



Social media, **CHRISTIAN** & *MENNONITE* **COMMUNITIES** IN INDONESIA

written by :

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BACKGROUND

“Talking about the influence of social media on the Christian community in Indonesia especially Mennonite very interesting, but before that let's talk about a few things that affect it.

Technology

Social Media exists because of the Internet. Indonesia, that has over 200 million people and more than 17,000 islands, ranks sixth in world for using the Internet access. It means Indonesian people engages in getting information around the globe and response to international news, and some areas are becoming increasingly modern also make the economy better. Although the infrastructures and technology development do not yet equal in every part of the country, Indonesia still have a lot of potentials to grow.

Gadgets

Before 2005 when the smartphones were not popular in Indonesia, thus people used laptops or personal computers to access the Internet and social media. Learning how Indonesian people got actively engaged in the Internet and social media, smartphone manufacturers saw the potential of marketing their products in Indonesia. As a result, in 2010 Indonesia became one of countries with the highest rate of

smartphone users. Smartphones enable Indonesian people to access the Internet easier and become more active in social media such as Facebook and Twitter.

Interesting fact: Indonesia has become one of the countries with the highest users of social media, especially Facebook and Twitter. Indonesia is the third country with the highest number of Twitter users

Why do I get involved in promoting church through social media?

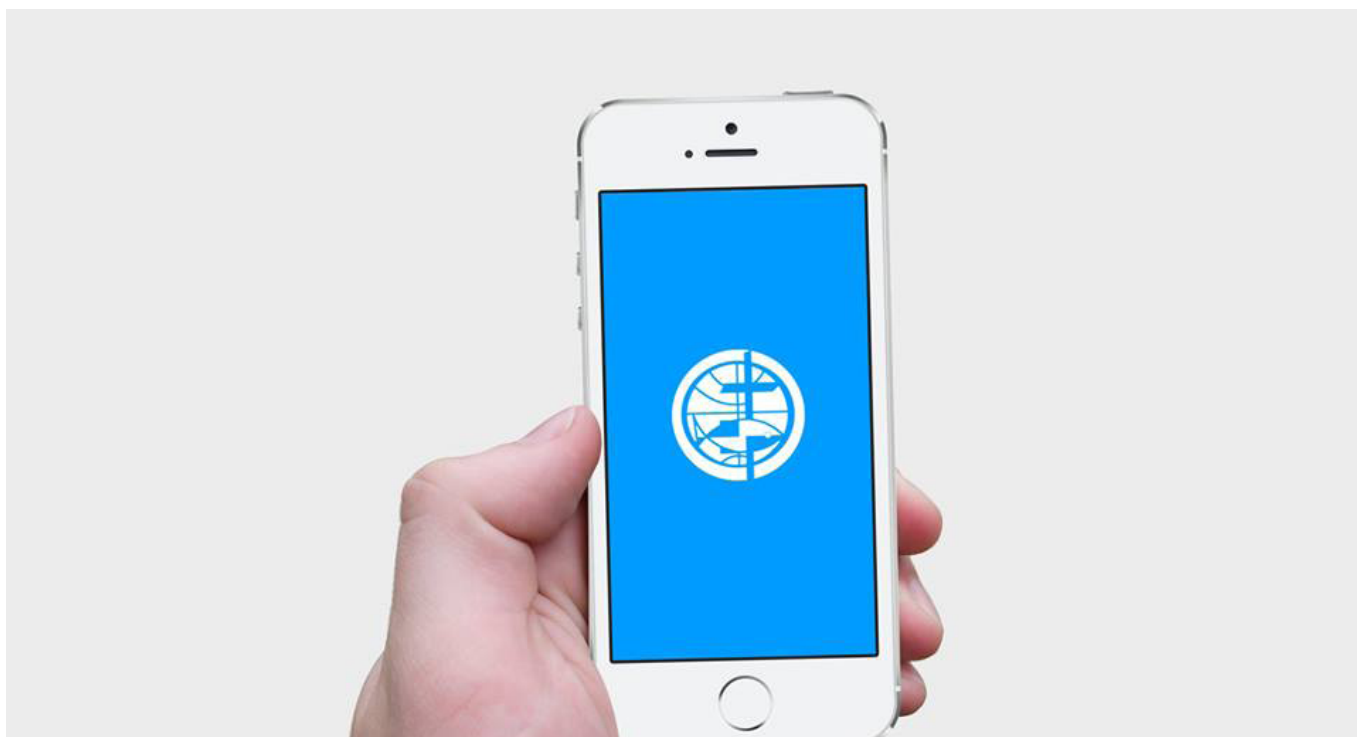
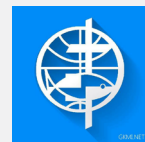
Some friends of mine from the USA visited me a few years ago and they were surprised when they learned that I was a Mennonite, since I work as a programmer, graphic designer, and website developer. To their knowledge, Mennonites are conservative community who live in simplicity and use limited technology. That was the moment when I realized that many people do not have sufficient information about the Mennonites in Indonesia. I acknowledged that social media can be a powerful yet easy way to introduce and educate people about Mennonite faith and beliefs.

How about Gereja Kristen Muria Indonesia (GKMI, Muria Christian Church of Indonesia)?

“The churches in Indonesia became active in social media in 2008 seen by the presence of social media profile of the church and several Christian community on Facebook, Twitter, and other online Christian forums. This phenomena was warmly welcome by the Christian communities because it enables them to share, educate, learn, and encourage one another through testimonies and information sharing.

Although a few local churches have used social media as a tool for information sharing, the movement itself was done in grass-root level. GKMI conference got actively involved in social media in 2012. One of the reasons was because most of the church leaders did not have the knowledge and experiences in social

media. It is a fact that young generations have more expertise in using technology, the Internet, and social media.



GKMI (Muria Christian Church of Indonesia)

“ *I was contacted by our church leaders in 2009 to help them develop and start using social media for the youth. At that time, youth programs were done mostly in their respective local churches.*

The Synod had a vision of creating a youth movement at national scale. The church leaders found that the church became less interesting for the youth. While the church still used conservative approach to maintain the youth, I learned that the church had to change their method and use a different approach in keeping the youth informed and involved. Utilizing social media was the answer to raise an awareness about the new youth movement since most of the youth have access to the Internet and social media.

After embarking on a small survey, I learned that one of the reasons why our youth left the church and started going to different churches was because they found the new churches are more innovative as they use

hi-tech and social media to make the youth involved. So the first thing to do was to create a Facebook Fan Page which was popular at that time, and also develop a special forum for young people of GKMI to share their stories and information. It was not easy to invite them to join because the church did not have enough data of the young people in our church conference.



Youth For Peace (Y4P) Movement of GKMI



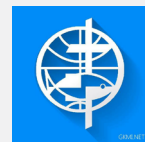
In September 9, 2010, the church leaders appointed several young people from different churches to start a new movement called Youth For Peace with a full support from the church conference. The new committee realized that face-to-face was important to introduce and invite the young people in more than 50 local churches that are scattered in many cities and islands. The first Y4P Summit was held in June 2011 where more than 400 young people gathered and learned together about the new movement and the Mennonite faith and belief for four days. During the summit, we introduced and invited the participants to join Y4P Facebook Fan Page. Within a few days the members of Y4P Facebook Fan page growth from tens to hundreds. After the summit, the Y4P committee invited me to join the team and maintain the Y4P Facebook account. The process became easier and smoother since we had hundreds of members who were active and involved. Since then, we use Y4P Facebook Fan Page to promote church and youth program, share stories and information.

GKMI Network?



The success of Y4P Facebook Fan Page encouraged the church leaders to use the same method to get the people involved with the church. Thus in 2012, I was again contacted by the church Synod to form a new online community called GKMI Network. The goal is to reach out more church members and other by using social media, website, email, and other technologies as. Consisting of a few other young people, GKMI Network also has other publication functions such as designing and developing videos and brochures, maintain corporate emails, etc.





So here is the equation



Church + social media = Movement

This movement can make people stay connected with each other, share stories, testimony and the word of God. This movement can reach out people from all over the world!

A friend of mine, a successful and kind businessman, told me a story that he had the call and desire to help other people. However, do to his physical limitation, he was not able to get involved directly to help. When the big earthquake hit Yogyakarta, Indonesia, he tried to find a way to share the blessings with the survivors of the earthquake who needed help immediately. He contacted one of his acquaintances who at that time worked at the affected location and asked him to send pictures that could describe the real situations and post them on Facebook. As soon as the pictures were posted, he use Facebook to organize a way where he and other people who wanted to help can send their money to a bank account so the volunteers in the field can get food and build temporary shelters for the survivors of the earthquake. It was the power of social media!

“Romans 12:2 says, *“Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is--his good, pleasing and perfect will” (NIV). It does not say that we have to stay away from it. Using social media and other means of technology does not mean that we are the same with the world. We use technology to share the word of God, peace, and love with other people. Church, as a place where believers learn, share, and grow together in God’s presence, could use technology such as the Internet and social media to reach out more people and share God’s word.*

Author : Andre Setya



Key People

Andre Setya



Position: CEO GKMI NETWORK

Organization: GKMI Network

Andre Setya is Creative Director, digital designer, web designer and front-end developer on GKMI Network and GKMI Synod. And also a musician.

Before starting the GKMI Network Andre worked as photographer, graphic designer and website developer for on SEDSIGN ID until now.

Andi O.S



Position: General Secretary

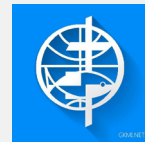
Organization: GKMI Synod

Mr. Andi is our general secretary on GKMI Synod, he also supports Youth For Peace and GKMI Network for creating a movement concept.

Andi has also an activist of social media. He always share everything about GKMI and mennonite on Facebook and twitter

“ True peace is never silence

“ Live life with love

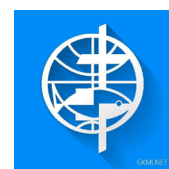


Official GKMI Social Media Pages

With Social links

GKMI Network

- ▶ Facebook | <https://www.facebook.com/gkmi.net>
- ▶ Twitter | <https://twitter.com/gkminetwork>
- ▶ Website | www.gkmi.net



GKMI Synod

- ▶ Facebook | <https://www.facebook.com/sinode.gkmi>
- ▶ GKMI Bergerak "GKMI Movements" on Facebook page
- ▶ Website | sinodegkmi.com/org



Youth For Peace GKMI

- ▶ Facebook | <https://www.facebook.com/youthforpeace>
- ▶ Twitter | <https://twitter.com/Youth4PeaceGKMI>
- ▶ Facebook Group | "pemuda remaja GGKMI"



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