

The Encounter with Christ in the Conversion of Paul (Gal. 1:11-17) and the Batak's conversion in the works of German Mission in Indonesia.

Batara Sihombing

As the apostle of Christ, Paul has done a great mission works in his life. He is a daring and faithful missionary who brings the Gospel of Christ to Europe. The great motivation of Paul as a missionary can be found in the accounts of his conversion, that is, the meeting with Jesus Christ himself on the way to Damascus. This encounter with Jesus does not only encourage him to be a diligent missionary but also to be a Christian who lives out his Christian life faithfully. So, Christ is the central figure who changes Paul's life, from the person who persecuted Christ's followers to become the great preacher of Christ (Gal 1:11-17).

The Batak people follow Christ due to the work of Wuppertal- German Rhenish Mission who brought the Gospel to the Batakland, 1861-1942. It was a great moment in history of mission when the big numbers of Bataks were converted into Christianity. Currently, there are around 7 million Batak Christians in Indonesia. However, when we look at the history of the Batak's conversion it was slightly different from the conversion of Paul. It is worth noting that the Batak became Christian it was not all by conversion; rather, it was because of following the village kings' religion. When the German missionary baptized a king of a village then all the villagers follow the new religion. This method was done by the German missionaries due to the challenges of Moslem mission that has entered the Batakland at that time. So, this historical reality can help us to understand to nurture the Batak wisely, diligently, and faithfully in following Christ in the daily life.