STUDIA ISLAMIKA

INDONESIAN JOURNAL FOR ISLAMIC STUDIES

Volume 3, Number 3, 1996

ISSN 0215-0492

STUDIA ISLAMIKA

Indonesian Journal for Islamic Studies

Volume 3, Number 3, 1996

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STUDIA ISLAMIKA (ISSN 0215-0492) is a journal published quarterly by the *Institut Agama Islam Negeri* (IAIN, The State Institute for Islamic Studies) Syarif Hidayatullah, Jakarta. (STT DEPPEN No. 129/SK/DITJEN/PPG/STT/1976) and sponsored by the Department of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia. It specializes in Indonesian Islamic studies, and is intended to communicate original researches and current issues on the subject. This journal warmly welcomes contributions from scholars of related disciplines.

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Howard M. Federspiel

The Structure and Use of Mosques in Indonesian Islam; The Case of Medan, North Sumatra

Abstraksi: *Masjid mempunyai posisi penting dalam ajaran Islam dan kehidupan kaum Muslim. Nabi Muhammad, khususnya setelah hijrah ke Madinah, membangun masjid sebagai pusat peribadatan dan kegiatan-kegiatan sosial kaum Muslim. Tulisan ini berusaha mengkaji eksistensi, peranan dan penggunaan masjid di Indonesia, dengan studi kasus di Medan, ibukota provinsi Sumatera Utara. Melalui kajian pada aspek-aspek tersebut, dapat dilihat kedudukan masjid dalam masa kontemporer.*

Menurut penulis, masjid-masjid dapat ditemukan di seluruh pelosok kota Medan, sejak dari kawasan pusat kota dan wilayah pinggiran; dan tersebar dalam berbagai lembaga, baik pemerintah, seperti di perkantoran pemerintah dan kampus universitas negeri, maupun swasta. Masjid-masjid yang terus bertambah jumlahnya dibangun dengan menggunakan berbagai sumber daya ekonomi; sejak dari wakaf, sumbangan keuangan masyarakat Muslim umumnya, dan bantuan dana pemerintah. Bangunan-bangunan masjid lama maupun baru merupakan simbol kelestarian dan kontinuitas budaya Muslim.

Masjid-masjid di Medan pada umumnya dikelola oleh yayasan yang melibatkan banyak pihak, sejak dari kalangan pemerintah maupun swasta. Keterlibatan pejabat atau pegawai pemerintah berkaitan dengan harapan untuk pemasukan dana bagi pemeliharaan masjid dan pengelolaan kegiatan-kegiatannya. Tetapi dalam banyak kasus, masjid-masjid berfungsi dalam waktu yang lama tanpa pengumpulan dana secara besar-besaran. Dana masjid-masjid ini umumnya datang dari anggota masyarakat Muslim sendiri yang secara tetap menggunakan fasilitas-fasilitas masjid bersangkutan.

Fungsi masjid lebih daripada sekedar tempat shalat. Di sini penulis mengutip pendapat Mantan Menteri Agama, Mukti Ali, yang menyata-

*kan bahwa terdapat sembilan jenis kegiatan yang berlangsung di masjid: shalat dan ibadah-ibadah lain; pendidikan umum informal tentang Islam; pendidikan formal (*diniyyah *dan madrasah); dakwah dan penyiaran Islam; perpustakaan; penerbitan dan penyebaran buku-buku agama; acara perkawinan; tempat kunjungan parawisata; tempat makan dalam perayaan keagamaan. Tetapi penulis membagi fungsi masjid ini ke dalam empat kelompok besar: ibadah pada umumnya; perayaan hari-hari besar Islam; pelaksanaan acara-acara khusus; dan program keagamaan. Penulis memberikan deskripsi yang cukup rinci mengenai bentuk kongkrit fungsi-fungsi ini.*

Penulis berargumen, bahwa sejauh menyangkut masjid terdapat dua kecenderungan yang bertentangan. Pada satu pihak, masjid-masjid kebanyakan dibangun dan dikelola oleh masyarakat Muslim Indonesia sendiri dan, karena itu diharapkan lebih bersifat independen dari kekuasaan politik. Tetapi pada pihak lain, pemerintah atas alasan pembentukan identitas nasional berusaha meletakkan "stempel" setuju atau tidak setuju terhadap apa yang berlangsung di masjid. Karena itu, misalnya, atas dasar pertimbangan-pertimbangan politis, pemerintah Indonesia tidak mengizinkan orang-orang asing memberikan khutbah atau ceramah-ceramah keagamaan lainnya di masjid.

Lebih jauh lagi, menurut kajian ini, pemerintah berusaha melakukan semacam indoktrinasi terhadap para pengurus masjid. Indoktrinasi itu dimaksudkan untuk meningkatkan pemahaman mereka atas ideologi negara Pancasila, dan juga atas kebijaksanaan-kebijaksanaan pemerintah. Tetapi, selain indoktrinasi semacam itu, pemerintah juga memberikan semacam latihan untuk peningkatan kemampuan administratif mereka dalam pengelolaan masjid. Di sini penulis membandingkan fungsi masjid di Singapura, misalnya, di mana masjid betul-betul digunakan penguasa Singapura sebagai lembaga yang efektif untuk indoktrinasi politik. Hal seperti ini juga mungkin dilakukan di Indonesia; tetapi sejauhmana efektivitasnya masih sangat diragukan.

Akhirnya penulis berkesimpulan bahwa masjid merupakan lembaga sangat sehat, yang sangat esensial dan penting bagi seluruh masyarakat Muslim Medan khususnya, dan kaum Muslimin Indonesia umumnya. Masjid terutama tetap berfungsi sebagai tempat ibadah; namun pada saat yang sama fungsi sosial dan komunalnya juga semakin luas. Memang ada lembaga-lembaga Islam lainnya, yang juga penting; tetapi lembaga-lembaga lain ini tidak mengurangi sama sekali posisi masjid. Bahkan terdapat hubungan yang simbiotik antara masjid dengan lembaga-lembaga Islam lainnya dalam memajukan ummat Muslimin.

هوورد فيدرسفيل

بناء المساجد والانتفاع بها فى إندونيسيا: دراسة عن المساجد فى ميدان، سومطرة الشمالية

نبذة: إن المسجد له مكانة خاصة فى التعليم الإسلامى وحياة المسلمين. فالنبى صلى الله عليه وسلم بالأخص بعد هجرته إلى المدينة المنورة قام ببناء مسجد كمركز عبادى وأنشطة اجتماعية للأمة الإسلامية. هذه الكتابة تعنى بدراسة كيان المسجد ونفوذه والانتفاع به فى إندونيسيا. مع دراسة خاصة لما حدث فى ميدان (Medan)، عاصمة دائرة سومطرة الشمالية. عن طريق دراسة هذه المنافع المذكورة نستطيع رؤية وضع المسجد فى عصرنا الحالى.

حسب رأى الكاتب، إنه يمكن وجود المساجد فى كل فج من مدينة ميدان فمن منطقة العاصمة إلى المناطق النائية، وهى فى واقع الأمر منتشرة فى مختلف المؤسسات سواء الحكومية أم الأهلية. إن المساجد التى تزداد عددا تبنى عن طريق المساعدات المتعددة المصادر الاقتصادية سواء من الوقفية أو تبرعات عامة المجتمع الإسلامى ومن امدادات الحكومة. إن مبانى المساجد القديمة أو الجديدة تعتبر شعار خلود واستمرارية الثقافة الإسلامية.

إن المساجد فى ميدان على وجه العموم تقوم بإدارتها مؤسسات الجهات مختلفة سواء من جهة الحكومة أو عامة الشعب. إن اشتراك الموظفين يرجى منه

دخول مساعدات كثيرة للمحافظة على هذه المساجد وإدارتها وتولى أنشطتها، ولكن لكثير من المشاكل، فإن المساجد قد أدت عملها منذ أمد بعيد ولكن دون جدوى فى الحصول على التبرعات المرجوة التى ينتظر بها سد الضروريات الملحة. وغالبا هذه التبرعات إنما تأتى من الأيادى السخية من المجتمع الإسلامى الذى لا مرما له صلة بالمساجد.

إن عمل المسجد أكثر من أن يكون مكان صلاة فحسب. فالكاتب يقتبس من رأى وزير الشئون الدينية الأسبق معطى على (Mukti Ali) الذى قال بأنه توجد تسعة أجناس من الأنشطة المباشرة فى المسجد: الصلاة وغيرها من العبادات، والتربية العامة غير الرسمية عن الإسلام، والتربية الرسمية (دينية كانت أو مدرسية) والدعوة ونشر الإسلام، والمكتبة، والنشر وتوزيع الكتب الدينية، وعقد الزواج، ومكان زيارة السياح، ومكان الموائد فى الاحتفالات الدينية، ولكن الكاتب يقسم أعمال المسجد إلى أربع مجموعات كبيرة: العبادة على وجه العموم، والاحتفالات بالأعياد الإسلامية، القيام بالمناسبات الخاصة، والبرامج الدينية. والكاتب يعطى وصفات مفصلة عن الشكل الحازم لكل هذه المهمات.

والكاتب يستدل بأنه فى مدى العلاقة بالمسجد يوجد ميلان متضادان. فى ناحية، إن المساجد كثيرا ما تبنى ويديرها المجتمع المسلم الإندونيسى نفسه ولهذا يرجى أن تكون لها الصفة الاستقلالية عن السلطة السياسية، ولكن من ناحية أخرى، الحكومة بحجة تكوين شخصية وطنية للمساجد تفرض الختم الرسمى بالموافقة أو لا على الأعمال التى تؤدى فى المساجد. ولذلك مثلا، على اساس اعتبارات سياسية، فالحكومة الإندونيسية لا تأذن الأجانب بإلقاء خطب منبرية ومحاضرات دينية وغيرها فى المساجد.

أبعد من ذلك، حسب هذا الاستطلاع، إن الحكومة تسعى عمل شئ يشبه التوعية للعاملين فى المساجد. هذه التوعية يقصد بها رفع فهمهم عن مبادئ

الدولة الخمسة (Pancasila)، وكذلك عن القوانين الحكومية/سياستها. ولكن بجانب مثل هذه التوعية، فالحكومة تعطى كذلك تدريبات لرفع القدرة الإدارية لخدمة المسجد. هنا يقارن الكاتب بين مهمة المسجد فى سنغافورة مثلا الذى المسجد فيها تستغله السلطة كمؤسسة فعالة للتوعية السياسية. مثل هذه الحالة، يمكن كذلك يعمل بها فى إندونيسيا، ولكن إلى أى مدى تكون فاعليتها ما زالت موضع الشك.

أخيرا، الكاتب يستخلص بأن المسجد كشكل مؤسسة إسلامية فى غاية والأهمية لكل المجتمع الإسلامى فى ميدان خاصة وللأمة الإسلامية الإندونيسية عامة. فالمسجد دائم العمل كمكان العبادة، بينما فى الوقت نفسه له عمل اجتماعى وجماعى مستمر الاتساع. حقا هنالك مؤسسات إسلامية غير ذلك، وهى هامة كذلك، ولكن هذه المؤسسات الأخرى لا تقلل من مهمة المسجد، بل الواجب أن توجد صلة تكافلية بين المسجد وهذه المؤسسات الإسلامية فى رفع شأن الأمة الإسلامية.

The house of worship in Islam—known in Arabic as "*masjid*," in Indonesian as "*mesjid*," and in English as "mosque"—has its origins in early Islam. In seventh century Arabia the Prophet Muhammad established the mosque as a place of worship and the very center of communal activity, especially in the years at Madinah when the early Muslim community completed an important stage of its development. Throughout Muslim history since then the mosque has been the site of daily prayers for many, the place of the Friday communal prayer, and as a community meeting place, marking it as an important Islamic institution, and, indeed, as a symbol of the Islamic faith.[1] With that generality as background, this essay moves to the specific, examining the existence, role and utilization of the mosque in an Indonesian city to show its importance to believers in a contemporary setting.

The material for this study was gathered in the late 1980's from Muslim newspapers, from personal observation and from interviews with Muslims living in Medan. Twenty-five mosques were periodically observed at different times of the day and at different times during the week, over a period of two years and then later on two short trips to the city. A newspaper clipping file added examples. To gain perspective discussions with knowledgeable individuals were undertaken in the course of social activity and business at the University of North Sumatra and elsewhere in the city of Medan. It should be emphasized that this was not a full-time research project where formal interviews, surveys and other research techniques were employed. Neither was there a targeting of specific officials and mosque users. My professional responsibilities were directed in other directions at the time. Rather, much of the research was based on simple observation, made as unobtrusively as possible, for personal edification and enjoyment. Still the observations were made by a trained Islamicist and, as such, were placed in that context for analysis. Consequently, publication of the results can only yield results that are preliminary, yet certainly interesting and informative for readers concerned with the development of Islamic institutions in Southeast Asia.[2]

I. Location and Identification

This study centers on Medan, North Sumatra, a city of nearly two million people and a regional center for trade, industry and agriculture in the Northeast quadrant of Indonesia. It is an ethnic city, with its population composed of several related, but distinct Batak

groups, Coastal Malays, Javanese, Acehnese, Minangkabaus and Chinese. Religiously it is also diverse, with both Protestant and Catholic Christians, Hindu-Buddhist sects and Sunnî Muslims all represented in the population. Culturally the life of the city is drawn in three directions: first by the Javanist-centered national culture of the Indonesian nation, second by the dynamic Batak communal lifestyle of the North Sumatra Interior and third by the modern business attitudes and practices of Singapore and Western Malaysia. There is on one hand general tolerance and respect for cultural difference, but at the same time considerable competition and infighting for position and advantage. The city has, in general, a dynamic, hardworking people and, while not exactly unique among Southeast Asian cities, Medan is more diverse than most (MUCIA, 1987, 3).

Government sources stated that in 1984 there were 309 mosques (*mesjid*), 523 prayer sites (*langgar*) and 43 prayer houses (*musholla*) within the boundaries of the city. This contrasted with 323 Christian churches and 52 Hindu/Buddhist temples within the same boundaries (*Buku* 1984, 482). This rich mixture of houses of worship was testimony to the religious diversity that existed in the city. The numbers also indicated that Sunnî Muslims were the major religious group in the city, but not so dominant that they could determine the public culture of the city by themselves.

Mosques were found in all quarters of the city and under all kinds of environmental circumstances. They were located in residential sections, such as the Helvetia quarter, where there were a considerable number of prayer houses as well. Mosques were found at public and private institutions such as schools and universities. At the University of North Sumatra, for example, there was a central mosque and most colleges of the university had their own prayer houses, some rivaling mosques elsewhere in architectural beauty. Mosques were also found in the busiest quarters of the city, as on the edge of the Teladan quarter, where two mosques were located in the center of daily vegetable and fruit markets. Finally, they were located in and near government complexes, as at the army compound in the Northeast sector of the city. There were only a few areas of the city where mosques could not be found, although much the same could be said for Christian churches. Mosques, churches and temples enriched the architecture of the city, which stood in contrast to the usually practical and low cost buildings of a Third-World city. Like churches, temples and government buildings, they symbolized permanence and cultural continuity.

Names of mosques varied, but two general designators were common. First were those taken from Arabic, using terms and names prominent in Islam. For example, *al-Hasanah* (the Fair) and *al-Rahmân* (the Compassionate) are names of God; *Taqwâ* (Fear of God), *Tawfiq* (Piety) and *Ikhlâs* (sincerity) are highly-recognized religious concepts, while *al-Jihâd* (Combat, or struggle, in the Way of God) and *Syuhadâ'* (the Martyrs) are terms for Muslims' commitment to their religion. Second, there were those designating a place, which are usually made with Indonesian words, but often had some Arabic terms included as well. Masjid Agung Medan (the Great Mosque of Medan), Petisah (an area of Medan), Muslimîn Teladan (the Muslims of the Teladan City Sector), Jamik Megawati (the Megawati City Sector Community of Believers) and the Bank 46 Kesawan (the Mosque of the Bank 46 of the Kesawan Sector) are examples. These two sources formed the great majority of mosque names.

In addition to the two common examples, three other categories of mosque titles were apparent. First were terms associated with Indonesian identity and national purpose. *Perjuangan 45* (The 1945 Struggle for Independence), *Istiqlâl* (Independence) and *Pahlawan Muslimîn* (Muslim Heroes) illustrate this usage. Second were names associated with prominent personalities, such as Soedirman (a leading general of the Indonesian Revolution) and Syekh Burhânuddîn (a Muslim missionary in the Minangkabau region in the seventeenth century). Finally there are some special names, such as Dirgantara (the Javanese word for "Heaven") in use for army and air force personnel, presumably from Java; Dakwah Kampus USU (the "Witnessing" Mosque of the University of North Sumatra Campus); and Quba (the name of an Arabian city in early Islam noted for the piety of its people and the beauty of its mosque). In general mosques bore an Arabic name, but words with Indonesian derivation were not uncommon.

New mosques were often built on land donated for that purpose and then constructed with funds raised from a variety of sources. For example, the land that was used for the construction of the Nûrul Imân Mosque had originally been dedicated (*wakaf*) for that purpose by the family of a local Muslim according to the instructions of his will. The mosque structure itself was built with a mixture of private and public money. The Ministry of Religious Affairs advanced some funds, a family in Malaysia made a substantial contribution, and the remainder of the Rp. 14 million[3] was raised from a number of private sources and general contributions from the society of the area that

the mosque would serve (*Anal.*, July 20, 1989, 3). A similar situation occurred at the Baiturrahmah Mosque where land was given as endowment and was developed at a cost of Rp. 30 million. At a ceremony at the end of construction the head of the city office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs noted in his address that funds from the Ministry had been used for some of the development costs (*Was.*, Aug. 22, 1985, 6).

Abdul Rochym (1983), an architect interested in the history of the mosque in the Middle East and Southeast Asia, provided a context for the design of the mosques in Medan.[4] In his analysis Rochym used Indonesian history to explain the architecture and spatial relationships of the mosque in Indonesian society. He began his study with the description of the basic Indonesian mosque, which he named "traditional." This basic mosque consisted of one or more sloping roofs, covered usually with tiles, but sometimes with metal or thatch, void of arches and domes. His examples, given in sketches, described well-known mosques in Kudus, in Banten and at Demak, developed prior to the arrival of the Europeans in the sixteenth century. Against this traditional style Rochym contrasted a form from "the Muslim West", that is, from India, Persia, and the Arabic lands, which featured the Arabesque arch, the onion dome and the slender minaret. His examples of this style were the central city mosques at Bandung and Medan built during the colonial period. The last group of mosques included diverse styles of recent mosques, including the neo-traditional style of the main mosque at Semarang, the ornate Indian style of an important landmark mosque in Kebayoran, Jakarta, the modern Arabic style of a leading mosque in Yogyakarta, and the Istiqlâl mosque in Jakarta. All the designs described by Rochym were found in Medan and among the mosques used for preparing this study. Of the group of twenty-five mosques and prayer houses observed, five fell into the traditional category, fourteen were judged to fit the features of the standard mosque imported from the Western Islamic world, and the remaining six were judged to be contemporary mosques.

One of the most simple places of worship was the Mukisin Prayer House, which fit Rochym's "traditional" style of architecture. It was located in a Batak and Acehnese section on a busy thoroughfare. It consisted of a small square building about eight by eight meters with cement walls, a slanted metal roof rising from the four sides, topped with a small dome where the four roof sections met. It was a simple, unadorned structure; there were no attempts, for example, to include Arabesque

framing about the windows or other openings. It had an outside wall to shield it from the street, apparently to muffle the sounds of heavy traffic. A small adjacent building contained ablution facilities, but it had no minaret. It was painted green, the color associated with Islam.

In comparison, one of the most striking structures was Jamik Sei Agul Mosque, which fit in Rochym's "Islamic West" category. It measured about fifteen by fifteen meters and was located in a Batak area on the edge of a commercial shopping ribbon. It consisted of a two-story structure with verandas and Arabesque arches. There were windows and other openings between the verandas and the interior of the mosque, presumably for ventilation of the interior. The mosque was topped with a large onion dome, with a second, somewhat thinner dome arising from a second, nearby building where the ablution facilities were located. In the rear there was a thin minaret, rising to a height just above the mosque, also topped by a thin onion dome. There was no outside wall to screen it from the street, allowing very free access. It was painted white and gray, with some of the trim and interior walls of the porch in yellow, giving it a striking appearance when the sun shone on it. Even at night with the interior lights on and the illumination from small exterior lights in the area, it was pretty and inviting.

The third example fits Rochym's "contemporary" style of architecture. The Jihâd Mosque was located in a Batak area in a suburban residential setting. It was in the middle of an open area which gave it access from different directions. It had out-buildings along one property line, which included an office and a structure for youth activities. The mosque itself, measuring approximately twenty by twenty meters, was square with a single roof covering the mosque proper and a veranda on all four sides. The outer supports were undecorated, but the windows, door and latticework on the interior of the porch contained subtle Arabesque arches. The roof was flat with a large, low, half-round dome dominating a large part of the roof. It was painted in white with light green trim on the windows, door and latticework. It came across as pretty, neat and functional. Night lighting was good and it radiated warmth.

Major repairs, upgrading and new facilities were usually undertaken through the contributions of the worshipers using the mosque or through special fund-raising drives. An example is provided by the committee of the Istiqâmah Mosque, which decided to renovate the mosque proper, install iron gates, upgrade the office area, mod-

ernize the ablution areas and add a twenty-five meter minaret. To cover the cost of this work the foundation of the mosque asked for and received a contribution from the President of Indonesia of Rp. 11 million available to him through the Pancasila Foundation for Muslim Activities (Yayasan Amal Bhakti Muslimin Pancasila), an agency of the Golkar political party. The majority of the funds needed were obtained with a bond issue, with individual bonds ranging from Rp. 5 thousand to Rp. 100 thousand each. Many inhabitants of the area surrounding the mosque could afford to purchase bonds at that low price (*Was.*, July 5, 1985, 4; Feb. 14, 1986, 3).

The Agung Medan Mosque, one of the largest mosques in the city and often used for government-sponsored activities, also undertook improvements, including construction of a forty-five meter minaret, addition of new meeting areas, office space and a library. The drive was set for Rp. 350 million and after four weeks it was announced that Rp. 178 million had already been received or pledged. The money consisted of private donations of about Rp. 45 million, a special gift from the Pertamina oil company of Rp. 10 million, donations from the city and provincial governments of Rp. 75 million and money from the previous development drive of Rp. 47 million. Later Rp. 8.5 million was received from the merchants of the nearby Petisah commercial district in a special drive there and two families gave private donations of Rp. 2 million and Rp. 2.5 million respectively. Eventually, at the completion of the drive period, the amount collected or pledged was still Rp. 61 million short of the goal and a loan was made from a bank so that the upgrading of the mosque could proceed on schedule (*Was.*, May 23, 1986, 2; Oct. 5, 1986, 2).

Upkeep of mosques fell to the community in general. Sometimes help was given by volunteer workers in a modernized version of mutual-help (*gotong-royong*) efforts common in traditional Indonesian village life. This was offered by two groups in the Polonia area which cleaned up the yard and exterior of the Taqwâ Mosque in April 1985 as part of their efforts to assist "places of worship in the area" (*Was.*, April 27, 1986, 2). Usually, however, the mosque committee or the *nâzir* either hired a person to sweep the mosque and to keep the surrounding area clean, or the effort was undertaken by worshipers themselves. The latter procedure was popular among some suburban groups, as at the new Baiturrahmah Mosque, where Sunday afternoons were often used by men and women in the neighborhood to put the yard of the mosque in order.

Operating funds for mosques seemed to be in short supply and most relied on two major sources. First were the voluntary contributions of the members, usually placed in a box in the mosque by some worshipers. According to an informant who was a member of the council at a mosque in a poor neighborhood, such voluntary contributions did not produce enough funds to keep the mosque operating properly. The second source was gifts from the estates of deceased members and from associations with a social welfare mission. An example of the latter occurred in 1985, when the League for Preservation of the Village (*desa*) gave assistance of Rp. 100 thousand for cash purchases to each of three mosques in a particular district, along with some large ventilating fans. In addition Rp. 50 thousand was given to each mosque to support their training classes for children, along with copies of the Qur'ân and pamphlets containing the text of *Juz Amma*, the last section of the Qur'ân, noted for its ease of reading and its poetic beauty (*Was.*, July 31, 1985, 6).

II. Organization

The primary governing body of the mosque was a foundation (*yayasan*) which was charged by law with the financial operation of the mosque itself. The organization was reflective of Indonesian society's preference for wide participation and representation in its institutions. One committee at a prominent mosque had eighteen people involved: five highly respected persons were given the positions of advisors, there was a chair and three deputies, along with four secretaries, two treasurers and three persons charged with developing plans for use of funds (*Was.*, Aug. 15, 1985, 5). That committee was larger than most, but none had fewer than seven members.

At times the foundation supplemented itself with other committees to undertake special activities. The reconditioning of the Agung Mosque was undertaken by a "Development Implementation Commission," which was organized similar to the foundation itself and included representatives from all important groups it hoped to contact during fund raising. Reflecting its status as a leading mosque of the city, the advisory members consisted of the Governor of the Province, the Provincial Military Commander, the Chair of the Provincial Assembly, the Mayor of Medan and the Chair of the City Assembly. The Chair of the commission was a brigadier general in the North Sumatra Army Command, while the two deputy chairs came respectively from the Foundation for the Mosque and the Council of

Donors. There was a secretary—an army colonel,—a deputy secretary and a treasurer from the Board of Donors. Assisting the Commission was a board of donors and several committees, all composed of high ranking government officials or other influential people, including a member of the provincial religious judges' (*qâdîs*) association and a representative from the national university located in the city (*Was.*, Sep 14, 1985, 1).

Despite the foregoing indications of complex organization and high commitment to mosque duties, most mosques functioned for long periods of time out of the limelight and without major fund raising drives. An informant, himself a member of a local mosque committee, put it in perspective by saying that members of the committee were selected from the surrounding community which used and supported the mosque. Elections were informal and there was normally not much occasion for meetings as money was short and the local needs of the worshiping community were not great. Sometimes considerable discussion was given to small expenditures, such as whether the purchase of a fan should come from current funds or was a matter for purchase from the mosque endowment.

One of the leadership's most important responsibilities was to find an administrator, called a *nâzir*, who looked after the mosque and tended its everyday functions. In large mosques serving a sizable number of worshipers, the *nâzir* had many duties, was well educated, served full time and had assistants to help him. In small mosques the *nâzir* was often only a part-time caretaker and coordinator doing many of the tasks himself and organizing volunteers to do the rest. An informant stated that many served long periods of time, while in some other mosques there was a rapid turnover, both conditions reflecting the character, wealth and expectations of the users of the mosque.

In general the *nâzir* provided security and maintenance for the mosque and its worshipers, assured that the call to worship was given at the appropriate times, maintained a place for the posting of bulletins and made appropriate announcements, saw that Friday services were properly staffed with a prayer leader (*imâm*) and a sermon giver (*khâtib*), took appropriate action as the events of the Muslim calendar occurred, took care of the contributions made to the mosque, and assisted groups associating with the mosque, such as Qur'ân learning groups, youth groups and special worship committees. He also served as the main point of communication with outside groups, such as the government, the press and mosque-coordinating groups.

In the press the *nâzir* was sometimes named and/or pictured as the symbolic representative of the mosque in accepting aid from government officials. This occurred in 1985 at the Utamaniyah Mosque when the mayor held a ceremony to present a contribution for the building fund and the *nâzir* was the mosque dignitary receiving the check (*Was.*, July 8, 1985, 2). Government guidelines and instructions concerning mosques were sent to the *nâzir* as the official responsible for their observance and for informing worshipers at the mosque. For example, in 1985 all mosques in the city were reminded of the government's ban on foreign scholars, revivalists and other personalities using the mosque to deliver inspirational speeches or other addresses (*Was.*, Feb 28, 1986, 6). Significantly, outside of government, other persons and groups used the same network, as an Indonesian scholar of the Qur'ân did in 1985 when he asked publicly for all *nâzir*s to observe the general rule of context in Qur'ân recitation, to wit, that recitation neither start nor end in the middle of a verse (*Was.*, July 18, 1985 10). Reporters contacted *nâzir*s of the largest two mosques in Medan—Agung Mosque and al-Mashun Mosque—for information about Islamic celebrations. On one occasion these two administrators were asked to provide information about the poor-tax rate for that year and at another time about the progress of contributions for animal sacrifice for the *'Id al-Adhâ* festival. In both cases they provided the desired information in considerable detail (*Was.*, May 29, 1986, 7).

Alongside the *nâzir* was the *muazzin* (*bilâl*), the person who gives the call for each of the five daily prayers. It appears that there was not a single individual for this function in most of the mosques of Medan. Usually it was a shared function and sometimes taped recordings were used. As we shall see later, even children were taught the call to prayer and it was a skill that young men were called on to master as part of their normal religious training. But the sound of the call to prayer was regularly heard throughout the city and was an indicator that Islam was firmly ensconced as the major religion of the area.

III. Mosque Functions and Activities

In a recent study Abdul Mukti Ali, a former Minister of Religious Affairs and one of Indonesia's leading Muslim intellectuals, offered a check list of uses mosques have offered since 1945. His view was toward the mosque area in general and not specifically to the central mosque area proper where prayer takes place. He identified nine general activities centering on mosques throughout the modern Islamic world:

prayer and general worship, general learning regarding Islam, use for formal schools, for Islamization activities, for libraries, for publication and distribution of books, for marriage ceremonies, as objects of tourism and as a site of eating places. He observed that in addition to the foregoing functions there were in Indonesia some special activities undertaken at specific mosques: services connected with the Fasting month, acting as a center for revivalist activity, serving as publishing centers for Islamic materials, providing clinics and other medical facilities, providing social relief programs including the distribution of the poor alms and, immediately after the Indonesian revolution, serving for a time as the site of local units of the Ministry of Religious Affairs (Ali, 1987, 47-9).[5] These functions can serve as a point of comparison with the mosques of Medan in the following sections.

A. General Worship

The primary purpose of the mosque was to serve as a place for worship as established in religious teachings. The mosques in Medan nobly filled that task. Although it was not required, mosques and prayer houses were used regularly for the five daily prayers expected of all Muslims. The worship occurred early in the morning (*subh*), at noon (*zuhur*), in late afternoon (*'ashr*), at sunset (*maghrib*) and in the evening (*'isyâ*). Observation confirmed that there was some use of the mosque, predominantly by men, in the morning, considerably more at noon and many more at sunset and in the evening. Women were more apt to join in the prayers at sunset and especially in the evening. Of course, daily prayers could be performed anywhere and attendance at mosques and prayer houses at these times in no way indicated much about religious attitude or about the total number of people praying.

Some people arrived early and used the extra time to rest, chat with others, read religious exercises or undertake supererogatory prayers. Especially in late afternoon men could be seen assembling outside the mosque on the veranda in small groups or in the ablution areas, with some members in the interior of the mosque undertaking mental and psychological preparation for prayer itself. Much the same occurred among women during the late evening prayer. The occasion was both social and religious.

It is incumbent on the worshiping community in an area to provide a quorum of worshipers for the communal prayer at noon on Friday. By custom this worship is attended by adult males. At Medan

the mosques were well attended throughout the year at most sites, although there never was the large crowds of worshipers that overflowed the facilities of many mosques in the main areas of Jakarta, where streets and adjacent areas were completely covered with prayer rugs. Except for evening Ramadân services, Medan mosques accommodated the worshipers using them.

The major feature of the Friday prayer was an address by a prominent person. A tracking of the sermon-givers for the leading mosques of Medan revealed that these people were educated personalities connected with the local office of religious affairs, local universities and other professions. Some moved weekly from mosque to mosque while others spoke at only one or two mosques on a fairly regular basis. An informant noted that at a university mosque in the city professors associated with the mosque were expected to undertake this duty on a rotating basis. There were no cases where there was only a single sermon-giver at a mosque performing week after week.

Local Muslim newspapers carried the text of some of these sermons; for the most part the speakers followed the events of the Muslim calendar. Furthermore the sermons were subject to government review and had to be registered with the local office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs. This policy sought to assure that religion was not used for partisan politics or for perspectives at odds with government policy, an approach that was introduced by the government in the 1970's. To paraphrase government wording, "the mosque must be politically neutral, so that one political party does not have an advantage over another" (*Was.*, May 11, 1986, 11). An informant, himself adverse to politicking in the mosque, noted that prior to the government regulation it was not unusual for Friday sermon givers to exhort worshipers to support Muslim political parties and back particular "Islamic" viewpoints being supported by Muslim activists. But, he noted, such political orientation differed greatly from mosque to mosque and the particular mosque he attended had never been very involved in political matters.

Two personalities provide somewhat different approaches used in these sermons. The first sermon-giver was a traditionalist Muslim, meaning that he followed strictly the teachings of the Shâfi'î school of Muslim law. In five sermons he dealt with the subjects of death, the poor alms, and the celebration of the feast day of *'Id al-Fitri*. Consistent with the Shâfi'î viewpoint, he stated in each of his sermons that he was outlining the thinking of the great Muslim teachers of the past on the

subject. Consequently, he made frequent reference to the teachers of the Shâfi'î school, often to Imam Shâfi'î himself, occasionally to the Qur'ân and sometimes to the Traditions of the Prophet, but usually references to scripture were made in the context of a religious scholar's interpretative remarks. In a sermon on the poor alms, for example, his theme was that "intention" is the key to the declaration of the poor alms. If the money or goods being donated to a worthy cause were not given without the specific intention of fulfilling that poor alms specifically, then the giving could not be considered as meeting the giver's obligation. The donation became instead a free-will offering which would earn merit with God, but the obligation to deliver a set portion of the believer's wealth each year would still stand. In general his sermons were technical, given to the fine points of standard belief and frequently quoted sizable passages from Shâfi'î scholars (*Anal*, Feb. 8, 1985, 8).

The second sermon-giver was a staff writer for a Muslim newspaper and also a teacher of religion at a local Muslim university who formulated his sermons from a modernist Muslim viewpoint. In fifty sermons he expressed the need for personal involvement in life, in struggle to make positive things happen, in having the right attitude and in evaluating the environment in which one existed. Consistent with the modernist Muslim viewpoint he stated that the scriptures of Islam—the Qur'ân and Traditions of the Prophet—were the source of religious knowledge and inspiration for Muslims, without necessarily relying on the old scholars for their interpretations. In an address on "attitude" he cited the National Planning Document of 1983 which called on Indonesians to establish the proper relationship of humans with their God, with other humans, and with the environment in which they live, to promote cordiality among all peoples and to show respect for human values everywhere "on earth and in the Hereafter." He cited the Qur'ân as the chief support for that viewpoint and then added the supporting views of the medieval Muslim scholar Ibn Kathîr and the late nineteenth century scholar Muhammad 'Abduh. The references to a national document and to older scholars were not crucial to his explanation, but they were used as reinforcement for his viewpoint (*Was.*, Sep 28, 1985, 10).

One informant noted that the Qur'ân is an important document and to memorize it, to recite it and to hear it recited—even when there was not full comprehension of the Arabic words or their meaning—was a religious act in itself. This was a common activity at most

mosques and many prayer houses where some efforts were organized and other were more informal; all of it was considered worship. For instance, the Jamiatul Taqwâ Prayer House held regular sessions for "memorizing and reciting (*haflah*)" the Qur'ân after the evening prayer (*Was.*, Sep 13. 1985, 6).

At the same time it was not unusual for several members to meet at the mosque outside of normal worship hours, usually after the early morning prayer or the evening prayer, for general Qur'ân learning (*belajar Qur'ân*); this was observed, for example, at the Mustaqim Mosque. On Thursday nights in many mosques young people met with the *nâzir* or a knowledgeable member of the mosque community to memorize the popular chapter (*surah*) named *Yâsîn*, which was commonly recited in the general community and in family settings, sometimes as an afternoon hymn of praise. This instruction was considered a rite of passage among pious Muslim groups. It was observed at several mosques, such as the Taqarrub Mosque and at a mosque with no name sign in the Helvetia Quarter.

During the month of Ramadân recitation of the Qur'ân (*tadarus*) in the mosque was common. A newspaper account in 1985 summarizing information gained from contacting *nâzirs* of mosques in different quarters of the city noted that such recitation was enjoying renewed popularity, with participation by all ages and both sexes in various recitation groups. The reporter observed, however, that older men and women were consistently more involved, although some youth groups were making special efforts under the guidance of their adult advisers (*Was.*, May 18, 1986, 1). Also in Ramadân, some mosques had reading teams, usually consisting of three males to a shift, who took turns reciting the Qur'ân, so that the entire scripture was completed in its entirety several times during the month. The Hidâyatul Islâmiyah Mosque, whose membership consisted in large part of Muslims who immigrated from Bengal, undertook this activity each year during the fasting month as part of its celebration. At other mosques some individuals or pious groups undertook this informally and stayed up much of the night alternately reading the Qur'ân and reciting a formula praising God (*dhikr*).

Qur'ân recitation contests have been held at various places in Medan, as elsewhere in Southeast Asia, throughout the twentieth century and that tradition continued in the mid-1980's, although the mosque was only one of the sites for such competitions. For instance, there was a "memorizers competition" at the Ibnu Sina Mosque in

1985 for units of the Indonesian Civil Servants Association (Korpri), which had both men's and women's divisions at several different skill levels. There was also a translation competition and a contest for answering questions about the content and related information concerning the Qur'ân (*Was.*, Nov 11, 1985, 6). A similar contest took place for Armed Forces personnel at the Hilâl Mosque (*Was.*, Apr 1, 1986, 6). These contests were connected with the national Qur'ân reading contest held biennially. The first example involved training for the competition, while the second was an actual competition at the opening level.

B. The Mosque and the Important Dates of the Muslim Calendar

The two major festivals of the Muslim calendar were *'Id al-Fitri*, which fell at the end of the fasting month, and *Id al-Adhâ*, which occurred during the pilgrimage season. Both festivals were marked by worship services in different areas of the city, with open areas and major mosques being used as the sites for this activity. In the 1985 *'Id al-Fitri* celebration there were eight sites for services: four were in open areas and four were in mosques. The largest celebration was at the city's central square (Lapangan Merdeka Medan), which received major media coverage, and at the army compound (*Was.*, May 29, 1986, 2; *Bukit Barisan*, June 12, 1986, 3). The two largest mosques of the city, Agung and al-Mashun, also had large numbers of people attend their services. In the following *'Id al-Adhâ* celebration and the next *'Id al-Fitri* celebration the same two mosques were again used, indicating a common pattern, probably based on the capacity of both structures and the history of the two mosques. Al-Mashun had that function during the Sultanate period and Agung was especially built with the purpose of being a major Islamic center of worship for the Medan community.

As at the Friday worship there was also a speaker at services for both of these festivals. The Friday sermon givers were used for these occasions, although occasionally personalities from outside the city or province were invited to give the event special status. For example, the rector of the State Institute for Islamic Studies (IAIN) in Jambi gave the sermon at one site for *'Id al-Adhâ* in 1986 (*Was.*, Aug 16, 1986, 1). Since these occasions were major feast days, the addresses were framed in that context, although most speakers dealt with the usual issues of ethics, morality and good citizenship. In 1985 a speaker at one observance emphasized that the fasting undertaken in the previous month

strengthened Muslims and put them in a state of holiness. He stated further that *'Id al-Fitri* marked that accomplishment and provided an opportunity for worshipers to dedicate their lives for the coming year to good works and undertake efforts to remain close to God in attitude and accomplishment (*Was.*, June 25, 1985, 7). Another frequent sermon topic for both observances concerned financial contributions to the poor and suffering, which, of course, was encouraged and lauded (*Was.*, June 6, 1986, 1).

On *'Id al-Adhâ* sacrifices of goats and water buffalo were made, with the meat generally given to orphanages or to the poor. It was not incumbent that this activity take place in the area of the mosque and individual families and religious associations sometimes organized the sacrifices at other places. At the same time mosque committees were sometimes formed for undertaking this activity, relying on the membership to make donations of animals, or money for the purchase of animals. The Agung Mosque announced a telephone number in the newspaper for Muslims to call to pledge money for the purchase of sacrificial animals (*Was.*, Aug. 9, 1985, 2). Mosque members prepared the animals for sacrifice, cut the jugular vein of the animal with the name of God, cleaned the carcass, made meat cuts and packaged the meat for distribution to the deserving. At al-Hasanah Mosque enough contributions were made that it was possible to sacrifice ten buffalo over two days. In a similar effort Jamaah Mosque sacrificed three buffalo and three goats (*Was.*, Aug 20, 1986, 6; Aug 21, 1986, 6).

Free will offerings were collected at the worship services on both feast days and donated to the poor, often to orphanages. At the major *'Id al-Fitri* celebration in 1985 for example Rp. 1.3 million was collected from worshipers and then donated to orphanages in the city (*Was.*, June 25, 1985, 1). A local Muhammadiyah association in the Padang Bulan area raised Rp. 200 thousand in voluntary contributions (*infak*) during *tarâwih* services in Ramadân and another Rp. 100 thousand at its *'Id al-Fitri* services, all of which were donated to the poor (*Was.*, May 31, 1986, 4).

In the evening of the two feast days, but more so on *'Id al-Fitri*, young men gathered at various sites to be loaded into cars, trucks, vans and buses for a motorcade through the city to display banners, shout the greeting "God is Great" (*takbir*) and generally celebrate the holiday. Instructions in Medan warned participants to keep their banners and demeanor centered on the religious aspects of the holiday and to eschew partisan political and special interest appeals. In

general they did so and there were no reports of violations in the press. The assembly points for these motorcades were frequently mosques, which allowed participants to worship either at the beginning or end of the excursions (*Was.*, June 19, 1985, 2: Aug. 22, 1985, 9).

Also important was the yearly fasting month of Ramadân, when the mosque was fully involved. Throughout the month most mosques and many prayer houses were used for *tarâwih* services, which consisted of a lengthy set of prayers, interspaced with special readings and recitations, often from the Qur'ân and hadîth, along with inspirational talks (*kuliah*) (*Anal.*, May 24, 1985, 1). The talks were given by special speakers, including the Friday sermon givers, but often by men who had studied religion in the Middle East and were familiar with the traditional stories and homilies of Islamic tradition.

The *tarâwih* services were popular throughout the month, although the greatest attendance was during the first ten evenings. Mosques overflowed at this period of time. Prior to services the streets were full of people walking to the mosque, often to a different mosque than they usually attended since Shâfi'î doctrine has it that extra effort would produce merit for the worshiper. One informant noted that she liked to attend the large mosque in the center of the city because all the municipal and provincial officials and their families went there. In her mind the egalitarianism of worshiping in Islam was really borne out in such services, when the common garb and the adjacent positions brought a common uniformity to those participating. This attitude was expressed by other Muslims in the city as well.

Mosques overflowed during the *tarâwih* services and women and children, who formed the rear group, often were forced to pray outside the mosque. Since the services were relatively long there was some difficulty keeping the children from roaming, and on occasion small boys played tag and other spontaneous games on the grounds of the mosques. Girls, wearing more confining prayer garb and perhaps more supervised, usually stayed with their mothers or in groups with other girls. Significantly, large numbers of women attended these services and at a few mosques, such as al-Mustaqim Mosque, they sometimes outnumbered the men. At most mosques, however, the numbers were about even or there was a modest majority of men. In general the mosque was a very popular place for Muslims during Ramadân, despite the breaking of the day-long fast which occurred prior to these services. And if Muslims celebrated through much of the night in their homes and those of their friends, it was also a time

of piety and the mosques saw many of the faithful participating in communal services.

Aside from the *tarâwih* prayer ceremonies in the evening, some mosques also had special events at other times of the day during Ramadân, especially after the early morning prayer. Along this line, the Thawalib Prayer House had a special series of inspirational talks (*ceramah*) following the prayers for the entire four weeks of Ramadân (*Was.*, May 30, 1986, 6). This built on a common pattern throughout the year when some Muslims used the early morning hours for special learning, scripture recitation, and contemplation after undertaking required prayer.

Also, during the final days of Ramadân the poor alms (*zakâh al-fitr*) was collected from Muslims and distributed to the poor. In some areas of Indonesia there were government or quasi-government agencies, usually known as the Office of the Collector of Poor Alms and Contributions (Badan Amil Zakat dan Infaq/Shadaqah—Bazis) that performed this function, but it did not exist in North Sumatra. In Medan the city office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs acted as a general coordinator of the activity and the mosques served as an important conduit for collection of the alms. A contribution figure was set by the leading Muslim associations, leading mosques and the Ministry of Religious Affairs office and, while there was common discussion on this matter, the figure differed a trifle among them. In 1986 the general figure was 3 kg of rice or Rp. 1050. per adult Muslim, a figure somewhat lower than assessed in Jakarta. Written notices appeared on the bulletin boards of many mosques during Ramadân stating the amount of the alms, reminding believers of their obligation to pay, and setting forth collection times and conditions (*Was.*, May 12, 1986, 1; May 31, 1986, 2). Amounts collected varied considerably by collecting agency. Three mosques in one area reported collecting Rp. 100 thousand and an unspecified amount of rice (*Was.*, June 15, 1985, 6). In another case the regional military command announced that poor-alms collections from its mosques amounted to five tons of rice and Rp. 250 thousand (*Was.*, June 25, 1985, 6). In a third case a group of mosques in the central city area, including a major mosque, reported collecting six tons of rice (*Was.*, June 17, 1985, 1).

Distribution differed as well. In a first scenario distribution was undertaken by a district association of mosques which compiled lists of people qualifying for aid and then actually undertaking the distribution to them (*Was.*, June 15, 1985, 6). This was the major system

for distributing the poor alms. In a second scenario mosques, orphanages, religious schools and other social institutions were the recipients of collections. The regional military command, for example, gave its poor alms collections to four major Islamic associations operating in the Province—Muhammadiyah, al-Washliyah, al-Hilal and Zending Islam—for use in their social welfare endeavors, particularly their orphanages (*Was.*, June 25, 1985, 6). In a third scenario a mosque made its contribution to a specific group on a continuing basis, such as the Taqwâ Mosque in the Brayan district, which annually gave one hundred packets of clothing for the orphaned and poor of the district (*Was.*, June 12, 1985,6). The al-Ikhlâs Mosque had a similar arrangement with the poor in its district (*Was.*, June 11, 1985, 6).

Alongside major festivals there are several other important holidays in the Muslim calendar, notably the Birthday of the Prophet Muhammad, the Night Journey and Ascension of the Prophet, Muslim New Year, and the Descent of the Qur'ân. These observances were not necessarily marked in the mosque, although some were held by some mosque communities in the mosque complexes. Frequently these were done by religious organizations and many were held at public meeting places and sponsored by government offices, public associations or private firms and individuals. These celebrations usually consisted of readings from the Qur'ân—often by accomplished reciters,–special prayers, other readings appropriate to the occasion, and addresses by special speakers. For example, al-Ma'rûf Mosque during the Descent of the Qur'ân (*Nuzûl al-Qur'ân*) celebration had an inspirational speaker (*muballigh*) and recitation of the Qur'ân by "famous North Sumatran male and female reciters (*qarî' dan qâri'ah*)" (*Was.*, June 7, 1986, 2). At al-Amîn Mosque during commemoration ceremonies for The Night Journey and the Ascent (*Isra' dan Mi'raj*) there was an address by an Islamic teacher (*ustaz*), Qur'ân recitation and special prayers from early Islam (Bukhârî and 'Aishah) (*Was.*, April 27, 1985, 6). During Birthday of the Prophet (*Maulid*) celebrations at some sites special songs (*marhaban*) were sung (*Was.* Dec 7. 1985, 6). The mosque proper was not ordinarily used for such observances, but attendees often used the mosque for their own daily prayers before or after such events. These events were attended by significant numbers of women, who also observed ordinary prayer and used the mosque on those occasions.

The themes for speakers reflected, of course, the occasion being celebrated. A speaker at the Agung Mosque at the Descent of the

Qur'ân observances in 1985 followed a common theme relating the original revelation of the Qur'ân to the Fasting month. He noted that the Qur'ân was revealed in Ramadân because it was the season when Muslims were most aware of their behavior and their relationship to religion. He continued that the purpose of the Qur'ân, as stated by Muhammad himself, was to learn from it and perform its lessons in society (*Was.*, June 19, 1985, 6). At al-Hilal Mosque a speaker on the occasion of the Ascent of the Prophet emphasized the particular tolerance shown by Muhammad and those who became his followers. The speaker called for a continuation of that attitude among present-day Muslims (*Was.*, May 12, 1985, 2).

Important in the yearly cycle stands the pilgrimage to Mecca, which occurs each year in the month of Zulhijjah. In itself, the pilgrimage constitutes an important rite for Medan Muslims and approximately 1000 people went during 1986 (*Was.*, May 31, 1986, 7). Still, it is only of passing importance in the activities of most mosques since Indonesian national policy has created a special administration in the Ministry of Religious Affairs for arranging facilities for those registering for the religious rite. Information about the pilgrimage and the registration arrangements are provided in most mosques. People interested often discuss their intention with the *nâzir* and with those members who have already undertaken the journey and participated in the appropriate rites. Formal orientation and training sessions, however, were usually undertaken in assembly halls outside the mosques, but there is evidence that some sessions occurred in mosques and prayer houses. This occurred, for example, at the Mushalla al-Muâ'wanah, where practice was undertaken for "aspirants," held several nights over several weeks time (*Was*, March 9, 1986, 9, May 5, 1986, 2). There is no information in newspaper about mosque involvement in the "Lesser Pilgrimage" (*umroh*) occurring in Mecca outside the official pilgrimage season. Information from sources elsewhere in Southeast Asia would suggest that groups preparing for such a trip might well use a local mosque convenient to them for orientation and practice.

Finally, in the yearly cycle there were folk observances that deserve some mention, particularly the Night of Forgiveness and the *Halal bi Halal*. It was popularly believed by Muslims that on the Night of Forgiveness, a date known only to God (*ghâib*) in the month of Sya'ban, (but often confused by some Muslims with the Descent of the Qur'ân near the end of Ramadân), that God set or ordained the fate of individuals. It was also believed that Muslims needed to be

especially watchful of religious obligations and act piously at that time so that God and his angels would gain a good impression and allot a fate that was beneficial. Mosques were not involved per se, although supererogatory night prayer and, more particularly, a lengthy repetition of an incantation reciting the name or names of God (*dhikr*) at the mosque was sometimes used to help the individual set the mood he or she regarded as appropriate.

The *Halal bi Halal* was a social occasion usually undertaken at the work place, in organizations and wherever people associated with one another, usually within two weeks after *'Id al-Fitri*. It was a ritual meal in which people asked forgiveness of one another, particularly the inferior of the superior. It had no set ceremony and usually not even prayers were said, although in some cases they apparently were. It did, on occasion, take place within the mosque complex, but was not much observed there. However, in 1985 at the Nûrul Mukminîn Mosque the youth group held a *Halal bi Halal* and the *nâzir* addressed the assembled youth to remind them of the absolute importance of religious values in their lives and the necessity for intergenerational understanding in their own community of worshipers (*Bukit Barisan*, June 25, 1985, 11).

C. Other Important Occasions

Conversion to Islam was not an event that was usually celebrated in the mosques, but on occasion it was. The person undergoing conversion was usually instructed in a home, a religious school or some public meeting place. In most of the conversions announced in newspapers during 1985 and 1986 this was the common pattern and only two cases were connected with mosques. In one of those cases a young Chinese woman gave her confession of faith at the Raudhatul Muslimîn Mosque, which was witnessed by the head of the mosque committee. As part of the conversion she also changed the Chinese name she previous held to an Islamic name derived from Arabic (*Was.*, Oct 27, 1985, 2). In another case a mass circumcision (*khitan/sunnat*) for fifty-seven area boys was held at the al-Muhtadûn Mosque with a team of doctors undertaking the ceremonial operations. Among the children seven were from the Karo tribe, a people now converting from animism to Islam and Christianity, where the parents were not Muslim (*Was.*, April 26, 1986, 6).

Unlike some other areas of Southeast Asia, funerals in Medan were not held in mosques, but usually in the homes of the deceased where

local customs were observed. On occasion the *shalat ghâib* was performed for certain individuals, which is a prayer for the dead which takes place after the regular communal prayer on Friday. When a leader of the Islamic Education Institution (Taman Pendidikan Islam—TPI) died in 1985 leaders of that association requested that this prayer be given in honor of the deceased (*Anal.*, Aug. 1, 1989, 4). There were cemeteries connected with some mosques, although the connection between the two was not very common; among the twenty-five mosques surveyed in this study, only two had cemeteries in their environs. During the final days of Ramadân many Muslims visited the graves of deceased family members to clean, decorate and repair the grave sites (*Was.*, May 19, 1985, 11; *Anal.*, Mar. 2, 1985, 3).

D. Religious Programs and Mosques

Instruction in Islam was regarded as an ordinary part of school life and there was strong social pressure in mosque communities to send young children to Islamic schools to supplement public school educations. Ample Muslim schools existed in Medan, often in the same complex with a mosque, so the responsibility of indoctrinating and socializing young children in Islam was considerably lessened for mosque communities. Still there were instances when some training occurred, either to target a special group or to supplement what was learned elsewhere. This occurred at the al-Muhtadûn Mosque in 1985 when seventy children from the area, who were fifteen years of age and under, attended three days of instruction. On the first two days the children were taught how to pray, how to give the call to prayer and some of the elements of religious recitation. On the third day the children, with their parents, attended a celebration of the Ascent of the Prophet (*Isra' dan Mi'raj*) with the children assisting in the program. Since the program was sponsored by the Islamic Preaching Council (Dewan Dakwah Islamyah), the aim was probably intended to bring in youth who ordinarily did not have access to such training.(*Was.*, April 28, 1986, 6)

Some mosques, particularly those associated with the Muhammadiyah Association had scout (*Pramuka*) units attached to them. The Taqwâ Mosque in Tanjung Sari had an active scout unit that included both boys and girls. The scoutmaster stated that normal meeting times were on Sunday morning, although outings took place at other times of the week as well. He noted that there was an extensive network of scout units in North Sumatra and that they had several outings a year that

took them to all parts of the province (*Anal.*, Sep. 3, 1989, 8).

A theme of mosques throughout Indonesia in the 1980's was the intensification of youth programs intended to bring young men and women to full Muslim commitment. Nationally a call was given for Mosque Youth units (*Remaja Masjid*) to be established at prominent mosques and by Muslim organizations; accordingly in Medan many mosques had such youth adjuncts. In line with this emphasis the Remaja Masjid Rekasi reported that it had seventy members, both young men and women (*Was.*, July 12, 1985, 12). The unit at the Taufiq Mosque announced its plans to begin Qur'ân memorization efforts, hold a bazaar to raise money, give an artistic performance (*kesenian malam*) and "give service to society" in general (*Was.*, Sep. 23, 1986, 7). Some units were active when their sponsoring mosque was undertaking renovation or development activities in raising funds, through a variety of activities, such as car-washing, flea-markets and collection drives. The youth units were organized with officers similar to that of the mosque foundation itself, with a chair, deputy chairs, secretaries and treasurers, but also had adult advisers and counselors as well (*Was.*, Oct. 8, 1985, 3).

Connected with these Mosque Youth programs were the "Quick Academies" (*pesantren kilat*) and other learning programs which attempted to deepen knowledge of Islam. Most of these were held at Muslim schools or universities, but sometimes the mosque was a venue as well. One such session was held at al-Falâh Mosque during Ramadân, which placed emphasis on Qur'ân recitation and featured togetherness in undertaking the sunset prayer (*maghrib*), sharing a common meal when breaking the fast, and reciting *tarâwih* prayers in the evening. Twenty-four young people, both male and female, took part in the sessions (*Was.*, June 19, 1985, 6).

The Remaja Masjid often belonged to federative groupings, such as the Coordinating Leadership of Muslim Youth in North Sumatra (BAKOPMI) and the Muhammadiyah Student Association (IMM). Both held training sessions and assemblies and these were usually held in mosques. Such a session was held in al-Jihâd Mosque in the Medan Baru Sector for a leadership orientation and intensive study of Islam. For the general membership there were rallies that had Islamic rock bands and *nâshid* performers as the centerpiece, both of which were popular means of attracting young people committed to an Islamic life style. The *nâshid* groups were particularly attractive to young women who formed groups of five to ten to sing songs in

praise of God in a quavering style reminiscent of certain Arab chanting. It was so popular by 1989 that some of the songs of particular musical groups was included on popular TV singing shows (*Was.*, Oct. 18, 1986,1,2).

Mosques were sometimes associated with schools and were an important feature of education, with both worship and learning taking place in the mosque itself. The schools varied in purpose and quality, with some offering only elementary training and other with very sophisticated programming. For example, the Burhanuddin and al-Ma'ârif mosques had elementary Islamic schools (*madrasah*), while the Taqwâ Mosque at Tanjung Sari had a more developed educational program, with a kindergarten and national-certified elementary, middle and junior high schools. The most differentiated, however, was at the Complex al-Azhar where there were national-certified schools at all levels along with special instruction in English and Arabic. Some of these educational systems were associated with Islamic associations, particularly the Muhammadiyah and al-Washliyah, which both have historically placed heavy emphasis on education that involves both Islamic sciences and general educational material. This continued the high stress that the Indonesian Muslim community placed on popular education throughout the twentieth century.

Islamic associations sometimes used mosque areas for their meetings, but other assembly halls and meeting places were more usual. As the associations differed in their purpose and activities, so too were the purposes of meetings held in the mosques. For example, the assembly hall of the Taqwâ Mosque on Demak Street was the site of several meetings of religious organizations affiliated with the Muhammadiyah. The Council for Building a Prosperous Community (Majelis Pembina Kesejahteraan Ummat-PKU) held a major meeting over several days time; the agenda included discussions of social affairs, health, family welfare, society's development and the role of religion in society (*Was.*, Sep. 6, 1986 2). In a second example, the women's section of al-Washliyah met monthly in a series of mosques to reinforce its Islamic identity by reading the *Surah Yâsîn* from the Qur'ân and hear an inspirational talk (*Was.*, Feb 18, 1986, 6). Up to eight hundred women attended such sessions. In a third example the Indonesian Islamic Students Association (Pelajar Muslimin Islam Indonesia-PMII) at the national Islamic studies institute in Medan held the twenty- fifth anniversary of the chapter at the al-Falâh Mosque with panel discussions on the role of the association

in society and within the national philosophy of Pancasila (*Was.*, April 22, 1985, 5).

Mosques sometimes had commentaries, copies of the Qur'ân, prayer books and books on various religious subjects reserved for the use of worshipers. There were very few mosques observed in the study that had enough materials that they could be termed libraries or even reading areas. The Agung Mosque was the exception, although its collection was very limited, which reflects the usual state of contemporary Indonesian institutions, which have had financial difficulty gathering materials in usable collections. The sale of books and other printed materials dealing with Islam was done by small dealers near some mosques. For example, there was a vendor with a good display of Indonesian and Arabic texts outside al-Mashun mosque. However, none of the free-lance vendors near mosques had a stock that compared with the regular book stores in the city or those that catered specifically to Muslim readers.

A few mosques had special activities or relationships. The Taqwâ Mosque in the Teladan Quarter stood next to a health polyclinic operated by the 'Aisyiyah association, a leading Muslim women's movement in Indonesia with a long history of social welfare activities throughout the country. It is not known, however, whether the mosque had any special relationship or was coincidentally located adjacent to the polyclinic. The Dakwah Kampus USU Mosque had a cooperative attached to it, although the nature, extent and operation of the enterprise was never fully explained by students using the mosque.

IV. The Mosque and Outside Organization

Indonesia has two conflicting trends that affect mosque organization and operation. In the first instance Indonesian society organizes itself and builds its own institutions. The history of Islam in Indonesia is part of that self-organization from the grass roots level and the institution of the mosque reflects that tendency. Mosques are individual and varied, yet part of a nation-wide and even world-wide network. On the other hand the drive for national identity has created a government that attempts to place its stamp of approval or disapproval on nearly everything in the country. Government impact applies to mosques as well as other institutions.

It was observed earlier that, for political considerations, foreign speakers were not permitted to participate in mosque sermons and

inspirational talks and that the Friday sermon was monitored for political content (*Was.*, Feb. 28, 1986, 6). These were controversial policies and Muslims were divided on their appreciation of them. Certainly such regulations limited the options of Muslims in using their mosques for certain activities in the interest of nationalism. Periodically there were attempts to have mosques reflect national cultural values more clearly. For example, in 1986 the local unit of the Ministry of Religious Affairs held a national indoctrination session (P-4) for *nâzir*s of mosques in various sections of the city. These sessions, common in government agencies, were intended to deepen participants' understanding of the national philosophy of Pancasila and the stress of government policies in promoting national development. Along with this ideological training the sessions also included lessons for general upgrading the administrative skills of the *nâzirs* in operating their mosques (*Was.*, Oct. 31, 1985, 2).

Aside from government action, there were also other efforts to coordinate the efforts of mosques. It has already been mentioned that Local Mosque Leaders Associations (Kepenghuluan Kampung Mesjid) existed for coordination of the distribution of the poor alms (*Was.*, Oct. 15, 1985, 4). There were also specialist's meetings, such as the Association for Mosque Treasurers (*Dâr al-Mâl lî al-Masâjid*—Lembaga Penbendaharan Mesjid) (*Was.*, Sep. 19, 1986, 3). Finally many mosques had an affiliation with an Islamic association; e. g. most mosques in Medan named "Taqwâ" are part of the Muhammadiyah family. In the same way many other mosques were affiliated with al-Washliyah Association. Mosques with such affiliations were engaged in coordinating activities with those associations, especially on celebration of feast days and support for particular social causes promoted by the parent association.

V. Conclusions

In the time frame studied, the mosques of Medan fulfilled most of the functions listed by Abdul Mukti Ali earlier in the article, although the overall stress was somewhat different from his analysis. The central theme of Medan mosques was worship, but many mosques were also associated with a wide variety of activities intended to promote Islam in other ways the Indonesian Muslim community regarded important. Mosques served throughout the year as a gathering point for the faithful, where they could undertake worship and other activities they found important. Significantly the Friday communal

worship and the events of Ramadân were the most striking in overall participation, but the daily use by small numbers of worshipers throughout the day and evening was probably more significant.

Mosques were not the only center of Muslim activity but they constituted an institution that was undisputed in its essentiality and importance among nearly all members of the community. The religious schools, special religious organizations, and units of the Ministry of Religious Affairs were important centers as well, but the others did not detract much from the purpose of the mosque, but possibly added to it, by using mosque areas for their activities and encouraging people to use mosques for worship.

Some writers, including Mukti Ali, have suggested that mosques be promoted as the very center of Indonesian Islam and that their facilities and their programs be expanded. The Singapore case[6] offers a case where the mosque has been especially used by the government as a tool of development and it has been a fairly effective policy. This might be possible in Medan as well, but it is questionable whether much would be gained, since Indonesian Islam, at least in the Medan context, is multicentered, with the mosque only one focal point of the Muslim effort. To add responsibilities to mosques might only weaken some other part of the Islamic fabric. There are symbiotic relationships among the institutions of Islam, as the foregoing discussion clearly shows, and those interrelationships need to be fully understood before attempting to restructure the functions of the mosque in the name of development.

In conclusion the mosques of Medan were healthy institutions serving their Muslim constituents very well. By and large they were devoted to worship as their primary task, but in most ways fulfilled the communal role featured for mosques by the Prophet Muhammad himself. They were certainly pertinent and vital institutions in the life of the Muslims of Medan.

Endnotes

1 For background and comparative material on the mosque, see in particular the five articles on the subject in Esposito, 1995; Pijper 1977; and *Ensik. Islam 1994.*

2 This manuscript, and a set of mosque photos, was reviewed by DR Parmono Atmadi of the Departmen of Architecture at the University of Gadjah Mada, who made helpful comments, particularly concerning the architectural aspects of the article.

3 At the beginning of the period of time when material was collected for this article, the Rupiah was approximately Rp.1,000 = US$ 1, but in a devaluation midway in the period it changed to approximately Rp. 1,400 = US$ 1. The exchange rate is only included here for general cost comparison and the devaluation had little real impact since most of the construction costs were for goods manufactured in Indonesia.

4 A comparative study on architectural forms in mosque construction in nearby Malaysia is well described in Nuh, 1979. That study concentrates on the style that Rochym labels as "traditional."

5 A comparative work by Mansor describing uses of Singapore mosques was more methodological, dividing functions into three major categories: educational, religious and public events. Under education he included kindergartens, religious classes, lectures, community development classes and remedial education for regular schools. Under religious activities were included prayers of various kinds, circumcision, recitation of the Qur'ân and *hadîth*, administration of social welfare, convert care and family counseling. Under public events were included celebration of the key events of the Muslim calendar, administration of the pilgrimage, school holiday activities, and National Day ceremonies (Mansor, 1983, 11).

6 See note 5.

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2. Fieldnotes and Interviews

Federspiel, Howard M. 1984-1990. "Field notes."

Interviews

— Informant 1. Thirty-five year old male; Batak, Muslim and member of a mosque committee, and; low level administrator at an oil company.

—Informant 2. Fifty year old male; Acehnese, Muslim and regular *khatib* at Friday services, and; university professor and administrator.

—Informant 3. Thirty year old female; Batak, Muslim, and; lead office secretary.