

Ritual Slaughtering of Livestock in “Aluk Rambu Solo”: How the way of Torajan Appropriate the Doctrine of Jesus as Sacrifice

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Abstraksi

Kebudayaan Indonesia sangat kaya dengan ritual keagamaan, menariknya salah satu kebudayaan yang usianya sangat tua adalah ritual pemotongan hewan, yang juga biasa dilakukan sejak zaman Abraham. Hampir semua tradisi dari berbagai dunia memiliki ritual kurban dengan memotong segala jenis hewan. Salah satu tradisi itu ada di Tana Toraja. Dalam penelitian ini penulis menyoroti suatu usaha untuk mengadopsi ritual mantunnu tedong untuk menjelaskan pemahaman orang percaya mengenai pengorbanan Kristus di atas kayu salib. Dalam tulisan meyakini adanya titik temu atau jembatan yang mampu menjelaskan ajaran Alkitab bagi orang-orang di Toraja sehingga mereka dapat memaknai ritual Rambu Solo beserta ritual pemotongan kerbau lebih alkitabiah.

Kata Kunci: Interkultural, Doktrin Pengorbanan Kristus, Rambu Solo

Introduction

The death of Christ on the cross as a sacrifice to atone his people and as the mediator between God and men is a central theme in the Christian doctrine. His death as a sacrifice is one of many metaphors used by the New Testament (NT) writers. For some people, the death of Christ, which make peace between God and men, seems like a violence, for instance, feminists see it as a “child abuse.” Also came a critical negative from a juridical perspective.

Some tribes in Indonesia like Toraja has a sacrificial concept called *mantunnu tedong*. This tradition become a life system

among torajan. They have myth and “old understanding” by this ritual the soul of the dead will be save to the “heaven”. The slaughtering of livestock, that is called *Aluk Rambu Solo* (ARS) is use in the death funerals ritual. Interestingly, part of them do not think any negative aspect of the slaughtering of livestock and the sacrifice of Christ. The problem is when they become a syncretism.

This situation may become a obstacle to the growth of their faith. As Hiebert states a careful analysis, “Conversion to Christ must encompass all three level: behavior, beliefs, and the worldview that underlies these. Christian should live differently because the

Christians, however if their behavior is primarily on the traditional rather than Christian beliefs it becomes pagan ritual (Hiebert, 2008:9).” Where church to understand the teaching about Jesus death on the cross as a sacrifice. However, Toraja’s people still confuses even to distinguish between the Christian belief and tradition of funerals, because the appropriation of the Christian value to the Toraja context is still limited. While, the adoption process still continue in several place in Toraja. at where Christianity has existed in Toraja since a century ago, it remains uneasy to be applied in the context of church mission.

This article propose to understand a Toraja’s people view regarding to a ritual sacrifice in ARS and combine and correlate with the concept of Jesus as perfect offering who give a salvation for his people. This question will guide this essay: How could the ritual of ARS be appropriated so that it could be accepted as a local Christian tradition? The background analysis will help to answer this question. This method will investigate the motive behind the ritual tradition, and will look deeper at their action and

thoughts. There are three parts in this essay: The first is the explanation about the concept and motivation of offering in Toraja culture. The second is elaboration regarding the doctrine of Jesus as a sacrifice in NT. And thirdly, this author will expose the Christian’s Toraja understanding in each relation to teaching on Jesus as the sacrifice. Finally, some suggestion will be proposed at the end of this writing.

Methodology

The methodology in this study uses an intercultural study approach, the analysis and description of contextual expressions of Christianity.¹ Where in assessing a culture that is seen from the behavior of a community in a particular place. Then analyze various ways to teach particular doctrine using their own habits. We are not only criticizing but provides solutions by paying attention to certain activities to undergo a transformation of their worldview. As a descriptive analysis intercultural method offer a good solution, since it makes provision for both institution and content-related aspect, it different with mission approach

¹ For further study see, Henning Wrogemann, *Intercultural Theology: Intercultural Hermeneutics* Vol 1 dan 2 (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2018); Kees de Jong, Yusak Tridarmanto (ed), *Perjumpaan Interaktif antara Teologi dan Budaya: Kajian tentang Pemahaman dan Persepsi*

Mengenai Teologi Interkultural di Aras Akademik dan Gerejawi (Yogyakarta TPK, 2018); Tony Salurante, *Biblikal Narasi dan Interkultural: Tinjauan terhadap Misional Hermeneutik untuk Menyatakan dan Memahami Kabar Baik* (Jakarta: Views, 2018), 59-76.

(Wrogemann, 2018: 25).

Aluk Rambu Solo: The Days of Weeping but Full Of Blessings

The ARS is the highest ritual in Toraja to carry the deceased man to his last resting place. A death funeral where family's grief is mixed with the happiness. The ARS is an absolute ceremonies for family, and this ritual is established and strongly bind it by oral laws. The stratification of social class has significant influence in particular in the death ceremony and controls how the family perform it. The richer and more powerful individual will have a more expensive funerals. In the *aluk* (belief) religion, only the nobles have the right to have an expensive death feast.

For Torajans, the funerals rite is a privilege to perform even for the poor class. It has such an importance and effect, since has much important and effect in social life people competing to perform this ceremony, although it could take all effort and unlimited costs. Evidently, this ritual becomes primary for Toraja's people; in fact, all asset of those who died will be spent for this ceremony. Therefore, there is a philosophy in Toraja, "live for death" (Kobong, 2008: 38). In brief, death becomes most important aspect in Toraja.

This ritual seems also to influence Christians, in which the teaching and old

religion (*Aluk to dolo*) of *Mantunu tedong* blended with Christians values. Unfortunately, there are only a small groups who are still faithful to the Christian teaching. While, this situation has a noticeable impact of custom that influenced some Torajan people there is also a shift in people's behavior in the twentieth century, where those are educated and are knowledgeable, no longer want to bind it by this rules.

The ancestors' belief influences how the Torajan treat the body of those who are died; until they can perform the ARS people will keep the body in the house and treat them as if they still alive. This happens, for the Torajan considers the dead as one who's sick or sleep. They will provide food and drink; their family will always communicate to this body. Interestingly, the effect of tribal belief is still influenced for many Torajans; in the past, they gave slaughtering livestock offering base on the motivation according to get a blessing as a return. This motivation could be easily seen on the amount of killed livestock that is given; the greater amount is slaughtered animals, this expresses how worldly their motivations rather than Christian teachings.

Mantunu Tedong: The Buffaloes' Spirit

as the 'transportation' into *Marendeng*²

The most important ritual in the ARS is a livestock slaughtering: buffalo and pig. One's stratification will the number of animals that will be used a ceremony in Toraja, a minimum of 14 buffaloes and 50 pigs, without any maximal number which is determine by wealth of the family. In the ARS, the family slaughters most of this entire livestock offering. According to Kobong explains that Torajan in the past believe about correlation between human and ancestors.

"Offering has eschatology function in the life of Torajan. They believe in life after death relationship with people who live in this world and vice versa. Therefore, an offering is presented to maintain the relationship to gods (deata) and ancestors so that God will give more wealth, prosperity, and welfare (Kobong, 2008: 36)."

The tradition of tribal belief causes Torajans slaughter buffalo as a sacrifice to ensure the deceased man coming to "heaven". What are the motivations behind this perform? It is really interesting to know that in the Dutch colonial government period, the missionaries have tried to limit

certain aspects that have no relation to biblical teachings. However, the ARS had not experienced an inculturation process (Kobong, 2008: 49). On one hand, the recent situation is more attractive, since this ritual expresses also the increasing economic status in Toraja; the other hand, this demonstrated a decreasing spirituality, mainly in ethics. Consequently, this become a challenges for the churches mission in Toraja and this should be the important items in the church's agenda in order to find a good solution for the issue. Therefore, Torajan churches must exist as its confession; a church must reorganize their cultural order/rule according to the truth of the Bible.

Concerning Increasing the ARS in Toraja, the problematic within this ritual leads to a question: what kind of motivation or belief that influence their behavior, so that they bring a sacrifice of livestock in the death funerals? The following parts will try to elaborate some motivations behind the ritual:

1. Moral duty. Torajan feels that there is a strong obligation to provide livestock for they need to pay parents' funerals to repay their parents for their love and support over the years (Hollan & Wellenkamp, 1994: 83).

²*Marendeng*: eternal place or heaven,

sometime is called *puya*.

2. Religious motive. They believe that by slaughtering their livestock, the spirit of the dead will be happy in their after-death life, Torajans believe that there is the interaction between the living and the dead, and that the deceased will need the soul of buffalo for their special transportation. This means if the family slaughter many of buffaloes that will make their spirit quicker to arrive in heaven (Kobong, 2008: 52).
3. Prestige viewpoint. The family of a noble or a family from common class, who are very successful and prosperous in their life, perform ARS ceremony in a luxurious way to defend their family status and keep the name honorable; hence, when their parents past a way, they will not hesitate to spend a lot of money to achieve this objective (Hollan & Wellenkamp, 1994: 84).
4. Investment perspective. If a relative who is not from nucleus family dies, someone, like uncle, aunt or others, will bring a buffalo as an investment. Because there is always the obligation for a receiver to return

this investment at another time (Hollan & Wellenkamp, 1994: 86).

5. Togetherness. Since one of Torajan characteristics is a close relationship with extended family, when they return to their hometown, they always like to meet with many families from the region. Thus, they will delightly follow ARS ritual and present slaughtering livestock as solidarity because they are still a part of an extended family, and they want to show their existence to their society.

At present, most Torajans (either for Christians or not) still preserved some motivations above. Consequently, this motivation influences strongly Toraja's daily life, the existence of *mantunu tedong* proves this fact. This practice seems to become the live show that indirectly contaminated later Torajan generation. Why does this still happen? This situation clearly appears in almost in all villages. Because of a geographical condition, this ceremony is employed generally in a wide area and must be performed in the center of the village. This preferences is still reflected by old tradition principle, it happens especially when someone dies in the village. Still for people who are far from

their hometown, they have the more modern understanding and therefore they will try to obey rather than the tradition.

As the ARS tradition is so deeply embedded in the personality of Toraja's people, there is a demand for present Christianity to show the biblical value to Torajans and to appropriate acceptance of the meaning of Jesus as the sacrifice. For the Torajans the ARS has multiple meanings, more than just the funeral ceremony, and therefore, the Toraja's Church has significant rule to teach this fundamental doctrine to Christian Toraja.

Jesus as Perfect Sacrifice

Compare to the OT, the gospels present a new meaning about sacrifice; through the synoptic, we might see a diverse description regarding Jesus' death (e.g., forgiveness, salvation and mediator). Therefore, for the authors of the gospels considers the death of Jesus is necessary not only to redeem his people, but also to sacrifice himself for a new covenant (cf. Mk 14:24, Mt 26:28, Lk 22:19,³ Jn 1:29,

19:31). Further, Macleod reminds that in the last supper, the blood was always treated separately in the sacrificial liturgy, because Jesus saw his death as, in the most formal sense, as a sacrifice (Macleod, 2014: 24). To explain the meaning of his death that's is his sacrifice, Jesus appropriates the content of the imagery of paschal lamb, and in order to speak of the redemptive power of God related to his covenant, (Head, 1995: 113). Calvin comments on John 1:29 to explain that the death of Christ is ultimate and final for man's sin:

The chief office of Christ is explained briefly but clearly. By taking away the sins of the world by the sacrifice of His death, He reconciles men to God....therefore, John, putting Christ forward, bears witness that He is the Lamb of God; by which he means that whatever sacrificial victims the Jews used offer under the Law had no power at all to atone for sins, but were figures whose reality was revealed in Christ Himself.⁴

Finally, the gospels, confirms that Jesus new covenant, his death provides the link to

³Here Luke clearly presents the last supper as a Passover meal and describes traditional rituals (Head, 1995, 117). Luke describes the death of Jesus as a sacrifice parallel as a new Passover meal. In contrary, according to Beck he believes that Christ's death is like a martyr's action. Therefore, it is not suitable to be called as a sacrifice as in the Old Testament. Similar to Beck, Biviano also assessed that in the context of early Christian tradition, the

early Christian martyrs clearly saw themselves following the example of Jesus and actively willed to accept their fate with the profound sense of surrender. However, Macleod clearly denied this view, he thinks that the death of Christ is neither martyrdom nor tragedy, but the climactic act of his obedience. The main mission of Christ's sacrifice is to redeem the chosen people from the status of sinful mankind.

⁴Calvin's commentary on John 1:29

the prophecy of OT prophets and the messages of NT apostles. Christ's death become means for fulfilling the old testament promises and displaces the old covenant and to the new covenant (Beckwith, 1995: 123). The Gospels claim that Jesus himself guarantees that through his death (through his blood), the people of God will receive salvation and redemption (cf. 1 Pt 1:18-19). Because of his sacrifice, Jesus sanctifies himself and he devotes himself to God; the effect of this is that we are sanctified and become devoted to God. Jesus' sacrifice makes us new people of God (Burger, 2014: 59).

The Doctrine of Jesus as sacrifice also important in the the NT letters, for example Paul to the Corinthians about cross of the Christ in order to connect the original understanding about Passover that is a remembrance of the Israel's salvation from the land of Egypt (Ex 12:14, cf., 1 Cor 5:7; 2 Cor 5:21). That God delivered his people from Egypt illustrate the deliverance from sin and evil, and the means used for this is his own son blood, protecting us from the death and evil (Young, 1975: 67). The OT sacrificial system has been renewed by the death of Jesus, through his death he redeems the mankind sin. Paul emphasizes on Ephesians (1:7, 5:2) that Christ has made the perfect sacrifice that cleanses the sins of humankind (Morris 1993, 856). At same time, it is clear that his sacrifice for God,

not only for replacing our position, and set us free, brings new exodus (Burger, 2014: 57). Correspondingly, Paul teaches the Romans to present their body as a living sacrifice. The believers should give honor Christ's sacrifice to the world as ultimate sacrifice beside all human ritual sacrifice in the world (cf. Rom 12:1).

In Paul's letter to the Romans (5:10) he teaches believers how to understand the meaning of his sacrifice by comparing Jesus and Adam. Jesus in his role as the second Adam has a function as a mediator to reconcile between God and humankind whose tread God as their enemy. Christ is, indeed, a perfect man who enables to pay the death penalty intended to man. Therefore Christ's incarnate to be a means of propitiation. Nonetheless, explains that sacrifice and salvation have conquered the power of the Devil, that way the power of the Devil is defeated. This arguments suggest broader perspective (Treat, 2014: 205). Treat's view remind us about classics of atonement from patristic period, which had a significant role in Christian today, mainly for Christians in Toraja. This teaching emphasizes the saving of his people from the devil, which his sacrifice was defeated had broken the power of evil (Jn 12:31).

Therefore man who has believed in Jesus is justified by his death, does not have any reason to give animal offering, which is

influenced by cultural tradition (cf. Rom 3:21-26). Here, Paul apparently states that the sacrifices customary in the Jewish tradition were not available to fulfill human needs for cleansing human sin; there is only one human-God and that could be a perfect sacrifice by which God is recognized (Morris, 1993: 857).

Moreover, In Romans 3:25, Paul explains that ‘God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood’ (NIV). Paul speaks about righteousness from God for all humankind. In the preceding chapters Paul argues that both Jews and gentiles are guilty before God. Similar to Jesus’ teaching in the Gospels, which explain the relationship of his death with the rites of Passover in OT and the Last Supper, Paul has a similar understanding. Jesus is considered to fulfill the Passover sacrifice with two features: blood and flesh. Hence, through the Lord’s Last Supper, the believers could learn about his sacrifice. Calvin further comments, “By mentioning blood alone he did not mean to exclude other parts of redemption, but rather to include the whole of it in a single word, and he mentioned the blood, in which we are washed. Thus, the whole of our expiation is denoted by taking a part for the whole”.⁵ Therefore, propitiation occurs due to a sacrifice, where Christ has taken our

place as a sinful man, in which the broken relationship between the sinner and God is restored. And the redemption is the fruit and result of his death. Calvin also writes, ‘He offered as sacrifice the flesh he received from us, that he might wipe out our guilty by his act of expiation and appease the Father’s righteous wrath’ Calvin commentary significant for the church, because his explanation gives a coherency and balance to look the fact that the sacrifice of Christ has a broad impact for relationships between God and men, and through his death, man is justified and becomes atoning for our sin and the whole world (cf. 1 Jn 2:2).

The metaphors used to describe Christ’s sacrifice on the cross play an important role to the NT writers, whom are inspired by the Holy Spirit. Yet, it is important to notice that these images are used in accordance with certain contexts. In addition, the authors of the letter to the Hebrews, describes Jesus’ office mainly as a high priest who is greater and more perfect than any other priest in the world (9:5). He has entered to the most holy room in the temple by giving his own blood. His sacrifice purifies the sinful heart of mankind (9:14), Roger says:

“Here, as in the teaching of our Lord (Mark 7:1-23) and Paul (2 Cor. 6:14-

⁵Calvin’s Commentary on Rom 3:25.

7:1), we see the ceremonial cleanness and uncleanness of the Old Testament ritual being replaced by moral cleanness and uncleanness, uncleanness and sin are connected ideas in the Old Testament, but in the New Testament they are actually identified: the true uncleanness is sin, so the atoning sacrifice of Christ, which deals with sin deals with uncleanness to (Beckwith, 1995:133)."

Roger's comment the OT teaching of Day of Atonement. He is probably correct that the virtue of Christ has leads him to be as the perfect victim, who is sufficient to give redemption to all people. That OT sacrifices cannot surpass the blood shedding on the cross. Make the author of Hebrews (10:4) states: "Because it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins." Through his blood we are sanctified, the implication of this teachings is explain in 9:15. It seems the author tries to connect the OT sacrifice rituals, which Jews can easily understand, to the effectiveness of Jesus' death.

This could be good example showing an effort to appropriate the process implementation Christian teaching in difference context, especially for Torajans. The Jews' understanding about sacrifice becomes an effective tools to *reapply* the understanding about Christ's atonement in

new culture. Christ offered his live on the cross as the final sacrifice for man's sin, so that the sacrifice of Christ will reconciles men with God, and reconciliation is permanent (cf., Calvin's commentary on Acts 13:39). Moreover Burger says, the effect of his offer shows that he makes people truly new and removes every trace of sin in their hearts or conscience (Burger, 2014:58). Those teachings probably becomes the answer for Torajans struggle with ritual of *Mantunu Tedong*. Because the offering in this ritual could be uses to describe Christ's death as the perfect sacrifice.

Appropriating the Doctrine Jesus as a Sacrifice to *Mantunu Tedong* in ARS

Christians need to appropriate the slaughtering of livestock in Toraja's culture in a proper way. There is a reasonable possibility to appropriate the Christian teachings to this ritual. The central point of their belief may be appropriated and used to share the gospel message. In the past, they have received a tradition that the deceased will need the soul of water Buffalo as a special transportation. Based on this tradition, in 1981, the Synod of Toraja has shown their response to answer the question around the ARS' questions (see PIGT 'The Confession of faith in Church Synod of Toraja, note 8). According to Kobong, the Confession stated that the salvation and a

peace of us now and later not depend on the offerings; such as livestock offering, work, goodness and our integrity. People's sin is only solved before God only by Jesus' sacrifice. In addition, this confession explicitly emphasizes that Toraja's church has explained how important to make the proper appropriation of Christ as the sacrifice by improving their ways of thinking about their ancestors.

Unfortunately, according to Kobong, many churches in Toraja have lost their control over Christian attitude in 1990's. The Synod's decision has not effectively affected the most of congregation's faith, in contrast, they are apparently more influenced by the modernity (Kobong, 2008:322). Those who decide to be faithful in their Christian tradition, they will consistently be critical to their culture. Of course, their belief will influence explains about the personality and influences their family both in positive and in a negative way. Contrarily, those who neglect the doctrine of Christ work, they will easily return to follow their ritual; this causes syncretism in the church of Toraja. What is more? The second group, In fact, is much than the first, and we can see them easily in church and society. Therefore, we have to be careful when making an appropriation; as Kobong says: "... According to Christianity, an essential structure of ARS practice is similar everywhere. People not

gives an offering to ancestor anymore, but the pastor will explain based on the Bible, which is about Christ atoning and call them to believe. ARS principal as offering ritual to the ancestor has been replaced by a state of being a true hope message by the church (Kobong, 2008:314)." This statement proved that there is a shift belief in Torajan; on one side, although the contextual movement in church of Toraja is weak and slow, on the other side, it still has given positive effect to their experience of community.

Nevertheless, this effort could be dangerous if it is not maintained and preserved in every aspect of the Church. A syncretism become a real issue that is hard to be identify. Moreover, although recently most of Torajan do not believe in the ancestor teaching about the buffalo as "special transportation", there is still a problem in an ethical perspective. Many Torajan are still loyal own culture rather than Christian values. Torajan's show a spirit of hedonism by performing animal slaughtering, only for temporal aim and a provisional pleasure. They also do not care about the negative effect of their behavior, there is a tension between Christ and culture life. On the other hand, their willingness to sacrifice seems not to reflect the Christian identity; this will eventually disposes the understanding of Jesus as true sacrifice with culture. However, as a

Christian, we need to have a sober live and need to learn seeing life from a perspective of eternity. It is likely most Torajans are still bound with culture rather than the Christian teachings, and therefore, they still try to give an animal sacrifice, which is not primary in Christian live.

This situation depicts how important for Christian to understand the Christian teaching within their culture. They probably live in a tension between a Christianity and culture. Thus, it is a question how to develop a better understanding within the torajan that they could deal ARS ceremony, which is expensive. The previous missionaries who work in Toraja historically have tried to help the people to manage their ritual in a better way without spending so much money. While Christianity teaches that God's offer in Christ is a gift, and teaches us to offer our life as a thank offering to God. All Torajans need to reflect this teaching so that they will not only give their possessions as a sacrifice but to dedicate their life to God (Burger, 2014:65).

The process will be long and probably difficult. Not many people maintained the Christian teaching that is taught by the missionary that people to be critical of the tribal custom like ARS. People now live in the city and their families are well educated and inherit a good faith. Hence, they learn to places

Christ above culture and do not let themselves once again be contaminated with cultural customs. Additionally, they have to be aware that their identity as Torajan is unique, but they also need to become a Christian-Torajan. This kind of people will see Christ as God and man who was incarnated in human culture and society as an example of their calling to live in the world. This is what Niebuhr has said about *conversionist* type (Niebuhr, 1952: 43).

Also, they should improve their understanding of the concept of the death and live. Some people have changes their attitude and behavior regarding the dead. They do not speak to those who already passed away and do not give any food and drink anymore because they know that there is no relationship between the dead and the living. They have learnt to preserve a culture in the light of God's truth. They often reject investment motivation to death funeral and usually they no longer keep the dead body. With consideration of their health and moral duty, this behavior tends to be more simple, efficient and economics.

Many families now a day, also make an adjustment, they apparently do not give priority to funerals rule anymore and performs only three days for mourning. They also change the term used to call the ritual from ARS to mourning service. The church takes much responsible for this

service from the beginning to the finish. In the recent day, it is common to see a particular service one day after the burial in the Toraja. This service performed as a request from the family to express their thankful to God and peoples who has been helping. In my opinion, the church succeeds in teaching the Torajan to apply the mourning service in a proper way. This situation was reflecting the change of belonging of Christian-Toraja.

They find their identity as Christian and learn to be flexible in applying Toraja culture. Sometimes, the situation like this becomes a trend in Toraja village because they see that nothing happens when one family does not follow the ARS but employ church rule. We should appreciate those people who teach the Torajan; they will an acknowledged God-servant in which God works effectively through their unstoppable love for Torajan. Anton Loosdirect is a good missionaries showing this kind of people.

Evaluation to the *Mantunu Tedong* in the ARS

The concept death in Toraja significantly influences the life orientation Torajan in every aspect. In fact, we can use the sacrifice concept in a Torajan ancestor to appropriate the Bible teaching about Jesus as a sacrifice. However, we have to be careful and to consider the various effect, backgrounds and concerns behind the

culture. Paul has shown that believers need to be aware that culture could lead to syncretism. Hence, it this necessary to propose some suggestions for Christian Torajans. While *mantunu tedong* in ARS could be applied as an analogy to teach the gospel, Christians should correctly interpret the notion of Christ as human sacrifice and then contextualize it in a local culture.

The *mantunu tedong* should not become the highest series in ARS ritual. In this case, Christian values should give more attention to people identity, at where Christian lives. At the same time, this will avoid inappropriate motivation regarding people's obedience to traditional rule. Peays explains: "Christian funerals should include a celebration and appreciation of life, an acknowledgment of Christ work on the cross as the conquering of death, and the hope and assurance of the deceased's ascension into heaven with God forever (Peays, 2007:209-210)." He may be correct, that there is a different context for understanding the mourning service. Yet I suggest that Torajan should not try to remove *mantunu tedong* from the ARS, but they could reinterpret their tradition in light biblical teaching that they will be free from a traditional custom rule that is not always in accord with biblical teaching (cf. 1 Cor. 5:17, Col. 3:10).

Thus, the church has a significant role in educating the Christian values in Torajan

society. For example, every family should ask advice from the church (i.e. the pastor) before they perform the ARS ritual. Another example, the churches in Toraja should implement the teaching about atonement in a context of funerals so that it could reduce the extravagance of the ceremony practice.

The author has to explain that situation would become a threat if the influence of ancestor tradition is stronger in Torajan mindset instead of church teaching. This situation may encourage directly Christian to syncretism and destroy those who is lack faith. Colijn correct when encourages the important to make intercultural appropriation, he states: "A believer or a church receives and interprets the Word of God for their own cultural and religious context, forming an image of the past, present, and future, that in turn shapes the self-- image and Identity in their own context",⁶ This method should be practiced wisely. Thus, the culture and Christians teaching in Toraja can be applied in a similar way to what Niebuhr says: in paradoxical manners (Niebuhr, 1952:150). In this case, culture should not influence the Christian faith, yet, it should be controlled by Christian teaching, which should influence our belief, our behavior, and our belonging and experience. In this sense, the

Christian teaching becomes objective truth, including for every object in cultural studies; because the reformed theology should lead the believers to spiritual devotion, effective service, and missionary activity, we should also pay attention to all aspect of humanity including our human culture and identity.

Conclusion

The understanding of Christ's atoning sacrifice for humankind is the core of church mission. This mission has clearly and widely become the primary aspect of the Christianity in Toraja. Therefore, it is important to have a proper understanding of this teaching for believers and to apply it in daily life. Hopefully, Torajan will be able to get a free life as a new covenant without a boundary of useless ancestor tradition that contradicts to the Bible.

Livestock slaughtering such as buffalo in ARS should be preserved and should have a limitation. The Christian values must become fundamental motivation for Torajan in practicing funerals rite. While the death funerals could help to appropriate the understanding of Christ's as a sacrifice, God must be above all. Contextualization should be performed correctly that it may glorify God.

⁶Class Lecturers

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