some reports suggest that Catholicism could continue without the foreign missionaries and religious people. On the other hand, in many places in Kalimantan there was a presence of foreign missionaries during only a few decades, but still quite a few facts show that in this period the attachment to the missionaries had taken firm roots. There are several moving stories of catechists and other lay people who at risk of their own lives took measures to ensure that the sacred objects of the Catholic liturgy and of the parish house should be saved. A quite striking and creative example of the respect for the foreign missionaries is the mission post of Sejiram, where teacher Loegit had continued the common prayer services during the absence of the missionaries. In order to keep the memory of the priests alive, during these services a chasuble was placed in front of the altar as a representation of the absent leadership.³⁵

³⁴ Coomans 1980:105–107.

³⁵ Van Hulst 1983–I:99.

The small Catholic communities of Kalimantan showed a quite spectacular development in the second half of the twentieth century. For the period up to 1965 perhaps the political role of the West Kalimantan Catholics was the most impressive, besides a growing role in the field of education. For the period between 1965 and 1980 we can note a very rapid increase in numbers, related to the anti-communist policy of the Soeharto government that obliged all people to register with one of the five recognised global religions, as we have seen already above in relation to the development of Hindu Kaharingan. In this period we also see the double movement of greater independence from foreign personnel (called *indonesianisasi*) but at the same time in this period there was a quick increase in foreign aid related not to evangelisation but to more secular development projects. In the period 1985–2000 we see some kind of stabilisation, no longer this spectacular growth in numbers, while development aid became detached from ecclesial organisation with the establishment of many NGO's, Non-Government Organisations that were only loosely connected to the church and relied more on lay organisations that also sometimes included Muslim people. In this latter period there was also a growing tension between various ethnic communities, especially between Madurese migrants and the Dayak from Kalimantan. Although these tensions, and finally a number of bloody incidents since 1995, were racial and economic rather than religious, they were closely related to religious differences and therefore have to be discussed here as well. Finally, in this section we will have to discuss the move towards a more open recognition of Dayak spirituality that was to be included in a contextualised Kalimantan Catholicity.

In the opposition of Dayak versus Malay it is often stated that 'Dayak' inland people become Malay when they embrace Islam. In this way the word Dayak (meaning 'upstream' or 'inland') would have just a pejorative and negative meaning. In the early period of Indonesian independence, however, the word Dayak received a stronger, more positive meaning, something to be proud of. As opposed to Malay, it became the expression of a distinctive identity. As in the case of the 'Batak'³⁶ where it has been argued that Christianity gave a convincingly solid basis to this new name for a non-Malay and non-Muslim identity, in the period 1945–1965 the proud name of Dayak was also used in contrast to Islam as a self-confident sign of a new and singular identity. This happened with the Dayak political parties of West Kalimantan in the early years of Indonesian independence. It has been argued that already "Dutch colonial rule forged a 'Dayak' identity out of a diverse, autochthonous, non-Islamic population."³⁷ Because of the poor education provided for Dayak people prior to independence, it was first of all the few graduates of the Catholic

³⁶ Hasselgren 2000:135.

³⁷ Davidson 2003:2.

teacher-training course (CVO, *Cursus voor Volksonderwijzer*) that formed the first nationalist activists. It was in 1941, during a retreat in Sanggau for Catholic school teachers, that Oevaang Oeray, then a student at the seminary of Pontianak, started the first movement that later was seen as an organised Dayak movement in West Kalimantan.³⁸ Together or in rivalry with Francis Xavier Palaunsoeka, Oeray founded the Dayak Association (PD, *Persatuan Dayak*, also called *Partij Persatuan Dayak* as a political party). In the early 1950s, they were critical of the preferential treatment of Chinese mission students, and of the colonial thinking and paternalistic attitude of the missionaries.³⁹ In the 1950s the PD was a major party in the elections for the regional assembly: in 1955 they gained nine seats against ten for the major Muslim party, Masyumi, while in 1958 they gained twelve seats, against nine for Masyumi.⁴⁰ In the conflict between the two leaders, Palaunsoeka later left the Dayak Party and joined the national Catholic Party, while Oeray moved to a national party: Partindo. But this was the end of Catholic-inspired regional policy. In the New Order of General Soeharto, after 1966, regional parties were forbidden, because ethnic, religious and regional issues should no longer play a role in politics. In 1966 Oeray, who had become governor thanks to his warm relations with Soekarno, was removed from the governorship and this was the end of the Dayak Party in West Kalimantan. In other provinces of Kalimantan the Catholics never were strong enough to play a decisive political role.

As in other regions of Indonesia, there was also a quick growth of Catholicism in Kalimantan between 1965 and 1980. Below are the figures for percentage of Catholics for the last decades of the twentieth century, for the island, divided over the six dioceses:

*Catholics in the dioceses of Kalimantan*⁴¹

	1950 in %	2000 in %	Catholics 2000	Population 2000	RC per priest (2000)	Priests (2000)
Pontianak	1.1	8.7	201,870	2,321,011	3,873	50
Ketapang	n.a.	18.3	75,247	411,705	2,786	20
Sintang	1.7	20.1	132,078	665,330	2,547	49
Banjarmasin	0.4	0.5	17,278	3,202,300	1,151	15
Palangkaraya	n.a.	2.9	52,660	1,805,208	2,062	23
Sanggau	n.a.	46.2	233,281	505,236	5,689	41
Samarinda	n.a.	5.9	134,937	2,294,851	3,161	50

³⁸ Davidson 2003:7.

³⁹ Davidson 2003:14.

⁴⁰ Davidson 2003:16.

⁴¹ Figures after www.catholic-hierarchy.org. In 2002 the new diocese of Tanjung Selor was established.

It was first of all the inland dioceses (Sanggau, Sintang and partially Ketapang) that took their share of the increase of Catholics that can be noted for the whole period. This has resulted in a quite uneven distribution over the whole island. A growing number of clergy became naturalised Indonesians in this period. It is striking, however, that the number of Dayak vocations for religious orders was far below the average of the Dayak people as a proportion of the Catholics of Indonesia. In 1980 6.9% of the Indonesian Catholics were of ethnic Dayak origin, against only 3.4% of the members of religious orders.⁴² This can easily be related to the overwhelming over-representation of the Javanese and clergy from Flores in this way of life. We could also relate it to the nominal membership, less existential and personal choice among Dayak Catholics. A dramatic development in this respect took place in the diocese of Sintang. Isak Doera from Flores was here nominated bishop in 1976. He gave up the hope for a Dayak clergy and founded in Flores a minor seminary to attract more priests from Flores for the Dayak territories of Kalimantan. He also sought his catechists and teachers mostly from Flores. This was considered as “internal colonialism” and caused such unrest and conflicts in Sintang, that on 1 January 1996 he was forced to resign. His successor Agustinus Agus (nominated administrator on 21 January 1996, full bishop in October 1999) was a Dayak priest from neighbouring Sanggau. Together with another Dayak Bishop, Hieronymus Bumbun (Pontianak), he is a strong fighter for a Dayak character Catholicism in inland Kalimantan.

What did it mean for Dayak people to embrace Christianity? To what extent was this new religion a real fulfilment of Dayak needs? Which aspects of culture, society, world-view and ritual changed and which aspects were resistant to change? The statistics show neatly divided groups, but how was the somewhat chaotic mix of world-views in the mind of the various players in the process of change: the children, the adults, the common people and the ritual specialists? To answer these questions it is better not to look at the concept of God or the hereafter, but to the concepts about marriage, following Father Michael Coomans, the bishop of Samarinda for the period 1987–1992 and before that time a pastor and researcher about the transformation of Dayak religion.⁴³

Coomans looked at the practice of marriage among registered Catholics in the period 1965–1975. In the major Tunjung station of Barong Tongkok there were 51 blessings of marriage. In nearly all cases the couples had already celebrated marriage and the exchange of gifts according to traditional ceremonies. They came to the parish asking that their marriage should be ‘repaired’

⁴² After Boelaars 1991:180 and 219.

⁴³ Unless stated explicitly, the following is an excerpt of Coomans 1980:187–210.

(*beres*). In 22 of the cases no family was present, but it was just a matter of the young couple themselves. In nearby Engkuni there were 39 blessings in the same period, with broader attendance of the family in only seven cases. All these marriages were a blessing of a life bond that had started already some time before and had been accepted by society in general and the mutual family through traditional celebrations. Nevertheless, the priests felt urged to preach the formal doctrine of the Catholic Church that before formal marriage blessing by the parish priest no sexual relations should be maintained. The Catholic faithful showed their loyalty to the new religion not by a full observation of the Catholic rules, but by the willingness to 'repair' the situation after traditional marriage had taken place. Quite a few priests, including Father Coomans, felt embarrassed. They estimated that the basic values of the Catholic doctrine of marriage were validated by Dayak morality, such as the monogamous relationship (not in theory but in practice, because polygamy was a rare exception in Dayak society), mutual love and fidelity, equal rights for man and woman and stability as ideal, although there was a relatively high divorce rate in traditional and modern Dayak society. On the whole, however, marriage remained a social happening where the extended family played a much more important role than the outsider, the parish priest who claimed his role and authority on the basis of the ecclesial law of the Catholic Church, the *Codes Iuris Canonici*. The village head, the parents, the council of elders of the family were still given much more authority in matters of the long process of establishing a marriage than the parish priest who could only act at the end of the long process. Like his colleague John M. Prior in Flores, Coomans also pleaded for a modest role for the priests and a formal recognition of customary and state rules of marriages by the Catholic Church. In daily pastoral practice they had to find their way between the formal law of the church and the reality of the social development of Dayak society. One way out was the procedure of repairing the failure. Another perception was that the faithful often considered the church blessing as just another magical means to *membuang sial*, to protect against evil. In 1980 Coomans estimated that about 60% of the marriages of Catholics in the parish of Engkuni were not yet legalised with an ecclesial blessing.

Divorce was considered as reprehensible in Dayak society, but after much deliberation and payment of a fine, couples could break up their marriage. In most cases that are recorded for this period, there was no consultation with the priests in these cases and they had to find out themselves that divorce had taken place. In one specific case in 1939–1940, the village head of Bika Tengah, close to the mission station of Bika, came to the parish to ask about "the adat (customary rulings) of the Christians in the case of divorce." He was highly surprised to hear that the only ruling was that divorce could not be accepted and should not take place. Also the woman of the quarrelling

couple addressed the priest, telling him that she now knew that it was not allowed and therefore really was prepared to pay a fine, but only wanted to know how much. To the parish priest she let know that his predecessor had told them that she would be condemned for divorce. Therefore she wanted to be informed about the details of the condemnation: *minta dikoekoem*, wanted to know the fine.⁴⁴ Notwithstanding the formal policy of contextualisation in the 1950s and even more explicitly after the Second Vatican Council, marriage rulings were generally excluded from this strategy. The priests took the double strategy of explaining the official Catholic doctrine and a lenient application of a personalised pastoral approach.

Contextualisation was first of all seen in the cloth of the couple that would marry. Since the 1960s the white robe for the bride and a formal black suit for the man became more and more fashionable as a sign of modernity and prosperity, complete with sunglasses and plastic flowers. In the field of contextualisation, a major problem in Kalimantan was the diversity of Dayak languages that made finally Malay or modern standard Indonesian the religious language. In traditional Kalimantan society the religious specialists used a specific language for religious rituals. This could no longer be continued. There had been already, since 1858, a bible translation in Ngaju Dayak (by the Protestant mission), but the Catholic mission used Malay in its schools and also for common church services. Moreover, it was more the catechists and the new Christians who initiated the practice to establish 'sacred places' in the neighbourhood of the longhouses or small private family houses: they placed a cross in a special room attached to their houses or under a small roof and treated that in the same way as the traditional Dayak sacred place. Although there were doubts among the clergy about the actual strategy, they also were more and more positive in this field.

The 1960s were a turning point in the nationality of the clergy and the members of religious orders in Indonesia. The number of foreign church personnel declined drastically, but there was a quick increase in the number of Indonesian priests, religious sisters and brothers who could take over their positions. This process, called *Indonesianisasi*, found a counter-current in another development of the 1960s, the rise of development aid. While western personnel left Indonesia, more and more western money entered the region. Partially this was done in continuation of traditional activities in the fields of education and health care.

One special field of social service for this region certainly was the efforts done in the 1930s by a Capuchin friar to build longhouses that had more fresh

⁴⁴ *Dagboek Bika-Nazareth*, 28–29 February 1940:102 (Capuchin Archives 's-Hertogenbosch).

air and also better light. Traditional longhouses for extended families were built in a style that made defence against attacks by enemies more easy. With the increasing safety of the colonial rule the practice of building this style of house declined. The colonial government and the independent Indonesian government discouraged the building of these houses, because people were encouraged to live in larger villages where facilities like schools and dispensaries would be available. The disappearance of longhouses, together with the 'secularisation' of the office of village chief (since the 1960s no longer hereditary in the feudal class) was one of the basic conditions for religious change. Many taboos were related to life in the longhouses. Ancestor spirits had their place in these giant structures, while social control made the observance of many prescripts easier. With the exception of the proposals for improvement of the houses, mentioned above, the Catholic mission did not directly intervene in the houses of the Dayak, as they did in Papua.

Besides activities in the field of education and health care, there were quite a few initiatives in agriculture. Already in the 1920s the Capuchin Friars taught the boys of their boarding schools how to grow vegetables as an enrichment of the daily menu. They also stimulated rubber plantations, for the financing of the mission itself, but also for the improvement of the financial position of the Catholics. In 1937 an agricultural school was opened in Tering. Father J. Spitters, parish priest of Barong Tering in the early 1950s, reopened the school, but experienced too many difficulties because of a lack of well-trained personnel. In the 1960s and 1970s in many places credit unions were founded under the supervision of the clergy and often with some money from foreign countries.

Kalimantan was not East Indonesia, where Catholics and Protestants in many regions like Flores, Timor, the Moluccas and Papua could dominate the field of education nearly totally in the colonial period, and where they had an important role in development programmes in the 1960s and early 1970s. Catholicism and Protestant churches played an important role in some inland regions, but in no region could they obtain a truly dominating role.

CAMA in East and West Kalimantan

On the west coast of Kalimantan, Protestant mission work had started by the Reformed Church in America in 1839, but this mission field was abandoned in 1850 because of their lack of success. In 1906 the American Methodists came to Pontianak, but when they decided to concentrate in Sumatra they surrendered their work to the *Indische Kerk* (1928). The major Protestant initiative took place from the southern regions, especially Banjarmasin as already depicted above. Another Protestant initiative started in 1929 in East Kalimantan, in the

region of the Kutai, Kayan and Sesayap rivers. This mission was started by CAMA, *Christian and Missionary Alliance*, a missionary organisation founded by an American Presbyterian. The Indonesian branch of CAMA was founded by R.A. Jaffray who had worked in China between 1897 and 1927 and in 1928 started his work in Indonesia with Makassar as the centre for a theological school, but its first important missionary work was done in East Kalimantan. In 1940 this mission counted already some 5,000 baptised in East Kalimantan. This was partly the result of CAMA strategy to baptise people shortly after a positive reaction towards the proclamation of Christianity, sometimes even after a few days. For CAMA missionary George Fisk in East Kalimantan a confession that Jesus was accepted as redeemer could be enough, while the Catholic mission required a minimum of two years discipline in catechism classes. The CAMA missionary and his assistants (Chinese, Ambonese, Manadonese, Toraja and Dayak teachers) concentrated on the region north of Samarinda and the inland Kenyah district, where they had virtually no direct contact with the Catholic mission until the early 1950s.

The situation for West Kalimantan was quite different. CAMA missionary A. Mouw arrived in April 1933 in Pontianak. From here he made a journey on the Kapuas as far as Sintang. The first convert was a Chinese, Lim Hong Lip, from Nanga Sejirak along the river Belitang. Before his conversion to CAMA Protestant Christianity, this man was asked by the medical staff of the hospital of Sintang to accept the Catholic faith, but he had rejected this suggestion.⁴⁵ Although Reverend Mouw settled close to the border with Sarawak in Iban territory, in Balai Sepuak, he had more contacts with the Catholics than with his colleague in Eastern Kalimantan. But his contacts were, as far as we can judge, not with the Catholic missionaries themselves, but with some of their converts. A key figure here was an Embaloh Dayak, Marthen Lombok, born in 1915. He was already a faithful Catholic who could assist at Mass as an altar boy and knew the required Latin phrases by heart, but nevertheless became attracted at the CAMA message and studied at the CAMA Bible school in Makassar between 1936 and 1938, before entering the region as a CAMA missionary.⁴⁶ In 1935 Rev. Mouw baptised 515 people in one ceremony in a river in this inland region of West Kalimantan, close to the Malaysian border. This baptism (as usually administered by CAMA through immersion) is the only mass baptism recorded in the history of Christianity in Kalimantan.⁴⁷

The CAMA mission of Kalimantan probably was the first to make use of airplanes. Rev. Fisk undertook pilot training in the USA in the late 1930s and

⁴⁵ Lewis 1995:196.

⁴⁶ Lewis 1995:203–205.

⁴⁷ Lewis 1995:200.

received a plane from the CAMA headquarters. It commenced work in East Kalimantan among the remote tribe of the Apo Kayan in late 1939. In July 1942 a Dutch officer ordered that the plane be burned, fearing that otherwise it would be captured by the Japanese army. Between 1948 and 1957 CAMA bought six planes for Indonesia: two for Kalimantan and four to be used in Papua. But after 1970 CAMA also used the service of MAF, Mission Aviation Fellowship, to overcome the problems of transportation in East Kalimantan.

The CAMA was not only fast in baptising people; they were also extremely quick in setting up a local church. In 1947 a first synod collected 153 representatives from 26 congregations in Sesayap, the major town on the eastern coast, only some 50 km. south of the Malaysian border. This small harbour town was one of the major openings to the upper Kayan region that became the most important field for CAMA in East Kalimantan. In 1950 the number of congregations in this remote region had risen already to 42. The first president of the synod, Rev. A. Dumai was a first generation convert like the whole leadership of this young church. Only the few foreign missionaries received foreign aid. For the rest the congregations had to pay all expenses. For the period 1956–1977 there were no resident expatriate missionaries in the region and the congregations managed to survive and to grow through their own initiative.⁴⁸ The church was later part of KINGMI, *Kemah Injil Gereja Masehi Indonesia*, Tabernacle Gospel Messianic Church of Indonesia.

The young church proved not to be really stable yet in this period. Already in 1954 there was a schism in Sesayap, because one church worker was accused of sinful behaviour. He protested and erected the *Gereja Kristen Pemancar Injil* or Gospel Propagating Christian Church. According to later internal sources the major cause of the secession was the wish to be more relevant in social, agricultural and medical work than the major CAMA church.⁴⁹

As in Central Kalimantan where the Kaharingan movement caused a revival of traditional religion, also in East Kalimantan a local revival of traditional religion took place. This was the 1940s revelation to an Upper Kayan Kenyah person, Jok Apuy. Although first converted to Christianity, he was at the beginning of what is now called the Bungan Movement. In dreams he met the spirit Bungan who told him that he should return to the simple basic rules of the old religion, not the complicated rituals of the later periods. Also many taboos were abolished. This Bungan revival was quite successful. It spread slowly in the 1940s and 1950s, but in the 1960s more and more people who had opted for Christianity returned to the ancestral religion in this new form. Most of these, however, were people from the Malaysian side of the border.

⁴⁸ Lewis 1995:178–179.

⁴⁹ Lewis 1995:180; Bauswein & Vischer 2002.

K. Muller⁵⁰ estimated that on the Indonesian side most accepted Christianity, at least nominally. 75% of them had joined CAMA churches, and 25% were Catholic. The Catholics were rather late in the Kayan region of Northeast Kalimantan, but they were quite soon known as the more easy-going missionaries. One of the difficult points in the region was the absolute ban on alcohol by the CAMA churches, while the Catholics under conditions could allow the drinking of alcohol.⁵¹ In the turbulent 1970s, another period of church growth in Indonesia, the KINGMI mission also started work in the southern regions of East Kalimantan.

In West Kalimantan CAMA had also started close to the Malaysian border, north from the important river connection of Sintang, as already noted above. Work for CAMA in West Kalimantan grew much more slowly than in East Kalimantan. Pioneering missionary Mouw was jailed for a short period in February 1942 by the Japanese invaders, but was able to escape from Japanese-occupied territory and never returned to his mission stations. After independence, in September 1946, out of the ten bible teachers, only five were left in the Melawi area, north of Sintang. The mission remained difficult, even when in 1951 quite a few American missionaries came to the region after they were expelled from China. West Kalimantan was known as Chinese territory, but several of the expatriate missionaries entered work for the Dayak mission. In the mission history this period is known as the Sour Period (*Masa Suram*),⁵² because of the slow growth. For the year 1957 only 39 baptisms were registered and there was no real progress in the following years, until in 1962 a step forward was taken with the opening of a mission station in the central place of Sintang. This was the period of the Indonesian struggle against Malaysia (the 'Crush Malaysia Campaign' or *Ganyang Malaysia*). This turned, after 1965, into the fight against communism, when many of the Chinese of the region were suspected of communism. The army and the local government supported the spread of Christianity in the remote regions. Quite famous in CAMA circles is the request to cooperate with the government in the transformation of the lower Kayan tribes who still lived by shifting culture thanks to yearly burning of pieces of virgin forest. The government wanted to halt this practice for environmental and financial reasons but also for safety strategies. In 1969 the MAF, Mission Aviation Fellowship, had started work for CAMA in West Kalimantan and in this way the rich and eager mission and

⁵⁰ Muller 1991:87.

⁵¹ See also Rousseau 1998:21–37 for the development of the Bungan revival. On p. 29 he relates about joyful receptions at the Chinese New Year where he had to help one of the Catholic missionaries home. "The next day, I was interviewed by several Kayan who wanted to know whether these were indeed missionaries. . . . They opined that if these missionaries have a good time in this way, it must be a good religion!"

⁵² Lewis 1995:225–227.

the poor military and government officials could join their goals in a mission to the upper Kapuas regions in early 1971. CAMA reported that “199 people received Christ as their saviour” in this joint mission.⁵³

CAMA in West Kalimantan remained subordinated to the more prosperous Christians of the eastern regions. In 1978 an evangelising team from the eastern province came by plane to the congregations of West Kalimantan to start a campaign “and many surrendered to the Lord, in the hope to be filled by the Holy Spirit and be sanctified. Many amulets and writings about traditional healing were handed over to be burnt. Jesus was pronounced as the Healer and quite a few people were restored to health.”⁵⁴

In 1978 CAMA made the move to Pontianak, the capital of the vast province on the most western shore, at the mouth of the Kapuas river. After starting in remote villages more than 1,000 km. inland in the 1930s, the theological seminary was established in the western capital Pontianak, the region of the Malay and the Chinese. It was a sign that also in West Kalimantan the KINGMI church had become an inter-ethnic and widespread religious denomination. Statistics of 1990 show for East Kalimantan nearly 98,000 members, with 67,000 not yet baptised (KINGMI is a church that opts for adult baptism and many were children). For West Kalimantan the numbers were more modest: 62,252 members, 15,234 of whom were baptised. This made KINGMI the third largest Christian church in Kalimantan, after the Catholics with their centre in West Kalimantan and the Reformed Protestants with their centre in Central Kalimantan. KINGMI with its centre in the East Kalimantan highlands where it accounted in the early 2000s for roughly $\frac{1}{4}$ of the total number of Christians holds the third ranking in membership numbers.

*The difficult decade 1995–2005:
socio-ethnic conflicts with religious side-effects*

For centuries there has existed a rather ambivalent relationship between the Malay Muslims of the coastal area and the non-Muslim Dayak tribes of the interior. Several Muslim rulers developed special ties with specific Dayak tribes. In the field of popular religion Muslims sought the services of Dayak healers. But there have also been hostilities related to difference of religion. This socio-religious complex became more complicated when in the last decades of the nineteenth century small pockets of Dayak people converted to Christianity, to reach finally a quite substantial part of the population of Kalimantan. The Chinese more or less remained a distinct group. The situation became even

⁵³ Lewis 1995:233.

⁵⁴ Lewis 1995:235–236.

more intricate with the arrival of a rather large group of migrants from strongly Muslim Madura, to settle in several regions. The Madurese are a fierce, proud, and outspokenly Muslim people who have a culture linked often to violence. The island of Madura is frequently called the Sicily of Indonesia.

The first serious conflict in the violent decade 1995–2005 was the bloody riot of Banjarmasin, 23 May 1997. As also described in chapter six, this was the most violent incident during the election campaign of 1997 when Soeharto for the last time was re-elected as the Indonesian president. The party of the government, Golkar, held its campaign with much public funds, supported by several national Muslim leaders, while the other two parties experienced all kinds of obstruction. In strongly Muslim Banjarmasin the Islamic party, PPP, was rather frustrated. On Friday 23 May scores of members of PPP joined a Golkar meeting, disguised as Golkar supporters by wearing the yellow shirts of Soeharto's party. All of a sudden, just before the official speeches started, one PPP member gave a special sign, and the PPP activists took off the yellow shirts of Golkar and showed their green PPP shirts. They burnt the yellow shirts and shouted "Slay Golkar," while starting to attack Golkar members, several of whom were killed because their throats were cut. Shortly afterwards they not only gave attention to the Golkar supporters who ran away, but also started attacking churches, Christian schools, a Buddhist monastery, office buildings and shopping centres. Due to panic several hundreds of people were kicked to death or burnt in the fire of the shopping mall Mitra Plaza.

The Catholic Church was most seriously hit by the turmoil, with the destruction of Saint Mary's Cathedral, two other churches, parish houses, a home for elderly people, and several schools. Also a major building of the Batak Church, HKBP, one belonging to the GKE, and churches of seven other denominations were severely damaged. Of all the incidents related to inter-religious tensions in the Soeharto period, 1965–1998, the Banjarmasin riots caused the highest loss of human life and material damage.⁵⁵

In the 1960s and 1970s large groups of poor farmers from the dry and overpopulated island of Madura settled in what were considered empty regions by the Indonesian government.⁵⁶ Substantial groups were sent to West Kalimantan where they, as in other regions, received pieces of land in the Sambas region, or started work in the new palm oil plantations. A side-goal of the Indonesian government was the protection of its border with Malaysia. The presence of many Chinese in West Kalimantan, suspected of cooperation with mainland Chinese communism, could be counteracted in this way by the fiercely Muslim Madurese. In the period December 1996 until January 1997

⁵⁵ Aritonang 2004:475–478.

⁵⁶ For this section Aritonang 2004:560–564 is used besides the ICG Report no. 19 (27 June 2001): *Communal Violence in Indonesia: Lesson from Kalimantan*.

serious conflicts between migrant Madurese and local Dayak in the Sambas region of West Kalimantan caused loss of lives and material damage. The source of these conflicts was that the Madurese were treated as if they were sent as farmers to empty areas, while the Dayak people as shifting cultivators needed these lands once in 10 or 20 years. Besides, several sacred and taboo places of the Dayak people were used in a sacrilegious way. In many cases Dayak communities were dislocated, undermining the authority of traditional village leaders and the cohesion of their former life. The Sambas conflicts lead to an effective ethnic cleansing of the region: virtually all Madurese of the area returned to their homeland.

The conflicts of Sambas spread to East and Central Kalimantan. In the Sampit region the most dramatic conflicts took place in February 2001. In the whole province of Central Kalimantan the Madurese counted 6–7%, or about 120,000 people. They were most numerous in the region of Sampit where they were up to 40% or according to other assessments even 60%. As in smaller incidents in the region, so also in Sampit the affair started with a quite trivial event. On 15 December 2000, in a karaoke bar in the small town of Kereng Panggi, halfway between Sampit and Palangkaraya, a Dayak was stabbed to death by three Madurese who then fled. Soon after this event several hundred Dayak arrived to seek revenge for their companion. They could not find the three Madurese involved, but set fire to several Madurese-owned bars and houses. This was the beginning of inter-ethnic fighting that culminated in a massive attack on the town of Sampit and its whole surroundings on 18 February 2001. The number of Madurese killed was, according to official report, 456 and 108,000 Madurese fled the province, most of them returning to Madura.

There are several religious aspects in this complicated series of conflicts. With the reality of a weak government (people did not trust a corrupt police but took revenge for themselves) religious sentiments could easily creep in. The Dayak had been considered second-class citizens for centuries. Since the 1970s even their conversion to Islam could no longer give them equal rights with the Malay, because since that time it became common practise to label converts *Bakumpai* (after an isolated small tribe of the Upper Barito). In the fighting against the Madurese several Christian Dayak returned to traditional practices like the use of amulets, invocations by traditional religious leaders and even traditions related to headhunting.

In the aftermath of the troubles the senior church leader, Dr. Fridolin Ukur, blamed the Soeharto government for giving priority to economic development by migration, by gold mines and palm oil plantations, without taking into account the original inhabitants of the region. The workers who had arrived recently were given priority over the local population. Junior anthropologist and lecturer at the theological school of the GKE in Banjarmasin, Marko Mahin, even stated that the GKE itself was among the colonising powers, a

global player destroying a local religion. He criticised the title of one of Ukur's books: *The Rich Harvest* as the result of the thinking of his church in the 1960s when tribal culture and the religion of Kaharingan were considered a rival to Christianity. He asked his church to convert, and joined the call that Kaharingan should be recognised as a full religion in its own right and not as a branch or local development of worldwide Hinduism. In various regions of Kalimantan traditional religion had been able to survive the religious developments of the last 150 years and it looks as if this may result in a more mature relationship with Christianity as well.⁵⁷ This has made Kalimantan one of the most religiously diversified parts of Indonesia.

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⁵⁷ Fridolin Ukur gave an interview to the weekly *Tempo*, 26 March 2001; see Ukur 2002; the comment on Ukur is from his summary of a speech at the theological school in Banjarmasin, early 2005, in: <http://www.mail-archive.com/kmnu2000@yahooogroups.com/msg02613.html>, consulted on 7 February 2006.

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