

Roy Alexander Surjanegara  
Power in Reformed Polity

# Church Polity and Ecumenism

Global Perspectives

edited by

Leo J. Koffeman, Christina Landman,  
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Roy Alexander Surjanegara

# Power in Reformed Polity

The Articulation of Authority  
in Indonesian Reformed Churches

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## Abbreviations

BEM	Baptist, Eucharist, and Ministry
BFM	Board of Foreign Mission
CCA	Christian Conference of Asia
CCI	Communion of Churches in Indonesia (also PGI)
CO	Church Order
Const	Constitution
CR	Congregation Regulations
CRNCA	Christian Reformed Church in North America
CTCV	The Church: Towards a Common Vision
DGD	Dewan Gereja-gereja se-Dunia (also WCC)
DGI	Dewan Gereja-gereja Indonesia (now PGI)
DZV	Doopsgezinde Zendings Vereeniging
EB	Ecclesiological Basis
EC	Explanation to the Constitution
ECO	Explanation of the Church Order
EP	Explanation to the Preamble
GIUZ	Genootschap voor In- en Uitwendige Zending
GKHV	Gereformeerde Kerken in Hersteld Verband
GKI	Gereja Kristen Indonesia
GKN	Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland
GKS	Gereja Kristen Sumba
GMIM	Gereja Masehi Injili di Minahasa
GMIT	Gereja Masehi Injili di Timor
GPI	Gereja Protestan Indonesia
GPM	Gereja Prostestan Maluku
KHDB	Khoe Hwee Djawa Barat
NGZV	Nederlandse Gereformeerde Zendings Vereeniging
NHK	Nederlandse Hervormde Kerk
NTB	Nusa Tenggara Barat
NTT	Nusa Tenggara Timur
NZG	Nederlandsch Zendeling Genootschap
NZV	Nederlandse Zendingsvereeniging

OASE Intim	OASE Indonesia Timur
OBER	Officebearer Election Regulation
OER	Office and Employment Regulations
PGI	Persekutuan Gereja-gereja di Indonesia (also CCI)
PR	Presbytery Regulations
Pre	Preamble
Reg	Regulations
RT	Rukun Tangga
SAAT	Sekolah Alkitab Asia Tenggara
SR	Synod Regulations
STFT	Sekolah Tinggi Filsafat Teologi
STT Intim	Sekolah Tinggi Teologi Indonesia Timur
THKTKH	Tiong Hoa Kie Tok Kauw-Hwee
TNMC	The Nature and Mission of the Church
UKAW	Universitas Kristen Artha Wacana
UKDW	Universitas Kristen Duta Wacana
UUD	Undang-Undang Dasar
VOC	Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie
WCC	World Communion of Churches (also DGD)
ZC	Zending Consulaat
ZCGK	Zending van de Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerk
ZGKHV	Zending van de Gereformeerde Kerken in Hersteld Verband
ZGKN	Zending van de Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland

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# Chapter 1

## Power in Reformed Polity: The Articulation of Authority in Indonesian Reformed Churches

### 1.1. Introduction

What makes the church authoritative in the eyes of its beholder? I grew up in a community where on Sundays the Christians will still flock to church services, people of all range of age and social strata lending their ears to the sermon of the minister; some may even have to take a return trip longer than their daily commute to work. In the church building, Sunday school children, teenagers and youth, women, the elderly, musicians, choirs, multimedia operators, etc. form into groups, gather in rooms where they conduct meetings, prepare for activities, listen to teachings, and much more. And business does not happen on Sundays only, because on any day of the week there will be some other activities taking place in the church.

From my personal travels to other parts of the archipelago, I have come to learn that this is still the general landscape of church life in Indonesia. And I also hear similar stories depicting the landscape of many churches in third world Christian communities. From historical accounts of churches in the global North, we would still be able to see the same sceneries persisting for the most part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. All in all, we could still say that for the most part of her history, being part of a church is considered as a necessity for people.

When one becomes part of a church, attends services, listens to sermons, is baptized, goes through catechesis, does confirmation, accepts Holy Communion, becomes a member of a church group, and others, certain sacrifices have to be made: skipping late Saturday night big football matches, or denying the privilege of Monday morning 'sleep-in', having to participate in extra meetings after a tiring day at work, some additional hours of piano practice for Sunday service, voluntarily mowing the church's garden, routinely donating a signifi-

cant part of one's income for church charity work, and the list could go on and on.

What makes Christians willing to do this? For the most part of these activities, the only payment or reward they get comes in the shape of coffee or tea along with cookies provided by the church. No letters of merit or certificates would be handed out to them that have donated time, labor, or money, and it would not be of any use to put it in their C.V. when applying for a formal job anyway. So, what drives them to do all these things? There is this invisible force that drives them to obey these callings to be part of the church's life. Hence, the question I raise at the beginning: "What makes the church authoritative in the eyes of its beholder?"

When we think about this question, we can never underestimate the people's spiritual motives of being grateful for God's blessings. However, attributing this entire complex dynamic to gratitude alone would certainly be an oversimplification. In *The Kingdom of God is within You*, Tolstoy wrote: "Only under the intoxication of the power or the servility of their imagined positions could all these people act as they do" (Tolstoy, 2013, 151). Although here he was referring to the context of war, the two notions he coined do describe a more or less similar dynamic with regard to the phenomenon mentioned earlier. It has something to do with power on the one hand, and with a sense of servility on the other hand. The church people have to assume (imagine) certain positions where power from God is located: be it in key figures, ecclesiastical offices, traditions, church order, and such. And they also have to assume that the acts that they're doing are valid expressions of servitude to that higher power.

Therefore, it would help to view the matter from the notion of authority/power. After all, power is a notion embedded in the whole fabric of our life. It runs like blood through the veins of our society's interactions, even through our personal relations with another human being. No matter how positive or negative a connotation the notion might bring, the fact is that power exists in our ecclesiastical lives.

## 1.2. Research question

This research is an attempt to understand how Reformed churches in Indonesia articulate authority in their polity. In their effort to frame power within a sound theological perspective, is there a distinct character in the polity of Indonesian Reformed churches? This will be the primary question of this research project.

Firstly, we have to admit that the issue of power is a very tricky theme in church polity. Nevertheless, the notion of power and its allocation enables poli-

ty to function, regardless of whether it is being used for the good or for the detriment of the people (cf. Koffeman, 2014, 4-5). As a kind of response to this fragile reality of power in the church, the Faith and Order study document *The Church: Towards a Common Vision* provides us with some helpful guiding principles (cf. CTCV, par. 48f):

- All authority in the Church comes from her Lord and head, Jesus Christ,
- whose entire ministry was characterized by authority,
- which placed itself at the service of human beings.
- This authority is then shared with the apostles,
- and is exercised in the proclamation of the gospel, the celebration of the sacraments, and in the pastoral guidance of believers.
- The distinctive nature of authority in the Church is understood from and exercised according to the example of Jesus Christ “as humble service, nourishing and building up the *koinonia* of the Church in faith, life and witness; it is exemplified in Jesus’ action of washing the feet of the disciples. It is a service (*diakonia*) of love, without any domination or coercion”.

From the description above, we could say then, the study of church polity has the responsibility to examine the kinds of power allocation within the life of the church. It should have the prophetic capability, together with academic credibility, to determine and prove whether a particular expression of power, allocation of power, within the church is in accordance with the distinct nature of authority in the church. Related to my earlier question about what makes the church authoritative in the eyes of its beholders, this would mean that one of the main tasks of church polity is to educate the people in order to be able to discern where and how power is allocated, expressed, and formalized so that their service would not betray the distinct nature of church authority. This in fact, is exactly the definition of church polity. Church polity, both in its sense as an academic theological field and as the governance of the church, could be described as that effort to frame power within a sound theological perspective.

I would like to add another approach regarding this ‘tricky’ matter of power and church polity. Since church polity is the formal translation of power expressions in church life that find its justification of authority from Christ, its Lord and Head, and at the same time as a “service of love, without any domination or

coercion”, church polity as such will always consist of two aspects: 1) devotional, and at the same time 2) social.

The polity of the church is by nature devotional because it relies on a set of beliefs with intrinsic authority ‘handed down’ by God. There is a sense of ‘because God had intended it to be so’ in our polity. It is not merely a set of regulations decided by human logic, but it has to be understood more as an effort to manifest the spiritual command that God deemed good and necessary. A paper from The Faith and Order Commission, *The Importance of the conciliar process in the ancient church for the ecumenical movement* (1967), highlights this aspect, with regard to the claims of the councils (Faith and Order, 1967, in Gassmann, 1993, 214-215):

... regardless of whether a synod as a constitutional organ of the Church received a clearly defined and thereby limited legal authority or whether it could appeal to other external signs of authority, its claim finally remains spiritually founded.

No matter how practical a system of church polity might seem to be, it should not be there simply for practical reasons alone. It is there because it is considered ‘spiritually founded’, and because there are some underlying theological justifications that support it and consider it necessary to be there.

At the same time, the polity of the church is social, because it is not only about *because God has intended it to be so*, but also because we have *agreed* that it is because God has intended it to be so. The God of church polity never intended his commands to be played out in vacuums, nor are the churches his lab rats. There is always a sense of reception, appreciation, or consent toward the church polity that we embrace, however discomfiting our obedience to it might be. Most people would not choose to wake up early on a Sunday morning to attend a worship service in the church, but however uncomfortable that might be, most church members would still consent that it is the right thing to do. This kind of human reception means that a combination of human rationality, societal norms, and daily life practicality is given a considerable ‘bargaining power’.

The Faith and Order document *How Does the Church Teach Authoritatively Today* (1977) examines that patterns of authority in the society play an influential role towards the modes of teaching and the structure of authority inside the church (Gassmann, 1993, 248-250). Adaptation, social appropriation, these kinds of dialogue between the church and the people are inevitable if the church wants to have an effect in the society. One obvious example is the changes we see in church worship, which has changed a lot along with the development of



musical instruments, genres of artistic expressions, and even technological advances. This kind of social appropriation does not mean that the church is betraying her own identity; but rather that the church finds her identity not in some fixed formulations as established centuries ago that will last until *maranatha*; but in her engagement to social reality the church will re-find, refine, and redefine her true calling to become salt and light in this world. Furthermore, it is this ability and willingness to engage in dialogue with the social reality and contextual challenges, which characterizes the church as a living organism, rather than just another organization in the world.

All these statements affirm the social aspect of church polity. No matter how profane this aspect might seem, it is inevitable, and no church will be able to deny – although perhaps involuntarily – this social aspect of church polity. An earlier Faith and Order document, *Spirit, Order, and Organization* (1971) remarks: “Churches as a whole are social bodies and (...) even doctrine is to a certain extent a reflection of specific social and political conditions in which a Church finds itself” (Gassmann, 1993, 274).

And through the ongoing dialectic between these complementing characters – the devotional and the social – the polity of our church becomes an effort to formally translate power into something theologically accountable and socially acceptable. As an example: for Christians, the statement that God has absolute power over the church is considered a basic truth. From the devotional aspect, all churches could easily come to an agreement with such statement being written in the book of church order. However, churches will differ greatly in the social aspect of expressing that concept, thus resulting in many different forms of polity in the church. These different articulations of God’s governance for the church are generally categorized into three major patterns of church polity: the *episcopal*, the *congregational*, and the *presbyterial-synodical* model.

On the subject of church polity patterns, Edward LeRoy Long, Jr. in his book *Patterns of Polity* (2001) made comprehensive descriptions and analyses regarding the internal dynamics of the different polity patterns. Koffeman also uses materials from Long when he dedicates a chapter commenting on these three patterns of church structures (cf. Koffeman, 2014, 47-62). These patterns are like the fabrics of our ecclesiastical life where power expressions in the church are vindicated. These three are certainly only general models since in practice there are many variations and overlaps between them that could easily be pointed out. However, the fact that churches all over the world employ these general patterns, should say something about our conviction regarding these frameworks (of power) – that bridge the gap between God’s absolute power and human power – as theologically sound. And their striking resemblance to three

general patterns of governance found in our society – respectively: monarchy, independent communities, and democracy – does say something about their social acceptability.

From the descriptions above, we can already see some characteristics regarding the articulation of authority in church polity, which will be influenced by the church's particular theological position and its socio-cultural context. The formal authority of a church will always be considered as theologically sound and socio-culturally acceptable. At the end of this research, we hope to get a clearer picture of that characteristic, especially in the polity of Reformed churches in Indonesia.

### **1.3. Methodical considerations**

Before we continue, we need to make some clarifications regarding some key concepts of this research: power in the church, contextual theology awareness, Reformed polity, and the focus of our analysis.

#### **1.3.1. Power in the church**

Continuing our discussion about power in the research question section, here we want to explain what we mean when we talk about power in church polity. Koffeman tries to make a distinction of power in the church by asking three questions (Koffeman, 2014, 67):

- 1) Does the person/body that exercises power, do so consciously?
- 2) Do those 'addressed' experience the exercise of power consciously?
- 3) If they experience the exercise of power consciously, do they accept it positively?

Based on the answer to these questions, Koffeman defines three types of power. The first type of power is 'intrinsic authority', which is power that is exercised and experienced consciously, and that is positively accepted by those who experience it. The second type of power is violence, which is power that is exercised and experienced consciously, and that is not being assented to. The third type of power is manipulation, which is power that is exercised consciously but not experienced consciously, and therefore cannot be assented to (cf. Koffeman, 67). Koffeman speaks about 'formal authority', which is power given by law. In church polity, we are mainly dealing with 'formal authority', but it is important to relate that formal authority to a notion of rightness so that it may be experienced and exercised as 'intrinsic authority', not violence, nor manipulation (cf. Koffeman, 66-68).

Kearsley in his book *Church, Community and Power* tries to identify forms of power faced in the social realities of a faith-community like a church. He

tries to make a distinction by associating power with various prepositions: a) 'power *over*', b) 'power *to*', c) 'power *with*'. The three terms sometimes merge or overlap, but they help to explain the play of power in a Christian community (Kearsley, 2008, 25).

- a) 'Power over' is that conception of power where a particular player, or group, curbing the freedom of another, or getting their way over or instead of another. 'Power over' mainly bears negative connotations, but even in the church, this concept of power is very much alive and well (cf. Kearsley, 26-27). Kearsley furthermore explains, "Power over stems from a commanding advantage of authority, status and/or resources. Hence its natural course appeared to be the crushing of resistance, and achievement of adverse effects upon another." (Kearsley, 30).
- b) 'Power with' can be explained by reasoning that power cannot by definition be the property of any one individual, because that individual is always empowered by a group of some kind, and that this power remains in place just as long as the group does not withdraw its support or destroy that person (cf. Kearsley, pp. 31-32). Kearsley is using Hannah Arendt's concept, namely that community power is underlying centralized power, and that any credible power will usually spring from a community of consent (Kearsley, 33). In 'power with', the attention of power towards command and obedience, is shifted into an achievement of consent towards common ends (cf. Kearsley, 33).
- c) 'Power to' is a conception of power as a freedom to act for the good of another (cf. Kearsley, 40). It is power to make "uncontested difference to the benefit of a whole community" (Kearsley, 35). The emphasis is on recognizing the 'productive' or transforming quality of power. Because it is such a subtle change of emphasis from 'power over', sometimes it can become difficult to distinguish them apart, as 'power to' can simply be dominating power in disguise. However, 'power to' denotes a person's ability to engage his/her own capability, whereas 'power over' points to the exploitation of someone else's powerlessness (Kearsley, 40).

Kearsley says that much of power in the life of a church cannot be accommodated in a church order, because that power is not official, fluid, not easy to locate, and "without clear villains" (Kearsley, 110). That is why it is important for the church to recognize it, because sometimes power can be invisible except when its full effects are finally felt (cf. Kearsley, 110). He uses Steven Lukes' argument that power may take its victims through non-intervention or abstaining (cf. Steven Lukes, 2005, 480). Kearsley describes it this way (Kearsley, 110):

Hence, proposed projects are welcomed officially but ignored in actual practice. Power and resistance (sometimes quite gentle resistance) are being quietly exercised. Apathy may strangely direct affairs through their end. Docility becomes a mightier enemy than open revolt.

In conclusion, Kearsley says that we cannot escape the simple fact of forms of 'power over', but for a church to be healthy it needs the balancing and more final possibility of an outcome of positive 'power to' (cf. Kearsley, 111). We can see a similar dynamic with Koffeman when he talks about 'formal authority' that should relate more with 'intrinsic authority' rather than with violence, or manipulation. Whenever we talk about power, there is no escaping from the negative connotation of it. However, those negative tendencies need to be acknowledged, recognized, and treated accordingly so that it will achieve something positive instead.

Kearsley also argues that in churches the word 'authority' is considered as less suspicious and more contentious than 'power'. This is because the term 'power' tends to "summon[s] up thoughts of abuse, danger or threat whereas 'authority' has usually suggested recognizable religious, social and moral order" (Kearsley, 167). But later on, Kearsley also recognizes that 'authority' can also be perceived as 'power over'. In other words, the valuations towards the terms 'power' or 'authority' are very much related to what concept of experience we attribute them to. Some would treat the two terms more as neutral (as they can have positive or negative connotations), while some might choose to treat the term 'authority' with a more positive meaning. Paul Avis is one example of those in favor of the term 'authority', as can be seen in his description:

It would seem to command broad support if we defined *power as the capacity to obtain compliance with one's will*, and *authority* as a form of power where *compliance is willingly given* because it is accepted that that will has the right to be complied with. (Avis, 1992, 25)

Let us explore a bit more of Avis' explanation about authority. For him, no authority exists in a vacuum, but it finds its *raison d'être* in the context of a particular community and in relation to the specific goals of that community. He then translates it for the context of the church leaders. The authority of church leaders is located within the Christian community, is related to the common goals of the Christian community, has a symbolic function, and is constrained by the ecumenical environment (cf. Avis, 9-13). We can see that here Avis is

trying to view authority more in the 'power to' and 'power with' concept mentioned by Kearsley.

Another point of view with regard to the way we use our language for power and authority can be represented by Rik Torfs' argument. He says that canon lawyers and those in authority should not be ashamed of such terms as 'authority' and anxiously try to find beautiful replacement words for it. For him, terms such as 'love' and 'service' on the legal level represent a very open but also an extremely manipulable concept (cf. Torfs in Provost & Walf, 1988, 70-71). What Torfs is suggesting here, is for us to be more critical of the tendency to beautify terms such as power, or authority with open meaning terms in the legal realm. Avis is trying to explain authority as an *exousia*, a 'moral authority' that it receives from God through Christ; and in his view power without *exousia* is bankrupt and discredited (Avis, 20). But Torfs is saying that what church law needs, is not the association of terminologies with some ideal concepts, but the establishment of precise contexts and permissible expectations regarding that term (cf. Torfs, 71).

With Torfs' way of treating the term, we should find it easier to accept the naming of Weber's typology of power, which usually is translated into 'domination' (*Herrschaft*). Some literature will translate the term into 'authority', because the term 'domination' seems to summon more negative connotations. For Weber, there exist three forms of legitimate domination: traditional, charismatic, and legal (cf. Swedberg, 2005, 64). We will use here the term 'authority', not because of the negative connotation the term 'domination' might imply, but in order to be consistent with the rest of the documents. In the course of this project, the terms 'power' and 'authority' will be used interchangeably. The words 'power' (*dynamis*) and 'authority' (*exousia*) even though having a slight difference of emphasis between the two, are used synonymously (cf. Sykes, 2006, 3). Swedberg explains Weber's typology like this: Traditional authority is basically a belief in the sanctity of tradition and of those who exercise power according to tradition. Charismatic authority is a belief in some extraordinary individual and the order that that individual stands for. Legal authority is where obedience is not to a person but to the legal system according to which that person holds power (cf. Swedberg, 2005, 64). For further reading about Weber's theory of legitimate domination, see Morrison's *Marx, Durkheim, Weber* (2006).

From the discussions above, we get a general impression that the term 'power' tends to have a neutral to negative connotation, while the term 'authority' would have a more positive connotation. However, while we recognize the richness of meaning and the nuances between the terms 'power' and 'authority',

this research will treat both terms as the same. In the context of a church, church law claims formal authority and is the highest authority within the church (cf. Koffeman, 66). If we relate this claim to the usage of the terms, this would imply that the articulation of power in church polity is normatively seen as something good, with a positive connotation. It does not mean that the church polity product is perfect in itself. The book of church order, which is the most tangible object for our research regarding the church's concept of formal power, is not a final book that must not be changed for all eternity. But rather, how the concept of power is being articulated in that church order is a reflection of the church's ideals about what is good governance at that moment in time. In other words, in the framework of church polity power is articulated as something good and formal. And this is where we will limit our usage of the terms 'power' and 'authority' in the context of this research: as formal authority as prescribed by the church order.

### **1.3.2. Contextual theology awareness**

Koffeman suggests that to critically deal with church polity, we should approach it as a multi-disciplinary field that has five aspects: ecclesiology, ecumenical study, missiology, contextual theology, and legal science (cf. Koffeman in Janssen and Koffeman, 2014, 7-14). This research will try to employ that perspective of a multi-disciplinary approach in dealing with church polity, but with a special emphasis on contextual theology. What do we mean by it being a contextual theology?

Traditionally, theology was understood as inspired, universally true, objective, and valid regardless of particular location, time, or circumstances; thus, Christian theology has often remained unexplored for the influences and factors that have given particular shape to and determined its content (cf. Pears, 2010, 8). Basically, what happened was the transporting and imposing of Western Christianity on contexts and cultures hugely different to those out of which it emerged (cf. Pears, pp. 8-9). In many contexts, this process of importing theology coincides with the oppressive system of colonization as well.

Anscar J. Chupungco defines contextualization as being directly concerned with the situation of oppression and deprivation and more connected to the social area. It is not about embracing a certain ethnic and religious cultural identity, which he would call acculturation. It is not about reciprocal assimilation between Christianity and culture, where the culture is internally transformed by Christianity on the one hand, and Christianity is becoming rooted in the culture on the other hand; for which he uses the term inculturation. For Chupungco, contextualization requires relevance to social challenges (Cf. Chupungco, 1992,

in Rydinger, 2006, 73-74). Relevance here is not meant as a synonym of being popular, as the pop-culture usage of the term might imply. It is the quality that is witnessed whenever the church takes side with the oppressed and fights the oppressor, risking its popularity and comfort when advocating for social justice, and giving up its privileges for those in need. In a similar line of thinking, Bergquist and Manickam wrote about the crisis of dependency in third world churches, criticizing that they tend to be dependent upon western theological norms and church organization as mediated by the missionary movements, which demand high financial capabilities, based upon elitist styles of ordained leadership, and may divert the focus of the churches' mission and ministry from the basic questions of human freedom and justice (cf. Bergquist & Manickam, 1974, 1-3).

Volker Küster, on the other hand, has a broader definition regarding contextual theology (cf. Küster, 2001, 25). For him, contextual theology can be distinguished into a cultural-religious type and a socio-economic and political type (cf. Küster, 25). When compared to Chupungco's definition that tends to discard the cultural-religious type, Küster's distinction provides a wider umbrella and allows for greater integration in understanding what is contextual theology. So, what we can see is that contextual theology encompasses a whole variety of themes, as rich as the context itself allows. Similar to Küster, in terms of its inclusive understanding of contextual theology, is the view of Stephen B. Bevans. For Bevans all theology today must be understood as contextual theology: an attempt to understand Christian faith in terms of a particular context (cf. Bevans, 2005, 15). According to Bevans there are two sets of factors that point to why theology must take context seriously (cf. Bevans, 2005, 9-15):

*External factors* that contribute to the possibility and necessity of contextual theology:

1. A general dissatisfaction with classical approaches to theology,
2. The oppressive nature of older approaches,
3. The growing identity of local churches,
4. The growing understanding of culture provided by development in social sciences.

*Internal factors* from Christianity:

1. The incarnational nature of Christianity,
2. The sacramental nature of reality,

3. The shift in understanding the nature of divine revelation, from a general proposition of truth towards an interpersonal communication from God to creation,
4. The catholicity of the church,
5. The dynamic of the Trinity.

But even in Bevans' explanation about contextual theology we see again the same desire to foster social change in order to be an authentic, living church. The issue of oppression within doing theology, classic theological stances that provide no space for liberating the oppressed, and the dynamic nature of our Triune God, the view of reality not only as full of sin but also as sacramental, all this points to the necessity to be relevant to contextual challenges that are ever changing. As he explains (Bevans, 2005, 27):

Contextualization points to the fact that theology needs to interact and dialogue not only with traditional cultural value, but with social change, new ethnic identities, and the conflicts that are present as the contemporary phenomenon of globalization encounters the various peoples of the world.

However, their forms and realization could vary incredibly depending on which models one employs. Bevans distinguishes six such models, which are not mutually exclusive but may be used in creative combinations:

1. Translation Model

This model's main assumption is that there is a 'core gospel message' that we need to try to put inside the culture. Hence the name 'translation', because similar to the process of translating a book it tries to put this Gospel core into the language and culture of the people. Understandably, from this perspective of having a Gospel core, there would be a greater obedience or appreciation towards tradition (or what has been traditionally considered as the core).

2. Anthropological Model

The anthropological model is not so much different from the translation model, but it makes use of the insights from culture and is willing to learn from it. There is a greater focus on and respect for the culture, even though the Gospel still remains a more important and decisive factor.

3. Praxis Model

As the naming might suggest, the praxis model start with an action that is considered as 'good', and then will try to reflect more on it in the light of



the scripture, tradition, and social science. The model is a kind of '*trial and error*' way of doing theology. There will be a dialectic between action and reflection, which in turn will lead into new and refined actions.

4. Synthetic Model

The term synthetic here refers to how this model tries to achieve a synthesis from the previous three models. The insights gained from each of the previous models are put into a creative dialectic. There is a continuing dynamic, or conversation, or dialogue between the Christian message and the culture/cultures.

5. Transcendental Model

This model puts high appreciation towards the subject who is doing theology. In learning more about oneself/culture, we learn more about the truth of God.

6. Countercultural Model

This model does not seek to be cultural nor anti-cultural, but it understands Jesus and his disciples as countercultural. Therefore, theology needs to understand the symbols of the culture, and analyze them under the light of the scripture before then making use of the symbols to challenge the culture itself.

How do we locate and explain our project under the general concept of contextual theology already described above? Our point of departure is Bevan's definition that all theology is contextual theology, i.e., an attempt to understand Christian faith in terms of a particular context. This project is an attempt to understand the polity of Reformed churches in Indonesia: both as understanding Reformed polity in the context of Indonesian churches, and as understanding Indonesian churches in the context of Reformed polity. A kind of dialectic dynamic between what we consider as Reformed polity, Indonesian context, and Indonesian church is done by: 1) proposing a general rule for Reformed polity (in terms of its common features), and then 2) trying to relate them to the Indonesian context, and then 3) trying to analyze their presence in the Indonesian church orders, and from that 4) we can see how the notion of power is treated. This project is contextual in the sense that it tries to analyze the specific contextual characters that can be identified in the polity of Indonesian churches. In doing so, we may see some aspect of the anthropological model, in that we are using some insights from the culture. We may also see some aspect of the praxis model, in that we start by proposing a model of reformed polity, and then put it in a dialectic process with the history, culture, and church orders of the sample

churches. But having some aspects of the anthropological and praxis model allows us to understand this research approach more as a synthetic model.

We have to admit the difficulty of putting it on the ‘map’ using the current classification that is available. It does not have a specific emphasis for situations of oppression and deprivation as Chupungco would define it, but neither does it dwell in the depth of socio-cultural discourses. In Küster’s distinction between a cultural-religious type and a socio-economic and political type, the approach we are using here will be somewhere in the middle of that spectrum. Because all three Reformed churches that we use as samples here have ethnic backgrounds, we have to admit that there will be some cultural problems that will loom in the horizons. However, we are also aware that this approach will not be able to go into the depth of the many socio-cultural aspects of the contexts being researched, but rather more in what we consider as the general national culture of Indonesia, because the focus will be put on the church polity aspect instead.

### **1.3.3. What is Reformed polity?**

Hendrik M. Vroom once wrote that “the question of Reformed identity ... is an annoying question” (Vroom, in Lienemann-Perrin, Vroom, and Weinrich, 2000, 153). Perhaps, when we are asked to describe who are we as Reformed churches, most would answer by providing historical notes from a church history point of view, by referring to Calvin, his theological influence and developments, which later became the formational basis of confession for this particular branch in the global ecclesiastical family. Now, Vroom explains his hesitation with this way of defining Reformed identity (Vroom, in Lienemann-Perrin et al., 2000, 153-154):

Unless one wants to affirm that the Westminster Confession, the Canons of Dordt and some other classical Reformed Confessions are the best expression of the understanding of the Bible to which the church has been brought by the Holy Spirit, formulating a statement that is truly shared all over the world about what constitutes Reformed is problematic. Moreover, in discussing this question, many of us feel that the real issue is not being addressed, i.e. what is truly Christian.

For Vroom, to ask about Christian identity, is what should be our primary question. We should ask more questions like: “What are we called to be as Christians?” as our first order questions. And to ask about Reformed identity should only be a second order question; that is in order to help us understand other confessional traditions, and to evaluate our different ways of answering our

calling (Vroom, in Lienemann-Perrin et al., 2000, 155). So, for Vroom, the main purpose of formulating a notion of Reformed identity is not to highlight the things that set us apart from the rest of the church, but rather to help us navigate and relate to other confessional traditions. In other words, identity needs to be understood in the light of ecumenicity.

In line with Vroom's concern, so what is it that I am doing when I use the term 'Reformed' in this research? I strongly agree with a statement from the *Spirit, Order, and Organization* document, which states: "any conception of an essential order in the Church could no longer be interpreted in 'static' or 'a-historical' terms, but that order has to be understood as functionally related to the particular historical situation" (Gassmann, 1993, 272). In other words, the polity of the Reformed is not derived from a strong conviction towards a set of pre-defined beliefs about one's identity (as a Reformed church), but it should rather be understood as a particular Christian community's response towards discerning God's will in the light of one's particular historical situation (read: context). Thus, in trying to understand Reformed polity, one should always be aware of its theological nature as contextual theology.

Churches all over the world may categorically be distinguished into families based on their common theological and historical roots, confessions, or structure. The World Council of Churches website, for example, lists as many as 19 families (taken from: <https://www.oikoumene.org/en/church-families>). The Reformed Churches form one such family, but even within the Reformed family we can find diverse forms of theology, historical roots, and structures. This diversity within the Reformed circles should not be considered as counterproductive nor as a stumbling block in one's appreciation of Reformed identity. When we start seeing them from the perspective of contextual theology, then we can begin to appreciate their true beauty and authenticity.

Indeed, it is also valid to describe the Reformed tradition from a historical perspective. We could always refer to being Reformed as being churches that have theological and historical roots in the French and Swiss-led Reformation of Jean Calvin, Ulrich Zwingli, and so on. And certainly, we could always look back to classical theological works like the *Institutes* of Calvin, which have gained a 'canonical' status among many Reformed polity scholars. However, from the line of argument I stated earlier, I truly believe that Reformed polity should never be about preserving a prescribed list of do & don'ts that were formulated by their founding fathers for all ages and places. I am convinced that that was not even their intention in the first place.

There are indeed truth propositions in the Reformed tradition that go beyond superficiality that would deserve the status of principles, such as: Christ is the

head of the church. But if we go this far down the road, then would not it be more accurate to say that those principles belong to all churches and not exclusively to the Reformed only? Thus, there are principles that identify what the church is that would be valid when applied to the church in general; and there is also perhaps something that could easily be identified as belonging to the Reformed church without resorting to superficialities. Are there some distinct features that characterize the Reformed churches in general? This is the reason why we opt to use the term ‘features’ of Reformed polity rather than principles. And we will try to propose some features of Reformed polity in Chapter 2.

#### **1.3.4. Focus**

In our attempt to analyze about formal power in a contextual manner in the Reformed polity, we then need to locate where to focus our research on. In Reformed churches, we find the clearest formal articulation of power in their book of church order. Therefore, we will give focus to some of the main aspects of church polity that would articulate power. In our selection here, we choose to focus on the aspects of identity, assembly, and ministry. Identity is the self-understanding of a church, while assembly is how that self-understanding takes shape in real life, and ministry is how that being expresses itself into action. And we can also see that these are the aspects that most directly relate to the features of reformed polity, which will be proposed in Chapter 2.

Along with the church order, there are also many other complementary documents at the synod level – along with the many variations of naming them – such as bylaws, ordinances, working manuals, procedures, minutes, acts of the synod, to name some. A short description regarding the church order samples will be given in the introduction of Chapter 4, but the main content will be our analysis regarding identity, assembly, and ministry.

#### **Identity**

How do you, in a church order, give answer to the question, “who are you”? By giving your name? Or occupation? Describing your situation? Identifying your purpose? Identity is a complex subject. We think we know about it but find difficulties in describing the whole of it. Hence whenever we talk about it, we need to set a clear defining boundary beforehand. How one introduces oneself says something about one’s idea of power. If power lies in one’s historical background, then it will be the one emphasized the most. If power is found within certain cultural values, then those values will be very much emphasized. How churches present themselves says something about how they identify and articulate power. In our discussion regarding identity, we will relate it to the

hermeneutical tension between tradition and context and ask the question whether the polity is more inclined towards tradition or towards context. We will do it by trying to look for traces of traditional identity and contextual identity and compare them.

### **Assemblies**

Reformed polity understands that church exists simultaneously in distinct, but inseparable layers: as local congregations, presbyteries – sometimes also regional synods (the wider assembly) –, and synod (the widest assembly or general assembly). These layers of being a church are united through a series of inter-related or inter-linked councils of representatives. In the church order, we can analyze the degree of authority given to each of the assemblies (and its respective council) and get a picture of the kind of dialogue that is happening within. The guiding question working in the background of doing this kind of reading is trying to determine the position of a particular church with regard to the tension between hierarchy and independentism.

### **Ministry**

The term ministry is a synonym of God's purpose for the church: to serve. Originated from the Latin word *minister* (to serve), it became a widely known title used to denote the teaching office in Reformed churches. In Reformed polity, this term has then somehow become synonymous with the concept of office: Reformed church's ministry is done through the offices. In this recognition for ministry there will be some act of assigning authority. Whether to all church members or to officebearers, this assigned authority will always be balanced with responsibility. We will look into the church orders' description regarding ministry, office, discipline, review and appeal, and relate them with the feature of accountability.

In Chapter 5, we will try to reflect on the relationship between the features of Reformed polity, the historical and cultural background of Reformed churches in Indonesia, and the church orders formulation, in order to see the characteristics of Reformed polity in Indonesian churches with regard to how they articulate authority.

## **1.4. Relevance**

Nowadays we see a trend of churches in the global South emerging as the main body of Christianity in the world. As a result, the landscape of Christianity that once was predominantly European has certainly changed into one that is very

diverse, complex, and dynamic. However, there is still a lack of appreciation for theology that arose from these 'new' contexts, as churches and their theology more often are still oriented towards the West. Although we can see more positive developments in this regard, in general this is still the case for many churches in Indonesia.

Another aspect of the growing complexity of church development in Indonesia is the need for a healthy appreciation of church polity as a theological discipline. Rather than perceiving church polity as something similar to denominational propaganda, which gives more emphasis on defending and preserving inherited polity (and the theology behind it) within a particular denomination, this research wishes to give appreciation and to promote its potential in ecumenical discourse.

## Chapter 2

### Features of Reformed Polity

#### 2.1. The presbyterial-synodical system

In general, we can distinguish three main systems of church governance: Episcopal polity, Congregational polity, and Presbyterian polity. Episcopal polity can be recognized by the presence of a singular leader (or bishop) as in Lutheran, Methodist, or Roman Catholic communions. Congregational polity is characterized by the principle of one person, one vote of a pure democracy, as in Baptist polity. Presbyterian polity may be characterized as a representative democracy and is found in such communions as the Church of Scotland, the Presbyterian Church (USA), or the Reformed Church of Hungary (cf. Wolfe, 1992, 282). What Wolfe here refers to as Presbyterian polity, in the Dutch Reformed tradition is known as presbyterial-synodical polity.

The presbyterial-synodical polity offers a combination between the more centralized (Episcopal) polity and the more independent (Congregational) polity, and is used by churches in Indonesia that claim to be Calvinist (cf. Arintonang, 1995, 70-71). The presbyterial-synodical polity is organized following this general pattern (cf. Arintonang):

- The church consists of local congregations with local assemblies of elders as their leader. Local congregations are the smallest unit in the church organization.
- The wider organization of the church (i.e., presbytery and synod) is based on the premise that all local congregations and offices are of equal status and without hierarchy.
- Local congregations in a specific region are gathered in an assembly called presbytery; and all these presbyteries are gathered together in an assembly called synod.

The main principles of the presbyterial-synodical form of government are these: the rule by a plurality of elders in the local church, the 'submission' of the local governing body to a higher governing body, and the unity of churches

finding its most concrete representation in the connection of the churches and their elders in regional (presbytery, regional synod) and transregional (synod) bodies (Hall, 1994, 5).

Elder is the most common term for the members of a specially designated group for leadership in the presbyterial-synodical polity (cf. Long, 2001, 63). Elders are often laypersons who are elected from the congregation by democratic procedures, but often ministers with the responsibility for preaching and administering the sacraments are also called (teaching) elders (cf. Long). Besides the offices of elder and minister, presbyterial-synodical polity also knows the office of deacon. However, its role and importance can vary between one denomination and another. The presence of elders in the presbyterial-synodical church polity provides checks and balances so that no single person – not even the minister – is vested with power that can be exercised unilaterally (cf. Long, 64). Thus, group decision-making becomes the norm of this polity.

Another characteristic of the presbyterial-synodical structure is that it is heavily connectional, and thus creates a carefully and widely recognized denominational identity (Long, 2001, 66). As Long describes (Long, 77):

The Presbyterian pattern of governance by elders is a major alternative to both Episcopal and congregational polities. It is a highly refined and deeply cherished form of governance, which many have suffered adversity to defend. Its strength lies in the high participation it requires by those charged with its maintenance and utilization. Its possible limitation is that it can become somewhat legalized and that it offers guidance for the mind more adequately than succor for the feelings.

## 2.2. Process models as features

Many scholars have tried to come up with a set of basic qualifiers for Reformed church polity, which are generally referred to as principles of Reformed polity. These principles usually include – but are not limited to: the lordship of Christ in governing the church, the supremacy of the scripture, the autonomy of the congregation, and the necessity of discipline. Moreover, these principles are usually handed down and received faithfully from one church generation to another in such a way that they have become somewhat the *repertoire* of the Reformed. As a practical implication, church polity thus tends to be static.

Another possible explanation for this static tendency is that, while on the one hand churches are opening up to live ecumenically, on the other hand most churches are still living in what Dombois described as the ‘transcendental’ type



of church polity. Here I am borrowing the framework of Dombois' evolutionary phases of church polity (cf. Koffeman, 2014, 31-34). He distinguishes church polity into three types/phases: *epicletic*, *transcendental*, and *ecumenical*. In the epicletic phase, which coincided with the first millennium, church polity developed naturally under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, along with various other developments in church life. With some churches being direct opposites to some others, the churches were then challenged to justify their current position in polity. Thus, a different type of church polity developed, the transcendental type, which coincided with the second millennium. Under crisis or challenges, churches formulated ecclesiological standpoints to legitimize their time. However, this kind of church 'individuation' – a general term in the English language to denote the act or process by which social individuals become differentiated one from the other – tends to lead ecclesiastical life towards a compartmentalized dead end. Fortunately, it became less and less convincing as churches became more and more aware of its destructive tendency. Thus, the churches' efforts to avoid it are characterized by an ecumenical type of church polity. Which is the position of Reformed polity in this progression? With our discussion below, we assume that Reformed polity by nature will tend to be on the movement between transcendental type towards ecumenical type.

Koffeman states that the transcendental type of church polity has lost theological legitimacy and is no longer convincing, and he then continues (Koffeman, 2014, 34):

If church polity, in order to prove its validity, only refers to specific elements of a particular confessional tradition, it automatically excludes itself from academic discourse and therefore loses its theological relevance. Church polity can only be ecumenical today!

Agreeing to that position, so the next question will be how to bridge this paradigm gap between a transcendental and an ecumenical type? We try to offer a perspective on this by trying to appreciate products of church polity as results of certain contextual processes, rather than as universal truth propositions.

Let us relate this thought to practical daily-life observation: Growing up, humans go through similar phases comparable to Dombois' distinction. As toddlers, we lived dependently under our parents' guidance. Then, as we grew older, we start to develop our own independence (some might develop their own – very different – identity). But at a certain point in our life, we mature and realize that interdependence is what humans need to flourish. What makes us change? One thing for certain, is when we start realizing that some rules are not

made to last forever. We sternly forbid a 5-year-old kid playing with fire or electric sockets in our home. But we certainly would not want him to fixate that commandment in his brain forever! We will want him to help us with fire and electricity around the house someday when he is older. Now the thing with static church polity is that in many instances, most of us (churches) tend to preserve those commandments we received when we were toddlers.

What if many of the things that we regard as the principle(s) of our (Reformed) ecclesial life are in fact a product of particular challenges within particular communities during certain times in history? That does not necessarily mean that all of the products from the past are no longer necessary for Reformed polity today; but the point is that we need to always evaluate and have the courage to change some products of Reformed church polity that perhaps have become obsolete. This is the reason for considering the term 'features' instead of 'principles', because principle denotes rigidity and universality.

In the transcendental phase, we could understand why principles were necessary. They were the accepted 'credentials' for integrity and thus ensured survival of the churches participating in that medieval 'ecclesiastical contest'. This is clear from historical events, such as one that led Guido de Bres to formulate the Belgic Confession. That confession was written as a plea for understanding and toleration from the King of Spain during the Spanish inquisition in the Lowlands. The Belgic Confession was intended to point out the continuity of Reformed belief with that of the ancient Christian creeds while on the other hand pointing out its difference from the Catholic belief (and the Anabaptist teachings). In other words, the confession was formulated to show the basic principles that Reformed churches share with the rest of Christianity, but also to emphasize different features in living their faith.

On a side note: The Belgic confession example perhaps could also tell us that churches have had the opportunity to develop a more ecumenical type of church polity. A kind of linking attempt from the transcendental phase towards ecumenical was made there. Unfortunately, at that time nobody crossed that 'bridge' that could have peacefully linked the two, but they were simply standing each on their own side of the bridge. We failed to learn that lesson in the past, and current ecumenical discussions are showing us that we are still struggling to accept that lesson.

In this situation regarding identity, we are reminded of the Theseus' ship paradox (Cohen, 2004):

The ship wherein Theseus and the youth of Athens returned had thirty oars, and was preserved by the Athenians down even to the time of Demetrius Phalereus, for they took away the old planks as they de-

cayed, putting in new and stronger timber in their place, insomuch that this ship became a standing example among the philosophers, for the logical question of things that grow; one side holding that the ship remained the same, and the other contending that it was not the same. ... The original puzzle is this: Over the years, the Athenians replaced each plank in the original ship of Theseus as it decayed, thereby keeping it in good repair. Eventually, there was not a single plank left of the original ship. So, did the Athenians still have one and the same ship that used to belong to Theseus?

There are many versions of this story. One example is, what if someone built the same exact ship duplicate from all the thrown away pieces of Theseus' ship? Then, which one would you consider as the real Theseus' ship?

The Theseus ship story resonates with our dilemma regarding Reformed identity in different contexts. Should we be that one ship that has been restored with new planks, or should we be the one built completely from the original pieces, in order to carry our Reformed identity? Many developments have taken place in Reformed life since the day of the classic reformers and their writings: the Dutch socio-political circumstances that helped shape the Reformed tradition through colonization (e.g., in Indonesia, South Africa) and immigration (e.g., North America), Reformed church demography that is no longer Eurocentric, and many more.

Should being Reformed mean referring back to historical documents alone, with the risk of being irrelevant *clichés*, overused expressions that do not answer much to the present challenges in Reformed polity? Or should we replace old rotten planks in order to be relevant, even though they might change our appearances greatly? Theseus' ship paradox is a fine example of the philosophical questions concerning identity, persistence, and perhaps consciousness, which we cannot give a definite answer to.

However, in the context of church polity, trivialities such as this can be circumvented if we introduce a sense of purpose to the question on the table. From a legal perspective, the newly restored Theseus ship in its current condition might be considered as the correct answer. But for collectors of antiques, the one made from all the old pieces perhaps contains more history and value. Which one tells us more about our authentic identity: relevance, or antiquity? A static approach toward polity tends to give principal status to many antiques that were merely features, thus further preserving the transcendental characteristic of church polity rather than fostering ecumenical awareness. Sanctifying historical products does not guarantee restoration of that 'Reformed consciousness' they

once bore witness to. In doing so, one might even deny that very consciousness. We believe that theological traditions formulated by earlier generations in the Reformed churches should be respected; they – to a certain degree – are in fact formal points of departure for Reformed polity. However, we are not trying to erase the past, we just should not be caged in it.

From an ecumenically oriented perspective, we can find Reformed identity through re-reading traditions with the awareness that they were products arising from specific challenges in specific contexts. And our proposal here is to try appreciating our theological heritage more as ‘process models’; that we appreciate them as models for the process of contextualization rather than simply as final outcomes. For example, Reformed churches often put strong emphasis on – and some would rightly defend it as a decisive principle – the autonomy of the local congregation. Instead of rigidly defending local autonomy as a *sine qua non* for Reformed polity, which was likely the outcome or product of a certain contextual challenge in church history, we could on the other hand analyze the contributing factors at play and the processes that took place that finally gave birth to that specific feature of polity.

Is it not true that our special emphasis on local autonomy was conceived in a time when a hierarchical model of church polity was considered as the major threat to ecclesiastical life, while ‘independentism’ was not yet considered a problem? If we look more closely, we will find that both hierarchy and independentism are rejected in Emden, 1571 (cf. Koffeman, in Koffeman and Witte, 2001, 72). But that particular context made them give special prominence to the autonomy of the local congregations. This kind of treatment is what we mean when proposing to treat polity features as ‘process models’. Speelman suggests that a key feature of Protestant church polity, is that it is ‘distinctively flexible’ (cf. Speelman, in Koffeman and Smit, 2014, 187-191). And Reformed polity could indeed be considered as ‘flexible’. But it is not irresponsibly flexible, because its flexibility should be understood as the result of the church’s process of honestly responding to God’s guidance. Perhaps, this ‘flexibility’ is also another reason why some people tend to see Reformed churches as theologically more liberal and less traditional than Anglicans, Orthodox, and Roman Catholics (cf. Lems, 2013, 42-46). However, imagine how less rigid our polity and theology – and perhaps politicians and theologians – would be if traditions could be appraised more as ‘processes’ rather than ‘products’.

## 2.3. Power-related Features in Reformed Polity

From a descriptive approach, we would like to suggest three processes that can be regarded as characteristic features of Reformed polity that directly deal with the notion of power. The three are inter-related and exist as a whole, hence explain each other.

### 2.3.1. Hermeneutical tension between tradition and context

There's a saying that is often attributed to Margaret Mead: "Always remember that you are absolutely unique. Just like everyone else." (<https://quoteinvestigator.com/2014/11/10/you-unique/>) We can relate this with how churches usually think about their scriptural reasoning regarding polity. Churches all around the globe ground their diverse theology in what they perceive as their 'unique' interpretation of the bible. And so does every other church. So, what is so unique about our scriptural grounding?

From the scripture, we derive the proposition that Christ is the sole head of the church. Christ is known, lives, and guides the church through his Word. In the *Belgic Confession* (Art. 29) we find the following statements:

The true church can be recognized if it has the following marks: The church engages in the pure preaching of the gospel; it makes use of the pure administration of the sacraments as Christ instituted them; it practices church discipline for correcting faults. In short, it governs itself according to the pure Word of God, rejecting all things contrary to it and holding Jesus Christ as the only Head. By these marks one can be assured of recognizing the true church – and no one ought to be separated from it.

After two short paragraphs, it then continues with...

As for the false church, it assigns more authority to itself and its ordinances than to the Word of God; it does not want to subject itself to the yoke of Christ; it does not administer the sacraments as Christ commanded in his Word; it rather adds to them or subtracts from them as it pleases; it bases itself on humans, more than on Jesus Christ; it persecutes those who live holy lives according to the Word of God and who rebuke it for its faults, greed, and idolatry. These two churches are easy to recognize and thus to distinguish from each other.

Here we find a juxtaposition between two concepts of the church, i.e. the true and the false church, depending on how they place themselves under the guidance of the Word. And this is one example of Reformed churches' scriptural ground for ministry (i.e., the proclamation of the Word, administration of sacraments, and discipline). In that (uniquely) Reformed logic, all things related to ministry are explained and justified by the scripture. Reformed churches have somehow developed this unique hermeneutical tension between tradition and context, and context is usually given more authority than tradition. In other words, beneath the surface of the Reformed traditions, there are always inclinations for contextual hermeneutics. In Chapter 1 we have made a general description about contextual theology, so here contextual hermeneutics is a process where the tension between scriptural readings and contextual challenges give birth to a relevant tradition.

From this framework, the Belgic Confession can be appreciated more as a context-challenged confession rather than a traditionally defined one. It was formulated not out of the need to have a formal tradition, but because it was relevant to do so to defend it against a threat. They point to the bible first, and only later formulate certain confessional statements (read: traditions) when they are challenged to do so.

Referring to tradition was not the first instinct of the Reformed churches, scripture and context are. And Reformed churches tend to give higher priority to sensitivity towards contexts in doing hermeneutics, and only later formulate specific theological formulations (which afterwards became the traditions we came to know of) as we deal with challenges that arise in those specific contexts. One example of this emphasis on contextual relevance can be seen in this excerpt, taken from the introduction part of CRCNA's document about the Belgic Confession (retrieved from <https://www.crcna.org/welcome/beliefs/confessions/belgic-confession>):

The text of Article 36 is presented in two forms in this edition because the Christian Reformed Church in 1938 and 1985 decided to revise it from the original text in order to set forth what it judged to be a more biblical statement on the relationship between church and state, and to eliminate language that denounced 'Anabaptists, other anarchists . . .' and so on. The Reformed Church in America has not made any amendments to the Belgic Confession. However, when the Reformed Church in America adopted the Belgic Confession in 1792 as one of the three confessional Standards of Unity, it also adopted the Explanatory Articles that reconciled the statements in the three standards and the

Church Order of Dort with the situation in which it existed in the newly independent United States of America.

From this example, we can see how Reformed churches do not simply follow tradition, but they process it in order to become relevant to the challenges of their context. And that explains the vast diversity of theological traditions present in the Reformed family. Calvin's work *The Institutes* gained popularity in a western-legalistic point of view perhaps because it provided the Reformed churches of that time with a somewhat fixed (and sound) scriptural grounding for dealing with their contexts. They helped the church of that time with a provisional position regarding what the scripture has to say for their specific contextual challenges. They served as tools, rather than statues. Muller makes an interesting remark about the Reformed traditions (Muller, in Bagchi & Steinmetz, 130):

The movement itself was in fact fairly diverse – bounded by confessional norms but guided by the thought of a group of founders and formulators rather than by a single person, and developed on an international scale by numerous theologians and exegetes, none of whom took it as their central task to reproduce Calvin's theology in other times and places.

As we've progressed, we now have somewhat 'fixed theological groundings' in the classic works on the one hand, and the ever-changing challenges from diverse contexts on the other hand. The history of the Reformed churches itself is nothing else than a process wherein the traditions are constantly challenged and changed by context. These are the colors with which we draw our theological debates until today. We have come a long way since the days of the Reformation, but not many things have changed. Has our fascination to the classics of Reformed traditions persuaded the Reformed scripture-context-tradition hermeneutics to become rigidly tradition-bound?

For example, as van der Borght criticized, we tend to develop our concept of ministry into the realm of practical theology only (cf. van der Borght, 2007, xi-xviii). Why? Because – as some might think – our polity for ministry is already final! The same rigidity could be mentioned concerning many aspects of our church life, such as the offices of ministry, discipline, liturgy, and so on. The risk of having our theology being defined with such fixed scriptural reasoning is that we usually no longer feel the need to question it.

On the other hand, however, traditions or fixed scriptural groundings can never eliminate the dynamics of human life. That is why we see such plurality in the Reformed family all over the world; because our keen sensitivity to the challenge of context allows us to adapt and adjust better than our obedience to tradition which tends to make us see in 'black or white'. In a time when even our mobile phone displays can distinguish up to millions of colors between black and white, limiting our theological perception to 'black or white' would only be a setback. However, no matter how rigidly tradition-bound the Reformed churches may become, the power of context will always find a way, either through the revision of traditions or schisms.

This is how the concept of authority has developed in the Reformed churches. In its appreciation of the authority of the scripture, there is always a tension between tradition and context. On the one hand, there are demands to give primary authority to tradition instead of context. After all, tradition does provide a stable concept of identity to the church. But on the other hand, because context is always changing, a constant crisis of identity will emerge revealing the limitations of anchoring identity in tradition. Therefore, Reformed polity will tend to incline towards context more than to tradition in its hermeneutics. This hermeneutical tension where context trumps over tradition is one feature for Reformed polity.

### **2.3.2. Dialogue**

Earlier we mentioned already Christ's headship over the church. However, as the church then grew larger in number, further questions arose regarding how Christ governs this enlarging and, most certainly, diversifying community of believers. If we take a look at church history, we can see a progression in the Reformed churches towards understanding the church as multilayered. I borrow Dombois' polity phases again as a framework for a general description of that progression (here I distinguish the term 'The Church' to refer to the notion of one true holy apostolic Church as a whole, from the term 'the churches' to refer to the many expressions of that one true holy apostolic Church).

In the epicletic phase, people had a certain level of common understanding regarding what the Church is. There was not any specific definition nor clear formulation of what the one true holy apostolic Church is, but somehow people had a strong intuition about what it was (and how it looked like). People gathered in communions as communities of believers, as local congregations, which hinted at and reminded them of this one true holy apostolic Church. The local congregations were the entrance to this common consciousness of the Church. There was no distinguishable border between the churches and the Church. But



from an organizational perspective, this honeymoon period was a mess. Teaching and leadership authority began to fade as they were transferred from one generation to another. This was the cue for the transcendental phase to begin.

The transcendental phase was, in other words, a giant effort to tidy up the organizational mess felt in the epicletic phase. Together with the growth of civilizations, national developments, migrations, economic transactions, the communities of congregations just became too large to be unorganized. An informal common consciousness about their identity was no longer sufficient to hold them together. Local communities were compelled to define their Christian identity in clear formulations, specifying who are regarded as the true Church, and who are not. Be within those borders, and you are part of the Church; and be outside of them, and you are not. There arose a strong sense of certainty about their identity as churches, but at the expense of fading common consciousness and the narrowing definition of what it meant to be the Church.

This great organizational aspect of the transcendental period unfortunately then led these churches to fall into compartmentalized dead ends. As churches began to realize that these formulations of theological convictions are as imperfect as humans themselves, they started to deconstruct those borders (e.g., through unifications) and/or to introduce new tools and skills between one another (e.g., through ecumenical movements, agreements, co-operations). There is a rejuvenated sense of belonging to this common consciousness of being the Church, while at the same time reevaluating their own expressions of being the churches. These dynamics mark the ecumenical phase we are currently – or some might say, hopefully – living in.

In the Reformed churches, their concept of identity progressed in parallel with the general description above.

First, we saw various local churches that shared a common ‘Reformed’ consciousness. Congregations grew naturally together with civilizations, held together by the authoritative teaching (and guidance) of the reformers. They were the epicletics in Reformed polity. But then as many contextual challenges arose, new formal teachings and regulations were introduced that would set up new sets of borders in defining one’s identity: which clothes to wear, what song books to use, which historical confessions represent us, and so on. But one thing is for certain; this kind of progress has shaped these churches into relatively homogenous organizational entities with a hint of superiority that allowed them to expand their ‘franchise’ of Christianity further abroad. They were the transcendentals in Reformed polity (In the Indonesian context, during the Dutch government this model of ‘franchised’ Christianity is established even more through a government regulation that limits missionary work only within a spe-

cific area – which almost always correlate with a specific tribe. As a result, the portrait of Indonesian Reformed churches today can easily be identified with their specific tribal identity).

However, bearing in mind that the Reformed are more responsive toward context than tradition in their hermeneutics, they ended up with many different – even contrasting – expressions of Reformed identity while at the same time confessing to be the same. This diversity in unity regarding identity might be the reason why Reformed churches are relatively more prepared in transitioning towards the ecumenical era.

So, the Reformed clearly have no rigidly fixed concept regarding the church. Certain circumstances shaped thoughts that considered the centrality of local congregations; while other circumstances formed positions that considered the wider communion of congregations to be central. And it was not about choosing between two possible options only, but a wide spectrum of alternatives with nuances among them.

These variations combined with their progressions from transcendental to ecumenical, make it difficult for us to tell where exactly the Reformed churches reside. However, the general pattern we usually find would be layered like this:

- The local congregation, represented by the local council (session, or consistory); they are the expression of unity between believers who belong to the same congregation.
- The presbytery (or classis), or the wider church, represented by the presbytery (or classis) council; they are the expression of unity between local churches within a certain region. Sometimes out of practical considerations (coverage area, time, and financial efficiency, etc.) another layer could be introduced. They are called regional synods.
- The synod, or the widest church, represented by the synod council; it is an expression of unity between the whole of local and wider churches within that denomination – usually inside the border of a country because of legal jurisdiction considerations.

In a friendly conversation during a church polity conference in Princeton in April 2016, Joshua Bode, a pastor in the Reformed Church in America made this comment regarding the level of unity in the three layers: “Consistory is unity in least diversity, presbytery is unity in moderate diversity, and synod is unity in most diversity”. All three layers are considered to be the same expression of that one communion, which as a whole we usually term denomination. They are in every layer a complete church, whether as each local congregation

or together as a whole. This is what we call the multi-layered nature of the church within a presbyterial-synodical system.

We will also find differing positions in determining who/which layer should play a central role. Some scholars propose the central role of the local congregation by emphasizing its autonomy. The arguments along this line of thought would be (Van Huffel in Janssen and Koffeman, 2014, 37):

The local congregation is a complete church, and is thus in principle independent of other congregations or churches. The local congregation is, in itself, a complete manifestation of the body of Christ and is subject to Christ the head of the church.

At the synod of the Walloon churches, held in Paris in 1559, it was decided as a rule in the church that “No church may assume primacy or domination over another.” (De Ridder quoted in Faber, 2020, 237). Also, at the Convent of Wezel the following principle was approved: “No church shall in any way lord it over other churches, no officebearer over other officebearers.” (Bouwman, 1999). And the synod of Emden in the very first article of its Church Order stated: “No church shall lord it over another church, no minister of the Word, no elder or deacon shall lord it over another, but each one shall guard him against all suspicion and enticement to lord it over.” (Koffeman, in Koffeman and Witte, 2001, 72). All these statements serve to highlight one thing, that in the church where Christ is the sole head, domination is not allowed. To make it more explicit, usually the denominations that hold this view would use the term churches (plural) rather than church as their synod name. This perhaps serves as a gesture that says each congregation within that synod has the central authority.

However, should we not understand this special emphasis on local autonomy against the background of the Reformation, which in general was under the spirit of distancing itself from the Roman Catholic Church of that time? Therefore, it was justifiable to perceive the idea of autonomy or independence as the most appropriate model for being a church. Local congregation’s autonomy is considered effective for avoiding hierarchy in church polity.

However, to fixate emphasis on local congregation’s autonomy runs the risk of independentism, as Emden seriously reminded its reader in its final article (Koffeman, in Koffeman and Witte, 2001, 72):

These articles regarding the legal and suitable order of the churches have been agreed upon unanimously insofar that they may and should be changed, added to and reduced if the interest of the churches should

request it. However, no particular church will be free to do so, but all churches will apply themselves to maintaining these articles until it has been decided otherwise in a synodical meeting.

The real deciding factor in this dialogue is the hermeneutics. The essence of the discussion was not about whether the local congregations or the presbytery or the synod would have the highest authority. It was clear for the Reformed that the Scripture is central as representation of God's governance over them. So, it was more a question of who was obeying the scripture more in specific cases. Questions like this are settled through dialogues between the layers, held regularly between them through meetings. It is through this dialogical process of discerning what the scripture is saying for a specific case, that power is then given. This designation of authority is not fixed to a single agent, but rather fluid since any one of the parties involved could be given a central role in different cases depending on the meeting's decision. The many layers in that one denomination create also, as a consequence, many complications. The issue of decision making, how each layer relates to each other, and how the church should be governed, to name a few, are matters that have been in the center of theological discussions in Reformed circles. The guiding key word is always hermeneutics: the one position considered by the meetings to obey the scripture the most will have the final say in polity. This is why in Reformed polity council meetings deserve serious attention.

Churches held together in a synod communion can be formally recognized through common confession and church order. The confessions and the church order function somewhat like a common consciousness regarding a denomination's identity that should assist them to navigate through contemporary issues in their regular meetings (read: dialogues). The purpose of these meetings was problem solving, be it regarding teachings, daily life, or financial matters. Difficult issues around teachings used to be the central aspect of these meetings. The confessions and many other documents we have in the present bear witness to that difficult and costly process. But those end products were the results of high-participatory interaction of the layers of the church, meeting together as equals deciding important matters regarding the life of the church. This egalitarian interaction through the meetings of the different layers of the church, this is what we mean by 'dialogue' as the feature of Reformed polity.

### **2.3.3. Accountability**

Reformed polity tends to be very cautious in dealing with the notion of power in the church. Perhaps, that is how the Reformed logic works, always living in a

struggle between avoiding hierarchy in the widest church and allowing too much independence in the local church. Take for example, the way Reformed churches formulate ministry in their polity. All Reformed churches without doubt would agree to the statement that Christ – as the Head of the Church – has the highest power in the church. His power is manifested in the Word, and then through the offices he instituted for the church. Through that Christ-given authority, the offices carry out the ministry of the church. That is a very general description about the authority for ministry that can easily be accepted by any Reformed denomination. But when it comes to articulating these basic propositions into church polity, then most of us would start disagreeing – even separating – as the many instances in our history show us.

It is interesting to see that to address this caution towards power, Reformed churches will feature a demand for accountability. That is why in Reformed polity the issue of power is always expressed in ‘balancing acts’ between authority and responsibility. Different denominations all over the world might have different –some might seem contradicting – arrangements regarding the authority of the different offices, but they would have to be regulated with such standard of accountability that in the end they are essentially the same. With every right there will be obligations going with it, with every privilege there will be limits and restrictions, with every position there will be terms and conditions applied. In Reformed polity, authority never stands on its own, but is always based on and limited by the scripture. The authority to govern will always be limited by the responsibility to serve. There are, and will always be, mechanisms for ‘checks and balances’ whenever we deal with power in the church.

Another practical example of such extra caution can be found in how Reformed polity regulates power between church layers. On the one hand, the authority of the local assemblies is emphasized to safeguard the church from hierarchy; but, on the other hand, they are also responsible to obey decisions they made through wider assemblies to prevent independentism (the term used nowadays would usually be ‘congregationalism’; we use independentism in order to be consistent with the previous usage quoting Emden). This perpetual balancing act between autonomy and interdependence of the local churches is perhaps one of the most fascinating features in Reformed church polity.

Regarding assemblies, Calvin explained in *Institutes* book IV chapter 9 point 13 (retrieved from <https://ccel.org/ccel/calvin/institutes/institutes?queryID=3397648&resultID=698>):

We readily admit, that when any doctrine is brought under discussion, there is not a better or surer remedy than for a council of true bishops to meet and discuss the controverted point. There will be much more weight in a decision of this kind, to which the pastors of churches have agreed in common after invoking the Spirit of Christ, than if each, adopting it for himself, should deliver it to his people, or a few individuals should meet in private and decide. Secondly, when bishops have assembled in one place, they deliberate more conveniently in common, fixing both the doctrine and the form of teaching it, lest diversity give offence. Thirdly, Paul prescribes this method of determining doctrine. For when he gives the power of deciding to a single church, he shows what the course of procedure should be in more important cases – namely, that the churches together are to take common cognizance.

Note that for the more important matters in the church, Calvin thought that decisions made in the wider assemblies deserved higher respect than decisions made in the narrower assemblies. This is the kind of balancing act we are talking about; to avoid excessive power in the local congregation by putting them into dialogue with the wider assembly. In this manner, we should not see Calvin's advice as a matter of hierarchy between assemblies, or as betrayal of the local congregation's autonomy, but rather as a measure of moderation. I suppose that is the reason why the term 'moderator' becomes the English language translation for the head-leadership title in many Reformed denominations.

While recognizing the power and responsibilities of the wider assemblies on the one hand, it should be noted that they are also limited. They should not attend to matters that could be dealt with at the narrower assemblies, and should rather concentrate on issues that are really common to all churches within that specific denomination. Again, here we see a process of re-balancing authority with responsibility. Reformed polity does not separate authority from responsibility.

Another example of such caution is visible in the right to ask for review and appeal. When a church member feels that his or her right has been violated, or the church council has violated the Word or the church order, he or she has the right to ask for review and appeal. In this case, the right of the church members to review and appeal becomes the formal limit for the officebearers' authority in church leadership.

However, this pattern of balancing authority with responsibility also has its limitation. We can agree with the statement from A. van de Beek (as cited in Van der Borght, 2007, 410):

The revulsion of ministerial hierarchy leads to a bureaucratic structure in which nobody has the final responsibility and in which power is shadowy: ... the expert minister, the serving elder, the converted or committed member of the congregation, the church governor or official or faceless commission all have power. Up to a point they all have power. They also limit each other's power. But because they all work in different areas the power in their own area is very often greater than that of the bishops.

What we get from that paragraph is that when we try to nullify everything related to authority, simply for the sake of security, that will usually result in non-functioning authority because everybody just works to cancel each other out, or worse, to camouflage tyrants within specific borders of authority. Hypothetically speaking, re-introducing the office of bishop as the office of unity has been one suggestion that could address to this problem. As long as accountability – rather than cautiousness – remains to be the key word, it is even possible to introduce the bishop as the office of unity. The Reformed are wary about power in the church, and the way they deal with it is by arranging mechanisms for checking and balancing between authority and responsibility. It is a sort of a Reformed way to theologially justify the presence and the exercise of power in the church. This demand for accountability is the third feature we mentioned.

From our discussion in this chapter, we see that Reformed polity can also be seen from its characteristic features, which are: Hermeneutical tension between tradition and context, Dialogue, and Accountability. The three features are inter-related: Reformed polity needs to be accountable in its hermeneutics and dialogues. But even in discerning what is accountable, the need for dialogue in tension between tradition and context also came into being. In other words, the three features are integral. Certainly, there are more processes to be discovered that could help us better understand the patterns of Reformed polity's 'ecclesiastical fabric'. However, in our research here, we will limit to these three features as we take a closer look of the church orders later in Chapter 4.

## **2.4. Reformed churches in Indonesia**

For this research, I will especially try to see how power and polity interact in the Reformed tradition that I have come to be familiar with: the polity of Reformed churches in Indonesia. My decision to limit the scope only to the polity of Reformed churches in Indonesia is not without justification. Almost all traditional churches that were planted in Indonesia initially came through Dutch

Reformed agencies, whether directly or indirectly. The Reformed heritage has played a role of major importance in defining the landscape of Protestantism in Indonesia, as we can see from the thirty synods that came together in 1950 and founded the Indonesian Council of Churches (then DGI, now PGI) – nearly all of which have Dutch Reformed roots. That founding conference was held on the 21<sup>st</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> of May 1950, in Jakarta Theological Seminary (now STFT Jakarta), and was attended by: Huria Kristen Batak Protestan, Gereja Kristen Protestan Bali, Gereja Methodist Sumatera, Banua Niha Kristen Protestan, Gereja Kalimantan Evangelis, Gereja Protestan di Indonesia bagian Barat, Gereformeerde Kerken in Indonesia, Gereja Kristen Pasundan, Gereja Kristen Sekitar Muria, Gereja Kristen Jawa Tengah, Gereja Kristen Djawi Wetan, Tionghoa Kie Tok Kauw Hwee/Hoe Hwee Jawa Barat, Tionghoa Kie Tok Kauw Hwee/Hoe Hwee Jawa Timur, Tionghoa Kie Tok Kauw Hwee/Hoe Hwee Jakarta, Gereja Kristen Protestan Bali, Gereja Kristen Sumba, Gereja Masehi Injili Timur, Gereja Masehi Injili Sangehe & Talaut, Gereja Masehi Injili Minahasa, Gereja Masehi Injili Bolaang Mongondow, Gereja Kristen Sulawesi Tengah, Gereja Kristen Toraja, Gereja Kristen Toraja Mamasa, Gereja Kristen Sulawesi Tenggara, Gereja Kristen Sulawesi Selatan Makassar, Gereja Masehi Injili Halmahera, Gereja Protestan Maluku, Gereja Masehi Injili Irian, Gereja Protestan di Indonesia (PGI, 2010; also from <https://pgi.or.id/sejarah-singkat/>). Therefore, in focusing our research to how the Reformed churches in Indonesia articulate power in their polity, we can get a better understanding about how power is handled in the polity of Indonesian churches in general.

Who do we mean by the Reformed churches in Indonesia? Reformed churches in Indonesia are generally born from one of three wombs: the state, the missionary societies, and individual initiatives. The Dutch East-Indie government directly supported the life of *De Protestantische Kerk in Nederlandsch-Indië* (also known as *Indische Kerk*, and later in Bahasa Indonesia, *Gereja Protestan Indonesia*); and the many missionary bodies planted many other churches in their images. These two were the main circles in Reformed church activities in Indonesia; however, there were also many local initiatives where individuals stumbled upon Christianity, became converted, and later founded their own churches. Most of these individual churches were founded by immigrants or their descendants, like the Chinese descendants' community who at that time gained a middle-class status in society when classified as *Vreemde Oosterlingen* (together with Arabic, Indian, Turkish, Persian, and many other smaller groups of immigrants that were not European) through a government regulation in 1854. In general, they were not a direct target for mission by the *Indische Kerk* or the mission bodies. I consider them as local initiatives, alt-



though at a later stage they also got support from the two main circles of churches mentioned above.

For this research, I choose one synod from each of the three wombs as samples:

- The Gereja Masehi Injili di Timor (GMIT) representing churches from the *Indische Kerk*
- The Gereja Kristen Sumba (GKS) representing churches from the missionary bodies
- The Gereja Kristen Indonesia (GKI) representing churches from local initiatives

A general historical description of these churches will be given in Chapter 3 of this book.



## Chapter 3

### Reformed Churches in Indonesia: A Historical & Cultural Background of Polity

#### 3.1. A general historical survey

Christianity was first introduced to the islands that now comprise eastern Indonesia by Portuguese expeditions in the early 16th century. However, there was neither enough sovereignty nor motivation for the Portuguese Catholic missions to make a lasting impact during that period. At the turn of the 17th century, Protestantism came along with the settlement of the Dutch East India Company (Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie/VOC) and soon it absorbed many of the remaining Catholics in the region formally into Dutch Protestantism.

Churches were founded by the VOC to care for the religious needs of the Dutch people there. The VOC had no interest in missionary activities; as long as the Christians did not disturb their business and avoided conflict with the Moslems, they were given room to grow. Besides the practical considerations already mentioned, another theory regarding this reluctance for mission is, that it was because: first, the commissaries of the VOC were mostly broad minded aristocrats rather than orthodox Reformed leaders; and second, the Reformed tradition from the time of John Calvin did not really stimulate foreign mission (Aritonang & Steenbrink, 2008, 101).

It is clear that ministers from the Netherlands were not interested to come to Indonesia, for they did not want to be simply servants of the VOC, and most of those that finally came to the archipelago did so under bad motives. So, in general, the quality of the missionaries was far from satisfying. From 1602 to 1633, there was a special place in Leiden to prepare missionaries to Indonesia that gave birth to some excellent ministers, but the VOC discontinued it because of its high costs. However, it was more likely so, because the VOC didn't like the criticism they frequently received from these ministers (Van den End, 1997, 223). In 1799, the VOC was dismissed due to bankruptcy, and all its assets were taken over by the Dutch state. During the next years all Dutch overseas

possessions were then lost to the English, and in 1815 the territory that nowadays is Indonesia was restored to the newly established kingdom of the Netherlands (Aritonang & Steenbrink, 137). Hence, since 1815 government policy in the archipelago (including matters regarding church activities) was determined by the Dutch Crown, and later after 1849 increasingly by the Parliament (Aritonang & Steenbrink, 137).

In general, all regulators of church activities during the period of 1700-1900 maintained the same policy of maintaining order. However, this change of regulators did have an impact in the different way they dealt with their colony: they no longer focused on trade only, but became more territorial and to some degree by modern humanitarian ambitions (Aritonang & Steenbrink, 137).

Meanwhile, during that same period, Islam, which in 1500 was still professed only in some parts of Sumatra and Java, had grown by 1800 to cover the majority of the Indonesian region (cf. Van den End, 1996, 137). On the other hand, even though Christianity in Indonesia had developed into a sizeable number, they had certain problematic characteristics, as observed by some missionaries: 1) They could not fully separate Christianity from ancestor-related worships, 2) Christianity was for Sunday, and adat (local customs) was for the rest of the week, 3) There were legalistic tendencies in viewing Christianity, and 4) Christianity was viewed especially from the perspective of magi and myth (cf. Van den End and Weijtjens, 1993, 334-336).

In the 19th century, the Dutch government's political power over the region was expanding enormously. When in 1816 the Dutch did retake their position in Indonesia after a brief power transition to the British (1811-1816), they reestablished the *Protestantsche Kerk in Nederlandsch-Indie* (Protestant Church in the Netherlands Indies), commonly referred to as the *Indische Kerk*, as a union of the various denominations that were present in the colony (Aritonang & Steenbrink, 384). The Indische Kerk organized both the existing indigenous Christian communities and the European Christians, and eventually also included even the Lutherans, into a single church organization that maintained close ties with the government in financial and organisational matters (cf. Aritonang & Steenbrink, 138). This nature of the Indische Kerk as being a government agency perhaps could explain the fact that their church order, called *Reglement* (Regulation, 1844), did not contain a creedal formula (cf. Aritonang & Steenbrink, 138). Van den End mentions three characteristics of this church: It turned out to be a state church, it has lost its essential characteristics in terms of confession of faith and church order, organization was set up in a hierarchical structure and Indonesian Christians were not seriously taken into account in leadership (Cf. Purwanto, 1997, pp. 16-17).

Developments in the Netherlands explain the background of the *Indische Kerk*. The newfound superiority of the Dutch crown over the church had a major impact in the Dutch church. In 1798, under French rule the Dutch Reformed Church was disestablished as the country's official religion, but in 1816 King William I, the first king of the newly established Kingdom of the Netherlands, reorganized and renamed the church (Britannica, 2010). The 1816 Regulation (*Algemeen Reglement*) was introduced by the secular state, which basically made the church a kind of department of state for carrying out the policies of the king and his government (Wintle, in Gilley & Stanley, 2006, 336). The change is also reflected in how the church was organized; it became a top-down corporate structure where the Synod ran the regional church assemblies, while they in turn were in charge of the local congregations (Wintle, in Gilley & Stanley, 336). Issues of confession were supposed not to be part of the church administration. This became the characteristic of the *Hervormd* church. In the following years, opposition to these changes arose lead first and foremost by a strict orthodox Calvinist groups, organized in congregations which rejected church hierarchy. Although their numbers were very small, but they were at the heart of a major schism in 1834, and by 1850 had become a recognized group in Dutch religious life (Wintle, in Gilley & Stanley, 337). After them, arose a larger group of orthodox Calvinist, who were also determined to keep to the principles of the church of Calvin and the Dutch Revolt, but who were not as severe in their doctrine as the previous group (Wintle, in Gilley & Stanley, 337). In 1886, this led to another large schism, called the *Doleantie*, which formed the *Gereformeerde Kerken*, reverting to the previous name of the church (*gereformeerd*, as opposed to *hervormd*) and rejecting all the innovations associated with the new church structure introduced by the state in 1816 (Wintle, in Gilley & Stanley, 337). This group in 1892 join forces with the smaller group that split in 1834 (Wintle, in Gilley & Stanley, 337), into the *Gereformeerde Kerken* in Nederland.

However, in the Indonesian archipelago, the new start of the *Indische Kerk* in the 19th century was also complemented by missionary activities born out of fresh optimism and new interest for mission in Europe already started in the second half of the eighteenth century. Missionary societies, which in most cases had no formal ties with any church, were trying to convert the Netherlands Indies population. Aritonang and Steenbrink describe the situation on the field during that period (Aritonang & Steenbrink, 140):

During the nineteenth century more societies were founded. They divided the Netherlands Indies among themselves or were allotted territories by

the government, and set about Christianizing the population of these territories. ... Throughout the nineteenth century, the relationship among the Protestant missionary societies working in Indonesia hardly posed a problem. There was no case of missionaries intruding in regions already 'occupied' by another mission. The government, bent on preventing any cause of unrest among the indigenous population, would have forbidden them. It could do so, because according to the statutes regulating the government of the Netherlands Indies (*Regeeringsreglement*, 1854) every European 'clergyman,' Dutch or foreign, needed a special permit to perform religious tasks, including mission work, a permit that was always restricted to a well-circumscribed area. This policy was popularly known as the 'ban on double mission.' Actually, all Protestant missions entering before 1900 (with the exception of the Baptists) belonged to churches of the Reformed or mixed Lutheran-Reformed type, so that there was no motive to reach out to people outside the territory allotted to them.

The presence of missionaries alongside the Indische Kerk in the 19th century marked the transition in the region, from a single version of Christianity (as previously introduced by the Portuguese through Catholicism, and then by the VOC – and later the Dutch government with the Indische Kerk) into a pluriformity of denominations, although still of Dutch reformed nature in general. Nevertheless, it was the Dutch government that held control over them. With the introduction of the *Regeeringsreglement* in 1854, missionary activities were limited to areas where Islam was absent or regions where traditional religions were strong. The motive behind this – beside maintaining order – was that they wanted to secure the followers of these traditional religions to become Christians rather than converting into Islam (who were more hostile towards the Dutch government compared with the Indonesian Christians). Hence, the government became the designator for missionary activities, specifically allocating different mission bodies to appointed regions. With most of Indonesia's population centers already being Islamized, this meant that the missionaries were working in relatively isolated areas surrounded by Moslem neighbourhoods - a situation that forced the missionaries to be cooperative with the government interest in exchange for security.

Plausably, the missionary societies in the 19th century did not have any real problem accepting the 1854 regulation. This perhaps could be best explained with this observation made by Aritonang and Steenbrink (Aritonang & Steenbrink, 143):

With the exception of the Mennonites, all European missionary societies were rooted in territorial (national) churches. That fact influenced the choices they made on the mission field. They did not, like the Anglo-American missions after 1900, focus upon the population centers (actually, before 1900 there were very few cities in the Netherlands Indies). Generally, they chose as their field the territory or part of the territory of a particular ethnic unit. To be sure, they applied church discipline with vigor, like their Anglo-American counterparts, but to them the fundamental notion was that of God's covenant with all members of the baptized community. Accordingly, they administered infant baptism, which to most of the Anglo-American missionary societies active in Indonesia was anathema. They adhered to the traditional doctrines of the churches they were rooted in, and passed those doctrines on to their Indonesian congregations, without emphasizing distinctive features.

They also made a remark proposing that this fact was also the reason why a national council of churches could easily be established in Indonesia shortly after the Indonesian independence (Aritonang & Steenbrink, 2008, 143):

As a result, the churches which emerged from their mission work could without difficulties cooperate in a National Council of Churches (*Persekutuan Gereja-gereja di Indonesia* /PGI, founded 1950), which was also joined by the churches that issued from the colonial Protestant Church. Conversely, most twentieth-century Anglo-American missions each brought along the specific doctrines which distinguished them from the traditional churches and from each other. Thus, it is no surprise that after 1950 three different councils of churches emerged alongside the DGI/PGI: the Indonesian Pentecostal Council (*Dewan Pentakosta Indonesia*), the Indonesian Evangelical Alliance (*Persekutuan Injili Indonesia*), and the Baptist Alliance (*Persekutuan Baptis Indonesia*).

By the start of the 20th century, many other denominations (Methodists, Adventists, the Pentecostal movement, Christian and Missionary Alliance) came and helped spread Christianity in Indonesia. However, these 'newer' denominations, together with the 'older' Roman Catholic Church felt that they were not subject to the 'ban on double mission' regulation, thus characterizing their relationship with the other 'Dutch Reformed' churches in the archipelago; and in the future Indonesian state also with Islam.

So, in general, Dutch Reformed activity between in 18th and 19th century Indonesia could be distinguished in two circles: the Indische Kerk (Gereja Protestan Indonesia/GPI) and the mission bodies. The relationships between the two are characterized by mixed feelings and 'ups-and downs', usually the political interest of the Dutch authorities being the deciding factor. During the 19th century, while the number of churches and territories of Christian communities grew larger, there was no significant progress in terms of their maturity as an Indonesian churches besides physical expansion.

Even inside the church, there weren't any native Indonesian church officials until 1881, when the GPI introduced the office of 'Pendeta Pribumi' (*indigenous minister/inlands leraar*) who had no authority to minister the sacraments until 1916. It is also worth noting that until 1942 the GPI was still supported by government funding even though they were no longer a state church since 1935 (cf Van den End, 1993, 55; Aritonang and Steenbrink, 137). Also from the mission side, not a single church was declared independent by their mission bodies until 1930. And even after becoming independent churches, many of the formal or informal leaders in those churches were Europeans.

Churches and mission activities changed drastically after the Japanese occupation in 1942 (until 1945). The Japanese were very serious in trying to wipe out any Dutch influence in the region, with direct impact on church life of that time, as many Dutch (and other European) political and religious leaders were sent into prison camps – and many others left the country. From that moment, together with the Indonesian independence, Indonesian churches started to be independent. In May 1950, the Dewan Gereja-gereja di Indonesia/DGI (now Persekutuan Gereja-gereja di Indonesia/PGI, the Communion of Churches in Indonesia) was born.

We will end the general historical description here, as it is intended to give a background picture of the forces at play in shaping what would become the reformed churches in Indonesia. In terms of church polity, the resulting effect of this historical process proved to be critical. Concerning the aspect of church governance, Van den End especially pointed out three complications that arise after Indonesian (reformed) churches gain their independence (cf. Van den End, 1993, 358):

1. While the official polities of these reformed churches were presbyterial, in reality the Indonesian Christians were not trained with this new system as throughout the previous centuries the churches were governed in a very hierarchical manner.



2. In some areas with feudalistic cultures, this hierarchical pattern of governing the church was easily welcomed and preserved, rather than developing the presbyterial nature of the church.
3. The geographical barriers and economical gaps between many congregations were so wide, that it became a major challenge in promoting a wider level of presbyterial life in the churches.

By 1950, many Reformed churches in Indonesia have become emancipated. However, from the aspect of church polity, their development is far from ideal. Van den End suggested four factors that contributed to this lack in church polity (cf. Van den End, 1997, 290-292):

1. The influence of pietism that motivated almost all mission in Indonesia, tended to not pay attention for matters regarding church polity. Their main priority is religious conversion rather than building an organization.
2. Most missionaries were not sent by churches but by missionary societies. Thus, developing church organizations was not their first nature.
3. For the missions, the church is manifested through the purity of faith of the people. When they became disappointed with the behavior of these new Christians, they concluded that they weren't mature enough to form a church.
4. The paternalistic tendencies of the missionaries of that time coupled with the feeling of European superiority have made them hesitant to hand over their church leadership position in the church. As we can see from the establishment dates of the Indonesian churches, their emancipation was born more out of the political situation – the Indonesian independence, rather than being a natural transition.

By now, most Reformed churches in Indonesia are around 75 years of age. They usually do not put the term 'Reformed' in their names, but in general they can be distinguished by the use of the terms 'Gereja Masehi Injili ...' or 'Gereja Protestan ...' for churches stemming from the *Indische Kerk* family, and 'Gereja Kristen ...' for churches from the missionary bodies, coupled with the name of the region where they work.

With a problematic background in terms of church polity development, what model of church polity do these churches have today? Which developments have taken place in these churches regarding church polity? How do they express being Presbyterial-Synodical in the context of Indonesia? What does it mean to be reformed for these Indonesian churches? We will try to take a clear-

er picture from the three synods below: Gereja Kristen Sumba, Gereja Kristen Indonesia, and Gereja Masehi Injili di Timor.

### 3.1.1. Gereja Kristen Sumba

Here is a description from Aritonang & Steenbrink regarding Christianity in the island of Sumba (Aritonang & Steenbrink, 2008, 322):

The last decades of the nineteenth century were a period of turmoil and schism in the Reformed churches in the Netherlands. This caused a re-grouping of missionary societies, the outcome of which was a strong congregationalist emphasis on the organization of the mission. The island of Sumba was entrusted to three northern districts (*classes*) of the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands (the plural churches was chosen to accentuate that reference was not to the national church, but the local congregations of the true church).

The present-day Gereja Kristen Sumba (GKS) consists of 712 congregations in 24 presbyteries with 164 ordained ministers serving 386.000 people (PGI, 2010). The GKS held their first synod on the 15<sup>th</sup> of January 1947, which is celebrated as its emancipation date. Sumba as part of the greater Nusa Tenggara Timur (NTT) region shared many historical events with GMIT regarding its relationship with the Dutch government. The difference is that for Sumba all missionary activity was done under the *Zending der Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland* (ZGKN), the mission body of a conservative Calvinist church founded by Kuyper, which mainly worked in Central Java and the Sumba region. Unlike the missionaries that were working in other parts of NTT, the missionaries working in Sumba were under direct supervision from their mother church and had the same education and power as their colleagues back in the Netherlands (Aritonang & Steenbrink, 145).

Christianity came to Sumba by Sabu immigrants who were mostly Christians. They were relocated to Sumba by Isaac Esser, former Resident of Timor around the 1870s. One of Esser's motives was to introduce Christianity in order to change the Sumbanese from their constant state of war, cattle theft, and killings. The Sabu immigrants settled in two places: Kambaniru and Melolo, but they live in religious isolation from the Sumbanese. Only runaway Sumbanese slaves who sought for protection in the Sabunese villages would want to become Christians.

In 1881, J.J. van Alphen arrived in Sumba, under the *Nederlands Gereformeerde Zendingsvereniging* (NGZV) mission body, and started approaching

the Sumbanese. In 1883, he had to leave for Java after his wife died and he caught malaria himself. In 1885 he came back, but this time for the *Zending Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerk* (ZCGK). He fell into illness again and left to Java for recovery a second time. In 1889, he came again to Sumba for the third time, this time to work in the Sabu village of Kambaniru until 1893. In 1889, the ZCGK also sent a second missionary, Willem Pos, to look after the Christians in Melolo. In 1892, C. de Bruijn was sent to work among the Sumbanese, but eventually he also focused on the Sabu people in Kambaniru.

In 1904, the ZGKN mission body sent Douwe Klaas Wielenga to Sumba after his study of theology and some additional training in practical medicine, Malay and Sumba language. He first stayed in Kambaniru, but then moved to Payeti in 1907, leaving the circle of Sabu Christians and opening his way to minister to the Sumbanese (Aritonang & Steenbrink, 322).

Missionary work in Sumba proved to be very difficult because (cf. Aritonang & Steenbrink, 322-323):

1. Constant war between local rulers in Sumba made it very dangerous for missionary works. Only after 1912 Sumba was considered safe and under Dutch rule.
2. The missionaries' lack of knowledge about Sumbanese people's culture and customs. They also had no training in health care, agriculture, and other practical matters that could help them build relationships with the Sumbanese people.
3. The Sumbanese were suspicious that the missionaries came to destroy their social structure, belief and culture.
4. Suspicions that the missionaries had a hidden agenda besides evangelizing: to put Sumba under Dutch rule. So, in general the Sumbanese and the missionaries kept their distance and suspected each other.

With the administrative rule of the Dutch in Sumba, missionary activities began to flourish. Evangelization was carried out also through health care, education, and community development that received full financial support from the colonial government. In 1924, the missionaries also started a theological school that was higher than a simple teacher's training. Most of the students were sons of chiefs, of the nobility and of freemen, besides some Sabunese (cf. Aritonang & Steenbrink, 324). When the Japanese conquered Indonesia in 1942, there were already seven autonomous congregations in Sumba, and 47 missionary stations where a community of 5.855 members of the Protestant churches came together (cf. Aritonang & Steenbrink, 324).

It is interesting to note that even though the ZGKN mission, as a mission body for the conservative Calvinist *gereformeerde* churches, strictly upheld the 'no-hierarchy' or 'no lording over' principle also in the mission fields, in Sumba they simply did not. Van den End contrasted ZGKN policy in Sumba compared with Java. He assumed that difference arose from the assumption that Javanese were considered 'higher' or 'more civilized' than the Sumbanese (cf. Van den End, 1996, 310-311). In Sumba, the foreign missionaries still played a dominant role in controlling the congregations; no different from the stance taken by many other missions in Indonesia.

The arrival of the Japanese to Sumba accelerated the process of ordaining native ministers from Sumba. On 3 March 1942, H. Mbay, the evangelist in Payeti, was ordained. On 16 March 1942, H.M. Malo was also ordained. Had the Japanese not come, perhaps it would have taken some more time before they would have started ordaining native ministers. The reason was, as Aritonang and Steenbrink put it (Aritonang & Steenbrink, 328):

Compared to the European ministers in Timor (members of the *Indische Kerk*), the ministers of the Sumba Mission were quite orthodox and conservative, and must be seen as somewhat paternalistic. They wanted a very thorough theological training for ministers and formulated such difficult requirements that until the emergency conditions of 1942 nobody could fulfill their wishes.

On 14 May 1942, the Japanese occupied Waingapu. European missionaries and colonial officials were arrested and sent to detention camps outside Sumba, so from that time the congregations had to be directed by the Indonesian evangelists and ministers. Rev. H. Mbay handled the congregations in Central and East Sumba, while Rev. H. Malo did so in West Sumba. The Japanese killed Rev. Mbay in July 1945, and Rev. S.H. Dara, the evangelist of Melolo, took over his responsibility in Central and East Sumba. While in West Sumba, Rev. Malo was able to make a good relationship with the Japanese and had already started a sort of presbytery-like meetings in the district.

An interesting progress happened in the transition period between the departure of the Japanese and the re-arrival of the Netherlands that might have had major effect for the GKS future in terms of dependency (Aritonang & Steenbrink, 329):

Towards the end of 1945 the foreign missionaries were preparing their return to Sumba. They wanted to rebuild the missionary institutions that

were destroyed by the Japanese but they had not followed the new developments in Sumba. They thought that as many foreign workers as possible should be sent to Sumba, at least some twelve persons. In the first years after the Japanese capitulation 18 foreign workers arrived, more than ever had been working in the island before the Japanese period. The missionary leaders estimated that still some 20–25 years were needed in order to prepare the church for self-reliance, but things developed more quickly than expected.

After the Japanese capitulation, congregations started to nominate their own evangelists and ministers. The congregations in Central Sumba (Kambaniru, Payeti and Waingapu) were already establishing their own presbyteries. Kambaniru and Payeti already had Sumbanese ministers, Mb Ratubandju and S.J. Piry. In 1946, a presbytery of East Sumba was established and Melolo nominated its own minister. This was the reality that was found by the returning and new missionaries. Whether they liked it or not, they had to accept this situation. They soon agreed and found their new role as advisors. This resulted in the formation of the synod of the GKS, *Gereja Kristen Sumba* in Payeti, 15–17 January 1947.

However, after their emancipation, the GKS did not release their strong ties with foreign mission. “It remained financially dependent and its top leadership was still in the hands of expatriate missionaries. These foreign ministers were no longer confined to their congregations, but they also had a function as advisor of a classis, especially for missionary work. Their role remained for the time being very decisive” (Aritonang & Steenbrink, 330). Until 1962 salaries for GKS ministers were still paid by ZGKN, and for evangelist and assistant evangelist until 1972 (cf. Aritonang & Steenbrink, 331-334). Autonomy as envisaged in a self-governing, self-supporting and self-propagating church remained a problem for the GKS (cf. Aritonang & Steenbrink, 334).

### **3.1.2. Gereja Kristen Indonesia**

The Gereja Kristen Indonesia (GKI) was born through the unification of GKI West Java, GKI Central Java, and GKI East Java, on 26 August 1988. The GKI East Java was founded on 22 February 1934, GKI West Java on 24 March 1940, and GKI Central Java on 8 August 1945. The churches were originally ethnic churches for the Chinese and Chinese-Indonesian descendants, until it became one church using an Indonesian national identity along with its change of name from *Tiong Hoa Kie Tok Kauw-Hwee* (THKTKH) into *Gereja Kristen Indonesia* (GKI) in 1958 (cf. Van den End, 1996, 225). On 26 August 2003, the unifi-

cation found its formal completion with the adoption of one church order for the whole of GKI.

Christianity came to the Chinese in Indonesia, both *totok* (direct immigrants who speak mainly Chinese) and *peranakan* (descendants born in Indonesia, or from mixed-marriages with Indonesian spouses, Chinese-Indonesian, who speak mainly Melayu) through many paths:

The congregation in Patekoan (Jakarta kota) was born from the effort of Mr. Anting and the traveling missionary Gan Kwee. The congregation in Indramayu was born after an Ang Boen Swi in his faith-search met an Indische Kerk minister who lent him a New Testament bible in Javanese language. On the other hand, one large congregation in Jakarta, the Mangga Besar congregation was born as result of the Methodist missionary work, while congregations in Bandung, Sukabumi, and Tasikmalaya were from the works of NZV missions. Members of the NZV congregations were the *peranakan* Chinese, who speaks Melayu as their main language. The NZV had no means to evangelize the *totok* Chinese who speaks Chinese. (Van den End, 1996, 223-224)

However, within the Chinese communities in Indonesia there was division as well between the *totok* and the *peranakan*. In general, the *peranakan* Chinese were mainly oriented towards Dutch Indies (Indonesian) identity because they were born in Indonesia, with an Indonesian parent or spouse, and spoke mainly Melayu (the early version of the Indonesian language). In contrast, the *totok* Chinese were oriented to their motherland in mainland China, and still preserved the mother language and customs. They were also economically richer. Conflicts often happened between the two groups, and it was no exception in their church life. There were also exceptions, for example the *Sinpo Group*, which is a *peranakan* party that is oriented to China (cf. Hartono, 2017, 20-21). There were also internal conflicts within the two groups. But the general dividers within the Chinese community in Indonesia were mainly these: language use, economic status, and identity orientation. The church that later would become the Gereja Kristen Indonesia, was born within the *peranakan* 'branch' of the Chinese-Indonesian 'tree'.

The *Genootschap voor In- en Uitwendige Zending* (GIUZ) was the mission body that had planned to evangelize the Chinese-Indonesian in West Java. The GIUZ brought in a missionary from China to Batavia (Jakarta) to evangelize the Chinese-Indonesian, and in 1856 Gan Kwee arrived and worked towards the Chinese-Indonesian communities in Java. But the spread of *peranakan* Chris-

tians was also influenced greatly by the work of the converts themselves, for example: Ang Boen Swie, who converted in Indramayu, 1858; Khouw Tek San, Purbalingga, 1866; Gouw Kho, Batavia, 1868; and Oei Soei Tiong, Surabaya, 1898. Together with Gan Kwee, they started Chinese-Indonesian congregations in Java (cf. Hartono, 14).

Initially the Dutch missions only directed their work towards the Indonesian natives. The NZV in West Java (since 1863) and ZGKN in Central Java (since 1892) were mainly interested in evangelizing to the Sundanese (West Java) or Javanese (Central Java) people. It was the American mission, the Board of Foreign Missions (BFM), which since 1905 directed their work towards the Chinese communities, starting in Batavia, Bogor, Surabaya, and other places (cf. Hartono, 14-16). Only after seeing the success of the evangelization work among the Chinese, then the NZV and ZGKN started opening their work towards the Chinese. In central Java, there was also missionary works towards the Chinese done by the *Doopsgezinde Zendings Vereeniging* (DZV) (cf. Hartono, 15).

In 1938, the *Tiong Hoa Kie Tok Kauw-Hwee Khoe Hwee Djawa Barat* (THKTKH-KHDB, translated: Chinese Christian Church, West Java Presbytery) was formed. It was a body consisting of all *peranakan* Christians in West Java who were willing to cooperate with the NZV. The body was in the shape of a presbytery, with the hope that it could be united with other presbyteries already formed in Central and East Java, to become one Chinese Christian church in Java (cf. Van den End, 1993, 225). In 1939, John Sung, an evangelist from China came and revitalized the church with his revival sermons. This event was so remarkable that some commenters stated that the *peranakan* churches in Java were still alive until then because of John Sung's revival work. On 24 November 1940, the *Zendings Consulaat* – the person who represents all the missionary agencies in Indonesia to the Dutch government – recognized the THKTKH-KHDB as an autonomous church. The status of presbytery was then changed into that of a synod in 1954, and then it took the name of Gereja Kristen Indonesia Jawa Barat (GKI-Jabar) in 1958.

In Central Java, it was also the new converts themselves who initially did most of the evangelization work. The ZGKN did not want to establish a separate church for the Chinese-Indonesian because they did not want to divide the church based on racial differences. However, in practice, the Chinese Christians organized their own groups, which in 1936 became a separate presbytery, and in 1956 became a synod: The Gereja Kristen Indonesia Jawa Tengah synod.

In East Java, the NZG mission which was operating in the region did not work among the Chinese community. Again, it was the Chinese Christians who

did the evangelization towards their own. There was also work from the American Methodists between 1905-1927. However, in 1928 the mission work towards the Chinese in East Java was taken over by the mission body of a small Calvinist church in the Netherlands that had just recently split from the GKN: The *Gereformeerde Kerken in Hersteld Verband* (GKHV). On 9 August 1934, they became a presbytery, the THKTKH Jawa Timur. A split within this community happened when a part that mainly used the Chinese language formed the Gereja Kristus Tuhan, and in that circle the Sekolah Alkitab Asia Tenggara (SAAT; translated Southeast Asia Bible School) was founded later. The part that used the Melayu language continued to be the THKTKH Jawa Timur, later renamed to GKI Jawa Timur

In 1962, the unification process that was designed already from the beginning started to be visible with the establishment of GKI General Synod (Sinode Am GKI) consisting of GKI West Java (GKI Jawa Barat), GKI Central Java (GKI Jawa Tengah), and GKI East Java (GKI Jawa Timur). There were many theological backgrounds that influenced the GKI, as a consequence of its history. For the GKI West Java part, we can distinguish two models: first the congregations influenced by NZV missionaries, who were mainly rooted in NHK traditions, and second the congregations influenced by the BFM of the Methodist Episcopal Church. For the GKI Central Java part, we can distinguish three different models: first the congregations influenced by the ZGKN missionaries, second the ones influenced by the Salatiga Zending, and third the ones influenced by the DZV. And for the GKI East Java part, we can generally distinguish two models: first the congregations influenced by the work of the Chinese converts, like Oei Soei Tiong who's theological (confessional) affiliation cannot be determined, and who was later adopted by the ZGKHV; and second the ones influenced by the BFM (Methodist).

In August 1988, the three synods became one Gereja Kristen Indonesia synod. This formal process of unification met its completion in 2003 with the implementation of the GKI Church Order (Tata Gereja GKI). With these diverse theological backgrounds, it is interesting to see what kind of polity this amalgam called GKI produced.

### **3.1.3. Gereja Masehi Injili di Timor**

Timor, Flores, Sumba, and Sumbawa are the major islands in the archipelago that is also called the Lesser Sunda Islands (Ardana, 2005, 23). The name Timor can be used to denote the name of Timor Island, the largest island in the Nusa Tenggara archipelago. This archipelago is administratively divided into two provinces: Nusa Tenggara Barat /NTB (West Nusa Tenggara), and Nusa



Tenggara Timur /NTT (East Nusa Tenggara); and the term Timor can be used also to refer to NTT as a province. The exclusion of Sumba from the ministerial area of GMIT is because historically Sumba Island was an area for *gereformeerd* missionary work, which later became GKS. So, in terms of naming, the name Timor in GMIT does not include Sumba. Here's a description from Aritonang & Steenbrink regarding Christianity in Timor (Aritonang & Steenbrink, 2008, 299-300):

The Indonesian province of NTT is often divided into a northern and a southern section. Flores is the largest island of the northern section. Timor and Sumba are the largest islands of the southern sections. While Catholicism has become the dominant religion in Flores (with quite strong Muslim communities in Solor, Adonara and Alor), in Sumba and Timor it is Protestantism that has become the dominant tradition of Christianity, although with some larger minorities of Catholics in Sumba and a Catholic majority in the north-eastern districts of West Timor, where the diocese of Atambua has an overwhelming Catholic majority. As was the case in Flores, also in Timor there was a first spread of Christianity in the sixteenth and seventeenth century, ...

The history of GMIT can be described in these periods (cf. Cooley, 1976, 24):

- The *Oude Hollandsche Zending* period (1614-1819)
- The *Nederlandsche Zendeling Genootschap* period (1814-1860)
- The *Indische Kerk* period (1860-1942)
- The Japanese Occupation period (1942-1945)
- The Emancipated *Gereja Masehi Injili di Timor* period (1947 – present)

#### **The Oud Hollandsche Zending Period (1614-1814)**

Protestantism arrived together with the Dutch VOC in Timor since 1614. Protestant churches in the period of 1614 to 1819 were considered as branches of the church in the Netherlands (NHK), but the work of the church's missionaries was strictly regulated by the VOC (cf. Cooley, 1976, 28-29). All churches in that period live in a strict conformity with the Dutch church, they were copies of the churches in Netherlands.

The first Protestant minister to arrive in Kupang was Rev. Mattheus van den Broek in 1614. He only stayed for a very short period. His replacement, Rev. Key Sero Kind arrived in 1665. In 1687 he was replaced by Rev. A. Corpius, who died a year later. And from 1688 until 1739 there were no more ministers

residing in Kupang. During that period, they only received eight visitations from ministers in Batavia (now Jakarta) (cf. Cooley, 1976, 31). The comforters of the sick and Christian schoolteachers became a '*clerus minor*' that played an important role in maintaining the churches for the most part of this period (cf. Cooley, 1976, 34).

### **The *Nederlandsch Zendeling Genootschap* Period (1814-1860)**

Contrary to the approach taken in the previous two centuries, the *Nederlandsch Zendeling Genootschap* (NZG), or loosely translated: the Netherlands Missionary Fellowship actually tried to refrain from making the churches in Indonesia as simply copies of the Netherlands. "They intentionally discontinued the church propaganda of the *Oud Hollandsche Zending*" (Cooley, 1976, 34). The NZG did not want to propagate a specific teaching, style, or form of being a church. Their main objective was to teach the main principle of being Christian to the people. In theory, we could appreciate the NZG decision as a countermeasure to respond to the problems posed by the old 'copy-paste' approach, however in practice the missionaries could never fully separate their preference toward their own (Dutch church) traditions.

In 1819, Rev. R. Le Bruyn arrived and was stationed in Kupang until he died in 1829. In the decade he was serving in Kupang, progress was felt in the Protestant community. However, that golden period did not last more than his lifetime. The years afterward saw very little progress until eventually in 1854 the NZG retract its work from Kupang and Rote. Finally, in 1901, the NZG retired from the whole of NTT and all missionary work there was taken over by the *Indische Kerk*. Until the end of its time in NTT, the NZG was not successful in fulfilling its mission to liberate the Indonesian Christians from the church traditions of the Netherlands. Instead, they kept on building on the inheritance of the previous period (cf. Cooley, 1976, 43).

### **The *Indische Kerk* Period (1860-1942)**

The *Indische Kerk* (Gereja Protestan Indonesia) was a state church that started in 1817. It became a form of governmental body that administered religious matters in Indonesia. The leadership board (*Kerk Bestuur*) was appointed by the governor general and was situated in Batavia. The *Indische Kerk* tried to avoid any confessional ties with the churches in the Netherlands, and thus opted for the term 'Protestant' rather than 'hervormd' or 'gereformeerd' (cf. Cooley, 1976, 43). However, since most ministers working in the region came from the NHK, they brought along their 'hervormd' ideals in their ministries and teachings. Missionary works were mainly concentrated in Kupang, as the central

location for Indische Kerk's base office in NTT. This also explains the lack of available data regarding missionary activities and church situations in other regions of NTT (e.g., Rote, Sabu, Alor, Timor Tengah Selatan, Flores). Only after the second decade of 1900 missionary works paid more attention to regions outside Kupang, and other islands.

Even though there was not any emphasis on a singular confessional identity in the Indische Kerk, they maintained a strict uniformity for the churches within the family. Thus, the congregations throughout NTT now had to adopt a new, uniformed pattern: the Indische Kerk way. In other things, the church situation in this period is more or less the same with the previous periods. The relationship between church and state became stronger over the course of time, and the church grew into a larger and stronger Dutch Indies governmental organization. Thus, doctrinal or confessional standings did not become the criterion for church polity the way socio-political considerations did.

Actually, already in 1910 there were voices inside the Indische Kerk to hand over church leadership to the Indonesians: to emancipate the churches within specific regions such as Ambon, Minahasa, and Timor. But this effort was resisted by the *kerkbestuur* in Batavia, because they were concerned that such a move would diminish the uniformity in those churches (cf. Cooley, 1976, 56). In 1933, the Indische Kerk synod already decided to emancipate three churches: The Gereja Masehi Injili Minahasa (GMIM), Gereja Protestan Maluku (GPM), and Gereja Masehi Injili di Timor (GMIT). GMIM was emancipated in 1934 and GPM in 1935, but Timor was on hold due to the arrival of the Japanese in Indonesia.

### **The Japanese Occupation Period (1942-1945)**

The arrival of the Japanese army in Kupang, 1942, marked the end of the Dutch Indies government in NTT. The situation affected the church negatively as all Dutch workers were captured. The churches were still served by native workers, but the government could no longer pay them for their services. Most of the Indonesian church workers had to support their life by farming (cf. Cooley, 1976, 52).

The many local congregations that were scattered along the region of NTT tried to form smaller governing bodies to coordinate ministries between them. This sudden change from a centralized, super-church structure into a more independent, loosely gathered body of congregations within a region stunned the churches in Timor. However, it might have been too short a period for the churches to reflect on the positive side of this change. They had not yet adapted and found their way in this new mode of being and had felt only the downside

of not having a super structure that sustained them. Thus, for the Timor church, the previous mode of being a church seemed like the ideal one for them.

With the end of World War II and together with Indonesian independence (17 August 1945), the Dutch were free again to continue their work in the church. Rev. E. Durkstra was then sent to Kupang to continue the preparation of establishing an emancipated Timor church (cf. Cooley, 1976, 55).

### **The Emancipated *Gereja Masehi Injili di Timor* Period (1947 – present)**

The *Gereja Masehi Injili di Timor* (GMIT) became an emancipated church within the *Indische Kerk* (Gereja Protestan Indonesia) family when their first synod meeting took place on 31 October 1947. The new synod was still chaired by a Dutch minister, E. Durkstra, and only in 1950 a Timorese became the chairman: Johannes Ludwig Chrisostomus Abineno.

Even though GMIT had become an emancipated church, the case was not always so in terms of finances. Having been fully financed by the colonial government previously, GMIT was still financed by the Indonesian government until August 1950 when president Soekarno declared the separation of state and religion (cf. Aritonang & Steenbrink, 308). Never been experienced in financial self-support, this change sent the GMIT church into a financial crisis in 1955. People were then encouraged to give gifts, a payment of 10% of their income, and other means to find ways to finance GMIT, which mainly were used to pay the salaries of their personnel.

The approach that is typical of any church from the *Indische Kerk* family is to be a regional church, and GMIT is serving reformed Christians in the region of Nusa Tenggara Timur, excluding the island of Sumba. The term Timor has a double meaning: first, in general it refers to the whole archipelago officially known as Nusa Tenggara Timur (NTT); and second, more specifically it refers to Timor island, in NTT. The name *Gereja Masehi Injili di Timor* refers to the general meaning of the term Timor.

The people under the care of GMIT are comprised of many different ethnic groups, each with their own sub-ethnic groups, customs, and languages. They are usually distinguished according to the major islands: Flores, Timor, Alor, Sabu, and Rote. The island of Sumba is also part of NTT province, however in terms of church governance the people there have their own synod, the *Gereja Kristen Sumba* (GKS), which we have given attention to above.

In the 2010 directory of PGI members the GMIT was listed as consisting of 2020 congregations in 44 klasis (presbytery), with membership counting to 1.050.413 people with 828 ordained ministers. At present there are also GMIT

congregations in the area of Nusa Tenggara Barat (NTB) and Batam (PGI, 2010)

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To give a historical perspective to GMIT's church polity, we summarize Cooley's analysis on GMIT's historical background (cf. Cooley, 1976, 62-71):

1. The dominant strand of Protestantism in GMIT (Cooley uses the term 'Ger-eja Timor') is that of the Dutch Hervormd Church (NHK). The sources for teachings are the Dordrecht Canones, the Dutch Confession, and Heidelberg Catechism.
2. The attitude of the church ministers and workers reflects more the attitude of a government employee rather than that of missionaries. They tend to be bureaucratic and hierarchical.
3. The societies in NTT were mostly living in isolation from each other. They have strong feudalistic tendencies with stratified classes in the society. Massive encounter with the outside world only started recently, with Dutch colonialism.
4. There is not yet any formal attitude or position of the church regarding traditional social patterns, local customs, and other cultural heritage of the people in NTT, let alone their meaning for church polity. The church simply took them for granted as part of the people's custom. In general, the church and local traditions were simply living side by side yet without any real critical dialogue between the two.
5. There still is a feeling of superiority, with a paternalistic tendency from the Dutch workers especially in the early days of GMIT. "... Apparently, it was still difficult for missionaries from the Netherlands who came after Indonesian independence and GMIT's emancipation to treat their Timorese colleagues as their equal; a difficulty that isn't as visible from fraternal workers from Anglo-Saxon churches."

Cooley reflects on the historical background of GMIT and argues strongly: "The church in Timor is a victim of colonial mentality that has been for too long and too thickly absorbed" (Cooley, 1976, 71). Considering that Cooley was aware of the local feudalistic tendency of the Timorese with their small kingdoms, here Cooley was not simply blaming the Dutch. The Reformed Protes-

tantism that was brought together with Dutch colonization only enhanced the colonial mentality of the local kings when they embraced Christianity. It will not do justice to the GMIT and the people if we simply judge them by their problematic past. In the past decades, theologians and contextual theology in Indonesia have developed through ecumenical theological seminaries such as Jakarta Theological Seminary (STT Jakarta), Universitas Kristen Duta Wacana (UKDW), Sekolah Tinggi Teologi Indonesia Timur (STT Intim), Universitas Kristen Artha Wacana (UKAW) and also para-church organizations that give specific focus to developing contextual theology in the eastern part of Indonesia such as OASE Indonesia Timur (OASE Intim). The historical background should be viewed as a tool for comparison in analyzing the present shape of church polity in GMIT.

### **3.2. The context of Indonesia: a national culture**

Is it possible to speak of an Indonesian culture amidst the diversity of its ethnic, language, and cultural backgrounds? As an archipelagic entity that comprises more than 17.000 islands, three different time zones, and a wealth of cultural heritage, diversity is certain. As Frank L. Cooley observes (Cooley, 1968, 11):

Indonesia is made up of many diverse ethnic and language groups, which have been relatively isolated from one another until quite recently. This isolation resulted from the country's marked geographic traits: deep straits and wide seas separating islands, high volcanic mountain ranges, heavy tropical rain forests and wide swampy sea coasts. These have led to differences in history, regional development, traditions, customs and religion, which accentuate the difficulty of binding these diverse groups into a unified nation. Indonesia's present condition and her main problem are symbolized by the national motto: *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*, (Diversity Becoming Unity).

However, Indonesia cannot be characterized by its wealth of differences nor its challenging geographical features only. There is a strong unifying factor that is present in the mentality of the people as can be found in the national motto: *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* (Diverse, but One. Formally translated into: Unity in Diversity). Eka Darmaputera writes (Darmaputera, 1988, 19):

*Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*: various, yet one; diverse, but united. This national motto does indeed represent and reflect accurately the most profound reality of the world's fifth most populous country – Indonesia. It expresses

a strong desire to achieve unity despite the immense heterogeneous character of this newly built state (independent: August 17, 1945.) And the existence of this common will in its turn presupposes the existence of common cultural characteristics underlying the apparent heterogeneity.

Here he is arguing for the presence of a common cultural characteristic that has been a primary characteristic of the Indonesian people in the shape of this common will for unity and harmony amidst the diversity of its context. For Darmaputera, the characteristics of Indonesia's cultural identity can be described as follows (Darmaputera, 63):

... the social structure is characterized by the existence of a closely united religious agrarian community called *desa*; the religious belief is animistic; the social attitude is communalistic strongly bound by the preservation of customary law (*adat*); and the most cherished social values are mutual aid (*gotong-royong*) and *musyawarah untuk mufakat* (consultation for reaching unanimous consensus) aimed at preserving the internal harmony of the community.

We will use Darmaputera's framework to introduce the notion of an Indonesian national culture – despite Indonesia's heterogeneity – that serves as the context for the Reformed churches in Indonesia. These characteristics are distinguishable, but not exclusive from each other, as they are various expressions of the same ideal, one that we propose to call the 'Pancasila mentality':

1. The 'Neither-Nor' paradigm
2. *Gotong-Royong*
3. *Musyawarah untuk Mufakat*
4. Pancasila principles

### 3.2.1. The 'neither-nor' paradigm

Perhaps, this is one of the most interesting characters of Indonesian society that does not fit to the usual 'either-or' or 'both this and that' paradigm. For example: In describing something, we often use the paradigm of 'either-or' or 'both this and that'. In coming to a decision, whether in a synod meeting, or a civil court, the mode for decision-making usually will choose either 'Yes' or 'No', 'Right' or 'Wrong', 'For' or 'Against'. In processes like this, we have to realize the fact that in the background there lays a process of creating an imaginary duality, or perhaps some clear polarity before then going forward and discuss

which position is considered to be correct. There should be a clear distinction between ‘A’ and ‘B’, and this is what is meant by the ‘either-or’ paradigm. Another model is the ‘both this and that’ paradigm. When my wife asks me to choose which dress suits her the best, my answer would usually be using this model: “both the black dress and the blue dress suit you nicely.” But there is something more in the Indonesian cultural paradigm that does not fit within the two previous models, and this is what is referred to as the ‘neither-nor’ paradigm. We borrow an illustration from Darmaputera (Darmaputera, 65):

... [Indonesian society] can be best illustrated with a flower garden. In the beginning, let us say, there were only white flowers in that garden. And then, red flowers were introduced. After that, flowers of other colours. The result was, surprisingly enough, not a garden with white flowers here, red flowers there, and yellow flowers somewhere else. The result was a garden with flowers which were both red, white, and yellow – or, to be more exact, they were flowers whose colours were neither fully red, white nor yellow. In some flowers at some parts maybe a certain colour was dominant. But nowhere could the flowers remain purely white, red or yellow.

... the story provides us with a portrait of a fascinating truth of how Indonesian society handles the various influences from outside. It embraces all of them, yet without accepting all of them. It neither rejects nor accepts them fully. It accepts all but does not let them stay in their original forms. It accepts all by transforming them and including them into its own system.

R.M. Sutjipto Wirjosuparto gives a similar opinion regarding this Indonesian cultural identity: “Even by contact with foreign culture, the patterns of Indonesia’s culture remained the same, because the foreign cultural elements were absorbed into the patterns of Indonesia’s culture.” (Sumihe, 2001, 86) What we see here is a complex mindset that cannot be simply described by a general typology, or simply by combining everything: it is something else. It is *neither* ‘either-or’, *nor* ‘both this-and that’. It is something Indonesian.

### 3.2.2. *Gotong-royong*

The term *gotong-royong* can be translated into ‘mutual aid’, ‘working together’, or ‘cooperation’. But it is not simply a model for getting this done; it is the appropriate method for getting everything done. In traditional Indonesian villages, weddings, *syukuran* (thanksgiving ceremony for special occasions), funerals,



and so on, are done not only by the respective family but also by the whole village. And that practice is still held in most Indonesian villages until today.

I remember when I had just started becoming a minister for a congregation in a small village in Lampung, Sumatera. One of my neighbors invited me to come to their daughter's wedding celebration, which would be held a week from then. Their house was just across the parsonage (In Indonesian: *pastori*) where I lived. But already from three to four days before the wedding day, every day – mostly in the afternoon – people would come and work on the festivities. They brought sacks of rice, sugar, palm sugar, vegetables, live chickens, coffee beans, tea, cigarettes, anything they have at hand. The men would erect open air tents, set up the stage, paint the decorations, and the women would make handicrafts from leaves and flowers, some would be in the kitchen cooking meals for everyone who was working. Some youths will be asked to deliver invitations to relatives in other villages, some help with the chores inside the house. Later in the evening, after the *maghrib* (Moslem evening prayer), the people would usually come back and have a cozy time while trying to figure out whatever else they could contribute. Some would be talking with the family, some would just sit outside on long wooden benches sipping coffee or tea, play dominos, whatever thing they could spend their time with. In this kind of event, it was not so much about the number or the difficulty of the task that you are able to do; simply by being present there one is considered as taking part in *gotong-royong*.

For Indonesian villages, special occasions like a wedding or a funeral can never be limited only to a family celebration: it is the celebration of the whole village. Not taking part in it, unless you have a very strong reason – or a clever excuse –, would be considered as disinterest toward being part of the society. You are only a part of the society if you are willing to participate in *gotong-royong*.

From a modern urbanized society's perspective, this method might be considered as somewhat inefficient and ineffective. But that does not mean that they reject the whole idea of *gotong-royong*. What then happens in Indonesian cities is that we find different expressions of doing *gotong-royong* in the community. Residential areas in cities routinely organize a *gotong-royong* in the form of cleaning the neighborhood trenches, parks, and roads together. People would bring snacks, cold drinks, their cleaning equipment, etc. The head of the *Rukun Tangga* (neighborhood administration) usually coordinates all this. Formally abbreviated as *RT*: *Rukun* means harmonious, and *Tangga* is from the term *tetangga* or neighbors. It is the smallest formal unit of community recognized by the government, even though the organization of *RT* is completely

informal. In other words, it is the direct synonym of being a village in the urban setting.

This is *gotong-royong*, not merely how people do things together, but this sense of attachment to community life through participation in daily activity. This is another cultural aspect of being Indonesian.

### 3.2.3. *Musyawarah untuk mufakat*

The term is composed of two key concepts, *musyawarah*, an Indonesian term for deliberation or consultation, and *mufakat*, an Indonesian term for consensus or common consent. In its usage, the term is used for both a method and a principle wherein deliberation to achieve a consensus is regarded as the highest norm for coming to a decision within Indonesian society. Not every *musyawarah* process will finally come to a *mufakat*, certainly. However, the desire for consensus serves as a beacon that guides the whole process of decision-making, which transforms the process beyond winning or losing (cf. Surjanegara, 2008, 9). There is no point in *musyawarah* when there is no desire for *mufakat*. Darmaputera points out the dynamic in *musyawarah* (Darmaputera, 1988, 37):

The procedure of doing everything together based on and/or in order to reach the common consent of all is called *musyawarah untuk mufakat*. *Musyawarah* or consultation is universally practiced in the archipelago almost to every matter. Every member of the meeting is allowed to speak and has the right to be listened to. After prolonged giving and taking and weighing the pros and the cons, a decision – usually a compromise – is finally reached. Here no one will find all his/her wishes realized, nor will anyone find none of his/her wishes fulfilled. The ‘neither-nor’ principle prevails.

The central idea of doing *musyawarah* is that differences are recognized, and not resolved through a win-lose (‘either-or’) paradigm. That is why voting in most Indonesian communities is regarded as a last resort, rather than the preferred option in decision-making. In *musyawarah*, it is necessary that the participants are willing to accept each other’s differences by accepting a creative compromise; a communally agreed solution where no one finds neither all nor none of their wishes fulfilled. This does not mean that the outcome of a *musyawarah untuk mufakat* will simply be a compromise with the lowest common denominator. An agreement with the lowest common denominator would mean that all parties participating in the *musyawarah untuk mufakat* process stick to their prior position and simply agree to what is already shared with the rest of

the group. There is no change of position needed in that process. That is not the case with *musyawarah untuk mufakat*. In *musyawarah untuk mufakat*, it is required that everybody moves from their previous position, adding or negating something to it, until in the end they would reach a position that everybody would agree upon.

We can see that negotiating this delicate process of coming to a decision requires a different set of skills from that in the voting method. For a leader of the *musyawarah* to function means having the ability to recognize the core issue from each of the conflicting parties, and to propose a creative compromise that enables everyone involved in the process to see it from a different and more communally consented perspective. And in the context of Indonesia as a nation, the greatest creative compromise that unites the whole nation in harmony is Pancasila (cf. Surjanegara, in Ensign-George and Evers, 2019, 62-66).

#### **3.2.4. Pancasila principles**

As mentioned earlier, all these different characteristics are not to be regarded exclusive notions but rather as expressions of a common ideal. In the history of Indonesia as a nation, this ideal was later formulated and proposed in a creative compromise that became the set of formal principles of the Indonesian state: Pancasila. We can see even from the outset of its birth the role of the cultural characteristics described above.

The *musyawarah untuk mufakat* ethos plays an important role in the period of Indonesia's struggle for independence, especially during the determining of the new Indonesia state's ideology. On 28<sup>th</sup> of April 1945, a committee named *Badan Untuk Menyelidiki Usaha-usaha Persiapan Indonesia Merdeka* (The Investigating Body for the Preparation for an Independent Indonesia) was formed. The purpose of this Investigating Body was to consider the basic questions and to draft major plans for an independent state of Indonesia. During the meetings of the Investigating Body – there were two meetings, the first was from May 29 to June 1, and the second one from July 10 to July 17 – the biggest issue they had to discuss was the following question: “What is the basis or the foundation of the Indonesian state which we are about to form?” (cf. Surjanegara, 2008, 9; also SarDesai, 1997, 172-173)

In these meetings, the struggle for what would be the base ideology of the new Indonesian state took place. Darmaputera notes (Darmaputera, 1988, 150):

On June 1, 1945, after three days of ‘sharp conflict’, Sukarno delivered his famous speech, which from then on was known as Lahirnya Pancasila (The Birth of Pancasila). In this speech he proposed a compromise: Indo-

nesia Merdeka would neither be an Islamic nor a secular state, but a Pancasila state.

According to Sukarno, Pancasila – literally means ‘five pillars’ or ‘five principles’ – consisted of the following principles, arranged in the following order:

1. Kebangsaan Indonesia (Indonesian Nationhood, or, Indonesia Nationalism)
2. Internasionalisme/Perikemanusiaan (Internationalism/Humanitarianism)
3. Mufakat/Demokrasi (Unanimous Consensus/Democracy)
4. Kesejahteraan Sosial (Social Welfare)
5. Ketuhanan Yang Maha Esa (The One Lordship).

SarDesai gives a brief explanation of Pancasila, or the five principles as mentioned by Sukarno (SarDesai, 1997, 173):

Nationalism involved the establishment of one national state based on the entity of one Indonesian soil from the tip of Sumatra to Irian, a means of promoting unity through diversity. Internationalism would seek to establish a family of nations, with each one recognizing its respective nationalism. Though details were left to be worked out, the importance of the principles of consent, representation, and consultation to the strength of the Indonesian state was recognized. The principle of social justice underlined a political-economic democracy in which all people would prosper. And finally, Sukarno emphasized the right of every Indonesian to believe in his or her own particular God, which amounted to secularism.

This formulation of Pancasila emerged after a sharp conflict between the two major powers at that moment, the Nationalist side and the Islamic side. The Islamic side defended the idea of Islam to be the basis of *Indonesia Merdeka* (Independent Indonesia), and the Nationalist side strongly rejected that idea in favor of a secular basis of the state (cf. Darmaputera, 149). This polarization created a deadlock in the meeting. There were also some other conflicting ideas during the debates in the Investigating Body, but they were relatively minor in comparison to the polarization of those who proposed Islam and those who preferred secular principles as the foundation for *Indonesia Merdeka* (cf. Darmaputera, 149). The negative consequences of both options are, as Darmaputera notes (Darmaputera, 149-150):

What was at stake here was the very identity of Indonesia: its unity and its diversity. Had the idea of a religious state prevailed, then the result would have been separation of the country into two or more states along the lines of what happened with India and Pakistan. But had the other option won, i.e., if Indonesia had become a secular state, then the diversity of Indonesia would be taken into account but without a sufficient unifying factor to make Indonesia united as a nation.

The question of what Indonesia's state ideology would be was a very crucial question that could not be resolved simply by means of voting. To determine the answer through voting would only generate a sense of *winner*s and *loser*s, which would further emphasize the polarization in the new state. That was the major reason why the Investigating Body accepted Sukarno's proposal of Pancasila immediately, since it managed to be the "middle-way in order to achieve and to preserve harmony and balance" (Darmaputera, 165). It is easily accepted by both sides in conflict because, as Darmaputera puts it, "[T]he solution offered by Pancasila is something that is able to avoid, or more correctly to go beyond, this 'either-or' choice" (Darmaputera, 183).

As a follow-up to Sukarno's speech about Pancasila, an Ad-Hoc Committee (*Panitia Kecil*) was formed to reformulate Pancasila – based on the speech given by Sukarno – as the foundation of the State. This *Panitia Kecil* then formulated the text of *Piagam Jakarta* (the *Jakarta Charter*) that revised the formulation of Pancasila into (Darmaputera, 151-152):

1. (The principle of) One Lordship, with the obligation to carry out the Islamic syari'a for its adherents;
2. A Just and Civilized Humanity;
3. The Unity of Indonesia;
4. (The principle of) Peoplehood Guarded by the Spirit of Wisdom in Deliberation and Representation;
5. Social Justice.

We can see the change of order of the principles in Pancasila, whereas the principle of One Lordship (*Ketuhanan Yang Maha Esa*) becomes the first and guiding principle to which the other principles are subordinated (cf. Darmaputera, 152). This has to be seen in the light of the efforts to neutralize the tension between the Nationalist and Islamic side, as Dharmaputera describes (Darmaputera, 153):

First of all, it is very clear that Pancasila was proposed and accepted as a compromise between those who were in favor of a religious state and those who preferred a secular state. In this respect, the formulation of the first principle was crucial. It tried to satisfy both parties, while at the same time it could not accept any of those ideas in their entirety.

But this compromise was not accepted by all either, particularly concerning the emphasis on the first principle “with the obligation to carry out the Islamic *syari’a* (Islamic Law) for its adherents.” Finally, during the preparation to formulate a Constitution for Indonesia, a breakthrough came that changed the *Piagam Jakarta* formulation of Pancasila. It took into consideration the serious objections from those who are not Islam, who thought that it would be inappropriate to have a regulation that only would apply to a particular set of people within a principal statement that concerned the whole nation. Even though adherents of Islam made up for the dominant part of the population, for the sake of unity and harmony of Indonesia, finally the phrase “with the obligation to carry out the Islamic *syari’a* for its adherents” was omitted from the Preamble of the Constitution (cf. Darmaputera, 1988, 155).

In its final form, Pancasila as a state ideology is formulated in the Preamble of the 1945 Constitution of Indonesia, as follows (Darmaputera, 1988 155):

1. Ketuhanan Yang Maha Esa / (The Principle of) One Lordship
2. Kemanusiaan yang Adil dan beradab / (A) just and civilized humanity
3. Persatuan Indonesia / (The) Unity of Indonesia
4. Kerakyatan yang dipimpin oleh hikmat kebijaksanaan dalam permusyawaratan/ perwakilan / (The Principle of) Peoplehood which is guarded by the spirit of wisdom in deliberation/representation
5. Keadilan Sosial / (Social Justice)

One difficult problem usually arises in translating the notion of *Ketuhanan yang Maha Esa* in the English language. How do we translate this appropriately? A study conducted by Sita Hidayah listed as many as eleven English translations for this notion that is used by the Indonesian government and scholars mainly from a Muslim or Christian background: 1) Belief in God, 2) The belief in one God, 3) Belief in the oneness of God, 4) Belief in the one and only God, 5) Belief in divine omnipotence, 6) God’s divine omnipotence, 7) Belief in an all embracing God, 8) Belief in one divine Lordship, 9) The unity of God, 10) A supreme Godhead, 11) The absolute Lordship of God (Hidayah, 2010, 242-243).

In order to fully understand the meaning of Pancasila we should always put in mind the concept of unity, balance, and harmony. The five are a harmonious whole, wherein each complements but at the same time also limits the other (cf. Darmaputera, 1988, 191-192).

If we assume that the many internal and external changes that have happened in the Indonesian society since 1945, have made the Pancasila ideology simply a nostalgia of the past, we would be mistaken. Although during the presidency era of Soeharto the concept of Pancasila was often used and given a narrower meaning as a tool for disciplining the people, the society's appreciation and affirmation to its principle remains. One of the reasons is that since it was accepted initially it was cherished not because of its status as a formal document, but rather as an 'umbrella' that unites the Indonesian culture. Darmaputera says (Darmaputera, 1988, 198):

Pancasila has been the most viable option for Indonesia, precisely because it is rooted in this 'common culture', rather than being merely a reflection of one of the cultural layers. Not only it is acceptable to all but, more than that, all of the cultural layers see themselves represented in it.

Douglas E. Ramage's observation about the broad Indonesian acceptance of the 'formulaic expression of national unity' in Pancasila (Ramage, 1997, 202):

Indonesian political discourse suggests that while authorities use Pancasila to restrict the permissible boundaries of political behavior, there is also unifying value in a national ideology whose appeal cross-cuts religious, ethnic, and regional affiliations.

In this short description, Ramage suggests that no matter how often at times Pancasila has been used and 're-interpreted' by the political powers for their own interest, it still has the appeal that 'cross-cuts' boundaries of diversity (Ramage, 1997, 202). Ukur attributes the fact that Indonesia, although being the world's largest Moslem population, remains intact as one nation without having to be an Islamic state, because of Pancasila (Ukur, in CCA, 1983, 83).

### **3.2.5. Indonesian national culture: Pancasila mentality**

It is important to note that the term 'Pancasila mentality' that is proposed here should be understood as a mental model that is working in the background of Indonesian society, which is characterized by a common longing for unity amidst its obvious diversity.

In Indonesian academic discourse, it is not uncommon to use the term Pancasila in the way that we are using it here. See, for example, a doctoral thesis from Radboud University, Nijmegen by Suhadi in 2014: “I Come from a Pancasila Family” – A discursive study on Muslim-Christian Identity Transformation in Indonesian Post-Reformasi Era. In this research, the term ‘Pancasila Family’ is used to describe a mental model of families who embraced diversity of religions within their family (Suhadi, 2014, 178). The term ‘Pancasila Family’ is also used by Widjopranoto, in his book *The Pattern of Developing the Pancasila Family (Pola Pengembangan Keluarga Pancasila)*, in which he refers with this term to a family whose members observe the values of Pancasila (Widjopranoto, cited in Suhadi, 178). Even though we see two distinct meanings of the same term ‘Pancasila family’, both usages imply that the term ‘Pancasila’ is not understood merely as a set of formal rules, but as a dynamic living principle. Therefore, we dare to use the term ‘Pancasila Identity’ in describing the set of characters mentioned earlier.

The present Indonesian society has undergone many changes: changes of political order, liberalization, modernization, that gave birth to many new challenges, especially after the collapse of Soeharto. But nevertheless, as Suhadi puts it: “Pancasila ideology rules interpersonal everyday life” (Suhadi, 207). That cultural identity, which is visible in: 1) the ‘neither-nor’ paradigm in perceiving Indonesia’s unity in its diversity, 2) the gotong-royong principle that obligates everyone’s participation in Indonesia’s communal life, and 3) the musyawarah untuk mufakat principle of deliberating in order to achieve a creative compromise as a harmonious consensus; this is what we refer to as the Indonesian national cultural context that is present in the background of the Indonesian churches.



# Chapter 4

## Church Order Analysis: Identity, Assembly, and Ministry

### 4.1. The church orders

A church order is more than just another official document of a church. It is *the* official document of a church, and it explains a particular church's understanding of identity, life, and ministry. It is like a window that connects us with the church's historical past, presents to us its contextual challenges, and introduces to us its vision for the future. From it we can see the theological ideals that define a church's being, shaped by centuries of tradition and currents of academic theological thinking. It tries to translate those theological ideals into practical formulations that are directive for the whole church.

Long says that the way churches do things frequently receives direction from their polity, which reveals how a group believes things should be done (Long, 2001, 1-2):

Normally, in thinking about various Christian groups, less attention is given to their governance than to their beliefs. ... It is true that churches believe certain things about governance as well as about doctrinal matters. These governance patterns deserve to be better understood, for differences and contrast among mainline church groups may be seen more clearly by comparing governance than by comparing doctrines. There are clear and abiding differences in the patterns of governance – generally called the 'polities' – of different churches.

A book of church order is the most comprehensive document regarding a church's governance/polity. It is not simply a collection of regulations, but it also contains spiritual guidance and intends to create the space for the revelation of God's law for His church (cf. Coertzen, 1998, 45-46; see also Coertzen, 2004 for a more thorough discussion regarding the topic of church order). This is not

to say that a church order contains everything about a church, because there will always be other complementing documents that usually explain the technical matters related to the topics mentioned in the church order.

Different churches can have different approaches as to how their church order is structured. Some may formulate in a relatively concise manner, while others do so in a more extensive way. Some may try to summarize it into one single document, and others make use of many complementary documents. But, in general, the content of a church order will usually flow from a more foundational formulation toward a more operational elaboration. The general outline of a church order content will be:

- Foundational part: Here we can find a church's ecclesiology being narrated into concise paragraphs. In most church orders this can be found in their preamble to the constitution, like in the case of GKS CO and GKI CO. But some church orders may also introduce an additional part prior to the preamble, to better explain their ecclesiology, such as the Ecclesiological Basis document in the case of GMIT CO. The constitution is also a foundational part of a church order, articulating the main ideas in the preamble into the framework of a legal document, which will outline the flow for the rest of the church order.
- Elaborational part: The next part is where a church order tries to elaborate the points in the constitution into practical language. This part is usually called the regulations. Again, churches may differ in how detailed the extent of their elaborations is. In the case of GKS CO we can already see the regulations describing more technical details. In GKI CO and GMIT CO, we see some details, but further technical details are provided in other documents separate from the church order.
- Practical part: To finalize the translation process from concept to practice, we can find practical arrangements in a church order. In some church orders, they can already be found in the regulations, while some others only provide some basic information. More often, the regulations' part will direct us to another document that contains specific instructions regarding the discussed matter.

The description above serves more as a guideline to help us understand the different weight that different articles carry. We cannot always see a clear dividing line between these different parts, but we can always see that flow of movement from conceptual to operational in a church order. A foundational part will carry more theological weight if compared to the practical part. Consequently, the

foundational part of a church order will remain relatively unchanged – unless there is a drastic change happening in a church's theological view – , while the practical part may be revised more often.

#### **4.1.1. GKS Church Order**

The church order of GKS that we will analyze is adopted by the synod in 2006 as a revision of GKS CO 1998 (GKS, 2006, 6). Since its establishment in 1947, GKS has had 4 church orders: GKS church order of 1949, 1986, 1998, and 2006. Already in its first synod in 1947 the GKS started arranging how cooperation with the *Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland* could be regulated, and a temporary church order was adopted (cf. Kapita, 1965, 70). In 1949, the GKS adopted its first church order. In general, the development of the church orders flows rather naturally without any major change over the years (cf. GKS, 2010, 1). The GKS church order 2003 is considered as a revitalization of the previous church order (GKS, 2010, 1).

The church order as one whole book is structured in this manner:

- Preamble (Pre)
- Constitution (Const)
- Regulations (Reg)
- Explanation of the Church Order (ECO)

#### **4.1.2. GKI Church Order**

The church order of GKI that we will analyze is GKI CO 2009, which is a revision of GKI CO 2003. This is only the second church order after GKI's unification. Prior to the GKI CO 2003, the GKI West Java synod, GKI Central Java synod, and GKI East Java synod each had their own church orders even though the intention of unification was already at the horizon. The GKI Central Java church order was characterized by the *gereformeerd* order, while the GKI West Java and GKI East Java church orders were characterized by the *hervormd* order (cf. Huliselan, 2009, 41 also cf. Purwanto, 2014, 163). In 1962, the three synods held their first general synod in Jakarta, where they proposed a draft concept for a church order using a coexistence model similar to the GPI (cf. Huliselan, 43). In August 1994, GKI adopted the Preamble and the Constitution, and finally in 2002 the GKI synod adopted the Regulations (Huliselan, 43). As a whole, the Preamble, Constitution and Regulations became the GKI church order 2003. That church order then received minor tidying up and revisions, resulting in the GKI church order 2009.

GKI CO 2009, as one whole book, is structured in this manner:

- Preamble (Pre)
- Explanation to the Preamble (EP)
- Constitution (Const)
- Explanation to the Constitution (EC)
- Regulations (Reg)
- Appendix

GKI CO is also complemented with separate documents, such as: Implementation Guidelines, Administrative Forms, and the Book of Liturgy.

#### 4.1.3. GMIT Church Order

The church order of GMIT that we will analyze is GMIT CO 2015, which is a revision of GMIT CO 2010. Since its establishment in 1947, GMIT has had 9 church orders: GMIT church order of 1949, 1952, 1958, 1970, 1973, 1987, 1999, 2010, and 2015. GMIT's first church order, the *Peratoeran Geredja Masehi Indjili di Timor 1949*, is basically following the outline, basic ideas, and formulation of the draft *Hervormde Kerk 1947* church order (cf. Purwanto, 2014, 164). From the first church order until the church order of 1999 there were no major changes. However, the growing presence of the *Hervormde Kerk* heritage of a tendency to be more hierarchical and to have strong state influence resulted in a process of church order revision that gave birth to the GMIT church order 2010 (Wetangterah, 2011, presentation slide 6). The current 2015 church order is a minor revision of it. The main difference between the present GMIT CO and the church orders before 2010 lies in its increasing appreciation of the presbytery and its role in the life of the church. Previously, it was more about the synod and the congregations, and the presbytery was treated more as an additional entity. That is no longer the case since the major church order revision that resulted in the GMIT church order 2010.

As a whole book, the church order is structured in this manner:

- Ecclesiological Basis (EB)
- Preamble (Pre)
- Explanation to the Preamble (EP)
- Constitution (Const)
- Congregation Regulations (CR)
- Presbytery Regulations (PR)
- Synod Regulations (SR)

GMIT CO is complemented with lots of other regulatory documents, separate from the church order book, but in our analysis here we will also take a look only at some of them:

- Officebearer Election Regulation (OBER)
- Office and Employment Regulations (OER)

Unfortunately, there is no formal English version available for all of these church orders. Therefore, we have to translate them from Indonesian by trying to capture the spirit of the texts rather than converting them word by word into English. In doing so we have to be aware of the limitations and challenges, such as the loss of meaning and aesthetics that can happen in a translation process. The translated version of the main documents can be found in the Appendix of this research, while some of the more technical details will only be found here in the main text.

In chapter 2 we have discussed power-related features in Reformed polity, which directly correlate with the theological aspects of identity, assembly, and ministry that we have described in chapter 1. This chapter now is specifically intended to discover and analyze those relationships as can be found in the church order documents. We link the concept of identity with the feature of tension between tradition and context because that is the main question we will always deal with when discerning our identity. The concept of assemblies will be linked with the feature of dialogue, because of the inter-related nature of the assemblies and their councils in the Reformed church, which presumably requires serious attention regarding dialogue. And the concept of ministry will be linked with the feature of accountability because the exercise of ministry is an exercise of power, which in the Reformed feature would require to be accounted for.

## **4.2. Analysis of the concept of identity**

The term identity can have a variety of meanings. It is a notion about certain marks that describe who we are, what make us become a part of others, or sets us apart from some others. In this part of our discussion, we will treat the notion of identity in light of the hermeneutical tension between tradition and context: between a church's traditionally defined identity and its contextually shaped identity. We owe our concept of identity to this perennial struggle between our heritage and our present context, and that is why it would be worthwhile to see how they are presented in the church orders. Here we will use the term traditional identity and contextual identity to refer to them.

What is traditionally defined identity? It is similar to what Jenkins regards as primary identity, which is: “symbolizations that were established early in life or that have been internalized to a level of almost non-negotiability, functioning as givens to those who possess them” (Jenkins, 1996, quoted in Pauw, 2007, 23). Although Jenkins is referring to ethnicity here, we can see a similar dynamic that can be used in describing the concept of identity for a church. Furthermore, Pauw using Jenkin’s theory says: “They (read: identity) are always constructed in the internal response to external influences from one’s environment” (Pauw, 23). What this means is that identity is not a static notion, although it may start from a certain point of departure that has been internalized within a community, but it will also be redefined as a result of the community’s response to external influences. But even what we might consider as external influences at one period of time, may in turn become something internalized, and become part of the tradition that defines us. With regard to our discussion, the ecclesiastical traditions that have become an accepted set of identity markers, that is what we refer to when speaking about traditional identity.

The other part of our discussion regarding identity concerns the external influences that a community is facing, challenges that are happening that the community has to deal with, the context that they are engaging life in. This kind of identity might not yet have as strong an influence as the tradition. It may not yet be fully accepted, nor even recognized clearly, by the community as a whole. But there will be some kind of ideals emerging in the church order, that deliberately take these contextual challenges into consideration and formalize them into statements that describe a concept of identity. This is what we refer to by contextual identity.

In this part, we will try to locate and analyze how the church orders treat these two concepts of identity. The preamble (and its explanation) of a church order contains valuable ecclesiological insights regarding that particular church. The preamble is usually a narrative about the church; it is an attempt to reflect the stories and purpose of the church’s life. It provides the most tangible expression of the church’s identity. Some churches may even formulate a separate document explaining the ecclesiology of their particular denomination, like for example the *Pokok-pokok Eklesiologi GMIT (Ecclesiological Basis/EB)* document in *Gereja Masehi Injili di Timor (GMIT)*. In analyzing the concept of identity, we will give more focus to the preamble, and will try to include parts from the constitution and regulations whenever further explanation is considered necessary.

#### 4.2.1. Gereja Kristen Sumba (GKS)

##### Reading the Preamble

A preamble is usually formulated in relatively brief but dense statements; that is also true for the GKS. Therefore, it is possible to analyze it directly here. We will first read the paragraphs in their order, complemented with the explanations of the corresponding paragraph. The texts used here are translated from the Indonesian version directly, since no English version is available. From there we can highlight any hints regarding its concept of identity and attempt to analyze them per paragraph, and then as a whole.

##### GKS CO - Pre par. 1

Trusting in God's revelation as witnessed to in The Old Testament and The New Testament, the Gereja Kristen Sumba believes that God has brought his Kingdom as an expression of his glorious love in and to the world. That act reached its peak in God's liberation work in the great act of the Lord Jesus Christ who saved the world through his death and resurrection.

##### GKS CO - Explanation of Preamble (EP) par. 1

###### Introduction

The content of this introduction is reflecting the vision, mission, and journey direction of GKS in the future.

The explanation here does not specifically speak about the first paragraph, but it speaks more about the preamble as a whole. But from the formulation of Pre par. 1 we can see that the notion of God's kingdom and liberation work is introduced as key word for GKS, and we can see these two terms are repeated many times in the preamble.

##### GKS CO - Pre par. 2

The kingdom that has come and is coming will reach its fullness and perfection when the Lord Jesus comes again to judge the world.

##### GKS CO – EP par. 2

###### Creed

The opening part of a church order is more or less a *status confessionis*. It contains convictions regarding what God is doing to the world, and how the church is entrusted to minister and bear witness to the world.

Therefore, we start this opening part with a conviction of God's revelation as witnessed to by the scripture.

Par. 2 is a brief description about God's Kingdom that has come, and that will come fully when Jesus comes again. EP par. 2 also gives some explanation about the preamble in general. Already here, we also see an explanation about the church's responsibility to partake in the fulfillment of God's Kingdom, which later will be described in par. 3-4. As a general observation, par. 2 seems more like a part of par. 1, rather than a separate paragraph.

GKS CO – Pre par. 3

Through the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit, Jesus entrusted the liberation work to the Church, which is the communion of the believers.

GKS CO – EP par. 3

The Kingdom of God as the church's vision

This church order is formulated in the framework of the fulfillment of God's Kingdom. Jesus Christ liberated the world because it is God's intention to manifest His kingdom in the realm of human history. That kingdom has arrived, but it also will arrive at its fulfillment in the future when everything is perfected. The history is progressing in this dialectic between this God's Kingdom *already* and *not yet* having arrived. This means that historical progress, however inevitable, must be put under the measures of God's kingdom. A critical attitude towards history must be applied. Jesus Christ is the bearer of God's kingdom, because He fulfilled what God's kingdom is about, which is justice, truth, peace, brotherhood, prosperity, liberation, and salvation in a sustainable ecology, with God as the center of history. This history will progress toward eschatology.

Par. 3 speaks about the vision of the Church in general, and GKS in particular. We see here a narrative about the Church bearing responsibility to manifest God's kingdom in the realm of human history, through manifesting the examples of Jesus' liberation work until the fulfillment of God's kingdom. A mention is made regarding the changing historical context that the Church must respond to with a critical attitude. The vision of fulfillment of God's kingdom and the Church's part in it becomes the framework for GKS' narrative of identity.



## GKS CO - Pre par. 4

The apostolic mandate is given to the Church, to make visible the signs of God's Kingdom in the realm of history. In obedience and loyalty to this mandate, the Church continuously proclaims and manifests God's loving grace along the course of world's history until the end of time.

## GKS CO – EP par. 4

The Church as bearer of the apostolic mandate  
Jesus Christ as the bearer of God's mission, entrusted that mission to the church. We use the term apostolic mandate, to remind us of the apostles' task to carry that mandate to all creation. The church can only understand this mission if the Holy Spirit is working in it. The Holy Spirit works, supports, shapes, and will always sanctify the church as a communion of believers. The Church's mission is also called a liberating work because that mission needs to show how humankind has been liberated not only from sin, but also from the many shackles of sin (compare Luke 4: 18-19). The church bears this liberating work until the end of time, because all those oppressive shackles will always remain in various forms.

Par. 4 speaks about the mission of the Church in general, and GKS in particular. This mission is a mandate that the Church must carry with loyal obedience. Church mission is narrated through the perspective of liberating the creation from the oppressive shackles of sin.

## GKS CO - Pre par. 5

God's love through Jesus Christ never changes, whether yesterday, today, or in the future. And in fact, by his never changing love, God makes changes for the good and the welfare of humanity in history. He leads and directs those changes. The Church as the executor of this apostolic mandate then should become the subject of change, and not be strayed or swept by the changes happening.

## GKS CO – EP par. 5

God as the cause of changes

God's steadfast love is everlasting, and manifested in different ways throughout the realm of history. There are changes (progresses) in the course of human history, as we can see human culture is not static. We believe that God alone causes those changes, but humans are given the

capacity to respond to the challenges these changes create. In other words, these changes are not something that is happening automatically. We need to direct these changes toward the fulfillment of God's kingdom. It can happen that some changes are caused by other 'spirits', which we can characterize by: they do not bring prosperity to humankind, but they bring destruction. Hence, we need to be alert, critical, positive, and realistic.

Par. 5 specifically addresses the inevitability of changes throughout history, and how the Church is called to influence these changes so that they may fulfill God's kingdom. Although par. 5 could be seen as ambiguous when describing the cause of change, because first it says God causes all changes but later it also says some changes can be caused by other spirits, however, it seems clear enough to assume that the intention here is how to not let these changes be oppressing shackles to the creation, but liberating.

#### GKS CO – Pre par. 6

Believing that God through Jesus Christ is continuously giving his apostolic mandate to the Church at all times and places, Gereja Kristen Sumba that is founded on 15 January 1947 as the fruit of missionary work from Nederlands Gereformeerde Zendings Vereniging (NGZV) and Zending van de Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland (ZGKN), believes that it also received the same apostolic mandate to manifest the signs of God's Kingdom in the society and nation of Indonesia, and specifically in the island of Sumba.

#### GKS CO – EP par. 6

The Church as a subject of change

Since the church is mandated to keep on carrying the apostolic mandate, and because we believe that God is the cause of changes/renewal, hence the church should be a subject in this change and renewal. In other words, the church has to be proactive in initiating changes and renewal within the church, and in society. The church should not be passive or even resisting to changes, as long as the changes are for the benefit of humankind.

God through Christ has given and is continuously giving the mandate of mission to the Church. Par. 6 speaks about GKS's identity as a church born in the family of Dutch Reformed churches through the works of NGZV and ZGKN,

and thus as a church it also received that mandate from Christ. Here GKS is also acknowledging its position as a church that is part of the Indonesian society, especially in the island of Sumba. Below are some articles in GKS Const that correspond to par. 6:

- GKS Const § 2: “GKS is the communion of believers in Sumba who are called and baptized by Jesus Christ into one body, where Jesus becomes the head that guides and nurtures the whole body through his Word and Spirit.” The emphasis on the island of Sumba as geographical border for GKS is made here. One symbolization with regard to the Sumba context is visible from the logo and seal of GKS, Reg § 6.1: “The logo and seal of GKS is the shape of the circle with a white horse and the rider wearing a crown and holding a bow” (Revelation 6:2).



This reference to horse and rider is linked with the Sumbanese people’s appreciation for horses, horse riding, and the characteristic savannah landscape in Sumba Island. Compare this to the quotation from Hoskins to show the kind of appreciation Sumbanese customs have toward horses: “The most common honorific title used to address or refer to a prominent person is his horse name, which links him to a stallion specially dedicated to the marapu spirits in a divination to determine that the two ‘share the same spirit and the same destiny’. The horse is thereafter excluded from the realm of ordinary exchange, cannot be sold, and will not leave his master's house until four days after his master's death, when he is led out beside the open grave and sacrificed to bear his soul on a final journey to the afterworld” (Hoskins, 1989, 434).

- GKS Const § 3: “GKS is the communion of believers as the body of Christ, which is manifested in the congregations within the ministry of GKS”. Here we see a hint of a traditional *gereformeerd* concept of identity with regard to the emphasis on local congregations as the expression of the Church.

- GKS Const § 4: “Members of GKS are those who have received the sacrament of Baptism.”

Although it is clear that through baptism a person enters the communion of believers, what does the statement above imply? If it were to refer to the general condition that a person is already baptized, then it would mean anyone who has been baptized can be considered as GKS member. That cannot be the case. But if it were to refer only to persons who were baptized in a GKS congregation, then how could someone who has been baptized elsewhere become a member of GKS? There is actually one part that indirectly speaks about membership obtained not through baptism; GKS Reg § 7.4 regarding transfer (of membership) says:

- 1) Every member wishing to move to another GKS congregation or to a congregation of another denomination of the same tradition, needs to ask for a transfer letter from the consistory.
- 2) A member who is moving from another church of a different tradition, has to proclaim a confession of faith in front of the congregation worship.
- 3) A member who is moving from another church of different tradition, should not be re-baptized.
- 4) Church membership will be erased if a person moves to another church, converts to another religion, or is excommunicated.

It is obvious from GKS Reg § 7.4.1-3 above, that GKS membership is obtainable not only through baptism in a GKS congregation. One can be a member of GKS not through baptism, but through an administrative admission. This generalization regarding membership through baptism might imply GKS congregations' identity as a relatively homogenous community that grows mainly through internal growth in Sumba.

However, EP par. 6 does not seem to fully correspond to the content of Pre par. 6. The first sentence of EP par. 6 speaks about the apostolic mandate that churches received, and the church's responsibility as subject of change (still in relation with Par. 5). But later, it seems that Pre par. 6 is also explained in part in EP par. 7 (when it speaks about the Dutch Reformed heritage). Regardless of that, here we see already that the linking between traditional identity (Dutch Reformed background) and contextual identity (Sumba, Indonesia) is made.

## GKS CO - Pre par. 7

Based on that belief also, Gereja Kristen Sumba realizes and confesses that Gereja Kristen Sumba is the manifestation of the body of Jesus Christ, in the Communion of Churches in Indonesia, and with every Church that confesses Jesus Christ as the Lord and Savior of the world.

## GKS CO – EP par. 7

Gereja Kristen Sumba as the body of Christ

The church does not exist as an abstract entity. The church concretely exists in history. GKS as the body of Christ is living in the history of the Indonesian society, and in the Sumba context, as the fruit of missionary activity of the Zending van de Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland, but also as a part of the Communion of Churches in Indonesia (Persekutuan Gereja-gereja di Indonesia/PGI) and all the churches confessing Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

Again in par. 7 a correlation between GKS as part of the Church history (tradition), and part of the Indonesian society's history (context) is made. Some articles that correspond to this linking are:

- GKS is adopting the traditional ecumenical confession and can formulate its own confession, as stated in GKS Const § 5 – Confession:
  - 1) Jesus is Lord and Savior of the world, source of truth and life, and is the head of the Church.
  - 2) GKS confesses that the Old Testament and New Testament are the Word of God in the light of Jesus Christ.
  - 3) Together with the Church of all ages and places, GKS accepts as its creeds: the Apostle's Creed, the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed, and the Athanasian Creed.
  - 4) Together with the Indonesian Communion of Churches, GKS accepts the Pemahaman Bersama Iman Kristen (Common Understanding of Christian Faith) in the *Dokumen Keesaan Gereja* (The ecumenical document of Indonesian churches).
  - 5) GKS can formulate its own confession.
- GKS accepts the traditional Reformed teaching and can formulate its own, as stated in GKS Const § 6 – Teachings:
  - 1) The source of GKS teaching is the Scripture.
  - 2) GKS accepts the teaching of the Reformation in the Heidelberg Catechism.

- 3) GKS can formulate its own points of teaching.
- GKS acknowledges its position as part of the larger Indonesian society with Pancasila as an umbrella principle, GKS Const § 7 – Principle in Community Life: “GKS accepts the Pancasila as the principle for living in the Indonesian society.”
  - Acknowledging GKS participation in the wider community of churches in Indonesia through the Communion of Churches in Indonesia (PGI), GKS Const §1.2 states: “The GKS name must be complemented with ‘Member of the Communion of Churches in Indonesia’”.

#### GKS CO – Pre par. 8

In the course of Indonesian history, Gereja Kristen Sumba will experience changes and rapid developments in the field of social life, culture, economy, politic, law, history, religion, science, and technology, as a result of the globalization process as we enter the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Facing those changes, Gereja Kristen Sumba, on the one hand has to remain being the subject of change in the conviction that God himself is doing all those changes, and on the other hand must remain alert so that it will not be dragged by the many changes that do not come from God.

#### GKS CO – EP par. 8

Gereja Kristen Sumba facing changes.

We have mentioned that changes are inevitable. Changes are happening in all fields of life. GKS, in its conviction that God initiates changes, must not let these changes just happen by themselves. GKS must initiate these changes. In order to do that, GKS must be able to read the signs of time. And to be able to do that, GKS must remain in a double-discernment between God’s Word, in trying to understand what is God’s will for our world today (Indonesia, NTT, Sumba); and on the other hand struggling with the changes (socio-economic, politic, culture, science, technology, and others).

Par. 8 speaks about the context of change that GKS will always have to respond to under the guidance of Scripture. EP par. 8 acknowledges that in order for GKS to become a subject of change, it must try to understand Scripture in the light of the context it is dealing with. A ‘double discernment’ between obedience to a traditionally accepted reading of scripture, and a contextually guided reading of scripture. One particular example that can be linked with this ‘double

discernment' can be found in Reg § 16.3.3: "Adult baptism for people from Marapu belief who are already married, will no longer require them to redo the marriage blessing ceremony." The term marapu means ancestors (*leluhur*), the honored one (*yang dimuliakan*); it became the name for the traditional belief system of the Sumba people (cf. Soeriadijedja, 2009). One of the earliest problems facing the GKS regards the polygamy marriage in the Marapu belief, and when the person then converted to Christianity questions arose regarding how the church should deal with the marriage status – should the husband divorce some of his wives, should they be under church discipline, and other matters –; discussions about this issue can be found in "Injil dan Marapu" (Wellem, 2004, 335-339).

#### GKS CO – Pre par. 9

In fulfilling the apostolic mandate, Gereja Kristen Sumba governs itself, its life and ministry by under-lining these points:

1. In preserving the holiness and purity in the life of church members, Gereja Kristen Sumba appoints people into offices, which are: elders, deacons, and ministers, with the main task of caring, supervising, and equipping church members to live according to God's will.
2. Organizationally, the shape and system of government of Gereja Kristen Sumba is presbyterial-synodical, which emphasizes on the one hand the role of the consistory (presbyterial) in the congregations, and on the other hand the togetherness (synodical) of the congregations in the ministerial territory of Gereja Kristen Sumba, as one unity in common loyalty as the body of Christ.

To govern itself, life and ministry of Gereja Kristen Sumba, the Church Order of Gereja Kristen Sumba is formulated, which is an improvement from the Aturan Gereja 1949, Tata Gereja tahun 1986, and Tata Gereja tahun 1998; Consisting of Constitution and Regulations arranged in this manner: (RAS: it then continues with the content).

#### GKS CO – EP par. 9

How Gereja Kristen Sumba lives out and carries the apostolic mandate. GKS needs order to be able to do that. We are aware of the limitations of a church order, that many dynamics of the Holy Spirit and the living dynamics of congregational life might not be accommodated in this church order. This should not reduce the significance of the GKS church order, because all things must be done decently and in order.

The love expressions that are characteristics of God's congregations need not to be in contradiction with decency and order.

Along with the presbyterial-synodical principle of the GKS, the basis of ministry is in the congregation. There is where initiatives start but that does not mean that congregations can exercise full autonomy without limitations. Congregations living together as a synod would mean walking together. Therefore, congregational autonomy must be understood as an inter-related autonomy, we are bound together and depend on each other.

Par. 9 speaks about GKS governance through the traditional offices of elder, deacon, and minister; the presbyterial-synodical organizational system; and the adoption of the GKS Church Order. Some articles that relate to these points above are:

- Regarding the offices, a detailed analysis will be done when we are examining the concept of ministry. But here it should be noted that in GKS, there is another function that has overlaps with the traditional offices, which is: *pengerja gerejawi* (church worker). GKS Const § 12 states:
  - 1) What is meant by church worker (*pengerja gerejawi*) is: minister, evangelist, and vicar.
  - 2) GKS can designate other types of church worker than those mentioned above.

Church Worker is an umbrella term to describe any kind of formal function that does ministry in the church and receives financial support from the church. GKS Const § 12.2 above actually opens some possibility for new forms of formal ministry that can go beyond the three traditional offices of elder, deacon, and minister.

- Regarding the presbyterial-synodical system, some more analysis will be done when we are examining the concept of assembly; but here we will try to see how GKS understands that system from the perspective of identity. GKS Reg § 34.1 states: "The organizational form of GKS is presbyterial-synodical, which on the one hand emphasizes the role of the congregation, and on the other hand the role of the synod, which in its implementation is organized in balance and in harmony". Here we see a description about the church's system of governance, which totally resonates with the Indonesian ideal for balance and harmony.



### **General Analysis of GKS' Concept of Identity**

GKS has not yet formulated its own confession, nor a specific ecclesiological document. However, from the reading of its preamble some conclusions regarding its concept of identity can be made:

- God's Kingdom, liberation, and changes are three major key words in GKS concept of identity. Life is a journey towards the fulfillment of God's Kingdom, and GKS, as part of the Church, must play a liberating role in that journey. Changes are inevitable, but GKS should take an active role as subject of changes in the society so that changes that happen could truly become liberating and not destructive.
- The church order acknowledges both the tradition that GKS inherited from Dutch Reformed missionary activity, and the context that it is in: the Indonesian society, the wider Indonesian churches. However, in stating both concepts of identity, there are not enough clues to suggest the kind of attitude GKS has towards them. It simply states them: the traditions and the contexts. There is no preference among the two in describing GKS' identity. However, we can see that accepting tradition as given does not limit GKS's creativity in opening new avenues for ministry, as seen in the possibility in defining GKS' own teaching, confession, and forms of ministry. In the framework of power in polity, this means that in GKS CO there are possibilities to creatively deal with the notion of authority to respond to the calling of the context, but it just has not been used, yet.
- It is very apparent that GKS consciously and deliberately focuses its life and mission in the context of Sumba. This does not mean that GKS has no participation in the wider church or communities other than Sumba; it just chooses to do it indirectly through its work in Sumba. In this light, it is fair to assume that there will be potential complications in relation to the concept of power-relation in the Sumbanese culture. However, there is no mention about this at all in the church order of GKS, which may deserve a more critical reflection: does this reflect a certain uncritical conception about the church's identity? We are aware of the limitations of this research, and that this question might be best treated from a sociological point of view. However, it is important to point out this silence regarding the specific Sumba identity in GKS church order.

#### 4.2.2. Gereja Kristen Indonesia (GKI)

##### Reading the Preamble

GKI CO - Pre par.1

By the help and guidance of the Holy Spirit, Gereja Kristen Indonesia, which is a continuation and manifestation of unity of Gereja Kristen Indonesia Jawa Barat, Gereja Kristen Indonesia Jawa Tengah, and Gereja Kristen Indonesia Jawa Timur, in discerning the Word of God as witnessed to by the Old Testament and New Testament Bible, in the context of present Indonesian reality, hereby declares its basic understanding and confession of faith regarding the Church universal and in particular about itself:

EP par. 1

1. Only in the Holy Spirit, GKI can express its understanding of faith regarding the Church universal and speaks about itself in particular through this preamble.
2. Under the guidance and help of the Holy Spirit, GKI discerns the Scripture. That discernment happens continuously in the encounter with the living God, who reveals Himself in the Lord Jesus Christ as testified by the Old Testament and New Testament Scripture.
3. GKI's process of discerning the Scripture happens in the present Indonesian context. But in understanding its context, GKI sees itself also as an integral part of this world. Therefore, expressing itself and its function in the context of Indonesia must be understood broadly in the context of the world.
4. From the discernment as mentioned above, GKI declares its points of understanding and confession of faith regarding the Church universal and particular. On the one hand, GKI's general and basic understanding about itself is included in this universal understanding. On the other hand, GKI's self-understanding in particular contains points, which are derived from that universal understanding.
5. As a result of missionary work, domestic and from abroad, in East Java on 22 February 1934 a church was founded, which later became Gereja Kristen Indonesia Jawa Timur; in West Java on 24 March 1940 a church was founded, which later became Gereja Kristen Indonesia Jawa Barat; and in Central Java on 8 August 1945 a church was founded which later became Gereja Kristen Indonesia Jawa Tengah. Since 27 March 1962, these three churches

have tried to unify into one Sinode Am Gereja Kristen Indonesia. On 26 August 1988, the three churches became one church under the name Gereja Kristen Indonesia.

GKI's preamble opens with an acknowledgement that GKI is a continuation and manifestation of unity between three churches. Here, the hermeneutical tension to read the scripture in the context of Indonesia is mentioned. In EP par. 1.4-5, GKI is affirming that it is a part of the universal church, born through previous missionary work as three distinct churches, which then unified into GKI. GKI's affirmation of its Reformed identity can be seen in its constitution and regulations:

Const § 3 – Confession:

1. GKI confesses its faith that Jesus Christ is:
  - a. Lord and world Savior, Source of truth and life.
  - b. Head of the Church, who founded the church and called the church to life in faith and mission.
2. GKI confesses its faith that the Scripture – Old Testament and New Testament – is the Word of God, which became the foundation and the only norm for church life.
3. GKI, in communion with the Church of Lord Jesus Christ of all times and places, accepts the Apostle's Creed, the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed, and the Athanasian Creed.
4. GKI, in relation with the Reformed tradition, accepts the Heidelberg Catechism.
5. GKI, in communion with the Indonesian churches, accepts the Pemahaman Bersama Iman Kristen (Common Understanding of Christian Faith) from Persekutuan Gereja-gereja di Indonesia/PGI (Communion of Churches in Indonesia).

Reg § 12 - Teaching

1. Holding to GKI's confession as stated in Chapter 3 of its Constitution, GKI's teaching is elaborated and formulated in its Catechism and Teaching Guidance.
2. GKI catechism books are:
  - a. Tumbuh dalam Kristus (Grow in Christ)
  - b. Tuhan Ajarlah Aku (Lord, Teach Me)
3. GKI accepts the currently available teaching guidances, which are:
  - a. Teaching guidance about the Scripture

- b. Teaching guidance about the Church
- c. Teaching guidance about the New Pentecostals (Charismatics)
  - i. Glossolalia
  - ii. Healing
  - iii. Vision
  - iv. Baptism
  - v. Holy Communion

From the description regarding GKI's confession and teaching above, we can see that they are still using a traditional Reformed standard, combined with what is used in the Indonesian ecumenical circle of PGI. There are teaching documents in the GKI, but their contents are translations of traditional Reformed positions of various themes, rather than something developed in/for the context. In practice, the two books mentioned are not widely used, and most GKI congregations have developed their own materials. This can perhaps be explained due to practical reasons: the fact that many of the contents are traditional Reformed theology that is already well known and easily accessible nowadays.

Another identity defining formulation in GKI CO regards its logo.

GKI Reg § 11 – Meaning of GKI Logo:

1. As a sign symbolizing the nature of GKI as a church, GKI decides on the logo:



2. Explanation:
  - a. The Boat represents God's Church moving forward fulfilling its calling in the world, and GKI's affirmation as an inseparable part of God's Church to realize the One Church in Indonesia and in the world.

- b. The Cross represents the love and sacrifice of Lord Jesus Christ which determines the path of GKI's life.
- c. The Wave represents the world, which is full of challenge and opportunity, into which the GKI is sent.
- d. The Alpha and Omega represent the eternal God, who decides and is present along the GKI's journey.

In symbolizing its essence as a church, we can see the symbols used are relatively neutral ecumenical symbols that do not specifically depict the context of GKI's life and ministry. But there is a very unique characteristic in GKI that may not be found in other churches in Indonesia, which is the way church naming works:

GKI Const § 2.1:

1. Name

- a. GKI in the form of a congregation is called: GKI ... (full address, street name and city, area and city, or the city name)
- b. GKI in the form of a presbytery is called: GKI Klasis ... (name of the city or name of the region).
- c. GKI in the form of a regional synod is called: GKI Sinode Wilayah ... (name of province).
- d. GKI in the form of a synod is called: Gereja Kristen Indonesia.

Although the logo of GKI seems very neutral in terms of context identity, the naming of its congregations, presbyteries, and regional synods are closely linked to the actual location of the church building. All GKI congregations are known by their street or city names as the formal name of the church. In Indonesia, many street names are using the names of national heroes, and many of them are Muslim names, so sometimes we will find a very unique combination of naming such as: GKI Wahid Hasyim (who was the first minister of religious affairs in Indonesia, and a son of the founder of Nahdlatul Ulama), GKI Agus Salim (who was a leader of Sarekat Islam), GKI Maulana Yusuf (who was the second sultan of Banten), and many other examples.

GKI CO - Pre par. 2

Universally, the source of the church is found in God who saves through His work within and throughout history. God's salvation work

– which reached its peak in Lord Jesus Christ – is done holistically and is covering everything toward the fulfillment of God's Kingdom. In that salvation work, through His covenant, God gathers His chosen people, starting from the people of Israel and continued with a new people of God in Lord Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit, which is the church. As a new people, the church is one. Church unity is a unity in diversity. Therefore, the church is one communion of those who have faith in Jesus Christ – Lord and Savior of the world – who by the power of the Holy Spirit are called and commissioned to partake in God's mission, which is God's salvation work in the world.

EP par. 2

1. The source of the church being in the world does not come from itself nor from the world, but from God through His salvation work in and throughout history. The phrase 'in and throughout history' refers to God's salvation work, which covers the wholeness of time and events in this world since the fall of humankind into sin until the end of time. This salvation work includes the participation of humankind and the world.
2. God's salvation work is liberating the world and humanity from sin, and it brought the world and humankind to a new life in the right relationship with God, with others, and with the whole of creation.
3. The history in which the salvation work of God is happening is the history of our world.
4. In the history of the world, God works through his covenant. His covenant, on the one hand, summarizes God's initiative and love to bind Him-self and to call humankind, and on the other hand, summarizes human responses through love and obedience to God's initiatives and work. That salvation history started from God's action to the people of Israel, and through Jesus Christ, and continues with God's work through his Church.
5. From the perspective of covenant in the framework of God's salvation, the Lord Jesus Christ is the foundation and head of the Church, which signifies the Church's presence as the new people of God. On the one hand, the church cannot be separated from the people of Israel in the Old Testament. On the other hand, the presence of the church as a new people is founded on Christ as Lord and Savior of the world.

6. Only by the Holy Spirit, the Lord Jesus Christ becomes and is acknowledged as the foundation and head of the Church. On the one hand, the Holy Spirit continuously renews the church and life here and now. On the other hand, the holy Spirit continuously directs the church to live and grow towards the future, toward the perfect fulfillment of God's salvation work.
7. In the Lord Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit, the church as the new people is one. On the one hand, the church's unity that is rooted in Jesus Christ is 'given', on the other hand, by the power of the Holy Spirit, the church is called to manifest that unity.
8. The church's unity is a unity in diversity. In Jesus Christ, the church is essentially one. However, in its history that one church has manifested itself into many diverse historical units if seen from the perspective of history, culture, tradition, way of life and mindset, organization, and others. Departing from this reality, only by the power of the Holy Spirit, every church which is a part of the church of the Lord Jesus Christ will be enabled to manifest unity in diversity.
9. Therefore, the church as a new people is an organic unity, continuously growing, while bearing the banner of liberation from sin for humankind and the world. The church is bound in time and space as a historical reality in the world. However, precisely because all of its being is directed to the fulfillment of God's salvation work, the church is called and commissioned by God to participate in fulfilling his plan and salvation work in and for the world.

The second paragraph speaks about God's salvation work that must be done through the churches. Reflecting GKI's history of unification, the church is described as one communion of these diverse believers, who are called and commissioned to partake in God's salvation work. Here the key words of GKI's preamble can be seen already: communion of diverse believers, called and commissioned to partake in God's salvation work.

#### GKI CO - Pre par. 3

In the framework of participating in God's mission, the church carries out its mission. The church's mission is done by every member of the church in the context of the society and nation wherever the church is placed.

## EP par. 3

1. God's universal salvation work, which covers everything, is called God's mission. In essence, God himself carries on his mission. But the church gets a place and calling to participate in executing God's mission through the church's mission. God's mission cannot be limited to the mission of the church. In the framework of God's salvation work in the world, God's mission is expressed also through the church's mission, and therefore the church's mission is based on and is serving God's mission.
2. The church in its entirety is the bearer of the church's mission. That means that every church member, whether individually or together, is responsible in doing the church's mission.
3. The church is called and commissioned by God to do its mission – in the framework of God's mission – in and for the world. Therefore, the church's mission has to be done in the context of the society, nation and state, wherever the church is situated.

Pre par. 3 speaks about the role of every church member to partake in God's mission through the church mission, which is done within a particular context. In Pre par. 3 to par. 6 we see a bridging between explanations about the Church universal in the previous paragraphs, towards becoming a church in a particular context.

## GKI CO - Pre par. 4

The church carries out its mission by continuously manifesting fellowship with God and with others on the basis of love, and through many forms of witness and service.

## EP par. 4

The church's mission is understood as one holistic unity, which consists of fellowship (*persekutuan*), witness (*kesaksian*), and service (*pelayanan*). In reality, the mission of the church is divided into two major parts that cannot be separated from each other. On the one hand, in doing its mission, the church is manifesting fellowship, which emphasizes its own being. On the other hand, the church does the church's mission by doing witness and service, with an emphasis on its works.

Par. 4 speaks about the manner with which the church can carry out its mission; that is through fellowship, witness, and service. In EP par. 4, the three terms are



then distinguished: fellowship relates more to the internal being of a church, while witness and service relate more to the church's external expression through the works of a church.

GKI CO - Pre par. 5

In the framework of carrying out its mission, the church members play an essential role according to God's calling and the gifts of the Holy Spirit. In relation to that, church members are called to become church officebearers taking the role of church leadership. The relationship between church officebearers and church members is not a hierarchical relationship, but a dynamic and reciprocal functional relationship based on love.

EP par. 5

1. Church members play an essential role in carrying out the church's mission. It means that church members play an important role as the executors of church mission. On the one hand, this role is based on God's call, which is understood as a gift, task, and responsibility given to his people. On the other hand, this role is manifested according to the spiritual gifts, which is understood as the many talents, skills, expertise, and others that God gave to every church member.
2. God calls some church members to become church officebearers, with the role of serving and equipping the church in order to be able to carry out its mission.
3. The relationship between church members and church officebearers is functional in essence, meaning that both are inter-related and cannot be separated in carrying out the church mission.

In par. 5 the role of church members in carrying out the church's mission receives a special recognition through the calling of some members into office as a leadership function. But that leadership function does not mean that there is a hierarchical relationship between church members and officebearers; this is characteristic of the identity of the Reformed tradition. The term leadership is used often in GKI CO and is always linked with the framework of church development. GKI const § 10.1:

1. Leader
  - a. As a congregation, GKI is led by the consistory whose members consist of all church officebearers within that congrega-

tion. According to its need, the consistory can form a consistory executive body as daily leadership, appointed and held accountable to the consistory.

- b. As a presbytery, GKI is led by the presbytery council whose members consist of all consistories within that presbytery. The presbytery council executive body is the daily leadership of the presbytery council, appointed and held accountable to the presbytery council.
- c. As a regional synod, GKI is led by the regional synod council whose members consist of all presbyteries within that regional synod. The regional synod council executive body is the daily leader of the regional synod council, appointed and held accountable to the regional synod council.
- d. As a synod, GKI is led by the synod council whose members consist of all regional synods within the synod. The synod council executive body is the daily leadership of the synod council, appointed and held accountable to the synod council.

#### GKI CO - Pre par. 6

The church's mission is carried out in the middle of an ever changing and developing situation. Therefore, in order to perform its mission well, the church as a whole in its integrity is called to always do church development.

#### EP par. 6

1. What is meant by church development (*pembangunan gereja*) here is not physical in nature (for example in developing church buildings or places of worship). The term development here refers to 'oikodome' in the New Testament, a spiritual development in the widest sense of the word, as the responsibility of Christian fellowship as a whole.
2. In essence, God is the main actor of church development. However, because God has chosen and wants to call his people as his partners, in a concrete and operational way, the church becomes the actor of church development. What is meant by the church here is all of its members and officebearers, whether individually or together as unity.

Par. 6 acknowledges the reality of change in the world, thus the need for the church to also develop itself, under God's guidance, in order to respond to new arising challenges. After describing GKI's historical background in par. 1, and then affirming the church's identity as a community of believers who are called to partake in God's mission in par. 2, par. 3 to par. 6 can be summarized as talking about church mission as a call to all church members, which is done through fellowship, witness, and service, together in the leadership of the officebearers. In the following paragraphs, the preamble starts to speak in light of GKI as a particular church.

GKI CO - Pre par. 7

Particularly, GKI besides affirming itself as part of the one church of Lord Jesus Christ also affirms itself as part of the churches in Indonesia, and part of the society, nation, and state of Indonesia.

In par. 7, GKI acknowledges that Indonesia in particular is the context of its mission and being. No further explanation is given in EP par. 7.

GKI CO - Pre par. 8

GKI's existence is meant as a contribution to the process of realizing a more concrete Gereja Kristen Yang Esa di Indonesia, and for the better carrying out of God's mission. Therefore, the shape of GKI's unity is a functional unity, as reflected in an organic structural unity, while respecting and making use of all the wealth and diversity of historical heritage in it.

EP par. 8

1. GKI's unity is not an abstract unity, but a unity that is visible in one integral organization with one church order. However, considering that GKI comes from GKI Jawa Barat, GKI Jawa Tengah, and GKI Jawa Timur, each with its own historical heritage and specific context, that unity must remain open for the diversity that exists and not only emphasize uniformity, which could diminish creativity and the rich historical heritage we have.
2. GKI as a unity is not exclusive, which is only focused on itself, but it rather is a part of the churches in Indonesia through the Communion of Churches in Indonesia (PGI), which since its conception on 25 May 1950 has been on the same historical track, to manifest

*Gereja Kristen Yang Esa di Indonesia* (One Christian Church in Indonesia).

3. GKI's unity is not an end in itself, but is also intended to enable GKI to carry out its function in the world, especially in Indonesia. GKI's unity on the one hand is always in the process of change in itself, but on the other hand is also in the process of influencing and changing its external surroundings. Therefore, this unity is called a functional unity: first, by being based in Christ and by the power of the Holy Spirit, GKI's unity has the function to partake in the fight to realize the unity of the Church, especially in Indonesia; secondly, GKI's unity has the function to partake in God's mission in the world, especially in Indonesia.
4. In accordance with its essence, GKI does not give any possibility for separation from the unity of GKI.

Par. 8 speaks about church unity and opens with a reference to the formation of *Gereja Kristen yang Esa* (One Christian Church), which was the goal of PGI when it was founded in 1950 – then still named *Dewan Gereja-gereja di Indonesia/DGI* (Board of Churches in Indonesia). The intention at the time was, in line with international ecumenical enthusiasm of that era, focused on founding one concrete organizational unity between churches in Indonesia. That model of organizational unity was already considered unrealistic in 1984, and together with the change of name from DGI to PGI the focus of the ecumenical movement in Indonesia then no longer aimed at founding a single church of Indonesia, the *Gereja Kristen Yang Esa* (cf. De Jong, 1990, 86-88). However, even though this ideal of forming the *Gereja Kristen Yang Esa* (One Christian Church) has been considered unrealistic, in practice, Indonesian churches still use that notion with the old intention of becoming a single church in Indonesia. We can see that this outdated model still survives in the Indonesian churches as a shared ideal, as we can still see the term GKYE mentioned again and again in many churches' church order. GKI's mention of GKYE may be related to the fact that GKI is one of the churches in Indonesia that has managed to unify into one organizational body, thus in EP par. 8.2 that old paradigm is still being affirmed again. We can say that when speaking about unity as an identity of the church, GKI is still holding on to tradition rather than context.

GKI CO - Pre par. 9

As a church in Indonesia, GKI affirms that the church and the state have their own authority, in which the other should not interfere. However,

the two are parallel partners, which respect, remind, and help each other.

EP par. 9

1. GKI acknowledges that the church and the state are two institutions that come from God, each with their own calling and authority. Therefore, the church should not directly interfere in or take over the authority of the state. And the other way around, the state should not limit the freedom of the church in expressing itself and carrying out its function. However, the church and the state should live side by side, developing a good relationship and cooperation with each other.
2. In that kind of relationship, GKI affirms and holds to the Scripture as the only foundation and norm for the life of the church. In this light, GKI together with all elements of the Indonesian society accepts Pancasila as the principle in living as a society, nation, and state. What is meant by Pancasila, is as formulated in the national constitution: (1) The oneness of God, (2) A just and civilized humanity, (3) Unity of Indonesia, (4) Democracy under the guidance of wisdom through deliberation of representatives, (5) Social justice for all Indonesian people.
3. GKI supports, is actively involved in, and participates fully in the national development because GKI understands the national development as an intentional effort to create a better livelihood for the Indonesian people, in its broadest sense. This support, involvement, and participation must be expressed in the attitude of being positive, creative, critical, and realistic. Positive means openness to what is good; creative means: by the guidance of the Holy Spirit actively involved in renewal efforts; critical means seeing everything in the light of the Scripture; realistic means: being aware of the time and the limits of reality and not carried away by unrealistic dreams.

Par. 9 speaks about the relationship between the church and the state that should be understood as a partnership, each with its own authority and calling. EP par. 9.1 exemplifies the Indonesian emphasis on harmony when stating: “the church and state should live side by side, developing a good relationship and cooperation with each other” in accordance with the non-interfering or taking over of authority between the two. Pancasila is also mentioned in EP par. 9.2 as the principle of living in Indonesian society. Altogether, Pre par. 9 describes the

wider context of GKI as part of Indonesia, and how it should relate to it in a positive, creative, critical and realistic way, together with the Indonesian society and Indonesian government in promoting national development as part of God's mission.

#### GKI CO - Pre par. 10

In the spirit of togetherness, based on the Christian faith and the spirit of national unity, GKI opens up to cooperate and dialogue with other churches, the government, and other groups in the society, to promote welfare, justice, peace, and integrity of creation for all Indonesians.

#### EP par. 10

1. GKI is called to promote welfare –which is shalom – which contains justice, peace, and the integrity of creation. To make it happen, GKI has to open itself to cooperate and dialogue with all sides and groups of good will.
2. Promoting justice, peace, and integrity of creation are three missionary aspects that are inter-related and inseparable. The peace that GKI is promoting is a just peace, not just living in *status quo*. The justice that GKI is promoting is a reconciling justice, not putting different sides into opposition to each other. And lastly, peace and justice are not only within humankind alone, but also in the context of the whole creation.
3. What is meant by 'integrity of creation' is that all God's creatures are inter-related in an integral system of life, where everything in it depends on each other. The extinction or destruction of one element will impact the wholeness of this system. In its turn, it will endanger every element in the system.
4. Humans must not think only of their interest and comfort, disregarding the rights of other creatures. GKI is called not only to promote the welfare of humankind alone, but the life of all God's creation.

Par. 10 speaks more specifically about the aims of church mission in the context of Indonesia, which are: to promote welfare, justice, peace and integrity of creation. In EP par. 10.1, the term welfare is understood as translation for shalom, which can happen only if GKI is willing to open up for cooperation and dialogue with other groups. In general, in par. 10 GKI is recognizing that it cannot

work alone, and as part of the larger Indonesian society it needs to work together with others.

GKI CO - Pre par. 11

In order for the GKI to be able to manifest its dynamic and integral unity, while doing its mission efficiently and effectively, the GKI Church Order (*Tata Gereja*) and GKI Regulations (*Tata Laksana*) are formulated, adopted, and implemented by the GKI synod council as the official ecclesial regulations and organizational means. GKI church order and regulations are arranged according to the presbyterial-synodical system. As an integral unit, the GKI church order and regulations consist of:

1. The Church Order, which covers:
  - a. Preamble
  - b. Constitution
2. The Regulations

EP par. 11

1. As stated in the previous paragraphs, the source of GKI's being and mission is God. Therefore, GKI as an institution is not any ordinary institution and it must essentially be different from other institutions in this world. However, being an institution in this world, GKI still requires formal regulatory tools and functional organizational means. All those are formulated in GKI's church order.
2. GKI's church order is one variant of the presbyterial-synodical system of church government. This system has two basic aspects, which shape GKI's unity that carries GKI's mission, and GKI's leadership institution.
  - a. The shape of GKI's unity departs from the congregation as the basis form of unity, which is a means for fellowship for GKI members as believers. This basic form of unity then widens into the form of the presbytery unity, then widens into the form of the regional synod unity, and as the widest form into the synod unity.
  - b. A GKI's leadership institution is called a council. A council is a permanent institution, which is a means for church officebearers to carry out their leadership ministry collectively and collegially. Parallel with the shape of GKI's unity, the council starts from the consistory as the leadership institution in the congregation, which is widened into the pres-

bytery council, then the regional synod council, and finally the synod Council.

3. The preamble contains the ecclesiological basis for the articles in GKI's constitution and regulations. GKI's ecclesiology is formulated in confessional statements regarding the church. In essence, those statements regard the identity of the church, which is universal and particular, in a bipolar framework (centered on two questions: what/who is the church?, and what is its mission?). The preamble is explained in the explanation to the preamble. The explanation to the preamble is an integral part of the preamble and must be read together with the preamble so that its meaning can be understood in its fullness.
4. GKI's constitution contains GKI's self-understanding, which is an elaboration of GKI's ecclesiology and is formulated in brief, dense, non-operational statements. The constitution is explained in the explanation to the constitution. The explanation to the constitution is an integral part of the constitution and must be read together with the constitution so that its meaning can be understood in its fullness.
5. GKI's regulations contain the elaboration of GKI's constitution in the form of operational and detailed rules, which contain:
  - a. Definitions/rules of the church
  - b. Criteria used in the church
  - c. Procedures used in the church
6. GKI's regulations are complemented with the GKI Administrative Tools (*Peranti Gerejawi GKI*) so that the criteria and the procedures mentioned in the regulations can be followed.

The closing paragraph of GKI's preamble speaks about the need for governance, through the church order, so that church mission can be done efficiently and effectively. In EP par. 11.2, GKI speaks about the presbyterial-synodical system as a broad concept, and what GKI is using is only one variant of it. In a way, this recognition signifies that GKI does not perceive the presbyterial-synodical system simply as a given model. Rather, GKI tries to design a distinct model (variant) by treating the presbyterial-synodical system more as a guiding principle, as can be seen from EP par. 11.2. GKI's presbyterial-synodical model is understood from two basic aspects: the shape of GKI's unity, and its leadership institution. And from there, it then speaks about the congregation as the basis form of unity in GKI, widening into a wider form of unity in presbytery



and regional synod, until the widest form of GKI's unity in the synod. And parallel to that shape of GKI's unity there are the councils that become GKI's leadership institution. From this description, we can say that GKI's definition of the presbyterial-synodical system can be summed up as a system that models the dynamic of an inter-related conciliar unity.

### **General analysis of GKI's Concept of Identity**

- The narrative of GKI's preamble can be summed up in these inter-related key words: communion of diverse believers (unity), called and commissioned (leadership and church development), and God's salvation work (church mission).
- Despite its rich historical and cultural background as an ethnic church in its beginning that we have discussed in chapter 3, it is intriguing how GKI in the preamble makes no reference to it. Instead, in the ecclesiological narrative of GKI's preamble we see a lot of academic ideals, a theoretical framework, and a textbook description about theology and context. The same could be said with regard to the location of most GKI congregations, which are in urban areas in the island of Java (although there are very few exceptions). Does it mean that for GKI the source of authority relies more on academic theology proficiency, rather than on tradition or context? With regard to the hermeneutical tension between tradition and context, the academic or theoretical inclination can be linked to both tradition and context, depending on how it is being used. We see differing stances in how GKI deals with this matter. For example, in understanding unity in the vision of Gereja Kristen Yang Esa we see a very tradition-related approach, but in describing the presbyterial-synodical system we see a very context-related approach. Perhaps it is a sign that GKI is still developing its own theology in a more ecumenical direction. One example of this can be found in a Wikipedia entry by GKI (from: [https://id.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gereja\\_Kristen\\_Indonesia](https://id.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gereja_Kristen_Indonesia)):

Tata Liturgi GKI mengacu pada tata liturgi yang dimuat dalam Dokumen Lima (Liturgi Lima) yang ditetapkan oleh Dewan Gereja-gereja se-Dunia (WCC). Pembacaan Firman Tuhan untuk Kebaktian minggu dan Kebaktian Hari Raya Gerejawi diambil dari The Revised Common Lectionary (RCL).

Translation:

GKI's liturgy refers to the liturgy in the Lima Document which was adopted by the WCC. The scripture reading for Sunday worship and other church calendars are taken from the RCL.

There is a strong influence of ecumenical theology in the way GKI positions its identity. However, we also need to be aware that this kind of approach can pose a threat in terms of dealing with power: that context can be ignored for the sake of academic theories, and that academic theories can be selected to suit the interest of power. In other words, GKI's concept of identity might not run the risk of being very traditional, but it might not be context-relevant either.

### 4.2.3. Gereja Masehi Injili di Timor (GMIT)

#### Reading the Preamble

In formulating its church order, GMIT started by making an ecclesiology document that gives direction to GMIT's church order: the Ecclesiological Basis document (EB). GMIT's preamble is a summary of this relatively lengthy document, which is why in this part we will not be presenting EB in its entirety, but it will be paraphrased and excerpts from its translation will be presented. EB is divided into two major parts, EB part A speaks about the self-understanding of GMIT, and part B speaks about the mission of GMIT.

GMIT CO – Pre par. 1

By the guidance of the Triune God – Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit – Gereja Masehi Injili di Timor (GMIT) was born through the work of missionary bodies of the *Hervormd* tradition from the Netherlands, which found its source in the teachings of Calvin. Through the missionary activities, congregations were founded in the Timor *Afdeling* (English: Department), except in the *onderafdeling* (English: Sub-department) Sumba. On 31 October 1947, those congregations formed into an independent church called GMIT, as part of the Gereja Protestan di Indonesia, within the nation state of the Indonesian republic, based on Pancasila and the UUD 1945 constitution.

EP par. 1

GMIT understands its presence in the world as not based on human initiative, but as a fellowship that God has created. God guided the works

of European missionary bodies in the framework of His salvation work to the world (*missio Dei*).

Par. 1 speaks about the *hervormd* background that shaped GMIT, which was part of GPI initially. Churches from GPI that have emancipated, usually call themselves *gereja mandiri* (autonomous church) to point out their own autonomy as a church, although until now GPI still exists as a unifying identity for the twelve autonomous churches born from the GPI church (cf. from: <https://www.oikoumene.org/en/member-churches/protestant-church-in-indonesia>). Again, it is worth reminding that the name Timor in GMIT does not include Sumba, even though Sumba is still a major part of the Timor province. In a way, this reflects the impact GMIT's history has in defining its identity. In EB point A.1 there is a reflection regarding this, by stating that this historical background provides a challenge for GMIT to liberate itself from the spirit of colonialism with its hierarchical and bureaucratic tendencies that has influenced the church in its history. This reflection shows a critical attitude in realizing the negative aspects of GMIT's history that should be responded to; which in our discussion here shows a more contextual identity.

Here, GMIT also speaks about its ecumenical understanding as member of the PGI; GMIT Const. § 7.1 states: "GMIT is an independent part of the Gereja Protestan Indonesia (GPI), and at the same time member of Persekutuan Gereja-gereja di Indonesia (PGI), and a manifestation of the One Christian Church (GKYE)". Notice that the GMIT position is not using the traditionally accepted view of forming a single church in Indonesia, but it views itself as a manifestation of that church unity in Indonesia.

#### GMIT CO – Pre par. 2

By the guidance of the Holy Spirit, GMIT, which is a manifestation of communion of the congregations in Timor, except Sumba, confesses and proclaims that Jesus Christ, the world Savior, is the foundation for its life and ministry (1 Cor. 3:11).

#### EP par. 2

God intended GMIT's presence in the Timor *afdeling*, with the exception of the Sumba *onderafdeling*, so that GMIT becomes God's agent in manifesting His salvation work in the world wherever GMIT is situated and doing ministry. The foundation of all aspects of GMIT's life and ministry is Jesus Christ. All arrangements of GMIT's life and ministry are founded in the pattern of life and ministry of Jesus Christ as witnessed to by the Scripture.

Par. 2 and EP par. 2 speak about the source of being and the purpose of GMIT, which is explained in EB point A.2. However, EP par. 2 can also be read as: God intended GMIT's presence in Timor, but not in Sumba. We have touched on this in the paragraphs above, but the constant need to use 'except Sumba' seems like a burden from history that might hinder effective ministry for believers in NTT. Traces of the *hervormd* tradition as a state-church can be seen in GMIT's church attributes, with its own hymn, march, flag (Const § 58-60), and its very complex and rich set of bureaucratic regulations (cf. Const § 62). There is no explanation regarding the logo of GMIT in the current constitution, but we can find it in GMIT CO 1999: "GMIT logo is a traditional house with a cross on top of it" (Const § 26.1).



#### GMIT CO – Pre par. 3

By God's will, GMIT was born and grew in the midst of diversity: tribes, islands, customs, values, history, and geography. Therefore, GMIT understands itself as a family of God (*familia Dei*), which is based on God's trinity (Eph. 2: 19-20). In the light of Jesus' proclamation of God's Kingdom, GMIT believes that God intends to engage in fellowship with all humanity, and with all creation.

#### EP par. 3

GMIT's understanding of *familia Dei* is based on GMIT's understanding of God as the Triune God in fellowship: the Father the Creator, the Son the Savior, and the Holy Spirit the Comforter and Renewer. As a church that is characterized by differences and diversity, GMIT is called to manage those differences and that diversity, so that they do not become a threat but become a blessing through the synergy in carrying out GMIT's mission in this world. Furthermore, GMIT understands itself as a communion of believers in unity with other believers in all places, times, and situations. The metaphor of GMIT as the family of

God is intended to emphasize the character of intimate, personal, friendly relationships between family members, whether between congregations or church members. The church is a community of reciprocal love, sharing with each other, and together carrying burdens. All Christians are children of God, the Father in this family (Galatians 4:4-7). As children of the Father, they are heirs, together with Christ (Romans 8: 16-17). In the family, Jesus Christ is the first-born son, our brother (Hebrew 2: 10-13). This brotherhood is global in nature. It crosses all borders that humankind may have created. This image is also emphasizing that we do not personally choose that we can be members of this family. God the Father decided it for us. He calls everyone, native and foreigner, man and woman, big and small, employer and employee, master and helper, all into the family as equal brothers and sisters. In the light of Jesus' proclamation about God's kingdom, GMIT believes that God intends to share this kind of family relationship in the church, also with all humankind, even all His creations. Therefore, GMIT as an independent church is also a part of the one, holy, universal church. Thus, GMIT's identity is situated in a dialectic between particularity and universality.

EB point A.3 describes GMIT having a strong characteristic of diversity: tribal, customs, cultural values, history, and geographical conditions. Therefore, the metaphor of being a family of God is intended to perfect the limited symbols of unity that can already be found within each local community in GMIT. This is then elaborated in GMIT Const § 2 – Nature of GMIT:

GMIT is:

- a. God's communion, which stands on the basis of faith in God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and runs its life as a family of God manifested through congregations, presbyteries, and synod.
- b. The communion of congregations as the basis of GMIT's life and ministry.
- c. The communion of believers who are called to live and serve as God's servant.

The way GMIT uses the fellowship of the triune God and relates that to critically giving a meaning to the diversity of GMIT's context, shows a creative dialogue between traditional theology and contextual approach in defining GMIT's identity. The way GMIT interchangeably uses family and church community is explained in EB part A.15, that says that GMIT as a unity of congregations can also be understood as one whole congregation. This is somehow

a reflection of the *hervormd* idea that the church as a whole is one, and that the congregations are basically parts of the larger and fundamental unity (cf. Koffeman in Doe, 2021, 240-243). Even Const § 3-5 in describing presbytery and synod, puts a special emphasis on the local congregation. This importance given to the local congregation is interesting, given the historical background of being a state-church where centrality of the synod is the tendency. By introducing the notion of family in understanding the church, whether in the form of congregation, presbytery, or synod, this shows an interaction between tradition and context.

GMIT CO – Pre par. 4

GMIT confesses and accepts the Scripture, Old and New Testament, as the Word of God, and on that basis celebrates the sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion. Based on its confession of the scripture, GMIT accepts and adopts the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed, and the Athanasian Creed as ecumenical creeds. Besides those, in discerning its faith in its own unique context, GMIT formulates its own confession.

EP par. 4

Besides accepting the three ecumenical creeds, GMIT also formulates its own confession. In formulating it, GMIT is not simply repeating the existing ecumenical creeds. GMIT's confession is born out of an attempt of discerning its faith in its local and national contexts, in the face of the values that are living within those contexts. GMIT takes the questions from the people where it lives and makes it its own. In GMIT's confession, the tradition of the universal church of all times meets with the local tradition. The result of this 'challenge and respond' process is what then becomes GMIT's confession.

Par. 4 (also see Const. § 9) and EP par. 4 is a summary of EB point A.5-6 about GMIT's view regarding the Scripture and traditional Reformed teachings. The same structure is used: after accepting all the traditional creeds and teachings, GMIT in an effort to live its faith in context will also formulate its own confession and teachings, which will try to also take into account the richness of ethnic and cultural backgrounds of its members. In order to do so, GMIT has founded a theological faculty. This shows a very concrete policy in GMIT to take into account its context more seriously.

## Const § 10 – Teaching:

1. The source of GMIT's teaching is the Scripture's testimony as God's Word.
2. GMIT's teaching includes its understanding about God, the world, the church, and its context.
3. GMIT must analyze and formulate its teaching correctly, clearly, and dynamically.
4. GMIT must live out its teaching in loyalty, orderly, and truthfully as a life guidance to all its members.

We can see that in the way GMIT explains its position regarding confession and teaching, it is following a kind of principle-consequence pattern in its explanation. This pattern is quite visible in the way GMIT is narrating its church order. We will get back to this later in the description for Pre par. 6.

## GMIT CO – Pre par. 5

In an ever-changing world, GMIT together with the church of all times and places is called to participate in God's plan for the world's salvation. GMIT's understanding of its mission comes from the vision of God's kingdom. To fulfill that vision GMIT partakes in God's mission by formulating and carrying out its calling and mandate in its penta-ministry (*panca pelayanan* or five-fold ministry): fellowship (*persekutuan*), witness (*kesaksian*), charity work (*pelayanan kasih*), worship (*ibadah*), and stewardship (*penatalayanan*).

## EP par. 5

The ordering of GMIT's life and ministry cannot exclusively aim at the interest of GMIT. The confession of God's initiative in the formation and presence of GMIT as God's salvation agent must be understood in GMIT's presence in the world to partake in God's salvation plan. Therefore, GMIT has to direct itself in efforts to be involved with God in the history of the world. In this context, GMIT understands itself as God's servant and as messenger of Christ. As God's servant, GMIT is dedicated to God's salvation work. And as messenger of Christ, GMIT always understands its calling as directed to the world. GMIT understands its mission in the framework of GMIT's penta-ministries, which consist of fellowship (*persekutuan*), witness (*kesaksian*), charity (*pelayanan kasih*), worship (*ibadah*), and stewardship (*penatalayanan*). The execution of GMIT's mission is based on the vision of God's kingdom, which is the salvation work of God in the world.

Par. 5 marks the shift in the preamble from describing who GMIT is to the mission of GMIT, which is the second part of GMIT EB document. A special term is coined to describe GMIT's identity with relation to its mission: GMIT as God's servant and messenger of Christ. This is to show the vertical relationship of GMIT's mission, from God to His servant; and the horizontal relationship from GMIT bringing God's message to others. An interesting observation regarding GMIT's definition of ministry, which gives a special place for charity, is that it can be linked with the context of poverty that has become the major problem of NTT as a province.

GMIT CO – Pre par. 6

In ordering itself as an institution, GMIT adopts the institutional presbyterial-synodical principle, which is based on the theological principles of the priesthood of all believers and *ecclesia reformata semper reformanda* (the church always renews itself)

EP par. 6

GMIT accepts the presbyterial-synodical principle as an implication of the priesthood of all believers and the affirmation that in essence the church is a fellowship that is oriented outward. In the presbyterial-synodical understanding, GMIT is not hierarchically led by one person sitting at the summit of church leadership, but it is collectively led by some/many people, in what are called councils (*konsistorium/ presbiterium/kemajelisan*). The synodical principle means that each congregation does not walk separately, but in a commitment to walk together (*syn-hodos*) in faith and ministry. As a consequence, in GMIT there are congregations, presbyteries, and the synod. The relationship between congregations that is arranged within the bond of presbyteries and synod is manifested through the meeting of the officebearers.

In describing the presbyterial-synodical system, GMIT's approach is by viewing it as a consequence of two guiding principles: the priesthood of all believers, and the reformation's reminder of the church's need for constant renewal. From these principles, the system came out as a consequence. GMIT states that as a church it is non-hierarchical and characterized by the church members' commitment to walk together in faith and ministry. And from this principle, the three-fold model of congregation, presbytery, and synod came as the consequence (more details can be found in EB point A.12-19). This kind of principle-consequence logic quite characterizes GMIT's way of describing itself, as is



apparent in how GMIT arranges its church order: starting from formulating basic principles in EB, and then formulating a new constitution (the 2010 Constitution), and then formulating many other regulations as elaborations (read: consequences) of the constitution, all as separate documents. This principle-consequence logic may provide space for a creative dialectic between tradition and context in GMIT's identity. One example of this creative approach can be found in GMIT's way of defining its ministry into penta-ministries rather than the traditional three-fold ministry of *koinonia*, *marturia*, and *diakonia* only.

#### GMIT CO – Pre par. 7

In the framework of ordering its life and ministry so that it can become an effective agent of God's salvation work in the world, GMIT decided to revise the GMIT Constitution 1999 and adopt the GMIT Constitution 2010.

#### EP par. 7

GMIT's constitution is an integral part of the GMIT church order and becomes the reference for all other regulations in GMIT. The Church order is an act of wisdom in order to govern the life and the execution of GMIT's apostolic mandate. We are aware of the limitations of a church order, that many things that are results of the dynamics of the Holy Spirit and of the congregations may not be contained in it. This fact, however, does not reduce the importance of a church order. Love expression, which is characteristic of God's people should not be in contradiction with decency and order, according to the presbyterial-synodical system that GMIT adopted. The term Church Order is applied to all kinds of regulations within GMIT, which are the constitution, regulations, synod decisions, regulations for implementation, presbytery meeting decisions, and consistory decisions.

There is a special segment in EB point A.22 that speaks about the relation of church order to tradition; it is said there that GMIT inherits tradition from the past, not as passive reception, but by living its identity with an open interpretation according to dynamic local needs faced with ever changing challenges of the time. Whether a tradition be kept or changed, the Scripture remains the basic starting point, and church order is an act of wisdom in order to regulate life and ministry so that all that can be done decently and in order. With regard to our discussion here, this approach clearly shows GMIT's hermeneutical inclination to context rather than tradition.

One interesting observation about EP par. 7 of GMIT CO is that it contains the exact same set of sentences with EP par. 9 of GKS CO: from “we are aware of the limitations of a church order ...” to “love expression, which is characteristic of God’s people ...”. In terms of dating, the GKS CO (2006) predates the GMIT CO (2010), but this does not necessarily mean that the GMIT CO is simply copying from GKS CO. Rather, it could also hint to the fact of a common agreed template provided from a common source in the scholarly academic theology circles of GKS and GMIT since they share the same region of NTT and have a joint theological faculty in Universitas Kristen Artha Wacana (UKAW) in Kupang.

### **General Analysis of GMIT’s Concept of Identity**

- The narrative of GMIT’s identity can be summed up in these key words: family of God, servant and messenger, God’s salvation work.
- Although the scope of GMIT ministry is focused on NTT, GMIT is very diverse in the sense that there are many *suku* (major tribes) that make it impossible to characterize GMIT as homogenous. GMIT embraces the diversity of its church members by providing an alternative identity that can bridge the divisive differences through introducing the term ‘family of God’. Family can be used as a synonym for congregation, presbytery (the larger family), and synod (the widest family). The usage of this term can also be seen as a contextual approach to respond to GMIT’s *hervormd* heritage with its strong-centralized synod power. By speaking of GMIT as a congregation, it is saying that a synod is the same as a congregation; we are all part of this family.
- In formulating its church order, GMIT started by laying down the foundation first, by formulating the Ecclesiological Basis document. This is the ‘book of principles’ that later is being elaborated into the Church Order. We see this approach of doing theology reflected in GMIT’s church order. On the other hand, we can also see traces of state-church identity reflected in GMIT’s church order. This shows that this church order is ‘a work in progress’, it is trying to introduce a ‘principle based’ approach in a church that has a long history of state-church bureaucratic dynamics.

#### **4.2.4. General Analysis of the Churches’ Concept of Identity**

From the analysis we have done with regard to the three churches, we can try to get a picture regarding their concept of identity in light of their inclination towards tradition and context. The main aim here is to see whether the notion of

power in the church order is derived more from tradition or from context. We see that in the three churches there are similarities and differences in the way they describe their identity in the ecclesiology documents.

### **The Self-understanding and the Mission of the church**

They are similar in that they believe that God initiated them into being through the works of missionary agencies in the past, which relates them to the universal Church in general, and to the wider churches in the Reformed family. The church is born simultaneously as a divine initiative and as a human effort. It is at the same time a part of God's Kingdom and a part of human history. They are also similar in the conviction that becoming a church means that they are called to participate in God's mission, which is done through carrying out the church's mission. All three churches in the formulation of their ecclesiology use this same structure, which is divided into two parts: by first describing the 'Who' (their self-understanding), and then continuing by describing 'the mission' in relation to their context.

However, they are different in expressing 'the who' and 'the mission'. Using the specific jargons that become key terms found in their ecclesiology documents, we can make a general comparison between the three churches, that briefly summarizes their understanding of the 'who' and the 'mission' in the world:

- GKS views itself as an agent of change participating in the liberation work for the fulfillment of God's kingdom in the world. Human history is a journey towards the fulfillment of God's kingdom, and GKS is born from missionary activity into this journey. This journey takes place in the history of the world where changes are always happening. Some changes are oppressive and do not reflect God's will, and GKS is called to become an agent of change, to liberate the world from these negative changes.
- GKI views itself as a community of believers who is called to unity and to take leadership in church development in partaking in God's salvation plan in the world. God's salvation plan calls believers to take an active role. Missionary activities in the past have shaped a diversity of believers. These diverse believers are called to manifest unity, as a communion, which is now called GKI. This unity is GKI's identity, but at the same time it is an expression of fulfilling God's calling. The believers are called into leadership (ministry) to develop the church so that it can participate in realizing God's salvation plan.

- GMIT views itself as a family of God, which is called to become God's servant and Christ's messenger in God's salvation work in the world. GMIT as a whole is one big congregation that views itself as a large family of God. GMIT is born into this family of God through missionary activity in the past. And this family is called to follow God's will, and brings God's message to the world, as part of God's salvation work in the world.

### **Traces of Traditional Identity in the Churches**

All three churches affirm their part in the universal church, and their particular place in Dutch Reformed tradition by accepting historical ecumenical creeds and catechism. As a general statement, they all confess to acknowledge the need to keep the tension between appreciating the traditions handed down to them, and the mission challenges facing them. As we have discussed in the previous chapter regarding church history, we see that each church has had influences from a specific Reformed tradition: GKS with its *gereformeerde* tradition, GMIT with its *hervormd* tradition, and GKI with its amalgamation of mixed traditions. They all admit to this historical background that is part of who they are, but interestingly the name of the missionary body is only mentioned in the ecclesiology document of GKS. GKI mentions that it is a result of missionary work from domestic and abroad, and puts more emphasis on the previous three churches that constituted GKI rather than on the distant past. GMIT does not make a direct reference to the missionary body it came from either, but simply states the *hervormd* tradition from the Netherlands, which found its source in the teachings of Calvin.

In a way, this might show a degree of awareness of the churches' own identity in the present. The fact that GKS still acknowledges NGZV and ZGKN perhaps can be explained by the centrality of the congregations in the *gereformeerde* tradition, which until today – although they now are part of the PKN church – can still engage in bilateral cooperation with the GKS. So presumably, the relationships between GKS and many congregations in the Netherlands that have historical ties with it are still relatively preserved. Thus, the mentioning of the names of NGZV and ZGKN is a symbol of appreciation of that. While on the other hand, GKI and GMIT in not mentioning the names do not mean that they no longer acknowledge the missionary bodies that were part of their historical formation. In terms of relationship, unlike GKS and the *gereformeerde* congregations, there is no counterpart for GMIT and GKI. With the end of the state-church era, presumably there is no more central governing body that can maintain that relationship with GMIT, and on the congregation level the kind of intimate-personal ties simply did not develop. As for GKI, the various missionary

bodies have had differing influence on the previous three churches, but there was never a predominant tradition. So presumably, along with the process of unification, there is no special preference from GKI to maintain ties with a specific missionary body.

The historical descriptions in chapter 3 also have showed us, that in general the Indonesian churches never really experienced first-hand the theological tensions that were in the background of all these various Reformed expressions. What the Indonesian churches were used to, was the end product; and a distorted one with its very hierarchical ways. This might explain the creative efforts made by the three churches in giving meaning to the traditions they were born into, as seen from the narratives they formulated.

### **Traces of Contextual Identity in the Churches**

In the narrative of the church orders, all three churches show the Indonesian emphasis on unity in harmony that we have dealt with in the previous chapter. This can be shown with their openness to embrace the wider identity as being part of the PGI, and in their expression of manifesting Gereja Kristen Yang Esa, although with different emphases. There are no confrontational statements in the church orders, besides stating the non-hierarchical nature of the church, which might be related to the historical tension between the Reformed traditions and the Roman Catholic Church. But as the present reality in Indonesia also displays, Reformed churches that constitute the majority of mainstream Christianity are in fact living a very harmonious relationship with the Roman Catholic Church. So, in stating the anti-hierarchical nature, the church orders have no intention to directly confront the Roman Catholic Church, but rather state a principle that they hold.

In describing their contextual identity, the church orders speak of the geographical concentration for their life and ministry. GKS is the most specific one, with the island of Sumba as its particular context. GMIT describes NTT province, excluding Sumba, as its particular context. GKI may be quite unique in using Indonesia as its particular context, despite the fact that almost all of GKI congregations are located in Java. This might be explained by the fact that GKS and GMIT can still be related to a specific ethnicity or group of ethnicities that constitute their church membership, while GKI is no longer related itself to a specific ethnicity but embraces the national Indonesian identity. While church members who are from a specific ethnicity or group of ethnicities can relate themselves to a particular area or region of origin, using a national identity limits – or rather circumvents – that relationship to a particular area or region. We can also see this in light of the difficulties that people from Chinese-descent

who constituted the first generation GKI members have to face with regard to relating themselves with a particular area or region of origin. Another nuance to this geographical situation is that, while almost all GKI congregations are situated in urban areas, most GKS and GMIT congregations are in rural areas. Although not directly stated, we can see hints of this fact being reflected in the way they speak of their identity. Terms such as leadership and development (GKI) might reflect more of an urban setting, while terms such as family and servitude (GMIT) might reflect more of a rural setting. This is why the GKS use of terms such as agent of change and liberation becomes fascinating in relation with its rural setting.

In trying to respond to the context, we also see the contribution of academic theological education that has influenced the churches. We see how the church orders share some similarity in how they structure their formulation, and some even have the exact same sentences in them. In the use of ecumenical terminologies, similar ideals, same references, they point to the role of ecumenical theological faculties and theology in shaping these churches. In the church order of GKS and GKI we see these ideas very much present, but perhaps with little direct relationship with or relevancy for their context. GMIT may have found a better way in translating those academic, ecumenical ideals in its context. But with regard to our discussion in this part, this may actually describe most visibly the way our churches deal with the notion of power in their identity: In the encounter between tradition and context – and perhaps the frustration in how to handle them –, academic and ecumenical theology became the main source of authority for these churches.

### **4.3. Analysis of the concept of assembly**

In the English language, the term ‘assembly’ can mean a group of people gathered together in one place for a common purpose, or the action of gathering together as a group for a common purpose (taken from: <https://www.lexico.com/en/definition/assembly>).

From a Reformed perspective, this definition fits nicely with the nature of the church as a communion of believers, as people who gather in a kind of concentric circles with the Word, sacraments, and discipline as its center. In the church, the smallest unit of this assembly is called the congregation. Congregations all around the world carry with them this conviction of being gathered around the Word, sacraments, and discipline. However, as centuries of living faith in various contexts have shaped different traditions of theological understanding – from different hermeneutical point of views – regarding this core

(Word, sacraments, and discipline), a distinct kind of identity qualifier for these congregations then emerged: church denomination.

When congregations who identify themselves as belonging to a particular denomination gather, they form a wider assembly. Naturally, this wider assembly can become so large that in order to become effective it needs to be split into smaller assemblies: the intermediate-level assembly, thus transforming the previously wider assembly into the widest assembly within a denomination. In presbyterial-synodical polity, usually the term presbytery or classis is used to denote this intermediate-level of a wider assembly, and the term synod or general assembly is used to denote this widest assembly.

The relationship between these layers or scopes of a church assembly – congregation, presbytery, (sometimes regional synod), and synod – has become the main feature of church governance in churches in the Dutch Reformed tradition. From this kind of being a church through interlocking assemblies the term presbyterial-synodical is derived. And as societal interactions are generally limited by the national legal borders of a nation, so is a church denomination's synod usually located within the nation's legal borders.

In this process of forming assemblies, one would ask, how are these masses of people able to relate with each other effectively? How do congregations build relationships with other congregations? As a congregation grows, the members would select among them some people to become leaders for ministry along the line of the biblical narrative. The selected few are then ordained into office, becoming church-officebearers (minister, elder, deacon – each according to his/her own gifts), which operates as a collective-leadership body in a council. A council would act on behalf of the assembly it represents. And it is through the meetings of these councils that the relationship between congregations is facilitated. In fact, it can be said that the truest expression of the relationship between the assemblies of the church – and of the councils that represent them – is found in the act of meeting.

In the wider assemblies, as councils meet with each other, the need to select a group of leaders among them arises again. So, a council in the wider assembly is formed. The process goes up to another level until a council representing the widest assembly is formed. So, in the presbyterial-synodical system of the Reformed churches in Indonesia, we would generally have different levels of interlocking councils (note that different church denominations worldwide may use different terms to refer to them):

- A council that represents a congregation is called a consistory,
- A council that represents a presbytery is called a presbytery council,

- A council that represents a regional synod is called a regional synod council,
- A council that represents a synod is called a synod council.

The manifestation of being a church through the meetings – the assembling – of these councils, gives explanation to the name *presbyterial-synodical*: the meetings of the *presbyterium* all the way to the widest assembly.

The narrative above is given as an attempt to reconstruct the natural logical flow of initial church development from a community of believers into a more nationally organized denomination of a synod. We have the congregation as the smallest assembly, the presbytery and the regional synod as the wider assemblies, and the synod as the widest assembly. When we use the term assemblies in this discussion, it refers to all of the assemblies mentioned above. Along with that we have the consistory, the presbytery council and the regional synod council, and the synod council. When we use the term councils, it refers to all of the councils mentioned above. And then we have the meetings of these assemblies and councils. So, we already have three key concepts in describing the dialogical process within the presbyterial-synodical system: assembly, council, and the act of meeting. And as all three of the sample churches in this research recognize their governance system to be presbyterial-synodical, we can see the nuances in how they each define these key concepts in their church orders.

The analysis in this part is related to our effort to understand how the church orders treat the notion of power as seen through the dialogues between the layers of the church. As has been discussed in chapter 2, the main reason behind this intensive dialogical process in Reformed polity is to prevent hierarchy on the one hand, and independentism on the other hand. In other words, we can see that the notion of power is closely linked with the notion of reception, or acceptability from the parties involved. Thus, in reading the church order articles, we need to keep an eye on the tendency for hierarchy on the one hand, and on independentism on the other hand, and on how the tension between the two is resolved.

### **4.3.1 Gereja Kristen Sumba (GKS)**

#### **Church Assemblies**

In the Preamble, GKS CO mentions a special emphasis on the role of the consistory and congregations in the presbyterial-synodical system. GKS Pre par. 9.2 reads:



That organizationally, the shape and system of government of Gereja Kristen Sumba is presbyterial-synodical, which emphasizes on the one hand the role of the consistory (presbyterial) in the congregations, and on the other hand emphasizes the togetherness (synodical) of the congregations in the ministerial territory of Gereja Kristen Sumba, as one unity in common loyalty as the body of Christ.

Although a reference is made regarding the togetherness of GKS congregations as a synod, the emphasis is put on the consistory and the congregations. In EP par. 9, we see an explanation:

In accordance with the presbyterial-synodical principle of the GKS, the basis of ministry is in the congregation. This is where initiatives start, but that does not mean that congregations can exercise full autonomy without limitations. Congregations living together as a synod would mean walking together. Therefore, congregational autonomy must be understood as an inter-related autonomy, we are bound together and depend on each other.

Again, we see the emphasis on congregations, and even in speaking about the synod, it is seen from the perspective of handling congregational autonomy responsibly. It is interesting to note that in the GKS Constitution there is no direct explanation regarding the presbytery and the synod, although there is one mention of them when speaking about the organizational shape in Const § 13.2: “In accordance with the point above, the organizational structure of GKS consists of a policy maker and a policy manager within the congregation, the presbytery, and the synod.” It is saying that organizationally, within the structure of the presbytery and the synod there will be policy makers and policy managers. However, nothing is said about the nature of the presbytery and the synod in the Constitution.

It seems that the narrative of the Constitution is created from the perspective of GKS as congregations living together. It opens with explaining who GKS is, Const § 1.1: “The communion of congregations in Sumba is called Gereja Kristen Sumba, ...”. And then emphasizes again in Const § 3: “GKS is the communion of believers as the body of Christ, which is manifested in the congregations within the ministry of GKS.” We have not seen yet any direct distinction made regarding the wider assemblies in GKS in the Constitution. It is clearly stated that GKS is a communion, an assembly of believers in Sumba manifested through the congregations. Although there is an indirect mention of the GKS as

a synod assembly, it is explained more as congregations in relationship with other congregations forming a general identity of GKS as a whole. Reg § 34.2 follows the same line of thought: “The pattern for ministry and leadership in the GKS organization is built upon the principle of ‘council-ness’ with emphasis on togetherness between congregations, along with the leadership pattern which is collegial (collective).”

An indirect reference toward the presence of a wider assembly is given in Const § 6.4: “Decisions made in the wider assembly meetings have a binding power towards those made in the narrower assembly meetings.” We can assume that the wider assemblies here refer to the presbytery and synod assembly, however it is only mentioned indirectly (see Reg § 44). Later in the Regulations we see that both presbytery and synod are given more descriptions, but the fact that they are not directly described in the Constitution hints to the emphasis on congregation in GKS’ understanding of the presbyterial-synodical system. In Reg § 34.1 we see that the presbytery assembly is not even mentioned: “The organizational form of GKS is presbyterial-synodical, which on the one hand emphasizes the role of the congregation, and on the other hand the role of the synod, which in its implementation is organized in balance and in harmony.”

In Reg § 3 - § 5 regarding the nature and form of GKS, the assemblies in GKS are described as congregation, presbytery, and synod.

- Reg § 3.1: “The congregation is the communion of believers in a particular place, as a form – and an integral part – of the body of Christ, who are called to communion, witness, and service.”
- Reg § 4.1: “A presbytery is the communion of neighboring congregations within a ministerial area.”
- Reg § 5.1: “The synod is a form of communion of the congregations and the presbyteries in GKS.”

And as a whole the nature of these assemblies is stated in Const § 2: “GKS is the communion of believers in Sumba who are called and baptized by Jesus Christ into one body, where Jesus becomes the head that guides and nurtures the whole body through his Word and spirit.” In summary, GKS assemblies are the body of Christ in Sumba, who are guided and nurtured by Jesus through his Word and spirit, and are called to communion, witness, and service. This is trying to say that although there is an emphasis on the congregation, there is no supremacy of the congregations over the presbyteries or synod, as they are all the body of Christ. We can see here the way GKS expresses its presbyterial-synodical system, in denying hierarchy and avoiding independentism, by identifying the communion of congregations as the body of Christ. However, this still

does not hide the fact that a special emphasis is put on the congregation assembly in the GKS.

Perhaps, this emphasis on the congregation is also reflected by the relatively tough requirements for founding a congregation, as Reg § 3.2 states:

Requirements to form a congregation are:

1. To have people who are in church office.
2. To have at least 500 members, among which 200 must be confessing members.
3. To be able to finance the ministry of the congregation.
4. To have a clear and dynamic organizational structure and working procedures.
5. To have a clear geographical area of ministry.
6. To have a decent place of worship.
7. To have a decent manse.
8. To have a land with clear legal status.
9. To have adequate means of administration.
10. To be willing to follow the decisions of the wider assemblies: the presbytery and the synod assemblies.

Reg § 3.5.5a states that a new congregation must already have a minister prior to it being formally recognized as a new congregation. The 'mother' congregation which is forming the new congregation needs to call and process that new minister, and the role of the presbytery and the synod is a supervisory role (see Reg § 31 regarding the office of minister). Again, we see a very active role of the congregation in comparison with the role of the presbytery and the synod. The same can be said with regard to the descriptions of presbytery and synod in the regulations, which are relatively short in comparison with the description of the congregation (Reg § 3 about congregation being the longest, Reg § 4 about the presbytery which is shorter, and Reg § 5 about the synod which is very short). Take for example, the most important aspect from Reg § 4, found in Reg § 4.2, regarding the requirements to form a presbytery:

1. Congregations are in close distance within a region.
2. It at least consists of 3 (three) congregations, with a maximum of 5 (five)
3. It allows for efficient and effective ministry.
4. The formation of a new presbytery must get the approval of GKS synod council and or synod meeting.
5. It takes into consideration the balance of finances and resources.

And for Reg § 5 describing the synod as an assembly, it only states:

1. The synod is a form of communion of the congregations and the presbyteries in GKS.
2. Legal Body:  
GKS and its congregations and presbyteries, which adopt the Constitution and Regulations of GKS, are religious bodies by the Decision Letter of the Protestant Christian Community Guide General Director of the Indonesian Department of Religion no. 192, dated 19 November 1990.

To summarize, although the GKS CO makes a distinction between the assemblies and the councils that represent them, it is lacking in description regarding the assemblies. Further articles regarding these matters in GKS CO are then shifting to describing the councils. From Const § 13.2 we see that for each of the assemblies, two roles are then assigned, which are: policy maker and policy manager. There is no further explanation regarding these two roles, except in Const § 13.5: “policy management/execution is done by bodies formed at each level”. However, in Reg § 35 - § 49, which articles are the elaboration of Const § 13, the term used is then changed into ‘organizational agent’. But we can deduce that between the organizational agents in GKS, the role of policy making is done by the councils (consistory, presbytery council, synod council), and the role of policy managing is done by the bodies made by the councils (executive bodies, consideration bodies, treasury examination bodies, foundations caretaker bodies). Here we can see that in describing the assemblies, GKS CO already makes the shift to describing the councils as the organizational agents of the assemblies.

One related topic in our discussion here regards membership. Church membership is the formal entrance into the assembly, and then into the council. It is described in Reg § 7:

#### Status, Rights and Obligations

1. What is meant by membership of GKS is all members of the communion of congregations and presbyteries in the ministerial scope of GKS.
2. Status:
  - 1) Baptized Member: The child of any GKS member which has been baptized, but is not confessing yet.

- 2) Confessing Member: The member of GKS which has done confession of faith in front of God and in the midst of a GKS congregation.
3. Rights and Obligations:
  - 1) Every member has the right to receive church ministry and care.
  - 2) Every confessing member has the right to vote and be voted as member of the consistory.
  - 3) Every member is obliged to contribute to the financing of church ministry by giving a part of his/her belongings as a token of gratitude for God's grace.
  - 4) Every member is obliged to hear, read, and proclaim God's Word through word and deed, and to participate in the fulfillment of the priesthood of all believers.
4. Transfer:
  - 5) Every member wishing to move to another GKS congregation or to a congregation of another denomination of the same tradition, needs to ask for a transfer letter from the consistory.
  - 6) A member who is moving from another church of a different tradition, has to proclaim a confession of faith in front of the congregation worship.
  - 7) A member who is moving from another church of a different tradition should not be re-baptized.
  - 8) Church membership will be erased if a person moves to another church, converts to another religion, or is excommunicated.

From Reg § 7.1 we see that membership is linked to the identity of GKS as a synod (communion of congregations and presbyteries), rather than to the identity of GKS as a congregation. However, the record keeping is done in the congregation as the basis location for membership, as we can see from the way GKS deals with membership transfers. From the members' participation in the congregation, they can be elected to become member of the consistory and the wider councils.

### **Church Councils**

In describing the councils, the GKS CO has no specific explanation regarding its concept of council. Even when describing the church office in Reg § 26,

there is no direct reference to its relationship with the assembly. In Reg § 34.1-3 we see an umbrella concept that tries to give a general explanation about the following articles (Reg § 35 - § 49) that speaks about the organizational function of the councils and their meetings:

1. The organizational form of GKS is presbyterial-synodical, which on the one hand emphasizes the role of the congregation, and on the other hand the role of the synod, which relationship in its implementation is organized in balance and in harmony.
2. The pattern for ministry and leadership in the GKS organization is built upon the principle of 'council-ness' with emphasis on togetherness between congregations, along with the leadership pattern which is collegial (collective).
3. Meeting is a means for *musyawarah* (deliberation) in order to come to a decision according to the ministerial task at all levels.

In point 2 we see there is a mention about the principle of council-ness (*ke-majelis-an*) as the pattern for ministry and leadership in GKS, and that is the only explanation regarding the concept of council found in the church order. We find elaborate organizational roles in these articles, however there is no explanation with regard to the difference between the assemblies and the councils that represent them. Reg § 34 is then followed by Reg § 35, which speaks about the composition of the organizational agent:

1. The consistory, which is composed of the people who are officebearers, consisting of: the ministers, elders, and deacons.
2. The consistory executive body – the officebearers who are elected and appointed in the consistory meeting, and inducted in the congregation's worship. The composition is:
  - 1) Chair, vice chair, secretary, vice secretary, treasurer and vice treasurer (if necessary). The chair of the consistory should be a minister.
  - 2) The consistory executive body is helped by its agents, departments, commissions, which are appointed in a consistory meeting by suggestion from the consistory executive body and inducted during congregation's worship.
3. Church consideration body: 5 persons, elected and appointed in a consistory meeting, and inducted in the congregation's worship.
4. Congregation treasury examination body
5. Congregation foundation caretaker body

We see here that the consistory is described as people who are officebearers, but there is no explanation about the relationship of the consistory as a council to the congregation as the assembly it represents. The same is true with regard to the wider councils, as the content of the parallel articles are using the same structure as above. Also, when we relate Reg § 34 with the articles regarding organizational agents from the congregation to the synod, we see that in GKS CO a degree of ‘council-ness’ (*ke-majelis-an*) is given to other bodies that is formed by the councils, such as: church consideration body, treasury examination body, caretaker of foundations.

From here we can also see that in GKS CO the concept of council is as a council of church officebearers. One must be elected into office to become a member of the consistory and to have the possibility to become member of the presbytery council; and one must first be a member of a presbytery council to be elected into the synod council. In the process of election into the councils, we see a kind of elimination process happening. Reg § 38.1 regarding the presbytery: “The presbytery council consists of representatives from the consistories within the presbytery, which are all the ministers in that presbytery, plus one elder and one deacon from each congregation. They are elected and confirmed in the presbytery meeting.” And Reg § 41 regarding the synod: “The synod council consists of elements from the presbytery councils, from each three persons (minister, elder, and deacon) as confirmed in the synod meeting, based on name suggestions from the presbyteries.” However, if we look at the composition, with all the ministers within a presbytery automatically becoming part of the presbytery council, we may assume a certain numerical majority of ministers in comparison with only one elder and one deacon from each congregation sitting in the presbytery council. Only when it reaches the synod council, the composition is balanced again, with only one minister, elder, and deacon representing each presbytery council. Here we can see that the councils are only directly linked with the narrower council, rather than with the assemblies. In other words, in the process of election into councils, membership in the presbytery and synod assemblies has no effect.

In describing the councils further, the Regulation is writing down lists of administrative explanation about the councils and the bodies they formed. Again, we will take the articles about the consistory and the bodies it formed as example, but a similar or parallel content is found in the wider councils as well:

Reg § 36 – Role, Authority, and Responsibility of Organizational Agents

1. Consistory (minister, elder, and deacon)

1. To perform duties as regulated in § 27.2, § 28.2, and § 31.2.
  2. To execute the general policy and program for the congregation, including the program determined by the presbytery meeting and synod meeting.
  3. To decide the annual budget of the congregation.
  4. To form organizational agents for the congregation, including those who will represent the congregation at the presbytery and synod level.
  5. To accept the accountability report from the organizational agents.
  6. To discuss and decide suggestions or statements to the presbytery and synod meetings.
  7. To resolve problems that arise in the consistory executive body.
2. Consistory executive body
1. To perform duties that are assigned to it by the consistory.
  2. The role of each member of the executive body is assigned by the consistory.
  3. To arrange and supervise the work of the ministers, elders, deacons, and other organizational agents in the congregation.
  4. To manage the congregation's administration, statistic, finance, and property.
  5. To do consultation with the presbytery and synod councils' executive bodies regarding the tasks in the congregation.
  6. Authorized to resolve the problems arising in the congregation.
  7. To do cooperative work with other denominations, religions, and the government in the scope of the congregation.
  8. To take the responsibility for the congregation on behalf of the consistory.
  9. To hold accountability for its task to the consistory meeting.

Reg § 36 continues describing the role of other organizational agents as mentioned in § 35 and other similar bodies, regarding, amongst others, their task, reporting, and accountability. However, from Reg § 35 and 36 we can see that a relatively heavy organizational function is placed in the work of the councils,



and that dialogue is mostly done between the councils and the bodies they formed, rather than with the assembly they represent.

### Church Meetings

As a guiding principle, the GKS CO emphasizes the principle of *musyawarah* in conducting meetings and problem resolving at all levels (Reg § 34.3, § 37.1, § 37.7, § 40.7, § 44.7, § 44.12.6, § 45.6). There is no further explanation regarding the concept of *musyawarah*, but the term has been coined in the Indonesian churches glossary as the principle used to conduct dialogue in decision making and problem resolving that best expresses unity and harmony (cf. Surjanegara, 2008, 47). Let us see how the meetings are explained:

#### Reg § 37 – Meeting (at the congregation level)

1. The meeting in the congregation is a means for *musyawarah* in order to come to a decision in all components of the congregation.
2. The kinds of meeting are:
  1. Congregation meeting, once a year.
  2. Consistory meeting, once every 3 months and/or as necessary.
  3. Consistory executive body, meeting once every month, and/or as necessary.
3. The quorum of the meeting is  $\frac{1}{2}$  plus one person eligible to vote present.
4. The congregation meeting:
  1. Participants:
    - a. All church officebearer, which are the ministers, elders, and deacons, with voting rights.
    - b. Congregation members representing each district, each with voting rights.
    - c. The organizational agents, which are: the consistory executive body, bodies/foundations/ departments/committees, with voting rights.
    - d. Guests and observers, with speaking rights.
  2. Task and authority of congregation meeting:
    - a. To decide on the general policy of the congregation.
    - b. To decide on regulations for the congregation as long as they are not contradicting the GKS CO.

- c. To discuss and accept the accountability report of the consistory executive body.
3. The meeting is presided by two people elected from the officebearers, assisted by the president of the consistory executive body as a resource person, and the secretary of the consistory executive body as the secretary of the meeting.

Points 5 and 6 deal with the meeting of the consistory and the consistory executive body, which basically intend to translate the general policy formulated in the congregation meeting into a workable program and budget, and to manage the congregation's ministry agents. Reg § 37 then continues:

7. Decision-making is done using *musyawarah untuk mufakat*, and in certain cases voting can be used.
8. The nature of the meeting is open, however when needed it can be changed to a closed meeting.
9. The minutes of the meeting are formulated by the meeting secretary, and accepted in that meeting.
10. All meeting decisions must be sent to the consistory and organizational agents, no later than 1 month after the meeting.

From the meeting regulations at the congregational level, we can see that the congregation as an assembly gets a place in the dialogue through participation of church member representatives with voting rights in the congregation meeting (Reg § 37.4.1b). But if we see the task and authority in a congregation meeting, we notice that it only deals with organizational functions of the congregation rather than being a way to engage in dialogue between the council and the assembly it represents (Reg § 37.4.2). In the consistory meeting then we see a place for engaging in dialogue with the presbytery through suggestions and statements (Reg § 37.5.2f), but in general it is also concentrated with fulfilling administrative functions of church organization. In the consistory executive body meeting we see that its main task directly relates to the life of the congregation itself and is not related to engagement with the wider church (Reg § 37.6.2). So, we can see that the meetings at the congregational level are focused on matters regarding the congregation only, and not designed for engaging dialogue with the wider church. Although there is a place for dialogue through giving suggestions to the presbytery, there is no specific agenda regarding the wider church put into the main discussion in the meetings.

In Reg § 40 we see provisions regarding meetings at the presbytery level. They are basically parallel to Reg § 37. From the meeting regulations at the presbytery level, we see there is a presbytery assembly meeting. However, when we see the participants (Reg § 40.4.1), we notice that only representatives from the consistory and the councils' organizational agents can take part in the meeting. In other words, we see that at the level of the wider church (the presbytery, and also the synod), the assemblies only exist through the councils. Using the logic of GKS CO, the church assemblies only exist in their form as congregations; but the church councils exist in the form of consistory, presbytery council, and synod council. The task and authority of the meetings at the presbytery level is similar with those at the congregation level, in the sense that they are heavily tasked with administrative organizational aspects of the church, only in a wider setting. But there is one major difference visible at the presbytery level, because in the meeting there is the need to elaborate the synod's general policy (Reg § 40.4.2a: "To decide on the general policy of the presbytery, as an elaboration of the GKS general policy") and to give suggestions to the synod meeting (Reg § 40.4.2g: "To decide on suggestions to the synod meeting."). Here we see a role of the presbytery as an extension of the synod on the one hand, and as an extension of the congregation on the other hand.

When describing the meetings at the synod level, the church order takes a different approach. Rather than describing all the meetings in a single article like with regard to the congregation and the presbytery meetings, here each meeting in the synod level is described into three separate regulations (Reg § 44 Synod meeting, Reg § 45 Synod council meeting, and Reg § 46 Synod council executive body meeting). The three sections are formulated using the logic of elaborating towards execution, starting from the synod to the synod council, and then to the synod council executive body. I present Reg § 44 here:

#### Reg § 44 – Synod Meeting

1. The synod meeting is a wider ecclesiastical meeting than the presbytery meeting and the consistory meeting, and its decisions have a binding authority for the presbytery and the congregation.
2. The synod meeting is held once every 4 years, with each presbytery taking turn to become the host.
3. An extra-ordinary synod meeting can be held if 2/3 of the presbyteries in GKS submit a written application with the reasons.
4. The convener of a synod meeting is a congregation under the coordination of the presbytery.

5. The quorum of the meeting is  $\frac{1}{2}$  plus one person eligible to vote present.
6. The synod meeting is presided by 4 people elected from participants with voting rights, assisted by the moderator as a resource person, and the general secretary as the secretary of the meeting.
7. Decision-making is done using *musyawarah untuk mufakat*, and in certain cases voting can be used.
8. The nature of the meeting is open, however when needed it can be changed to a closed meeting.
9. The minutes of meeting are formulated by the meeting secretary, and accepted in that meeting.
10. All meeting decisions must be sent to the consistories within the presbytery and presbytery organizational agents, no later than 3 months after the meeting.
11. Synod meeting participants:
  1. Presbytery representatives, per presbytery in total 6 person: 2 ministers, 2 elders, and 2 deacons, with voting rights.
  2. The synod council executive body and its organizational agents, with speaking rights.
  3. The synod council consideration body and the synod council treasury examination body, with speaking rights.
  4. The synod foundation caretaker body, with speaking rights.
  5. Guests, observers, and the organizing committee with speaking rights.
12. Task and authority of the synod meeting:
  1. To decide on GKS doctrinal matters
  2. To decide on the GKS Church order
  3. To decide on GKS General Policy
  4. To discuss, accept, and evaluate the accountability report of the synod council executive body.
  5. To elect members of synod organizational agents for a 4 years term.
  6. To resolve problems in the spirit of *musyawarah untuk mufakat* on the basis of fellowship as one body of Christ in the shape of GKS.
  7. To conduct worship/bible study and Holy Communion, as source for inspiration in meeting process.

Reg § 44 starts with a special explanation regarding the status of decisions made in the synod meeting that must be prioritized over decisions made in narrower

council meetings. Reg § 44.1, states: “The synod meeting is a wider ecclesiastical meeting than the presbytery meeting and the consistory meeting, and its decisions have a binding authority for the presbytery and the congregation.” Nevertheless, this does not mean full superiority of the synod over the presbytery and the congregations, because the main task of a synod meeting is concentrated in deciding on doctrinal matters, church order, and the general policy of GKS (Reg § 44.12). However, in the synod meeting, there seems to be no space designed for dialogue between the synod and the narrower councils, because it deals more specifically with matters at the synod level.

In GKS CO we see also a kind of ministerial program centrality following a guideline made in the synod meeting: the GKS General Policy (Reg § 44.3). The synod council is tasked to elaborate GKS General Policy into an annual program (Reg §42.1). The synod council executive body is tasked to equip synod ministerial agents, the presbyteries, and the congregations to develop their ministry according to the GKS General Policy (Reg § 42.2.1-2); and to do the coordination and supervision of its implementation in the presbyteries, congregations, and foundations (Reg § 42.6).

We will just read the task and authority for the synod council in Reg § 45.11:

1. To execute the decisions of the synod meeting.
2. To elect the secretaries for departments and committees.
3. To discuss, accept, and evaluate the accountability report of synod organizational agents.
4. To discuss and accept reports from the presbyteries.
5. To formalize the annual program and budget for the GKS synod.
6. To form organizational agents that will support the synod council executive bodies.
7. To decide on regulations as elaboration of the GKS church order.
8. To discuss problems arising between synod meetings.

In the synod council meeting, we see there is a space for dialogue with the presbytery through the discussion of reports (and suggestions) from the presbyteries (Reg § 45.11.4). However, as we have noticed in the other meetings, the majority of the task and authority of the meetings is heavily dominated by administrative organizational aspects of the church in its own ministerial scope. And as we see in Reg § 46, the synod council executive meeting mostly will deal with internal administrative matters (Reg § 46). In other words, although there is space provided for dialogue, the majority of time and energy spent to deal with administrative organizational aspects could be a major hindrance for effective dialogue between the church layers.

### **General Analysis of GKS' Concept of Assembly**

In analyzing the concept of assembly, we distinguished three major concepts: church assemblies, church councils, and church meetings. From the descriptions above, there are some conclusions regarding the GKS' concept of assembly:

- In GKS, the church assemblies exist only in the form of congregations. Presbytery and synod do not exist as a direct assembly, but as a continuation of the council at the congregation level (the consistory). This is in accordance with GKS' view about being a synod, which is as a communion of congregations. On the other hand, we also see a constant reminder regarding the GKS' emphasis on the congregation. So, there is this kind of balancing-act; while GKS puts emphasis on the congregation, it also affirms that the congregations do not exist individually but as only a communion of congregations (synod).
- The councils in GKS are councils of officebearers, with representatives from the consistory sitting as members of the presbytery council, and representatives from the presbytery councils sitting as members of the synod council. Since the relationship between the layers of the church exists through the relationship of the councils only, the risk present in the GKS model is that dialogue between councils may be limited to dialogue between *elites* in church leadership.
- The meetings in GKS are heavily tasked with administrative organizational functions, such as: making an annual program and budget, electing organizational agents, accepting accountability reports from the various bodies in the church. Although there is space for dialogue between the layers of the church, it does not receive enough emphasis as a major part of church meetings. In meetings in the congregation, there is space for giving suggestion to the presbytery, but there is no description about the consistory responsibility to hear from the wider councils. In meetings at the presbytery level, there is space for hearing suggestion from the consistories, giving suggestions to the synod meeting, and there is space for elaborating the general policy made in the synod. In meetings at the synod level, there is space to hear reports from the presbyteries, but decisions made in the synod are binding to the congregations and presbyteries. From the flow of meetings above, we can see that a dialogue process can mainly take place at the level of the presbytery. However, there is a special note to be made for meetings at the presbytery level, given the unique dominance due to the numerical majority of the ministers present there, if compared with the other councils. At the congregation level, the minister's number is balanced with the number of elders and deacons

comprising the consistory. At the synod level, the minister is of equal numbers with the elders and the deacons. The reason for this difference is unclear, but it should be taken into consideration in order for effective dialogue to take place.

- Regarding a hierarchical or independentist tendency: On the one hand, we see that the GKS church order tries to balance the emphasis it puts on the congregations by understanding its identity as a communion of congregations. On the other hand, we see the risk of an elitist tendency that could dominate the leadership in the wider councils. Furthermore, we can also take into consideration the heavy focus on internal administrative organizational matters in every layer of the church. The resulting combination is probably enough to prevent a hierarchical or independentist tendency, but at the same time it also functions more as an impasse rather than providing space for dialogue between the layers of the church that would allow a healthy articulation of power in GKS' polity.

### 4.3.2 Gereja Kristen Indonesia (GKI)

#### Church Assemblies

GKI EP par. 11.2a:

The shape of GKI's unity departs from the congregation as the basic form of unity, which is a means for fellowship for GKI members as believers. This basic form of unity then widens into the form of presbytery unity, then widens into the form of regional synod unity, and as the widest form into the synod unity.

In EP par 11.2a, we see that GKI makes a distinction between the assemblies existing in GKI: starting from the congregation as the basis form of GKI's unity, the presbytery and regional synod as wider forms of GKI's unity, and the synod as the widest form of GKI's unity. Let us see how these church assemblies are described in the church order:

Constitution § 1:

1. GKI is a Church of Lord Jesus Christ, which at present takes form as congregations, presbyteries, regional synods, and a synod in Indonesia, doing its mission in the framework of God's mission in the world.

2.
  - a. A congregation is the form of GKI unity that is present and doing its mission in a particular region and is a communion of all members in that region.
  - b. A presbytery is the form of GKI unity that is present and doing its mission in a particular region and is a communion of all congregations in that region.
  - c. A regional synod is the form of GKI unity that is present and doing its mission in a particular region and is a communion of all presbyteries in that region.
  - d. The synod is the form of GKI unity that is present and doing its mission in a particular region and is a communion of all regional synods in that region.
3. Congregation, Presbytery, regional synod, and synod, each and as a whole, are the manifestation of GKI as one whole and integral church.
4. GKI gives no possibility for secession of a congregation, a presbytery, and a regional synod.

We see that Const § 1.1-2 is the elaboration of EP par. 11.2a above, but perhaps GKI's unique definition regarding its assemblies is found in Const § 1.3 in understanding the assemblies of the church in duality: as itself (*each*), and in relationship with other assemblies (*as a whole*). What is uniquely implied here especially regards GKI's view of the widest assembly: the synod is not only the communion of all assemblies that constitute it, but it is a separate assembly in itself. The usage of 'each and as a whole' and similar phrasing is found often in GKI CO, which hints to the way GKI is preventing hierarchical and independentist tendencies.

In accordance with GKI's emphasis on its unity, the GKI Regulations start with a relatively lengthy description regarding GKI's shape of unity: from the congregation level to the regional synod level (Reg § 1 - § 9). There is no description regarding the synod assembly here, which is unusual. However, since the articles describe the requirements and procedures for forming assemblies, we may assume that GKI CO considers that it does not need to arrange the requirements and procedures for forming a synod, as it is already existing and can only be one. Nevertheless, it would be good to include some description regarding it, rather than leaving it lacking.



Reg § 5.1 regarding congregation requirements:

- a. To have at least 100 confessing members from the founding congregation, who are willing to become a member of the new congregation.
- b. To have a regular place of worship.
- c. To be able to realize communion and to do witness and service according to the awareness of its members about Christ's calling.
- d. To be able to govern itself based on the leadership potential among its members.
- e. To be able to finance its own needs.
- f. To have at least 7 confessing members who will be elected as elder.
- g. In accordance with GKI's development strategy and policy.

Here we see the usual requirements for forming a congregation, but in Reg § 5.1g we find a unique article that states that a congregation formation must be in accordance with GKI's development strategy and policy. This points to the existence of a super-body that governs the existence of a congregation. Although the term GKI there might refer to its identity as a whole, it certainly can be related closer to GKI as a synod rather than as a congregation.

When talking about the presbytery in Reg § 8.1 (and again in Reg § 9.1 regarding regional synod) we find that notion again:

The considerations for arranging a presbytery:

- a. The number of congregations is a minimum of 7 and a maximum of 15.
- b. The balance of resources and financial matters.
- c. Geographical location.
- d. GKI development policy and strategy.

However, it is more understandable in the case of a presbytery and a regional synod, because their existence naturally follows the existence of the congregations that precedes them. But in the case of the congregation, it seems unusual to insert that article. Although we can try to understand it as directed only for forming new congregations, but technically speaking it does open the possibility of demoting or removing a congregation if it is no longer in accordance with GKI development policy and strategy.

Regarding membership, Const § 8 states:

1. The members of GKI consist of:

- a. Baptized members, who are members of GKI that have already received infant baptism.
  - b. Confessing members, who are members of GKI that have already received adult baptism, or baptized members who have done confession of faith.
2. The member's function is to carry out church mission and church development.

So, participation in the assembly starts from baptism, and is recorded in the GKI membership book. The congregation is responsible for recording and managing the membership data, but the membership itself is not located in the congregation: the term used in the church order speaks about membership in the assembly of GKI as a whole rather than in the congregation assembly (Reg § 69). However, member participation in GKI assemblies is not limited only through the councils or the bodies they formed, as Reg § 68.1 regarding the responsibility of confessing member states:

1. Responsibility
  - a. Doing the church mission, which means expressing communion and doing witness and service whether individually or together, within and through the life and profession of the person, family, within and through one's personal life, church institution, or directly in the society.
  - b. Doing congregation, presbytery, regional synod, synod development, whether individually or together, and with the leadership of the church officebearers, by:
    - i. Empowering oneself for the life and work of the congregation, presbytery, regional synod, and synod.
    - ii. Participating in arranging, doing, and evaluating the work programs and budget of the congregation, presbytery, regional synod, and synod.
    - iii. Participating in forming the ministerial structure and organizational structure of the congregation, presbytery, regional synod, and synod.
    - iv. Participating in communication processes in the congregation, presbytery, regional synod, and synod.
    - v. Participating in decision-making processes in the congregation, presbytery, regional synod, and synod.
    - vi. Participating in handling and resolving problems arising in the congregation, presbytery, regional synod, and synod.

From the regulations above, participation of church members in the wider assemblies of the church is recognized not only through the council of officebearers. This shows that in GKI CO, assemblies and councils exist in parallel.

### **Church Councils**

GKI EP par. 11.2b:

A GKI's leadership institution is called a council. A Council is a permanent institution, which is a means for church officebearers to carry out their leadership ministry collectively and collegially. Parallel with the shape of GKI's unity, the council starts from the consistory as the leadership institution in the congregation, which is widened into the presbytery council, then the regional synod council, and finally the synod council.

In describing the councils, GKI CO uses the framework of church leadership. Councils are the leadership institutions for the assemblies: from the consistory to the synod council. GKI Const § 10.1-2 regarding leadership states:

1. Leadership
  - a. As a congregation, GKI is led by the consistory whose membership consists of all church officebearers within that congregation. According to its need, the consistory can form a consistory executive body as a daily leadership, appointed by and held accountable to the consistory.
  - b. As a presbytery, GKI is led by the presbytery council whose membership consists of all consistories within that presbytery. The presbytery council executive body is the daily leadership of the presbytery council, appointed by and held accountable to the presbytery council.
  - c. *(RAS: Parallel to point b, but in the context of regional synod).*
  - d. *(RAS: Parallel to point b, but in the context of synod).*
2. Task
  - a. The task of the consistory is to lead the congregation so that it can do church development at the congregation level to achieve the purpose of GKI at the congregational level. If a consistory executive body exists, its task is the daily leadership of the consistory.
  - b. The task of the presbytery council is to lead the congregations within that presbytery so that they can do church development at the presbytery level to achieve the purpose of GKI at the

presbytery level. The task of the presbytery council executive body is the daily leadership of the presbytery council.

- c. *(RAS: Parallel to point b, but in the context of regional synod).*
- d. *(RAS: Parallel to point b, but in the context of synod).*

Since in GKI CO, the concept of council is directly related with its leadership function, descriptions regarding its task and responsibility can also be analyzed from the perspective of ministry. Const § 9 speaks about the church officebearers (elder and minister) that have the leadership function in the assemblies of the church through their belonging to the councils. Notice that Const § 10.1 states that wider councils consist of all the officebearers within the assembly they represent. It means that the members of a presbytery council are all members of the consistories within that presbytery, members of a regional synod council are all members of the presbytery councils within that regional synod, and members of the synod council are all members of the regional synod councils. It also means that, if you are a member of the consistory, you are automatically a member of the synod council. So, we see a different model of the councils as representation of the assemblies, where every officebearer becomes a member of all councils in the church at the same time. However, in wider council meetings, not all of these members can attend. The narrower councils will send representatives to attend the wider council meetings. And because of the relatively large size of these councils, there is a need to form a smaller group dedicated to executive functions of council leadership resulting in the formation of a council executive body.

Reg § 171.1 lists the task of a consistory (other articles regarding the task of the wider councils are also written using similar fashion):

1. Regarding the framework of congregation development, the leadership function of the consistory is manifested in these aspects:
  - a. Communion and Unity.
  - b. Witness and Service.
  - c. Education.
  - d. Teaching.
  - e. Church Office.
  - f. Organization and Leadership.
  - g. Means and Infrastructure

It then continues with a very extensive list elaborating the tasks within each aspect, and then, using a similar fashion, it is repeated again in describing the

task of the wider councils. We will take an example from the consistory task, in Reg § 171.2-8:

2. Tasks regarding the aspect of Communion and Unity cover:
  - a. To carry out worship services.
  - b. To carry out the proclamation of the Word.
  - c. To carry out the sacraments and confession of faith.
  - d. To carry out general and special pastoral care.
  - e. To carry out church conversation with regard to baptism, confession of faith, wedding, membership transfer, and conversion to another religion.
  - f. To direct, motivate, and facilitate the congregation to participate in the life and work of the presbytery, the regional synod, and the synod.
  - g. To make real the participation of the congregation in the ecumenical movement.
3. Tasks regarding the aspect of Witness and Service cover:
  - a. To direct, motivate, and facilitate the congregation to do their witness and service task.
  - b. To carry out the establishment of a congregation post. (*RAS*: before a congregation can be established, it has to first attain the status of congregation post, which then can be increased to congregation prospect, before finally attaining the formal status of a congregation)
4. Tasks regarding the aspect of Education cover:
  - a. To empower members and ministry groups in the congregation for the life and work of the congregation.
  - b. To carry out servant-leadership education for the elders and ministers.
  - c. To carry out servant-leadership education for other leaders within the congregation ministerial bodies.
5. Tasks regarding the aspect of Teaching cover:
  - a. To carry out catechism class.
  - b. To observe, take care, safeguard, and live out GKI teaching.
6. Tasks regarding the aspect of Church Office cover:
  - a. To carry out the elders election process.
  - b. To carry out elder ministry development.
  - c. To carry out elder ministry performance evaluation.

- d. To carry out termination and dismissal from office of elders.
  - e. To carry out recruitment for theological student candidates.
  - f. To carry out the minister process.
  - g. To carry out minister development.
  - h. To facilitate minister transfer.
  - i. To decide on, appoint, and evaluate congregation special assignment ministers.
  - j. To carry out termination and dismissal from office of ministers.
  - k. To carry out minister emeritation.
  - l. To empower a minister emeritus.
  - m. To assist a minister emeritus.
7. Tasks in the aspect of Organization and Leadership cover:
- a. To facilitate and determine the congregation's vision and mission using the vision and mission of GKI as common direction.
  - b. To facilitate and determine the working program and budget which refers to the congregation's vision and mission.
  - c. To facilitate the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the congregation's working program and budget.
  - d. To arrange and determine the ministerial structure and the organizational structure for the life and work of the congregation.
  - e. To facilitate, implement, and develop communication processes in the congregation.
  - f. To facilitate, implement, and develop decision making processes in the congregation.
  - g. To handle and resolve problems arising in the congregation.
  - h. To elect, direct, receive accountability reports, and terminate ministerial bodies in the congregation.
  - i. To arrange an annual report regarding the life, work, and treasury of the congregation.
  - j. To carry out consistory meetings and extended consistory meetings.
  - k. To determine and appoint representatives of the consistory to the presbytery council meeting.
  - l. To discuss and make decisions regarding review and appeal.

- m. To decide on, elect, and implement a performance evaluation for the congregation's church workers.
  - n. To determine the congregation's name and location.
  - o. To attend the business meeting of the presbytery council executive body.
  - p. To carry out the coordination meeting between the consistory and the congregation's ministerial bodies.
  - q. To become representative inside and outside of court, and to appoint representatives to become committee members of regional ecumenical bodies and foundations.
  - r. To carry out the status increase from congregation post into congregation prospect
  - s. To carry out the status decrease from congregation prospect into congregation post.
  - t. To carry out the institutionalization of a congregation.
  - u. To carry out the status decrease from congregation to congregation prospect.
  - v. To accept the merger from another church.
  - w. To elect and to terminate the congregation treasury examination body.
  - x. To give church order and regulations amendment proposals to the presbytery council.
  - y. To give response to church order and regulations amendment proposals sent by the synod council executive body.
  - z. To formulate and decide on the consistory working regulation.
  - aa. To formulate and decide on the consistory meeting regulation and the extended consistory meeting regulation.
  - bb. To manage the membership administration including the membership role.
8. Tasks in the aspect of Means and Infrastructure covers:
- a. To manage GKI's possessions that are entrusted to the congregation.
  - b. To gather, store, and keep the congregation archives.

We see here a very extensive and idealistic list that combines the whole of ministerial leadership aspects of a GKI council. This can be understood since in GKI, the council is considered as a permanent institution, and the concept of being a council is treated almost as a synonym for ministry. A lot of things

listed above is about the usual daily ministry at a congregation level, but especially regarding organizational and leadership aspects, the congregation must derive its vision and mission – and then its working program and budget – from the GKI vision and mission. The same can be said for the councils at the presbytery and regional synod level. In other words, there is a strong presence of GKI identity as a whole. While it does not refer directly to the synod or the synod council, it however is located much closer to them. There is a risk of hierarchical tendencies in the authority of the synod over the councils, especially through concepts such as the GKI development strategy and policy, and the GKI vision and mission, as can be found in the way the GKI CO puts it.

### **Church Meetings**

Still in the framework of church leadership, Const § 10.5-6 speaks about the formal meetings that take place in GKI:

5. Ecclesiastical Meeting
  - a. The consistory meeting is the means of decision making for the consistory. It is attended by consistory members from that particular congregation. Decisions of the consistory must be accepted by the members of that particular congregation.
  - b. *(RAS: Parallel to point a, but in the context of presbytery council).*
  - c. *(RAS: Parallel to point a, but in the context of regional synod council).*
  - d. *(RAS: Parallel to point a, but in the context of synod council).*
6. Executive Meeting
  - a. The presbytery council executive body can hold an executive meeting between two presbytery council meetings, as a means to make decisions with the participation of the consistories within the presbytery.
  - b. *(RAS: Parallel to point a, but in the context of regional synod council).*
  - c. *(RAS: Parallel to point a, but in the context of synod council)..*

We can see that for GKI, the emphasis regarding meetings is seeing them as a means for decision-making. Perhaps, this emphasis on the leadership function of the council explains why church meetings only happen through the meetings of the councils. Although in Reg § 184.2 we see a provision about extended consistory meeting where church members are invited to participate, in essence it is a consistory meeting to present their accountability report to the congrega-



tion. The congregation members are invited, but an extended consistory meeting is still not a congregation's meeting.

One possible grey area for church members participation in the council meetings can be found in the provision for meetings in the wider councils, Reg § 185.1a (similarly also in Reg § 186.1a for regional synod council meeting, and Reg § 187.1a for synod council meeting):

Each consistory within the presbytery sends five members, as long as possible they should be elders and ministers, who are not sitting in the presbytery council executive body, and they should bring a credential letter.

The grey area that can be misinterpreted here is in the wording, "as long as possible they should be elder and minister," that could be interpreted as other church members who are not in office. However, if we look at the context of the article, the article refers to the members of the councils, which have to be officebearers. So, the intention of the wordings is that representatives sent to the wider council meetings should be a combination of elders and ministers, not only elders or ministers.

The regular interval for the meetings is as follows:

- Consistory meeting, at least once every two months (Reg § 184.1b.1).
- Extended consistory meeting, at least once every year (Reg § 184.2b.1).
- Presbytery council meeting, at least once every year (Reg § 185.3a).
- Regional synod council meeting, at least once every two years (Reg § 186.2a).
- Synod council meeting, at least once every four years (Reg § 187.2a).

Another type of church meeting in GKI is called the business meeting, which is the meeting of a wider council's executive body in between two council meetings (Reg § 188 - § 190). We take for example Reg § 189 – Business meeting of the regional synod council executive body:

1. Definition

The regional synod council executive body business meeting is a means between two regional synod council meetings, to make a decision regarding urgent matters and/or matters as assigned by the regional synod council and/or matters as arranged by GKI regulations, with the participation of the presbytery council executive bodies within the regional synod. The decisions made in the busi-

ness meeting apply to all the congregations within the regional synod.

2. Executor

The regional synod council executive body conducts the business meeting.

3. Participants:

- a. All members of the regional synod council.
- b. The presbytery council executive bodies within the regional synod, each sending three delegates.
- c. The ministerial bodies of the regional synod and/or ministerial bodies in the presbyteries and synod, and/or other people if necessary.

From the description above, we see that business meetings have the same authority as council meetings at the same level. Although there are provisions for organizing extraordinary council meetings to handle urgent matters by notifying the narrower councils one to two weeks prior to the meeting (Reg § 185.3j, § 186.2j, § 187.2j), here in GKI CO the church also has business meetings to handle urgent matters. One critical view to this business meeting is that it gives a certain direct superiority to the executive body with regard to its narrower councils. The executive body is not responsible only to the council that forms it, but as we can see from Reg § 189, the regional synod council executive body is in a direct leadership function to all the presbytery council executive bodies within the regional synod. And the fact that decisions made in the business meetings directly apply to the life of the congregations within its scope, and not through the council meetings first, means that in GKI CO business meetings are considered to have the same authority as council meetings. So, we see a kind of pyramid leadership, with the executive body of the wider council having relatively strong authority over the congregations within its ministerial scope.

In describing the council meetings (Reg § 185 - § 187) and the business meeting (Reg § 188 - § 190), the regulations speak of the participants, the procedures for meeting, the quorum, and the way a meeting should be named. But there is no explanation regarding the content and scope of discussion for the meetings here. We may have to refer back to Reg § 171 - § 178 that lists the tasks for the councils and their executive bodies, to get some idea regarding the content for the meetings. Since the councils are the leadership institution for the church, let us see for example the task regarding the aspect of organization and leadership:

Reg § 178.7d: (Synod council executive body)

To decide on drafts and/or to change drafts for the synodical general policy, which consists of:

1. The Vision and Mission of GKI
2. The GKI development policy and strategy

Reg § 177.7c: (Synod council)

To decide on synodical general policy, which consists of:

1. The Vision and Mission of GKI
2. The GKI development policy and strategy

Reg § 176.7a.3)-4): (Regional synod council executive body)

- 3) (To facilitate and decide on the formulation of) the vision and mission of the regional synod using the vision and mission of GKI as a common direction.
- 4) (To facilitate and decide on the formulation of) the work program and budget of the regional synod, referring to the regional synod vision and mission, and taking into consideration relevant decisions of the regional synod council and the synod council.

Reg § 175.7a: (Regional synod council)

To decide on the vision and mission of the regional synod

Reg § 174.7a.3)-4): (Presbytery council executive body)

- 3) (To Facilitate the formulation of) the vision and mission of the presbytery using the vision and mission of GKI as a common direction.
- 4) The Work program and budget of the presbytery, referring to the presbytery vision and mission, and taking into consideration relevant decisions of the regional synod council and the synod council.

Reg § 173.7a: (Presbytery council)

To decide on the vision and mission of the presbytery using the vision and mission of GKI as common direction.

Reg § 171.7a-b: (Consistory)

- a. To facilitate the formulation and decide on the vision and mission of the congregation using the vision and mission of GKI as a common direction.
- b. To facilitate and decide on the work program and budget of the congregation by referring to the vision and mission of the congregation.

Although the CO articles are written starting from the congregation to the synod level, the essence here is the other way around. Ministry directives – through

the formulation of the GKI vision and mission, and the GKI development policy and strategy – flow from the synod to the congregation.

### **General Analysis of GKI's Concept of Assembly**

Here are some conclusions regarding the concept of assembly in the GKI church order:

- GKI understands itself from the perspective of church unity, and in GKI that unity is expressed through its assemblies, starting from the congregation until the synod. The congregation is the basis form of GKI unity, and the wider assemblies are wider expressions of GKI unity. Therefore, in GKI the concept of being a synod relates more to GKI as one super congregation. This is visible also from the way GKI understands the councils: the wider councils are the total sum of the narrower councils within it. Another effect of that model of thinking is related to the way the executive body in the wider council can exercise authority over the narrower councils, especially in the business meetings. Because they understand that unity like an organic unity of a congregation, the widest council and its executive body function almost like a consistory to the congregation, but on the widest level. Sometimes that kind of super authority is not exercised directly by the widest council, but through the council's products such as the GKI vision and mission, or the GKI development policy and strategy. On the one hand, we understand this as GKI's way to express its unity as a church that is holistic. However, on the other hand, we cannot close our eyes to the potential danger of a hierarchical tendency in the way the councils function, although unintentionally.
- With regard to the tasks of the councils, in GKI CO we see a very extensive list of tasks covering multiple aspects of church ministry. It also contains some very idealistic organizational and spiritual leadership task lists that the councils are called to fulfill. But the main point we see here is that the leadership function of the council precisely overlaps with the ministry of the officebearers. For example, Reg § 171.2.b-c lists: to carry out the proclamation of the Word, and to carry out the sacraments and confession of faith. These are the roles usually attributed to the office of minister of the Word, but here it is described as some of the tasks of the consistory.
- In terms of the model of dialogue that happens in the church, in the church order there are provisions for the narrower councils to give suggestions to the wider council meetings. But we can also explain it in relation with the way GKI views council membership: since the widest council members are the total sum of all officebearers in GKI, theoretically speaking this would

mean that dialogues would happen naturally at all levels of the church. However, if we put this theory in comparison with some hierarchical tendency found in the regulations, we have to question whether this wonderful theological concept regarding GKI unity requires more critical examination in its implementation.

### 4.3.3 Gereja Masehi Injili di Timor (GMIT)

#### Church Assemblies

Following GMIT CO's structure, theological descriptions regarding a topic can be found in the Ecclesiological Basis (EB), which later is elaborated in the Constitution (Const) and will be articulated into more details in the Congregation Regulations (CR), the Presbytery Regulations (PR), and the Synod Regulations (SR). In the elaboration process, usually the main idea from the source is repeated and afterward further descriptions regarding its implementation follow. Therefore, in referring to the church order articles here, we will not write down all the repetitions, but use one/some that represent the main idea being discussed. GMIT uses the metaphor of 'family of God' to describe being a church. GMIT members as God's children live in fellowship within the congregations with families as the basic form (EB A.6-7). Every congregation lives in communion with other congregations, as presbytery and synod, balancing between autonomy and fellowship in a dialectic way (EB A.12). Const § 2 regarding the nature of GMIT, states that GMIT is:

- a. God's communion which stands on the basis of faith in God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and runs its life as a family of God manifested through congregations, presbyteries, and synod.
- b. A communion of congregations as the basis of GMIT's life and ministry.
- c. A communion of believers who are called to live and serve as God's servant.

GMIT as assembly is manifested in congregations, presbyteries, and synod (point a), but it is stated that the basis of GMIT's life and ministry is the communion of congregations (point b). By the term 'communion of congregations' above, it could give the understanding that the basis of GMIT's life and ministry is located in the wider assemblies (presbytery and synod) or in the widest assembly (synod).

We try to compare Const § 2 with other articles regarding the assemblies: Const § 35 – Status of Congregation:

1. The congregation is an integral part of GMIT.
2. The congregation is the basis of GMIT's life and ministry work.

Const § 39 – Status of Presbytery:

1. The presbytery is an integral part of GMIT.
2. The presbytery is a means of togetherness between congregations in a particular area.
3. The presbytery organizationally is a means for *musyawarah* between consistory, presbytery council, and synod council.

Const § 43 – Status of Synod:

1. The synod is an integral part of GMIT.
2. The synod is a means of togetherness of GMIT congregations.
3. The status of GMIT congregations within the synod is equal.
4. The synod organizationally plays a role as a means of *musyawarah* and through its meetings makes the widest decisions that bind GMIT as a whole.

We see an ambiguity here; whereas Const § 2.b states the basis for GMIT's life and ministry is in the communion of the congregations, in Const § 35.2 it is in the congregation. And if the basis is in the communion of the congregations, where is the basis specifically located: in the presbytery and the synod, or in the synod as the widest communion of congregations? From another perspective, we can also ask what is meant by wider assemblies as 'a means of togetherness' (Indonesian: *wadah kebersamaan*): does it mean that presbytery and synod are not assemblies, but just means (read: container, tool, vehicle) for the congregations to express their being in relationship with other congregations?

Const § 3, also in a similar way EB A.13, and CR § 1 – Nature of Congregation:

A congregation is the communion of GMIT's members within a particular place and socio-cultural setting, where the Word is proclaimed, and sacraments administered, under the leadership of the consistory and where discipleship in the spirit of exemplifying Christ is manifested.

CR § 6.1 – Relationship between Congregation and Presbytery:

The congregation is the basis of GMIT's life and ministry.

Const § 4, also in a similar way EB A.14, and PR § 1 – Nature of Presbytery:

A presbytery is a means for togetherness between GMIT congregations, which is expressed through the meetings of the presbyters and through the shared programs within a particular area.

Const § 5, also in a similar way EB A.15, and SR § 1 – Nature of Synod:

The synod is a means for togetherness between GMIT congregations, which is expressed through the meeting of the presbyters and through the shared programs within the widest area.

From the articles above, we get more clarity regarding the basis of GMIT's life and ministry, which is located in the congregation rather than in the communion of congregations. In essence, in the presbyterial-synodical system, a congregation is always living in communion with other congregations within the denomination. But to be more specific, the formulation in Cons § 2.b should have been: "The congregation as the basis of GMIT's life and ministry", instead of: "A communion of congregations as the basis of GMIT's life and ministry."

Another answer that we find from the articles above regards the nature of the presbytery and the synod, which clearly is not understood as an assembly. By definition of the regulations, presbytery and synod only exist through the meetings as wider councils of officebearers representing the congregations, as a means for decision-making and joint-ministerial programs.

Related to the discussion above, we can also question the intention of GMIT CO regarding the nature of these assemblies. Because, even though the regulations elaborating it seem to be very clear in stating the congregation as the basis for GMIT's life and ministry, there seems to be some duality in the theological spirit as can be found in the Ecclesiological Basis – which is a stronger theological basis for the church order. For example, EB A.16 regarding the relationship between the congregation, presbytery, and synod, states: "The relationship between the communion of believers in the congregation, the presbytery, and the synod is characterized by inclusion, *perichoresis*, in the sense that they complement each other, not replacing nor negating each other." If we look at the formulation here, we see that congregation, presbytery and synod are described in equal position as an assembly and not only as the meeting of church officebearers in a wider council as the regulations described. Does this ambiguity arise as a side effect of the transformation progress that is happening in GMIT, given its history as a state-church with strong synod authority towards the congregation? That in trying to empower the congregations, these regulations are introduced and therefore leave some ambiguity regarding the position of the wider assemblies? One hint might be found in the way GMIT CO uses the term 'equal' so frequently when describing the relationship status between different elements (eg: Reg § 24.3 - between church members, CR § 5.1 – between congregations, PR § 4.1 – between presbyteries, EB A.16 – between congregation, presbytery, and synod). To add to that note: although GMIT CO contains no

formal description regarding the term ‘presbiter’, the term is found frequently in the church order articles to denote church officebearers in general as a way to promote a sense of equality between the offices (minister, elder, deacon, and teacher). However, regarding the ambiguity mentioned earlier, we might have to wait for further revisions in the church order to see which direction GMIT will take.

Regarding church membership, Const § 24 - Member’s Status says:

1. GMIT members are all who believe in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, within the communion of GMIT’s congregations.
2. GMIT’s members consist of:
  - a. those who are born into GMIT families.
  - b. those who have been baptized in GMIT congregations.
  - c. members from another church or religion, who have been accepted as GMIT members.
3. GMIT affirms the equal standing of its members, as the subject of the priesthood of all believers.

Unique in GMIT CO is that membership starts when one is born in the family of a GMIT member. Also, in describing membership status, the constitution makes neither description nor distinction at all between baptized members and confessing members (cf. Const. § 24 - § 27). Even when describing church office (cf. Const § 28 - § 32), no distinction is made regarding baptized members and confessing members. In the constitution, the idea of GMIT membership is formulated just as membership.

### **Church Councils**

Let us see the main ecclesiological concept regarding the councils in GMIT, from its Ecclesiological Basis document. First, in EB A.11, we see an explanation regarding the councils as something that is formed by the officebearers:

Within the principle of the priesthood of all believers there are also special offices; the believers elect people into offices to equip the saints for the development of Christ’s body. The church offices are minister, elder, deacon, and teacher. The offices then form councils at different levels: congregation, presbytery, and synod.

And then, regarding the relationship between councils, GMIT EB A.18 writes:

The consistory, presbytery council, and synod council are of equal status. They are colleagues, partners in a dialectic, dialogical, and non-



hierarchical relationship. The consistory is not inferior to the synod council and presbytery council, and vice versa. The consistory is doing ministry in a more limited scope, while the presbytery council and the synod council are doing ministry in a wider scope. These leaders of fellowship, within each ministerial scope must support each other to promote the life of the congregations in all aspects of being a church, a society, and a state. A dialectical relationship between the three of them must be maintained. Each council has its own authority within its scope, received from the meetings in its respective scope. However, that authority is not an exclusive authority. The presbyterial-synodical system requires the openness of the consistory for the presbytery/synod council's involvement in its life-management and congregation ministry according to the authority given by the synod. Furthermore, the presbytery council must also be open for the synod council's involvement in its presbytery ministerial management according to the authority given by the synod.

From the explanation in GMIT Ecclesiological Basis A.18, we see an emphasis on the synod council's role in the life of the presbyteries and congregation. The term used there is not that of acceptance by the narrower council, nor a language of offering support, but a clear imperative of the narrower council's openness for the involvement of the wider council.

In the Constitution, we see a further description regarding how the councils function:

Const § 37.5:

In performing its duties, the consistory is held accountable to the congregation (*jemaat*) through the congregation meeting as a form of faith-accountability to the Lord.

Const § 41.5:

In performing its duties, the presbytery council is held accountable to the congregations (*jemaat-jemaat*) and GMIT synod (*sinode* GMIT) in its meeting as a form of faith-accountability to the Lord.

(In PR § 12.3, the presbytery also gives its ministry accountability report in synod meeting)

Const § 44.5:

In performing its duties, the synod council is held accountable to the synod meeting (persidangan sinode) as a form of faith-accountability to the Lord.

Here we see some differences regarding how a council is held accountable: The consistory is only held accountable to the congregation (its respective assembly), the presbytery council is held accountable to the congregations and the synod (its narrower and wider assemblies), and the synod council is held accountable to the synod meeting (its own meeting). One thing we appreciate in GMIT CO 2015 is regarding how it tries to give a theological explanation to most of its activities, such as: "... as a form of faith-accountability to the Lord". This model of formulation is not often found in the previous version, the GMIT CO 2010. There is a progression toward giving a theological explanation to the organizational activities that GMIT does. However, as we have discussed earlier, hints of these articles as part of an ongoing process are visible, such as the ambiguity in the Constitution articles above. For example, in stating that the presbytery council must be held accountable to the synod, it shows a certain confusion regarding its position in the system. If the reason was because GMIT CO tries to maintain its emphasis on the equality between the councils, then why does the synod council not need to be held accountable to the congregations and presbyteries of which it consists, or why does the congregations not need to be held accountable to the presbytery and synod it is a part of.

In speaking about the councils' ministry, we also see a kind of alignment to the synod's policy as we have seen in GKI CO, for example:

Const § 37.4c:

(The consistory) Performs the ministerial planning process and decision-making at the congregation level, while participating in the ministerial planning process and decision-making at the presbytery and synod level, according to organizational regulations and GMIT's ministerial management.

At the presbytery level, we do not find an article that is parallel to the one above, but we find Const § 41.4e:

(The presbytery council has the task) to help the synod council to promote and execute synod decisions in the congregations within the presbytery.

At the synod level, there is no article in the constitution that speaks about receiving input from the congregation or the presbytery level, but only from the synod to the narrower assemblies by deciding the synod ministerial plan (Const § 44.3c-d). However, later in SR § 10.1 it is explained that consistories, presbytery councils, and the synod council may give suggestions for the ministerial plan. This pattern of the synod's centrality is then complemented by the regulations in the narrower assemblies:

CR § 17.2 – Authority, Task, and Responsibility

The congregation ministerial plan refers to the Ministerial Master Plan (*Rencana Induk Pelayanan*) and GMIT General Policy Direction for Ministry (*Haluan Kebijaksanaan Umum Pelayanan GMIT*)

PR § 13.3a:

(The ministerial program in the presbytery consists of) The implementation of GMIT Penta-ministries, which refers to the Ministerial Master Plan (*Rencana Induk Pelayanan*) and the GMIT General Policy Direction for Ministry (*Haluan Kebijaksanaan Umum Pelayanan GMIT*)

SR § 9 – Authority, Task, and Responsibility

1. The synod receives its authority from God to participate in God's mission in the world.
2. The synod is tasked to implement the GMIT ministerial program and form ministerial bodies at synod level.
3. Accountable to God, the synod reports about its ministry through the synod meeting.

In GMIT, councils are the leadership for ministerial management, as per the regulations:

CR § 33.4 (also PR § 29.4 in similar fashion for the presbytery level, and SR § 27.4 for the synod level):

All ministerial management at the congregation level is led by the consistory in coordination with the presbytery council and the synod council.

From the regulation articles above we see again the way they are formulated using an equal relationship model as mentioned earlier. So, with regard to the councils in GMIT, we see this ambiguity because in some parts of the CO there

is an emphasis on the centrality of the synod, while on other parts it is described more as a matter of equals.

### **Church Meetings**

All decision-making in the meetings of GMIT is done using the principle of *musyawarah untuk mufakat*, however if no consensus can be made decisions will be taken through voting and/or by casting a lot (*undi*) after a moment of prayer (CR § 41.7, PR § 37.8, SR § 35.8, and many more). Let us see how the regulations describe the meetings at all levels.

Const § 46 (also CR § 39) – The Congregation Meeting:

1. Congregation meetings are means for decision-making according to God's will, regarding matters related to the life and ministry of the congregation.
2. Meetings at the congregation level are:
  - a. The congregation meeting;
  - b. The extraordinary congregation meeting;
  - c. The consistory meeting;
  - d. The congregation outpost meeting;
  - e. The congregation outpost council meeting.

Explanations regarding meetings in congregation level are:

- The congregation meeting, at least once every four years (CR § 40.2).
  - Led by the consistory, inviting all confessing members and ministerial bodies of the congregation (CR § 41.3).
  - The purpose is to evaluate the consistory's ministry report, decide on the program plan according to GMIT's General Policy Direction for Ministry (CR § 40.4).
- The extraordinary congregation meeting, only if necessary (CR § 42-43).
  - Done to resolve urgent problems in the congregation, led by the consistory or by the presbytery council in coordination with the synod council and the consistory.
- The consistory meeting, at least once every year (CR § 44.1).
  - Led by the consistory executive body, inviting all consistory members and congregation ministerial bodies (CR § 45).
  - The purpose is to follow-up decisions from the congregation meetings and wider councils' meetings, program evaluating and planning, and to prepare an accountability report (CR § 44.3).
- The congregation outpost meeting, at least once every four years (CR § 46.2).

- Similar to the congregation meeting but on the smaller scope of the congregation's ministry outpost. Led by the outpost's council, the meeting is to evaluate the congregation outpost's ministry report and to form ministerial bodies of the outpost. (CR § 46-47).
- The congregation outpost council meeting, at least once every year (CR § 48.1).
  - Similar to the consistory meeting but on the smaller scope of the congregation outpost level (CR § 48-49).

There is no mention about the consistory executive body meetings in Const § 46 and CR § 39, but there are provisions for it in CR § 50-53. Also, it is interesting that in the regulation, a congregation outpost has its own structure that is similar to that of a congregation: having its own council, council executive body, and ministerial bodies (CR § 62-63). Also, another interesting observation in the regulation is that provisions for meetings (CR § 39-53) are described prior to giving explanation about the council itself (CR § 54-65).

Const § 50.2 (also PR § 35):

Meetings at the presbytery level consist of:

- a. The presbytery meeting;
- b. The extraordinary presbytery meeting;
- c. The presbytery council meeting.

Explanations regarding meetings at the presbytery level are:

- The presbytery meeting, at least once every four years (PR § 36-37).
  - Led by the presbytery council, inviting all presbytery council members, presbytery ministerial bodies, ministers who are not chair of a consistory, representatives from the congregations (1 elder, 1 deacon, 1 teacher).
  - The purpose of the meeting is to evaluate the presbytery's ministry and the presbytery council's accountability report, to formulate and decide on the ministry program according to GMIT General Policy Direction for Ministry, and to form the presbytery's ministerial bodies.
- The extraordinary presbytery meeting (PR § 38-39).
  - Done to resolve urgent problems, led by the presbytery council or the synod council executive body.
- The presbytery council meeting, at least once every year (PR § 40-41).

- Led by the presbytery council executive body, inviting all presbytery council members, and presbytery ministerial bodies.
- The purpose of the meeting is to follow-up decisions made in the presbytery meeting, the synod council meeting, and the synod meeting; program evaluating and planning, and preparing the council's accountability report.

Although it is not recognized as a meeting at the presbytery level in Const § 50.2 and PR § 35, we see in PR § 42-43 provisions for the presbytery council executive body meeting, to be held at least once every three months.

An observatory note regarding the extraordinary meetings: an extraordinary presbytery meeting can also be led by the synod council executive body (not the synod council), while an extraordinary congregation meeting can be led by the presbytery council (not the executive body). There is no explanation regarding why it is the synod council executive body and not the synod council, nor why it is the presbytery council and not its executive body, that can lead extraordinary meetings in the narrower assemblies. Also, when the presbytery council is leading an extraordinary congregation meeting, it is done in coordination with the consistory and the synod council; but when the synod council executive body is leading an extraordinary presbytery meeting, there is no mention regarding the need for coordination with the other councils. There is also no explanation given regarding when such special circumstances might happen.

Const § 54.2 (Also SR § 33):

Meetings at the synod level consist of:

- a. The synod meeting;
- b. The extraordinary synod meeting;
- c. The synod council meeting.

Explanations regarding meetings at synod level are:

- The synod meeting, a means for decision-making that is binding to all GMIT congregations, done once every four years (SR § 34-35).
  - Led by the synod council, inviting all of its members, representatives from congregations from each presbytery (2 ministers, 1 elder, 1 deacon, and 1 teacher), and synod ministerial bodies.
  - The purpose is to decide on the constitution and its revision, regulations and their revisions, to evaluate ministry on the synod level, to decide on the Ministry Master Plan and the GMIT General Policy Direction for Ministry, to resolve ministerial problems that can-

not be solved by the synod council, to decide on teaching and theological issues, and to elect the synod council.

- The extraordinary synod meeting (SR § 36-37).
  - Done to resolve urgent problems, led by the synod council.
- The synod council meeting, done at least once every year (SR § 38-39).
  - Led by the synod council executive body, inviting all members of the synod council, and synod ministerial bodies.
  - The purpose is to follow up decisions made in the synod meeting, program evaluating and planning, and to prepare the accountability report.

There is also a provision for synod council executive body meetings (SR § 40-41), although it is not recognized as part of meetings in the synod level (Const § 54.2 and SR § 33).

#### **General Analysis of GMIT's Concept of Assembly**

- From the discussions above, we see a recurring ambiguity in the CO articles regarding the relationship between the assemblies and the councils. In some parts, GMIT CO tries to emphasize the equality between the congregation, the presbytery, and the synod; but in other parts we see a strong emphasis on the synod's authority.
- By definition of the constitution and the regulations, presbytery and synod only exist through the meetings as wider councils of officebearers representing the congregations, as a means for decision-making and joint-ministerial programs. But in the elaboration of that principle, the regulations describe the wider assemblies, councils, and their executive bodies more as permanent institutions with a strong hint of the synod centrality.
- In the purpose of meetings in the wider assembly or wider council meetings, there is no mention of accepting or discussing the input from the narrower assemblies/councils, but there is one article in SR § 40.2a, that one of the purposes of a synod council executive body meeting is to accept suggestions from synod council members as suggestions to the synod council meeting. So, even though one of the rights of the narrower assemblies is to give suggestions to the wider assemblies, there is no mention of the wider assemblies/councils meetings' obligation to respond to it.

#### 4.3.4 General Analysis of the Churches' Concept of Assembly

##### Different expressions of being a church

- From the church orders comparison above, we see that regarding the nature and form of the church they all acknowledge the presence of congregation, presbytery, and synod as church assemblies. Unique to the GKI is the presence of the regional synod, which is related more to its historical background (three previous synods prior to becoming GKI) rather than to geographical reasons. However, there are differences in how the churches describe those assemblies.
- In GKS CO we can say that, in essence, the assemblies only exist in the form of congregations. There are the presbytery and the synod, but they only exist as councils, as a continuation of the consistories at a wider level. This relates to GKS' understanding that the synod is a communion of congregations. And throughout the GKS CO we see that this emphasis is put on the congregation.
- In GKI CO we see a church model where the synod is seen as a super congregation. As the congregation is the sum of all its members, the presbytery is the sum of all congregations within it, the regional synod is the sum of all presbyteries within it, and the synod is the sum of all regional synods within it. This model also applies at the council level, where the synod council members are comprised of all members of the consistories, presbytery councils, and regional synod councils. This relates to GKI's emphasis on its unity as a church.
- In GMIT CO we see an ambiguity regarding how the assemblies are described. On the one hand, GMIT tries to emphasize the equal nature of the congregation, presbytery, and synod as assemblies of the church; but on the other hand, the congregation is described as the basic form of communion, and the presbytery and synod are only means for decision making at the wider level. This ambiguity is also reflected in GMIT CO's description regarding the councils: on the one hand, the presbytery and synod only exist through their council meetings; but on the other hand, the elaborations of the regulations regarding the councils and their executive body actually describe them as permanent institutions. GMIT understands itself as a church using the concept of 'family of God', in which all of the GMIT congregations are one big family.



**Desire for unity through denominational identity**

- In GMIT CO we see a strong emphasis on the role of the congregation, while in GKI CO and GMIT CO – although not explicitly – the emphasis is on the role of the synod. However, they all employ a similar formulation strategy in emphasizing the unity of the church, especially through their denominational identity.
- All church orders speak about the equal nature of the assemblies of the church: the congregation, the wider assembly, and the synod. However, all of them also speak of the imperative of following decisions made at the wider level. This is related to honoring the unity of their being a church, their ‘walking together’ as a denomination. The church orders speak of the synod level with this emphasis on denominational unity: the synod as the widest expression of their communion, or as their most inclusive communion. However, this kind of word play between the broader meaning of the term synod and the meaning assigned to it in the church orders can be misleading, as it gives the justification for a kind of centrality of the synod in the church.
- One model of this synod’s centrality can be found through ministry ‘master plan’ documents that should be implemented in the narrower assemblies’ context. GKS has GKS General Policy (*Garis Besar Kebijakan Umum GKS*); GKI has GKI development strategy and policy (*Kebijakan dan Strategi Pengembangan GKI*), and GKI Vision and Mission; GMIT has Ministerial Master Plan (*Rencana Induk Pelayanan*) and GMIT General Policy Direction for Ministry (*Haluan Kebijaksanaan Umum Pelayanan GMIT*). One might argue that since those documents are decided on in the synod meeting, the widest possible meeting within that denomination, that should assume shared acceptance of it. We will try to respond to this together with our next point.

**Assigned authority and assumed reception**

- In the church orders we see that church office and council are two inseparable yet distinct notions. Office is more related to the church’s concept of ministry (the mission of the church, ‘the doing’), and council is more related to the church’s concept of assembly (the ‘who’ of the church, ‘the being’). Since the council always consists of only church officebearers, the two notions coincide as we see in descriptions regarding the task of the council that is very central in ministry.
- In doing its task for ministry, the council receives authority from the assembly it represents. First, we see the congregation assign authority to the con-

sistory, then the representative from the consistory is assigned authority to take part in the presbytery council, and lastly the representative from the presbytery council and the regional synod council is assigned authority to become members of the synod council. This move of assigning authority creates a pyramid-like structure for leadership in the churches, and the accumulation of authority in the widest council usually gets concentrated even further in its executive body that performs daily leadership functions. That is one reason why leadership elections at the synod level are always a hot issue in Indonesian churches.

- In the wider councils, the narrower assemblies are present through their selected representatives, but that does not mean that reception of the decisions made can be assumed automatically. The responsibility of the representatives sent to the wider councils is not to be enforcers of decisions made, but they are responsible to become agents for dialogue between the different levels of the church. Assigned authority should not mean assumed reception. Instead of employing the language of obedience to wider assemblies and their councils, the church orders should give provision to a kind of ratifying action. Without which, the church's structure will resemble that of a hierarchical system.

#### **Meeting as an organizational function, rather than as an expression of communion**

- The theological nature of the council is expressed most concretely through the ecclesiastical meeting. Through meetings we encounter different realities that make up the church. The church, meeting at different levels through its councils, is expressing its unity as a communion of believers in this world. However, we see in the church orders that all ecclesiastical meetings are designed to accommodate the church's institutional activity. The agendas of meetings are heavily concerned with fulfilling an organizational task checklist, rather than manifesting the unity of the different assemblies.
- One contributing factor to this phenomenon perhaps lies in the emphasis on leadership. The term itself is used very frequently in all the church orders. An ecclesiastical meeting is the meeting of the leaders. It is true that in the formulations, the term leadership is always referred to as spiritual leadership following the example of Jesus. But when we look into the church orders, the majority of the meeting's purpose will relate more to decision-making regarding program planning, evaluating, budgeting, and forming agents to implement the programs. In the meetings we see a dialogue at the level of

organizational matters, rather than as an encounter between different realities of being a church. And furthermore, in describing the assemblies, the councils, and the meetings, we see that the church orders' function became that of an organizational handbook rather than that of a theological explanation.

As a general summary regarding the churches' concept of assembly, we can say that the church orders are very clear in expressing their intention to avoid independentist tendencies. We can understand that the overwhelming emphasis on the church's unity as manifested in the widest assembly (the synod) can be related to the intention to prevent the church from its independentist tendencies. But on the other hand, not enough measures are given to prevent hierarchical tendencies in the church orders. So, fear toward independentism is clearly seen in the church orders, but fear toward hierarchy is not. With regard to the focus of our discussion in this analysis, we have to say that the dialogue between the layers of the church in Indonesian churches has the tendency to be hierarchical.

#### **4.4. Analysis of the concept of ministry**

In the WCC, one of the most important documents about the church that has been produced is called *Baptist, Eucharist, and Ministry* (WCC, BEM, 1982). These three main topics are considered as three fundamental areas of the churches' faith and life, and it is rightly so because through baptism we enter this communion of believers, through eucharist we are nourished by and reminded of God's loving grace, and through ministry we live out the calling of God towards each other and the world around us. God calls us into communion, God equips us with gifts, and God calls us for ministry. This is also an affirmation of the unique nature of church ministry, that it is a responsibility that cannot be separated from our belonging to this ecclesial communion, and from the gifts that God has given us. In our previous analysis about identity, we have seen that the church orders also affirm this understanding.

In the BEM Document, Ministry, par. 5 writes about ministry: "The Holy Spirit bestows on the community diverse and complementary gifts. These are for the common good of the whole people and are manifested in acts of service within the community and to the world." Because of these gifts, each and every member of the church has the responsibility to do ministry within the church and to the world, however differently each church tradition understands and formulates the way ministry should be conducted. In its broadest sense, the term ministry means "the service to which the whole people of God is called, whether as individuals, as a local community, or as the universal Church" (BEM, Ministry, par. 7.b).

It should be noted that the term ministry is so rich in meaning that its usage can be quite nuanced in different contexts. Terms such as office, ministry, or service, are sometimes used interchangeably although they might have a different emphasis depending on the context. One of the reasons for this is, as Van Der Borght mentions, due to the lack of a well-balanced concept of the theology of ministry itself (cf. Van Der Borght, 2007, xi-xv). Also, in the Indonesian language the term ‘ministry’ and ‘service’ are both translated into the same word ‘*pelayanan*’. Therefore, in our usage here we distinguish the terms in such manner:

- The term ministry is used as a general term that umbrellas the all nuances of the Church’s acts in responding to God’s calling.
- The term office is used to refer to specific ministry functions in the church, which correlate with specially elected persons.
- The term service is used to refer to specific acts of ministry that are aimed at the world, which usually are related with diaconal works.

In the 2005 WCC document, *The Nature and Mission of the Church* (TNMC, Faith and Order Paper no. 198) the terms ‘ministry of all the faithful’ and ‘ministry of the ordained’ are used to distinguish between the general and special call for ministry to the whole people of God. However, there is no clear-cut boundary between the two notions since the various church traditions attribute different meanings to them. Take, for example, the three-fold ministry of bishop, presbyter, and deacon that is usually referred to as ordained office in ecumenical documents: in Reformed polity the names are understood differently. Even though Reformed polity shares the common name of ‘elder’ and ‘deacon’, in Reformed polity the elder does not exercise a priestly function, and the elder is more a social rather than liturgical figure (cf. Janssen, 2006, 7-8). It would help a bit to see them as two ends of a spectrum with church members being on the one end (all the faithful) and ministers of the Word on the other end (the ordained), and in between the two we have a vast variety of offices with differing names and authority attributed to them.

### **Ministry of all the faithful and the ordained**

Ministry is first and foremost God’s calling for all church members. Every member is given God’s gift for ministry, and whoever develops those gifts can be selected and entrusted to do a more specified function in ministry. This is a general understanding of church office: the specific functions (and thus authority and responsibility) entrusted to elected church members according to their

gifts. As Jesus selected and appointed his disciples, the church also continues this tradition of selecting and appointing some among its members for special ministry in the offices. There is a value of an apostolic continuity in the offices of the church (cf. TNMC, par. 86-89; BEM, Ministry, par. 19-25).

In this part of our analysis, we will take a look at how the church orders describe the ministry of all the faithful and of the ordained within the framework of accountability. Accountability in ministry is first and foremost put in relation to God as head of the church. Church ministry must be held accountable to God who first gave the church its authority for ministry. But it is accountable to each other as well. As some among the church members are entrusted with specific authorities and responsibilities, they are not to use that authority as a position to 'lord it over' other church members. Therefore, there are measures that hold them accountable to the communion that elected them, and accountable to their specific function in ministry (e.g., requirements for candidate). This 'no lording it over' principle has a special place in the Dutch Reformed tradition, and its formulation has resonated since Wezel 1568, to Emden 1571, and even until now in the church order of the Protestant Church in the Netherlands. The Indonesian churches do not share that formulation in describing the non-hierarchical nature of the church.

Another form of accountability in church ministry can also be found in the concept of church discipline. The term 'church discipline' has often been misunderstood simply as a form of punishment from the church towards its members. However, in essence, it is related to the idea of living as Christ's disciple. And as the church carries out its ministry through the lives of its members, it is also called to be accountable to the life of Christ's disciple through its discipline. Discipline implies mutual accountability. Moreover, Koffeman argues that this model of church accountability through discipline "should not be understood exclusively – or even primarily – in terms of structures, regulations, codes, or protocols" (cf. Koffeman, unpublished). In other words, the discipline in the church should not be perceived as simply a rigid rule of law, but as how can the church build and provide ministry of discipline beyond that legal rigidity in order to become accountable as Christ's disciples.

One more element of the church order that relates to the idea of accountability regards the right to ask for review and appeal. When church members have the right to ask for review or to appeal a decision of the church, we can see a balancing act of authority between church office and church member.

One clarification should be made in this opening part regarding the church orders usage of the Indonesian term 'pentahbisan' or 'penahbisan' (alternative spelling to translate the term 'ordination'). The GKS CO uses 'pentahbisan',

while GKI CO and GMIT CO use ‘penahbisan’. However, the difference in usage goes even further:

- In GKI CO the term is only used for the act of ordaining someone to become a minister of the word.
- In GMIT CO the term is used for the act of ordaining someone to become a minister of the word, and also for the act of appointing someone into the office of elder, deacon, and teacher. However, this does not mean that they are ‘ordained elders, deacons, and teachers’ in the sense that they are authorized to preach the word and administer the sacraments. They are still lay office-bearers.
- In GKS CO the term is used for the act of ordaining someone to become a minister of the word, for the act of appointing into the office of elder and deacon, and also for the act of formalizing a new congregation/presbytery. In the explanation to the Regulations § 13.2.5 it is mentioned explicitly: “Examples of other worship services are: ordination of the church building or church meeting hall.” It seems that the term ordination in GKS CO is used for any act that involves a degree of ‘setting apart’ for ministry.

Perhaps, this narrowing and broadening of meaning of the term ‘ordination’ illustrates a degree of uneasiness of the Reformed tradition regarding designating ‘power’ to a certain person. Therefore, sometimes they try to broaden the scope of it to make it less personal and less official, such as ‘ordaining’ a new church hall. But the original meaning of ordination is the act of setting those people apart, who are called by God as discerned by the Church, to serve as ministers of the Word and preside the sacraments (cf. UCA Assembly, website). Therefore, in order to avoid confusion in analyzing the church orders, we will use the terms in such manner:

- The term ‘ordination’ will refer to the act of laying of hands where the authority to preach the word and administer the sacraments is transferred.
- The term ‘induction’ will refer to both the act of formal appointment into lay offices (elder, deacon, teacher), and also to the act of a formal appointment of a minister into a new position or place.
- The term ‘commissioning’ will refer to the act of a special appointment into a special ministry, usually outside the church (lecturer, army chaplain, hospital chaplain). A commissioning will always take place together with an ordination or induction service.

#### 4.4.1. Gereja Kristen Sumba (GKS)

##### GKS Ministry

In the GKS Constitution, the concept of ministry is firstly mentioned in terms of GKS' purpose, task, and education (Const § 8 - §10), and then continued with articles on church office and church worker (Const § 11 - § 12). In general, GKS ministry is done through a three-fold ministry: fellowship, witness, and service; and every church member is obliged to partake in them (Const § 9). And in order for that to happen, GKS educates its members to equip and enable them for ministry (Const § 10). That is why the point regarding education is put together with the purpose and task of GKS.

Const § 9 is elaborated in Reg § 11 – 12, regarding GKS calling and commissioning. Reg § 11 speaks of the GKS calling to make visible its unity, to proclaim the gospel, and to carry out service in the world. Reg § 12 gives a general description regarding the three-fold ministry:

1. In the area of fellowship, the Church is sent to carry out its task and responsibility in the world through building, unifying, and renewing the relationship between humans and God, between fellow humans, and between humans and other creatures; both internally as a fellowship of believers (the Church) and as part of the society, nation, and state.
2. In the area of witness, the Church is sent to carry out its task and responsibility, whether through verbal proclamation about salvation, redemption, peace, justice, and truth, or through concrete actions in upholding justice and truth, defending human rights.
3. In the area of service, the Church is sent to carry out its compassionate service and social responsibility as an act of faith through various efforts to liberate humankind from the shackles of sin in the form of social issues.

The participation of all church members in church ministry is described in Reg § 7.3 - Rights and Obligations:

1. Every member has the right to receive church ministry and care.
2. Every confessing member has the right to vote and be voted as member of the consistory.
3. Every member is obliged to contribute to the financing of church ministry by giving a part of his/her belongings as a token of gratitude for God's grace.

4. Every member is obliged to hear, read, and proclaim God's Word through word and deed, and to participate in the fulfillment of the priesthood of all believers.

Here we see a general description about church members as recipients of church ministry, and their obligation to become financial contributors and actors of church ministry that is aimed toward the church itself (inward) and the world (outward). Interestingly, Const § 11.3 describes the function of church offices in GKS as to serve and equip church members (for ministry). In other words, in the Constitution, it seems that the offices of the church are designed for inward ministry to enable the church members in doing outward ministry. That function of serving and equipping the church members is done through:

- Worship (Reg § 13),
- Proclamation of the Word (Reg § 14),
- The sacraments (Reg § 15-17),
- Catechism (Reg § 18),
- Confession of faith (Reg § 19),
- Marriage (Reg § 20),
- Pastoral care (Reg § 21),
- Diaconal service (Reg § 22),
- Church visitation (Reg § 23),
- Ecumenical cooperation (Reg § 24),
- Cooperation with other institutions (Reg § 25)

All the issues above are put together under the umbrella of educating church members. What is said in Const § 11.3 – “The function of the three offices is to serve and to equip church members” – is done by educating them through the points above, thus resulting in a description of ministry which tends to be inward and concentrated in the role of officebearers. The provisions for ministry for all the faithful, who are not in church office, are somewhat limited if compared to those who are in office and church workers.

### **Church Office**

There are three recognized offices, which are: elder, deacon, and minister (Const § 11). In Const § 11.2 the three offices are described as reflections of Jesus' offices; but in Reg § 26 the three offices are described as manifestations of the offices in Jesus. ‘Reflecting’ or ‘manifesting’, it is unclear which is the more accurate intention of the CO; however, it is apparent that the main intention is to describe a direct linking of ministry authority in the offices to the au-



thority of Jesus. And as in Jesus where the three offices are constituted into one body, the three offices of the church in GKS constitute the consistory (GKS Pre, par. 9) and function to serve and equip church members (GKS Const § 11).

The offices are described in the regulations (Reg § 26-31):

Reg § 27 – Elder

1. Definition: Elder is a special office, which manifests Lord Jesus Christ's office as King.
2. Duty & Responsibility:
  1. To develop and educate the congregation's fellowship.
  2. To nurture and visit congregation members, also giving warnings to members who are lost.
  3. To keep watch of the church's teaching in accordance with the scripture and GKS teaching.
  4. To do planned visitation and pastoral care to the minister, vicar, and evangelist.
  5. Together with minister and deacon to make a ministry program for the growth of the congregation's faith.
  6. Together with minister and deacon to apply church discipline.
  7. Obligated to maintain confidentiality during and after their terms of office.

Reg § 28 – Deacon

1. Definition: Deacon is a special office, which manifests Lord Jesus Christ's office as Priest.
2. Duty & Responsibility:
  1. To provide spiritual and physical help to congregation members in need.
  2. To visit and give pastoral care to congregation members who are lost, sick, and to comfort those in grief.
  3. To prepare the means for baptism and Holy Communion.
  4. Together with minister and elders to move the congregation members to realize their responsibility in financing the life of the congregation, presbytery, and synod.
  5. Together with minister and elders to plan and carry out charity for church members and community members.
  6. Obligated to maintain confidentiality during and after their terms of office.

From the list of duties and responsibilities of elder and deacon above, we see that their ministry role is mostly focused on inward ministry towards the church, and that there is hardly any special role differentiation between them. Perhaps that is also the reason why the provision regulating their requirements (Reg § 29) and process (Reg § 30) are described together.

Reg § 29 – Requirements:

1. Male or Female members who have been confessing members for at least three years.
2. Having knowledge, understanding, and obedience to the Scripture, teachings and Church Order of GKS.
3. No polygamy or polyandry.
4. Not a drunkard, not hot-headed, and not enslaved to money.

In GKS, the candidates for elder and deacon come from the deliberation of the consistory meeting rather than directly from the congregation (Reg § 30.1.1). The names of the candidates are then introduced to the congregation that will elect them through majority vote until the number of persons needed is reached (Reg § 30.2).

Related to the church office, GKS also has an additional category called church worker (Const § 12). Church worker includes minister, vicar, and evangelist, and seems to be related with the status of receiving a stipend because they work full time in ministry. We see an overlap here, where minister is considered as both a church office and a form of church worker. Although the introduction of church worker as a separate category is related to administrative purposes regarding the stipend, it also has a direct effect on ministry, especially as the role of evangelist is concerned. An evangelist in the GKS is a teaching position (*guru injil*, or gospel teacher) in the congregation. The consistory first has to ask for approval from the synod board of GKS regarding the candidate for evangelist, and afterward the person will be inducted into the office of elder without going through the process of election (GKS Reg, § 32.4).

Reg § 31 speaks about the office of minister. Reg §31.1-5 says:

1. Minister (*Pendeta*) is a church office that manifests the office of Jesus Christ as Prophet, and may also be called shepherd of the congregation.
2. Role of a minister:
  1. To proclaim God's Word through congregation worship, catechism class, administering the sacraments, educating

- the church members, giving pastoral care, and through daily life activity.
2. To administer weddings, to ordain church officers, to administer the confession of faith, confession of sin, reception of the excommunicated, and the burial of the dead.
  3. To keep watch and safeguard the teachings in the congregation so that it will not go against the Scripture and the Church Order of GKS.
  4. Together with elder and deacon, to encourage church members to realize their responsibility in the field of economy and finance, both for the sake of the congregation internally, and for the wellbeing of the church as a whole.
  5. To deliver blessing through the laying on of hands.
3. Requirements:
1. A person who has finished theological study at a Christian university that is founded or recommended by GKS.
  2. Who has gone through the candidacy stage (*vikaris*) well for at least two years, and has been declared adequate by the synod board of GKS.
  3. The declaration of adequacy must be proved by a recommendation from the consistory where the person has undergone his/her candidacy stage with regard to his/her competency, loyalty, dedication, and honesty to work in God's field.
  4. To understand and believe the testimony of the Scripture as God's Word.
  5. To accept the Apostolic Creed, Athanasian Creed, and Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed as the true creeds.
  6. To accept and affirm the Heidelberg Catechism as the teaching material for Christian faith.
  7. To obey the Church Order of GKS.
  8. He/she is obliged and able to keep the duty of confidentiality.
4. Status of the minister: In GKS, a minister is ordained, inducted, and/or commissioned by the congregation.
  5. The office of minister is a life-long office.

The following article, Reg §31.6 is a rather lengthy article that speaks about the calling process, ordination, transfer, stipend, minister emeritus, termination of

office, general ministry minister, consulting minister, official garments, and other jobs. We will not write them all here, but related to the office of minister the GKS CO distinguishes between:

- A minister (in general usage, the term refers to a minister in the congregation)
- A candidate for minister which is called the vicar (Reg § 33)
- A minister for general ministry (Reg § 31.6.10)
- A consulting minister (Reg § 31.6.11)
- A minister emeritus (Reg § 31.6.7)
- An evangelist (Reg § 32); as an office separate from minister, an evangelist has the authority to proclaim the word (but not to administer the sacraments), and therefore is required to have some theological courses.

If we compare the requirements between the office of minister and the office of elder and deacon, we may notice that there is no age limit or academic background required in order to become elder or deacon, whereas in the office of minister those are required. Although it is not stated directly in the regulations regarding ministers, for someone to become a vicar, he/she must be at the maximum age of 35 years old. There is no explicit explanation for this age limitation, but this must be related to the way retirement funds work in Indonesia. In Indonesia, the retirement age threshold is 60 years old. But individuals are not obliged to have a retirement fund. So, most churches then try to provide a basic retirement fund for the minister. The PGI retirement fund is one example of such effort, which the GKS is formally using (as can be seen from Reg § 31.6.7.ii). Now, in order for the retirement fund system to work, a person is expected to work for a certain number of years to pay for the benefit that they will receive when they turn 60. One of the consequences of this, since the church is responsible for the welfare of its ministers, is that accepting minister candidates after a certain age (in GKS case, 35 years old) will create a large burden in costs of the retirement fund. Hence, the maximum age limit for entering the office of minister.

Also, in the requirements for elder and deacon we see some points related to moral and spiritual integrity, such as: not in a polygamous marriage, not a drunkard, not 'hot-headed'. We see in the church order that these requirements serve as a way to ensure accountability for ministry in the church. In the requirements for minister, these kinds of moral requirements are no longer explicitly mentioned. Certainly, we must assume them to be self-explanatory for the minister as he has to hold a high standard of moral and spiritual integrity; how-

ever, that absence might give the impression that academic and organizational integrity receive more emphasis in the requirements for minister.

Reg § 29.2 and § 31.3.7 speak about the necessity of obeying the church order as the requirements for entering into office. We see that the church order in itself is a means for accountability in ministry. On the one hand, this emphasis might seem necessary, because as people enter ministry in the church, they should naturally follow the order in that church. On the other hand, this language of obedience that is present in most – if not all – church orders, can also cultivate a feeling of church order superiority over ministry. It expresses a certain emphasis on organizational obedience, rather than allowing the officebearers to be critical to the church order. In the church order, there are provisions regarding revision to the church order. But how do church officebearers revise or change something that they must obey? Because the act of revising or changing, or even having a different opinion about the church order could run the risk of being considered as disobedience. We might argue that this requirement to obey the church order is necessary in order to provide a legal framework for all other requirements mentioned in the church order, such as the moral and spiritual integrity that is basic for the office. That is certainly true. And a person can be obedient to the church order, and when encountering something that he/she considers as wrong, can always submit a proposal to change that particular thing following the provided procedure. That space for revision, to propose changes, is an example of the balancing act for accountability that characterizes how ministry is conducted in the church. However, when reading church order articles with this kind of language of obedience, it is neither about superiority nor promoting an attitude of submission to the church order.

For any person, the process of becoming a minister will take years of education and preparation. Starting from 5 years of academic theological formation (the standard completion year in the Indonesian system) in the seminary, followed by a minimum of two years being a vicar in two other congregations (one per year), one then needs to be elected by the congregation that wants to ordain him/her, and to pass the examination of the presbytery (GKS Reg § 31). In the process of the ordination the role of the different assemblies in GKS is present; a person is elected and ordained by the congregation, examined and approved by the presbytery, and ordained using the liturgy of the synod.

The elders, deacons, and ministers in GKS constitute the consistory, where the chair needs to be a minister (GKS Reg § 35). There is no explanation in the CO about the reason behind the need to have a minister in chairing the consistory. Perhaps, this is related to the fact that GKS is influenced by the *gere-*

*formeerd* tradition that had the same rule until the 1970s. General understanding about this model is that it is because the offices of elder and deacon have a shorter term in office, in comparison to the permanent term in office for the minister. Another practical explanation regards the education level; the offices of elder and deacon require no specific (academic theological) education, while the office of minister requires at least a master's degree. In many Indonesian rural congregations, it is not uncommon to find the minister as the person who has the highest educational degree amongst the people living there! Thus, we see again here that a certain academical and organizational characteristic is emphasized for the office of minister.

A unique feature in the office of minister in GKS is the possibility for a minister to take another job outside the church institution after he/she gets an approval from the consistory and the synod. That person will be released from his/her ministry position, but not from his/her office (GKS Reg § 31.6.13). This is fascinating because a person can still retain his/her status as an officebearer although he/she decided to take a job that is no longer in a position of ministry.

### **Church Discipline**

In GKS, church discipline is considered as a special pastoral ministry – in contrast with general pastorate –, as described in Reg § 21.8. It is applied to church members, members of the consistory, or church officebearers, ministers, and GKS synod officials on the basis of love after general pastoral approaches are considered not to be successful. The purpose is to nurture the holiness of congregational life, for the salvation of sinners, and as a warning and teaching for many others. If after the special pastoral care, the person is still considered unrepentant, he/she will be excommunicated and is no longer considered as a church member until he/she confesses his/her sin and asks to be reinstated as a church member (Reg § 21.4). If one is a church officebearer, he/she will be dismissed from the office and be treated under the special pastoral regulations for confirmed members (Reg § 21.6-7 and § 49).

This kind of deterrent effect of church discipline is emphasized in the GKS, as shown from the regulation regarding the confession of sin (Reg § 21.9). When a person repents and wishes to be reinstated in good standing within the congregation, he/she will be announced in the church bulletin for two consecutive Sundays, and the confession will be done in front of the congregation during the worship, or under special circumstances it can also be done in the consistory meeting room, according to the discretion of the consistory.

### **General Analysis of GKS' Concept of Ministry**

In this part, we want to highlight some points from the presentation above:

- Regarding the concept of ministry:

Ministry is the obligation of all church members. The offices are responsible to educate and equip church members so they can fulfill this obligation. Ministry is defined through the framework of fellowship, witness, and service. This three-fold ministry is directed to the church and to the world. In the article that defines the three-fold ministry, we can even find descriptions about fellowship, witness, and service that are very outwardly oriented. However, as we read the church order, we will find that most of the regulations are oriented inwardly.

- Regarding the office:

Minister, elder, and deacon are the three recognized offices in GKS. To enter into office, someone needs to fulfill certain requirements and to be called by the church. In GKS, the function of church offices is to serve and equip church members for ministry. In order to fulfill this function, there is a differentiation of authority and task between the offices. Only the minister, as an ordained office, has the authority to administer the word and sacrament, and to deliver blessings. This function of the proclamation of the word is also shared with the evangelist. An evangelist is basically an elder that has some theological education and is given a license to preach. The office of elder is mainly related to supervising the congregation's well-being and teaching, while the office of deacon is mainly related to providing help to members who are in need, and in preparing the equipment needed for sacrament. However, other than those two aspects mentioned, there is not any essential difference between the two offices. Even charity work towards the community is not specifically the task of deacon, but the task for all officebearers.

- Regarding discipline:

The term 'discipline' is used as a special form of pastoral care, to be given when general pastoral care has failed. The purpose is for the person under church discipline to repent, thus allowing him/her to carry out ministry again. However, discipline is expressed more in the form of punishment, shaming, and exclusion from fellowship.

- Regarding review and appeal:

There is no provision for review and appeal in GKS CO.

#### 4.4.2. Gereja Kristen Indonesia (GKI)

##### Ministry

In the preamble of its church order, ministry is defined “in the framework of participating in God’s mission” and is done by every member of the church in his/her particular context (Pre par. 3). Every member of the church is called to ministry, according to God’s calling and the gifts of the Holy Spirit, together with some who “are called to become church officebearers taking the role of church leadership” (Pre par. 5). In describing the nature of the relationship between the officebearers and other church members, the preamble writes: “(It) is not a hierarchical relationship, but a dynamic and reciprocal functional relationship on the basis of love” (Pre par. 5). GKI’s understanding of ministry is then expressed in Const § 4 – Purpose: “GKI intends to participate in doing God’s mission by expressing fellowship, witness, and service.” Here we see the three-fold ministry of *koinonia*, *marturia*, and *diakonia*.

In the GKI Constitution we see this three-fold ministry then described into 7 main categories, which are used as a framework to elaborate the authority and responsibility of the councils and the offices:

1. Fellowship (Const § 5)
  - a. Worship (Reg § 13-19)
  - b. Sacraments (Reg § 20-25)
  - c. Catechesis (Reg § 26)
  - d. Church Wedding (Reg § 27-31)
  - e. Ministry (Reg § 32)
  - f. Pastoral Care (Reg § 33-47)
  - g. Visitation (Reg § 48-53)
  - h. Ecumenical Movement (Reg § 54-58)
2. Witness and Service (Const § 6)
  - a. Witness and Service (Reg § 59-62)
3. Church Development (Const § 7)
  - a. Church Development (Reg § 63-66)
4. Membership (Const § 8)
  - a. Membership (Reg § 67-69)
  - b. Membership Transfer (Reg § 70-75)
  - c. Sympathizers (Reg § 76)
5. Church Office (Const § 9)
  - a. Elder (Reg § 77-94)
  - b. Minister (Reg § 95-166)
6. Leadership (Const § 10)



- a. Councils (Reg § 167-190)
  - b. Review and Appeal (Reg § 191-192)
  - c. Representation (Reg § 193-196)
  - d. Ministry Body (Reg § 197-201)
  - e. Church Worker (Reg § 202-204)
7. Possessions (Const § 11)
- a. Possessions (Reg § 205-211)

The term ‘ministry’ (*pelayanan*) in GKI CO is used in a narrower meaning in Reg § 32 – Ministry:

1. Definition
 

Ministry in the framework of fellowship is the act of strengthening and serving one another between members, congregations, presbyteries, and regional synods through various activities.
2. Actor
  - a. Each and every member of GKI, whether personally or as a community, is called into ministry.
  - b. The consistory, the presbytery council, the regional synod council, and the synod council, whether alone or together, are called to ministry.

This article speaks about ministry only in the framework of fellowship, and although the term ‘ministry’ is used this way, it does not mean that GKI’s ministry is limited only in terms of fellowship, as we have seen from the 7 categories above. However, it does represent the way ministry in GKI CO is defined more as an inward ministry, mostly regarding the internal matters of church life. We can see it being reflected from the number of sections given to address the internal matters (see above regarding the 7 categories), compared with only 3 sections regarding witness and service. And even there, rather than describing witness and service as two distinct concepts, the terms ‘witness and service’ are also coined as one term. See Reg § 59 – Definition:

1. Witness and Service is part of the GKI mission, realized by the GKI to participate in bringing God’s peace.
2. The GKI is living it through the call to repentance and efforts to manifest justice, peace, and the integrity of creation.
3. Witness and Service is done by all members, whether individually or together, in the context of society, nation, and state, wherever GKI is placed, and through cooperation with others.

In terms of the actor of ministry, the GKI church order states that it is the responsibility of confessing church members to carry out the church's mission in fellowship, witness, and service; and to carry out church development together with the officebearers (cf. Const § 8, Reg § 68). GKI also recognizes what it describes as a 'regular visitor' or 'sympathizer', i.e. someone who is not a member but who regularly attends worship in a GKI congregation, to take part in ministry (cf. Reg § 76). So, we see a very open attitude in the descriptions regarding who carry out ministry in general. Perhaps, that explains why the requirements for officebearers, especially for the office of minister in GKI become very strict.

### **Church Office**

In GKI, two offices are recognized: the office of elder and the office of minister, and together they function as the leadership of the church in the framework of church development, according to their respective assemblies and through their respective councils (cf. Const § 9). There seems to be a special emphasis in GKI's concept of ministry on the framework of church development, since all mentions about doing ministry for the officebearers are always done in the framework of church development.

Unfortunately, we could not find any official document explaining why there is no office of deacon in GKI, but it is considered as general knowledge in the GKI that the main reason is to avoid the tendency of misunderstanding the office of deacon as a reduced or a lesser version of eldership. So, instead of having the office of deacon and elder, the two functions are merged into the office of elder. Regarding the office of elder, GKI regulations describe (Reg § 77-94) the following aspects:

- An elder carries out ministry voluntarily (read: unpaid) in the framework of church development in order to fulfill the vision and mission of GKI in the context of society, nation, and state (Reg § 79)
- The period of office is three years, unless it is terminated or extended for another period (cf. Reg § 78)
- Unless an elder is entrusted to sit in the wider councils, ideally an elder should only hold office for one period to allow for rejuvenation (cf. Reg § 80)
- Elders carry out their ministry in the councils, where priority must be given to the wider council (cf. Reg § 81)
- The tasks of an elder consist of a general task and a structural leadership ministry (Reg § 82):

1. General Task:
    - a. To study the scripture.
    - b. To pray for and with the church members.
    - c. To encourage church members to participate in worship.
    - d. To equip and empower church members for their task in the church and society.
    - e. To carry out general pastoral care, with a special attention to the sick, the grieving, those in trouble, and those facing death.
    - f. To carry out special pastoral care.
    - g. To carry out inward ministry.
    - h. To carry out witness and service.
    - i. To carry out education and training.
    - j. To keep watch on the church teaching.
  2. Structural Leadership Task: Performing a leadership task as member of the consistory, presbytery council, regional synod council, and synod council.
- The requirements for elder (Reg § 83):
    1. Commitment
      - a. To understand the call to be an elder as a spiritual call from God through GKI, and to be willing to live by God's grace.
      - b. To be willing to do the task of elders with all heart and loyalty in the role of shepherd, teacher, role-model, and to be accountable.
      - c. To be willing to show behavior that is in accordance with the Scripture.
      - d. To be willing to uphold the GKI teachings.
      - e. To understand and live the Vision and Mission of GKI.
      - f. To understand, agree with, and obey the Church Order and Regulations of GKI.
      - g. To live out one's calling together with other people.
    2. Character
      - a. Humble.
      - b. Willing to sacrifice for other people.
      - c. Caring for the weak.
      - d. Honest.
      - e. Diligent.
      - f. Sincere.
      - g. Forgiving.

- h. Unprejudiced.
- i. Trustworthy, especially in keeping official secrets.
- 3. Competency
  - a. Able to lead.
  - b. Able to cooperate with other people.
  - c. Able to live in a diverse context.
  - d. Able to do independent learning.
  - e. Able to be an agent of change in individual life, in the church, and in society.
- 4. Administrative
  - a. Already a confessing member for at least two years.
  - b. Already a member in the congregation, and active in ministry for at least two years.
- 5. Additional
  - a. The spouse is not a stumbling block.
  - b. Having no husband-wife, parent-in-law, parent-child relationship or siblings with a current church office in the same congregation.
  - c. Not an officebearer in another church.

About the process to become elder GKI CO states:

- Confessing members write the names of potential candidates, and the consistory will decide from that input on the names that will be the official candidates (cf. Reg § 85).
- The consistory will ask the candidates for their willingness. The names of those that are willing will then be announced to the congregation for three consecutive Sundays (cf. Reg § 86).
- Elder candidates must attend a preparation class (cf. Reg § 87).
- The induction into the office of elder is done in a Sunday worship and is officiated by the minister (cf. Reg § 88).
- An elder must attend training and development programs (cf. Reg § 90).
- An elder's ministry performance will be evaluated (cf. Reg § 91).
- A person can be terminated or dismissed from the office of elder (cf. Reg § 92-94).

We can see from the regulations regarding the office of elder that a very strict sense of ministry accountability is demanded. So much so that there is even a

clause that regulates not only the elder him/herself, but also his/her spouse (cf. Reg § 83.5a).

Here are the regulations regarding the office of minister (Reg § 95-166):

- A minister has to be a member of the congregation where he/she is based (cf. Reg § 96).
- The term of office for minister is a lifetime, unless terminated or dismissed (Reg § 97).
- A minister is called to perform full-time leadership ministry in the framework of church development, to manifest the vision and mission of GKI in the context of society, nation, and state (Reg § 98.2)
- A minister emeritus no longer has the role of leadership ministry in the councils (cf. Reg § 99).
- A minister has three tasks: a Special task, a General task, and a Structural leadership task.

#### Reg § 101 - Task

To carry on leadership ministry in the framework of church development, the tasks of the minister are:

1. Special Task:
  - a. To proclaim the Word of God.
  - b. To administer sacraments.
  - c. The Ordination/induction of ministers.
  - d. The Induction of elders.
  - e. To perform the blessing of marriage.
  - f. To inaugurate ministerial bodies.
2. General Task:
 

*(RAS: similar to general task of the elder, but with the addition to teach the scripture and to lead the catechetic class)*
3. Structural Leadership Task:
 

Performing a leadership task as member of the consistory, the presbytery council, the regional synod council, and the synod council.
- The requirements for minister (Reg § 102)
  1. Commitment
 

*(RAS: similar to the commitment requirements for elder)*
  2. Character
 

*(RAS: similar to the character requirements for elder)*

### 3. Competence

- a. Able to preach and teach.
- b. Able to pastor.
- c. Able to lead.
- d. Able to think systematically.
- e. Able to think conceptually.
- f. Able to cooperate with other people.
- g. Able to live in a diverse context.
- h. Able to learn independently.
- i. Able to become agent of change in individual life, in the church, and in society.

### 4. Education

- a. Having completed a master degree in theology from a seminary that is supported by GKI.
- b. Having completed a master degree in theology from a seminary that can be accepted by GKI, and having also completed other requirements as prescribed by GKI church order and regulations, and decided on by the GKI synod council.
- c. Having completed a master degree in theology from a seminary that requires special recognition by GKI, and also completed other requirements as prescribed by GKI church order and regulations and decided on by the GKI synod council.

### 5. Addition

- a. For GKI cadre, a maximum age of forty years old when one starts minister preparation education. For a minister from another similar denomination, a maximum age of thirty-five years old when one enters the pre-calling stage.
- b. Willing not to work in any other profession, which has nothing to do with church ministry.
- c. One's spouse is not a stumbling block.
- d. If one's spouse is also a minister, they should not be ministers in the same congregation, but it is allowed to become a minister in a different congregation, or a special assignment minister, or a minister of a similar denomination.
- e. One's spouse is willing to become a confessing member of the calling congregation, and willing to support the minis-

ter's ministry without reducing one's right for working in another profession.

- f. If one's spouse is from a different church denomination, he/she must come from a denomination with similar teaching.

About the process of becoming a minister the GKI CO states (Reg § 103-119):

- GKI church members who are entering theological studies must pass an evaluation from the side of synod. After passing the evaluation, they will be recommended by the synod to become GKI 'cadre' (which is a first step on the road towards being a minister). Other church members still can enter seminaries, but they will not be able to apply to become a minister in GKI. Only students who have received a recommendation from the synod as GKI cadre will receive special training and financial support during their student years, and can become a minister candidate in GKI. (cf. Reg § 103-105)
- After graduating from seminary, the cadre will have to go through a conversation and a psychology test to determine whether they are eligible to continue to become a minister candidate (Reg § 106.1-2). Someone, who does not pass the evaluation, can still be recommended to become church worker in GKI (Reg § 106.2b).
- The cadre who has passed the evaluation will be placed in a congregation for an orientation period and will have to follow trainings from the synod (Reg § 106.4-5, § 107)
- The age limit for a cadre when he/she starts this training stage is 40 years of age maximum.
- After finishing all the trainings, the cadre is called a minister candidate and can be called by a congregation. The call must be made through the synod, not directly to the cadre. The synod council executive body business meeting will decide on the placement of the cadres (Reg § 109-110).
- After a placement is decided by the synod and if the congregation has no objection, the candidate will need to answer the call (Reg § 110.2-7). This stage is called 'Introduction Stage', which lasts for 6 months and can be extended for another 3 months. At the end of the introduction stage, the candidate is evaluated by the consistory to consider whether to continue his/her ministry or not. If both parties

wish to continue working together, the process is then continued into the 'Orientation Stage' (Reg § 110.8-15).

- If there is no objection from the congregation, the candidate will then be inducted into the office of elder, which will also mark the start of his/her orientation stage in that congregation. This stage will last for 1 year, and can be extended for another year (Reg § 111.1-9)
- A candidate will have two opportunities to go through the orientation stage, in two different congregations. If the candidate fails for the second time, his/her status as minister candidate will be terminated (Reg § 111.11-13).
- After passing the evaluation at the end of the orientation stage, the consistory can move to call the candidate to become a minister. The synod council executive body and the regional synod council executive body will have to give their approval for this calling, and afterwards the call is announced to the congregation. If there is no valid objection from the church members, the candidate will go through a church conversation (explained further in Reg § 114) to enter the 'Calling Stage' in a presbytery council meeting. After passing the conversation, the consistory will write to call the candidate to become a minister there. The candidate will be given time to give his/her answer (Reg § 112).
- After the candidate gives his/her willingness to be called by the congregation, a date for ordination is set (Reg § 113).
- A minister from another denomination can be called to become a minister in GKI, but will need to get the synod's approval. The minister will have to go through similar stages like the minister candidate: 3 months of introduction stage and 6 months of application stage, with an evaluation at the end of each stage. After passing the evaluations, the minister will go through the church conversation in the calling stage before finally to be inducted as a GKI minister. (Reg § 115-119).
- There are three other statuses for minister in GKI:
  - Special assignment minister, which is a minister who is assigned to other areas of ministry aside from the congregation, such as: full-timer in church council's executive body, lecturer, social work, or police/military force (Reg § 120-124).



- Consulting minister, which is a minister from another congregation who is assigned to become a counsel for a congregation that does not have a minister yet (Reg § 125).
- Minister emeritus, which is a minister who has reached the retirement age of 60 (can be extended to 65), and will no longer be involved in the councils of the church. (Reg § 130-135).
- A minister can be terminated or dismissed from office (Reg § 139-143).
- A minister's stipend and welfare benefits are regulated in Reg § 144-166.

Compared to the office of elder, in the office of minister we see an even stricter measure for ministry accountability. The process starts even before theological study has begun, through various stages of trainings and evaluations, even after one has reached the status of minister emeritus. There are additional requirements such as that the minister's spouse has to become a confessing member in the congregation he/she's serving. In other words, a GKI minister's spouse may not be a member of another religion, church denomination, or even another GKI congregation unless he/she is a minister there.

GKI also recognizes a church worker (Reg § 202-204), which is someone with a special expertise that is employed by the church to help with a specific ministry. A church worker is not inducted into eldership, and cannot be promoted to become a minister in GKI (cf. Reg § 203.2-3).

### **Church Discipline**

In GKI CO the term 'church discipline' is not used, but the concept is described in general as part of pastoral care (Reg § 33-47), but specifically as 'special pastoral care' (Reg § 37):

1. Special Pastoral care can be applied toward members, church officebearers, and church institutions.
2. Special Pastoral care for members is applied towards baptized and confessing members who:
  - a. behave against the Scripture and/or
  - b. have teachings that are against the Scripture and GKI's teaching, so that they become a stumbling stone for others, in order that they repent.
3. Special Pastoral care for church officebearers is given towards elders and ministers who:
  - a. behave against the Scripture and/or

- b. have and spread teachings that are against the Scripture and GKI's teaching, including abusing and/or betraying their official calling, so that they become a stumbling stone for others, in order that they repent.
4. Special Pastoral care for church institutions is given towards a consistory which:
  - a. makes a decision and/or
  - b. is involved in church practices, which are against the Scripture and/or Church Order and Regulations of GKI and/or GKI's teaching and/or decisions of the presbytery council and/or the regional synod council and/or the synod council, so that they threaten the integrity of the congregation and GKI as a whole, spreading teachings that are against the Scripture and GKI's Teaching, and causing the spread of a church practice that is not in accordance with the Church Order and the Regulations of GKI, in order that they repent.

We see also that in GKI, church discipline is applied not only to an individual but also to a consistory (Reg § 37.4). One interesting description here is that, if a consistory acts against the decisions of the wider assemblies, it can be considered as a threat to the integrity of the congregation and GKI as a whole, thus resulting in the status of receiving special pastoral care.

In GKI, as long as the matter is not resolved, the person will remain as a church member 'under special pastoral care', and lose his/her right to participate in holy communion, cannot ask for a marriage blessing, cannot ask for baptism/confirmation, cannot vote or be voted into office, and cannot be involved in any ministerial activity (Reg § 39-40). If one is a church officebearer, then he/she will be dismissed from the office (Reg § 41-46). A time limit of 6 months is given for the person under special pastoral care to repent, and if he/she does repent within that time, the church council meeting will decide that the special pastoral care status will be ended and all his/her membership rights will be reinstated. If he/she is a church officebearer, the council meeting will decide whether to reinstate the person back into the office or not. If after a six months period there is no repentance, the special pastoral care status will remain for an undetermined period until the person repents (Reg § 40-47).

### **Review and Appeal**

Of the three church orders analyzed, GKI CO is the only one that makes provisions regarding the right to review and appeal. They are explained as part of

leadership accountability, as included in the task of the councils (Reg § 171.7i, 173.7k, 174.7f, 175.7i, 176.7g, 177.7f, 178.7r). It is also described as the rights of a church member, with a distinction: a baptized member can only ask for review and appeal to matters regarding him/herself (Reg § 67.2e), and a confessing member can ask for a review and appeal to all decisions made in the church (Reg § 68.2f).

The concept of review and appeal is specifically described in Reg § 191-192. Below are the outlines for each:

#### Review in Reg § 191

- If a council's decision is considered wrong, a church member or a member of that particular council can file a request for a review (Reg § 191.1-4).
- A written request should be made as soon as possible explaining the reason for the request, and providing the identity of the person making the request (Reg § 191.5).
- A review will be conducted if the decision in question is proven to be in contradiction with the scripture or the church order (Reg § 191.6-7).

#### Appeal in Reg § 192:

- If someone is not satisfied with the decision of the review, within one month after the review decision is given, the person can ask for an appeal to the wider council (Reg § 192.1-3)
- The written request for appeal must be sent through the council of the congregation he/she is a member of. The council, whose decision is being appealed, must convey this written request to the immediate wider council (Reg § 192.4-5). A person can retract his/her appeal request at any time (Reg § 192.7).
- After receiving the request, the wider council will examine the decision in question in its next meeting (Reg § 192.6).

Having provisions that on the one hand acknowledge the right of church members to ask for a review and appeal against a decision made by a church council, and on the other hand oblige a church council in question to do review and to convey an appeal letter to the wider council, these regulations provide a way for church members to hold the council of officebearers accountable for their ministry.

### **General Analysis of GKI's Concept of Ministry**

In this part, we want to highlight some points from the presentation above:

- Regarding the concept of ministry:

GKI CO describes ministry as the act of participating in God's mission by expressing fellowship, witness, and service. All church members are called into ministry, but some members will receive a special calling into office and take the role of church leadership. And this call for ministry is not limited only to church members, as the church order also recognizes the role of 'sympathizers', persons who regularly worship in a GKI congregation to participate in ministry. In further descriptions, we can see that GKI CO actually puts more emphasis on the aspect of fellowship, while witness and service is coined into one. So, although initially, in the Preamble, ministry is explained as a three-fold of fellowship, witness, and service, its elaborations in the regulations seem to distinguish between ministry as fellowship on the one hand, and as witness and service (integrated) on the other hand. Also, when we look at the 7 main categories for ministry that are used in the church order, it is apparent that ministry is translated mostly into the inward act of serving the church and its members.

- Regarding the office:

GKI recognizes two offices in the church: minister and elder. It seems that in GKI, the role of the traditional offices of minister, elder, and deacon are basically integrated into one office of elder. A GKI minister, in essence, is an elder that is equipped with theological education, who after going through a strict selection process will receive the authority to administer the word and sacraments, and to deliver blessings. There are very strict requirements and a rigorous preparation and evaluation process to enter into church office. And the requirements do not apply only to the person entering the office, but also to his/her spouse. Since the office is a leadership ministry in the framework of church development, officebearers must also function in a structural leadership task as members of councils.

- Regarding discipline:

GKI does not use the term 'church discipline', but the concept is treated as synonym for pastoral care. Discipline is achieved through general pastoral care, which is given to all church members; and through special pastoral care in special circumstances. General pastoral care is done through all forms of fellowship ministry, and special pastoral care is done through the act of limiting a person's right to participate in and to receive the ministry of the church. Special pastoral care will not result in a person's expulsion from church membership, but the status of being under special pastoral care can remain for an undeter-

mined period of time until the person repents. There is no act of announcing the sin or the repentance to the congregation either. Special pastoral care is not only given to individuals, but can also be given to a consistory that acts against the decisions of the wider church.

- Regarding review and appeal:

A church member can challenge a church council's decision, and can appeal to its wider council if he/she is not satisfied with the result of the review. The regulations state it as a right of church members, and as an obligation of church councils. The limit is that a decision made in the synod council can only be reviewed, and it is not possible to appeal to the decision of the review.

#### 4.4.3. Gereja Masehi Injili di Timor (GMIT)

##### Ministry

The GMIT Constitution speaks about ministry as God's calling and mandate (Const § 11-12). It is intended to promote peaceful and prosperous life through the proclamation of God's Word, the administration of sacraments, and the carrying out of *Penta-ministries* (Const § 12.3-4). GMIT's ministry is described as a five-fold ministry (GMIT *Penta-Ministries*) of *koinonia*, *marturia*, *diakonia*, *liturgia*, and *oikonomia* (EB point B.7, Pre par. 5, Const § 13):

- *Koinonia* or Fellowship

*Koinonia* is inclusivity that will enable GMIT to overcome the primordial tendencies in the church and society. Accepting others in their differences, supporting the process of democratization in the Indonesian political sphere, the church can lead by example in promoting an open communion that upholds equality.

Const § 14 – Fellowship:

1. GMIT understands itself as a fellowship founded in the work of the Triune God.
2. GMIT calls itself Family of God (*familia Dei*).
3. As a Family of God, GMIT must:
  - a. Preserve the fellowship and unity of its members.
  - b. Become a harmonizing force in developing the spirit of brotherhood, openness, and equality in its presence in the world.

- *Marturia* or Witness

Witnessing is done in the spirit of sharing God's universal love, which can be found in many places, times, and events. Witnessing is done by making the church's critical prophetic voice heard during times of injustice and oppression. All church members are to take part, whether through the activity of the church, or in the wider community.

Const § 15 – Witness

1. GMIT accepts the task to proclaim and manifest the Gospel of Jesus Christ through words and deeds.
2. GMIT, in performing its witnessing task, must:
  - a. Proclaim the Gospel of the Kingdom of God to every human and creature;
  - b. Teach the Word, develop theology, and teach according to the Scripture;
  - c. Make its prophetic voice heard in all situations.

GMIT's witness is done with full responsibility, in the spirit of love, communicatively, and respecting others.

- *Diakonia* or Charity

*Diakonia* should be GMIT's strength in expressing true solidarity for the powerless in the society. Facing exploitation of the poor for the benefit of the capital owner, church ministry can no longer be mere charity, but should also be reformative and transformative.

Const § 16 – Charity

1. In doing charity, GMIT takes the example of Jesus Christ as the true servant of God.
2. In doing charity, GMIT must:
  - a. Perform caritative, reformative, and transformative diakonia.
  - b. Side with the weak and the marginalized in order to manifest God's love.

- *Liturgia* or Worship

*Liturgia* is translated into worship, emphasizing the vertical dimension of the church's mission. Mission is an action and a contemplation at the same time. The need for a contextual worship so that people may experience God, will help the mission of the church.

## Const § 17 – Worship

1. GMIT worships as an act of faith and devotion to God in spirit and truth (compare John 4:23-24) in all places and times.
2. Worship is a manifestation of true relationship with the Triune God and of thankfulness for His guidance, care, and protection.
3. GMIT in its worship must:
  - a. Develop a contextual worship.
  - b. Promote liturgical worship that can be implemented into actual work, in order to become a true worship.

- *Oikonomia* or Stewardship

*Oikonomia* in GMIT's understanding is the responsible act of managing the church household (internally) and the responsible act of promoting economic and ecological justice in the world (externally). Acknowledging God's universal love and authority, the church needs to be open in cooperating with other parties who have a good and sincere intention for the betterment of the world, and in the fight against injustice and destruction toward His creation.

## Const § 18 – Stewardship

1. GMIT is called to care for itself, its ecology, and its society as God's household.
2. In doing its stewardship, GMIT must:
  - a. Self-manage its ministry, procurement, maintenance, and develop its human resources, also in financial matters;
  - b. Manage and resolve the crisis of ecology and social issues.

From the descriptions above we see an emphasis on an outward view of ministry in GMIT's church order. Even when describing concepts that are usually more concerned with inward ministry – such as worship and stewardship, GMIT CO's description tries to link them with outward ministry.

EB point A.6 speaks about GMIT members as the basis of ministry; as God has given them talents so they could fulfill His mandate. Const § 26 states: "Church members have the obligation to actively manifest their fellowship, witness, charity, worship, and stewardship." So, ministry is an obligation for all church members, led by some who are elected into office (cf. Const § 29.3).

**Church Office**

GMIT CO makes a distinction between ministerial offices and organizational offices (Const § 30):

- Ministerial offices are minister, elder, deacon, and teacher; who are accepted through an act of ordination (the laying on of hands).
- Organizational offices are those of council members and other ministerial bodies, which are started and terminated in the congregation's worship service.

Here we see that all officebearers will have the double status of ministerial office and organizational office, since they are all members of the church council. It seems that the double status is intended to distinguish between a general sense of ministry (ministerial office) and an organizational position in ministry – that is shared with other ministry bodies in the church (organizational office). The main difference described in the CO is that the basic responsibility of the officebearers is pastoral work (Const § 31.3). The officebearers are servants of Christ, elected from church members, and intended to equip church members for carrying out ministry in church and society (cf. Reg § 28-29). As we have explained earlier, even though the CO uses the term 'ordination' for all ministerial offices indiscriminately, the full meaning of ordination – where the authority of giving blessing, and administering the Word and sacraments is transferred – only happens for the office of minister. The offices of elder, deacon, and teacher still have no authority to perform those ministries.

In the way GMIT CO is structured, detailed provisions regarding the offices (and also other topics) are scattered in various regulations separate from the church order. From the Ecclesiological Basis, the Preamble, and the Constitution, we have seen many basic descriptions about the offices. But the details regarding the offices cannot be found either in the Regulations that are part of the Church Order book (Congregation Regulations, Presbytery Regulations, and Synod Regulations). So, we have to try and look for explanation from the plethora of regulations in GMIT. We cannot discuss all of them in this analysis, but we will try to present some of the regulations that are available:

- Officebearer Election Regulations (OBER)
- Office and Employment Regulations (OER)

First, we see how CR § 55.3 speaks about the requirements for becoming a member of the consistory:

- a. to be a confessing member;
- b. to have the ability to grow in faith, wisdom, knowledge, honesty, and humility;
- c. to be a role model;
- d. to prioritize the need of GMIT above personal, family, or group needs;



- e. to have the spirit of unifying people;
- f. to be able to communicate and nurture human relationships;
- g. to be loyal to the GMIT church order;
- h. to have a work ethos that is oriented to the goal and aim of ministry;
- i. to have the competence and skills for organization and management.

We will see a similar approach for the requirements to become member of the wider councils regulated in PR § 45.2.a-k (for presbytery council), and in SR § 43.2.a-j (for synod council).

OBER § 9 – Requirements for elder, deacon, and teacher:

1. The candidates are confessing members who fulfill the requirements in CR § 55.
2. The candidates must also fulfill these requirements:
  - a. To be in the maximum age of 70 years old during the election.
  - b. To understand and maintain GMIT teaching.
  - c. Not to be under church discipline.
  - d. To have a good theological understanding and a broad knowledge of the church and the society.
  - e. Confessing members who were transferred from another congregation can be elected if he/she has been a member for at least 6 months.
  - f. To be willing to receive advise from fellow church members or the wider church councils.
  - g. A candidate must at least receive 5 votes.
  - h. Someone who is currently still in his/her second period of office cannot become a candidate.
3. Especially for the office of elder, candidates must have skills and competence in fellowship, witness, charity, worship, and stewardship.
4. Especially for the office of deacon, candidates must have the sensitivity, skills, and competence for charity works in the congregation.
5. Especially for the office of teacher, candidates must fulfill these requirements:
  - a. To have been a catechesis teacher for at least 2 years, or children and youth worker for at least 3 years.
  - b. To have the ability to maintain church teaching in the congregation.

6. The candidacy process must take into consideration the balance of gender and age.

Regarding the authority, task, and responsibility of officebearers more can be found specifically in the Office and Employment Regulations (OER):

OER § 34 – Authority, Task, and Responsibility of Elder

1. An elder is authorized:
  - a. To proclaim the word.
  - b. To carry out oversight and the evaluation of sermons in the congregation.
  - c. To uphold life, teaching, and organizational discipline in the congregation.
  - d. To lead in the life and ministry of fellowship of the congregation.
  - e. To attend a congregation meeting and to participate in decision-making.
  - f. To hold an organizational position in the consistory.
2. The task of an elder is:
  - a. Together with the minister to carry out GMIT pentaministries.
  - b. To carry out house visitation and pastoral care, whether individually or together with other officebearers.
  - c. To maintain and nurture the integrity and unity of the congregation.
  - d. To participate in carrying out ministry to ministerial bodies.
  - e. To officiate in a burial service.
3. An elder's ministry is held accountable to God by giving his/her ministry report through the consistory's report to the congregation meeting.

OER § 35 – Authority, Task, and Responsibility of Deacon

1. A deacon is authorized:
  - a. To carry out charity works in various forms.
  - b. To attend a congregation meeting and to participate in decision-making.
  - c. To hold an organizational position in the consistory.
2. The task of a deacon is:
  - a. Together with the minister to carry out GMIT pentaministries.

- b. To pray and care for sick members.
  - c. To organize the giving of aid for the poor inside or outside the congregation.
  - d. To facilitate the economic empowerment of church members.
  - e. To organize the giving of aid during a natural disaster.
  - f. To cooperate with other parties to carry out formal and informal education in the congregation.
  - g. To organize legal aid and advocacy for victims of violence, injustice, and oppression; and in the empowerment and assistance of civil rights issues.
3. A deacon's ministry is held accountable to God by giving his/her ministry report through the consistory's report to the congregation meeting.

#### OER § 36 – Authority, Task, and Responsibility of Teacher

1. A teacher is authorized:
  - a. To carry out teaching activities in the congregation.
  - b. To attend a congregation meeting and to participate in decision-making.
  - c. To keep watch on the teachings in the congregation.
  - d. To hold an organizational position in the consistory.
2. The task of a teacher is:
  - a. Together with the minister to carry out GMIT pentaministries.
  - b. To organize teaching ministry in the congregation.
  - c. To carry out Christian faith education for confessing members and church commissions.
  - d. Together with the minister to prepare and discuss teaching materials for the church, especially for children and youth ministry and catechism class.
3. A teacher's ministry is held accountable to God by giving his/her ministry report through the consistory's report to the congregation meeting.

In GMIT, a minister is also called as an employee of GMIT and has to follow GMIT employee regulations (cf. OER § 58-63). Let us see the regulations regarding ministers:

## OER § 11 – Requirements for a minister:

1. To accept the scripture as the word of God.
2. To be obedient to GMIT's confession and teaching.
3. To be obedient to the GMIT church order.
4. To be willing to work full-time.
5. To be loyal and diligent in carrying out his/her duties.
6. To be willing to accept a placement anywhere within GMIT.
7. To be willing to live in the area of his/her ministry.
8. To be willing to regularly participate in capacity building training/education.
9. The be able to keep the obligation of confidentiality.
10. To be willing and able to lead and coordinate the task of oversight and teaching in the congregation.
11. To be able to develop and nurture fellowship.
12. To have managerial skills and competence.
13. To be a confessing member.
14. To have a theological degree from a university that is recognized by GMIT, and to have received a recommendation from the GMIT synod council.
15. To have passed the period of vicar.
16. To have a good behavior and positive attitude as described in 1 Tim. 3:1-13 and Titus 1:5-9
17. Not to be under church discipline.
18. To be physically and mentally healthy.
19. To be able to become a role-model in life and ministry, including in one's marriage life.
20. To have declared and signed the minister's decree during the ordination service.

## OER § 33 – Authority, Task, and Responsibility of a Minister

1. A minister is authorized:
  - a. To administer the Word and Sacraments.
  - b. To do pastoral care and house visitation.
  - c. To officiate in confession of faith and marriage blessing.
  - d. To ordain officebearers.
  - e. To introduce church employees and ministerial bodies to the congregation.
  - f. To become the chair of the consistory.
  - g. To bury the dead.
2. The task of a minister is to carry out GMIT penta-ministries.

3. A minister's ministry is held accountable to God through the church councils where he/she is serving.

Still in the same regulation, the task of a minister as a GMIT employee is again defined according to the relevant assembly one is an employee of:

- OER § 58.2: The work of a minister in the congregation includes:
  - a. The proclamation of the Word.
  - b. The administration of the sacraments.
  - c. Pastoral care in the congregation.
  - d. A leadership function in the congregation.
  - e. Organizational management.
  - f. Other ministries according to the positions entrusted to the minister.
- OER § 59.2: The work of a minister in the presbytery includes:
  - a. Pastoral care for the congregations within the presbytery.
  - b. A leadership function in the presbytery.
  - c. Organizational management.
  - d. Other ministries according to the positions entrusted to the minister.
- OER § 60.2: The work of a minister in the synod includes:
  - a. Pastoral care for GMIT congregations.
  - b. Leadership of GMIT.
  - c. Organizational management.

We try to present the regulations above as they are not found in the main church order document. But when we compare the wonderful explanation regarding ministry in the GMIT Ecclesiological Basis and Preamble with the way ministry is described in the Constitution and the Regulations, it appears that the concept of 'penta-ministries' is treated as an ideal rather than as something operative in the regulations. We see that the term is always mentioned in the offices' description, but apart from that act of mentioning, the rest contains still generic explanations. Perhaps, one of the most refreshing articles that translate more concretely the penta-ministries is OER § 35.2 regarding the tasks of a deacon. But again, in the plethora of GMIT's regulations, it seems that the risk of heavy institutional bureaucracy might prove to be a very challenging aspect of doing ministry.

With regard to accountability, we see that the offices are held accountable by strict requirements, ministry reports that need to be accepted by the church, and – as we will discuss below – inputs from church members regarding how the officebearers are carrying out discipline.

### **Church Discipline**

EB point A.20 describes discipline as a necessity for the church, and can be explained as discipline in life, teaching, and in office. In a broad sense, all church members are under church discipline, it is an obligation for believers to live as God's disciples. However, in an extra-ordinary case, a disciplinary act can be given to limit a person's participation in ministry. The purpose is so that the person repents and returns to a correct relationship with God. (cf. EB point A.20, Const § 33). We see that discipline is closely related to ministry. Only when someone lives his/her life as God's disciple, he/she is accountable to participate in ministry. If someone fails to live as God's disciple, the church will give him/her a disciplinary act on the basis of love, a pastoral spirit, and forgiveness (cf. Const § 33.2-3). In order to know whether church members are living as God's disciples or not, the church performs its oversight function, through forms of supervision and consideration that cover the ministry, theology, treasury, and the administration of the church (cf. Const § 34).

Until this moment, the writer has not been able to obtain the specific regulations regarding discipline and oversight in GMIT. However, we can assume what the general treatment is that is usually given as a disciplinary act: one will not be able to become a candidate for office or other ministry bodies, has no right to vote, is not allowed to receive the sacraments, and if one is an officebearer, he/she will be released from office. Regarding disciplinary acts to an officebearer, in OER § 48.2c we see that the act can include the 'termination with dishonor'. But if in the future that person repents, he/she may ask to be reinstated after going through a period of counseling and declaring his/her repentance to the congregation (cf. OER § 49).

### **General Analysis of GMIT's Concept of Ministry**

In this part, we want to highlight some points from the presentation above:

- Regarding the concept of ministry:

GMIT ministry is an act of responding to God's calling and a mandate to promote peaceful and prosperous life through proclaiming God's word, administering the sacraments, and carrying out the *Penta-ministries*. There is a sense of importance in the office of minister in ministry, since the authority to administer the word and sacraments is exclusively linked to the office of minister. But aside from the word and sacraments, ministry is explained as a five-fold ministry (the GMIT *penta-ministries*) of fellowship, witness, charity, worship, and stewardship.

The church order description of the penta-ministries is very outward focused, reflecting on relevant and contextual issues in the society. All church members are obliged to carry out ministry, led by some who are elected into office.

- Regarding the office:

GMIT recognizes the offices of minister, elder, deacon, and teacher. A person enters an office through the laying on of hands; hence the term ‘ordination’ in the church order. But the authority to administer the word and sacraments, and to deliver blessings is only part of the office of minister. Officebearers in GMIT will have a double status of a ministerial office and an organizational office (a position in a church council). That duality is further explained: as a ministerial office, its main responsibility is pastoral work; and as an organizational office, its main responsibility is organizational work. A minister in GMIT will also be categorized as a GMIT employee. The Indonesian term ‘karyawan’ that translates into employee, can have a wider meaning that goes beyond ‘work force’. The word ‘karya’ also has the meaning ‘to create, to make, to bring out ministry’. But if the usage of the term employee in the GMIT regulations is intended to convey that wider meaning, then it should also be applicable to the other offices.

- Regarding discipline:

Discipline is the obligation of all church members to live as God’s disciples. GMIT discipline can be distinguished in discipline in life, discipline in teaching, and discipline in office. In the extra-ordinary case where a church member’s life, teaching, or ministry goes against the scripture, he/she will be given a disciplinary act. GMIT CO links the concept of discipline with the role of oversight.

- Regarding review and appeal:

Provisions regarding review and appeal cannot be found in GMIT CO.

#### **4.4.4 General Analysis of the Churches’ Concept of Ministry**

As we understand that identity, assembly, and ministry are closely related to one another, we realize also that some parts in the current analysis will have already been covered in our two previous analytical parts. However, in this part, we will especially try to analyze and reflect on the churches’ concept of ministry from the perspective of accountability. We will first try to make some comparisons, and then move to reflect on them using the structures that we have used above: ministry, office, discipline, review and appeal.

**Ministry**

The church orders we have discussed above, all speak about the concept of ministry mostly as an outward ministry. God has given His gifts so that all church members could respond to His calling to bless the world. Ministry is the church's response to God's calling and mandate, directed to the world. This general idea of church ministry through its member's actions to the world is present in the principal-foundational part of the church orders. However, as we go into more technical details, we will see that the church orders mainly speak of ministry more as an inward ministry, directed to and for the church. Take a basic form of ministry, such as the proclamation of the word for example, and we will see that it mainly will translate to the act of preaching in and to the church. Many of the categories attributed to carrying out ministry, although as a concept explained to have outward significance are explained more as a form of inward ministry in the regulations.

Perhaps, this is related to the high organizational tendency that we have seen in the church orders. Or perhaps because a church order is not designed to accommodate the wide horizon of Christian ministry, so to look for a concept of ministry beyond an 'internal manual of instruction' is missing the point? However, when churches justify their church order as the legal document that regulates the church's life and ministry, it should present more reflection on the outward nature of ministry. Church ministry concerns more the action from the church to the world, rather than that from the church for the church. If we, upon reflection, affirm that God has entrusted the church with the authority for ministry to the world, then we should also be held accountable for how we make use of that authority.

**Church Office**

GKI recognizes two offices: minister and elder. GKS recognizes three offices: minister, elder, and deacon. GMIT recognizes four offices: minister, elder, deacon, and teacher. The offices exist for ministry, and in the church order descriptions they function especially for ministry within the church. The general understanding in the church orders is basically the same: the offices function to lead and equip church members for ministry. In other words, the scope for the ministry of the officebearers as regulated in the church orders, is limited to ministry within the boundaries of the church organization.

Speaking of the offices, we see that most church orders relate them directly to Jesus' offices of king, priest, and prophet. In reflection we can ask how this Christ-centered model for office has affected the shape of church ministry, especially for church members who are not officebearers. Our reading of the



church orders has shown that church ministry is heavily connected with the office, and very little with the non-officebearers. As a reflection: perhaps, it would be interesting to see a church order that can formulate a more Trinitarian model of ministry that gives more recognition to the place of non-officebearers and their relationship with officebearers.

We see that strict requirements are set for church members to be able to enter the offices. Moral, spiritual, educational, and organizational integrity is demanded from those who are called. Especially for the office of minister, higher sets of requirements apply. This relates to the balancing act of authority and responsibility, which in itself is a measure of accountability. The higher the authority, the higher the responsibility will be. With the authority to administer the word and sacraments, and to deliver blessings it is only natural if the requirements to enter the office of minister become higher than those for the office of elder, deacon, or teacher.

So far, in the church orders we find accountability for carrying out ministry through strict requirements and selection procedures. We also see measures to warn and discipline church members and officebearers when they contradict the nature of their calling as God's disciple. However, we may also point out that in general the measure for accountability in the churches is designed more to respond to transgression, rather than to stimulate active ministry. Let us take the regulations regarding the office of deacon in GMIT, for example. One of the tasks of a deacon is to organize legal aid and advocacy for victims of violence, injustice, and oppression. The main question will be, how far can task descriptions in church order regulations be used to hold an office accountable? If a deacon in GMIT does not do any action in the sphere of legal advocacy, will he/she be asked for the reason? Or is it only when he/she does something in contradiction to that regulation, that they will be held accountable for that transgression? We speak of this not only with regard to the task of a deacon in GMIT, but also with regard to how offices can be held accountable according to their task descriptions in the church order in general. This question is related to how accountable our churches' understanding of office is, and the ministry function they represent, which will impact the way regulations are formulated.

One interesting feature regarding the office of minister that we see in the church orders, regards the maximum age limit applied to church members who intend to become a minister. Certainly, this requirement is not related to the effect someone's age has for one's ability to carry out ministry. This age limitation is related to the retirement fund system that is used by Indonesian churches, that makes it not viable for someone after a certain age to enter a work in the church. Even if you have a saintly church member, a wonderful person with a

deep understanding of theology, a model citizen, felt called to enter ministry as a minister – and sometimes this call happens later in life – , if he/she is over the allowed age limit, sadly the church cannot allow him/her to become a minister. With respect to the importance of how an organizational system can function, this example does give a sense of an administrative-organizational emphasis in the ministry of the offices.

From the regulations we can also see this requirement for procedural competence through meeting, reporting, budgeting, annual programming, and mastering the plethora of church regulation documents. We are aware of the need for order in the life and ministry of the church. But at the same time, we should also have the awareness for its pitfalls and limitations that may hinder the carrying out of church ministry.

### **Discipline**

Churches may differ in their usage of the term ‘discipline’. Some may understand it as the life of believers as God’s disciple in general, while some may use it with a connotation of punishment. Discipline can be seen as a church’s measure for the accountability of its church members in their life. Through the council of officebearers, church members who do not live their lives as God’s disciples can be given special pastoral treatment, which usually will include limiting their rights and responsibilities in church ministry.

Discipline in the church orders is associated with various aspects of a church member’s life. Discipline with regard to how someone leads his/her life is usually related to one’s moral integrity. Discipline with regard to teaching, is usually related to one’s understanding of God’s word that contradicts the teaching of the church. But discipline can also be associated with someone’s obedience to a church council’s decision or to an organizational regulation. If discipline is about being God’s disciple, would not it be harsh to associate discipleship with organizational obedience? Does not this reflect the church’s tendency to give emphasis on organizational life?

### **Review and Appeal**

Provisions for review and appeal are found only in the GKI CO. It does not mean that GKS and GMIT church members have no say in the church offices’ ministry. We are aware that church members have the right to give suggestions to their church council, which will be accepted and discussed in their meetings. However, the absence of the right to ask for review of a decision made by a council, or to appeal the decision on the review, seems to suggest that church members have no authority over church decisions. Since decisions made in

council meetings are final and have binding authority to church members, it is necessary to have a right for review and appeal to balance that authority in order to be accountable.

Reflecting on the model of review and appeal as found in GKI CO, we see that there is a limit where a decision made in the synod council can only be reviewed. After that, it is not possible to appeal since there is no wider council after the synod council. However, in the spirit of accountability, actually there should be a possibility to challenge a decision beyond the synod council. We are not talking about taking the matter to the national court. But when we see that church councils are hold accountable to the assemblies that they represent; an appeal to the whole church through a referendum-like approach is hypothetically possible.

From our analysis of the concepts of identity, assembly, and ministry in the church orders, we have got a clearer picture about how the notion of authority is treated in Indonesian Reformed churches. In the next chapter we will try to see how the findings from all the chapters so far relate to each other.



# Chapter 5

## Theological Reflection

### The Articulation of Authority in Indonesian Reformed Churches

In the beginning of this project, we asked the question: in the churches' effort to frame power within a sound theological perspective, is there a distinct character in the polity of the Reformed churches in Indonesia? In this part, we want to provide a theological reflection corresponding to the chapters of our discussion, and then followed by a theological reflection on the matter as a whole, focusing on the distinct characteristics that we have found in this project.

#### Features of Reformed Polity

We have identified Reformed polity in general as having three features that are inter-related: 1) Hermeneutical tension between tradition and context, 2) Dialogue, and 3) Accountability. Because of such features, authority in Reformed polity can be characterized as context-relevant, relational, and accountable.

What do we mean by context-relevant? Reformed polity is grounding its authority on scriptural authority. Reformed polity is living out its scriptural obedience in a hermeneutical tension between tradition and context. In its obedience to the authority of Scripture, Reformed polity tends to be responsive toward contextual challenges rather than conforming to tradition. This inclination towards context in its turn has given and will again give birth to a new 'tradition'. Along with the changing context of the church, this process will repeat itself. Contextual relevance has become a characteristic feature of Reformed polity. In this model, the source of authority cannot be found rigidly embedded in ecclesiastical tradition, but it is found in the dynamic hermeneutical process of responding to context.

What do we mean by relational? In Reformed polity, the diverse and complex nature of the church is being dealt with carefully through constant dialogue between the layers of the church. This constant dialogue is a consequence of the

ever-present longing to avoid the church from becoming hierarchical on the one hand, and from becoming independentist on the other hand. This process does not necessarily lead to uniformity, rather it is a manifestation of the church's strong desire for unity through the act of discerning together. In this emphasis on dialogue in the church, authority becomes something that is being found through the reception of common discernment processes.

And what do we mean by accountable? In Reformed polity, authority is always balanced with something in order to make it accountable. There are always checks and balances in the way authority is presented in Reformed polity. This is to express the non-hierarchical nature of the relationship between church members and officebearers, and also between the wider and narrower councils of the church.

These three are characteristics of authority articulation that we can derive from the general features of Reformed polity. In other words, they are still very conceptual, and not yet describing the distinct situation in an Indonesian Reformed churches context.

### **Historical and Cultural Background of Indonesian Reformed Churches**

In chapter 3, we try to give a general historical and cultural background to the Reformed churches in Indonesia. Church-historically speaking, we learned that Reformed churches in Indonesia have relatively weak ties with their traditional ecclesiastical identity. Tradition-wise, GKS is historically *gereformeerd*, which had a strong focus on the congregation rather than on the synod, GMIT is historically *hervormd*, which had a strong focus on the synod rather than on the congregations, as well as strong ties with civil authorities, and a more centralistic attitude. GKI is somewhat a combination of both. And sure enough, we can still see some traces of those traditional identities in these churches, although they are not dominant. Rather, we can see a creative mixture of these different traditions in the present Reformed churches in Indonesia.

One reason for this is related to historical backgrounds. Because many agencies have been involved in shaping the Indonesian churches, in the end there is no single model of church identity that has got a dominant influence. Another explanation we may suggest for this weak relationship to tradition is because the church, in its history, has always been in a context-driven adaptation in order to survive. This historical influence that is working in the background of Indonesian churches, provides a kind of flexibility in terms of responding to their context rather than strict conformity to church tradition. For many, if not all Indonesian churches, the key word has always been survival, and not preservation. And from this perspective we can also explain the Indonesian churches'

tendency to be more hierarchical, even though that would mean they would break with church tradition or a legacy of being anti-hierarchical: it is because they had to do so as a response to the complexity of Indonesia's plurality.

Diversity, in many respects, is characteristic of the Indonesian context. Therefore, from an Indonesian cultural perspective, it would be impossible to describe the whole complexity of Indonesian cultural diversity into a single model. But to treat the different cultural aspects for each of the three sample churches individually would not be a viable option either. Therefore, we benefited from a cultural model about Indonesia that we described as 'Pancasila mentality'. This mentality is distinctly Indonesian 'hive mind', and key terms such as *Pancasila* and *musyawarah* are often explicitly expressed in their polity (cf. Surjanegara, 2008, 47). This mentality is expressed through the paradigm of the 'neither-nor' approach, the act of *gotong royong*, and *musyawarah untuk mufakat*. The 'neither-nor' paradigm is the approach with which Indonesian people neither fully accept, nor fully reject external influences, but rather formulate creative compromises where all is embraced and transformed into something new. It is with this approach that the act of decision-making through common discerning, or *musyawarah untuk mufakat* is done. This 'neither-nor' approach provides non-rigid obedience to tradition, while at the same time being open to appreciate new contextual changes, without disregarding the one, or idolizing the other. In *musyawarah* and *gotong-royong* (i.e.: a traditional form of cooperation) we see a demand for high level participation and interaction from community members, as an expression of unity in harmony.

In this 'Pancasila mentality' we can see a high degree of compatibility with the three power-related features in Reformed polity. The 'neither-nor' approach complements well with the openness to context, *musyawarah* and *gotong-royong* with dialogue and accountability. Does this compatibility make it easier for Indonesians to accept Reformed church polity? That is not necessarily the case, because the compatibility lies in the features (process models) of Reformed polity and not in the 'end-product' of Reformed polity. The common ground here is that they all resonate in the same theme of unity: For Indonesian people, it is their unity as being Indonesia amidst its vast diversity; and for Reformed polity, it is their unity as being obedient to the scripture amidst its rich hermeneutical differences.

What we can see from this historical and cultural background, even though in its generalized form, there is a kind of synchronicity between the churches' movement historically and culturally that is centered on the notion of unity. When this desire for unity is translated into polity, then we have to realize that the true value of the 'end-product' of polity does not lie in the academical-

theoretical aspect of it, but in how it may promote and protect church unity. Authority is assigned as a mean to promote and protect this idea(1) of unity.

### **Church Order Analyses**

In Chapter 4 we analyzed how Reformed churches in Indonesia articulate authority in their church orders. In relation with the features of Reformed polity, we can see a parallel between *contextual inclination* with a church's self-understanding (identity), *dialogue* with how that self-understanding takes shape in real life (assembly), and *accountability* with how a church expresses itself into concrete actions (ministry). Focusing on these concepts of identity, assembly, and ministry, provides us with concrete objects for comparison with the findings from our previous chapters.

#### Concept of Identity

Reformed identity is often related to adherence to a particular set of traditions. Hence the critics that try to contrast being Reformed with being ecumenical as two opposing modes of being. Take this opinion for example (cf. Bagchi & Steinmetz, 2004, pp. 2-3):

Modern Reformation theology ... is it also ecumenical? The term is unsatisfactory in several ways, partly because it presupposes Christian belief on the part of present-day scholars of Reformation theology, partly because a strong tendency among ecumenically minded Christians is to minimize the importance of the Reformation and of confessional differences. The latter tend to regard the Reformation as an embarrassing relative who insists on producing snapshots of oneself as an infant, just when one is trying one's best to be grown up. It could even be said that, while in the 1970s and 1980s the severest critics of a theological approach to the Reformation were often social historians with no personal Christian sympathies, its greatest enemies today can be found among Christian ecumenists.

Where do we see the position of Indonesian Reformed churches in this contrast? Can the Indonesian churches still call themselves Reformed, when their direction and tendencies seem to be more ecumenical instead, because of this strong desire for unity? I believe this kind of dichotomy between Reformed and ecumenical was born out of a different context. In the soil of the Indonesian context, the seeds and roots of Reformed heritage gave growth to ecumenically inclined churches.



In analyzing the concept of identity, we wanted to see the polity's inclination, whether more toward tradition or toward context. We have found in the church orders traces of both traditional identity and contextual identity. Traditional identities are accepted, but not without being understood in light of the current contextual challenges. And contextual identities are understood in relationship with their traditional background. We see a 'neither-nor' approach in the way the churches define their identity as Reformed churches in Indonesia.

One consequence from this 'neither-nor' approach can also be seen in the way the church orders treat the relationship between denominational identity and church unity. In the church orders we can see clearly how the churches are always trying to relate their identity to this dynamic between being a particular denomination and being a part of the wider church communion. This approach may resonate with the context of plurality that is evident in Indonesia as a nation, and in the churches. Being Indonesia as an identity means to always live in this tension between particularity and commonality: between being an island and an archipelago, between being a member of a tribe and an Indonesian national. Correspondingly, this approach in describing church identity may have contributed to a better adaptability of Indonesian churches to ecumenical identity.

In our analysis we have also seen traces of the role of academic ecumenical theology (and certainly also ecumenical theologians) in helping the churches to express this 'hive mind' like a desire for unity. As seen from the striking similarities between the three church orders, whether in the way the church orders are structured, or even in the formulations of some articles, it seems that academic ecumenical theology, through ecumenical theological seminaries, has provided that 'neither-nor' space for the churches in expressing their identity. Relating back to the opinion that contrasted between Reformed and ecumenical, here in the Indonesian context we actually get an example where ecumenical theology provided space and integrity for the Reformed diverse heritage in Indonesia. The way the Indonesian cultural context influenced the employment of ecumenical theology, as the way to express their Reformed identity is a strong characteristic of Reformed churches in Indonesia.

#### Concept of Assembly

In analyzing the concept of assembly, we wanted to see the polity's inclination, whether more toward being centralized and hierarchical, or toward being decentralized and egalitarian. We have found that the church orders are using the 'neither-nor' approach in their formulation regarding this tension. However, despite their language of being neither hierarchical nor independentist, we see a

tendency of the assemblies to be centralized through a church 'master plan'. Using notions such as the church's vision and mission statement, the synod general policy, or the synod development strategy and policy, we find a kind of hierarchy and centralization.

This hierarchy and centralization through a church 'master plan' can be explained as the way the churches try to manifest their unity (cf. Surjanegara in Koffeman and Smit, 2014, 67). It is not intended as a way to 'lord it over' the narrower assemblies, but it is about being united in life and ministry as a church. There is this desire for unity being manifested through denominational identity. However, as a consequence, that resulted in a tendency to put a stronger emphasis on the role of the synod in comparison with that of the congregation. We can make a comparison with the history of Reformed churches in the West, which at a certain point in their history have attributed high importance to the authority of local congregations due to their contextual challenge. In the Indonesian context, the threat of independentism is more urgent, and it is dealt with through compromise, by emphasizing unity through a church's 'master plan'.

Through such 'master plan', the high participation level from different assemblies of the church can be directed more effectively. The assemblies can be orchestrated neatly and tidily into harmony. But focusing on being neat and tidy assemblies using a 'master plan' also has its risk. As the 'master plan' becomes the center of attention for the assemblies, church meetings tend to become an organizational function rather than being an expression of communion; meeting agendas can be filled with dialogue regarding organizational matters rather than stimulating a genuine – and sometimes messy – encounter between the different layers of the church, and leadership functions more as project programming than as spiritual leadership. What is at stake here is when an uncritical desire for unity in the end disincentivizes genuine *dialogue* in the church, and when the long and sometimes painful process of achieving harmony is simply substituted with organizational obedience. This emphasis on following an organizational 'liturgy' sadly seems to be another characteristic we found in the church orders.

### Concept of Ministry

In analyzing the concept of ministry, we wanted to see the polity's inclination, whether more toward the church member or toward the church officebearer. We have seen that in the church orders, the concept of ministry is mostly concerned with inward ministry, which is ministry that is directed to the church. We see strict guidelines being given as measures for the accountability of the church's ministry. And correspondingly, with a higher level of authority for ministry

being given to officebearers, there are higher measures for accountability given to them as well. However, we can see a hint of the polity's tendency to put more emphasis on the ministry of the officebearers than on that of non-officebearers, as can be seen from the lack of provisions regarding the right for review and appeal in the church orders.

In general, in the church orders we can distinguish between accountability with regard to moral integrity, academic competence, and organizational obedience. However, as the officebearers are also members of church councils, we see also the impact of the organizational emphasis found in the assemblies in the way the offices carry out ministry. Many of the dialogues happening in church meetings will have to do with program accountability, i.e., with planning, execution, reporting, and evaluating the programs of the church. There are provisions made with regard to moral integrity and academic competence, but they are very few in comparison with the provisions regarding organizational accountability. Perhaps, this is an unintentional effect of the constant demand of balancing ministry authority; in giving emphasis to the organizational aspects of ministry, churches can find easier and more concrete ways of providing accountability. But the deeper question we can ask here is, to be accountable to whom? In church life, the concept of accountability is not only between humans; between an offender and his/her victim, or between a minister and his/her congregation, but first of all we are accountable to God (cf. Koffeman, unpublished, 12). This emphasis on organizational accountability also has another side effect, that it does not provide enough thrust for outward ministry, because there is no provision for accountability that can contain authority beyond the borders of the church institution. So, this is another characteristic that we found: in these church orders the notion of accountability is treated more in the sense of organizational accountability.

### **Concluding Reflection**

How then can we connect the pieces we have discovered so far? Firstly, we can see a dialectic interplay between the features of Reformed polity, the background of the Reformed churches in Indonesia, and the way they formulate their polity.

The three features of Reformed polity are: hermeneutical inclination towards context, dialogue, and accountability. Together with the Indonesian cultural context they created these fascinating dialectic interplays. Within the 'neither-nor' paradigm, the hermeneutical tension between tradition and context resulted in creative compromises that explain the ecumenical characteristic of Reformed churches in Indonesia. Within the framework of *gotong royong* and *musya-*

*warah*, the dialogue between the layers of the church is expressed as unity through the church's common 'master plan'. There may not be enough direct connections between the accountability features found in the church orders and the historical and cultural background of the Indonesian churches. However, we can see an indirect relationship in the way accountability is described. In the church orders, accountability is described in three types, which are: moral integrity, academic competence, and organizational obedience. Each of these different accountability type corresponds to the cultural contexts: 1) requirements for moral integrity are closely related to the 'neither-nor' approach in translating scriptural obedience into practice in context, and 2) the academic competence required to carry out that context-relevant hermeneutic, and 3) organizational obedience with *gotong royong* and *musyawarah*.

Secondly, we see that 'unity' has become a very authoritative notion that relates to scriptural obedience in carrying out the churches' life and ministry. From the church orders analyses, we may conclude that the churches view their identity with a strong desire for unity, assembled through hierarchical and centralistic structures, and ministry conducted with the emphasis on organizational accountability. This can be considered as the distinct character of articulating authority in the polity of Reformed churches in Indonesia. However, the next question will be, is it theologically sound? We might ask the question what kind of unity the churches are actually nurturing, when the emphasis is on organization and the method is through hierarchy and centralization? Does it not treat unity more as a 'routine internal church maintenance' rather than as an endeavor of encountering others in *koinonia*? The churches sort of take for granted the unity that they so enthusiastically talk about.

The unity that the church seeks, should it not be one that recognizes and acknowledges different voices and dissenting opinions? This seems to be lost in the church orders' emphasis on organizational obedience. The hierarchy and centralization tendency, being justified by the desire for unity, could in turn be a perfect disguise for 'lording it over'. Because even if unity is the ideal, and hierarchy and centralization are simply the means to achieve it, it may very easily result in the opposite, where hierarchy and centralization becomes the ideal, and the language of unity becomes the means to achieve it. It is interesting, that while no single model of church tradition has got a dominant influence in the Indonesian churches, the present-day portraits of these churches have a similar characteristic with regard to hierarchy and centralization. The churches do not have enough awareness about the threat of hierarchy and centralization in their church orders. The Indonesian context of diversity naturally nurtures Indonesian minds to be aware of the threat of separation, of each going about one's own

way. Some might consider this hierarchical and centralistic model in the church to be the creative compromise that is needed in order to safeguard unity. So, to be aware of hierarchy and centralistic tendencies still needs to be developed, lest manipulation can lead the church to using the language of unity to camouflage corrupt political practices. Hierarchy and centralization may have been a creative compromise that answered to the contextual challenge of the previous age in the Indonesian context. However, it may have been taken for granted for too long and may no longer be adequate to the challenges that Reformed churches in Indonesia are facing today. The churches' ideal of unity should no longer be attained through hierarchy and centralization, but through better appreciation toward differences of opinion, and the polity's ability to recognize and acknowledge them in the life of the church.

Thirdly, we can see how theological ideal and Indonesian cultural ideal of unity relate in a very reciprocal manner. And they find the most theologically accountable and culturally compatible explanation for this unity in academic ecumenical theology. However, in its implementation, we see that the churches understand this unity as concretely manifested through organizational unity. As churches, we should be aware of the limitations and pitfalls of an organization. Thus, the challenge for the Reformed churches in Indonesia then is to find other expressions of unity beyond their organizational borders. A kind of unity that embraces the mystery of Jesus' divinity as much as it does Jesus' body.

Referring back to the question in the beginning of this research: What makes Reformed polity in Indonesia authoritative in the eyes of its beholder? The answer is related to our findings regarding the distinct characteristic of Reformed polity in Indonesia. Reformed churches in Indonesia identify themselves as having a strong desire for unity, they are assembled through hierarchical and centralistic structures, and they conduct ministry with an emphasis on organizational accountability. So, the answer can be put in this way: it is its scriptural obedience through ecumenical credibility and organizational integrity. This is what we have found to be the character of Reformed polity in Indonesia today. And we hope, this is only an 'on the way' process. Because as the churches embrace more and more of ecumenical theology, usually there will be less emphasis given to hierarchy, centralization, and organizational integrity. On this note, we may hope that global ecumenical theology will give inspiration to our theology of church organization, and not the other way around.



# Summary

## Power in Reformed Polity: The Articulation of Authority in Indonesian Reformed Churches

This research project is an attempt to describe the characteristic features of Indonesian Reformed churches' polity, especially in how they articulate the notion of authority. We take three churches representing three different wombs of Reformed churches in Indonesia, which are: Gereja Masehi Injili di Timor (GMIT) representing churches stemming from the *Indische Kerk* tradition, Gereja Kristen Sumba (GKS) representing churches stemming from the missionary bodies, and Gereja Kristen Indonesia (GKI) representing churches stemming from local initiatives.

We start with constructing the characteristic features of Reformed polity in general, which are based on the churches' obedience to the authority of the scripture. The features here, are not static truth propositions, but rather process models, which are: 1) Hermeneutical tension between tradition and context, 2) Dialogue between the layers of the church, 3) Accountability. From here we see that Reformed polity's articulation of authority will be characterized by it being: context-relevant, relational, and accountable. Context-relevant means that the source for authority cannot be found rigidly embedded in ecclesiastical traditions only, but also found in the dynamic hermeneutical process of responding to context. Relational means that authority is found through the reception of common discernment process happening in the church. Accountable means that authority is always balanced with responsibility.

We then go to describe the historical background of the sample churches and the cultural context of Indonesia. From the historical formation, we see that the churches have relatively weak ties with their traditional ecclesiastical identity. As a matter of fact, throughout their history, Reformed churches in Indonesia were governed in a very hierarchical manner due to the colonialist nature of the political circumstances of Indonesia at that time. Furthermore, the churches

have never really paid attention for matters regarding church polity. However, we can still see some of the traditional Reformed influences in the present churches, even though they are not dominant. What we see instead are creative mixtures of the different traditions in the present Reformed churches in Indonesia, resulting from their context-driven adaptations in order to survive.

From the cultural context of Indonesia, we see the churches are embracing a strong desire for unity in harmony, which is a very important concept for Indonesian society amidst its obvious diversity. This spirit of unity is expressed through: 1) the paradigm of 'neither-nor' approach, which is a mental attitude of neither fully rejecting nor fully accepting something, but rather creating a creative compromise where all is embraced and transformed into something new and acceptable to all; 2) *musyawarah untuk mufakat*, which is a model for decision-making and problem-resolving where common discernment to achieve consensus becomes the norm – rather than voting; 3) *gotong-royong*, which is a traditional form of cooperation that demands high level participation and interaction from community members. We call this mental attitude in Indonesian society with the term 'Pancasila mentality'. We can see from here, there are already some resonances between the general characteristic features in Reformed polity and the cultural context of Indonesia.

The next step that we do is analyzing the polity of the Indonesian Reformed churches, particularly as reflected in their church orders. A church order is the most comprehensive official document regarding a church's polity. Therefore, we will give focus to some of the main aspects of church polity that would articulate power, which are: identity, assembly, and ministry. Identity is the self-understanding of a church, while assembly is how that self-understanding takes shape in real life, and ministry is how that being expresses itself into action. And we can also see that these are the aspects that most directly relate to the features of reformed polity.

In analyzing the churches' concept of identity, we focus our reading in the church orders ecclesiological description, which are mostly found in the preamble to the constitution, and its explanation. Identity is not a static notion, although it may start from a certain point of departure that has been internalized within a community, but it will also be redefined as a result of the community's response to external influences. We relate this analysis to the Reformed feature of hermeneutical tension between tradition and context. In doing so, we try to see the polity's inclination, whether more toward the churches' traditional identity or their contextual identity. We found traces of traditional identities, and we also found traces of emerging contextual identities within the churches. In the church orders, we see that all the churches are accepting their traditional Re-



formed heritage identities, but not without reconstructing them in light of their current contextual challenges. GKS has a strong emphasis on its Sumba identity, GKI gives emphasis more using its Indonesian national identity, and GMIT gives emphasis on the plurality of tribal identities in Timor as one family. Despite the churches' obvious cultural differences, they are all in the process of defining their contextual identity using the 'neither-nor' approach and the template of ecumenical theology, rather than rigidly observing their traditional identities.

In analyzing the concept of assembly, we also want to see the polity's inclination whether toward being more centralized and hierarchical, or toward being decentralized and egalitarian. This inclination can determine the model of dialogue that is happening within the church, which is another feature in Reformed polity. We give focus to church order articles that describe church assemblies, councils, and meetings. From our analysis, we conclude that in general the churches are more inclined toward being centralized and hierarchical through their strategy of aligning the church using a kind of master plan. Using notions such as the synod's vision and mission statement, general policy, development strategy and policy, we find a different kind of hierarchy and centralization. However, in the churches we also find that this kind of hierarchy and centralization is understood as necessary in order to maintain the organizational unity of the church. Hierarchy and centralization do not refer to the nature of the different assemblies that constitute the church, but as a way to orchestrate harmonious dialogue between the assemblies of the church. In the Indonesian context of plurality, where threats of independentism are considered to be more urgent than hierarchy, this approach became a compromise that tries to preserve the church's unity. However, we should treat this approach to preserving unity through hierarchy and centralization more critically and with caution. Because even if unity is the ideal, and hierarchy and centralization are simply the means to achieve it, it may very easily result in the opposite, where hierarchy and centralization becomes the ideal, and the language of unity becomes the means to achieve it.

The analysis of the concept of ministry is related to the Reformed feature of accountability. Here we can analyze whether authority in the churches is inclined more toward the church member or toward the church officebearer. We focus our reading to church order articles regarding ministry, office, discipline, and the right to review and appeal, in order to determine the polity's inclination. We find that the church orders speak about ministry more as an inward organizational ministry, rather than outward ministry. Thus, the church orders are giving higher authority to church officebearer rather than the rest of the church

members when they speak about ministry. This higher level of authorization is then balanced by attributing higher degree of responsibility to the offices. This balancing act between authority and responsibility is expressed through employing a stricter requirement in moral integrity, academic competence, and organizational obedience. However, we can still see this emphasis on the importance of church officebearer in the ministry of the church from the lack of provision regarding the church member's right to ask for review and appeal in the church orders.

From the comparison between the features of Reformed polity, the church historical and cultural background, and the church order analyses, we then see how Reformed churches in Indonesia articulate power in their polity. The most visible finding here is the prevalence of this ideal for unity in the churches, which characterize the way they develop their polity. In Indonesian Reformed churches, the ideal of unity becomes a very authoritative notion, and it became a strong meeting point between theological ideal and the nation's cultural ideal. This may explain why ecumenical theology became very appealing for Indonesian churches, because it provides the most theologically accountable and culturally compatible explanation for this desire for unity. Another finding in that respect, we see that the Indonesian churches tend to place an emphasis on organizational unity in living out their unity.

In conclusion, this research shows us that Reformed churches in Indonesia identify themselves as having a strong desire for unity, they are assembled through hierarchical and centralistic structures, and they conduct ministry with an emphasis on organizational accountability. In the polity of Indonesian Reformed churches, authority is articulated by emphasizing church unity through the language of ecumenical credibility and organizational integrity.

**Samenvatting**

**Macht in gereformeerd kerkrecht:  
Hoe gezag  
in Indonesische Gereformeerde Kerken  
aan de orde is**

Dit onderzoeksproject is een poging om de karakteristieke kenmerken van het kerkrecht van Indonesische gereformeerde kerken te beschrijven, met name op het punt van hoe zij de notie ‘gezag’ tot uitdrukking brengen. We kiezen drie kerken die drie verschillende historische achtergronden van gereformeerde kerken in Indonesië representeren, nl: de Gereja Masehi Injili di Timor (GMIT) die kerken vertegenwoordigt die stammen uit de traditie van de Indische Kerk, de Gereja Kristen Sumba (GKS) die kerken vertegenwoordigt die teruggaan op het werk van zendingsorganisaties, en de Gereja Kristen Indonesia (GKI) die kerken vertegenwoordigt die wortelen in lokale initiatieven.

Om te beginnen construeren we de karakteristieke kenmerken van gereformeerd kerkrecht in het algemeen, die gebaseerd zijn op de gehoorzaamheid van deze kerken aan het gezag van de Schrift. Deze kenmerken zijn hier geen statische waarheidsproposities, maar veeleer procesmodellen, en wel: 1) de hermeneutische spanning tussen traditie en context, 2) de dialoog tussen de verschillende lagen in de kerk, en 3) verantwoording. Daaruit zien we dat de articulatie van gezag in gereformeerd kerkrecht als volgt gekarakteriseerd kan worden: het is relevant voor de context, relationeel en bereid tot verantwoording.

Relevant voor de context wil zeggen dat de bron voor gezag niet gevonden kan worden als louter en rigide ingebed in kerkelijke tradities, maar dat deze ook gevonden wordt in het dynamische hermeneutische proces waarin ingegaan wordt op de context. Relationeel wil zeggen dat gezag gevonden wordt in de receptie van een proces van gemeenschappelijke onderscheiding dat plaatsvindt

in de kerk. De bereidheid tot verantwoording impliceert dat gezag altijd in evenwicht dient te zijn met verantwoordelijkheid.

Vervolgens beschrijven we de historische achtergrond van de gekozen kerken en de culturele context van Indonesië. Het historische wordingsproces laat ons zien dat de kerken betrekkelijk zwakke banden hebben met hun traditionele kerkelijke identiteit. In feite werden gereformeerde kerken in Indonesië door heel hun geschiedenis op een heel hiërarchische manier bestuurd, dankzij het kolonialistische karakter van de politieke omstandigheden in Indonesië in die tijd. Voorts hebben de kerken nooit echt aandacht besteed aan zaken die het kerkrecht betreffen. Toch kunnen we in de kerken van nu nog enkele traditionele gereformeerde invloeden ontdekken, ook al zijn die niet dominant. In plaats daarvan zien we creatieve mengsels van verschillende tradities in de hedendaagse gereformeerde kerken in Indonesië, die voortkomen uit aanpassingen die vanwege de context noodzakelijk zijn om te kunnen overleven.

Wat de culturele context van Indonesië betreft zien we dat de kerken hartelijk kiezen voor de sterk verlangen naar eenheid in verscheidenheid, wat voor de Indonesische samenleving een heel belangrijk concept is in het kader van de sterk zichtbare verscheidenheid. Deze geest van eenheid komt tot uitdrukking in: 1) het paradigma van een ‘noch-noch’ benadering, dat wil zeggen een mentale houding waarin iets noch volledig wordt verworpen noch volledig wordt geaccepteerd, maar waarin veeleer een creatief compromis wordt gecreëerd waarin alles positief wordt opgenomen en omgevormd tot iets nieuws dat voor allen aanvaardbaar is; 2) *musyawarah untuk mufakat*, wat staat voor een model van besluitvorming en probleemoplossing waarin – liever dan een stemming – gemeenschappelijke onderscheiding om consensus te bereiken de norm is; 3) *gotong-royong*, een traditionele vorm van samenwerking die van de leden van een gemeenschap een hoge graad van participatie en interactie vraagt. We duiden deze mentale houding in de Indonesische samenleving aan met de term ‘Pancasila-mentaliteit’. Hieruit zien we al dat er enige resonantie is tussen de karakteristieke kenmerken van gereformeerd kerkrecht in het algemeen en de culturele context van Indonesië.

De volgende stap die wij zetten betreft het analyseren van het kerkrecht van de Indonesische gereformeerde kerken, in het bijzonder zoals die in hun kerkordes tot uitdrukking komt. Een kerkorde is het meest omvattende officiële document met betrekking tot het kerkrecht van een kerk. We zullen ons daarom concentreren op enkele van de belangrijkste aspecten van kerkrecht waarin macht gearticuleerd wordt, namelijk: identiteit, kerkelijke vergaderingen en

ambt. Identiteit is de wijze waarop een kerk zichzelf verstaat, terwijl de kerkelijke vergadering de vorm is waarin dat zelfverstaan vorm krijgt in het leven en ambt de wijze betreft waarop dit alles uitwerkt. Het valt ook in te zien dat dit de aspecten die die het meest direct gerelateerd zijn aan de kenmerken van gereformeerd kerkrecht.

Bij het analyseren van het identiteitsconcept van de kerken focussen we ons in onze lezing op de ecclesiologische beschrijvingen in de kerkordes; meestal zijn die te vinden in de preambule bij de kerkorde, en in de uitleg daarvan. Identiteit is geen statische notie, al kan het zijn vertrekpunt nemen in iets dat binnen een gemeenschap geïnternaliseerd is, maar het zal ook gedefinieerd worden als resultaat van de wijze waarop de gemeenschap omgaat met externe invloeden. We relateren deze analyse aan het gereformeerde kenmerk van de hermeneutische spanning tussen traditie en context. Op die manier proberen we ons er een beeld van te vormen of het kerkrecht meer neigt naar de traditionele identiteit van de kerken of juist naar hun contextuele identiteit. In de kerken vonden we sporen van traditionele identiteiten, maar ook sporen van opkomende contextuele identiteiten. We zien in de kerkordes dat alle kerken de identiteit aanvaarden die samenhangt met hun traditionele gereformeerde erfgoed, maar niet zonder dat ze die reconstrueren in het licht van actuele contextuele uitdagingen. De GKS legt sterk de nadruk op haar Sumbanese identiteit, de GKI meer op haar Indonesische nationale identiteit, en de GMIT benadrukt vooral de pluraliteit van tribale identiteiten op Timor als één familie.

Ondanks de evidente culturele verschillen tussen de kerken zijn ze alle bezig in een proces van het definiëren van hun contextuele identiteit, door gebruik te maken van de ‘noch-noch’ benadering en van het sjabloon van de oecumenische theologie, liever dan op een rigide wijze hun traditionele identiteiten in het oog te houden.

Bij het analyseren van het concept van de kerkelijke vergadering willen we ook zien of het kerkrecht er eerder toe neigt gecentraliseerd en hiërarchisch te zijn, of juist om gedecentraliseerd en egalitair te zijn. Deze neiging kan bepalend zijn voor het model waarnaar de dialoog in de kerk plaatsvindt, wat staat voor een ander kenmerk van gereformeerd kerkrecht. We focussen op kerkorde-artikelen die kerkelijke vergaderingen, raden en andere vormen van ontmoeting beschrijven. Uit onze analyse concluderen we dat de kerken in het algemeen meer geneigd zijn gecentraliseerd en hiërarchisch te zijn, door hun strategie om de kerk op één lijn te brengen met gebruikmaking van een soort ‘masterplan’. Door gebruik te maken van noties als het visie en missie document van een synode, algemeen beleid, en ontwikkelingsstrategie en -beleid vinden we een ander soort hiërarchie en centralisatie. Echter, we zien ook

dat deze vorm van hiërarchie en centralisatie in de kerken noodzakelijk wordt gevonden om de organisatorische eenheid van de kerk overeind te houden. Hiërarchie en centralisatie zijn niet bepalend voor de aard van de verschillende kerkelijke vergadering als zodanig, maar staan voor een manier om de harmonieuze dialoog tussen de kerkelijke vergaderingen in de kerk te orkestreren. In de Indonesische context van pluraliteit, waarin risico's van independentisme als meer urgent worden beschouwd dan dat van hiërarchie werd deze benadering een compromis dat beoogt de eenheid van de kerk te bewaren. Niettemin dienen we deze benadering in het bewaren van de eenheid door hiërarchie en centralisatie kritischer en met voorzichtigheid te benaderen. Want ook al is eenheid het ideaal en zijn hiërarchie en centralisatie eenvoudigweg middelen om haar te bereiken, dit alles kan heel makkelijk uitlopen op het omgekeerde: hiërarchie en centralisatie worden dan het ideaal, en het spreken over eenheid het middel om dat te bereiken.

De analyse van het ambtsconcept is gerelateerd aan het gereformeerde kenmerk van de verantwoording. Hier kunnen we onderzoeken of gezag in de kerken meer neigt in de richting van het kerklid of in die van de kerkelijke ambtsdragers. We concentreren ons in onze lezing op kerkordeartikelen inzake het ambt c.q. de ambten, de tucht en het recht van revisie en appel, om zo vast te stellen in welke richting het kerkrecht neigt. We stellen vast dat de kerkordes over het ambt eerder spreken als een interne organisatorische dienst dan als een naar buiten gerichte dienst. De kerkordes kennen, als zij spreken over het ambt, aan de kerkelijke ambtsdragers dus meer gezag toe dan aan de overige leden van de kerk. Dit hogere gezagsniveau wordt dan in evenwicht gebracht door aan de ambten een hogere graad van verantwoordelijkheid toe te kennen. Dit balanceren tussen gezag en verantwoordelijkheid komt tot uitdrukking in het hanteren van striktere eisen ten aanzien van morele integriteit, academische competentie en organisatorische gehoorzaamheid. Toch kunnen we deze nadruk op het belang van de kerkelijke ambtsdragers in het kerkelijk dienstwerk nog altijd terugzien in het ontbreken van kerkordelijke voorzieningen waarin het recht van de kerkleden vastligt om te vragen om revisie of appel.

De vergelijking tussen de kenmerken van gereformeerd kerkrecht, de historische en culturele achtergrond van de kerken en de analyses van de kerkordes laat ons zien hoe gereformeerde kerken in Indonesië in hun kerkrecht gezag articuleren. De meest zichtbare uitkomst is hier het prevaleren van het eenheidsideaal van de kerken, dat de manier waarop zij kerkrecht verder ontwikkelen bepaalt. In Indonesische gereformeerde kerken wordt het eenheidsideaal een heel gezagsvolle notie, en het is een sterk ontmoetingspunt geworden van theologische idealen enerzijds en culturele idealen van de natie

anderzijds. Dit kan ook verklaren waarom de oecumenische theologie een grote aantrekkingskracht heeft gekregen voor Indonesische kerken, namelijk omdat het de theologisch meest verantwoorde en cultureel meest passende onderbouwing geeft aan dit verlangen naar eenheid. In dit opzicht vinden we voorts dat de Indonesische kerken ertoe neigen de nadruk te leggen op organisatorische eenheid bij het beleven van hun eenheid.

Bij wijze van conclusie laat dit onderzoek ons zien dat gereformeerde kerken in Indonesië zichzelf zien als bepaald door een sterk verlangen naar eenheid, dat zij samen zijn door middel van hiërarchische en gecentraliseerde structuren, en dat zij hun dienstwerk doen met een nadruk op organisatorische verantwoording. In het beleid van Indonesische kerken wordt gezag gearticuleerd door de nadruk te leggen op kerkelijke eenheid, door gebruik te maken van de taal van oecumenische geloofwaardigheid en organisatorische integriteit.





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## Curriculum Vitae

Roy Alexander Surjanegara was born in Jakarta, Indonesia on 22 May 1979. He attended Jakarta Theological Seminary in 1997 and graduated in 2002. In 2005 he was ordained as a minister in Gereja Kristen Indonesia congregation in Tanggamus, Lampung. From 2007 to 2008 he studied Church Polity at the Protestant Theological University in Kampen with a special interest in Ecumenical theology. In 2009 he was inducted as a minister in GKI congregation in Bandung. From 2009 to 2018 he was involved in the Emancipatory Partnership program between PKN and Indonesian churches as secretary to the Steering Committee. In 2012 he started his doctoral research at the Protestant Theological University in Amsterdam, titled: *Power in Reformed Polity – The Articulation of Authority in Indonesian Reformed Churches*. Currently Roy is serving as a minister in Gereja Kristen Indonesia Perth – an Indonesian congregation within the Uniting Church in Australia.



# **Appendix**

## **Church Order texts translated**





## **Appendix A - The Church Order of Gereja Kristen Sumba 2006**

The church order of GKS is a compilation of three separate documents:

1. Tata Dasar GKS /*Constitution of GKS*, preceded by a preamble
2. Regulations
3. Explanation; explaining the preamble, the constitution, and the regulations.

### **Appendix A.1 - Pembukaan /*Preamble (Pre)***

1. Trusting in God's revelation as witnessed to in The Old Testament and The New Testament, the Gereja Kristen Sumba believes that God has brought his Kingdom as an expression of his glorious love in and to the world. That act reached its peak in God's liberation work in the great act of the Lord Jesus Christ that saved the world through his death and resurrection.
2. The kingdom that has come and is coming will reach its fullness and perfection when the Lord Jesus comes again to judge the world.
3. Through the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit, Jesus entrusted the liberation work to the Church, which is the communion of the believers.
4. The apostolic mandate is given to the Church, to make visible the signs of God's Kingdom in the realm of history. In obedience and loyalty to this mandate, the Church continuously proclaims and manifests God's loving grace along the course of world's history until the end of time.
5. God's love through Jesus Christ never changes, whether yesterday, today, or in the future. And in fact, by his never changing love, God makes changes for the good and the welfare of humanity in history. He leads and directs those changes. The Church as the executor of this apostolic mandate then should become the subject of change, and not be strayed or swept by the changes happening.
6. Believing that God through Jesus Christ is continuously giving his apostolic mandate to the Church at all times and places, Gereja Kristen Sumba that is founded on 15 January 1947 as the fruit of missionary work from the Nederlands Gereformeerde Zendings Vereniging (NGZV) and the Zending van de Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland (ZGKN), believes that it also received the same apostolic mandate to manifest the signs of God's Kingdom in the society and nation of Indonesia, and specifically in the island of Sumba.
7. Based on that belief also, Gereja Kristen Sumba realizes and confesses that Gereja Kristen Sumba is the manifestation of the body of Jesus Christ, in the Communion of Churches in Indonesia, and with every Church that confesses Jesus Christ as the Lord and Savior of the world.
8. In the course of Indonesian history, Gereja Kristen Sumba will experience changes and rapid developments in the field of social life, culture, economy, politic, law,

history, religion, science, and technology, as a result of the globalization process as we enter the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Facing those changes, Gereja Kristen Sumba on the one hand has to remain being the subject of change in the conviction that God himself is doing all those changes, and on the other hand must remain alert so that it will not be dragged by the many changes that do not come from God.

9. In fulfilling the apostolic mandate, Gereja Kristen Sumba governs itself, its life and ministry by under-lining these points:
  1. In preserving the holiness and purity of the life of church members, Gereja Kristen Sumba appoints people into offices, which are: elders, deacons, ministers, with the main task of caring, supervising, and equipping church members to live according to God's will.
  2. Organizationally, the shape and system of government of Gereja Kristen Sumba is presbyterial-synodical, which emphasizes on the one hand the role of the consistory (presbyterial) in the congregations, and on the other hand the togetherness (synodical) of the congregations in the ministerial territory of Gereja Kristen Sumba, as one unity in common loyalty as the body of Christ.

To govern itself, life and ministry of Gereja Kristen Sumba, the church order of Gereja Kristen Sumba is formulated, which is an improvement from the Aturan Gereja 1949, Tata Gereja tahun 1986, and Tata Gereja tahun 1998; Consisting of constitution and regulations arranged in this manner: (RAS: it then continues with the constitution).

**Appendix A.2 - Penjelasan Mukadimah/Explanation of the Preamble (EP)**

## 1. Introduction

The content of this introduction is reflecting the vision, mission, and journey direction of GKS in the future.

## 2. Creed

The opening part of a church order is more or less a *status confessionis*. It contains convictions regarding what God is doing to the world, and how the church is entrusted to minister and bear witness to the world. Therefore, we start this opening part with a conviction regarding God's revelation as witnessed to by the scripture.

## 3. The Kingdom of God as the church's vision

This church order is formulated in the framework of the fulfillment of God's Kingdom. Jesus Christ liberated the world because it is God's intention to manifest His kingdom in the realm of human history. That kingdom has arrived, but it also will arrive at its fulfillment in the future when everything is perfected. The history is progressing in this dialectic between this God's Kingdom *already* and *not yet* having arrived. This means that historical progress, however inevitable, must be put under the measures of God's kingdom. A critical attitude towards history must be applied. Jesus Christ is the bearer of God's kingdom, because He fulfilled what God's kingdom is about, which is justice, truth, peace, brotherhood, prosperity, liberation, and salvation in a sustainable ecology, with God as the center of history. This history will progress toward eschatology.

## 4. The Church as bearer of the apostolic mandate

Jesus Christ as the bearer of God's mission, entrusted that mission to the church. We use the term apostolic mandate, to remind us of the apostles' task to carry that mandate to all creation. The church can only understand this mission if the Holy Spirit is working in it. The Holy Spirit works, supports, shapes, and will always sanctify the church as a communion of believers. The Church's mission is also called a liberating work because that mission needs to show how humankind has been liberated not only from sin, but also from the many shackles of sin (compare Luke 4: 18-19). The church bears this liberating work until the end of time, because all those oppressive shackles will always remain in various forms.

## 5. God as the cause of changes

God's steadfast love is everlasting, and manifested in different ways throughout the realm of history. There are changes (progresses) in the course of human history, as we can see human culture is not static. We believe that God alone causes those changes, but humans are given the capacity to respond to the challenges these changes create. In other words, these changes are not something that is happening automatically. We need to direct these changes toward the fulfillment of God's kingdom. It can happen that some changes are caused by other 'spirits', which we can characterize by: they do not bring prosperity to humankind, but they bring destruction. Hence, we need to be alert, critical, positive, and realistic.

6. The Church as a subject of change

Since the church is mandated to keep on carrying the apostolic mandate, and because we believe that God is the cause of changes/renewal, hence the church should be a subject in this change and renewal. In other words, the church has to be proactive in initiating changes and renewal within the church, and in society. The church should not be passive or even resisting to changes, as long as the changes are for the benefit of humankind.

7. Gereja Kristen Sumba as the body of Christ

The church does not exist as an abstract entity. The church concretely exists in history. GKS as the body of Christ is living in the history of the Indonesian society, and in the Sumba context, as the fruit of missionary activity of the Zending van de Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland, but also as a part of the Communion of Churches in Indonesia (Persekutuan Gereja-gereja di Indonesia/PGI) and all the churches confessing Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

8. Gereja Kristen Sumba facing changes

We have mentioned that changes are inevitable. Changes are happening in all fields of life. GKS, in its conviction that God initiates changes, must not let these changes just happen by themselves. GKS must initiate these changes. In order to do that, GKS must be able to read the signs of time. And to be able to do that, GKS must remain in a double-discernment between God's Word, in trying to understand what is God's will for our world today (Indonesia, NTT, Sumba); and on the other hand struggling with the changes (socio-economic, politic, culture, science, technology, and others).

9. How Gereja Kristen Sumba lives out and carries the apostolic mandate

GKS needs order to be able to do that. We are aware of the limitations of a church order, that many dynamics of the Holy Spirit and the living dynamics of congregational life might not be accommodated in this church order. This should not reduce the significance of the GKS church order, because all things must be done decently and in order. The love expressions that are characteristics of God's congregations need not to be in contradiction with decency and order.

In accordance with the presbyterial-synodical principle of the GKS, the basis of ministry is in the congregation. This is where initiatives start but that does not mean that congregations can exercise full autonomy without limitations. Congregations living together as a synod would mean walking together. Therefore, congregational autonomy must be understood as an inter-related autonomy, we are bound together and depend on each other.

By agreement, we use the term church order to refer to both the constitution and the regulations.

### Appendix A.3 - Tata Dasar GKS /GKS Constitution (Const)

The constitution of GKS consists of 10 chapters, elaborated in 17 sections (Pasal)

#### Chapter 1 – Name

##### § 1 – Name

1. The communion of congregations in Sumba is called Gereja Kristen Sumba, next abbreviated as GKS.
2. The GKS name must be complemented with: “Member of the Communion of Churches in Indonesia”

#### Chapter 2 – Nature, Form, and Membership

##### § 2 – Nature

GKS is the communion of believers in Sumba who are called and baptized by Jesus Christ into one body, where Jesus becomes the head that guides and nurtures the whole body through his Word and Spirit.

##### § 3 – Form

GKS is the communion of believers as the body of Christ, which is manifested in the congregations within the ministry of GKS.

##### § 4 - Membership

Members of GKS are those who have received the sacrament of Baptism.

#### Chapter 3 – Confession, Teaching, and Principle

##### § 5 – Confession

1. Jesus Christ is Lord and Savior of the world, source of truth and life, and is the head of the Church. For no one else can place any foundation other than the one already placed, which is Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 3:11). “I am the way, truth, and life” (John 14:6).
2. GKS confesses that the Old Testament and New Testament are the Word of God.
3. Together with the Church of all ages and places, GKS accepts as its creeds:
  1. The Apostle’s Creed,
  2. The Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed
  3. The Athanasian Creed.
4. Together with other members of the Indonesian Communion of Churches, GKS accepts the Pemahaman Bersama Iman Kristen (Common Understanding of Christian Faith) in the *Dokumen Keesaan Gereja* (The ecumenical document of Indonesian churches).
5. GKS can formulate its own confession.

##### § 6 - Teachings

1. The source of GKS teaching is the Scripture.

2. GKS accepts the teaching of the Reformation in the Heidelberg Catechism.
3. GKS can formulate its own points of teaching.

#### § 7 – Principle in Community Life

In the light of § 6.3 above, GKS accepts Pancasila as the principle for living in the Indonesian society.

### Chapter 4 – Purpose, Mission, and Education

#### § 8 - Purpose

The purpose of GKS is to manifest the signs of God's Kingdom in the world through communion, witness, and ministry.

#### § 9 – Calling and Commissioning

1. To proclaim God's work through fellowship, witness, and service.
2. Every church member is obliged to partake in these works mentioned above.

#### § 10 - Education

1. GKS educates the members in order to equip and enable them according to the gifts of ministries to fulfill their calling.
2. The education is done through:
  1. Worship
  2. Proclamation of the Word
  3. Sacraments
  4. Catechesis
  5. Counseling
  6. Ministry
  7. Church visitation
  8. Ecumenical cooperation.

### Chapter 5 – Church Office and Church Workers

#### § 11 – Church Office

1. Church offices in GKS consist of:
  1. Elder
  2. Deacon
  3. Minister
2. The three offices are reflections (*pencerminan*) of Jesus' offices as King, Priest, and Prophet.
3. The function of the three offices is to serve and to equip church members.

#### § 12 – Church Worker

1. What is meant by church worker (*pengerja gerejawi*) is: minister, evangelist, and vicar.

2. GKS can designate other types of church worker than the ones mentioned above

#### Chapter 6 - Organization

##### § 13 – Shape and Mechanism

1. The GKS organizational shape is presbyterial-synodical.
2. In accordance with the point above, the organizational structure of GKS consists of a policy maker and a policy manager within the congregation, the presbytery, and the synod.
3. Decision-making is done in the meetings at each level.
4. Decisions made in the wider assembly meetings have a binding power towards those made in the narrower assembly meetings.
5. Policy management/execution is done by bodies formed by each level
6. GKS cooperates with many institutions at the local, regional, national, and international level.

#### Chapter 7 – Possessions

##### § 14 - Possessions

1. GKS' possessions are in the forms of money, valuables, assets and properties.
2. The possessions are received from:
  1. Offerings
  2. Other sources as long as not against the Scripture.
3. The management of GKS' possessions must be done according to God's Word and must be accountable.

#### Chapter 8 – Regulations

##### § 15 – Elaboration

The regulations of GKS are the elaboration of the constitution of GKS.

#### Chapter 9 - Changes

##### § 16 – Changes in Constitution and Regulations

Changes in the constitution and the regulations of GKS can only be made in the synod assembly meeting.

#### Chapter 10 – Closing Provision

##### § 17 – Closing Provision

1. Constitution and regulations of GKS that have been adopted by the synod assembly meeting may not be changed by the congregation or presbytery.
2. Things that are not yet regulated in the constitution and regulations of GKS, will be decided in other assemblies as long as they are not in contradiction with the current constitution and regulations.

### **Appendix A.4 - Tata Laksana GKS / GKS Regulations (Reg)**

The regulations of GKS consist of 13 Chapters (Bab) and contain 58 sections (Pasal). Not all the points will be presented here, only some selected articles which are considered relevant will be highlighted here.

#### Chapter 1 – Name and Address

##### § 1 – Name

1. The name of a congregation is decided on by the consistory meeting using the name of the place, region, or city.
2. The name of the presbytery is decided on by the presbytery meeting using the name of the place, region, or city.
3. The name of the synod is decided on by the synod meeting.
4. Behind the name of Gereja Kristen Sumba, an explanation should be added: “Member of The Communion of Churches in Indonesia (PGI)”, and then followed by the name of the presbytery and the name of the congregation.

##### § 2 - Address

1. The address used is that of the administrative and ministerial center of a congregation, presbytery, or synod.
2. Deciding on an address:
  1. A congregation’s address is decided on by the consistory meeting.
  2. A presbytery’s address is decided on by the presbytery council meeting.
  3. The synod’s address is decided on by the synod council meeting.

#### Chapter 2 – Nature and Form

##### § 3 – Congregation

1. The congregation is the communion of believers in a particular place, as a form—and an integral part—of the body of Christ, who are called to communion, witness, and service.
2. Requirements to form a congregation are:
  1. To have people who are in church office.
  2. To have at least 500 members, among which 200 must be confessing members.
  3. To be able to finance the ministry of the congregation.
  4. To have a clear and dynamic organizational structure and working procedures.
  5. To have a clear geographical area of ministry.
  6. To have a decent place of worship.
  7. To have a decent manse.
  8. To have a land with clear legal status.
  9. To have adequate means of administration.



10. To be willing to follow the decisions of the wider assemblies: the presbytery and the synod assemblies.
3. If a congregation becomes too large in terms of its ministerial area and the number of members, it can found a congregation branch and congregation twig (*RAS: out-post*).
4. A congregation branch and a congregation twig are an inseparable part of a congregation.
5. Congregation expansion:
  1. Congregation expansion is when a branch congregation matures and leaves the mother church to become an independent and autonomous congregation.
  2. Maturity here means being able to care for itself in finance and leadership. Autonomy here does not mean complete autonomy, but in relation with other GKS congregations as a synod, as the body of Christ.
  3. Requirements:
    - a. Having fulfilled the requirement to become a congregation as stated in point 2 of this section.
    - b. The expansion has to get the approval of the presbytery meeting.
  4. Procedure:
    - a. The consistory receives, considers, and decides on all input regarding the congregation expansion.
    - b. The consistory meeting sends a written request to the presbytery meeting with a copy sent to the synod council along with the required data.
    - c. The presbytery meeting attended by the synod council forms a visitation team to assess the feasibility of the request, and the result is reported in the presbytery meeting.
    - d. The presbytery meeting attended by the synod council discusses the report and decides to approve or reject the consistory's request.
  5. Status of the new congregation:
    - a. The new congregation has to already have a minister.
    - b. Prior to the expansion date, the process of calling for a minister has to be done.
  6. Preparation and ordination (*RAS: direct translation of pentahbisan*) of the new congregation:
    - a. If the presbytery meeting approves the request from the consistory, then in two months' time the preparation regarding the formation of a new consistory according to the need of the new congregation must be done.
    - b. The consistory invites other consistories within the presbytery, and the synod council, to attend the ordination service (*RAS: direct translation from kebaktian pentahbisan*) of the new congregation.
6. Transfer of a congregation branch or a congregation twig to another presbytery or congregation:

1. A congregation branch or congregation twig can be transferred to another congregation or presbytery if:
  - a. It is in close distance with the new congregation.
  - b. For better communication and access of ministry.
2. The transfer request comes from the consistory or the presbytery.
3. Discussion and decision regarding the transfer is done by:
  - a. The presbytery meeting if it is within the same presbytery.
  - b. The synod council meeting or synod meeting if it is between different presbyteries.

#### § 4 – Presbytery

1. A presbytery is the communion of neighboring congregations within a ministerial area.
2. Requirements are:
  - 1) Congregations are in close distance within a region.
  - 2) It at least consists of 3 (three) congregations, with a maximum of 5 (five)
  - 3) It allows for efficient and effective ministry.
  - 4) The formation of new presbytery must get the approval of GKS synod council and or synod meeting.
  - 5) It takes into consideration the balance of finances and resources.
3. Procedures:
  - 1) The presbytery meeting gives a written request to the GKS synod council and or synod meeting.
  - 2) The GKS synod council can propose the formation of a new presbytery upon fulfillment of the requirements above.
  - 3) The GKS synod council and or synod meeting forms a visitation team.
  - 4) The GKS synod council and or synod meeting discusses the report of the visitation team, and decides to accept or reject the presbytery request.
4. Preparation and Ordination (*RAS: pentahbisan*) of a new presbytery:
  - 1) If the synod council meeting and or synod meeting accepts the presbytery request for a new presbytery, then within 2 (two) months' time, preparations regarding the formation of presbytery council and presbytery administration must be done.
  - 2) The forming presbytery council invites all the consistories within the presbytery, and the GKS synod council, to attend the ordination service of the new presbytery, held in the congregation that will be appointed as the center for administration of the new presbytery.
  - 3) Handing over of the property and administrative matters will be done in that ordination service.
  - 4) The service of presbytery formation is done in a special presbytery meeting.
  - 5) The new presbytery is formalized when the service of presbytery formation is done.

## § 5 – Synod

1. The synod is a form of communion of the congregations and the presbyteries in GKS.
2. Legal Body:  
GKS and its congregations and presbyteries, which adopt the constitution and regulations of GKS, are religious bodies by the *Decision Letter of the Protestant Christian Community Guide General Director of the Indonesian Department of Religion* no. 192, dated 19 November 1990.

## § 6 – Logo and Seal

1. The logo and seal of GKS is the shape of a circle with a white horse and the rider wearing a crown and holding a bow (Revelation 6:2)
2. The change of the logo and seal of GKS is decided on by the synod meeting.
3. Foundations can design their own logos and seals, after approval from the GKS synod council and or synod meeting.

## Chapter 3 – Membership

## § 7 – Status, Rights and Obligations

1. What is meant by membership of GKS is all members of the communion of congregations and presbyteries in the ministerial scope of GKS.
2. Status:
  - 1) Baptized Member: The child of any GKS member which has been baptized but is not confessing yet.
  - 2) Confessing Member: The member of GKS which has done confession of faith in front of God and in the midst of a GKS congregation.
3. Rights and Obligations:
  - 1) Every member has the right to receive church ministry and care.
  - 2) Every confessing member has the right to vote and be voted as member of the consistory.
  - 3) Every member is obliged to contribute to the financing of church ministry by giving a part of his/her belongings as a token of gratitude for God's grace.
  - 4) Every member is obliged to hear, read, and proclaim God's Word through word and deed, and to participate in the fulfillment of the priesthood of all believers.
4. Transfer:
  - 1) Every member wishing to move to another GKS congregation or to a congregation of another denomination of the same tradition, needs to ask for a transfer letter from the consistory.
  - 2) A member who is moving from another church of a different tradition, has to proclaim a confession of faith in front of the congregation worship.
  - 3) A member who is moving from another church of a different tradition, should not be re-baptized.

- 4) Church membership will be erased if a person moves to another church, converts to another religion, or is excommunicated.

#### Chapter 4 – Confession, Teaching, and Principle

##### § 8 - Confession

1. GKS confesses that Jesus Christ is Lord, World Savior, and Head of the Church.
2. GKS affirms God's Word in the Old Testament and New Testament Scripture.
3. Together with the Christian church of all ages and places GKS accepts and confesses Creeds, which are:
  - 1) The Apostolic Creed
  - 2) The Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed
  - 3) The Athanasian Creed.
4. GKS accepts the "Pemahaman Bersama Iman Kristen" in the Dokumen Keesaan Gereja (The ecumenical document of Indonesian churches) of the PGI.
5. GKS can formulate its own creed.

##### § 9 - Teaching

1. The Scripture is the source of GKS teaching.
2. GKS accepts the teaching of the church of the Reformation and the Heidelberg Catechism.
3. GKS can arrange its own catechism, which will be approved in the synod meeting.

##### § 10 - Principle

In line with the confessions and teachings mentioned in § 8 and 9, GKS accepts Pancasila as the principle of social, national community living in *Negara Kesatuan Republik Indonesia* (the National Unity of the Indonesian Republic).

#### Chapter 5 – Calling and Commissioning

##### § 11 - Calling

1. GKS is called to live in accordance with the gospel and stand firm by:
  1. Making visible its unity as the body of Christ with many gifts but one Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:4).
  2. Proclaiming the gospel to all living creatures (Mark 16:15).
  3. Carrying out service in love and efforts to uphold justice (Mark 10:45; Luke 4:18; Luke 10:25-37; John 15:16)

##### § 12 - Commissioning

1. In the area of fellowship, the Church is sent to carry out its task and responsibility in the world through building, unifying, and renewing the relationship between humans and God, between fellow humans, and between humans and other creatures; both internally as a fellowship of believers (the Church) and as part of the society, nation, and state.

2. In the area of witness, the Church is sent to carry out its task and responsibility, whether through verbal proclamation about salvation, redemption, peace, justice, and truth; and through concrete actions in upholding justice and truth, and the defense of human rights.
3. In the area of service, the Church is sent to carry out its compassionate service and social responsibility as an act of faith through various efforts to liberate humankind from the shackles of sin in the form of social issues.

#### Chapter 6 – Education

##### § 13 - Worship

###### Point 3. Liturgy, Forms, and Church Songbook:

- 3.1. Liturgy and forms used in GKS are the ones approved by GKS synod.
- 3.2. Other liturgies used must be in accordance with the approved liturgy of GKS synod.
- 3.3. Songbooks used in GKS are the ones accepted and approved by GKS synod.

##### § 14 – Proclamation of The Word

###### Point 2. Forms of proclaiming the Word:

- 2.1. Sermon
- 2.2. Devotion or Reflection
- 2.3. Bible Study
- 2.4. Sunday School Story
- 2.5. Dance and Theatrical performance
- 2.6. Song and Lyric
- 2.7. Movie/Film

##### § 15 – Sacraments

1. A sacrament is a special ministry in accordance with Jesus' mandate as Lord and Savior, that must be done by the believers so they can understand the meaning of His suffering and sacrifice for the salvation of humankind and the world.
2. The GKS affirms and accepts two forms of sacraments, which are Holy Baptism and Holy Communion.

##### § 16 – The sacrament of Holy Baptism

Point 3.3. Adult baptism for people from Marapu belief who are already married, will no longer require them to redo the marriage blessing ceremony.

##### § 17 – The sacrament of Holy Communion

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## § 18 – Catechesis

Point 2. Types of Catechism class that must be done in the congregations are Confession of faith Catechesis and Pre-Marital Catechesis.

Point 5.1. Pre-Marital Catechesis is done for confessing members who are validly entering an engagement process in accordance with customary law.

## § 19 – Confession of Faith

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## § 20 – Blessing and Confirmation of Marriage

Point 1. Definition:

1.1. The Blessing and Confirmation of Marriage is a service done by the Church to formalize an agreement of love between one man and one woman to become a Christian husband and wife.

(...)

2.6. If one of the persons involved is from another religion, then he/she must first make a written agreement to convert to Christianity by his/her own will and under no pressure accept the teachings of the Christian faith, and after him/her being baptized their marriage will be able to be blessed.

## § 21 – Pastoral Care

1. Pastoral care is the church duty to lead, guide, care for, strengthen, remind, warn, and encourage its members so they can manifest life in accordance to the scripture.
2. Forms of pastoral care: The pastoral care of the church done by the consistory is comprised of two forms, which are: general pastoral care and special pastoral care.
3. General pastoral care:
  1. General pastoral care is done so that church members and the consistory can always manifest life in accordance to the scripture;
  2. General pastoral care is done through sermons, family worship, visitation, counselling, pastoral letters, church meetings, and other meetings;
  3. General pastoral care is done by and between congregation members, by and between the consistory, by the consistory to church members, by and between presbyteries, and by the GKS synod.
4. Special pastoral care for confessing members:
  1. Special pastoral care is given to confessing members whose behavior or teaching is against the scripture and becomes a stumbling block for others, so that they may repent.
  2. If after the warnings from the consistory the person still has not changed, and people have been aware of the sin, then he/she isn't allowed to partake in the holy communion, cannot be elected for office, and is not allowed to ask for infant baptism.
  3. If after the warnings the person repents, the consistory will conduct a conversation with the person. If he/she is considered to have repented, he/she will

be allowed back to partake in the holy communion, to be elected for office, and to ask for infant baptism.

4. If until a considered period of time the person has not repented yet, the name and the sin will be announced so the congregation can pray for it. Prior to the announcement, the person must be informed by the consistory.
  5. If in this stage, the person repents, point 3 above is applied. The name, the sin, and the repentance are then announced.
  6. If all the efforts bring no result, the consistory after approval from the presbytery will excommunicate the person, which is the removal from church membership. For three consecutive Sundays the matter is announced to the congregation. However, after the excommunication, the person will still be in our prayer.
  7. If at one day the excommunicated member repents, then point 3 above will be applied and a welcoming service is held in the Sunday worship. For three consecutive Sundays the plan for the welcoming service is announced for the people's consideration.
  8. If there's no valid objection from the congregation after the last announcement, the person will be welcomed back into church membership.
  9. Requirements for valid objections:
    - a. Written with clear name, address, and signature of the person stating the objection.
    - b. Containing proof that the person has not repented.
    - c. The objection is proven to be true.
5. Special pastoral care for baptized members:
1. Is given to baptized members whose behavior or teaching is against the Scripture and becomes a stumbling block for others, so that they may repent. Special pastoral Care will be given to them if they still wish to remain a member of the church.
  2. Execution:
    - a. After receiving a report, the consistory will warn the person.
    - b. The consistory will also give special pastoral care to the parents/guardians who are responsible for the person's faith.
    - c. If the sin is caused by the parents/guardians, whether directly or indirectly, then the parents/guardians will also be under church discipline until the matter is resolved.
    - d. The parents/guardians must continue their responsibility in guiding the baptized member to repentance.
6. Special pastoral care for church officebearer:
1. Is given to officebearers whose behavior or teaching is against the scripture, including the abuse of authority, actions that cause chaos and separation in the congregation, and becomes a stumbling block for others, so that they may repent.

2. Special pastoral care for elders and deacons:
  - a. After receiving a report from church members, the consistory warns the person according to point 4 (special pastoral care for confessing members) above.
  - b. During the warning period, the person's position in office is deactivated.
  - c. If he/she repents, and after consideration of the consistory, he/she will be re-activated into office. However, if he/she doesn't repent, then he/she will be terminated from the office and be given church discipline.
7. Special pastoral care for minister:
  1. A minister whose behavior or teaching is against the Scripture and becomes a stumbling block for the consistory and the church members, must be warned by church members who are aware of the problem.
  2. If the warnings bring no result, the matter should be notified to the consistory, who will then warn the minister. If the minister repents, he/she will continue in ministry. If the minister does not repent, the consistory asks the presbytery to give a warning. At this stage, the minister is temporarily deactivated from his/her role, not allowed to partake in the holy communion, nor ask for infant baptism. His/her stipend and welfare is still given by the congregation.
  3. If the warning of the consistory together with the presbytery brings no result, the consistory will announce the sin to the congregation, and the matter will be sent to GKS synod council. If after the synod warning, the person repents, the minister position will be reinstated.
  4. If the warnings from the consistory, the presbytery, and the synod bring no result, then the matter will be sent to the synod meeting, and after synod meeting approval, the consistory will terminate the person from the office of minister. After the termination, the stipend and welfare will no longer be given.
  5. If at one day the person repents, the consistory may conduct a conversation so that person can partake in the holy communion and ask for infant baptism. If the person intends to go into ministry again, the consistory, after approval from the presbytery and the synod council, may induct him/her as vicar.
  6. For ministers who abandon their duty or their congregation, without the approval of the consistory, their relationship with the congregation is terminated, following a synod decree on the matter.
  7. Abandonment could be a direct result of an irreparable conflict between the minister and the congregation/consistory. If the minister is in the right position, then the consistory is put under special pastoral care. If the attitude of the consistory is causing chaos in the congregation, then the presbytery council and the synod council will limit the right of the consistory. If the consistory does not listen to the warnings of the presbytery council and the synod council, the synod meeting will disband that consistory and elect a new one



to replace it, while the minister can be called by another congregation or commissioned into another role in GKS.

8. Special Pastoral Care for minister emeritus (...)
8. Church discipline:
  1. Church discipline is an act given to a GKS church member, officebearer, church worker, and synod officials.
  2. Church discipline is a spiritual act on the basis of love.
  3. The purpose of church discipline is to maintain the holiness of church life, for the salvation of sinners, and as a reminder for others.
  4. Church discipline is given to someone :
    - a. Whose life behavior is against the Scripture and denies the church's confession and teaching.
    - b. Who doesn't want to repent and becomes a stumbling block in the church and society.
  5. Church discipline is done following the pastoral procedures mentioned in point 4 to point 7 above.
9. Confession of sin:
  1. When a person who has sinned repents and wishes to regain his/her rights and to partake in the holy communion, he/she must first confess his/her sin.
  2. Prior to the confession of sin, the consistory will announce it to the congregation for two consecutive Sundays.
  3. The confession of sin is done in the congregation worship, or under special consideration can also be done in front of the consistory.
  4. The acceptance of confession of sin is done using the forms approved by GKS synod.

#### § 22 – Diaconal Ministry

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#### § 23 – Church Visitation

Point 2. Church visitation is an act of visiting the Congregation and Presbytery.

#### § 24 – Ecumenical Cooperation

1. Ecumenical cooperation is cooperation between GKS and other churches or church bodies outside of GKS. It is an expression of being one, holy, catholic and apostolic church, and that as churches we are called to partake in the same calling to be in communion, witness, and service.

#### Point 3. Forms

- a. Formal cooperation: this is cooperation done through signing a charter/agreement of cooperation and within an agreed time frame.
- b. Informal cooperation: this is cooperation done through agreement to partake in incidental programs or events.

- c. GKS becoming member in an ecumenical body (on the basis of historical ties, same principles, same role and geographical position).

#### § 25 – Cooperation with Other Institutions

1. GKS can conduct cooperation with the Government and Non-Governmental bodies
2. The form of cooperation will be discussed and agreed upon by the cooperating parties.

#### Chapter 7 – Church Office

##### § 26 – Church Office

1. Church Office is the manifestation of the offices in Lord Jesus Christ as King, Priest, and Prophet, that He passes down to His people/church.
2. Church Office is comprised of Elders, Deacons, and minister who constitute one body: the consistory.

##### § 27 – Elder

1. Definition: Elder is a special office which manifests Lord Jesus Christ's office as King.
2. Duty & Responsibility:
  1. To develop and educate the congregation's fellowship.
  2. To nurture and visit congregation members, also giving warnings to members who are lost.
  3. To keep watch of the church's teaching in accordance with the scripture and GKS teaching.
  4. To do planned visitation and pastoral care to the minister, vicar, and evangelist.
  5. Together with minister and deacon to make a ministry program for the growth of the congregation's faith.
  6. Together with minister and deacon to apply church discipline.
  7. Obligated to maintain confidentiality during and after their terms of office.

##### § 28 – Deacon

1. Definition: Deacon is a special office, which manifests Lord Jesus Christ's office as Priest.
2. Duty & Responsibility:
  1. To provide spiritual and physical help to congregation members in need.
  2. To visit and give pastoral care to congregation members who are lost, sick, and to comfort those in grief.
  3. To prepare the means for baptism and Holy Communion.
  4. Together with minister and elders to move the congregation members to realize their responsibility in financing the life of the congregation, presbytery, and synod.

5. Together with minister and elders to plan and carry out charity for church members and community members.
6. Obligated to maintain confidentiality during and after their terms of office.

#### § 29 - Requirements

1. Male or Female members who have become confessing members for at least three years.
2. Having knowledge, understanding, and obedience to the Scripture, teachings and church order of GKS.
3. No polygamy or polyandry.
4. Not a drunkard, not hot-headed, and not enslaved to money.

#### § 30 – Candidacy, Election, and Induction

1. Candidacy
  1. The consistory meeting deliberates and decides on the names of candidates for elder and deacon.
  2. The maximum number of candidates should be twice the number of persons needed.
  3. The names of the candidates are announced for three consecutive Sundays.
  4. The church council visits the candidates to ask for their willingness and to prepare them.
2. Election
  1. The election is led by a committee comprised of elements from the consistory members, appointed by the consistory meeting.
  2. The election is held in the meeting of the congregation, after Sunday Worship.
  3. The right to vote is for confessing members who are not under church discipline.
  4. The election is done directly, publicly, freely, and confidentially.
  5. Candidates will be elected by majority vote.
3. Induction
  1. Church conversation to prepare the candidate is done prior to the induction.
  2. The induction is done in a worship service, followed by the giving of a consistory decree letter and the signing of the certificate.
  3. The induction service is officiated by a minister using the GKS liturgy.
4. Term of service
  1. The term of service for elders and deacons is four years.
  2. An elder and deacon can be re-elected for another four years, and more in special circumstances depending on the situation of the congregation.
5. Termination of office
  1. Reasons
    - a. Reaching the end of term of office;

- b. Moving to another congregation or location;
  - c. By personal request due to reasonable cause;
  - d. Under church discipline;
  - e. Deceased.
2. Termination is based on the decision of the consistory meeting, formalized in a decree letter.
  3. The termination is announced to the congregation.

#### § 31 - Minister

1. Minister (*Pendeta*) is a church office that manifests the office of Jesus Christ as Prophet, and may also be called shepherd of the congregation.
2. Role of a minister:
  1. To proclaim God's Word through congregation worship, catechism class, administering the sacraments, educating the church members, giving pastoral care, and through daily life activity.
  2. To administer weddings, to ordain church officers, to administer the confession of faith, confession of sin, reception of the excommunicated, and the burial of the dead.
  3. To keep watch and safeguard the teachings in the congregation so that it will not go against the Scripture and the church order of GKS.
  4. Together with elders and deacons, to encourage church members to realize their responsibility in the field of economy and finance, both for the sake of the congregation internally, and for the wellbeing of the church as a whole.
  5. To deliver blessings through the laying on of hands.
3. Requirements:
  1. A person who has finished theological study at a Christian university that is founded or recommended by GKS.
  2. Who has gone through the candidacy stage (*vikaris*) well for at least two years, and has been declared adequate by the synod board of GKS.
  3. The declaration of adequacy must be proved by a recommendation from the consistory where the person has undergone his/her candidacy stage with regard to his/her competency, loyalty, dedication, and honesty to work in God's field.
  4. To understand and believe the testimony of the Scripture as God's Word.
  5. To accept the Apostolic Creed, the Athanasian Creed, and the Nicene Creed as the true creeds.
  6. To accept and affirm the Heidelberg Catechism as the teaching material for Christian faith.
  7. To obey the church order of GKS.
  8. He/she is obliged and able to keep the duty of confidentiality.
4. Status of the minister: In GKS, a minister is ordained, inducted, and/or commissioned by the congregation.

5. The office of minister is a life-long office.
6. Calling process of minister:
  1. Candidacy and Election stage:
    - a. The consistory meeting decides on the candidates that meet the requirements, and afterwards must try to get to know the candidates.
    - b. Through a mechanism of fit and proper test in the consistory meeting, the consistory then proposes at least three candidates, and at maximum five candidates. It is not allowed to propose a single candidate only.
    - c. After getting the approval from the presbytery and the synod board, the candidates are then announced to the church members for three consecutive weeks.
    - d. If there is no objection, an election will be held on the third Sunday, after Sunday worship.
    - e. Only confessing members are eligible to vote.
    - f. The voters present must be at least 2/3 (two third) of the total of confessing members who have the right to vote. If the quorum is not met, the voting will be postponed.
    - g. The candidate who receives more than a 50% vote will be elected.
    - h. The result of the election will be announced for three consecutive weeks.
    - i. A minister from another congregation can be nominated if he/she has been in placement for four consecutive years.
  2. Calling:
    - a. To the elected candidate, the consistory sends a calling letter using the GKS synod approved format. If the calling congregation does not have a minister in place, the letter is signed by the consulting minister.
    - b. The elected candidate must give a response to the calling within four weeks after the date of the letter.
    - c. After the candidate accepts the calling, the candidate must live in the middle of the calling congregation, and his stipend is given by the calling congregation.
  3. Examination Conversation:
    - a. After the candidate accepts the calling, a closed examination conversation is held in the presbytery meeting.
    - b. The examination conversation topics cover:
      - i. Sermon
      - ii. Teaching
      - iii. GKS church order.
    - c. If the result is not approved by the presbytery meeting, a re-examination conversation will be held, for which the presbytery shall determine the time.

- d. After the presbytery meeting approves the result of the examination conversation, the name of the candidate is to be announced for three consecutive weeks prior to the ordination.
4. Ordination:
  - a. Ordination is done in the congregation's worship using the formula approved by the synod meeting.
  - b. The authority of the minister's office is received through the laying on of hands by the ministers present in the service.
  - c. The consistory gives the ordination/induction decree letter and signes of the ordination/induction certificate.
5. Transfer:
  - a. Transfer is the conveyance of a minister between congregations through the calling process of GKS church order.
  - b. Requirements:
    - i. The minister has served within a congregation for at least four years in a row.
    - ii. The approval from the consistory, presbytery, and synod of GKS.
  - c. Procedure: Transfer procedures should go through the stages of candidacy, election, calling, and induction, but without the examination conversation and ordination.
6. Stipend:
  - a. The calling congregation has full responsibility for the stipend of the minister and his/her family.
  - b. The synod meeting regulates the stipend.
  - c. Besides the stipend, the congregation is also responsible for the minister's welfare: housing, book allowance, retirement fund premium, medical expenses, transportation, capacity building, and other costs according to each consistory's policy.
  - d. A minister emeritus will receive:
    - i. Stipend
    - ii. Housing subsidy
    - iii. Medical expense subsidy
  - e. For a minister emeritus who does not have a retirement fund, the last congregation or institution where he/she last worked will be responsible for his/her retirement welfare using the PGI retirement fund standard.
7. Minister Emeritus:
  - a. A minister emeritus is a minister who no longer serves full time in a congregation or another church institution.
  - b. A minister is entering the status of emeritus when:
    - i. Entering the age of 60, as the age of retirement.
    - ii. For a minister who is holding a position of synod full-timer, this age limit will be adjusted to the end of his/her term.

- iii. For a minister who is commissioned to be a lecturer, his/her retirement age will be adjusted according to the regulation of the university.
- c. Procedure:
  - i. One year prior to his/her retirement age, he/she must submit a written request to the consistory or the institution where he/she works, with copies sent to the presbytery and the synod council. This one year period is not necessary for a retirement request due to medical reasons.
  - ii. After the retirement request is approved, the synod council will report it to PGI retirement fund for follow-up.
  - iii. The status of minister emeritus starts after the consistory or the work institution have given the decree letter, and is done in a special worship service.
  - iv. A retirement preparation period is the one year prior to retirement. During this period, the minister can already be released from his/her obligations, but still receives stipend.
  - v. A minister emeritus functions as advisor in a consistory meeting, a presbytery meeting, and a synod meeting.
- 8. Termination of office:
  - a. Termination from the office of minister is done:
    - i. Upon personal request due to reasonable causes.
    - ii. In case of abandoning a ministry task without the approval of the consistory, presbytery, synod; following the pastoral procedure in Reg § 21.7.
    - iii. In case of church discipline.
  - b. The termination can be done by the consistory with a decree letter, after receiving approval from the presbytery meeting, the synod meeting or the synod council.
- 9. Cooperation of minister with elders and deacons
  - a. The cooperation is initiated and maintained by both parties.
  - b. If cooperation cannot happen, and even results in conflict, either the minister or the elders and deacons can report the matter to the presbytery with notification to the synod.
  - c. The presbytery through the presbytery council will do a special visitation to the minister, elders and deacons, in order to resolve the conflict.
  - d. If after a number of visitations the problem has not been resolved yet, the presbytery will report the matter to the synod.
  - e. The synod through the synod council will do a special visitation to the minister, elders and deacons, accompanied by the presbytery council.

- f. If the problem remains, the minister will be released from his/her position in that congregation, and the synod will facilitate for him/her to be called by another congregation.
  - g. If the minister has not yet received any calling from another congregation, his/her stipend will still be covered by that congregation.
  - h. If after one year, still no congregation is calling him/her yet, the minister can ask to become a minister emeritus.
  - i. If during the waiting period a reconciliation is made, the minister will be put back into ministry in that congregation.
10. Minister for general ministry:
- a. A minister for general ministry is a minister with a special assignment for ministry outside the congregation.
  - b. Examples for ministry outside the congregation are in the fields of church organization, theological lecturer, social functions, and army chaplaincy.
  - c. Regulations for ministers for general ministry:
    - i. Having served as a congregation minister for at least 4 years.
    - ii. The synod appoints the minister for general ministry.
    - iii. The synod will decide which congregation will be the base for the minister's commissioning.
    - iv. The stipend and welfare of the minister is the responsibility of the institution where he/she is serving.
  - d. Period:
    - i. The period of service in an organization outside GKS will be regulated in an agreement with that organization.
    - ii. The period of service in an organization belonging to GKS is regulated in Reg § 47 regarding GKS organizations.
    - iii. Upon entering the emeritus status, a general ministry minister receives welfare from the organization he/she has served, in the form of:
      - a. Retirement benefit.
      - b. Housing subsidy.
      - c. Medical expenses subsidy.
    - iv. A good relationship must be maintained between the minister and the congregation that commissioned him/her.
11. Consulting minister:
- a. A congregation that doesn't have a minister yet, or in which for some reason its minister cannot fulfill his/her function, must have a consulting minister from one of the congregations in the presbytery.
  - b. The congregation proposes the candidate for consulting minister to the presbytery meeting. After the minister states his/her willingness, the presbytery can then decide on it.



- c. If the presbytery has no available minister, it can ask for a consulting minister from the nearest presbytery.
  - d. Role of a consulting minister:
    - i. To give advice to the consistory.
    - ii. To help in pastoral duties.
    - iii. To assist the consistory in the process of calling a minister.
  - e. The period of service for a consulting minister is for the duration between presbytery meetings.
  - f. A consulting minister will receive a stipend from the congregation that calls him/her in the agreed amount depending on the congregation's ability.
12. Official garments:
- a. Minister's official garments are white robe, black robe, and purple robe together with stola.
  - b. The official garments' color will follow the liturgical calendar and can take local traditional patterns.
  - c. Suit and shirt with clerical collar.
  - d. The official garments can also take the local culture into consideration.
  - e. The official garments are provided by the consistory or the institution where he/she is serving, and are to be considered as part of the congregation's inventory.
13. Other jobs:
- a. What is considered as another job is another work that is institutionally bound outside the church institution.
  - b. If a minister wishes to take another job, he/she must get the approval from the consistory and the synod, and the person will be released from his/her ministry.

## Chapter 8 – Other Church Workers

### § 32 – Evangelist

1. An evangelist (*Guru Injil*) is a full-time church worker who is decreed by the decision of the consistory, after being approved the synod/synod board of GKS.
2. Requirements for an evangelist:
  1. A confessing member who is not under church discipline.
  2. Having attained theological education through theological seminary or courses.
  3. Able to keep duty of confidentiality
  4. Obeying the scripture and GKS church order
3. Main duty:
  1. Proclaiming the gospel
  2. Other tasks in the congregation as assigned by the consistory.

4. An evangelist is inducted into the office of elder without going through the process of election.
5. The stipend for an evangelist is covered by the consistory according to synod regulations.
6. An evangelist is retired:
  1. Upon reaching the age of 60
  2. If unable to function due to health conditions, by a medical doctor's statement.
7. The retirement benefit is covered by the consistory or another retirement fund.

### § 33 - Vicar

1. Definition:
  1. A vicar is a church worker in preparation to become a GKS minister.
  2. The Candidacy period (*Vicariat*) is a period done by a vicar in a congregation as a preparation and orientation regarding the office of minister, role and calling of the church.
  3. A mentor is a minister who is assigned to assist, guide, and direct a vicar during his candidacy period.
  4. The synod council of GKS organizes and arranges the placement of vicars within the congregations of GKS.
2. Requirements:
  1. Having a theological degree from a university founded or recommended by GKS.
  2. Sending an application letter to the GKS synod council, complemented with:
    - a. A copy of a theological study certificate.
    - b. A health recommendation letter from a medical doctor.
    - c. A copy of the baptism and confession of faith certificate.
    - d. A copy of the marriage certificate, for a candidate who is already married.
  3. Not under church discipline.
  4. In the maximum age of 35 years old.
3. Appointing procedure:
  1. Vicars must be appointed by the GKS synod council executive body and assigned into placement in GKS congregations.
  2. Prior to starting his/her service, vicars are inducted in a congregation worship using the forms approved by GKS synod.
4. Period:
  1. The periods of a vicar:
    - a. Period 1: One year in first congregation
    - b. Period 2: One year in a different congregation
    - c. Period 3: And so on: the preparation period consists of one year in placement in various congregations (rotating).

2. In period 3 and onward, after being declared worthy by the GKS synod council executive body, a vicar can be called to become minister.
5. Obligations and Rights:
  1. Obligations:
    - a. To obey the GKS church order and church meeting decisions at all levels.
    - b. To perform all ministry duties as assigned by the consistory, except for the administering of sacraments, marriage, confession of faith, and induction services.
    - c. To attend the meetings of the consistory, presbytery, and synod.
    - d. To make a ministry report to the consistory executive body and the synod council executive body. The mentor must know about the report.
    - e. To bring a transfer letter from the consistory every time he/she is transferred to a new congregation.
    - f. To be willing to be placed anywhere within the GKS.
  2. Rights: A vicar has the right to receive a stipend, housing, and transport arrangements to attend church meetings.
6. Mentor:
  1. A congregation minister or consulting minister.
  2. To give education, assistance, and guidance to a vicar in preparation to become a minister.
  3. To give a report regarding the performance of the vicar to the consistory and the synod council.
  4. To suggest the transfer or termination of a vicar to the GKS synod council executive body.
7. Consistory executive body:
  1. Together with the mentor to decide on the task of a vicar in the congregation, referring to the guidelines set by the synod council executive body.
  2. To give pastoral counsel to the vicar.
  3. To give a stipend and housing to the vicar.
8. Synod council executive body:
  1. To arrange the placement and transfer of vicars.
  2. To make task guidelines for vicars.
  3. To give education and guidance to vicars regarding ministry tasks in the congregation.
  4. To accept and examine the report from the vicar and the mentor.
  5. To decide whether a vicar can become a minister candidate.
  6. To warn vicars who reject placement or transfer to a congregation set by the synod council executive body.

## Chapter 9 - Organization

## § 34 - Definition

1. The organizational form of GKS is presbyterial-synodical, which on the one hand emphasizes the role of the congregation, and on the other hand the role of the synod, which in its implementation is organized in balance and in harmony.
2. The pattern for ministry and leadership in the GKS organization is built upon the principle of 'council-ness' with emphasis on togetherness between congregations, along with the leadership pattern which is collegial (collective).
3. Meeting is a means for *musyawarah* (deliberation) in order to come to a decision according to the ministerial task at all levels.

## Part A – Congregation

## § 35 – Composition of the Organizational Agents

1. The consistory, which is composed of the people who are officebearers, consisting of: the ministers, elders, and deacons.
2. The consistory executive body – the officebearers who are elected and appointed in the consistory meeting, and inducted in the congregation's worship.

The composition is:

- 1) Chair, vice chair, secretary, vice secretary, treasurer and vice treasurer (if necessary). The chair of the consistory should be a minister.
- 2) The consistory executive body is helped by its agents, departments, commissions, which are appointed in a consistory meeting by suggestion from the consistory executive body, and inducted during congregation's worship.
3. The church consideration body: 5 persons, elected and appointed in a consistory meeting, and inducted in the congregation's worship.
4. The congregation treasury examination body.
5. The congregation foundation caretaker body.

## § 36 – Role, Authority, and Responsibility of the Organizational Agents

1. Consistory (minister, elders, and deacons)
  - a. To perform duties as regulated in § 27.2, § 28.2, and § 31.2.
  - b. To execute the general policy and program for the congregation, including the program determined by the presbytery meeting and synod meeting.
  - c. To decide the annual budget of the congregation.
  - d. To form organizational agents for the congregation, including those who will represent the congregation at the presbytery and synod level.
  - e. To accept the accountability report from the organizational agents.
  - f. To discuss and decide on suggestions or statements to the presbytery and synod meetings.
  - g. To resolve problems that arises in the consistory executive body.
2. Consistory executive body
  - a. To perform duties that are assigned to it by the consistory.

- b. The role of each member of the executive body is assigned by the consistory.
  - c. To arrange and supervise the work of the ministers, elders, deacons, and other organizational agents in the congregation.
  - d. To manage the congregation's administration, statistic, finance, and property.
  - e. To do consultation with the presbytery and synod councils' executive bodies regarding the tasks in the congregation.
  - f. Authorized to resolve the problems arising in the congregation.
  - g. To do cooperative work with other denominations, religions, and the government in the scope of the congregation.
  - h. To take the responsibility for the congregation on behalf of the consistory.
  - i. To be accountable for its task to the consistory meeting.
3. Congregation Consideration Body
- a. To give consideration and counsel to the consistory and consistory executive body regarding the task in the congregation.
  - b. To attend ecclesiastical meetings in the congregation.
  - c. To be accountable for its task to the consistory meeting.
4. Congregation Treasury Examination Body
- a. To examine and supervise the management of the congregation's finance and property.
  - b. To report its work in every consistory meeting and consistory executive body meeting.
  - c. To be accountable for its task to the consistory meeting.
5. Congregation Foundation Caretaker Body
- a. To perform its duty as described in the foundation bylaws.
  - b. To do coordination and consultation, and to report on its task to the consistory.
  - c. To be accountable for its task to the consistory through the consistory executive body.
6. Department
- a. To perform its duty according to the department's plan and program.
  - b. To do coordination and consultation with the presbytery and synod departments in the framework of the presbytery and synod's program.
  - c. To accept task appointments from the consistory executive body.
  - d. To be accountable for its task to the consistory executive body.
7. Committee
- a. To perform its duty according to the committee plan and program.
  - b. To do coordination and consultation with the presbytery and synod committees in the framework of the presbytery and synod's program.
  - c. To accept task appointments from the consistory executive body.
  - d. To be accountable for its task to the consistory executive body.

## § 37 – Meetings

1. The meetings in a congregation are a means for *musyawarah* in order to come to a decision in all components of the congregation.
2. The kinds of meeting are:
  1. Congregation meeting, once a year.
  2. Consistory meeting, once every 3 months and/or as necessary.
  3. Consistory executive body meeting, once every month, and/or as necessary.
3. The quorum of the meeting is ½ plus one person who are eligible to vote present.
4. The congregation meeting:
  1. Participants:
    - a. All church officebearers, which are the ministers, elders, and deacons, with voting rights.
    - b. Congregation members representing each district, each with voting rights.
    - c. The organizational agents, which are: consistory executive body, bodies/foundations/departments/committees, with voting rights.
    - d. Guests and observers, with speaking rights.
  2. Task and authority of the congregation meeting:
    - a. To decide on the general policy of the congregation.
    - b. To decide on regulations for the congregation as long as they are not contradicting the GKS CO.
    - c. To discuss and accept the accountability report of the consistory executive body.
  3. The meeting is presided by two people elected from the officebearers, assisted by the president of the consistory executive body as a resource person, and the secretary of the consistory executive body as the secretary of the meeting.
5. The consistory meeting:
  1. Participants:
    - a. All church officebearers, with voting rights.
    - b. The other organizational bodies in the congregation, with speaking rights.
    - c. Guests and observers, with speaking rights.
  2. Task and authority of the consistory meeting:
    - a. To decide on the elaboration of congregation general policy into a work program.
    - b. To decide on the congregation's budget.
    - c. To form the congregation's organizational agents.
    - d. To decide on the members of presbytery council.
    - e. To discuss and accept the report from the congregation organizational agents.
    - f. To decide on suggestions, statements, and representatives to be sent to presbytery meetings.

3. The consistory meeting is presided by two people elected from the office-bearers, assisted by the president of the consistory executive body as a resource person, and the secretary of the consistory executive body as the secretary of the meeting.
6. The consistory executive body meeting:
  1. Participants:
    - a. All members of the consistory executive body.
    - b. The organizational agents in the congregation.
  2. Task and authority of the consistory executive body meeting:
    - a. To execute the decisions of the congregation meeting and the consistory meeting.
    - b. To decide on the program plan for the congregation, for example: the roster for Sunday worship, visitation, etc.
    - c. To discuss letters received, and problems arising in between consistory meetings.
7. Decision-making is done using *musyawarah untuk mufakat*, and in certain cases voting can be used.
8. The nature of the meeting is open, however when needed it can be changed into a closed meeting.
9. The minutes of the meeting are formulated by the meeting secretary, and accepted in that meeting.
10. All meeting decisions must be sent to the consistory and organizational agents, no later than 1 month after the meeting.

#### Part B – Presbytery

##### § 38 – Composition of Organizational Agents

1. The presbytery council consists of representatives from the consistories within the presbytery, which are all the ministers in that presbytery, plus one elder and one deacon from each congregation. They are elected and confirmed in the presbytery meeting.
2. The presbytery council executive body
3. The presbytery Consideration Body
4. The presbytery Treasury Examination
5. The presbytery Foundation Caretaker Body)

##### § 39 - Role, Authority, and Responsibility of Organizational Agent

(\*contains job descriptions for the agencies)

##### § 40 - Meetings

1. The kinds of meeting at the presbytery level are:
  1. The presbytery meeting, which is the meeting of consistories within the presbytery, once a year. The consistories take turn convening the meeting.

2. The presbytery council meeting, which is the meeting of presbytery organizational agents, once every 6 months and/or as necessary. Meetings take place taking turn in congregation locations, or as needed.
3. The presbytery council executive body meeting, once every 3 months, and/or as necessary.
2. An extraordinary presbytery meeting can be done by request of at least 2/3 of the congregations, upon written request stating the reasons.
3. The quorum of the meeting is ½ plus one person who are eligible to vote present.
4. The presbytery meeting:
  1. Participants:
    - a. Congregation representatives, in total 6 persons (ministers, elders, and deacons), with voting rights.
    - b. The organizational agents, which are: the presbytery council executive body, bodies/foundations/departments/committees, with voting rights.
    - c. Observers from the congregation organizational agents, with speaking rights.
    - d. Guests and observers from outside, with speaking rights.
  2. Task and authority of the presbytery meeting:
    - a. To decide on the general policy of the presbytery, as an elaboration of the GKS general policy.
    - b. To decide on regulations for the presbytery as long as they are not contradicting the GKS CO.
    - c. To discuss and accept reports from the congregations.
    - d. To discuss and accept accountability reports from presbytery organizational agents.
    - e. To elect the members of the presbytery organizational agents.
    - f. To elect the members of the synod council and representatives to the synod meeting.
    - g. To decide on suggestions to the synod meeting.
  3. The meeting is presided by two people elected from the participants with voting rights, assisted by the president of the presbytery council executive body as a resource person, and the secretary of the presbytery council executive body as the secretary of the meeting.
5. Presbytery council meeting:
  1. Participants:
    - a. Representatives from the consistories (all ministers, 1 elder, and 1 deacon) with three votes per congregation.
    - b. Representatives from congregation organizational agents – each two persons and all ministers within the presbytery, with speaking rights.
    - c. The presbytery organizational agents, with speaking rights.
    - d. Guests and observers, with speaking rights.
  2. Task and authority of the presbytery council meeting:



- a. To elaborate the general policy of the presbytery.
  - b. To decide on the presbytery's budget.
  - c. To form the presbytery organizational agents.
  - d. To discuss and accept the accountability reports from the presbytery organizational agents, and reports from congregations in the presbytery.
  - e. To decide on suggestions, statements, and representatives to be sent to the synod council meeting and the synod meeting.
  - f. To discuss matters regarding ministry of the presbytery.
3. The presbytery council meeting is presided by two people elected from the participants with voting rights, assisted by the president of the presbytery council executive body as a resource person, and the secretary of the consistory executive body as the secretary of the meeting.
6. The presbytery council executive body meeting:
    1. Participants:
      - a. All members of the presbytery council executive body.
      - b. The organizational agents in the presbytery.
    2. Task and authority of presbytery council executive body meeting:
      - a. To discuss the implementation of presbytery general policy into work program.
      - b. To discuss and accept reports from the presbytery organizational agents.
      - c. To discuss arrangements regarding the ministerial task of the presbytery.
      - d. To discuss letters received, and problems arising in between presbytery council meetings.
7. Decision-making is done using *musyawarah untuk mufakat*, and in certain cases voting can be used.
  8. The nature of the meeting is open, however when needed it can be changed to a closed meeting.
  9. The minutes of meeting are formulated by the meeting secretary, and accepted in that meeting.
  10. All meeting decisions must be sent to the consistories within the presbytery and presbytery organizational agents, no later than 1 month after the meeting.

#### Part C – Synod

##### § 41 – Composition of Organizational Agents

1. The synod council consists of elements from presbytery councils, from each three persons (minister, Elder, and Deacon) as confirmed in the synod meeting, based on name suggestions from the Presbyteries.
2. The synod council executive body
3. The synod council executive body assisted by departments and committee secretaries
4. The synod Consideration Body

5. The synod Treasury Examination Body
6. The synod Foundation Caretaker Body

§ 42 – Role, Authority, and Responsibility of Organizational Agent  
(\*contains job descriptions for the agencies)

§ 43 – Role, Authority, and Responsibility of members of Synod Council Executive Body  
(\*contains job descriptions for the positions within the executive body)

§ 44 – The Synod Meeting

1. The synod meeting is a wider ecclesiastical meeting than the presbytery meeting and the consistory meeting, and its decisions have a binding authority for the presbytery and the congregation.
2. The synod meeting is held once every 4 years, with each presbytery taking turn to become the host.
3. An extra-ordinary synod meeting can be held if 2/3 of the Presbyteries in GKS submit a written application with the reasons.
4. The convener of a synod meeting is a congregation under coordination of the presbytery.
5. The quorum of the meeting is ½ plus one person eligible to vote present.
6. The synod meeting is presided by 4 people elected from participants with voting rights, assisted by the moderator as a resource person, and the general secretary as the secretary of the meeting.
7. Decision-making is done using *musyawarah untuk mufakat*, and in certain cases voting can be used.
8. The nature of the meeting is open, however when needed it can be changed to a closed meeting.
9. The minutes of meeting are formulated by the meeting secretary, and accepted in that meeting.
10. All meeting decisions must be sent to the consistories within the presbytery and the presbytery organizational agents, no later than 3 months after the meeting.
11. Synod meeting participants:
  1. Presbytery representatives, per presbytery in total 6 persons: 2 ministers, 2 elders, and 2 deacons, with voting rights.
  2. The synod council executive body and its organizational agents, with speaking rights.
  3. The synod council consideration body and the synod council treasury examination body, with speaking rights.
  4. The synod foundation caretaker body, with speaking rights.
  5. Guests, observers, and the organizing committee with speaking rights.
12. Task and authority of the synod meeting:

1. To decide on GKS doctrinal matters.
2. To decide on GKS Church order.
3. To decide on GKS general policy.
4. To discuss, accept, and evaluate the accountability report of the synod council executive body.
5. To elect members of synod organizational agents for a 4 years' term.
6. To resolve problems in the spirit of *musyawarah untuk mufakat* on the basis of fellowship as one body of Christ in the shape of GKS.
7. To conduct worship/bible study and Holy Communion, as sources for inspiration in the meeting process.

#### § 45 – The Synod Council Meeting

1. The synod council meeting is a meeting of organizational agents at the synod level, whose decisions have binding authority over organizational agents at all levels.
2. A synod council meeting is held once a year.
3. A synod council extraordinary meeting can be held if 2/3 of synod council members write a formal request along with the reasons.
4. The quorum of the meeting is ½ plus one person eligible to vote present.
5. The synod council meeting is presided by 3 people elected from the participants with voting rights, assisted by the moderator as a resource person, and the general secretary as the secretary of the meeting.
6. Decision-making is done using *musyawarah untuk mufakat*, and in certain cases voting can be used.
7. The nature of the meeting is open, however when needed it can be changed to a closed meeting.
8. The minutes of meeting are formulated by the meeting secretary, and accepted in that meeting.
9. All meeting decisions must be sent to the consistories within the presbytery and the presbytery organizational agents, no later than 2 months after the meeting.
10. Synod council meeting participants:
  1. Members of the synod council representing each presbytery by 3 persons (minister, elder, deacon), with voting rights.
  2. The synod council executive body, with speaking rights.
  3. The synod council consideration body and the synod council treasury examination body, with speaking rights.
  4. The synod foundation caretaker body, each 3 persons, with speaking rights.
  5. The Presidents of GKS synod departments/committees, with speaking rights.
  6. Guests and observers, with speaking rights.
11. Task and authority of synod council meeting:
  1. To execute the decisions of the synod meeting.
  2. To elect the secretaries for departments and committees.

3. To discuss, accept, and evaluate the accountability report of synod organizational agents.
4. To discuss and accept reports from the presbyteries.
5. To formalize the annual program and budget for GKS synod.
6. To form organizational agents that will support the synod council executive bodies.
7. To decide on regulations as elaboration of GKS church order.
8. To discuss problems arising between synod meetings.

#### § 46 – Synod Council Executive Body Meeting

1. The synod council executive body meeting is a meeting of organizational agents at synod level, whether as a full time or a part time position.
2. The synod council executive body meeting is held once every 3 months and/or as necessary.
3. The synod council executive body meeting is presided by the moderator and all the presidents.
4. Participants:
  1. The members of the synod council executive body.
  2. The secretaries of departments and committees.
  3. The president of the synod consideration body.
  4. The president of the synod treasury examination body.
  5. The presidents of the foundation caretaker bodies.
  6. The GKS Theological institution and other bodies.
5. Task and authority of the synod council executive body meeting:
  1. To perform the decisions made in the synod meeting and the synod council meeting.
  2. To discuss, accept, and evaluate accountability reports from the synod organizational agents.
  3. To discuss problems arising between synod council meetings.

#### Part D – Terms of Office, Requirements, and Termination

##### § 47 – Terms of Office for Organizational Agents

Point 1. The term of office for all Organizational Agents, at all levels, whether full-timer or part-timer, is four years (according to the interval between synod meetings), and he/she can be re-elected for one more term. (*\*Two consecutive period in the same position, but still able to be re-elected in a different position*)

##### § 48 – Requirements for Induction into an Organizational Agent

Point 1. The requirement for induction into an Organizational Agent at all levels:

- 1.1. Member of a GKS congregation and not under church discipline.
- 1.2. Willing to obey the church order of GKS.
- 1.3. Physically and mentally healthy.

- 1.4. Having the competence, loyalty, and honesty to serve in the field of God.
- 1.5. Having knowledge and skills in the required field.
- 1.6. Having experience in the field of church and society.
- 1.7. Having an ecumenical perspective.

§ 49 – Termination of office

Point 1. Termination of office is done in case of:

- 1.1. Receiving church discipline
- 1.2. End of official period.
- 1.3. At own request with given reasons.
- 1.4. Deceased.

Chapter 10 – Property

§ 50 - Definition

The property of GKS in nature is God's belongings which He entrusted to GKS to manage in order to realize communion and to execute its mission.

§ 51 - Types

§ 52 - Acquire

§ 53 - Management

§ 54 - Accountability

§ 55 – Examination

Chapter XI – Elaboration of Regulations

§ 56 – Elaboration

The elaboration of GKS regulations will be arranged in other separate regulations and stipulations.

Chapter XII – Changes to Regulations

§ 57 – Procedure

1. Changes to GKS regulations can only be done by the synod meeting.
2. Proposals for the amendment of GKS regulations must come from the presbytery meeting and or the synod council of GKS, with clear and detailed reasons included.

**Chapter XIII – Closing Provision****§ 58 – Transitional Regulation**

1. The GKS church order and regulations that have been adopted by the synod meeting cannot be changed, added, or annulled by the congregation and/or the presbytery.
2. With the adoption of this church order the 1998 church order is no longer in effect.
3. This church order is put into effect after its adoption. (\*July 2006)

**Penjelasan /*Explanations***

Contains a brief explanation of the Introduction and the articles of the church order and the regulations of GKS.

## **Appendix B - The Church Order of Gereja Kristen Indonesia**

The church order of GKI 2009 is structured in the following order:

- Tata Gereja /GKI church order:
  - Mukadimah /Preamble (Pre)
  - Tata Dasar /GKI Constitution (Const)
- Tata Laksana /GKI Regulations (Reg)

### **Appendix B.1 - Mukadimah /Preamble (Pre)**

1. By the help and guidance of the Holy Spirit, Gereja Kristen Indonesia, which is a continuation and manifestation of unity of Gereja Kristen Indonesia Jawa Barat, Gereja Kristen Indonesia Jawa Tengah, and Gereja Kristen Indonesia Jawa Timur, in discerning the Word of God as witnessed to by the Old Testament and New Testament Bible, in the context of present Indonesian reality, hereby declares its basic understanding and confession of faith regarding the Church universal and in particular about itself:
2. Universally, the source of the church is found in God who saves through His work within and throughout history. God's salvation work—which reached its peak in Lord Jesus Christ—is done holistically and is covering everything toward the fulfillment of God's Kingdom. In that salvation work, through His covenant, God gathers His chosen people, starting from the people of Israel and continued with a new people of God in Lord Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit, which is the church. As a new people, the church is one. Church unity is a unity in diversity. Therefore, the church is one communion of those who have faith in Jesus Christ—Lord and Savior of the world—who by the power of the Holy Spirit are called and commissioned to partake in God's mission, which is God's salvation work in the world.
3. In the framework of participating in God's mission, the church carries out its mission. The church's mission is done by every member of the church in the context of the society and nation wherever the church is placed.
4. The church carries out its mission by continuously manifesting fellowship with God and with others on the basis of love, and through many forms of witness and service.
5. In the framework of carrying out its mission, the church members play an essential role according to God's calling and the gifts of the Holy Spirit. In relation to that, church members are called to become church officebearers taking the role of church leadership. The relationship between church officebearers and church mem-

bers is not a hierarchical relationship, but a dynamic and reciprocal functional relationship based on love.

6. The church's mission is carried out in the middle of an ever changing and developing situation. Therefore, in order to perform its mission well, the church as a whole in its integrity is called to always do church development.
7. Particularly, GKI besides affirming itself as part of the one church of Lord Jesus Christ also affirms itself as part of the churches in Indonesia, and part of the society, nation, and state of Indonesia.
8. GKI's existence is meant as a contribution to the process of realizing a more concrete Gereja Kristen Yang Esa di Indonesia, and for the better carrying out of God's mission. Therefore, the shape of GKI's unity is a functional unity, as reflected in an organic structural unity, while respecting and making use of all the wealth and diversity of the historical heritage in it.
9. As a church in Indonesia, GKI affirms that the church and the state have their own authority, in which the other should not interfere. However, the two are parallel partners, which respect, remind, and help each other.
10. In the spirit of togetherness, based on the Christian faith and the spirit of national unity, GKI opens up to cooperate and dialogue with other churches, the government, and other groups in the society, to promote welfare, justice, peace, and integrity of creation for all Indonesians.
11. In order for the GKI to be able to manifest its dynamic and integral unity, while doing its mission efficiently and effectively, the GKI church order (*Tata Gereja*) and GKI regulations (*Tata Laksana*) are formulated, adopted, and implemented by the GKI synod council as the official ecclesial regulations and organizational means. GKI church order and regulations are arranged according to the presbyterial-synodical system. As an integral unit, the GKI church order and regulations consist of:
  1. The church order, which covers:
    - a. Preamble
    - b. Constitution
  2. The regulations



## **Appendix B.2 - Penjelasan Tentang Mukadimah/*Explanation to the Preamble (EP)***

The preamble is a statement of GKI's theological understanding regarding the Church universal and particular.

### Paragraph 1

1. Only in the Holy Spirit, GKI can express its understanding of faith regarding the Church universal and speaks about itself in particular through this preamble.
2. Under the guidance and help of the Holy Spirit, GKI discerns the Scripture. That discernment happens continuously in the encounter with the living God, who reveals Himself in the Lord Jesus Christ as testified by the Old Testament and New Testament Scripture.
3. GKI's process of discerning the Scripture happens in the present Indonesian context. But in understanding its context, GKI sees itself also as an integral part of this world. Therefore, expressing itself and its function in the context of Indonesia must be understood broadly in the context of the world.
4. From the discernment as mentioned above, GKI declares its points of understanding and confession of faith regarding the Church universal and particular. On the one hand, GKI's general and basic understanding about itself is included in this universal understanding. On the other hand, GKI's self-understanding in particular contains points which are derived from that universal understanding.
5. As a result of missionary work, domestic and from abroad, in East Java on 22 February 1934 a church was founded, which later became Gereja Kristen Indonesia Jawa Timur; in West Java on 24 March 1940 a church was founded, which later became Gereja Kristen Indonesia Jawa Barat; and in Central Java on 8 August 1945 a church was founded which later became Gereja Kristen Indonesia Jawa Tengah. Since 27 March 1962, these three churches have tried to unify into one Sinode Am Gereja Kristen Indonesia. On 26 August 1988, the three churches became one church under the name Gereja Kristen Indonesia.

### Paragraph 2

1. The source of the church being in the world does not come from itself nor from the world, but from God through His salvation work in and throughout history. The phrase 'in and throughout history' refers to God's salvation work, which covers the wholeness of time and events in this world since the fall of humankind into sin until the end of time. This salvation work includes the participation of humankind and the world.
2. God's salvation work is liberating the world and humanity from sin, and it brought the world and humankind to a new life in the right relationship with God, with others, and with the whole of creation.
3. The history in which the salvation work of God is happening is the history of our world.

4. In the history of the world, God works through his covenant. His covenant, on the one hand, summarizes God's initiative and love to bind Him-self and to call humankind, and on the other hand, summarizes human responses through love and obedience to God's initiatives and work. That salvation history started from God's action to the people of Israel, and through Jesus Christ, and continues with God's work through his Church.
5. From the perspective of covenant in the framework of God's salvation, the Lord Jesus Christ is the foundation and head of the Church, which signifies the Church's presence as the new people of God. On the one hand, the church cannot be separated from the people of Israel in the Old Testament. On the other hand, the presence of the church as a new people is founded on Christ as Lord and Savior of the world.
6. Only by the Holy Spirit, the Lord Jesus Christ becomes and is acknowledged as the foundation and head of the Church. On the one hand, the Holy Spirit continuously renews the church and life here and now. On the other hand, the Holy Spirit continuously directs the church to live and grow towards the future, toward the perfect fulfillment of God's salvation work.
7. In the Lord Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit, the church as the new people is one. On the one hand, the church's unity that is rooted in Jesus Christ is 'given', on the other hand, by the power of the Holy Spirit, the church is called to manifest that unity.
8. The church's unity is a unity in diversity. In Jesus Christ, the church is essentially one. However, in its history that one church has manifested itself into many diverse historical units if seen from the perspective of history, culture, tradition, way of life and mindset, organization, and others. Departing from this reality, only by the power of the Holy Spirit, every church which is a part of the church of the Lord Jesus Christ will be enabled to manifest unity in diversity.
9. Therefore, the church as a new people is an organic unity, continuously growing, while bearing the banner of liberation from sin for humankind and the world. The church is bound in time and space as a historical reality in the world. However, precisely because all of its being is directed to the fulfillment of God's salvation work, the church is called and commissioned by God to participate in fulfilling his plan and salvation work in and for the world.

### Paragraph 3

1. God's universal salvation work, which covers everything, is called God's mission. In essence, God himself carries on his mission. But the church gets a place and calling to participate in executing God's mission through the church's mission. God's mission cannot be limited to the mission of the church. In the framework of God's salvation work in the world, God's mission is expressed also through the church's mission, and therefore the church's mission is based on and is serving God's mission.

2. The church in its entirety is the bearer of the church's mission. That means that every church member, whether individually or together, is responsible in doing the church's mission.
3. The church is called and commissioned by God to do its mission – in the framework of God's mission – in and for the world. Therefore, the church's mission has to be done in the context of the society, nation and state, wherever the church is situated.

#### Paragraph 4

The church's mission is understood as one holistic unity, which consists of fellowship (*persekutuan*), witness (*kesaksian*), and service (*pelayanan*). In reality, the mission of the church is divided into two major parts that cannot be separated from each other. On the one hand, in doing its mission, the church is manifesting fellowship, which emphasizes its own being. On the other hand, the church does the church's mission by doing witness and service, with an emphasis on its works.

#### Paragraph 5

1. Church members play an essential role in carrying out the church's mission. It means that church members play an important role as the executors of church mission. On the one hand, this role is based on God's call, which is understood as a gift, task, and responsibility given to his people. On the other hand, this role is manifested according to the spiritual gifts, which is understood as the many talents, skills, expertise, and others that God gave to every church member.
2. God calls some church members to become church officebearers, with the role of serving and equipping the church in order to be able to carry out its mission.
3. The relationship between church members and church officebearers is functional in essence, meaning that both are inter-related and cannot be separated in carrying out the church mission.

#### Paragraph 6

1. What is meant by church development (*pembangunan gereja*) here is not physical in nature (for example in developing church buildings or places of worship). The term development here refers to 'oikodome' in the New Testament, a spiritual development in the widest sense of the word, as the responsibility of Christian fellowship as a whole.
2. In essence, God is the main actor of church development. However, because God has chosen and wants to call his people as his partners, in a concrete and operational way, the church becomes the actor of church development. What is meant by the church here is all of its members and officebearers, whether individually or together as unity.

## Paragraph 7

Clear

## Paragraph 8

1. GKI's unity is not an abstract unity, but a unity that is visible in one integral organization with one church order. However, considering that GKI comes from GKI Jawa Barat, GKI Jawa Tengah, and GKI Jawa Timur, each with its own historical heritage and specific context, that unity must remain open for the diversity that exists and not only emphasize uniformity, which could diminish creativity and the rich historical heritage we have.
2. GKI as a unity is not exclusive, which is only focused on itself, but it rather is a part of the churches in Indonesia through the Communion of Churches in Indonesia (PGI), which since its conception on 25 May 1950 has been on the same historical track, to manifest Gereja Kristen Yang Esa di Indonesia (One Christian Church in Indonesia).
3. GKI's unity is not an end in itself, but is also intended to enable GKI to carry out its function in the world, especially in Indonesia. GKI's unity on the one hand is always in the process of change in itself, but on the other hand is also in the process of influencing and changing its external surroundings. Therefore, this unity is called a functional unity: first, by being based in Christ and by the power of the Holy Spirit, GKI's unity has the function to partake in the fight to realize the unity of the Church, especially in Indonesia; secondly GKI's unity has the function to partake in God's mission in the world, especially in Indonesia.
4. In accordance with its essence, GKI does not give any possibility for separation from the unity of GKI.

## Paragraph 9

1. GKI acknowledges that the church and the state are two institutions that come from God, each with their own calling and authority. Therefore, the church should not directly interfere in or take over the authority of the state. And the other way around, the state should not limit the freedom of the church in expressing itself and carrying out its function. However, the church and the state should live side by side, developing a good relationship and cooperation with each other.
2. In that kind of relationship, GKI affirms and holds to the Scripture as the only foundation and norm for the life of the church. In this light, GKI together with all elements of the Indonesian society accepts Pancasila as the principle in living as a society, nation, and state. What is meant by Pancasila, is as formulated in the national constitution: (1) The oneness of God, (2) A just and civilized humanity, (3) Unity of Indonesia, (4) Democracy under the guidance of wisdom through deliberation of representatives, (5) Social justice for all Indonesian people.
3. GKI supports, is actively involved in, and participates fully in the national development because GKI understands the national development as an intentional effort

to create a better livelihood for the Indonesian people, in its broadest sense. This support, involvement, and participation must be expressed in the attitude of being positive, creative, critical, and realistic. Positive means openness to what is good; creative means: by the guidance of the Holy Spirit actively involved in renewal efforts; critical means seeing everything in the light of the Scripture; realistic means: being aware of the time and the limits of reality and not carried away by unrealistic dreams.

#### Paragraph 10

1. GKI is called to promote welfare –which is shalom—which contains justice, peace, and the integrity of creation. To make it happen, GKI has to open itself to cooperate and dialogue with all sides and groups of good will.
2. Promoting justice, peace, and integrity of creation are three missionary aspects that are inter-related and inseparable. The peace that GKI is promoting is a just peace, not just living in *status quo*. The justice that GKI is promoting is a reconciling justice, not putting different sides into opposition to each other. And lastly, peace and justice are not only within humankind alone, but also in the context of the whole creation.
3. What is meant by ‘integrity of creation’ is that all God’s creatures are inter-related in an integral system of life, where everything in it depends on each other. The extinction or destruction of one element will impact the wholeness of this system. In its turn, it will endanger every element in the system.
4. Humans must not think only of their interest and comfort, disregarding the rights of other creatures. GKI is called not only to promote the welfare of humankind alone, but the life of all God’s creation.

#### Paragraph 11

1. As stated in the previous paragraphs, the source of GKI’s being and mission is God. Therefore, GKI as an institution is not an ordinary institution and it must essentially be different from other institutions in this world. However, being an institution in this world, GKI still requires formal regulatory tools and functional organizational means. All those are formulated in GKI’s church order.
2. GKI’s church order is one variant of the presbyterial-synodical system of church government. This system has two basic aspects, which shape GKI’s unity that carries GKI’s mission, and GKI’s leadership institution.
  - a. The shape of GKI’s unity departs from the congregation as the basis form of unity, which is a means for fellowship for GKI members as believers. This basic form of unity then widens into the form of the presbytery unity, then widens into the form of the regional synod unity, and as the widest form into the synod unity.
  - b. A GKI’s leadership institution is called a council. A council is a permanent institution, which is a means for church officebearers to carry out their lead-

ership ministry collectively and collegially. Parallel with the shape of GKI's unity, the council starts from the consistory as the leadership institution in the congregation, which is widened into the presbytery council, then the regional synod council, and finally the synod council.

3. The preamble contains the ecclesiological basis for the articles in GKI's constitution and regulations. GKI's ecclesiology is formulated in confessional statements regarding the church. In essence, those statements regard the identity of the church, which is universal and particular, in a bipolar framework (centered on two questions: what/who is the church, and what is its mission?). The preamble is explained in the explanation to the preamble. The explanation to the preamble is an integral part of the preamble and must be read together with the preamble so that its meaning can be understood in its fullness.
4. GKI's constitution contains GKI's self-understanding, which is an elaboration of GKI's ecclesiology and is formulated in brief, dense, non-operational statements. The constitution is explained in the explanation to the constitution. The explanation to the constitution is an integral part of the constitution and must be read together with the constitution so that its meaning can be understood in its fullness.
5. GKI's regulations contain the elaboration of GKI's constitution in the form of operational and detailed rules, which contain:
  - a. Definitions/rules of the church
  - b. Criteria used in the church
  - c. Procedures used in the church
6. GKI's regulations are complemented with the GKI Administrative Tools (*Peranti Gerejawi GKI*) so that the criteria and the procedures mentioned in the regulations can be followed.

**Appendix B.3 - Tata Dasar /Constitution of GKI**

## § 1 – Nature and Shape

1. GKI is a Church of Lord Jesus Christ, which at present takes form as congregations, presbyteries, regional synods, and a synod in Indonesia, doing its mission in the framework of God's mission in the world.
2.
  - a. A congregation is the form of GKI unity that is present and doing its mission in a particular region and is a communion of all members in that region.
  - b. A presbytery is the form of GKI unity that is present and doing its mission in a particular region and is a communion of all congregations in that region.
  - c. A regional synod is the form of GKI unity that is present and doing its mission in a particular region and is a communion of all presbyteries in that region.
  - d. The synod is the form of GKI unity that is present and doing its mission in a particular region and is a communion of all regional synods in that region.
3. Congregation, presbytery, regional synod, and synod, each and as a whole, are the manifestation of GKI as one whole and integral church.
4. GKI gives no possibility for secession of a congregation, a presbytery, and a regional synod.

## § 2 – Name and Location

1. Name
  - a. GKI in the form of a congregation is called: GKI ... (full address, street name and city, area and city, or the city name)
  - b. GKI in the form of a presbytery is called: GKI Klasis ... (name of the city or name of the region).
  - c. GKI in the form of a regional synod is called: GKI Sinode Wilayah ... (name of province).
  - d. GKI in the form of a synod is called: Gereja Kristen Indonesia.

## § 3 – Confession

1. GKI confesses its faith that Jesus Christ is:
  - a. Lord and world Savior, Source of truth and life.
  - b. Head of the Church, who founded the church and called the church to life in faith and mission.
2. GKI confesses its faith that the Scripture – Old Testament and New Testament – is the Word of God, which became the foundation and the only norm for church life.
3. GKI, in communion with the Church of Lord Jesus Christ of all times and places, accepts the Apostle's Creed, the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed, and the Athanasian Creed.
4. GKI, in relation with the Reformed tradition, accepts the Heidelberg Catechism.

5. GKI, in communion with the Indonesian churches, accepts the Pemahaman Bersama Iman Kristen (Common Understanding of Christian Faith) from Persekutuan Gereja-gereja di Indonesia/PGI (Communion of Churches in Indonesia).

#### § 4 – Purpose

GKI intends to participate in doing God's mission by expressing fellowship, witness, and service.

#### § 5 – Fellowship

1. GKI expresses fellowship with God and with other believers.
2. That fellowship is expressed both individually and communally.
3. The fellowship is done:
  - a. Within the scope of GKI.
  - b. Within the ecumenical movement.

#### § 6 – Witness and Service

1. GKI does witness and service in society through words and deeds.
2. Witness and service is done both individually and communally.
3. Witness and service of GKI is also done in partnership cooperation with other churches, the government, and the society.

#### § 7 – Church Development

1. Basic Definition
  - a. Church development is the whole effort done by GKI in all of its scope, that is the congregation, the presbytery, the regional synod, and the synod, to plan and implement change processes (transformation) as a whole, integrated, directed, and sustainable, in a reciprocal relationship with the society wherever GKI lives and works.
  - b. Church development is intended so that a congregation, a presbytery, a regional synod, and the synod of GKI, whether on its own or together, can realize fellowship, and do witness and service according to God's will in Jesus Christ in their respective situation.
  - c. Church development in the whole range of GKI must produce a positive and constructive reciprocal impact for life and work in other aspects of GKI as a whole.

#### § 8 – Membership

1. The members of GKI consist of:
  - a. Baptized members, who are members of GKI that have already received infant baptism.
  - b. Confessing members, who are members of GKI that have already received adult baptism, or baptized members who have done confession of faith.



2. The member's function is to carry out church mission and church development.

#### § 9 – Church Office

1. Church Office in GKI consists of:
  - a. Elder
  - b. Minister
2. Elder and minister function to lead the church.
3. The leadership function of elder and minister is realized in the framework of church development:
  - a. In the congregation within and through the consistory.
  - b. In the presbytery within and through the presbytery council and the presbytery council executive body.
  - c. In the regional synod within and through the regional synod council and the regional synod council executive body.
  - d. In the synod within and through the synod council and the synod council executive body.

#### § 10 – Leadership

1. Leader
  - a. As a congregation, GKI is led by the consistory whose members consist of all church officebearers within that congregation. According to its need, the consistory can form a consistory executive body as daily leadership, appointed and held accountable to the consistory.
  - b. As a presbytery, GKI is led by the presbytery council whose members consist of all consistories within that presbytery. The presbytery council executive body is the daily leader of the presbytery council, appointed and held accountable to the presbytery council.
  - c. As a regional synod, GKI is led by the regional synod council whose members consist of all presbyteries within that regional synod. The regional synod council executive body is the daily leader of the regional synod council, appointed and held accountable to the regional synod council.
  - d. As a synod, GKI is led by the synod council whose members consist of all regional synods within the synod. The synod council executive body is the daily leader of the synod council, appointed by and held accountable to the synod council.
2. Task
  - a. The task of the consistory is to lead the congregation so that it can do church development at the congregational level to achieve the purpose of GKI at the congregation level. If a consistory executive body exists, its task is the daily leadership of the consistory.
  - b. The task of the presbytery council is to lead the congregations within that presbytery so that they can do church development at the presbytery level to

achieve the purpose of GKI at the presbytery level. The task of the presbytery council executive body is the daily leadership of the presbytery council.

- c. The task of the regional synod council is to lead the congregations within that regional synod so that they can do church development at the regional synod level to achieve the purpose of GKI in the regional synod level. The task of the regional synod council executive body is the daily leadership of the regional synod council.
  - d. The task of the synod council is to lead the congregations within that synod so that they can do church development at the synod level to achieve the purpose of GKI at the synod level. The task of the synod council executive body is the daily leadership of the synod council.
3. Authority
    - a. The consistory has the authority to perform its task. If a consistory executive body exists, it receives the authority to fulfill its task from the consistory.
    - b. The presbytery council has the authority to perform its task. The presbytery council executive body receives the authority to fulfill its task from the presbytery council.
    - c. The regional synod council has the authority to perform its task. The regional synod council executive body receives the authority to fulfill its task from the regional synod council.
    - d. The synod council has the authority to perform its task. The synod executive body receives the authority to fulfill its task from the synod council.
  4. Accountability
    - a. The consistory must account for the task it performs according to the authority it has.
    - b. The presbytery council must account for the task if performs according to the authority it has.
    - c. The regional synod council must account for the task if performs according to the authority it has.
    - d. The synod council must account for the task if performs according to the authority it has.
  5. Ecclesiastical meeting
    - a. The consistory meeting is the means of decision making for the consistory. It is attended by consistory members from that particular congregation. Decisions of the consistory must be accepted by the members of that particular congregation.
    - b. The presbytery council meeting is the means for decision making for the presbytery council. It is attended by consistories within that particular presbytery. Decisions of the presbytery council must be accepted by the congregations within that particular presbytery.
    - c. The regional synod council meeting is the means for decision making for the regional synod council. It is attended by presbytery councils within that partic-

ular regional synod. Decisions of the regional synod council must be accepted by the congregations within that particular regional synod.

- d. The synod council meeting is the means for decision making for the synod council. It is attended by regional synod councils within the synod. Decisions of the synod council must be accepted by the congregations within the synod.
6. Executive meeting
    - a. The presbytery council executive body can hold an executive meeting between two presbytery council meetings, as a means to make decisions with the participation of the consistories within the presbytery.
    - b. The regional synod council executive body can hold an executive meeting between two regional synod council meetings, as a means to make decisions with the participation of the presbytery council executive bodies within the regional synod.
    - c. The synod council executive body can hold an executive meeting between two synod council meetings, as a means to make decisions with the participation of regional synod council executive bodies within the synod.
  7. Review and Appeal
 

If a decision of the consistory, presbytery council, regional synod council, or synod council is considered wrong, a review can be done by the council that made that decision, and then an appeal to the wider council can be made. For decisions made by the synod council that are considered wrong, only reconsideration is possible.
  8. Representative
 

The consistory, the presbytery council executive body, the regional synod council executive body, and the synod council executive body can appoint representatives for particular matters.
  9. Ministerial Body
 

According to existing ministerial needs, the consistory, the presbytery council and/or the presbytery council executive body, the regional synod council and/or the regional synod council executive body, the synod council and/or the synod council executive body can form a ministerial body that is appointed and held accountable by the respective body appointing it.
  10. Church Worker
 

According to existing ministerial needs, the congregation, the presbytery, the regional synod, and the synod can have a church worker who is appointed and held accountable to the respective body appointing it.

#### § 11 – Possessions

1. The possessions of GKI are God's belonging that is entrusted to the GKI for the fulfilment of its mission.
2. GKI in the form of a congregation, a presbytery, A regional synod, and the synod, each have possession ownership under the name of GKI as congregation, presbytery, regional synod, or synod.

3. GKI acquires its possessions mainly from the offerings of its members, and also from other sources as long as not in contradiction with the Scripture and GKI teaching.
4. GKI possessions consist of money, valuables, tangible and intangible assets, and intellectual property.
5. GKI must manage its properties in ways that do not contradict the Scripture and GKI teaching.

#### § 12 – Regulations

The elaboration of the GKI constitution is further regulated in the regulations of GKI.

#### § 13 - Changes

1. The preamble of the GKI constitution and the GKI constitution can be changed by the synod council in a synod council meeting, based on suggestions from:
  - a. A regional synod council, which can come from:
    - i. A confessing member, through and approved by the consistory, the presbytery council, and the regional synod council.
    - ii. A consistory, through and approved by the presbytery council and the regional synod council.
    - iii. A consistory executive body, through and approved by the consistory, the presbytery council, and the regional synod council.
    - iv. A presbytery council, through and approved by the regional synod council.
    - v. A presbytery council executive body, through and approved by the presbytery council and the regional synod council.
    - vi. A regional synod council executive body, through and approved by the regional synod council.
    - vii. A regional synod council.
  - b. The synod council executive body.
2. Every suggestion for change must become a material for and be included in the agenda of the synod council meeting through the synod council executive body.

#### § 14 - Closing

Matters not yet regulated in this constitution of GKI should be decided by the consistory, or the presbytery council, or the regional synod council, or the synod council within their respective meetings, according to their task and authority, as long as not in contradiction with the church order and regulations of GKI.

## **Appendix B.4 - Tata Laksana /Regulations**

### Part A – Nature and Shape

#### Chapter 1 – Congregation

##### § 1 – Stages for Forming a Congregation

A congregation is formed after going through two stages, a congregation post and a congregation prospect.

##### § 2 – Congregation Post

###### Point 2: Requirements

- a. To have at least 15 confessing members from the forming congregation.
- b. To have a regular place for worship.
- c. To have conducted regular worship at least once a week.
- d. To have at least 3 confessing members willing to be member of the congregation post committee, and who are not related to each other as spouses, in-laws, parent-child, and siblings.
- e. According to GKI's development strategy and policy.

###### Point 3: Procedure

- a. The consistory sends a written request to the regional synod council executive body regarding the intention to plant a congregation post, with carbon copy to the respective presbytery council executive body and the synod council executive body. The request must be accompanied with an explanation regarding the fulfillment of the congregation post requirements as addressed in § 2 Point 2.
- b. The respective regional synod council executive body conducts an incidental general visitation to the congregation, with the involvement of the respective presbytery council executive body.
- c. Based on the visitation, the regional synod council executive body makes a report and recommendation regarding the plan to plant that congregation post, and delivers it at the next regional synod council executive body business meeting.
- d. The regional synod council executive body in its business meeting considers that visitation report and recommendation to decide whether to approve or reject the consistory's request.
- e. The regional synod council executive body delivers the decision to the asking consistory, with carbon copy to the respective presbytery council executive body and the synod council executive body.
- f. If the request is approved, the consistory will convene an inauguration worship for the congregation post using the liturgy from the synod council, including the formalization of the congregation post committee, at least 3 months after the request has been granted. The service will be led by a minister. In the service, the regional synod council executive body will give a certificate to the congregation.

- g. The respective presbytery council executive body reports about the new congregation post to the presbytery council in the next presbytery council meeting.
- h. The respective regional synod council executive body reports about the new congregation post to the regional synod council in the next regional synod council meeting.

### § 3 – Congregation Prospect

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### § 4 – Change of Status from Congregation Prospect into Congregation Post

The status of congregation prospect can be changed into congregation post after the approval from the presbytery council, if it no longer meets the requirements of a congregation prospect despite all efforts done to address the matter. The respective consistory reports it to its respective presbytery council executive body, regional synod council executive body, and the synod council executive body.

### § 5 - Congregation

#### 1. Requirements

- a. To have at least 100 confessing members from the founding congregation, who are willing to become a member of the new congregation.
- b. To have a regular place of worship.
- c. To be able to realize communion and to do witness and service according to the awareness of its members about Christ's calling.
- d. To be able to govern itself based on the leadership potential among its members.
- e. To be able to finance its own needs.
- f. To have at least 7 confessing members who will be elected as elder.
- g. In accordance with GKI's development strategy and policy.

#### 2. Procedure

- a. The consistory sends a written request to the synod council executive body with carbon copy to the respective regional synod council executive body and presbytery council executive body about its intention to institutionalize a congregation prospect to become a congregation. The request must be accompanied with an explanation about the fulfillment of requirements as explained in § 5 point 1.
- b. The synod council executive body will do an incidental general visitation to the congregation and assess the conditions, with the involvement of the respective presbytery council executive body and the regional synod council executive body.
- c. Based on the visitation, the synod council executive body makes a report and recommendation regarding the plan to institutionalize that congregation pro-

- spect into a congregation, and delivers it at the next synod council executive body business meeting.
- d. The synod council executive body in its business meeting considers that visitation report and recommendation to decide whether to approve or reject the consistory's request.
  - e. The synod council executive body delivers the decision to the asking consistory, with carbon copy to the respective presbytery council executive body and the synod council executive body.
  - f. If the request is approved, the consistory will convene an inauguration worship for the congregation post using the liturgy from the synod council, including the formalization of the congregation post committee, at least 6 months after the request has been granted. The service will be led by a minister. In the service, the regional synod council executive body will give a certificate to the congregation.
  - g. The respective presbytery council executive body reports about the new congregation to the presbytery council in the next presbytery council meeting.
  - h. The respective regional synod council executive body reports about the new congregation to the regional synod council in the next regional synod council meeting.
  - i. The synod council executive body reports about the new congregation to the synod council to be incorporated as new member of the synod in the next synod meeting.

#### § 6 – Change of Status from Congregation into Congregation Prospect

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#### § 7 – Insertion of a Congregation from Another Denomination

1. If a congregation from another denomination wishes to be inserted into the GKI, this is possible as long as it will not disrupt the ecumenical relationship between GKI and that other denomination.
2. The congregation is an independent congregation, or one that is handed over by the synod leadership of that denomination.
3. -

#### Chapter 2 – Presbytery

#### § 8 – Presbytery Arrangement

1. The considerations for arranging a presbytery:
  - a. The number of congregations is a minimum of 7 and a maximum of 15.
  - b. The balance of resources and financial matters.
  - c. Geographical location.
  - d. The GKI development policy and strategy.

2. A suggestion to arrange a presbytery can be proposed to the regional synod council by the presbytery council or regional synod council executive body, only after an adequacy study has been done by them.
3. If the suggested presbytery re-arrangement involves congregations of an inter-regional synod, the arrangement is done together with all regional synod council executive bodies, with the involvement of the respective presbytery council executive bodies, and decided on by the respective regional synod councils.
4. A presbytery arrangement is decided on by the regional synod council.
5. The result of the presbytery arrangement is reported to the synod council.

### Chapter 3 – Regional Synod

#### § 9 – Regional Synod Arrangement

1. The conditions for arranging a regional synod:
  - a. The number of presbyteries is a minimum of 3 and a maximum of 8.
  - b. The balance of resources and finances.
  - c. Geographical location.
  - d. The GKI's development policy and strategy.
2. A suggestion to arrange a regional synod can be proposed to the synod council by the regional synod council or the synod council executive body, only after an adequacy study has been done by the regional synod council executive body together with the synod council executive body.
3. A regional synod arrangement is decided on by the synod council.

### Part B – Name and Logo

#### Chapter 4 – Name

#### § 10 – Example

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#### Chapter 5 – GKI Logo

#### § 11 – Meaning of GKI logo





1. As a sign symbolizing the nature of GKI as a church, GKI decides on the logo:
2. Explanation:
  - a. The boat represents God's Church moving forward fulfilling its calling in the world, and GKI's affirmation as an inseparable part of God's Church to realize the One Church in Indonesia and in the world.
  - b. The cross represents the love and sacrifice of Lord Jesus Christ which determines the path of GKI's life.
  - c. The wave represents the world, which is full of challenge and opportunity, into which the GKI is sent.
  - d. The alpha and omega represent the eternal God, who decides and is present along the GKI's journey.

### Part C – Teaching

#### Chapter 6 – Teaching

##### § 12 - Teaching

1. Holding to GKI's confession as stated in Chapter 3 of its constitution, GKI's teaching is elaborated and formulated in its catechism and teaching guidance.
2. GKI catechism books are:
  - a. Tumbuh dalam Kristus (Grow in Christ)
  - b. Tuhan Ajarlah Aku (Lord, Teach Me)
3. GKI accepts the currently available teaching guidances, which are:
  - a. Teaching guidance about the scripture
  - b. Teaching guidance about the church
  - c. Teaching guidance about the new Pentecostals (Charismatics)
    - i. Glossolalia
    - ii. Healing
    - iii. Vision
    - iv. Baptism
    - v. Holy Communion

### Part D – Fellowship

#### Chapter 7 – Worship

##### § 13 – Kinds of Service

-

##### § 14 – Parties Responsible and Organizers

-

##### § 15 - Liturgy

-

## § 16 – Song Book

1. The synod council decides on the song books for the worship service, using the liturgy decided on by the synod council.
2. The song books are *Kidung Jemaat*, *Nyanyikanlah Kidung Baru*, and *Pelengkap Kidung Jemaat*.
3. Apart from the books mentioned in point 2, the consistory is responsible for selecting songs used in worship and other activities according to GKI's teaching, and monitoring their usage.

## § 17 - Lectionary

## § 18 – Minister Liturgical Clothing

-

## § 19 – Liturgical Colors

-

## Chapter 8 – Sacraments

## § 20 - Types

The sacraments acknowledged and administered in GKI are:

1. Holy Baptism, which is adult baptism and infant baptism.
2. Holy Communion

## § 21 – Adult Baptism

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## § 22 – Infant Baptism

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## § 23 – Baptism under emergency circumstances

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## § 24 – Confession of Faith

-

## § 25 – Holy Communion

-

## Chapter 9 - Catechesis

## § 26 - Catechesis

-

## Chapter 10 – Church Wedding

## § 27 – Definition

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## § 28 - Requirements

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## § 29 - Procedures

§ 30 – Ecumenical Weddings together with The Roman Catholic Church

-

§ 31 – Church Wedding with special requirements

-

Chapter 11 – Ministry

§ 32 - Ministry

1. Definition

Ministry in the framework of fellowship is the act of strengthening and serving one another between members, congregations, presbyteries, and regional synods through various activities.

2. Actor

- a. Each and every member of GKI, whether personally or as a community, is called into ministry.
- b. The consistory, the presbytery council, the regional synod council, and the synod council, whether alone or together, are called to ministry.

Chapter 12 – Pastoral care

§ 33 - Definition

Pastoral care is a ministry done in love towards the members and/or church officebearers, whether individually or communally, also towards church institutions, to support, guide, oversee, criticize, heal, and reconcile so that he/she or they live in obedience to God, in peace with God, others, and the whole of creation.

§ 34 - Actor

Pastoral care is done by the members and/or church officebearer and/or church institution.

§ 35 - Types

Pastoral care consists of:

1. General Pastoral care
2. Special Pastoral care

§ 36 – General Pastoral care

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§ 37 – Special Pastoral care

1. Special pastoral care can be applied toward members, church officebearers, and church institutions.

2. Special pastoral care for members is applied towards baptized and confessing members who:
  - a. behave against the scripture and/or
  - b. have teachings that are against the scripture and GKI's teaching, so that they become a stumbling stone for others, in order that they repent.
3. Special pastoral care for church officebearers is given towards elders and ministers who:
  - a. behave against the scripture and/or
  - b. have and spread teachings that are against the scripture and GKI's teaching, including abusing and/or betraying their official calling, so that they become a stumbling stone for others, in order that they repent.
4. Special pastoral care for church institutions is given towards a consistory which:
  - a. makes a decision and/or
  - b. is involved in church practices, which are against the scripture and/or church order and regulations of GKI and/or GKI's teaching and/or decisions of the presbytery council and/or the regional synod council and/or the synod council, so that they threaten the integrity of the congregation and GKI as a whole, spreading teachings that are against the Scripture and GKI's teaching, and causing the spread of a church practice that is not in accordance with the church order and the regulations of GKI, in order that they repent.

§ 38 – Steps for Applying Special Pastoral care

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§ 39 – Procedures for Applying Special Pastoral care to a Baptized Member

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§ 40 – Procedures for Applying Special Pastoral care to a Confessing Member

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§ 41 – Procedures for Applying Special Pastoral care to an Elder

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§ 42 – Procedures for Applying Special Pastoral care to a Minister serving in a Congregation and a Minister with a special appointment from the congregation

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§ 43 – Procedures for Applying Special Pastoral care to a Minister with a special appointment from the presbytery

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§ 44 – Procedures for Applying Special Pastoral care to a Minister with a special appointment from the regional synod

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§ 45 – Procedures for Applying Special Pastoral care to a Minister with a special appointment from the synod

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§ 46 – Procedures for Applying Special Pastoral care to an Emeritus Minister

§ 47 – Procedures for Applying Special Pastoral care to a Consistory

-

Chapter 13 – Visitation

§ 48 - Types

1. Visitation to a congregation
  - a. General visitation to a congregation
  - b. General incidental visitation to a congregation
  - c. Special visitation to congregation
2. Visitation to a presbytery
3. Visitation to a regional synod

§ 49 – General Visitation to a Congregation

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§ 50 – General Incidental Visitation to a Congregation

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§ 51 – Special Visitation to a Congregation

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§ 52 – Visitation to a Presbytery

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§ 53 – Visitation to a Regional Synod

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Chapter 14 – The Ecumenical Movement of the churches

§ 54 – GKI’s Participation in the ecumenical movement of the churches

In the framework of realizing fellowship, GKI in all its levels participates in the ecumenical movement of the churches in Indonesia, Asia, and the world.

§ 55 – Congregation’s Participation

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§ 56 – Presbytery’s Participation

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§ 57 – Regional Synod Participation

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§ 58 – Synod Participation

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Part E – Witness and Service

Chapter 15 – Witness and Service

## § 59 - Definition

1. Witness and service is part of the GKI mission, realized by the GKI to participate in bringing God's peace.
2. The GKI is living it through the call to repentance and efforts to manifest justice, peace, and the integrity of creation.
3. Witness and service is done by all members, whether individually or together, in the context of society, nation, and state, wherever GKI is placed, and through cooperation with others.

## § 60 - Activity

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## § 61 - Actor

Witness and service is done by:

1. Members
2. The consistory, the presbytery council, the regional synod council, the synod council, and the ministerial bodies at all levels.

## § 62 - execution

1. Members
  - a. Members, whether individually or together, do witness and service in daily life and through their professions.
  - b. Members can do witness and service through the church or other institutions, whether domestic or abroad with guidance from the consistory.
2. Councils
  - a. The consistory, the presbytery council, the regional synod council, and the synod council plan and execute witness and service holistically.
  - b. The execution involves members and can also be through cooperation with other churches, the government, and other groups in society, whether domestic or abroad.

## Part F – Church Development

## Chapter 16 – Church Development

## § 63 – Congregation Development

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## § 64 – Presbytery Development

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## § 65 – Regional Synod Development

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## § 66 – Synod Development

-

## Part G – Membership

## Chapter 17 – Membership

## § 67 – Baptized Member

## 1. Responsibility

- a. To develop oneself in life and faith through fellowship, service, and witness activities according to one's age, whether individually or together.
- b. To prepare oneself to attend the catechism class in order to confirm one's faith.

## 2. Rights

- a. To receive pastoral care.
- b. To receive confession of faith.
- c. To receive a church wedding.
- d. To become a member of congregation ministerial bodies according to the regulations.
- e. To file a review and appeal regarding oneself.

## § 68 – Confessing Members

## 1. Responsibility

- a. Doing the church mission, which means expressing communion and doing witness and service whether individually or together, within and through the life and profession of the person, family, within and through one's personal life, church institution, or directly in the society.
- b. Doing congregation, presbytery, regional synod, synod development, whether individually or together, and with the leadership of the church officebearers, by:
  - i. Empowering oneself for the life and work of the congregation, presbytery, regional synod, and synod.
  - ii. Participating in arranging, doing, and evaluating the work programs and budget of the congregation, presbytery, regional synod, and synod.
  - iii. Participating in forming the ministerial structure and organizational structure of the congregation, presbytery, regional synod, and synod.
  - iv. Participating in communication processes in the congregation, presbytery, regional synod, and synod.
  - v. Participating in decision-making processes in the congregation, presbytery, regional synod, and synod.
  - vi. Participating in handling and resolving problems arising in the congregation, presbytery, regional synod, and synod.

## 2. Rights

- a. To receive pastoral care.
- b. To receive sacraments.
- c. To receive a church wedding.

- d. To vote and be elected as church officebearer.
- e. To become a member of a ministerial body of the congregation, the presbytery, the regional synod, and the synod.
- f. To file a review and appeal.

#### § 69 – GKI membership book

Every congregation must have a GKI membership book to record and make use the membership data. The formulation of the GKI membership book can be found in the administrative tool book.

#### Chapter 18 – Membership Transfer

##### § 70 – Transfer from another GKI congregation

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##### § 71 - Transfer to another denomination with the same teaching

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##### § 72 – Transfer from another denomination with the same teaching

##### § 73 – Transfer to other denomination with a different teaching

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##### § 74 – Transfer from other denomination with a different teaching

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##### § 75 – Converting to another religion and re-acceptance

#### Chapter 19 – Regular Visitor (*Simpatisan*)

##### § 76 – Regular Visitor

1. A regular visitor is a person who is not yet a member of GKI, who is:
  - a. Attending catechism class, or
  - b. Regularly attending worship in a congregation.
2. A regular visitor also participates in doing the church's mission and congregation development.

#### Part H – Church Office

#### Chapter 20 – Basic Regulations Regarding the Office of Elder

##### § 77 - Status

An elder is based in a congregation, but his/her status is as an elder of GKI.

##### § 78 – Period of Office

1. The period of office for elders is three years, unless terminated.
2. The period of office for elders can be extended.



## § 79 – position and function

1. Elder is the church office that together with the minister forms the consistory, the presbytery council, the regional synod council, and the synod council.
2. An elder is called to do his/her leadership ministry voluntarily in the framework of church development in order to fulfill the vision and mission in the context of the society, nation, and state.

## § 80 – period of ministry

1. The period of ministry for elders is three years.
2. In principle, for the sake of member empowerment to become an elder, a person performs one's ministry for one term only.
3. If needed, that is when in the congregation no new candidate can be elected, an elder can be re-elected for one more term. After that, he/she cannot be elected again for at least one year.
4. For an elder sitting in or elected to the presbytery council executive body, the regional synod council executive body, or the synod council executive body, the period of ministry in the congregation will automatically be extended according to the period of ministry in the respective wider bodies. For this extension period, the consistory will give a letter declaring the extension and give information about it in the church newsletter.

## § 81 – Scope and Means for doing a Leadership Ministry Task

Elders perform their leadership ministry together (collective-collegial) and individually:

1. In the congregation in the framework of congregation development, within and through the consistory and the consistory executive body.
2. In the presbytery in the framework of presbytery development, within and through the presbytery council and the presbytery council executive body. An elder who is sitting as a member of the presbytery council executive body must prioritize his/her leadership ministry in that presbytery council executive body, without neglecting his/her ministry in his/her congregation.
3. In the regional synod in the framework of regional synod development, within and through the regional synod council and the regional synod council executive body. An elder who is sitting as a member of the regional synod council executive body must prioritize his/her leadership ministry in that regional synod council executive body, without neglecting his/her ministry in his/her congregation.
4. In the synod in the framework of synod development, within and through the synod council and the synod council executive body. An elder who is sitting as a member of the synod council executive body must prioritize his/her leadership ministry in that synod council executive body, without neglecting his/her ministry in his/her congregation.

## § 82 - task

In the framework of church development, the task of elder in leadership ministry are:

1. General task:
  - a. To study the scripture.
  - b. To pray for and with the church members.
  - c. To encourage church members to participate in worship.
  - d. To equip and empower church members for their task in the church and society.
  - e. To carry out general pastoral care, with a special attention to the sick, the grieving, those in trouble, and those facing death.
  - f. To carry out special pastoral care.
  - g. To carry out inward ministry.
  - h. To carry out witness and service.
  - i. To carry out education and training.
  - j. To keep watch on the church teaching.
2. Structural leadership task: performing a leadership task as member of the consistory, presbytery council, regional synod council, and synod council.

## § 83 - requirements

1. Commitment
  - a. To understand the call to be an elder as a spiritual call from God through GKI, and to be willing to live by God's grace.
  - b. To be willing to do the task of elders with all heart and loyalty in the role of shepherd, teacher, role-model, and to be accountable.
  - c. To be willing to show behavior that is in accordance with the scripture.
  - d. To be willing to uphold the GKI teachings.
  - e. To understand and live the vision and mission of GKI.
  - f. To understand, agree with, and obey the church order and regulations of GKI.
  - g. To live out one's calling together with other people.
2. Character
  - a. Humble.
  - b. Willing to sacrifice for other people.
  - c. Caring for the weak.
  - d. Honest.
  - e. Diligent.
  - f. Sincere.
  - g. Forgiving.
  - h. Unprejudiced.
  - i. Trustworthy, especially in keeping official secrets.
3. Competency
  - a. Able to lead.

- b. Able to cooperate with other people.
  - c. Able to live in a diverse context.
  - d. Able to do independent learning.
  - e. Able to be an agent of change in individual life, in the church, and in society.
4. Administrative
- a. Already a confessing member for at least two years.
  - b. Already a member in the congregation, and active in ministry for at least two years.
5. Additional
- a. The spouse is not a stumbling block.
  - b. Having no husband-wife, parent-in-law, parent-child relationship or siblings with a current church office in the same congregation.
  - c. Not an officebearer in another church.

#### Chapter 21 – Eldership Process

##### § 84 – Basis for Calling

1. In essence, the call for eldership comes from the Lord Jesus Christ himself, which is done by the church through church procedure.
2. Through church procedure, in essence, God is using the church members and officebearers conducting the calling to fulfill His will. Because of that, the church procedure is done through faithful prayers of the members and officebearers.

##### § 85 – Candidacy Stage

1. The consistory meeting decides on the number and role of the new elders needed.
2. For three consecutive weeks, the consistory announces the plan to call new elders and asks for the input of potential candidate name from the members and officebearers according to the decided number and the ministerial role needed. The announcement must include also the requirements stated in § 83.
3. Confessing members, elders, and ministers hand in the written names of potential candidates at least two weeks after the last announcement. One is not allowed to hand in his/her own name.
4. The consistory makes a list of potential candidate names from the input.

##### § 86 – Selection Stage

1. After consideration through prayers and discernment, the consistory decides on the candidate names in its meeting. In this case, the consistory has to take into account the potential of the members and rejuvenation.
2. The consistory then makes a visitation to the selected names, to explain this call for eldership, its task, and to ask for their willingness to accept it.
3. The consistory lists the name of candidates who already accept the calling.

4. The consistory announces in the church newsletter the name and address of the candidates and the date for induction for three consecutive weeks, so that church members can give their support and consideration.
5. If there is no valid objection from any confessing member after the last announcement, the candidate will then be inducted into office.
6. An objection is considered valid if:
  - a. Written personally by stating the name, address, and signature or thumb print of the objecting person, and not a duplicate of another objection letter regarding the same matter.
  - b. The content is about the unfulfillment of the requirements as stated in § 83.
  - c. The content is proven to be true after investigation by the consistory.
7. If there is a valid objection, the induction will be cancelled. The cancellation is notified to the candidate, and to the person objecting, and will be announced in the church newsletter.
8. An objection that is regarded as invalid by the consistory will be notified to the objecting person.

#### § 87 – Preparation Stage

1. Before induction into office of elder, the candidate must attend a preparation class.
2. A candidate who cannot attend the preparation class can still be inducted, but will need to attend the next year's preparation class.

#### § 88 – Induction Stage

1. Elder induction is done in the Sunday service or Christian holiday service or congregation institutionalization service, using the liturgy for elder induction.
2. The induction of an elder is led by a minister.
3. The consistory gives a certificate of induction using the formulation in the GKI template for administrative forms.

#### § 89 - Schedule

The eldership process is done following the Implementation Guidelines regarding eldership process scheduling.

### Chapter 22 – Elder Ministry Development

#### § 90 – Elder Ministry Development

To develop elder ministry performance, elders must attend development programs as regulated in the Implementation guidelines regarding elder candidate preparation and elder development.

#### § 91 – Elder Performance Evaluation

To develop elder ministry performance, elders must attend a ministry performance evaluation program as regulated in the implementation guidelines regarding elder ministry performance evaluation.

#### Chapter 23 – Termination and Dismissal of Office for Elders

##### § 92 - Definition

1. Termination of office is applied to an elder who is ending his term according to the regulations, or because of certain reasons that are not contradictory to the nature of eldership which cause one's inability to continue one's ministry.
2. Dismissal of office is applied to an elder who betrays the nature of eldership.

##### § 93 – Termination of Office for Elders

1. Termination of office for elder happen when:
  - a. He/she has fulfilled his/her period.
  - b. He/she lives out of town/abroad for more than six months.
  - c. He/she can no longer serve due to medical reason.
  - d. He/she resigns due to reasonable cause.
  - e. He/she transfers membership to another congregation.
  - f. He/she becomes a member of another church.
2. The termination will be announced to the congregation for two consecutive Sundays, and is formalized during Sunday worship. The consistory will give the termination certificate to the person.

##### § 94 – Dismissal from Office for Elders

1. An elder will be dismissed from office if:
  - a. He/she move to another church that is not from the same tradition.
  - b. He/she is under special pastoral
2. The dismissal is done by the consistory by giving a decree letter, and is announced in the congregation for two consecutive Sundays.

#### Chapter 24 – Basic Regulations Regarding the Office of Minister

##### § 95 - Status

A minister's status is to be a minister of Gereja Kristen Indonesia, based in a congregation, a presbytery, a regional synod, or the synod.

##### § 96 - Membership

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#### § 97 – Term of Office

The term of office for a minister is a lifetime, unless terminated or dismissed from office.

#### § 98 – Position and Function

1. A minister is a church officer who together with elders forms the consistory, the presbytery council, the regional synod council, and the synod council.
2. A minister is called to perform full-time leadership ministry in the framework of church development, to manifest the vision and mission of GKI in the context of society, nation, and state.

#### § 99 – Term of Ministry

Minister performs leadership ministry in the consistory, the presbytery council, the regional synod council, and the synod council until one is given the status of minister emeritus, or termination, or dismissal of one's office.

#### § 100 – Scope and Means for Doing Leadership Ministry

A minister performs leadership ministry together (*collectively-collegially*) and individually:

1. At the level of a congregation in the framework of congregation development, in and through the consistory and the consistory executive body.
2. At the level of a presbytery in the framework of presbytery development, in and through the presbytery council and the presbytery council executive body.
3. At the level of a regional synod in the framework of regional synod development, in and through the regional synod council and the regional synod council executive body.
4. At the level of the synod in the framework of synod development, in and through the synod council and the synod council executive body.

#### § 101 - Task

To carry on leadership ministry in the framework of church development, the tasks of the minister are:

1. Special Task:
  - a. To proclaim the Word of God.
  - b. To administer sacraments.
  - c. The Ordination/induction of ministers.
  - d. The Induction of elders.
  - e. To perform the blessing of marriage.
  - f. To inaugurate ministerial bodies.
2. General Task:
  - a. To study and teach the Scripture.
  - b. To pray for and together with the members.

- c. To encourage the members to attend and participate in worship.
  - d. To equip and empower the members for their tasks in the church, and for their missional task in the society.
  - e. To perform general pastoral care, with special attention for the poor, the sick, those in grief, those in trouble, and those facing death.
  - f. To perform special pastoral care.
  - g. To perform inward ministry.
  - h. To perform outward witness and service.
  - i. To perform education and training.
  - j. To lead the catechetical class.
  - k. To pay attention and preserve teachings.
3. Structural Leadership Task:  
Performing a leadership task as member of the consistory, the presbytery council, the regional synod council, and the synod council.

#### § 102 - Requirements

1. Commitment
  - a. To understand the call to be a minister as a spiritual call from God through GKI, and to be willing to live by God's grace.
  - b. To be willing to do the task of minister full-time and with loyalty in the role of shepherd, teacher, role-model, and to be accountable.
  - c. To be willing to show behavior that is in accordance with the Scripture.
  - d. To be willing to uphold the GKI teachings.
  - e. To understand and live the Vision and Mission of GKI.
  - f. To understand, agree with, and obey the church order and regulations of GKI.
  - g. To live out one's calling together with other people.
2. Character
  - a. Humble.
  - b. Willing to sacrifice for others.
  - c. Caring for the weak.
  - d. Honest.
  - e. Diligent.
  - f. Sincere.
  - g. Forgiving.
  - h. Unprejudiced.
  - i. Trustworthy, especially in keeping duty of confidentiality.
3. Competence
  - a. Able to preach and teach.
  - b. Able to pastor.
  - c. Able to lead.
  - d. Able to think systematically.
  - e. Able to think conceptually.

- f. Able to cooperate with other people.
  - g. Able to live in a diverse context.
  - h. Able to learn independently.
  - i. Able to become agent of change in individual life, in the church, and in society.
4. Education
- a. Having completed a master degree in theology from a seminary that is supported by GKI.
  - b. Having completed a master degree in theology from a seminary that can be accepted by GKI, and having also completed other requirements as prescribed by GKI church order and regulations, and decided on by the GKI synod council.
  - c. Having completed a master degree in theology from a seminary that requires special recognition by GKI, and also completed other requirements as prescribed by GKI church order and regulations and decided on by the GKI synod council.
5. Addition
- a. For GKI cadre, a maximum age of forty years old when one starts minister Preparation Education. For a minister from another similar denomination, a maximum age of thirty-five years old when one enters the pre-calling Stage.
  - b. Willing not to work in any other profession, which has nothing to do with church ministry.
  - c. One's spouse is not a stumbling block.
  - d. If one's spouse is also a minister, they should not be ministers in the same congregation, but it is allowed to become a minister in a different congregation, or a special assignment minister, or a minister of a similar denomination.
  - e. One's spouse is willing to become a confessing member of the calling congregation, and willing to support the minister's ministry without reducing one's right for working in another profession.
  - f. If one's spouse is from a different church denomination, he/she must come from a denomination with similar teaching.

#### Chapter 25 – Minister Cadre Preparation Process

##### § 103 – Theological Student Candidate Recruitment

To have theological student candidates who will undergo theological study in GKI supported seminaries, so they can become minister cadre, a theological student candidate recruitment program is conducted as regulated in the implementation guidelines about theological student candidate Recruitment.



#### § 104 – Theological Student Candidate Selection

To have theological student candidates who are appointed with recommendation to undergo theological study in GKI supported seminaries as minister cadre, a theological student candidate selection program is conducted as regulated in the implementation guidelines about theological student candidate selection.

#### § 105 – Guidance and Assistance for Theological Student

To guide and assist theological students who are studying theology in GKI supported seminaries as minister cadre, a guidance and assistance for theological students program is conducted as regulated in the implementation guidelines about guidance and assistance for theological student.

### Chapter 26 – Minister Candidate Preparation for Minister Cadre

#### § 106 – Pre-Placement

1. The synod commission on ministers coordinates the three regional synod commissions on ministers to conduct conversations with, and psychological tests for every minister cadre who recently graduated from seminary, using the guide set by the synod council executive body through its business meeting.
2. Based on the conversation result, the psychological test result, and the evaluation data gathered throughout guidance and assistance for the theological student period, each regional synod commission on ministers make a recommendation regarding the minister cadre under three categories:
  - a. Cadre who is eligible for the minister process.
  - b. Cadre who is not eligible for the minister process, but is still eligible to become church worker.
  - c. Cadre who is not eligible, neither for minister process nor for church worker.
3. The three regional synod commissions on ministers report all cadres along with their recommendations to the synod commission on ministers.
4. The synod council executive body through the synod commission on ministers plans and arranges for congregations that will become the place for the minister Preparation Training for cadres who are eligible for the minister process.
5. Prior to the minister Preparation Training, the cadres must undergo Cadre Training 1 according to the Guide of Operational about Guidance and Assistance for minister Cadre.
6. The synod council executive board through the synod commission on ministers processes the placement of church worker candidates for cadres who are eligible to become church worker according to the Guide of Operational about Church Workers.

#### § 107 – Minister Preparation Training

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## § 108 – Minister Candidate Placement Projection

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## Chapter 27 – Minister Preparation for Minister Cadre

## § 109 – Basis for Calling

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## § 110 – Introduction Stage

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## § 111 – Orientation Stage

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## § 112 – Calling Stage

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## § 113 – Ordination Stage

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## § 114 – Church Conversation to Enter the Calling Stage

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## Chapter 28 – Minister Process for Ministers from Other Denominations with Similar Teaching

## § 115 – Pre-Calling Stage

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## § 116 – Introduction Stage

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## § 117 – Application Stage

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## § 118 – Calling Stage

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## § 119 – Induction Stage

## Chapter 29 – Special Assignment Minister

## § 120 – Definition

1. A special assignment minister is a minister who is specially assigned by the consistory, the presbytery council, the regional synod council, and the synod council in specific areas of ministry, such as ministry in ecclesiastical organizations, education, theological faculty, training, health, social work, and the police force/military.

## § 121 – Congregation Special Assignment Minister

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## § 122 – Presbytery Special Assignment Minister

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## § 123 – Regional Synod Special Assignment Minister

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## § 124 – Synod Special Assignment Minister

## Chapter 30 – Consultant Minister

## § 125 – Consultant Minister

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## Chapter 31 – Transfer of Minister

## § 126 – General Transfer

1. Minister transfer is an effort to facilitate the movement of a minister from one place to another with the purpose of GKI holistic development, according to GKI's development policy and strategy.
2. A minister can undergo transfer if he/she has served for five years in a row in a congregation, counted from his/her ordination/induction, unless he/she is transferring to become a special assignment minister.
3. Minister transfer is done according to:
  - a. The minister planning in the framework of GKI development policy and strategy.
  - b. A transfer initiative.
  - c. A request when a new minister needed
4. Transfer initiative:
  - a. The initiative to initiate transfer can come from:
    - i. The minister.
    - ii. The consistory.

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## § 127 – Transfer for Special Assignment Minister who finishes one's Ministry Term

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## § 128 – Transfer for Minister Caused by Disharmony in Ministerial Relationship

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## § 129 – Transfer for Minister After Special Pastoral care

## Chapter 32 – Minister Emeritation

## § 130 – Basic Arrangement

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## § 131 – Emeritation Process Based on Age

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## § 132 – Emeritation Process Based on Health or Physical Condition

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## § 133 – Emeritation Process Based on Reasonable Judgement

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## § 134 – Emeritation Delay Process Based on Age

-

## § 135 – Empowerment and Assistance for the Minister Emeritus

-

## Chapter 33 – Development, Assistance, and Evaluation for Minister Performance

## § 136 – Minister Development

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## § 137 – Minister Assistance

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## § 138 – Minister Performance Evaluation

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## Chapter 34 – Termination and Dismissal of Office for Ministers

## § 139 – Definition

1. A minister is granted the termination of his/her office for certain causes that do not betray the nature of ministerhood.
2. A minister is dismissed from office for certain causes that betray the nature of ministerhood.

## § 140 – Termination of Office for Ministers

1. A minister is granted the termination of his/her office if he/she is to be inducted as a minister in another church with similar teaching through a formal calling procedure.
2. Termination of office for a minister emeritus is applied if:
  - a. He/she transfers membership to another church.
  - b. He/she is inducted as minister in another church with similar teaching through a formal calling procedure.

## § 141 – Dismissal of Office for Minister

1. A minister is dismissed from office when he/she transfers his/her membership to another church, or transfers membership to another congregation without the formal church procedure.
2. A minister emeritus is dismissed from office if:
  - a. He/she transfers to become a minister in another church of different teaching.
  - b. He/she transfers to become a minister in another church with similar teaching without a proper church calling procedure.
  - c. He/she is put under special pastoral care.
  - d. He/she sends his/her resignation from the office of minister with a reasonable judgement to the synod council executive body.

## § 142 – Procedure for Minister Termination of Office

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## § 143 – Procedure for Minister Dismissal of Office

## Chapter 35 – The Responsibility of the Congregation, the Presbytery, the Regional Synod, and the Synod Regarding a Minister's Welfare

## § 144 – Introduction

-

## § 145 - Glossary

-

## § 146 - Stipend

-

## § 147 – Regional Allowance Index

-

## § 148 – Family Allowance

-

## § 149 – Local Allowance

-

## § 150 – Ministry Period Allowance

-

## § 151 – Christmas Allowance

-

## § 152 – Leave and Leave Allowance

-

## § 153 - Reimbursement

-

## § 154 – Consultant Minister Allowance

-

## § 155 – Stipend for Special Assignment Minister

-

## § 156 – Positional Allowance

## § 157 – Calculation Consideration

-

## § 158 – Pension

-

## Chapter 36 – The Responsibility of The Congregation, Presbytery, Regional Synod, and Synod Regarding Minister Emeritus

## § 159 – Introduction

-

## § 160 - Glossary

-

## § 161 - Housing

-

## § 162 - Medication

-

## § 163 – Literature

## § 164 – Liturgical Clothing

-

## § 165 – Transportation Fund

-

## § 166 – Burial/Cremation

-

## Part I – Leadership

## Chapter 37 – Leader

## § 167 – The Congregation

1. A congregation is led by the consistory.
2. The consistory consists of at least a chairperson, a secretary, a treasurer, and four members.
3. The organizational term of office for the consistory is one year.
4. If needed, a member of the consistory can be re-elected for the same organizational position maximum twice in a row. The organizational term of office does not apply for a minister.
5. The consistory structure and personnel is decided on by the consistory in its meeting.
6. If needed, the consistory can form a consistory executive body under these regulations:
  - a. The consistory executive body is the daily leader of the consistory.
  - b. The consistory executive body is hold accountable to the consistory.
  - c. The consistory executive body consists of at least a chairperson, a secretary, a treasurer, and four members, all of whom are daily leaders of the consistory.
  - d. The organizational term of office for the consistory executive body is one year.
  - e. If needed, a member of the consistory executive body can be re-elected for the same organizational position twice in a row. Organizational terms of office do not apply for a minister.
7. The consistory executive body is inaugurated in a Sunday Service using the liturgy assigned by the synod council.
8. The consistory decides on a consistory Working regulation.
9. The consistory structure and personnel is announced for two consecutive Sundays.

## § 168 – The Presbytery

1. A presbytery is led by the presbytery council.

2. The daily leader for the presbytery council is the presbytery council executive body, which is appointed, terminated, and hold accountable to presbytery council.
3. The presbytery council executive body consists of at least a chairperson, a secretary, a treasurer, and four members.
4. The organizational term of office for the presbytery council executive body is three years.
5. A person can become a member of the presbytery council executive body for a maximum of two organizational terms of office. After that, he/she cannot be re-elected for at least one organizational terms of office. This regulation doesn't apply for a presbytery special assignment minister.
6. A presbytery special assignment minister serving full time in the presbytery council executive body can be re-elected if needed by the presbytery and after his/her performance is evaluated by the presbytery council. If he/she is not re-elected, a transfer will be done.
7. The presbytery council executive body makes decision in its meeting, held at least once every two months and led by its chairperson.
8. The presbytery council executive body is inaugurated in the closing worship of the presbytery council meeting using the liturgy assigned by the synod council.
9. The presbytery council decides on a presbytery working regulation.
10. The presbytery council structure and personnel is announced in the newsletter of the respective congregations for two consecutive Sundays.

#### § 169 – The Regional Synod

1. A regional synod is led by the regional synod council.
2. The daily leader for the regional synod council is the regional synod council executive body, which is appointed, terminated, and hold accountable to regional synod council.
3. The regional synod council executive body consists of at least a chairperson, a secretary, a treasurer, and six members.
4. The organizational term of office for the regional synod council executive body is four years.
5. A person can become a member of the regional synod council executive body for a maximum of two organizational terms of office. After that, he/she cannot be re-elected for at least one organizational term of office. This regulation doesn't apply for a regional synod special assignment minister.
6. A regional synod special assignment minister serving full time in the regional synod council executive body can be re-elected if needed by the regional synod and after his/her performance is evaluated by the regional synod council. If he/she is not re-elected, a transfer will be done.
7. The regional synod council executive body makes decisions in its meetings, held at least once every two months and led by its chairperson.

8. The regional synod council executive body is inaugurated in the closing worship of the regional synod council meeting using the liturgy assigned by the synod council.
9. The regional synod council decides on a regional synod working regulation.
10. The regional synod council structure and personnel is announced in the newsletter of the respective congregations for two consecutive Sundays.

#### § 170 The Synod

1. The synod is led by the synod council.
2. The daily leader for the synod council is the synod council executive body, which is appointed, terminated, and hold accountable to synod council.
3. The synod council executive body consists of at least a chairperson, a secretary, a treasurer, and six members.
4. The organizational term of office for the synod council executive body is four years.
5. A person can become a member of the synod council executive body for a maximum of two organizational terms of office. After that, he/she cannot be re-elected for at least one organizational term of office. This regulation does not apply for a synod special assignment minister.
6. A synod special assignment minister serving full time in the synod council executive body can be re-elected if needed by the synod and after his/her performance is evaluated by the synod council. If he/she is not re-elected, a transfer will be done.
7. The synod council executive body makes decisions in its meeting, held at least once every two months and led by its chairperson.
8. The synod council executive body is inaugurated in the closing worship of the synod council meeting using the liturgy assigned by the synod council.
9. The synod council decides on a synod working regulation.
10. The synod council structure and personnel is announced in the newsletter of all congregations for two consecutive Sundays.

#### Chapter 38 – Task

##### § 171 – The Consistory

To perform the leadership function in the framework of congregation development, the consistory is tasked as follows:

1. Regarding the framework of congregation development, the leadership function of the consistory is manifested in these aspects:
  - a. Communion and Unity.
  - b. Witness and Service.
  - c. Education.
  - d. Teaching.
  - e. Church Office.
  - f. Organization and Leadership.



- g. Means and Infrastructure
- 2. Tasks regarding the aspect of Communion and Unity cover:
  - a. To carry out worship services.
  - b. To carry out the proclamation of the Word.
  - c. To carry out the sacraments and confession of faith.
  - d. To carry out general and special pastoral care.
  - e. To carry out church conversation with regard to baptism, confession of faith, wedding, membership transfer, and conversion to another religion.
  - f. To direct, motivate, and facilitate the congregation to participate in the life and work of the presbytery, the regional synod, and the synod.
  - g. To make real the participation of the congregation in the ecumenical movement.
- 3. Tasks regarding the aspect of Witness and Service cover:
  - a. To direct, motivate, and facilitate the congregation to do their witness and service task.
  - b. To carry out the establishment of a congregation post.
- 4. Tasks regarding the aspect of Education cover:
  - a. To empower members and ministry groups in the congregation for the life and work of the congregation.
  - b. To carry out servant-leadership education for the elders and ministers.
  - c. To carry out servant-leadership education for other leaders within the congregation ministerial bodies.
- 5. Tasks regarding the aspect of Teaching cover:
  - a. To carry out catechism class.
  - b. To observe, take care, safeguard, and live out GKI teaching.
- 6. Tasks regarding the aspect of Church Office cover:
  - a. To carry out the elders election process.
  - b. To carry out elder ministry development.
  - c. To carry out elder ministry performance evaluation.
  - d. To carry out termination and dismissal from office of elders.
  - e. To carry out recruitment for theological student candidates.
  - f. To carry out the minister process.
  - g. To carry out minister development.
  - h. To facilitate minister transfer.
  - i. To decide on, appoint, and evaluate congregation special assignment ministers.
  - j. To carry out termination and dismissal from office of ministers.
  - k. To carry out minister emeritation.
  - l. To empower a minister emeritus.
  - m. To assist a minister emeritus.
- 7. Tasks in the aspect of Organization and Leadership cover:

- a. To facilitate and determine the congregation's vision and mission using the vision and mission of GKI as common direction.
- b. To facilitate and determine the working program and budget which refers to the congregation's vision and mission.
- c. To facilitate the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the congregation's working program and budget.
- d. To arrange and determine the ministerial structure and the organizational structure for the life and work of the congregation.
- e. To facilitate, implement, and develop communication processes in the congregation.
- f. To facilitate, implement, and develop decision making processes in the congregation.
- g. To handle and resolve problems arising in the congregation.
- h. To elect, direct, receive accountability reports, and terminate ministerial bodies in the congregation.
- i. To arrange an annual report regarding the life, work, and treasury of the congregation.
- j. To carry out consistory meetings and extended consistory meetings.
- k. To determine and appoint representatives of the consistory to the presbytery council meeting.
- l. To discuss and make decisions regarding review and appeal.
- m. To decide on, elect, and implement a performance evaluation for the congregation's church workers.
- n. To determine the congregation's name and location.
- o. To attend the business meeting of the presbytery council executive body.
- p. To carry out the coordination meeting between the consistory and the congregation's ministerial bodies.
- q. To become representative inside and outside of court, and to appoint representatives to become committee members of regional ecumenical bodies and foundations.
- r. To carry out the status increase from congregation post into congregation prospect.
- s. To carry out the status decrease from congregation prospect into congregation post.
- t. To carry out the institutionalization of a congregation.
- u. To carry out the status decrease from congregation to congregation prospect.
- v. To accept the merger from another church.
- w. To elect and to terminate the congregation treasury examination body.
- x. To give church order and regulations amendment proposals to the presbytery council.
- y. To give response to church order and regulations amendment proposals sent by the synod council executive body.

- z. To formulate and decide on the consistory working regulation.
- aa. To formulate and decide on the consistory meeting regulation and the extended consistory meeting regulation.
- bb. To manage the membership administration including the membership rol.
- 8. Tasks in the aspect of Means and Infrastructure covers:
  - a. To manage GKI's possessions that are entrusted to the congregation.
  - b. To gather, store, and keep the congregation archives.

#### § 172 – Consistory Executive Body

If a consistory executive body is present, in order to execute its leadership function in the framework of congregational development, the consistory executive body is tasked according to the arrangement made by the consistory.

#### § 173 – the Presbytery Council

7a. To decide on the vision and mission of the presbytery using the vision and mission of GKI as common direction.

#### § 174 – Presbytery Council Executive Body, point 7.a.3) and 4):

- 3. (To Facilitate the formulation of) vision and mission of the presbytery using the vision and mission of GKI as a common direction
- 4. (To Facilitate the formulation of) the Work program and budget of the presbytery, referring to the presbytery vision and mission, and taking into consideration relevant decisions of the regional synod council and the synod council.

#### § 175 – Regional Synod Council

7a: To decide on the vision and mission of the regional synod.

#### § 176 – Regional Synod Executive Body

- 7a. The tasks in the Organizational and Leadership aspects include:
  - 3. (To facilitate the formulation of) the vision and mission of the regional synod using the vision and mission of GKI as a common direction.
  - 4. (To facilitate the formulation of) the work program and budget of the regional synod, referring to the regional synod vision and mission, and taking into consideration relevant decisions of the regional synod council and the synod council.

#### § 177 – The Synod Council

7c. The tasks in the Organizational and Leadership aspects include:

To decide on synodical general policy, which consists of:

- 1. The Vision and Mission of GKI
- 2. The GKI development policy and strategy

## § 178 – The Synod Council Executive Body

7d. (The tasks in the Organizational and Leadership aspects include:) To decide on drafts and/or to change drafts for the synodical general policy, which consists of:

1. The Vision and Mission of GKI
2. The GKI development policy and strategy

## Chapter 39 – Accountability

## § 179 – The Consistory

1. Every year the consistory arranges an annual report, including an evaluation regarding the life of the congregation, shared living in the Presbytery, the regional synod, and the synod, which reflects the congregation's performance. The report has to be made at least three months after ministerial term ended.
2. The report becomes the main material for the extended consistory meeting.
3. The report must be sent to the presbytery council executive body, the regional synod council executive body, and the synod council executive body to be used as necessary.

## § 180 – The Consistory Executive Body

If a consistory executive body is present, it must hold its ministry accountable to the consistory in every consistory meeting.

## § 181 – The presbytery Council Executive Body

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## § 182 – The Regional Synod Council Executive Body

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## § 183 – The Synod Council Executive Body

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## Chapter 40 – Meetings

## § 184 – The Consistory

1. The consistory meeting
  - a. A consistory meeting is attended by:
    - 1) Participants
      - a) All members of the consistory
      - b) Representatives of the presbytery council executive body, the regional synod council executive body, and the synod council executive body according to the regulations in this church order and regulations.
      - c) Invited Guests who function as resource persons.
    - 2) Observers, who are baptized or confessing members of the congregation, and who register to attend.

- b. Execution
    - 1) A consistory meeting is held at least once every two months.
    - 2) Plans and basic materials for the meeting are announced to the congregation members at least on two consecutive Sundays prior to the meeting, to give an opportunity for input and prayer from the members.
    - 3) The consistory prepares the meeting materials in writing and sends them to the members of the consistory prior to the meeting.
    - 4) The consistory meeting is led by the chairperson or the vice-chair, or in certain circumstances by a member of the consistory.
    - 5) Every participant has speaking rights, but only members of the consistory and formal visitors have voting rights.
    - 6) Decisions in the meeting are made through *musyawarah untuk mufakat*. In the case that *musyawarah untuk mufakat* cannot be reached, decisions will be made through voting.
    - 7) The consistory makes a minute of the meeting and accepts it in the meeting or in the next meeting afterward.
    - 8) Other detailed regulations about consistory meetings are arranged by the consistory as long as not in contradiction with GKI church order and regulations.
  - c. A consistory meeting is valid when:
    - 1) The quorum is reached, which is half of the members of the consistory plus one. If the quorum is not met, the meeting has to be postponed for one day (minimum) and one week (maximum), and the consistory members are invited for the second time. If the quorum is still not met, that consistory meeting is considered valid.
    - 2) Meeting invitation and materials have been sent to all consistory members one week prior to the meeting, except for the postponed meeting.
2. The extended consistory meeting
- a. The extended consistory meeting is a means for the consistory and other congregation ministerial bodies to report their work and receive input from congregation members.
  - b. The extended consistory meeting proposes names for a congregation Property Examination Body to be appointed by the consistory.
  - c. Participants:
    - 1) Every member of the consistory and members of ministerial bodies.
    - 2) Baptized and Confessing members.
    - 3) Members of the congregation Property Examination Body.
  - d. Execution:
    - 1) An extended consistory meeting is held at least once a year.
    - 2) The meeting is announced to all members at least three consecutive Sundays prior to it.

- 3) The consistory prepares written meeting materials and provides them to the members prior the meeting.
- 4) The meeting is led by the chairperson or the vice-chair of the consistory.
- 5) The participants have the right to speak.
- 6) The consistory makes a minute of the meeting and accepts it in the nearest consistory meeting. Every input will be put in the agenda of that meeting.
- 7) Other details regarding the extended consistory meeting are regulated by the consistory in its regulation for the extended consistory meeting, as long as not in contradiction with the church order and regulations of the GKI.

#### § 185 – Presbytery Council

##### 1.a Participants:

Each consistory within the presbytery sends five members; as long as possible they should be elders and ministers, who are not sitting in the presbytery council executive body, and they should bring a credential letter.

3.j (Implementation:) For urgent and important matters that need to be resolved immediately, the presbytery council executive body invites for a hearing to take place: the presbytery council, notifying the congregations in its presbytery at least one (1) week before.

#### § 186 – Regional Synod Council

##### 1. Participants:

a. Each presbytery council within the regional synod sends ten members, as long as possible they should be elders and ministers, who are not sitting in the regional synod council executive body, and they should bring a credential letter.

2.j (Implementation:) For urgent and important matters that need to be resolved immediately, the regional synod executive body invites for a hearing to take place: the regional synod council, notifying the Presbyteries in its Regional Synod at least two (2) weeks before.

#### § 187 – Synod Council

##### 1. Participants

a. Each consistory within the presbytery sends five members, as long as possible they should be elders and ministers, who are not sitting in the presbytery council executive body, and they should (??) bring a credential letter.

##### § 187.2j

(Implementation:) For urgent and important matters that need to be resolved immediately, the general synod executive body invites for a hearing to take place: the general synod council, notifying the regional synods at least two (2) weeks before.

## Chapter 41 – Business meeting

§ 188 – Presbytery Council Executive Body Business meeting  
- (Parallel with § 189)

## § 189 – Regional Synod Council Executive Body Business Meeting

## 1. Definition

The regional synod council executive body business meeting is a means between two regional synod council meetings, to make a decision regarding urgent matters and/or matters as assigned by the regional synod council and/or matters as arranged by GKI regulations, with the participation of the presbytery council executive bodies within the regional synod. The decisions made in the business meeting apply to all the congregations within the regional synod.

## 2. Executor

The regional synod council executive body conducts the business meeting.

## 3. Participants:

- a. All members of the regional synod council.
- b. The presbytery council executive bodies within the regional synod, each sending three delegates.
- c. The ministerial bodies of the regional synod and/or ministerial bodies in the presbyteries and synod, and/or other people if necessary.

## 4. Procedure

- a. The regional synod council executive body invites all the presbytery council executive bodies within the regional synod, and the invitation must already be received at least 1 month prior to the meeting date. The invitation must state the meeting agenda and materials. For urgent matters, the invitation and meeting materials have to be received at least 1 week prior to the meeting date.
- b. The meeting will be led by the chair or the vice-chair of the regional synod council executive body.
- c. The quorum for the meeting is half plus 1 of all the members of the regional synod council and presbytery councils within the regional synod. In the event that the quorum is not met, the meeting will be postponed for three hours. After which, the meeting will be resumed without considering the fulfillment of the quorum.
- d. All meeting participant has a speaking right.
- e. Decisions are taken using *musyawarah untuk mufakat*. In the case that *muswarah untuk mufakat* cannot be achieved, decision will be taken by voting. All members of the regional synod council and representatives of the presbytery council executive bodies have a voting right.

- f. The regional synod executive body sends in writing all the decisions made in the meeting to the nearest regional synod council meeting, with copies sent to all the presbytery council executive bodies within the regional synod.
- g. Further provision regarding the business meeting of the regional synod council executive body can be decided as long as it is not in contradiction with the GKI church order.

§ 190 – The Synod Council Executive Body Business Meeting  
- (Parallel with § 189)

Chapter 42 – Review and Appeal

§ 191 - Review

1. For a decision made by the consistory that is considered wrong, a review is done by that consistory based upon the request from a member of the consistory or a member of that congregation.
2. For a decision made by the presbytery council that is considered wrong, a review is done by that presbytery council based upon the request from a consistory in that presbytery or its presbytery council executive body.
3. For a decision made by the regional synod council that is considered wrong, a review is done by that regional synod council based upon the request from a presbytery council in that regional synod or its regional synod council executive body.
4. For a decision made by the synod that is considered wrong, a review is done by the synod council based upon the request of a regional synod or its synod council executive body.
5. Request for review:
  - a. It is advised to be done as soon as possible after the decision is made, while taking into consideration its relevance for the life and work of GKI.
  - b. It must be in writing, containing the reason for review, and stating the name and address, also with signature or thumb print of the person requesting.
6. A reason for review is if in that decision there are matters believed to be in contradiction with the Scripture and/or the church order and regulations of GKI.
7. The process of discussing and decision making of a review is conducted in the same manner as in any other problem.

§ 192 - Appeal

1. The party who wishes to file an appeal to a wider council must already have attempted the review procedure as mentioned in § 191.
2. If the party is not satisfied with the decision of the review and wishes to appeal, it should state in writing its intention for appealing to the wider council.
3. That written statement (192.2) must be sent at least one month after the respected party has been notified about the review decision mentioned in § 192.1.



4. The written statement along with description about the matter and the reason for appeal is sent to the wider council executive body through the appealing council's executive body. The daily leader of the council being appealed to has to convey the appeal statement to the daily leader of the wider council.
5. Appeal Examination:
  - a. To a decision of the consistory, is done by the presbytery council upon request of member of the consistory or member of that congregation.
  - b. To a decision of the presbytery council, is done by the regional synod council upon request of a consistory in that presbytery or its presbytery council executive body.
  - c. To a decision of the regional synod council, is done by the synod council upon request of a presbytery council in that regional synod or its regional synod council executive body.
6. The daily leadership of the wider council, after accepting the written statement, must put it into the agenda of the next council meeting.
7. The written statement can be retracted by the sender, whether before or while being discussed by the wider council.
8. The process of discussing and decision making for appeals is conducted in the same manner as in any other problems.

#### Chapter 43 – Representatives

##### § 193 – Consistory

1. The chairperson and secretary of the consistory act for and on behalf of the consistory in and out of court.
2. A consistory can appoint its member to act as its representative in an ecumenical committee or foundation in its region.
3. Representatives of the consistory must give a written accountability report regarding their task.

##### § 194 – The Presbytery Council Executive Body

##### -§ 195 – The Regional Synod Council Executive Body

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##### § 196 – The Synod Council Executive Body

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#### Chapter 44 – Ministerial Body

##### § 197 - Definition

1. A ministerial Body is any department, committee, commission, body, group, team, foundation, which is created and appointed to lead a specified field of ministry or conduct a certain task according to the need.

2. Departments and commissions are church ministerial bodies that are permanent in nature.
3. Committees, bodies, groups, and teams are church ministerial bodies that are temporary in nature.
4. Foundations or the likes are church ministerial bodies for a wider purpose and require more movement space with their own legal requirements according to state regulation.

#### § 198 – Congregation Ministerial Body

Further regulations regarding a congregation ministerial body are regulated in the implementation guidelines regarding a congregation ministerial body.

#### § 199 – Presbytery Ministerial Body

Further regulations regarding a presbytery ministerial body are regulated in the implementation guidelines regarding a presbytery ministerial body.

#### § 200 – Regional Synod Ministerial Body

Further regulations regarding a regional synod ministerial body are regulated in the implementation guidelines regarding a regional synod ministerial body.

#### § 201 – Synod Ministerial Body

Further regulations regarding a synod ministerial Body are regulated in the Implementation Guidelines regarding a synod ministerial Body.

### Chapter 45 – Church Worker

#### § 202 - Definition

1. A church worker is a partner of the elders, ministers, and ministerial bodies to perform specific ministerial function according to one's expertise.
2. A congregation, a presbytery, a regional synod, and the synod can have their own church worker as long as that specific role does not require the spiritual authority and leadership as in the office of minister.

#### § 203 - Status

1. A church worker has the status of a full-time worker which serves in a specific field of expertise in the boundary of a congregation, a presbytery, a regional synod, and the synod.
2. A church worker is not inducted into eldership.
3. It is not possible to promote a church worker into becoming a minister.

### § 204 – Detail Arrangements

Further details regarding church workers are regulated in the implementation guidelines regarding a church worker.

## Part J – Means and Infrastructure

### Chapter 46 – Possessions

#### § 205 – Definition of Possessions

GKI possessions are in the form of:

1. Money and securities
2. Movable objects, such as vehicles, machines, office supplies, musical instruments, and other equipment.
3. Immovable objects, such as land, building, manse, hall, office buildings and other buildings.
4. Intellectual richness, which are copyrights, patents, and brands.

#### § 206 - Acquisition

GKI possessions are acquired through:

1. The offerings of its members.
2. Donations that aren't binding.
3. Other businesses.

#### § 207 – Shared Responsibility of the Congregations for the presbytery, the Regional Synod, and the Synod

Congregations have shared responsibilities to finance the presbytery, the regional synod, and the synod. That shared responsibility is arranged in the guide of operational regarding the shared responsibility of the congregations for the presbytery, the regional synod, and the synod.

#### § 208 - Ownership

1. GKI in the form of congregation, presbytery, regional synod, and synod, each has ownership in the form of money, securities, movable objects, immovable objects, and intellectual property.
2. Possessions which are movable objects, immovable objects, and intellectual property is under the name of GKI as congregation or presbytery or regional synod or synod.

#### § 209 - Management

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#### § 210 - Accountability

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## § 211 - Examination

## Part K – Church Administrative Tools

## Chapter 47 – Church Administrative Tools

## § 212 – Church Administrative Tools

1. Regulations of GKI are complemented by GKI church administrative tools, which consist of:
  - a. The GKI implementation guidelines.
  - b. The GKI template of administrative forms.
  - c. Synod educational materials.
  - d. Regulations/tools/other equal materials.
2. GKI church administrative tools are approved and revised by the synod council executive body through its business meeting.

## Part L – Changes and Epilog

## Chapter 48 – Changes

## § 213 - Changes

1. The regulations of GKI can be changed by the synod council in its meeting based upon suggestions from:
  - a. A regional synod council, which can get suggestions from:
    - i. Confessing members through and approved by the consistory, the presbytery council, and the regional synod council.
    - ii. A consistory through and approved by the the presbytery council and the regional synod council
    - iii. A consistory executive body through and approved by the the consistory, the presbytery council, and the regional synod council.
    - iv. A presbytery council through and approved by the regional synod council.
    - v. A presbytery council executive body through and approved by the presbytery council and the regional synod council.
    - vi. A regional synod executive body through and approved by the regional synod council.
    - vii. A regional synod council.
  - b. The synod council executive body
2. A change proposal must become a material for and be put in the agenda of the synod council meeting through the synod council executive body.

Chapter 49 - Epilog

§ 214 - Epilog

Other matters not yet arranged in these regulations are decided on by the consistory, or the presbytery council, or the regional synod council, or the synod council in their respective meetings, according to the task and authority of each council, as long as not in contradiction with the church order and regulations of GKI.



## **Appendix C - The Church Order of Gereja Masehi Injili di Timor**

The church order of GMIT is a compilation of five separate documents:

1. Pokok-pokok Eklesiologi /*Ecclesiological Basis (EB)*
2. Tata Dasar GMIT /*Constitution of GMIT (Const)*
3. Peraturan Pokok Jemaat /*Congregation Regulations (CR)*
4. Peraturan Pokok Klasis /*Presbytery Regulations (PR)*
5. Peraturan Pokok Sinode /*Synod Regulations (SR)*

### **Appendix C.1. - Pokok-pokok Eklesiologi /*Ecclesiological Basis***

This document is intended to explain GMIT's understanding of its being and mission. It contains two major parts: A) Who is GMIT, and B) The Mission of GMIT. I present here a summarized version of the document.

#### **A. Who is GMIT?**

1. Historical background: GMIT is the fruit of missionary activities from the Netherlands missionary bodies, especially from the *Hervormd* tradition. On 31 October 1947, GMIT became an independent part of Gereja Protestan di Indonesia (*Indische Kerk*) which was founded by the initiative of the Dutch colonial government. On the one hand, this history is binding GMIT with the universal church, but on the other hand it provides a challenge for GMIT to liberate itself from the spirit of colonialism with its hierarchical and bureaucratic tendencies that has influenced the church in its history. Beside the aspect of colonial legacy, GMIT in the present needs to be aware of its role as an active agent in bringing a positive influence into the historical journey of the Indonesian society.
2. Source and Purpose of GMIT  
GMIT is a communion that came from God, for the salvation purpose in this world. GMIT's presence in this history is not for itself, but to fulfill a mandate from God, which is to participate in God's salvation plan for this world.
3. Scripture and Confession  
GMIT bases its identity on the affirmation of the authority of the Scripture, Old Testament and New Testament, which is centered in Jesus Christ as the world's Savior, the Lord and the Head of the Church. Based on this, GMIT also accepts and affirms the three ecumenical creeds as GMIT's. As an effort to living its faith in context, GMIT also formulates its own Confession.

#### 4. GMIT Teaching

The basis of GMIT teaching is the testimony of the Scripture, Old Testament and New Testament. In constructing its teaching, GMIT tries to take into account not only classical theological formulas, but also the richness of ethnical and cultural backgrounds of its members. In this context, GMIT founds a theological faculty that will enable this kind of critical-constructive approach.

#### 5. The Family of God Metaphor

GMIT has a strong characteristic of diversity: tribes, customs, cultural values, history, and geographical conditions. Within each local community in GMIT we can find symbols of unity, but still limited. It is in GMIT, with its emphasis on being a family of God (*familia Dei*), that the unity is perfected. Regardless of the tribal differences, it is in faith that we become united. Blood, historical, tribal, and other primordial ties are not discarded. But we are bound together by our faith in God.

#### 6. GMIT Members

GMIT members are those who are called by God and have given themselves to be baptized and have confessed their faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Beside them, all children born in the families of GMIT members are included. All these GMIT members are in communion in their own congregations, who are the basis of the ministry of GMIT, and manifest themselves as one dynamic salvation community. God gives talents to everyone of GMIT's members, which they should use in taking part in God's mandate for the whole creation. In doing so, they are to act as ambassadors of Christ, not as GMIT's.

#### 7. Christian Family

The Christian family is the basis of church life in GMIT. Families became the starting point in congregations. Realizing the many great challenges facing the values of Christian families nowadays, GMIT is called to enable Christian families to develop lives that are pleasing God and bearing witness to others.

#### 8. Ecumenical Relationships

Ecumenical relationships are not an option, but part of the nature of being a church. GMIT is open for relationships and cooperation with other institutions at the local, national, and international level, as long as they can bring a positive impact in the development of solidarity, brotherhood, and upholding human rights. Especially regarding relationships with other denominations, GMIT is called to create and nurture ecumenical relationships without losing its own identity.

#### 9. Christocracy

The communion of the congregations, presbyteries, and synod, is the communion of Jesus' disciples, led by the Holy Spirit in discerning Christ's will (Christocracy) or God's will (Theocracy), in order to realize Christ's lordship over the church. In order for Christ's governance to become effective in church structures, it needs to take a structure from its own context. In this case, democracy is not in contradiction with Christocracy. What is rejected is the tendency to view democracy simply as majority vote, rather than the vote which is thought as the truth, as found through



*musyawarah* under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. In this way, democracy is seen as an instrument to find Christ's will.

10. Offices

The establishment of offices in the church is Christ-given, the source being Jesus' offices as King, Priest, and Prophet. Thus, offices have the function of governance, priesthood, and prophecy. On that ground, GMIT appoints and induces its members into ministerial offices: minister, Elder, Deacon, Teacher; and organizational offices: councils, and other ministerial bodies. Ministerial offices are established on the basis of the Scripture for the reason of doing ministry. Organizational offices are developed according to the principle of the institutional church. Ministerial offices are received through the laying on of hands in a worship. The main responsibility of all offices is pastoral duty—in its wide sense.

11. Institutional Principle

Within the principle of the priesthood of all believers there are also special offices; the believers elect people to offices to equip the saints for the development of Christ's body. The church offices are minister, elder, deacon, and teacher. The offices then form councils at different levels: congregation, presbytery, and synod.

12. Presbyterian-Synodical Principle

GMIT adopts the presbyterial-synodical system as the implication of the principles of the priesthood of all believers, and of *ecclesia reformata semper reformanda*. Leadership in GMIT is done collectively by people in a consistory/presbytery/assembly. The synodical aspect means that all congregations do not walk on their own, but are committed to walk together in faith and ministry. Consequently, GMIT acknowledges the presence of consistory, presbytery, and synod. The relationship between congregations, which are arranged in presbyteries and synod ties, is manifested through the meetings of the officebearers. This principle tries to manage a balance between the independence of and the solidarity of one congregation with another. In terms of church leadership, this means that representatives from congregations are sent into meetings or to take part in structural positions within all levels of the church. meeting is a key term for togetherness in seeking and formulating the will of the Triune God. As a model of church governance based on communion, the presbyterial-synodical principle knows no hierarchy in the relationship between the many forms of the church (congregation, presbytery, synod). Each has its responsibility and authority for ministry in its scope, but priority must be given to decisions which are more inclusive, decisions which impact more members: a congregation is more inclusive than a branch, a presbytery is more inclusive than a congregation, and the synod is embracing many things that are related to the well-being of the whole church.

13. Congregation

A congregation is defined as a communion of believers who are living within one defined geographical border within a clearly measurable timeframe where the Word is being proclaimed, sacraments administered, and which is led by the consistory.

14. Presbytery

A presbytery is the communion of congregations within a ministerial area, manifested through the communion of the *presbyters* representing the congregations in presbytery meetings and common ministerial programs. The need for Presbyteries also takes into account the characteristics of the ministerial area, especially given its size and different problem and development potentials. A presbytery is led by a presbytery council, elected in a presbytery meeting. The presbytery council is not subordinated to the synod council, and not superior to the consistory.

15. Synod

By nature, GMIT can be understood as one whole congregation, but also can be viewed as a unity of congregations.

16. Relationship between Congregation, Presbytery, and Synod

The relationship between the communion of believers in the congregation, the presbytery, and the synod is characterized by inclusion, *perichoresis*, in the sense that they complement each other, not replacing nor negating each other. Each consistory should manage ministries in their own congregation, while the presbytery and synod council manage things related to common issues, in order to create balance between the congregations of GMIT.

17. Ecclesiastical meetings

Ecclesiastical meetings in GMIT take place at various levels of ministerial scope: congregation, presbytery, and synod. Presbytery and synod meetings are considered as wider meetings than the congregational meeting, and attended by representatives from congregations (officebearers). Decisions of a presbytery meeting are binding within the scope of that particular presbytery, and decisions of the synod meeting are binding for all congregations of GMIT. Congregation meetings are in charge of managing everything related to ministry. A presbytery meeting has the authority to discuss shared programs within the presbytery, problems between congregations, and to act as mediator with the wider communion at synod level. The widest ecclesiastical meeting (synod) has the authority to discuss and make decisions about general things, for example regarding confession, teaching, baptism, holy communion, church order, shared programs, church discipline, treasury, and other things.

18. Relationship between Consistory, Presbytery council, and Synod council

The consistory, presbytery council, and synod council are of equal status. They are colleagues, partners in a dialectic, dialogical, and non-hierarchical relationship. The consistory is not inferior to the synod council and presbytery council, and vice versa. The consistory is doing ministry in a more limited scope, while the presbytery council and the synod council are doing ministry in a wider scope. These leaders of fellowship, within each ministerial scope must support each other to promote the

life of the congregations in all aspects of being a church, a society, and a state. A dialectical relationship between the three of them must be maintained. Each council has its own authority within its scope, received from the meetings in its respective scope. However, that authority is not an exclusive authority. The presbyterial-synodical system requires the openness of the consistory for the presbytery/synod council's involvement in its life-management and congregation ministry according to the authority given by the synod. Furthermore, the presbytery council must also be open for the synod council's involvement in its presbytery ministerial management according to the authority given by the synod.

19. Election of Church Leaders

Church leaders at various levels (congregations, presbytery, and synod) are God's servants, chosen by God. In electing His servants, God uses the participation of His people, using the commonly accepted method for election in society. It is important for the people to realize that they are participating in God's work of election. In this context, democracy can be appreciated as a tool used to find God's will.

20. Discipline

In order to maintain the holiness of Christ's disciples, church discipline is a necessity for the church. Church discipline covers discipline in life, in teaching, in office and/or ministry. In the broadest sense of the term, all church members are constantly under church discipline. But in extra-ordinary cases, a disciplinary act which will limit a person's participation in church ministry is given, based on love and a pastoral spirit. GMIT understands church discipline in light of the act of the Holy Spirit to renew sinful life, back into a correct relation with God.

21. Oversight

The function of oversight has been there in the church since the time of the apostles. In the presbyterial-synodical system, the role of oversight (*episkope*) is not an authority separate from the office of elder.

22. Church Order and Tradition

GMIT inherits the tradition from the past. It is not only as a passive reception, but as a church *in continuum*; tradition also means that GMIT is living its identity with an open interpretation according to dynamic local needs, faced with ever changing challenges of the time. Whether a tradition be kept or changed, the Scripture remains the basic starting point. The church order is an act of wisdom in order to regulate life and ministry so that it can be done decently and in order.

23. Treasury

All properties of GMIT are God's belongings given to His people, and acquired through the giving of its people as an act of faith. All properties should be used accountably in order to finance God's mission, as a responsible act of faith.

## B. The Mission of GMIT

### 1. Understanding of Mission

Church mission is woven into the very existence of the church. The church does not exist for itself, but for a specific task. GMIT can only be a true church if it commits itself to church mission. When GMIT is no longer doing its mission, then its existence is questionable.

### 2. Relationship between Mission of GMIT and Vision of God's Kingdom

All efforts and resources for church mission are directed towards the fulfillment of Christ vision: The Kingdom of God.

### 3. God is The Owner of Mission

God sent us on a divine calling, to proclaim the good news that His Kingdom is coming among us. Mission should be understood from a trinitarian perspective, which means that first of all the church's mission should be God's mission (*missio Dei*). The church's mission can only be done right as long as the church is in connection with God, and proclaims the gospel of His Kingdom's presence in this world, wherever the church lives and gives witness.

### 4. The Church for the World

The Church exists to bring God's peace to the world He created. God's salvation work goes beyond the walls of the church. Therefore, the Church's mission is to witness God's love and grace to the world. This understanding will determine the Church's attitude towards culture, other religions, and various reality of the Church's context.

### 5. Church Development

To enable church members to fulfill the church's mission, requires a serious effort of church development, so that they can become means and signs of God's salvation for the world. This kind of church development allows every member of the church to participate and together to contribute so that the presence of the church is more empowering to the world. Church development should be done in conjunction with other scientific disciplines in order to be functional in serving the world.

### 6. The Context of Mission

Part of the mission itself is the effort to understand the context where the church is serving. Especially, facing the reality of globalization, the church needs to analyze this new context if it were to do ministry in correct forms and activities. The church needs to give preference to the powerless.

### 7. Penta-Ministries of GMIT

GMIT's understanding of its ministry is summarized in five major aspects:

#### a. *Koinonia*

*Koinonia* is inclusivity that will enable GMIT to overcome the primordial tendencies in the church and society. Accepting others in their differences, supporting the process of democratization in the Indonesian political sphere, the church can lead by example in promoting an open communion that upholds equality.

b. *Marturia*

Witnessing is done in the spirit of sharing God's universal love, which can be found in many places, times, and events. Witnessing is done by making the church's critical prophetic voice heard during times of injustice and oppression. All church members are to take part, whether through the activity of the church, or in the wider community.

c. *Diakonia*

*Diakonia* should be GMIT's strength in expressing true solidarity for the powerless in the society. Facing exploitation of the poor for the benefit of the capital owner, church ministry can no longer be mere charity, but should also be reformative and transformative.

d. *Liturgia*

*Liturgia* is translated into worship, emphasizing the vertical dimension of the church's mission. Mission is an action and a contemplation at the same time. The need for a contextual worship so that people would experience God, will help the mission of the church.

e. *Oikonomia*

*Oikonomia* in GMIT's understanding is the responsible act of managing church household (internally) and the responsible act of promoting economic and ecological justice in the world (externally). Acknowledging God's universal love and authority, the church needs to be open in cooperating with other parties who have the good and sincere intention for the betterment of the world, and in the fight against injustice and destruction toward His creation.

8. Church and State Relationship

GMIT, as the people in it and as an institution, is part of the Indonesian society, which has a shared responsibility in promoting peace, justice, prosperous life, and upholding human rights. Both the church and the state are God's servants; therefore, a dialogic-mutualistic relationship must be developed. Therefore, the church needs to analyze and be critical to state regulations, policies, and practices.

9. Church and Politics

Church and Politics are inseparable. We should ask what kind of doing politics should be the characteristic of the church. Politics is understood as the empowerment and management of power, done together. In this light, the church is called by God to promote justice and peace for the whole creation. This is the basis for the church's participation in politics. Not to fight for its own interest, but for the interest of all, including the poor and marginalized, the future, and the universe.

10. GMIT and Other Religions

We cannot deny that GMIT has inherited historical hostility towards other religions. However, God's universal love enables us to emphasize dialogue between religions in the present context. In dialogue, respect towards others is built.

#### 11. GMIT and Local Cultures

Since its formation years, GMIT has inherited a more open view towards local culture. The transformative impact of Christianity towards local culture needs to be balanced with the openness to accept the transformative impact of local culture toward GMIT. As long as the local culture and its dynamics are not put into consideration in developing GMIT's theology, GMIT will remain "a plant in a pot" handed down from the previous missionaries only. Dialogue must be done in the acknowledgement that God is also at work within the local culture. This is why preserving local culture and local identity has become one of the responsibilities of GMIT.

#### 12. Poverty

The church needs to do affirmative action towards the economically weak, the marginalized, and the poor. An alternative economical model is needed to fulfill the vision of God's Kingdom. An economical model of emancipation and empowerment of each other, this is what GMIT must strive to develop.

#### 13. Education

Historically, through education, the church has played a part in developing Indonesian society. Faced with the reality of the quality decline of education in East Timor, the mission of educating the people is important for GMIT.

#### 14. Science and Technology

Science and technological advances have their positive and negative side. GMIT needs to responsibly make use of science and technology for the well-being of life that God has entrusted to humankind.

#### 15. Health

Faced with the reality of sickness and healing, the church is called by Christ to participate in efforts to proclaim the good news through health. This can be done through developing modern medical service, and through supporting and critically revitalizing other forms of traditional healing in the community.

#### 16. Relationship between Man and Woman

The church should be the main venue, and the main actor in promoting full humanity for man and woman. There is a need to liberate theology and Christianity from patriarchal symbols, and to be critical toward androcentrism that have marginalized women. The value and principle of equality in society should be used to understand the message of the Scripture.

#### 17. Ecology

Faced with the fact of ecological devastation today, GMIT is called to take care of God's created universe. This is our common problem: as we are part of the problem, so we are also called to be part of the solution.

**Appendix C.2. - Pembukaan / Preamble (Pre)**

1. By the guidance of the Triune God – Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit – Gereja Masehi Injili di Timor (GMIT) was born through the work of missionary bodies of the *Hervormd* tradition from the Netherlands, which found its source in the teachings of Calvin. Through the missionary activities, congregations were founded in the Timor *afdeling* (English: Department), except in the *onderafdeling* (English: Sub-department) Sumba. On 31 October 1947, those congregations formed into an independent church called GMIT, as part of the Gereja Protestan di Indonesia, within the nation state of the Indonesian republic, based on Pancasila and the UUD 1945 constitution.
2. By the guidance of the Holy Spirit, GMIT, which is a manifestation of communion of the congregations in Timor, except Sumba, confesses and proclaims that Jesus Christ, the world Savior, is the foundation for its life and ministry (1 Cor. 3:11).
3. By God's will, GMIT was born and grew in the midst of diversity: tribes, islands, customs, values, history, and geography. Therefore, GMIT understands itself as a family of God (*familia Dei*), which is based on God's trinity (Eph. 2: 19-20). In the light of Jesus' proclamation of God's Kingdom, GMIT believes that God intends to engage in fellowship with all humanity, and with all creation.
4. GMIT confesses and accepts the Scripture, Old and New Testament, as the Word of God, and on that basis celebrates the sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion. Based on its confession of the scripture, GMIT accepts and adopts the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed, and the Athanasian Creed as ecumenical creeds. Besides those, in discerning its faith in its own unique context, GMIT formulates its own confession.
5. In an ever-changing world, GMIT together with the church of all times and places is called to participate in God's plan for the world's salvation. GMIT's understanding of its mission comes from the vision of God's kingdom. To fulfill that vision GMIT partakes in God's mission by formulating and carrying out its calling and mandate in its penta-ministry (*panca pelayanan* or five-fold ministry): fellowship (*persekutuan*), witness (*kesaksian*), charity work (*pelayanan kasih*), worship (*ibadah*), and stewardship (*penatalayanan*).
6. In ordering itself as an institution, GMIT adopts the institutional presbyterial-synodical principle, which is based on the theological principles of the priesthood of all believers and *ecclesia reformata semper reformanda* (the church always renews itself)
7. In the framework of ordering its life and ministry so that it can become an effective agent of God's salvation work in the world, GMIT decided to revise the GMIT constitution 1999 and adopt the GMIT constitution 2010.

**Appendix C.3 - Penjelasan Pembukaan / Explanation to the Preamble (EP)**

## EP par. 1

GMIT understands its presence in the world as not based on human initiative, but as a fellowship that God has created. God guided the works of European missionary bodies in the framework of His salvation work to the world (*missio Dei*).

## EP par. 2

God intended GMIT's presence in the Timor *afdeling*, with the exception of the Sumba *onderafdeling*, so that GMIT becomes God's agent in manifesting His salvation work in the world wherever GMIT is situated and doing ministry. The foundation of all aspects of GMIT's life and ministry is Jesus Christ. All arrangements of GMIT's life and ministry are founded in the pattern of life and ministry of Jesus Christ as witnessed to by the Scripture.

## EP par. 3

GMIT's understanding of *familia Dei* is based on GMIT's understanding of God as the Triune God in fellowship: the Father the Creator, the Son the Savior, and the Holy Spirit the Comforter and Renewer. As a church that is characterized by differences and diversity, GMIT is called to manage those differences and that diversity, so that they do not become a threat but become a blessing through the synergy in carrying out GMIT's mission in this world. Furthermore, GMIT understands itself as a communion of believers in unity with other believers in all places, times, and situations. The metaphor of GMIT as the family of God is intended to emphasize the character of intimate, personal, friendly relationships between family members, whether between congregations or church members. The church is a community of reciprocal love, sharing with each other, and together carrying burdens. All Christians are children of God, the Father in this family (Galatians 4:4-7). As children of the Father, they are heirs, together with Christ (Romans 8: 16-17). In the family, Jesus Christ is the first-born son, our brother (Hebrew 2: 10-13). This brotherhood is global in nature. It crosses all borders that humankind may have created. This image is also emphasizing that we do not personally choose that we can be members of this family. God the Father decided it for us. He calls everyone, native and foreigner, man and woman, big and small, employer and employee, master and helper, all into the family as equal brothers and sisters. In the light of Jesus' proclamation about God's kingdom, GMIT believes that God intends to share this kind of family relationship in the church, also with all humankind, even all His creations. Therefore, GMIT as an independent church is also a part of the one, holy, universal church. Thus, GMIT's identity is situated in a dialectic between particularity and universality.



## EP par. 4

Besides accepting the three ecumenical creeds, GMIT also formulates its own confession. In formulating it, GMIT is not simply repeating the existing ecumenical creeds. GMIT's confession is born out of an attempt of discerning with its faith in its local and national contexts, in the face of the values that are living within those contexts. GMIT takes the questions from the people where it lives and makes it its own. In GMIT's confession, the tradition of the universal church of all times meets with the local tradition. The result of this 'challenge and respond' process is what then becomes GMIT's confession.

## EP par. 5

The ordering of GMIT's life and ministry cannot exclusively aim at the interest of GMIT. The confession of God's initiative in the formation and presence of GMIT as God's salvation agent must be understood in GMIT's presence in the world to partake in God's salvation plan. Therefore, GMIT has to direct itself in efforts to be involved with God in the history of the world. In this context, GMIT understands itself as God's servant and as messenger of Christ. As God's servant, GMIT is dedicated to God's salvation work. And as messenger of Christ, GMIT always understands its calling as directed to the world. GMIT understands its mission in the framework of GMIT's penta-ministries, which consist of fellowship (*persekutuan*), witness (*kesaksian*), charity (*pelayanan kasih*), worship (*ibadah*), and stewardship (*penatalayanan*). The execution of GMIT's mission is based on the vision of God's kingdom, which is the salvation work of God in the world.

## EP par. 6

GMIT accepts the presbyterial-synodical principle as an implication of the priesthood of all believers and the affirmation that in essence the church is a fellowship that is oriented outward. In the presbyterial-synodical understanding, GMIT is not hierarchically led by one person sitting at the summit of church leadership, but it is collectively led by some/many people, in what are called councils (*konsistorium/ presbiterium/kemajelisan*). The synodical principle means that each congregation does not walk separately, but in a commitment to walk together (*syn-hodos*) in faith and ministry. As a consequence, in GMIT there are congregations, presbyteries, and the synod. The relationship between congregations that is arranged within the bond of presbyteries and synod is manifested through the meeting of the officebearers.

## EP par. 7

GMIT's constitution is an integral part of the GMIT church order and becomes the reference for all other regulations in GMIT. The church order is an act of wisdom in order to govern the life and the execution of GMIT's apostolic mandate. We are aware of the limitations of a church order, that many things that are results of the dynamics of the Holy Spirit and of the congregations may not be contained in it. This fact, however,

does not reduce the importance of a church order. Love expression, which is characteristic of God's people should not be in contradiction with decency and order, according to the presbyterial-synodical system that GMIT adopted. The term church order is applied to all kinds of regulations within GMIT, which are the constitution, regulations, synod decisions, regulations for implementation, presbytery meeting decisions, and consistory decisions.

**Appendix C.4 - Tata Dasar GMIT/GMIT Constitution**

## Chapter 1 – Name

## § 1

The church name is Gereja Masehi Injili di Timor, abbreviated to GMIT

## Chapter 2 – Nature, Basis, and Form

## First Part – Nature

## § 2 – Nature of GMIT

GMIT is:

- a. God's communion which stands on the basis of faith in God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and runs its life as a family of God manifested through congregations, presbyteries, and synod.
- b. The communion of congregations as the basis of GMIT's life and ministry.
- c. The communion of believers who are called to live and serve as God's servant.

## § 3 – Nature of a Congregation

A congregation is the communion of GMIT's members within a particular place and socio-cultural setting, where the Word is proclaimed, and sacraments administered, under the leadership of the consistory and where discipleship in the spirit of exemplifying Christ is manifested.

## § 4 – Nature of a Presbytery

A presbytery is a means for togetherness between GMIT congregations, which is expressed through the meetings of the presbyters and through the shared programs within a particular area.

## § 5 – Nature of the Synod

The synod is a means for togetherness between GMIT congregations, which is expressed through the meeting of the presbyters and through the shared programs within the widest area.

## Second Part - Basis

## § 6

GMIT's foundation is Jesus Christ (compare 1 Corinthians 3: 11)

## Third Part - Form

## § 7 - Location

1. GMIT is an independent part of the Gereja Protestan Indonesia (GPI), and at the same time member of Persekutuan Gereja-gereja di Indonesia (PGI), and a manifestation of the One Christian Church.
2. GMIT is formed by congregations in the Timor *afdeling*, except the *onderafdeling* Sumba. To answer special ministerial needs, GMIT can form congregations outside that geographical area, while trying to integrate that congregation into one of the local churches with the same principle.

## § 8 – System of Governance

1. GMIT is run based on the acknowledgement of Christ's governance (Christocracy).
2. GMIT is run following the presbyterial-synodical principle, with the congregations, presbyteries, and the synod as its manifestation.
3. This principle is translated into the leadership sphere, visible from the presence of the presbyters' participation as representatives from congregations, both as meeting participants or in holding governance positions in the church.
4. In implementing this principle, meeting becomes the key word for togetherness in seeking and finding the will of the Triune God.

## Chapter 3 – Confession and Teaching

## First Part – Confession

## § 9 - Confession

1. GMIT confesses to believe in the Triune God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
2. GMIT affirms the Scripture of Old Testament and New Testament as the Word of God.
3. GMIT celebrates the holy baptism and the holy communion as sacraments.
4. GMIT accepts the Apostolic Creed, the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed, and the Athanasian Creed as ecumenical creeds.
5. Called to confess its faith meaningfully and clearly, GMIT formulates and declares its own GMIT Confession.

## Second Part – Teaching

## § 10 - Teaching:

1. The source of GMIT's teaching is the Scripture's testimony as God's Word.
2. GMIT's teaching includes its understanding about God, the world, the church, and its context.
3. GMIT must analyze and formulate its teaching correctly, clearly, and dynamically.
4. GMIT must live out its teaching in loyalty, orderly, and truthfully as a life guidance to all its members

## Chapter 4 – Calling and Mandate

## First Part - General

## § 11 – Calling

GMIT is called by God to become God's partner in living out His calling, commissioned by the Lord Jesus Christ.

## § 12 – Mandate

1. The mandate is the church's task to proclaim and manifest God's gracious love through Jesus Christ, in this world.
2. GMIT accepts and lives out God's mandate in obedience and worship to God.
3. GMIT's living out the mandate is intended to promote peaceful and prosperous life, as the manifestation of God's love and justice for humankind and all creation.
4. For GMIT, the mandate is manifested in the proclamation of God's Word and the administration of sacraments, and also in the execution of GMIT's Penta-Ministries.

## Second Part – GMIT's Penta-Ministries

## § 13

GMIT's Penta-Ministries consist of fellowship (*koinonia*), witness (*marturia*), charity (*diakonia*), worship (*liturgia*), and stewardship (*oikonomia*).

## § 14 – Fellowship

1. GMIT understands itself as a fellowship founded in the work of the Triune God.
2. GMIT calls itself Family of God (*familia Dei*).
3. As a Family of God, GMIT must:
  - a. Preserve the fellowship and unity of its members.
  - b. Become a harmonizing force in developing the spirit of brotherhood, openness, and equality in its presence in the world.

## § 15 – Witness

1. GMIT accepts the task to proclaim and manifest the Gospel of Jesus Christ through words and deeds.
2. GMIT, in performing its witnessing task, must:
  - a. Proclaim the Gospel of the Kingdom of God to every human and creature;
  - b. Teach the Word, develop theology, and teach according to the Scripture;
  - c. Make its prophetic voice heard in all situations.
3. GMIT's witness is done with full responsibility, in the spirit of love, communicatively, and respecting others.

## § 16 – Charity

1. In doing charity, GMIT takes the example of Jesus Christ as the true servant of God.
2. In doing charity, GMIT must:
  - a. Perform caritative, reformative, and transformative diakonia.
  - b. Side with the weak and the marginalized in order to manifest God's love.

## § 17 – Worship

1. GMIT worships as an act of faith and devotion to God in spirit and truth (compare John 4:23-24) in all places and times.
2. Worship is a manifestation of true relationship with the Triune God and of thankfulness for His guidance, care, and protection.
3. GMIT in its worship must:
  - a. Develop a contextual worship.
  - b. Promote liturgical worship that can be implemented into actual work, in order to become a true worship.

## § 18 – Stewardship

1. GMIT is called to care for itself, its ecology, and its society as God's household.
2. In doing its stewardship, GMIT must:
  - a. Self-manage its ministry, procurement, maintenance, and develop its human resources, also in financial matters;
  - b. Manage and resolve the crisis of ecology and social issues.

## Chapter 5 – Ecumenical Relationships

## § 19 – GMIT's relationships with other churches

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## § 20 – GMIT's relationships with Christian Organizations and Ecumenical Organizations

-

## § 21 – GMIT's relationships with other religions

1. GMIT views other religions as means wherein God is also working in order to declare His truth and salvation.

## § 22 – GMIT's relationships with the State and Society

-

## § 23 – GMIT's relationship with the Ecosystem

1. GMIT affirms others as equally God's creation.
2. GMIT is called to resolve the ecological crisis.

3. GMIT is called to take care of God's created universe for its continuity.

## Chapter 6 – Membership

### § 24 – Member's Status

1. GMIT members are all who believe in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, within the communion of GMIT's congregations.
2. GMIT's members consist of:
  - a. those who are born into GMIT families.
  - b. those who have been baptized in GMIT congregations.
  - c. members from another church or religion, who have been accepted as GMIT members.
3. GMIT affirms the equal standing of its members, as the subject of the priesthood of all believers.

### § 25 – Member's Rights

1. A member has the right to receive GMIT ministry.
2. A member has the right to be equipped for ministry.
3. An infant member has the right to receive baptism, nurture, education, and pastoral care so that he/she may grow into maturity in faith.

### § 26 – Member's Obligations

Church members have the obligation to actively manifest their fellowship, witness, charity, worship, and stewardship.

### § 27 – Acceptance and Transfer of Members

-

## Chapter 7 – Church Office

### § 28 - Definition

Church offices are Christ's gift intended to equip church members for the ministerial work within church and society.

### § 29 - Status

1. Church officebearers are servants of Christ.
2. Church officebearers are elected from church members, based on principle of the priesthood of all believers.
3. Church officebearers are elected church members who are entrusted by the congregation through the guidance of the Holy Spirit to translate the vision of God's Kingdom, and to lead in the mission that God entrusted to His church.

### § 30 - Types

1. Ecclesiastical office in GMIT consists of ministerial offices and organizational offices.
2. Ministerial offices are minister, elder, deacon, and teacher.
3. The office of minister is a life-long office, while the others are periodical offices.
4. Organizational offices are council members and other ministerial bodies.
5. Ministerial offices are accepted through ordination, which is by the laying on of hands, while organizational offices are started and terminated in front of the people in a worship service.

#### § 31 – Task

1. Church officebearers have the responsibility of translating the vision of God's Kingdom, and to lead in the mission God entrusted to His church.
2. In doing their work, ministerial offices and organizational offices work complementarily.
3. The basic responsibility of all church officebearers is pastoral work.

#### § 32 – Function

The function of ecclesiastical offices is to manifest the three-fold office of Christ as King, Priest, and Prophet in the life of the church and society.

### Chapter 8 – Oversight and Discipline

#### § 33 Discipline

1. GMIT carries out discipline to order the life of its members so they may live as Christ's disciples and be loyal to the Father's will and love others sincerely.
2. If a person's life is not in accordance with God's calling, to that person will be given an act of discipline.
3. A disciplinary act is done in love, in a pastoral spirit, and in forgiveness.
4. Discipline as referred to in point 1 covers discipline in teaching, discipline in life, and discipline in office (discipline in organization).
5. Other arrangements regarding discipline are dealt with in the GMIT regulations.

#### § 34 Oversight

1. GMIT performs oversight as forms of supervision and consideration that cover ministry, theology, treasury, and administration in a pastoral spirit.
2. Other arrangements regarding oversight are dealt with in the GMIT regulations.

### Chapter 9 – The Scope of GMIT

#### First Part - Congregation



## § 35 – Status

1. The congregation is an integral part of GMIT.
2. The congregation is the basis of GMIT's life and ministry work.

## § 36 – The Formation of Congregation

The formation of congregation (RAS: *\*church planting*) is done according to the need of ministry.

## § 37 – Congregation Development

4c. (The consistory) Performs the ministerial planning process and decision-making at the congregation level, while participating in the ministerial planning process and decision-making at the presbytery and synod level, according to organizational regulations and GMIT's ministerial management.

5. In performing its duties, the consistory is held accountable to the congregation (*jemaat*) through the congregation meeting as a form of faith-accountability to the Lord.

## § 38 – Organizational Agents

The organizational agents in the congregation consist of the congregation meeting and the consistory.

## Second Part – Presbytery

## § 39 - Status

1. The presbytery is an integral part of GMIT
2. The presbytery is a means of togetherness between congregations in a particular area.
3. The presbytery organizationally is a means for *musyawarah* between consistory, presbytery council, and synod council.

## § 40 – The Formation of a Presbytery

The formation of a presbytery is done according to ministerial needs and following the constitution of GMIT.

## § 41 – Presbytery Development

4. In the framework of presbytery development, the presbytery has the task:
  - a. To listen to the struggles in the congregations, to be followed up into common ministerial programs, or to follow it through to the synod.
  - b. To raise the participation of the congregations to actively involve in ecumenical, social, and government activities.
  - c. To empower the congregations in order to effectively and correctly do the church's calling.

- d. To execute and develop two-ways communication with the synod council, between congregations within a presbytery, and all the stakeholders in the framework of presbytery development.
  - e. To help the synod council to promote and execute synod decisions in the congregations within the presbytery.
  - f. To coordinate with the synod council in congregational development, placement and transfer of minister, and problem solving.
  - g. Together with the consistory and synod council to take the responsibility of taking care of GMIT's treasury.
5. In performing its duties, the presbytery council is held accountable to the congregations (*jemaat-jemaat*) and GMIT synod (*sinode* GMIT) in its meeting as a form of faith-accountability to the Lord.

#### § 42 – Organizational Agents

The organizational agents of the presbytery are the presbytery meeting and the presbytery council.

#### Third Part - Synod

#### § 43 – Status

1. The synod is an integral part of GMIT.
2. The synod is a means of togetherness of GMIT congregations.
3. The status of GMIT congregations within the synod is equal.
4. The synod organizationally plays a role as a means of *musyawarah* and through its meetings makes the widest decisions that bind GMIT as a whole.

#### § 44 – Synod Development

4. In the framework of synod development, the synod has the task:
  - a. To perform synod meeting and special synod meeting.
  - b. To resolve the problems of GMIT which cannot be solved by the synod council with regard to the fields of: *koinonia*, *marturia*, *diakonia*, *liturgia*, and *oikonomia*.
5. In performing its duties, the synod council is held accountable to the synod meeting (*persidangan sinode*) as a form of faith-accountability to the Lord.

#### § 45 – Organizational Agents

The organizational agents of the synod are the synod meeting and the synod council.

#### Chapter 10 – Structure of Organization

#### First Part – Structure of Organization in the Congregation

## § 46 – The Congregation Meetings

1. Congregation meetings are means for decision-making according to God's will, regarding matters related to the life and ministry of the congregation.
2. Meetings at the congregation level are:
  - a. The congregation meeting;
  - b. The extraordinary congregation meeting;
  - c. The consistory meeting;
  - d. The congregation outpost meeting;
  - e. The congregation outpost council meeting.

## § 47 The Congregation Ministerial Body

1. The consistory is the ministerial body of a congregation
2. The consistory is an organizational office, which consists of the ministerial office-bearers: ministers, elders, deacons, and teachers.
3. The consistory is elected and appointed in a congregation meeting, and ordained and introduced in a special worship service.
4. The authority to make decisions of the consistory only exists during the consistory meeting, not in the individual power of the members. (previously is point 3)
5. The consistory's tasks are:
  - a. To conduct congregation meetings
  - b. To lead and coordinate the congregation's ministry
  - c. To arrange the carrying out of pastoral assistance and church members empowerment in the framework of manifesting a missionary congregation.
  - d. To arrange the carrying out of pastoral assistance and empowerment for the consistory's ministerial helping units.
6. The consistory represents the congregation, as according to the church order.
7. The consistory, in performing its duties, appoints and establishes congregation ministry helping bodies according to the recommendation of the congregation meeting, and appoints its members and appoints consistory ministry helping units.
8. The consistory, in performing its duties, is in partnership and consultation with the presbytery council and the synod council.
9. The consistory is held accountable to the congregation through a congregation meeting as a form of faith accountability to God.

## § 48 – The Ministry Helping Bodies of the Congregation

1. A ministry helping body is formed by the consistory as an organ of ministry of the consistory.
2. Members of the ministry helping body of the congregation are elected from ministers emeritus, elders, deacons, and teachers, in the consistory meeting.
3. A ministry helping body can consist of a consideration body and a congregation supervision body and other types of bodies according to the need of the consistory.
4. A ministry helping body is presented to the people in a special worship.

5. In performing its duty, all ministry helping bodies are in partnership and consultation with other ministry helping bodies at the level of congregation, presbytery, and synod.
6. A ministry helping body is held accountable to the congregation through the consistory in a congregation meeting.

#### § 49 – The Ministry Helping Units of the Consistory

1. A ministry helping unit of the consistory is formed by the consistory to help in the execution of tasks of the executive body of the consistory.

### Second Part – Structure of Organization of the Presbytery

#### § 50 – The Presbytery Meeting

1. The presbytery meeting is a means of decision making for GMIT congregations within the presbytery, with regard to common ministerial programs.
2. Meetings at the presbytery level consist of:
  - a. The presbytery meeting;
  - b. The extraordinary presbytery meeting;
  - c. The presbytery council meeting.

#### § 51 – Ministry Body of the Presbytery

1. The ministry body in the scope of a presbytery is a presbytery council.
2. The congregations within a presbytery propose the members of presbytery council.
3. A presbytery council is elected and appointed in a presbytery meeting, and then presented to the people in a special worship.
4. A presbytery council only has the authority to make a decision within a meeting, not as individual members.
5. The task of a presbytery council:
  - a. To conduct presbytery meeting.
  - b. To lead and coordinate the togetherness of congregations in carrying out their ministry at the level of presbytery.
  - c. To manage the carrying out of pastoral assistance and empowerment for the congregations in order to manifest missioner congregations.
  - d. To manage pastoral assistance and empowerment for the presbytery council's ministry helping units.
  - e. To assist consistories in resolving problems in the congregations.
  - f. To nurture and develop partnership with other parties, in coordination with the consistories and the synod council.
6. A presbytery council represents the presbytery according to GMIT church order.
7. A presbytery council in carrying out its tasks, form ministry helping bodies and units according to the recommendations from presbytery meeting.

8. A presbytery council in carrying out its task, is in partnership and to consult with the consistories and the synod council.
9. A presbytery council is held accountable to the congregations in a presbytery meeting as a form of faith accountability to God.

§ 52 – Ministry Helping Bodies of the Presbytery

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§ 53 – Ministry Helping Units of the Presbytery Council

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Third Part – Structure of Organization of the Synod

§ 54 – Synod Meeting

1. The synod meeting is a means of decision making according to God's will, regarding matters that are the authority, task, and responsibility of the synod.
2. Meetings at the synod level consist of:
  - a. The synod meeting
  - b. The Extraordinary synod meeting
  - c. The synod council meeting
3. Other arrangements regarding synod meetings are regulated in the constitution of GMIT.
4. Especially regulations for synod council Election are agreed upon in the synod meeting.

§ 55 – Synod Ministry Body

1. The ministry body in the scope of a synod is the synod council.
2. The congregations within a synod propose the members of synod council, to be elected and appointed in a synod meeting and introduced to the people in a special worship service.
3. The synod council only has the authority to make a decision within a meeting, not as an individual member.
4. The task of the synod council:
  - a. To conduct a synod meeting.
  - b. To lead and coordinate ministry within the synod.
  - c. To manage the carrying out of pastoral assistance and empowerment for the congregations and presbyteries in order to manifest missioner church.
  - d. To manage the carrying out of pastoral assistance and empowerment for the synod council's ministry helping units.
  - e. To nurture and develop ecumenical relationship locally, nationally, and globally.
5. The synod council represents GMIT according to GMIT church order.

6. The synod council in carrying out its task forms ministry helping bodies and units.
7. In resolving problems in a congregation, presbytery, and synod; the synod council is in partnership and to consult with the consistories and presbytery councils.
8. The synod council is held accountable to the synod meeting as a form of faith accountability to God.

§ 56 – Ministry Helping Bodies of the Synod

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§ 57 – Ministry Helping Units of the Synod Council

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Chapter 11 – Church Attributes

§ 58 – Hymn and March

1. The hymn and march of GMIT is an expression of GMIT's affirmation of its nature and calling.
2. The hymn and march of GMIT is composed with a theological perspective and with socio-cultural considerations.
3. The hymn of GMIT is "Yesus Kristus Tiang Induk Rumah Allah" (*Jesus Christ is the Main Pillar of God's House*), and the march of GMIT is "Di Bumi Indonesia Engkau Berdiri" (*In Indonesian Soil You Stand*).

§ 59 – Symbol

1. GMIT symbol is a reflection of GMIT's understanding regarding its essence and calling.
2. GMIT symbol is designed with theological and socio-cultural consideration.
3. Arrangements regarding the size, color, and other matters are dealt with in the regulation.

§ 60 - Flag

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Chapter 12 – Treasury

§ 61

The authority of ownership over all resources GMIT treasury at the level of a congregation, a presbytery, and the synod, is held by the synod; and the management authority is held by the consistory, the presbytery council, and the synod council, and is held accountable to the synod.

## Chapter 13

## § 62 – The Hierarchy of the Church Order

1. The order of GMIT is arranged using this stratification:
  - a. Constitution
  - b. Regulations
  - c. Synod council decisions
  - d. Constitution execution regulations
  - e. Presbytery meeting decisions
  - f. Congregation meeting decisions
2. These orders of GMIT are in harmony and refer to each other.

## Chapter 14 – Changes to the GMIT Constitution

## § 63

1. Changes to the GMIT constitution can only be made in a GMIT synod meeting.
2. Suggestions for change to sections in constitution can be proposed by GMIT congregations to the GMIT synod, through the consistory, the presbytery council, or the synod council.
3. Every suggestion for change of the GMIT constitution sections must be presented in a written proposal and show clearly the part that needs to be changed along with an explanation of its reasons for change.
4. A suggestion for change of GMIT constitution sections can be accepted and declared as a formal proposal if it is supported by 1/3 of the synod meeting participants to become part of the meeting agenda.
5. A decision to change GMIT constitution sections will be made after support from at least 50% + 1 participants of the synod meeting.
6. Especially regarding part of GMIT's foundation in the Introduction, on nature and form, and on confession no changes can be made.

**Transitional Regulation**

## § 1

All existing previous GMIT regulations, if not regulated in this GMIT constitution, will still be in effect.

## § 2

All existing ministry bodies of GMIT, if not regulated in this GMIT constitution, will still be in effect.

**Additional Regulation**

No later than one year after this constitution is adopted, the congregation regulations, presbytery regulations, and synod regulations must be created.

**Adopted 29 September 2015**



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