SUMMARY

Differences and diversity are inherent in the life of human beings. However, they will create a problem when people are not able to reconcile these differences and diversities, especially in a multi-cultural society. The conflict in the Moluccas, Indonesia, in 1999-2004 was an example of the failure to reconcile differences. This conflict challenged the Protestant Church of the Moluccas (GPM) as a major religious institution to play a role in reconciling the Moluccan society, since religion was one of the provocative issues of the conflict.

In order to provide the necessary historical and ecclesiological background, in Chapter II we sketch and analyze a brief history of the GPM. The GPM made a start in meeting and understanding other religions from a new perspective. This new view has been developed in two recent documents, namely the Understanding of Faith of the GPM and the Chief Model of Ministry and Chief Plan of Developing the Ministry (or PIP/RIPP) 2005-2015. They provide some important changes in the theological understanding of other religions. All religions are accepted as pointing to the same God and as partners of the Christians. In its effort to come on speaking terms with other religions, the GPM looks to the local Moluccan culture such as the pela as its frame of reference.

In Chapter III first of all we discuss the pela as an expression of Moluccan culture which, centuries ago, has been established in order to stop enmity between two or three villages and to create new brotherhood-sisterhood relationships among villages. The pela, especially the hard pela (pela keras) is conducted in a ceremony where the parties involved mix a few drops of their blood and drink this mixture, swearing that they are now brothers and sisters. As such, the participants have obligations to one another. Interestingly, these cultural obligations are also applied to their religious lives. Moluccan Muslims may take part in Christmas and other religious celebrations in a church. Likewise, Moluccan Christians may attend a religious celebration in a Mosque. Even though Moluccan Muslims do not believe in Jesus Christ as the Lord, they do not see Moluccan Christians as ‘gentiles’. In this same manner, Christians, who regard Jesus as their Lord, do not label the Muslims as ‘gentiles’.

This cultural relationship worked well during the conflict since the participants of a pela did nearly not fight each other. Nevertheless, the pela only works among its participants; other people do not experience the virtues of the pela. Therefore, one has to acknowledge that the pela still creates estrangement because it implies that there are insiders versus outsiders. This means that the pela has weaknesses and cannot function in the multi-cultural Moluccan society. Religion can play an important role in minimizing these weaknesses. Here, the GPM is challenged to help the Moluccans to understand and to experience their local culture critically.

In Chapter IV we state that a double transformation is necessary of both the pela and the traditional Christology. Transformation of the pela is a way to minimize its weakness and to extend its virtues. In order to transform the pela, the church needs standards or criteria. The notion of double (two-sided) transformation could be an
appropriate approach because it would imply that not only the *pela* will be transformed (in the sense of enlarged), but that also the Moluccan interpretation of Jesus gets its own specific emphasis, namely on Jesus as *tete Manis*.

Paul understands the sacrifice of Christ as a way to reconcile humankind to God. In Jesus Christ, God sacrifices Himself in order to be the bridge between humankind and Himself without any precondition. As a consequence, He asks human beings to become mutually reconciled as well. Moreover, Paul’s theology of the new covenant gives a new perspective in which all human beings are put before God. The crucified Christ places all people in the same position before God. This new covenant goes beyond religious and cultural borders. It breaks down all walls that made humankind to live in situations of estrangement, including religious boundaries.

In the notion of *double* transformation, the idea of the crucified Christ and the idea of the *pela* could be brought into a creative encounter. On the one hand, through the notion of the crucified Christ, the GPM should transform the idea of the *pela*, so that the *pela* can embrace outsiders. On the other hand, the *pela* can also help Moluccan Christians to understand better the meaning of the crucified Christ against the backdrop of their own cultural heritage. Christ can be seen as *Tete Manis* or *Upu Lanite-Upler*, the Lord, who sacrificed Himself in order to break all religious and cultural estrangement and alienation.

So, this endeavor concentrates on two important elements, namely the identification (transformation) of Jesus as *Tete Manis* and the identification (transformation) of the *pela* as all embracing sacrifice and as new covenant.

In the identification of Jesus as *Tete Manis* or *Upu Lanite-Upler*, the crucified Christ receives a more important position in the life of the Moluccans. Like a grandfather who lives with his family, always being a wise and loving advisor to the family, *Tete Manis* is God who lives not far away from the Moluccans and has power in the Moluccans’ life. By the identification of Jesus as *Tete Manis* or *Upu Lanite-Upler*, Jesus Christ replaces the position of the ancestors of the Moluccans to become the only One in Whom the Moluccan Christians believe.

The notion of the sacrifice of the crucified Christ can transform the idea of *pela* which tends to create insiders versus outsiders. Reconciliation as an important aspect of the crucifixion as sacrifice should inspire the Moluccan Christians to extend their brotherhood-sisterhood relationships. Since Jesus Christ is the initiator of the reconciliation between Himself and human beings, Moluccan Christians are invited to take part actively in reconciliation processes. Both religious and cultural alienation must be confronted with the notion of the crucified Christ, so that the frame of *we* (insiders, that is: original Moluccans) *versus them* (outsiders, that is: non Moluccans living in the Moluccas) shall be transformed to *we* (insiders) *in connection with them* (outsiders).

In the concluding Chapter V we argue that the transformation of the *pela* as a covenant provides new perspectives in the understanding of the brotherhood-sisterhood relationship in the Moluccan society and thus in the reconciliation process. Here the GPM has to take its responsibilities. Equality should form the Moluccan social lives as well as their religious understanding. Instead of creating discrimination, equality in human relationships should be developed. Looking through the eye of the *pela*, the Moluccan Christians should criticize theological notions which exclude other religious
people before God. Also, the *pela* can teach Christians, that the new covenant established by Christ is not meant for their individual interest but for all human beings as a community. Also, because of the significance and importance of the notion of the crucified Christ the Moluccan Christians should take initiatives to develop a Moluccan society where all people have the same rights.

Inspired by the crucified Christ, the *pela* can be transformed into an embracing *pela* which means that others are not excluded. However, embracing outsiders does not mean that they must lose their own cultural and religious identity. Instead, it means to recognize, to respect and to reconcile these cultural and religious differences. When the *pela* becomes an embracing *pela*, outsiders are allowed to experience the virtues of the *pela*. In this manner the Moluccans should be ready to develop the idea of *pela* into new perspectives. In this respect, the Moluccans will experience their *pela* also as a suffering *pela* because they are ready to take courageous steps in order to create reconciliation in a multi-cultural Moluccan society.

Another new perspective is the idea of the peacemaking *pela*. This means that the *pela* must encourage the Moluccans to have face to face encounters with each other, especially in the situations of anger and enmity. There will be no reconciliation when there is no peace. And there will not be peace when there is no face to face encounter. Furthermore, the *pela* should be a conflict resolving *pela*, not oriented to the past but to the present and the future in order to help the Moluccans to restore their society and to be able to tell the truth about the conflict. Finding and telling the truth about the recent conflict is very important to heal the wounds inflicted in the past.

The GPM could play an influential role in this reconciliation process when it develops its own specific Christology which helps the Moluccans to cross their cultural and religious boundaries. Jesus Christ, as the *Tete Manis-Upu Lanite-Upler*, offers new perspectives for the Moluccan Christians to reject religious boundaries.

By transforming the *pela*, the Moluccans will be able to live according to the spirit of the *pela* rather than to experience their *pela* only as a repetition of the past and as a way to show their respect to their ancestors who established the *pela* relationship. As an important institution in the Moluccas, the GPM could play an active and critical role as the innovator of the *pela*. This role of innovator can also imply that the GPM develops a ceremony of *panas pela* as a Moluccan form of communion. This means, the GPM could take the initiative to bring all people in the Moluccas together during a special event where they take part actively in sharing their stories and expressing their commitment to build the Moluccan society.