



Pitres Sombowadile &
Tim Pengarah BPHS GERMITA
2017-2022

DARI PERBATASAN BERLAYAR KE MASA DEPAN

Sejarah Gereja Masehi Injili Talaud
(GERMITA)

1859 – 2022

plus
Profil
137
Jemaat



25 tahun

GERMITA

Epilog oleh:
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EPILOGUE

GERMITA:

GOD'S BLESSING FOR TALAUD, INDONESIA, AND THE WORLD

A Glimpse on Its Growth and Development throughout 25 Years

By:

Pdt. Dr. Arnold A. Abbas

THE RANGE of time covered by this writing is quite long: twenty-five years, since the founding of GERMITA (23 October 1997) to the present (in the year 2022). In this timespan, we are going to cover: how far have the churches in Talaud actually developed since they became autonomous, separated from GMIST (Evangelical Christian Church of Sangihe Talaud)?

To be delved into are: (1). *What advancements have actually been achieved throughout that span of twenty-five years?* So, with the presence of GERMITA in Paradise Land (translation note: this refers to Talaud Islands) and in Indonesia this far, (2). *Has it actually responded to the hopes and expectations of the local congregations of GERMITA, including the ones that live in Talaud and those outside Talaud (Manado, Bitung, and Jakarta)?* These are the two important questions that we are going to cover.

Many people know and still remember the condition of the congregations in Talaud before the year 1997, before they officially decided to become autonomous and form one independent church. People of my generation or the many older than I am — we are grateful that we have been given the opportunity by God to be involved in the process to establish the GERMITA church as a fruit of God's great work for the Christians in Talaud, Indonesia, and the world. Since becoming a church of its own, we have been observing carefully how the Church in Talaud has been developing and advancing.

As has been described in many writings the condition of the congregations in Talaud at that time was in reality quite concerning. There is the problem of the scarcity of pastors, because only 64 pastors were in service, including the pastors who hold the caretaking offices of three resorts (the resorts of Lirung, Beo, and Nanusa) as well as other pastors who serve 84

local congregations.

Besides the scarcity of pastors, the local congregations also experienced various obstacles: among others, the shortage of infrastructure such as pastor residences, and the low amount of financial support for pastors; for example, the wage for a *vikaris* (translation note: a person in the process to become a pastor and works by assisting a pastor) is only Rp. 25.000. Also, at that time material for sermon composed and provided by the GMIST church was not available yet. And lastly, there was not enough building and

empowerment given by the central officials located in Tahuna to the deacons in



Figure: 5...The provision of pastors is achieved through the vicariat program and the inauguration of new pastors.

Talaud. Also, at that time, there was no cooperation with banks for providing loans to the pastors for their household needs and financing education for their children.

The condition at that time I call an institutional stagnation and a stagnation of the deacons. The local congregations were lacking in all aspects. This, among others, became a motivating factor for the 84 congregations in Talaud to unite and give birth to the GERMITA church, an independent church that would grasp its calling to steward the lives of the congregations in Talaud Islands.

Out of such a limited-in-all-aspects condition, 84 congregations in Talaud arose and became determined and strove to achieve their aspiration: self-sustained in church life (in terms of theology, strength, and funds), presenting the “signs of shalom” (kingdom of God) in the Paradise Land.

For the discussion to be expounded thoroughly, I will discuss the development and achievement of GERMITA in the 25-year span period by period, starting with *Period of 1997-2002*, then *Period of 2002-2007*, and so on until *Period of 2017-2022*. So there are 5 periods in total, and for each period only broad outlines will be given. Finally, a “thread” will be identified to evaluate whether development and advancement have taken place as an impact of the organization’s independence.

I. PERIOD OF 1997-2002

After the formation of GERMITA on 23 October 1997, the need which had to be fulfilled as an organization is the consolidation process. As it turned out, the process proceeded very intensely, because in a relatively short time, GERMITA was able to approve, in rapid succession, *Basic Codes and Rules of the Church*, *Liturgy Book*, and *Broad Outlines of Ministry Programs* for the period of 5 years ahead.



In the year 1997, the Office of Religion Department of the Regency of Sangihe-Talud Islands, more specifically on 11 November 1997, issued a Recommendation / Operation Permit for GERMITA to carry out religious ministry, cultivation, and building, in order to manage its organization as a church. The permit allowed GERMITA to do ministry, internally as well as externally with organizational units of the government, as

FIGURE 5. Positive relationship is always established with all units and levels of the government. In the photo is the meeting of BPHS GERMITA 2017-2022 with an official of the Ministry of Religion, Prof. Dr. Thomas Pentury, in Jakarta.

well as nationally in establishing institutional relationship with PGI (translation note: Communion Churches in Indonesia, an ecumenical body which most churches in Indonesia are members of) and GPI (translation note: Protestant Church in Indonesia, a church founded in the Dutch occupation era consisting of congregations founded by missionaries from Europe in Eastern parts of Indonesia, which has now sprung several churches, GERMITA being one of them).

The period of 1997-2002 was a new phase for the congregations in Talau Islands, a period for them to start managing themselves independently and autonomously. A prioritized item on the agenda is for the newly-formed Church to explain its existence to other churches in Indonesia and other nations. Therefore, the 2nd Annual Meeting of GERMITA in 1998 held at Imanuel Kiama local congregation set out the importance of socialization about the founding and institutionality of GERMITA to:

First, members of the Sinode Am Suluttenggo (translation note: a communion of churches in the provinces North Sulawesi, Central Sulawesi, and Gorontalo). *Second*, at the national level, members of PGI and GPI. *Third*, at the international level, churches in other nations such as: The Protestant Church in Netherlands (*Protestant Kerkhen in Nederland*) and churches in Germany and Switzerland.



FIGURE 5... The advancement of GERMITA is a consequence of the advancements of its local congregations. Today, hundreds of congregations of GERMITA are blessed by God with adequate infrastructure for worship services. In the photo: The Church Chairman poses in the inauguration ceremony of the church building for Imanuel Kiama congregation.

The socialization on the existence of GERMITA turned out successful and satisfactory. The presence of GERMITA itself as a Church that serves autonomously in Talau islands (which are near the borders with the Philippines) was warmly welcomed by churches in Sinode Am Suluttenggo, PGI, and GPI. As a positive response of churches in Indonesia, at PGI's MPL meeting on 13 November 2002 in Rantepao, Toraja, GERMITA was approved as its 80th member. Subsequently, in the Meeting of the Council GPI in GPID (Indonesian Protestant Church in Donggala), also in the year 2002, GERMITA was approved as its 12th member.

In the year 2003, through Sinode Am Suluttenggo, GERMITA was approved as a member and entered into a cooperation with PKN (Protestant Church of the Netherlands). The cooperation began with the assistance for programs of empowerment for the congregations since 2004, through workshops in the crafts of furniture and openwork, raising awareness on gender issues, etc. Today, the cooperation with PKN is directly handled by PGI.

Another breakthrough is the cooperation with EED (a consortium of 27 churches in Germany) through Prof. Udo Gedig, focused on agriculture and the environment. The program was intended to empower coconut farmers through the use of organic natural fertilizers which are environmentally friendly and eradicating the *sexava* pest. Its pilot project was conducted in Bitunuris village in the years 2003 to 2005. Unfortunately, this project was abandoned by EED for various reasons.

II. PERIOD OF 2002-2007

In this period, the most important point to underline was that GERMITA managed to formulate several important documents:

1. *Formulation on the Creed of GERMITA and Understanding on the Teachings of Faith of GERMITA* along with their explanations;
2. 3 (three) more points of Church Rules (PG), i.e. *PG No. 8 on Election, PG No.9 on Attributes, and PG No. 10 on Code of Conduct.*
3. the document *GERMITA's Calling in the Development of Talaud Islands Regency*, which became the reference in the Church's participation in building the people of Talaud, as well as its involvement in the national life.

In this period GERMITA strengthened its institutionality as well as deacons as human resources (*capacity building*) through equipping new deacons and directors (BPHMJ, MPJ, and BPPJ) in the year 2003 and *Transformational Leadership Training* in cooperation with Bina Darma through Jefry Lempas and Semuel Lusi (in 2006) in Maranatha Mangaran congregation. There was also a cooperation with EED and PKN, especially in the area of people empowerment in several regions and strategy planning for preventing HIV/AIDS and illegal drugs, especially in the youth in some regions.

And in the year 2006 the *Seminar/Workshop on Reposition and Revitalization of GERMITA*



FIGURE 5...: The inauguration of the church building of Bukit Sion Congregation, Kolongan

as a Reformed church in Nazareth Moronge congregation, which invited Pdt. Dr. R. Daulay (PGI), Pdt. Dr. N.

Gara, and Dr. R.A.D. Siwu, Dr. Ir. Max Maanema, Dr.C.T. Lalompoh, and Alex Ulaen DEA. And, for the first time, the GPI Council Meeting was held in the Eben Haezer Melonguane congregation, attended by the Head of GPI, Pdt. Dr. Semuel B. Hak, and the 12 heads of each church that was a member of GPI.

III. PERIOD OF 2007-2012

Of note in this period are two important things in relation to the development of GERMITA, namely the continuation of the *capacity building* program, which, among others, supports pastors to advance their study to postgraduate degrees and the involvement in ecumenism regionally and nationally, such as in PGI, GPI, Sinode Am Suluttenggo, and international partners PKN and M21, while also enter into cooperation with WCRC (World Communion of Reformed Churches) headquartered in Geneva, through the secretary general of WCRC, Rev. Dr. Setri Nyomi. Another achievement is the cooperation with LAI (Indonesian Bible Society) in the form of the publication of the Bible in the Talaud Language (the Old Testament and the New Testament),

In this period, more specifically the year 2009, there was an earthquake in Talaud, of magnitude 7.4 SR. The earthquake destroyed hundreds of houses, several church buildings, government buildings, and schools. Among the church buildings damaged by the earthquake were: Syalom-Peret Ambruk, Almasih-Damau, Ayalon-Pangeran, and Nazareth-South Moronge. BPHS GERMITA, in cooperation with YTBI, Pelkesi, CWS, GKI, and MUKAT took action to help the disaster victims by giving them *trauma healing*.

Also in this period (in 2010) the church's Special Meeting (SIS) was held in the congregation Imanuel Karatung to amend the Basic Order / Church Rules, resulting in Basic Order / Church Rules 2010. And in the year 2011, the Syalom Foundation of GERMITA was approved to be registered in the Ministry of Law and Human Rights as a legal entity. In this period as well, namely in 2011, for the first time the church's Annual Meeting was held in Hotel Ibis Mangga Dua, Jakarta.



FIGURE 5...: Posing with Victor Hutabarat (translation note: a national artist) after the celebration event of National Easter 2022 held in Talaud.

Also in this period, for the first time, GERMITA became the host of the Meeting of the Council of Workers of PGI, held in the congregation Eben Haezer Melonguane of GERMITA. This MPL-PGI meeting was held successfully, bringing honor to GERMITA among the churches that are members of PGI. This increases GERMITA's confidence to keep on taking part in the national level as a church that serves in a border area and at the same time voices

the aspirations of the people in the border areas of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia.

IV. PERIOD OF 2012-2017

In this period, efforts were continued to build the capability of the deacons through advanced study in the postgraduate program of UKIT (among others, Pdt. Arnold A. Abbas), and several pastors studying in Master's degree in PPsT UKIT in order to enhance stewardship and building of the faiths of the church members and to be involved in ecumenical programs in regional and national levels, with GPI and PGI.

V. PERIOD OF 2017-2022

Of note in this period as well are developments and advancements that GERMITA underwent despite the challenge presented by the COVID-19 pandemic which struck the whole world, impacting all aspects of life, including health, economy, as well as religiosity. This phase lasted more than two years. Some advancements are:

- **In Terms of Stewardship Infrastructure.**

In this period, the construction of one unit of office building for the church was carried out, located next to the old office, in Lirung village, Lirung district,



FIGURE 5... A representative church office was an essential requirement for GERMITA's stewardship. In the photo is the groundbreaking ceremony for the office construction that was almost completed in 2022.

Regency of Talaud Islands. After 25 years of church life, it was determined to build a new office as the centre for stewardship for the congregations of GERMITA. The dimensions of this office are $30 \times 30 \text{ m}^2$, one of the largest buildings in Talaud Islands. This office building construction was started by the help of the Provincial Government of North Sulawesi, in particular the Governor Olly Dondokambey, SE — and the local government of Talaud Regency, as well as individual participations from all of the congregations of GERMITA.

- **Development of Human**

Resources: The establishment of GERMITA Theological College and

Advance Study: Postgraduate Programs in Theology (Master's degree and Doctorate). There are about 8 pastors currently in Doctorate study and 12 pastors in Master's study, in the church's cooperation program with PPsT UKIT.

- Strengthening the *Capacity Building*, through conducting the Catechism Programs in Stage I and Stage II.

- The publication of the History Book: 25 Years of GERMITA, a draft of which will be submitted on commemoration of The process of carried out by a Sombowadile under BPHS 2017-2022
- Cooperation with Dana, in order to of the church and to build the



FIGURE 5... Welcoming the Governor of North Sulawesi in the National Celebration of Easter 2022 in Talaud

23 October 2022 in the 25 years of GERMITA. making the book is team led by Pitres the direction of the team.

banks: BRI and Prisma enhance the well-being ministers of GERMITA congregations of GERMITA.

- Building the synergistic relationship with the government

(National, Provincial, and Regencial).

- GERMITA was also entrusted by the local government, through the Chairman Pdt. Dr. Arnold A. Abbas being appointed as the chairman of the local committee for organizing the National Easter event on 17 May 2022 in the Regency of Talaud Islands. This is the first time in a National Easter event that eight national church institutions (among which are PGI, KWI, PGLII, the Seventh-Day Advent Christian Church, the Baptist Church of Indonesia, and the Orthodox Church) celebrated Easter together, an event attended by about fifteen thousand people.

From this development of GERMITA's ministry throughout 25 years as told above, we may note advancements that we have achieved in:

1. **Increase of Pastors:** The increase of pastors in ministry, from 64 people in 1997 to 167 people currently.
2. **The Enhancement of Education for the Pastors:** In terms of education, the pastors of GERMITA in ministry now consist of about 20 pastors having completed Master's degree, 3 pastors having completed Doctorate, and the rest having completed the undergraduate degree.
3. **Improvement of Well-Being of Pastors** is also achieved through the allowances and salaries being given to the pastors.
4. **Increase in the Number of Local Congregations** from 84 congregations having increased to 137 congregations, an increase of 53 congregations in 25 years, a rate of 2 congregations each year. This means that in 15 years the number of our congregations will have doubled the number when GERMITA was first formed.
5. **Contruction of the Residences of the Clergy** and permanent church buildings for worship gatherings.
6. **The Construction of the New Church Office** which will be completed soon.
7. **The Establishment** of GERMITA Theological College

8. ***The increase of GERMITA's involvement*** in ecumenism, PGI and GPI (Pnt. Dr. Yetty Pulu became a member of Partners of MPL PGI, Pnt. Jack Parapaga became Chairman III of GPI, and Pdt. F. Majusip in the Deliberation Council of GPI).
9. ***The development of cooperation*** with banks (BRI, SulutGo Bank, and Prisma Dana Bank)



FIGURE 5...: The Chairman took a photo together with President Jokowi of Indonesia in the worship service for adult men held by PGI.

10. ***GERMITA's increase of role*** in building the nation and the regency, by creating synergistic relationship with partners from the government (National, Provincial, and Regencial).

11. ***GERMITA's role in successfully organizing the National Easter*** event in May 2022, through the Chairman of GERMITA being appointed as the Chairman of the *Local Committee of National Easter* for the event held on 17 Mei 2022.

That is an overview of the development and advancement of GERMITA throughout these 25 years. In view of the traces of its achievement, GERMITA deserves to be regarded as having been blessed by the Lord in all its achievement as well as its existence, becoming a blessing to the Christians and people in general in Talaud Regency, and even becoming a blessing for the nation and the world.

May GERMITA always be a blessing of the Lord, a glimmer of light that shines to all people, a light from Talaud the border area to the future. And all glory and praise to God only. ④

Moronge, September 2022