

Sowing the Gospel in the southern *Vorstenlanden*

Wonogiri in the Protestant evangelists' travelogues in the early twentieth century

ADI PUTRA SURYA WARDHANA AND DENNYS PRADITA

ABSTRACT

The goal of this study is to analyse the travelogues of Protestant evangelists in Wonogiri, a topic so far barely touched upon. Despite being a predominantly Muslim community, Wonogiri was one of the areas in the principalities of Surakarta targeted by the *zending*. Therefore, this study explores various aspects, including the purpose behind the visits of Protestant missionaries, the discourses presented in the travelogues, and the perspectives of these evangelists on the belief system prevalent in the community in the early twentieth century. Based on several travel accounts, this research utilizes a critical discourse analysis approach. The evangelists built a discourse which intertwined Christianity and identity discourse. The narratives reveal stark differences between the *abangan* communities and the stricter Muslims identified as *putihan*. The indigenous people who embraced Protestantism were perceived as the chosen ones, while those who remained unconverted were considered as the others. This reality highlights the inherent European-Christian perspective adopted by the travelogue writers.

KEYWORDS

Protestant evangelist, travelogues, Wonogiri, European-Christian, *zending*.

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INTRODUCTION

M.C. Ricklefs (2007) has written that, before the nineteenth century, mystic synthesis was a religious characteristic of Javanese society. This term refers to the belief system in the Javanese Islamic society which was influenced by Sufism and characterized by Islamic identity, adherence to the five pillars of Islam, but coupled with the acceptance of local spiritual forces. However, an increasing polarization of Javanese society in the mid-nineteenth century created two religious' categories: *abangan* and *putihan*, as the result of the growth of new, stricter Islamic ideas. *Abangan* derives from the Javanese word *abang*, meaning the colour red or the red ones, a group of people who did not adhere properly to observing their religious obligations in the eyes of pious Muslims. They prioritized tradition and belief in the power of ancestral spirits. *Putihan* (the white ones) distinguished a religious group which adhered to the five pillars of Islam and were identified as the white ones. *Putihan* referred to the *santri* (religious students) and the *kaum* (religious folk, religious functionaries) groups (Ricklefs 2007: 30, 84-87). For Christian evangelists, the *abangan* were more amenable than the *putihan*.

Since the authorization of evangelism by the Dutch colonial government in Java, various Protestant missionary organizations, grouped in a mission called the *zending*, had operated there freely. One of these organizations was the Nederlandsch Zendeling Genootschap (NZG, Dutch Missionary Society). In Central Java, various evangelizing bodies: the Nederlandsche Gereformeerde Zendingsvereniging (NGZV, Dutch Reformed Mission Union), Java Comite (JC, Java Committee), Genootschap voor In- en Uitwendige Zending (GIUZ, Society for Home and Foreign Mission), Doopsgezinde Zendings Vereniging (DZV, Mennonite Missionary Society), and Salatiga-Zending (SZ, Salatiga Mission) pursued their proselytizing (T. van den End et al. 2001: 3; Heintze 1937: 11). The evangelism itself could be preached by ministers from Dutch churches and by independent European Christian evangelists (*zendelingen*).

During the nineteenth century, the Javanese Christian community began to develop, with Javanese (indigenous) evangelists operating independently and not affiliated with European churches. However, they were not very successful because of differences in their methods. European evangelists under the *zending* rejected Javanese traditions, whereas the Javanese evangelists maintained their cultural practices in their evangelism (Gusti Garnis Sasmita and Adi Putra Surya Wardhana 2020: 125-126). This issue had an impact on the development of local Protestant Christian churches in Java.

The Javanese evangelists sought to distance themselves from European culture, giving rise to the congregation known as the Golongane Wong Kristen Kang Mardika (The Group of Free Christians) (En-Chieh Chao 2017: 39; Yoshua Budiman Paramita Harahap 2017: 2; Maryse Kruithof 2018: 126; Emanuel Gerrit Singgih 2015: 377). As a result, they achieved greater success in evangelism than the Europeans (*zendelingen*). Their success indicated that the community was more receptive to the methods employed by the Javanese, who incorporated local culture, than the *zending* evangelists who relied solely on doctrine.

Despite limited success, there was still a need for church management activities and the pastoral care of the converted, which necessitated cooperation with the *zending*. The *zending* assumed control of both the church and the converted people in Central Java, integrating them into a common platform. In the northern region, the local churches united under the name Geredja Kristen Djawa Tengah Utara (Javanese Christian Church of North-Central Java). Kyai Sadrah's Christian churches became known as the Jemaat Kristen Kang Mardika. In the southern region, the local churches united under the name Pasamoewan Kristen Djawi ing Djawi Tengah Sisih Kidoel (Javanese Christian Community in South-Central Java). These three local church communities laid the foundation for the subsequent establishment of the Javanese Christian Church (Gereja Kristen Jawa, GKJ) (Harry Bawono 2020: 11-12).

Of all the regions in Central Java, Surakarta was the most challenging for evangelists since it was one of the major centres of Islamic civilization in Java and, hence, an area in which the colonial government had prohibited evangelism. Governor-General J.B. van Heutz (1904-1909) hesitated to grant *zending* licences if the evangelism was to be directed towards Muslims. Nevertheless, independent evangelists defied the ban and continued to evangelize in various areas of the two principalities in Surakarta. A change in Governor-General provided the opportunity for the *zending* society to enter Surakarta, and permission was eventually granted by Governor-General Idenburg (1909-1916). Evangelism continued to thrive and expand beyond the capital city of Surakarta (Solo) (S.H. Soekotjo 2009: 309-319).

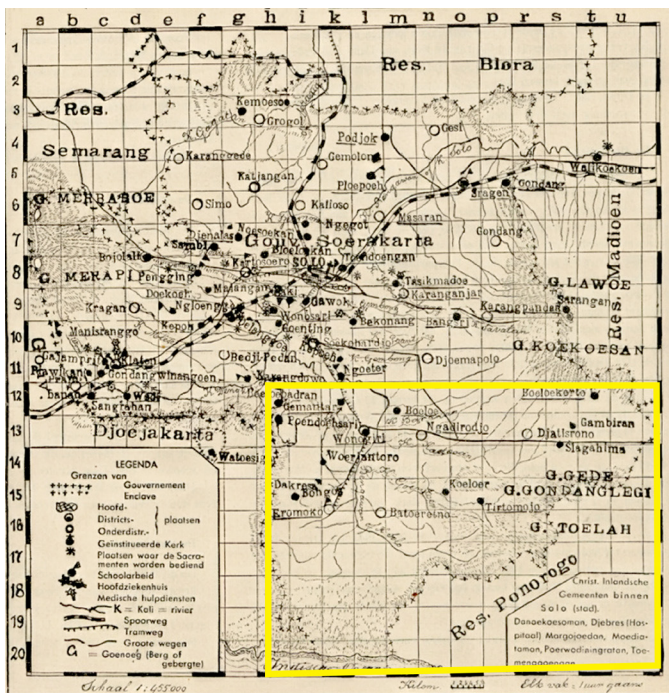


Figure 1. Wonogiri in 1932 (W. Breukelaar and L.G. Goris 1932: 19).

European evangelists were actively engaged in expanding the reach of evangelism in the territories of the principalities of Surakarta, particularly in Wonogiri. Figure 1 provides a geographical overview of the location of Wonogiri, a region characterized by very hilly terrain which posed challenges to accessing some remote areas (Erlyna Riptanti, A. Qonita, and R.U. Fajarningsih 2018: 744). Despite being predominantly Muslim, the community had deep-rooted *Kejawen* traditions (a belief system resulting from an amalgamation between Sufism and local traditions) (Julia Day Howell 1976: 234).

Although the Muslim community in Wonogiri did not adhere strictly to all their Islamic obligations, such as prayers five times a day, they maintained a solid commitment to *Kejawen* rites. Some of the practices observed by the *abangan* were viewed unfavourably by the *putihan*, because of their deviation from stricter Islamic doctrine. Consequently, there was often tension between these two groups in terms of cultural practices (Howell 1976: 234). This situation provided an opportunity for evangelists to introduce their message.

Initially, independent evangelists proselytized in Wonogiri. However, as the number of believers grew, they faced challenges in providing the people with sufficient guidance. Consequently, the *zending* organization assumed responsibility for nurturing the faith of the community. European evangelists visited Wonogiri on multiple occasions and documented their experiences in travelogues, a practice common among European evangelists dating back to 333 CE (Ayelet Oettinger 2007: 43).

Their travelogues served as records of the evangelists' daily activities and their encounters with the socio-cultural aspects of the surrounding communities. These accounts provide insights into foreign territories, cultures, and religions, often reflecting the perceptions of otherness (Jan Rörden et al. 2020: 801). The evangelists noted the potential for spreading the Gospel in these areas, and wrote their travelogues as evaluation material for future evangelistic endeavours. It is important to note that these travelogues represent the evangelists' point of view and constructed discourses.

Given the dearth of studies on Protestant evangelists' travelogues, the current essay specifically aims to examine: (1) the reasons behind the visits of Protestant evangelists to Wonogiri; (2) the discourses constructed by Protestant evangelists in travelogues, (3) the perspectives of Protestant evangelists on the belief system of Wonogiri society.

Various previous studies have focused on the history of evangelism in Indonesia encompassing both Protestant and Roman Catholic missionaries (Jan Sihar Aritonang and Karel Steenbrink 2008; Van den End et al. 2001; Chr. G.F. de Jong 1997; D. Lombard 2005; Kunto Sofianto et al. 2021; Karel Steenbrink 2003, 2015; Amos Sukamto 2022; John A. Titaley 2008; Barbara Watson Andaya 2006). However, these studies did not specifically analyse the travelogues of Christian missionaries. Barbara Watson Andaya (2017); Alexander R. Arifianto (2009); Angel Damayanti and Sri Yunanto (2022); M. Zainuddin (2019), on the other hand, have examined the history of encounters between Christianity and

Islam using the terms Christianization and Islamization, which are frequently associated with conflict.

Ferry Y. Mamahit (2021) has examined the relationship between the adherents of *Kejawen*, Islam, and Christianity. These studies are essential to understanding the stigmatization and suspicion between believers. Although these studies were crucial, they did not utilize Christian missionaries' travelogues as primary data to reveal the perceptions of adherents of other faiths. Also, Kim M. Phillips (2013) explains that, in the period 1245-1510, the travel-writing of Europeans depicted Asia as the realm of Otherness. The distinction in these studies lies in examining the perspective of Christian Europeans on Javanese society in Wonogiri. Previous studies, like those of Judith E. Bosnak and Frans X. Koot (2020), Virginia Matheson (1985), and George Quinn (1992), have focused on the travelogues of Javanese writers and analysed various travelogue manuscripts.

Moreover, Tomasz Ewertowski (2022) has examined the Polish view of Java in the mid-nineteenth century and Mikko Toivanen (2019) has analysed the perspectives of non-Dutch Europeans on the Netherlands East Indies. Their work was composed to support the political agendas of their respective countries, and Rick Honings (2021) has studied travelogues based on Dutch soldiers' experiences in the Netherlands East Indies during the early nineteenth century. Although these studies are valuable in understanding the various types of travelogues and their underlying interests, they are not directly related to the travel records of colonial-era Protestant evangelists. Therefore, the current study provides a novel contribution by analysing the travelogues of Protestant evangelists about Wonogiri, a topic which has rarely been explored, filling a gap in understanding the dynamics of the spread of Christianity in Wonogiri.

This study employs qualitative data analysis as its methodological approach. The qualitative data analysis delves deep into the text revealing a hidden meaning (Aeron Davis 2008: 57). It also evaluates the structure of the establishment or attribution of meaning (Anneke Meyer 2008: 69). The initial step involved the collection of data on Protestant evangelists' travelogues, sourced from the digitized Koninklijke Bibliotheek (KB, Delpher), the National Library of Indonesia (Jakarta), and the National Press Monument (Surakarta). Supporting data were obtained from newspapers, books, and scholarly articles. The collected data were subsequently compared and cross-checked to extrapolate information pertaining to Protestant evangelist travelogues. This process involved a thorough examination and reduction of the data to validate the results and mitigate any potential bias arising from a single source. Lastly, interpreted data were summarized and compiled in a scholarly narrative.

This study utilizes Norman Fairclough's critical discourse analysis (CDA). Discourse is a theory widely embraced by study experts and practitioners in Cultural Studies and the Post-modern paradigm. This theory investigates the power relations behind the design of knowledge disseminated through language (discourse). Power is diffuse and conceptualized in discourse events,

controlling the production, distribution, and consumption of texts within a specific socio-cultural context (Fairclough 1995: 2). Fairclough argues that CDA offers a means to examine the interrelationships between language, power, and ideology. It connects text analysis, discursive practices (text production, consumption, and distribution), and socio-cultural analyses of discursive events (Fairclough 1995: 23).

Fairclough has utilized linguistic analysis to examine texts selectively and intertextual analysis to dissect texts which refer to discourses' order, genres, and narratives (Fairclough 1995: 189). In the text analysis phase of this study, the structure and meaning of the Protestant evangelists' travelogues, like those written by Dominees D. Poll, Van Andel, and Dr J.H. Bavinck, have been analysed. Specific diction and sentence choices made by the authors have been scrutinized to identify underlying values. The texts have also been analysed to identify ideological traces and discourses. In the discourse analysis phase, the travelogues were examined to understand how the text was used in the socio-political context. Lastly, they have been analysed to reveal how the text was influenced by power and ideology as social practices during the colonial period.

WONOGIRI AS FERTILE SOIL FOR THE GOSPEL

Wonogiri is situated to the south of Solo, the capital city of Surakarta and encompasses a vast territory comprising both highlands and lowlands. The lowlands are fertile, while the highlands consist of less fertile limestone outcrops. During the colonial period, numerous fertile areas were leased to European entrepreneurs, resulting in the establishment of plantations in the region (A.I. Pitaloka et al. 2017: 3-9; Dennys Pradita et al. 2021: 3-4). To facilitate the smooth transportation of plantation products, the colonial government constructed a railway line from Solo-Kakap (Baturetno district) and built a bridge linking Wonogiri to Karanganyar.¹ The existence of the plantations encouraged the emergence of a European community, many of whom were Christians who sought the services of ministers of religion in the capital city. Meanwhile, Christian Europeans visiting Wonogiri observed the culture and belief system of the people.

According to a news report, the Wonogori community was classified as an Animist society despite the presence of Islamic leaders in the surrounding areas, like the Gunung Kidul and Yogyakarta.² This report depicts Wonogiri as an area unaffected by religion, even though Islam had already influenced nearby regions like the Gunung Kidul. This report can be viewed as the outcome of the author's one-sided perspective, reflecting a Eurocentric view of the colony which was lacking in a comprehensive understanding. In addition, it appears paradoxical when cross-checked with other sources.

¹ "Uit de Indische bladen", *Het nieuws van den dag voor Naderlandsch-Indië*, 13-5-1914; "Bruggenbouw", *De Locomotief*, 29-8-1917.

² "Europeesche pers. De zending", *De Indier*, 21-3-1917.

One piece of evidence about Wonogiri's Muslim community was the attendance of the Regent accompanied by other local officials at a Qur'an recitation led by the *penghulu* of the Mangkunegaran Palace, as reported in *De Locomotief*. There was also news about the growing influence there of the Muhammadiyah, an Islamic organization which opened its first school in Ngadirojo, Wonogiri, in 1936, and about a social movement against the police led by a religious figure at Tambak Merang, Girimarto, in 1934.³ This socio-religious movement demonstrated that the Wonogiri community had already embraced Islam for a considerable period.⁴

Extrapolating on the information presented, the perception of Wonogiri as an Animistic region can be attributed to several factors. There was an unfounded assumption that the traditions practised by the Javanese people were not related to Islam. *Kejawen* rituals blended harmoniously with Animist and Hindu-Buddhist influences. Over the centuries, Sufism had already had an impact on Javanese traditions, resulting in cultural practices associated with Islam. Conversely, there was a growing religious purification movement represented by the Muhammadiyah. This organization was viewed as contending with Javanese culture, which European orientalists labelled syncretic Islam.

The truth is that the Muhammadiyah appreciated and tolerated Javanese culture as most of its members were servants and aristocrats attached to the Yogyakarta sultanate. Nevertheless, its members were religiously observant and practised a culture which aligned with Islamic doctrines. Therefore, Ahmad Najib Burhani (2005) has argued that the Muhammadiyah was a Javanese variant of Islam in Java. Both Rubaidi (2019: 23) and Nancy K. Florida (1997: 187-188) had made a case that the separation of Javanese cultural practices from Islamic religious practices was a discourse perpetuated by European colonialists. This orientalist perspective was commonly adopted by European evangelists who had interests in facilitating their entry into Wonogiri.

In the early twentieth century, Wonogiri was opened to evangelism, and the ZGKN employed an evangelistic strategy to expand its movement into the rural areas. One of the native evangelists working alongside the European evangelists was ministering in the Gemantar area of Wonogiri in 1916. This led to the growing interest to hear about the Gospel among the local population. Subsequently, in 1918, eighteen individuals from Gemantar were baptized by a European minister in Surakarta (Suwitadi Kusumo Dilogo et al. 2016: 330; Soekotjo 2009: 315). The number of congregations in Gemantar continued to increase, and, in the 1920s, Wonogiri became a *pepanthan* (group or branch) of the Margoyudan Church (Dilogo et al. 2016: 331). During this period, European ministers and evangelists paid multiple visits to Wonogiri and documented their observations in journals.

³ "Midden-Java-nieuws. Wonogiri een Islamietische voordrachtavond", *De Locomotief*, 3-2-1928; "Nieuwe Mohammadiyah-Scholen", *De Locomotief*, 22-8-1936.

⁴ "Het treffen in Wonogiri. Een godsdienstige secte. Het oude liedje", *De Indische courant*, 10-10-1934.

PROTESTANT EVANGELISTS' TRAVELOGUES: TEXT AND DISCOURSE

Oettinger (2007: 41) defines a travelogue as a non-fictional account of a distant place written by, about, or for travellers. Peter Burke (2010: 2) says that travelogues are writings which document travellers' experiences. In the context of this study, evangelists recorded their experiences while visiting Wonogiri. In this section, the travelogues written by Dominees D. Poll, Van Andel, and Dr J.H. Bavinck are subjected to textual analysis. Fairclough (1995: 97-98) states that text analysis requires descriptions to improve an understanding of how the text is presented. At this stage, words and sentences are analysed to uncover hidden values conveying meanings. This analysis includes an examination of the language used in travelogues, which were published in Dutch. The use of Dutch indicates that the travelogue was written for readers in the Netherlands.

In *Midden-Java ten Zuiden*, Dominee D. Pol (1922) writes about his experiences when visiting Wonogiri as part of the preparation for a guidebook. Considering its textual dimensions, the title might appear simple but it contains deep meaning. *Midden-Java* or 'Central Java' refers to where the *zending* work was to be conducted. The phrase *ten zuiden* or 'south' indicates the direction of evangelism towards the southern part of Central Java, which had not yet been fully explored by *zending*. In addition, this book could be considered an ethnographic journal since it records various aspects such as the landscape, socio-economic relations, social interactions, kinship systems, national character, history of civilization, belief systems, religious organizations, the history of evangelism, and evangelistic opportunities.

Based on a text analysis, Dominee Pol's account is written in a descriptive language style which was easily understandable for Dutch readers. He discusses the colporteurs who assisted evangelism stating, "*Djagaswara, een Christen uit Gemantar. Hij doet van uit zijn eigen desa verre tochten in de afdeeling Wonogiri, natuurlijk alles te voet.*" (Djagaswara, a Christian from Gemantar, embarked on foot on long trips from his own *desa* (village) in the Wonogiri Regency). In the phrase *Djagaswara, een Christen uit Gemantar*, Dominee Pol introduces a Christian native as evidence of the success of evangelism in Gemantar, Wonogiri, and then highlights Djagaswara's significant role in evangelism as a colporteur. The sentence portrays the perseverance of the native colporteur through the verb *doet* (makes) and the noun phrase *verre tochten* (long trips) followed by a prepositional phrase indicating place, *in de afdeeling Wonogiri* (in the Wonogiri Regency). This conjures up a picture of the diligent work of the native colporteur who trudged on foot (*natuurlijk alles te voet*) from his home village. The colporteur was tasked with distributing books or writings related to Protestant Christianity to support the spread of the Gospel.

Dominee Pol was assisted by Dominee D. Bakker, a Dutch Reformed minister who was working in Central Java, including the principalities of Surakarta. Bakker was interested in the belief system of the Wonogiri people; therefore, observations included in the chapter on religion emphasize that

Wonogiri had great potential for spreading the Gospel. This was because the majority of the community consisted of Animists and *abangan*. Bakker also engaged in religious discourse to acquire knowledge and understand the belief system in Wonogiri society.



Figure 2. Dominee Bakker (left), one of the first Protestant evangelists in Central Java, beside a Javanese bride (source: Collectie Stichting Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen circa 1900-1943).⁵

Figure 2 depicts Dominee Bakker with a Javanese bride and groom at a Christian wedding breakfast. The portrait focuses on Dominee Bakker with the people around him serving as objects. It also highlights the subject's esteemed position, close relationship with indigenous people, and success in spreading the Gospel. The intertextual analysis has shown how Bakker's perspective was intertwined with Pol's in religious discourse.

Shamsematova Barno Rihsivayevna (2021: 8) argues that religious discourse encompasses the interpretation of a distinctive worldview, including norms, values, ideas, and myths. For Robert J. Wuthnow (2011: 7), religious discourse is a social practice which constitutes, practises, and disseminates all the discursive rules established by social institutions. In this case, the religious discourse was formed, practised, and disseminated by the *zending*. The discourse shows that all belief systems adhering to pre-Islamic culture were categorized as Animism and *abangan*. This knowledge was continuously reiterated and made available to other evangelists to read and use as evaluation

⁵ *Een Christen-Javaansche bruiloft, naast de bruid Ds. Bakker, een der eersten zendingspredikanten van Midden-Java* (TM-60062886).

material for evangelism, facilitating the spread of the Gospel. This aligns with Fairclough's statement, citing Kristeva, "the insertion of history (society) into a text and of this text into history" (Fairclough 1995: 189). It signifies that the existence of texts accentuates earlier, subsequently influenced texts.

Meanwhile, Huibert Antonie van Anandel, a Dutch evangelist born on 21 June 1875, documented his experiences while working in the principalities of Surakarta and did not distinguish between evangelistic activities and service to Christians during this period. In 1913, Van Anandel began working in Surakarta on the recommendation of the Gereformeerde kerk van Amsterdam (Amsterdam Reformed Church) (C. Houtman et al. 2006: 17).⁶ Before commencing, Van Anandel had studied the characteristics of the Javanese people and even approached the nobility of the Surakarta Sunanate and the Mangkunegaran Palace. Van Anandel met Susuhunan Paku Buwana X and Sri Mangkunegara VII to obtain permission to hold services and evangelize in the principalities of Surakarta (Dilogo et al. 2016: 108-109).



Figure 3. Van Anandel (left) with daughter and wife (source: Collectie Veenhuijzen, Centraal Bureau voor Genealogie, Den Haag, 1921).⁷

Figure 3 portrays Van Anandel with his wife and daughter on their return to the Netherlands. The portrait was published in a *zending* article to satisfy readers' curiosity about a minister who had successfully spread the Gospel in

⁶ See also "Dr. Van Anandel 60 jaar", *Algemeen Handelsblad*, 27-7-1935; "Dr. H.A. van Anandel en Mevr. Van Anandel", *De Amsterdammer*, 24-4-1928.

⁷ "H.A. van Anandel", Collection: The Netherlands in portraits - early 20th century. [Retrieved from: <https://geheugen.delpher.nl/en/geheugen/view/aandel?coll=ngvn&maxperpage=36&page=1&query=HA+van+Anandel&identificer=CBG01%3A330>, accessed on: 10-1-2022.]

the Netherlands East Indies. The caption emphasizes Van Andel's esteemed status as a respected Protestant evangelist (*zendeling*) in the Netherlands. Van Andel's travelogues composed during his spreading of the Gospel were published in a book entitled *Morgenrood: korte verhalen en schetsen* (Dawn: short stories and sketches) (Van Andel 1934b).

In the travelogue entitled "Boekoe Kristen: een verhaal uit 1914", Van Andel (1934a: 15) describes the Javanese people's exposure to Christianity. In textual analysis, the phrase *Boekoe Kristen* (Christian Book) carries the meaning of the Gospel. The author's intention was to describe the opportunities for evangelism in the principalities of Surakarta, particularly Wonogiri. The use of the *Boekoe Kristen* phrase encapsulates the story of Javanese people encountering Christianity for the first time.

Van Andel's narrative begins with the sentence, "*Morgen naar de Sekatên! Juichte Soe*" (Going to Sekaten tomorrow! Looking forward to it!), which serves as an exclamation and contains a parable. In the Old Testament, *Morgen* or 'tomorrow' signifies 'dawn' or 'morning' and often refers to the following morning or day, the next day, specifically the day after the Sabbath (Leviticus 23:11). Its meaning depends on the context like the Day of Rest (Exodus 16:23) and the Day of Worship (Genesis 22:3). In the New Testament, it signifies a day which will bring its own worries: "Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof" (Matthew 6:34). In Van Andel's text, *morgen* or tomorrow meant a new day with no worries in faith and a new hope for Christianity.

Sekaten is a symbol used in Javanese Islamic religious ceremonies to commemorate the birth of the Prophet Muhammad (Hisanori Kato 2021: 123; Arnout H.C. van der Meer 2017: 521; Nuryani Rahayu et al. 2020: 220; M. Rahmanita 2019: 163; Wasino and Endah Dri Hartatik 2019: 732; Mark R. Woodward 1991: 118). Based on text analysis, the opening sentence conveys the hope of spreading the Gospel in a region in which Javanese Muslims predominate. The use of the phrases *Boekoe Kristen* and *Sekaten* distinguishes the religious identity between Christianity and Islam.

Van Andel describes the Javanese interest in Christianity through the story of a boy who had a female name, Soeparti. The name had been given as a prophylactic to protect the child from misfortune. Soeparti and his parents travelled from rural Wonogiri to Keraton Surakarta, where they visited a bookshop. After browsing among the books for sale, the boy was particularly intrigued by Christian books. However, Parti was uncertain about Christianity.

Soeparti herinnerde zich van de school, dat er verschillende soorten boeken zijn, leesboeken, rekenboeken en nog andere. "Wat zijn dit voor boeken, vader?" Vader bracht de vraag over. "Wat zijn dit voor boeken, Mas?"

Het antwoord was: "boekoe Kristen." Heel duidelijk was dit antwoord voor Soeparti niet: hij kende dat soort nog niet. (Van Andel 1934a: 18).

'From school Soeparti recalled that there were different kinds of books, like readers, arithmetic books, and others. Soeparti asked the father, "What kind of books are these?" And his father conveyed the question to the bookseller, "What are these books, *Mas*?" The answer was, "*boekoe Kristen*." Unfortunately, Soeparti was dissatisfied with this answer: he did not know about that kind.'

In the paragraph above, Van Anandel emphasizes the sentence *hij kende dat soort nog niet* (he did not know about that kind), which is indicated by using a colon. Van Anandel also uses the past tense to highlight the unfamiliarity of the subject, Soeparti, with the main topic: "Boekoe Kristen". Some people referred to Christianity as *keris* (a precious Javanese dagger) because of the similarity in pronunciation, indicating many Javanese people were unfamiliar with the religion. Soeparti eventually studied Christianity intensively and became an evangelist in Wonogiri (Van Anandel 1934a: 16-19).

The message of this story is that anyone can discover Christian faith in a non-Christian context. Van Anandel's narrative served as a religious discourse describing the social and cultural practices of Javanese society. The discourse illustrates the community as deeply rooted in supernatural beliefs, exemplified in the story behind the boy's female name. The discourse also constructs knowledge about the Javanese who were unfamiliar with Christianity. However, their curiosity about religion is portrayed in Parti's story, who later diligently learned about the Gospel to become an evangelist. In this narrative, Van Anandel constructs knowledge about the opportunity to evangelize in Wonogiri.

In Van Anandel's subsequent account, "Een Javaansche Willebrord", the keyword in the title is the name "Willebrord". This name refers to the evangelist who first brought Christianity to the Netherlands around the beginning of the eighth century (P. Cornelissen 1939; J.D. Wolterbeek 1995: 2). Meanwhile, *Javaansche* is Javanese and the title signifies that it was a Javanese who became the first evangelist. The figure recounted in Van Anandel's journal is Karsasemita, a Javanese residing in Wonogiri.

The narrative begins with the sentence, "*Het was al enkele jaren lang tobben met de vrouw van Paq Karsasemita in Gemantar*" (It had been a worrying couple of years for Paq Karsasemita's wife in Gemantar) (Van Anandel 1934b: 41). This sentence hints at Karsa's misfortunes before encountering the Gospel, even his wife's suffering from a severe illness which the Javanese *dukun* or healers were unable to cure. However, when visiting a hospital in Yogyakarta, Karsa discovered a Javanese New Testament, and, not long after, his wife gradually recovered.

Van Anandel reintroduces the term "Christian book" in this account and constructs a narrative in which Karsa's fortune was a blessing because of his encounters with Christians and is introduced to reading the New Testament. The word *boeide* (intrigued) describes the Javanese interest in the Gospel. After encountering the Gospel, Van Anandel narrates how Karsa actively explored the concept of faith in Christianity. He even purchased a book to help him entitled *Kort begrip van den Christelijken godsdienst* (Brief understanding of the

Christian religion). This book provided an understanding of the three main concepts of Christianity: *zonde* (sin), *verlossing* (redemption), and *dankbaarheid* (gratitude) (Van Anandel 1934b: 42-43). These terms were part of a religious discourse, portraying a Christian identity which could bring salvation to Javanese who had not yet received the Gospel.

Van Anandel highlights the significant role of indigenous evangelists in spreading Christianity among the local community, emphasizing that the figure of Karsa influenced the people of Gemantar to acknowledge Christianity. This is exemplified by the story of the cutting down a sacred tree revered by the village community. Van Anandel narrated Karsa's bravery in felling the tree while preaching the Christian faith to the villagers, who believed in Karsa's words and actions, and later joined in felling the tree (Van Anandel 1934b: 43). This story symbolized the starting point of evangelism in Wonogiri, leading Van Anandel to refer to Karsa as a Javanese Willebrord.

Dr J.H. Bavinck (1932) was the next evangelist to document Wonogiri in an account entitled "Een vijfdaagsche reis door het land van Wonogiri", a narrative of a five-day visit to the area. Some of the areas visited were Gemantar, Eromoko, Woerjantoro, Manjaran, Batoeretno, Tirtomojo, Slogohimo, Boeloekerto, and the town of Wonogiri itself. The title used by Bavinck is clear and straightforward, and the language style is descriptive and easily understandable for Dutch-speaking readers. The opening sentence explains how Bavinck's busy schedule meant he could spend only five days in Wonogiri. By this time, Wonogiri had become a field of evangelism with an established indigenous Christian community (Bavinck 1934: 132). During the trip, Bavinck was fascinated by the stunning natural landscape of Wonogiri.

Mooi is dat bergland ten zuiden van Wonogiri, wonderlijk grillig en sprookjesachtig. Bovenop de bergen zie je vreemde rotspartijen. Hier is het net alsof er een sterke burcht gebouwd is met torens en bruggen. Op een andere plaats is het alsof de natuur zelf een tempel heeft opgebouwd, met mooie geronde hoeken. De glooiingen van de bergen zijn groen, alles gelijkmatig groen, met hier en daar roode streepen er tusschen, op die plaatsen waar de bodem zelf te zien komt. (Bavinck 1934: 132-33).

'The mountain area in southern Wonogiri is wonderfully rugged, like something out of a fairy tale. On top of the mountains, you can see strange rock formations. It is as if strong forts with towers and bridges had been built. In another place, it is as if nature has built a temple with beautifully rounded corners. The slopes of the mountains are green, all evenly green, with red streaks here and there where the soil itself can be seen.'

Using the discourse of environmental aesthetics, Bavinck invites readers to imagine one of the locations of evangelism in the principalities of Surakarta, highlighting the beauty of nature which builds a sense of amazement and gratitude for God's creation. The writing stimulates the imagination of the stories of God's greatness as told in the Gospels, enticing readers to visit the location described. Moreover, the description of the green mountains with unique rocky formations would have appealed to European readers.

Despite the beautiful landscape, Bavinck acknowledged Wonogiri's challenging dry environment, which made it unsuitable for rice cultivation, leading to poverty and dependence on other crops which required less water. Bavinck also uses this narration to evoke readers' sympathy and encourage their involvement in efforts to help the Wonogiri people and attract them to Christianity. This discourse was necessary to arouse the reader's enthusiasm for supporting evangelistic activities, both morally and materially.

In the subsequent narrative, Bavinck presents a religious discourse describing the enthusiasm of the Wonogiri Christian community. Bavinck was warmly welcomed with a solemn service held in a school-building in Eromoko. Some members had already arrived the night before, and the religious atmosphere was enhanced by descriptions of Christian hymn titles such as *Der legerscharen God* (The Lord God of Hosts) and *Huis en tempelzangen* (House and Temple Hymns). Bavinck later describes baptism ceremonies to demonstrate the continuity of the evangelism process and its fruitful outcomes, as well as the success seen in the north.

Bavinck illustrates the growth of the local Christian community in Woerjantoro, a sub-district in northern Wonogiri. The community had even constructed a small room adjacent to the evangelist's house to accommodate the congregation during services. Bavinck was fascinated by the spirit in this area (Bavinck 1934: 133). In Manjaran, the community's enthusiasm was also evident in the construction of a small church by the local Christian community, a commendable act which had cost 25 guilders despite the limited resources.

Niet minder dan 22 nieuwe leden zullen gedoopt worden. Ze hebben allen al ruim een jaar catechisatie ontvangen en nu is de tijd aangebroken, dat ze in de gemeente mogen worden opgenomen. Er zijn ouden bij die lange jaren in duisternis gewandeld hebben, vóór zij het Licht der wereld mochten leeren kennen. (Bavinck 1934: 135).

'No fewer than twenty-two new members, who had attended catechism for over a year, were to be baptized and now the time has come for them to join the congregation. Among them are older adults who have endured years of darkness before discovering the Light of the world.'

Several keywords in this quotation pertain to religious discourse, including baptism, catechism, congregation, and Light of the world. Baptism, in the context of Christianity, refers to the sacrament of becoming a follower of Christ (Józef Grzywaczewski 2019: 51; Xochitl Inostroza Ponce 2019: 199-200; Paul Ladouceur 2019: 398-401; Jennifer Hart Weed 2019: 77). Catechism is an exposition of the teachings of Christianity (Craig Atwood 2021: 7; K. Zach 2017: 49), while congregation refers to the gathering in a Christian community, and the Light of the world symbolizes the Holy Spirit or the presence of Christ (George Galavaris 1978: 70). These terms contribute collectively to the construction of knowledge, fostering optimism among readers about the progress made by evangelism in Wonogiri.

Tirtomoyo is the next region to be marked by high enthusiasm, regular services, baptisms, and marriage ceremonies. This progress can be attributed

to the efforts of a young evangelist who had struggled with a community unfamiliar with the Gospel. His discourse successfully attracted village leaders, including the *ngelmu* teachers (teachers of Javanese religious wisdom), to Christianity (Bavinck 1934: 137).

While interacting with the local evangelist, Bavinck was impressed by the behaviour of the local noblemen who exhibited a keen interest in Christianity. They actively engaged in religious discussions and posed numerous questions about the faith, an attitude which facilitated the introduction of Christianity to the aristocracy (Bavinck 1934: 134-36). This knowledge was essential if the reader was to understand the efforts made in evangelism, particularly when engaging with Javanese noblemen.

JAVANESE BELIEF SYSTEM FROM THE PROTESTANT EVANGELISTS' PERSPECTIVE

Power operates as a controlling force over the production, distribution, and consumption of texts in a specific socio-cultural context (Fairclough 1995: 1-2). During the colonial era, Europeans established power by constructing the Occident as a dominant entity. The Javanese society and culture, which attracted the interest of Dutch students of Java and Orientalists, were studied not only for scientific purposes but as colonial objectives (Charles Jeurgens 2013: 94; Kenji Tsuchiya 2018: 79-82). Through collaboration, an image was created and the local aristocracy was legitimized as cultural guardians, aligning with colonial government policies (Fadjar I. Thufail 2015: 299). The production and reproduction of knowledge by Europeans interested in Java and its culture resulted in stereotyping the people, society, and culture. One example of such an attitude was the assumption that *Kejawen* was distinct from Islam. This belief was held even by the Protestant evangelists working in Java, as evidenced in their travelogues.

Van Andel's account, entitled "Eenlingen, wellicht eerstelingen" (Isolated but perhaps the first fruits), states that Wonogiri was an area significantly influenced by external religions but claims the absence of Islam (Van Andel 1934c: 106).

Wonogiri, het uitgestrekte gebied, dat de helft van het gewest Solo omvat, is een land van geestelijke donkerheid. Zelfs het schemerlicht van den Islam is er vrijwel niet doorgedrongen. Voorzoover men godsdienstig voelt, viert het animisme daar hoogtij. Geesten van heilige hoornen en bronnen ontvangen in den vorm van wierook en bloemen en eetwaren vreesachtige hulde. In bange dagen tracht men hen gunstig te stemmen om dreigend onheil af te wenden, en voor de toekomst hoopt men op hun zegen. (Van Andel 1934c: 106).

'Wonogiri is a large area, encompassing half of the Solo region, is an area of spiritual darkness which even the twilight of Islam has barely touched. The dominant religious belief is Animism, where spirits residing in sacred horns and springs received awe-inspired tribute in the form of incense, flowers, and food. Where anxious, the people seek to appease their spirits to avert impending disasters and seek their blessings.'

Pol (1922: 98) reports that almost the entire Wonogiri community practised Animism. Animism is a belief system which recognizes the power of the environment, other beings, and spirits, including those inhabiting objects (Katherine Swancutt (2019) 2023: 1-2). This perception implies that Wonogiri people worshipped spirits, and the society was relatively free of the influence of Islam.

Pol and Van Andel identified the existence of two categories of Javanese Islamic society: *abangan* and *putihan*. The *abangan* were a community who believed in Animism or supernatural powers, performed rituals, and offered flowers to springs and spirits to protect them from potential danger. From the perspective of the evangelist, myths and supernatural beliefs posed obstacles to the acceptance of the Christian faith (Van Andel 1934c: 106; Pol 1922: 98-99).

Pol argues that the *abangan* adhered less to the official religious practices (Abrahamic religions), while the *putihan* adhered strictly to the orthodox doctrines of Islam. Although the *abangan* maintained ties with the *putihan*, their beliefs were influenced by Buddhist cultural roots, making them a challenge to penetrate. Pol also claims that Dr Radjiman (a nationalist movement figure and personal doctor to the Susuhunan of Surakarta) practised Buddhism. These opinions were in line with the reports of other missionaries working in Central Java and were related to the Christianization work in the principalities of Surakarta, particularly Wonogiri (Pol 1922: 98-99).

The binary opposition between *abangan* and *putihan* was a constructed knowledge produced and reproduced by European students of Java. This knowledge served as a foundation for Protestant missionaries to engage with Javanese culture and spread the Gospel. From their perspective, the Javanese integrated Animist, Hindu-Buddhist, and Islamic beliefs, making them relatively more amenable to influence than stricter Muslims. In this context, the evangelists perceived the Wonogiri people as syncretistic, a European term applied to those who adhered to a fusion of multiple faiths. The term syncretism was often used in Christian theology, leading to debates and negative (anti-syncretism) interpretations, particularly during the era of evangelical missions to colonies (Anita M. Leopold and Jeppe S. Jensen 2004: 14-16). Therefore, the anti-syncretism evangelists stereotypically viewed belief systems resulting from the fusion of multiple belief understandings as problematic.

The evangelist's anti-syncretism is illustrated in the story of Javanese "Willebrord", who felled the sacred tree of the village (Van Andel 1934b: 43). Another example highlighting this reality is presented in the following narrative.

Deze man is al jaren lang Christen en het is zijn arbeid, zijn geduld, die zoo rijkelijk door God gezegend zijn. Er is echte dankbaarheid in ons aller hart, als wij, na den Doop, samen aanzitten aan het Avondmaal, het eerste in het nieuwe kerkje. Moge God deze jonge gemeente met Zijn zegen nabij zijn en haar maken tot een licht in het midden van een wereld van bijgeloof en donkerheid. (Bavinck 1934: 135).

‘This man has been a Christian for many years and was richly blessed by God in his labours and patience. As we gather in the new small church for the Lord’s Supper after baptism, a genuine sense of gratitude fills our hearts. May God bless this young congregation and illuminate a world steeped in superstition and darkness.’

The narrative above has experiential value because of the ideological stereotyping of the Javanese belief systems. This aligns with Fairclough’s opinion that ideological traces were used by text producers to represent the social world through vocabulary choices (Fairclough 1996: 112). Bavinck suggested that the Wonogiri society had lived an era of darkness before encountering Christianity, thereby framing the local belief system negatively. In contrast, *Licht*, or Light, symbolized the Holy Spirit and Christ in Christianity. The evangelists sought to demonstrate that the religious transition from local beliefs to Christianity brought the Wonogiri people spiritual progress. This perspective illustrates the significant influence of Orientalism on the European evangelists’ perception of local beliefs, because European Christianity had a close relationship with Orientalism.

According to Philip A. Mellor (2004: 104), Christianity not only played a vital role in shaping Orientalist discourse and hegemony across all political and cultural domains but also established a lasting precedent in which the Orient was adjusted to align with the ethical demands of Western Christianity. Orientalism encompasses discursive fields such as science, history, religion, language, literature, art, philosophy, law, and politics; viewing the Oriental world as an object. In this discourse, Europeans position the Orient as the Other of the Occident (Lisa Lowe 1991: 4; Julie Rivkin and Michael Ryan 2004: 347). Oriental is an old European term broadly referring to Asia (Rivkin and Ryan 2004: 1112). The Orient was considered the oldest, most prosperous, largest, and most important colony for European countries. As a result, Orientalism became an intellectual power employed to manipulate, control, and incorporate diverse knowledge within the context of colonialism and imperialism (Edward Said 2003: 4-12).

In travelogues, terms like *bijgeloof* (superstition), *duister* (dark), and *donkerheid* (blackness, darkness) serve as symbols of the non-Christian, contrasting with terms like *lamp* (lamp), *vlam* (flame), *verlicht* (enlightened), and *licht* (light), representing the Christian. The terminology of darkness was a construct of Orientalist and evangelist knowledge, dismissing Javanese civilization and its belief system as perverse, barbaric, and backward. The evangelists still envisioned a war against paganism similar to the one which had been waged on a large scale in Europe during the fourth century of the Common Era (N. Sharankov 2019: 41). Conversely, the terminology of light or fire was used to stimulate the spirit of Christianity in evangelizing, symbolizing the way of light. This analogy demonstrated the superiority of European Christian civilization, which brought Javanese society enlightenment. The mission to civilize Javanese society with the Gospel was in line with colonial discourse.

In the early twentieth century, the colonial government embarked on a mission to civilize the indigenous population, which was articulated through the Ethical and Association Policies. The Ethical Policy constructed a discourse emphasizing that the Javanese could improve their lives and embrace European-style education (Didi Kwartanada 2017: 424; Sri Margana 2019: 234). On the other hand, the Association Policy aimed to foster cultural assimilation between the colonized and European societies in the Netherlands East Indies (Iim Imadudin 2015: 457). Education played a crucial role in the Association Policy as a means of assimilating into European society.

In colonial discourse, the *zending* promoted the development of education in evangelized areas. Governor-General Idenburg supported the establishment of Christian schools for the indigenous populations. For the colonial government, this was essential to counter the influence of Islamic schools and eradicating paganism as part of the ongoing religious discourse and identity struggle (Maaike Derksen 2016: 36; Elise van Nederveen Meerkerk 2019: 66). Consequently, the *zending* spearheaded the establishment of Christian schools throughout the principalities of the Surakarta region, including Wonogiri (W. Breukelaar and K. Anken 1937: 69).

The Ethical Policy necessitated the cooperation of the *zending* in disseminating Christian values and improving the morals of the indigenous people from the perspective of colonialism. The aim was to eliminate paganism and instil Christian values like monogamy, women's domestic role, and childcare (Van Nederveen Meerkerk 2019: 67). Christianity was seen as an instrument to "Europeanize" the indigenous population. Hence, the socio-cultural practices depicted in the travelogue were not influenced solely by the spirit of Christianity but were strongly impacted by colonial power. The objective was to exert dominance, disregard local beliefs, and subjugate the indigenous population to colonial values. Moreover, the discourse within the accounts of the Protestant evangelists had the power to encourage readers to engage actively in social practices related to evangelism in the colonies. This reality is in line with Fairclough's view that the dimension of social practice encompasses political value in discursive events in relations of power and domination (Fairclough 1995: 133).

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, according to colonial reports, Wonogiri was relatively free from the influence of Islam and classified as an *abangan* and Animist area. The reports reflect a Eurocentric view of the colony revealing the lack of a comprehensive understanding and therefore separating Javanese cultural practices from Islamic religious practices. This view was influenced by Orientalism, which perceived colonized populations as objects. Imbued with this perspective, Protestant evangelists considered Wonogiri a potential area for evangelistic activities. Therefore, Dominees D. Pol, Van Andel, and Dr J.H. Bavinck embarked on reconnaissance journeys to Wonogiri, documenting their experiences in travelogues and constructing various religious and identity discourses.

Evangelists' travelogues contained religious discourses highlighting the superiority of European Christian values. In the narrative, using the term *licht* (light) Javanese baptism was described as a phase of illumination, whereas the earlier period was labelled as a time of darkness. Stereotypical dictions were employed to describe local beliefs using negative terms like *bijgeloof* (superstition), *animisme* (Animism), and *donkerheid* (darkness). The discourses positioned the Javanese belief system as the Other in the colonial world. Subsequently, colonial hegemony represented by the evangelists' travelogues positioned Wonogiri society as an object to be aligned with the ethical demands of European Christianity.

In addition, the discourse was utilized by evangelists to gain the support of European Christian society and to encourage enthusiasm for evangelism in Wonogiri. This support was essential to the sustainability of evangelism and ensuring that European Christian values, like monogamy, women's domestic role, and childcare, were deeply rooted among the Javanese. The aim was to subjugate the indigenous population and eliminate paganism. The discourse was pursued by implementing social practices like intensive evangelism, community service, and the establishment of educational facilities. The colonial government supported the discourse and the socio-cultural practices as part of efforts to "civilize" Java. Therefore, the travelogues became a record of the evangelists' testimonies and an account of colonial power relations and its domination of colonized Wonogiri society.

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