

P R E F A C E

The role and contribution of the church as pioneered by European mission boards in the advancement of the schooling of the Bataks, especially the Christians, is common knowledge. But were the mission bodies the only agents? What and how extensive was the role of the Bataks themselves? Then too, what was the extent of the Dutch Indies colonial government's role in Batak education, particularly when addressing the educational progress of the Bataks in the pre-independence period of Indonesian people?

This writing will try to relate the history of education in the form of schooling among the Christian Bataks based on the hypothesis that their educational advancement was the result of the encounter between the Bataks and the mission boards, and to a certain degree because of the involvement of the colonial government. The mission board chosen as the partner in the encounter with the Bataks was the Rhenish mission (*Rheinische Missions-Gesellschaft*, RMG), a German mission board whose personnel worked in the Batak area and surroundings from 1861-1940.

With this hypothesis as our starting point, this writing attempts to describe the foundation, motivation, goal and content of the schooling which was conducted by the RMG during the time of its presence there. In addition, we shall note the RMG's educational views, and the place and function of education in the whole system of its ministry. From another perspective, we shall indicate the factors which motivated the Bataks to enthusiastically welcome that educational ministry. We shall also consider the role of Bataks themselves in the encounter, their motives and objectives for having the schools along with noting their traditional system of education.

In order to obtain a complete picture, it was necessary to utilize the results of various scientific disciplines. Even so, the main focus of this study was placed on theology, especially church history and missiology.

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This writing has actually been published by E.J. Brill (Leiden) in 1994 under the title, *Mission Schools in Batakland (Indonesia), 1861-1940*. Basically the text of this dissertation is just the same with that book, except some minor modification as well as typing and redactional correction. The author expressed his gratitude to the publisher for the permission given to use and to modify that book to be this dissertation.

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As is the case with all human work, this writing has not escaped from its share of shortcomings. While awaiting criticisms, corrections, and suggestions, the author hopes that this writing may provide the basis for further discussion and research on this and related topics. He particularly hopes that this writing may make a small contribution towards understanding the Batak Church and Society both in the past and present.

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