

Towards an Indonesian Old  
Testament Theology

Agustinus Setiawidi

# TAKING ITS SHAPE

TAKING ITS SHAPE : TOWARDS AN INDONESIAN OLD TESTAMENT THEOLOGY



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A Result from the Dialogue between Christoph Barth's  
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Old Testament Scholars

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# Het Krijgt Vorm

**Naar een Indonesische Theologie van het Oude Testament**

vanuit de dialoog tussen Christoph Barths  
*Theologia Perjanjian Lama* en studies van Indonesische oudtestamentici  
(met een samenvatting in het Nederlands)

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ter verkrijging van de graad van doctor in de godgeleerdheid aan de Protestantse  
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door

Agustinus Setiawidi

geboren op 15 augustus 1968  
te Jakarta, Indonesië

Promotor: Prof. dr. K. Spronk

Tweede promotor: Prof. dr. E.G. Singgih

## FOREWORD

Having accomplished my master's thesis on the book of Jonah at Leiden University in 2003, I went back to Jakarta Theological Seminary. My plan was that after teaching for a couple of years at the institution I would come back to Leiden for my doctoral research, taking up, once more, the subject of my thesis. However, my four-year experience of teaching at the seminary, and the reorganization within the Protestant Church in the Netherlands, caused these plans to change slightly.

During the four-year period of teaching Old Testament studies (2003–2007), I observed that the students expected more practical knowledge on how to apply the biblical texts to their respective contexts, not just theoretical expertise. The fact that the students come from many different regions in Indonesia, which means different social, economic, cultural and political contexts, provided a tough challenge for me in this. What I understood is that the students need some practical tools for making use of available sources in biblical studies, in order to do contextual biblical theology in Indonesia. As a result, I reconsidered the subject of my doctoral research, and decided that instead of taking up the subject of my thesis on the Book of Jonah, I would observe the development of Old Testament theology among the Protestant churches in Indonesia. This, I felt, might help theological students and Indonesian Old Testament scholars evaluate some of the Old Testament researches which have been done over the last forty years and see some possibilities for constructing contextual biblical theology in the future.

The reorganization within the Protestant Church in the Netherlands meant the place of my research, was moved from Leiden to Kampen. In 2007 I came back to the Netherlands and started my research at the Protestant Theological University, Kampen, under the supervision of prof. dr. Kune Biezeveld and prof. dr. Klaas Spronk. Unfortunately, a year later, in September 2008, prof. dr. Kune Biezeveld passed away due to pancreatic cancer. During her short period of supervision, she helped me sharpen the focus of my research with her critical questions. Shortly after her death, prof. dr. Emanuel Gerrit Singgih from Duta Wacana Christian University, Yogyakarta, became my second supervisor.

During the progress of writing this present research many people have supported me. I am grateful to my supervisor prof. dr. Klaas Spronk and my second supervisor prof. dr. Emanuel Gerrit Singgih for the inspiring discussions

filled with critical remarks which helped shape the final form of my dissertation. The members of the Ph.D. Seminar of vU Amsterdam and the Protestant Theological University located in Kampen were a fountain of ideas and thoughts, all of which enriched my dissertation, but particularly with regard to biblical hermeneutics. Mrs. Rince Pohan, one of the librarians of the Jakarta Theological Seminary, never tired of providing me with materials I needed for this research. Eukumindo supported my research financially, while Meurs Groep Holding made reunion with my family in the Netherlands possible. Rev. Henri Veldhuis read the manuscript and made significant remarks on it. Janet Kotynski, my former colleague at the Indonesian Bible Society, corrected my English. Despite all of this significant support, I am fully responsible for the final form and contents of this present research.

Last but not least, I would like to mention my wife, Nila, and my children, Haye, Vincent and Ann, who have provided me with invisible supports: Love and joy.

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