

Toward a Constructive Discourse on “Christology of *Tuak-Tempayan*”

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Abstract

The focus of this study is to engage in constructive discourse on an article entitled —Christology of *Tuak-Tempayan*, published in the Journal of *Studia Philosophica et Theologica* Vol. 24, No. 2, 2024. This study uses a qualitative literature method. The constructive discourse on that article focuses on two main issues: theological problems and the application of phenomenological research methods. —Christology of *Tuak-Tempayan* as a matter of fact can be a contextual Christology. To make this happen, this study suggests that the phenomenon of *tuak-tempayan* be used as a tool for socio-ecological reflection in the context of the Dayak tribe rather than as a Christological category.

Keywords: Phenomenon of *Tuak-Tempayan*; Theology; Phenomenological Method; Socio-ecological issues.

Abstrak

Fokus dari penelitian ini ingin melakukan diskursus konstruktif terhadap sebuah artikel dengan judul —Kristologi *Tuak-Tempayan*, yang terbit di Jurnal *Studia Philosophica et Theologica* Vol. 24, No. 2, 2024. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif studi pustaka. Diskursus konstruktif atas artikel itu berfokus pada dua isu pokok: problem teologis dan penerapan metode penelitian fenomenologi. —Kristologi *Tuak-Tempayan* seyogianya dapat menjadi sebuah kristologi yang kontekstual. Agar hal itu bisa terwujud, penelitian ini menawarkan agar fenomena *tuak-tempayan* menjadi alat untuk refleksi sosio-ekologikal dalam konteks suku Dayak ketimbang sebagai sebuah kategori Kristologis.

Kata Kunci: Fenomena *Tuak-Tempayan*; Teologi; Metode Fenomenologi; Isu sosio-ekologikal

1. Introduction

The Journal of *Studia Philosophica et Theologica* Vol. 24, No. 2, 2024, features an article titled —Christology of *Tuak-Tempayan*: Christological Endeavors in the Land of

Western Borneo.¹ This article is the result of research by Fr. Fransiskus Nong Budi (hereinafter Father Budi) conducted at St. Maria Bunda Allah Parish, Nanga Mahap, Sanggau Diocese. Through his research, he aims to use the phenomenon of *tuak-tempayan* as a means to understand and explain to the faithful about Jesus Christ, who possesses both divine and human natures. About Jesus Christ who is truly God, truly human. The main purpose of using this cultural phenomenon as a means is to deepen the faith of the Catholic community in Nanga Mahap Parish, and to make the mystery of faith more accessible and relevant to their daily lives.

In theology by taking the local wisdom of the Dayak people as a point of departure, what Father Budi has done is one of several efforts that have been made. For example, Yohanes Endi et al. discussed the relationship between the Catholic faith and the tradition of the death ceremony (*Kanjan Serayong*) among the Pesaguan Dayak tribe in Ketapang. One of the points they emphasized in their discussion was that the event of death, both in the Catholic Church and in the Pesaguan Dayak community, reveals a high sense of togetherness, support and solidarity among members of the community.¹ There is also Fransesco Agnes Ranubaya et. al, who tried contextualize Karl Rahner's Theology of Hope in the implementation of the *Naik Dango* (*Gawai Dayak*) traditional ceremony in the Dayak Kanayatn tribe. The *Naik Dango* tradition is a symbol of gratitude and hope for the Dayak Kanayatn people. Using the perspective of Karl Rahner's Theology of Hope, they see that the *Naik Dango* tradition is not only a cultural celebration, but also a concrete expression of the faith and hope of the Dayak Kanayatn people in the Creator.² In the context of the Dayak Bahau tribe, East Kalimantan, Agustinus Masterinus Laka Meko and Nani Indah Lestari use the *Hudoq*/*Hudoq* dance tradition in an effort to invite humans to reflect and reconstruct their religious identity in the face of the increasing ecological crisis.³ The concept of the Divine is often not easy for the faithful to understand. To help them understand it, concepts that are already alive in a local community are used. This was done by Stepanus Angga and Fabianus Rikardus who used the concept of *Jahtah Mohotarak* in the Dayak Uud Danum tribe to understand the concept of the Divine in the Christian faith.⁴

In the case of Fr. Budi, it looks a bit different, especially in terms of the selection of cultural elements used in helping the faithful understand the person of Jesus Christ. As a person who was born and raised in Dayak culture, to be honest, the author is amazed by the creativity of his imagination to think of using that kind of phenomenon as a means to explain the mystery of Christian faith. He seems to be simply trying to put into practice what the Second Vatican Council taught that, —*The diversity of human cultures can truly be a field for the Church to spread and elaborate the message of Christ, to explore and deepen it*.⁵

¹Yohanes Endi et al., Pesaguan Dayak Kanjan Serayong Custom: The Relationship between Catholic Faith and Culture. *Millah: Journal of Religious Studies*, Vol. 23, No. 2 (2024). <https://doi.org/10.20885/millah.vol23.iss2.art1>.

² Fransesco Agnes Ranubaya et al., Teologi Harapan Karl Rahner dan Tradisi Naik Dango Dayak Kanayatn, *Aggiornamento: Jurnal Filsafat Teologi Kontekstual*, Vol. 5, No. 1 (2024). <https://jurnalaggiornamento.id/index.php/amt/article/view/131/50>.

³ Agustinus Masterinus Laka Meko and Nani Indah Lestari, Religiusitas Tradisi Hudoq – Dayak Bahau dan Krisis Ekologis dalam Perspektif Laudato Si, *Perspektif, Jurnal Agama dan Budaya*, Vol.17, No. 2 (2022). <https://doi.org/10.69621/jpf.v17i2.166>.

⁴ Stepanus Angga and Fabianus Rikardus, Berteologi Kontekstual dalam Budaya Dayak Uud Danum dalam Memaknai Yang Ilahi Perspektif Iman Kristiani, *Borneo Review: Jurnal Lintas Agama dan Budaya*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (2023). <https://doi.org/10.52075/br.v2i2>.

⁵ Cf. GS, 58.

Fr. Budi's effort using the local wisdom of the Dayak people as a starting point is certainly worthy of appreciation. Nevertheless, the author opines that the effort to incorporate elements or symbols of local culture as a means of evangelization must be done carefully. It must be carefully considered whether this effort will truly lead the faithful to "grow in the knowledge of God" (Col 1:10), or conversely, make them confused in their faith, like the disciples who, after hearing Jesus' words about the Bread of Life, "turned back and no longer followed Him" (Jn 6:66).

Fr. Budi's research which links the phenomenon of *tuak-tempayan* with Christological dogma has the potential to obscure the recognition and understanding of the faithful regarding Jesus Christ. For that reason, the author finds it is necessary to carry out a constructive discussion toward the "christology" that he is trying to develop. Are those cultural elements, especially *rampang tuak*, truly worthy to be used as a means to understand and explain the great mystery of Christ? Does it truly enhance the understanding of the faith of the believers as Fr. Budi hopes? What is its relevance for the transformation of the community's life?

For the sake of generating a constructive discourse, this paper will focus on two central issues: theological problems and the application of phenomenological research method. By basing itself on Church teaching documents and related literatures, this article demonstrates the very close relationship between theology, the ecclesiastical vocation of a theologian, and the communion of the Church. A reality that seems to have been overlooked by Fr. Budi in conducting his research. Fr. Budi uses phenomenological research methods in analyzing the phenomenon of *tuak-tempayan*. This article shows the discrepancy between the purpose and the results of the research as he extends the search for the meaning of the *tuak-tempayan* phenomenon to the understanding of the dogma of Christology. Using this cultural phenomenon as a means to understand and explain the two natures in Jesus is likely to lead to confusing interpretations. For the sake of creating a contextual-constructive interpretation, this article offers that the phenomenon of *tuak-tempayan* be used as a 'scalpel' of humanitarian issues and ecological crises in the land of Kalimantan.

The discussion of this article will be presented in several points. First, the author will represent the core idea of Christology of *Tuak-Tempayan* initiated by Fr. Budi. Next, the author will explain what constitutes constructive discourse on this idea. There are four points that the author will present as a form of discussion: 1) Theology, interpretation of dogma and the communion of the Church, 2) A brief discussion on *rampang tuak*, 3) The phenomenological research method in contextual theology, and 4) The phenomenon of *tuak-tempayan* serves as a tool for analyzing socio-ecological issues in the land of Kalimantan.

2. Research Method

This paper will use the qualitative literature study method in conducting its constructive discourse. It uses library studies to examine Church documents and literature, particularly those related to the understanding of theology, the ecclesiastical calling of a theologian, and the interpretation of dogma. Also literatures related to the application of phenomenological research methods in conducting contextual theology.

3. Result and Discussion

3.1 Christology of *Tuak-Tempayan*

The tradition of *nyuling tuak* became the origin of the "Christology of *Tuak-Tempayan*" initiated by Fr. Budi. This tradition is still alive in some Dayak tribes, including the Dayak tribe of Nanga Mahap, the site of his research. Before getting into the main idea of his

"christology," let us first see what the function of this tradition in the life of the Dayak people is exactly.

Before discovering Fr. Budi's writing in the Journal of *Studia Philosophica et Theologica*, the author always thought that the tradition of *nyuling tuak* had no special function other than for traditional celebrations, such as Gawai Dayak, or for church and religious celebrations, such as the Ordination of Priests, the Anniversary of the Priesthood, the Church Anniversary, and so on. The author thinks so because once when attending the Mass of Priestly Ordination in Sepauk Parish, Sintang Diocese, the ordination committee held a *nyuling tuak* event. The author's thinking was apparently incorrect. From Fr. Budi's research, the author comes to know that initially, *tuak-tempayan* was produced by the Dayak people solely for the sake of *adat*.⁶ The same intention is also found among the Dayak Seberuang tribe in Sepauk District. Among this tribe, during a traditional wedding ceremony, the groom is required to prepare a large jar. This jar will later be given to the bride. And this jar is the one that must be used in the *nyuling tuak* ceremony.⁷

How then from the tradition of *nyuling tuak* was born a —christology‖ is certainly interesting to explore. The Dayak understanding of *tempayan* seems to have had a very strong influence on the birth of the idea of "Christology of *Tuak-Tempayan*". He notes that jar is used in the *adat pati* and also in the *adat nikah*. In both customs, the jar becomes a representation of the human body.⁸ Storing valuables (rice, *tuak*, self-defense weapons) is another function of the *tempayan* that he noted.⁹ He also noted about the Bishops in Kalimantan who included the *tempayan* in their episcopal coat of arms.¹⁰

Seeing the important function of the jar in the life of the Dayak people and even included by some Bishops in their episcopal symbols, he came to the conclusion that the jar is the body of Christ. Since the jar has been interpreted as the body of Christ, the *tuak* in it (*tuak-tempayan*) can be a means to explain the divinity of Christ. Meanwhile, *rampang* can be a means to explain the humanity of Christ.¹¹ The reality of divinity (*Tuak-Tempayan*), according to him, is a dimension that is "concealed in reality", in human reality (*Rampang*). This concealed reality, he says, can only be known through the experience of encounter. Drinking *tuak-tempayan* by sucking it with blowpipe (*sumpit bambu*) is then interpreted by him as an experience of encounter.¹² The Dayak understanding of *sumpit* also influenced the birth of his —christology". *Sumpit bambu* is an important part of *nyuling tuak*. Without it, one would not be able to drink *tuak-tempayan*. Therefore, it is called *nyuling tuak* because *sumpit* is used to drink it.

Sucking *tuak* from the jar with *sumpit* will not work unless it is mixed with water. This act of mixing with water also contributed to the birth of "Christology of *Tuak-Tempayan*". Fr. Budi sees it as an action similar to what the priest does during the rite of preparation of offerings, when the priest mixes water and wine while saying: "By the mystery of this water and wine may we come to share in the divinity of Christ who humbled himself to share in our

⁶ Fransiskus Budi Nong, —Christology of *Tuak-Tempayan*: Christological Endeavors in the Land of Western Borneo‖, *Jurnal Studia Philosophica et Theologica* Vol. 24, No. 2 (2024), 203. <https://doi.org/10.35312/spet.v24i2.682>.

⁷ The author got this information from a friend who is come from Dayak Seberuang tribe via WhatsApp (December 3, 2024).

⁸ Fransiskus Budi Nong, 204-205.

⁹ Fransiskus Budi Nong, 205.

¹⁰ Fransiskus Budi Nong, 207-208.

¹¹ Fransiskus Budi Nong, 208.

¹² Fransiskus Budi Nong, 208-209.

humanity. From the similarity of this action, he said, —*I arrive at a contextual phenomenological belief that Tuak-Tempayan in the sub-subgroup customary practices of the Dayak in the Nanga Mahap region has the potential to be interpreted in a Christological manner for catechesis.*¹³

3.2 Areas of Constructive Discourse

3.2.1 Theology, Interpretation of Dogma and Communion of the Church

Let us return for a moment to the title Fr. Budi's article, "Christology of *Tuak-Tempayan*: Christological Endeavors in the Land of West Borneo". From that title there can be no doubt that he is theologizing. Moreover, the subject of his paper is Christology, one of the branches of dogmatic theology, which, along with Trinitarian theology and Pneumatology, are three treatises that focus on the Triune God Himself as the source of human salvation.¹⁴ Since he is theologizing, and his mode of theologizing seems to ignore what is the purpose of theology and what is the vocation of a theologian, let us see what the Catholic Church teaches about these two things. For this purpose, the instruction *Donum Veritatis* (1990) of the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith and the document *Theology Today: Perspectives, Principles and Criteria* (2012), published by the International Theological Commission, will be my main references.

The second chapter of the document of the International Theological Commission is entitled "*Abide in the Communion of the Church*". In explaining the title, the commission says,

—*The proper place for theology is within the Church, which is gathered together by the Word of God. The ecclesiality of theology is a constitutive aspect of the theological task, because theology is based on faith, and faith itself is both personal and ecclesial. The revelation of God is directed towards the convocation and renewal of the people of God, and it is through the Church that theologians receive the object of their enquiry.*¹⁵

The point of the above statement is to show how closely related theology and the Church are. There is a close relationship between the two because "*theology is based on faith, and faith itself is both personal and ecclesial*". And that "*the revelation of God is directed to the convocation and renewal of the people of God*" further emphasizes the close relationship between theology and the Church. Referring to this relationship, Joseph Ratzinger says in *The Nature and Mission of Theology* that theology aims at building up the Church, the People of God. Theology is never the personal idea of a theologian. The Church, as a living subject that survives amid all the changes of time, becomes a vital field for a theologian.¹⁶ This is also emphasized in the encyclical *Lumen Fidei* (The Light of Faith):

—Theology is more than simply an effort of human reason to analyse and understand, along the lines of the experimental sciences. God cannot be reduced to an object. He is a subject who makes himself known and perceived in an interpersonal relationship. Right faith orients reason to open itself to the light which comes from God, so that reason, guided by love of the truth, can come to a deeper knowledge of God. The great medieval theologians and teachers rightly held that theology, as a science of faith, is a participation in God's own knowledge of himself. It is not just our discourse about God, but first and foremost the acceptance and the pursuit of a deeper understanding of the word which God speaks to us, the word which God

¹³ Fransiskus Budi Nong, 208.

¹⁴ Nico Syukur Dister, *Teologi Sistemika I* (Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 2004), 28.

¹⁵ https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/cti_documents/rc_cti_doc_20111129_tologia-oggi_en.html.

¹⁶ Joseph Ratzinger, *The Nature and Mission of Theology* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1995), 153-155.

speaks about himself, for he is an eternal dialogue of communion, and he allows us to enter into this dialogue. Theology thus demands the humility to be ‘touched’ by God, admitting its own limitations before the mystery, while striving to investigate, with the discipline proper to reason, the inexhaustible riches of this mystery.¹⁷

Theology lives in unity with the Church and has a function of service to the Church.¹⁸ In *Lumen Fidei* it says,

Theology also shares in the ecclesial form of faith; its light is the light of the believing subject which is the Church. This implies, on the one hand, that theology must be at the service of the faith of Christians, that it must work humbly to protect and deepen the faith of everyone, especially ordinary believers.¹⁹

We have seen what theology and what its purpose is. Now we want to move on to what constitutes the ecclesiastical vocation of theologian. In the quote from the document *Theology Today* above, we find the following statement, —...and it is through the Church that theologians receive the object of their enquiry.²⁰ This statement leads us to an understanding of what constitutes the ecclesiastical vocation of theologian. The instruction *Donum Veritatis* specifically addresses that ecclesiastical calling. The description of it can be found in Section II (nos. 6-12).²⁰

The Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith outlines several key points that theologians must pay attention to in fulfilling their calling. *First*, communion with the Magisterium. Theologians carry out their ecclesiastical vocation in communion with the Magisterium, which has been entrusted with the responsibility of preserving the heritage of faith.²¹ *Second*, discernment is needed. When? Specifically when theology uses elements and conceptual tools from philosophy and other disciplines. The task of theology is to understand the meaning of revelation. In order to understand this, the Dicastery emphasizes the need for the use of philosophical concepts that provide a true and solid understanding of humanity, the world, and God.²² *Third*, a theologian is also a member of the People of God. Because they are members of the People of God, theologians must cultivate respect for them and commit to offering teachings that do not in any way endanger the doctrine of faith.²³ A theologian must truly realize that he is "within a community of believers, namely the Church." Apart from the Church, he cannot do theology.²⁴ Because they are part of the community of believers, even though they have their own styles in theology and often grapple with challenging issues, they do not express personal beliefs, but rather become spokesmen for the community of believers.²⁵

Dogma of Christology is the main topic of Fr. Budi's writing. He uses the phenomenon of *tuak-tempayan* as a means to understand and explain the Second Person of the Trinity, who

¹⁷*Lumen Fidei*, 36. Dikutip oleh Tracey Rowland, *Catholic Theology* (London: Bloomsbury, 2017), 121.

¹⁸Riki M. Baruwarso, —Teologi, Gereja dan Magisterium, in Riki M. Baruwarso (ed.), *Mempertanyakan Magisterium Dinamika Pemahaman Kuasa Mengajar Gereja* (Jakarta: Obor, 2015), 194.

¹⁹*Lumen Fidei*, 36.

²⁰https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_19900524_theologian-vocation_en.html.

²¹*Donum Veritatis*, no. 6.

²²*Donum Veritatis*, no. 10.

²³*Donum Veritatis*, no. 11.

²⁴Berthold Anton Pareira, —Apakah Teologi itu? in Robert Pius Manik et al (eds.), *Berteologi Baru untuk Indonesia* (Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 2020), xxii.

²⁵John Macquarrie, *Principles of Christian Theology* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1966), 2.

is truly God and truly man. Through his efforts, he has acted in interpreting dogma. His goal is truly very noble, —*to deepen the faith of Catholics in Nanga Mahap, making the mysteries of faith more accessible and relevant to their daily lives*!.²⁶ However, does his action heed the Church's teaching on the interpretation of dogma itself? The International Theological Commission in the document *The Interpretation of Dogma* (1989), reminding of several fundamental things that must be taken into consideration when interpreting dogma, —*One may not then sever them from their context in the life of the Church and interpret them in a purely conceptual manner. The meaning and interpretation of dogmas is more a matter of redemptive value; they are to guard the family of the Church against error, heal its wounds, and serve the growth of living faith*!.²⁷

The author opines that Fr. Budi, by linking the phenomenon of *tuak-tempayan* with Christology, has interpreted the dogma in a purely conceptual way. Thus, he overlooks a fundamental aspect of what was outlined by the commission above. That —*One may not then...interpret them in a purely conceptual manner*”. The most palpable example is when he attempts to explain in such a way how the experience of encountering the divine reality occurs. As mentioned above, the moment when a person drinks *tuak-tempayan* by sucking it through *sumpit* is when the experience of encounter takes place. And the word "squeeze" seems to have a very important meaning for him.

—This reality can only be known through experience, which is daring to engage in a unique human encounter. Just as people will enjoy *Tuak-Tempayan* (or *Tuak fluid*) only by —squeezing! or —straining! it themselves through a *sumpit* by sucking it... —Squeezing! here is in another sense, namely through the available *sumpit*, people squeeze *tuak fluid* from *rampang* by sucking!.²⁸

At this point, to put it bluntly, his statement perplexes the author. To the best of the author's knowledge, as well as from the experience of attending the priestly ordination mass mentioned above, the *tuak* used for the *nyuling* ceremony is the one that has been squeezed from its *rampang*. He stated that —*people squeeze tuak fluid from rampang by sucking*!. That the word "squeeze" (*memeras*) here is used to describe the encounter between humans and the reality of divinity, for me, his opinion nonetheless still seems to imply that the *tuak* in the jar is the one that remains intact with its *rampang*. In the sub-tribes of the Dayak in Nanga Mahap, it might indeed be the case that the *nyuling tuak* ceremony uses unsqueezed *tuak*. However, it is also important for him to know that among other Dayak tribes, they use *tuak* that has already been squeezed from its *rampang* for the *nyuling tuak* ceremony. A knowledge that he should indeed possess. Moreover, he uses a phenomenological approach in elaborating his "christology." A methodological approach that provides him with a very broad opportunity to learn about the traditions of other Dayak sub-tribes besides those in the Nanga Mahap Parish. The failure to apply that method as well as possible resulted in an interpretation that seemed not based on the actual phenomenon. The original form of a cultural phenomenon seems to be neglected in order to make his "christology" in such a way seen logical.

There is still one matter the author would like to provide regarding the interpretation efforts of the Christological dogma based on the phenomenon of *tuak-tempayan*. When examining the bibliography of his writing, the author noticed that he used two books he wrote as sources of reference. If we look at the title, *ADA-ti-ADA: Sebuah Perjalanan*

²⁶ Fransiskus Budi Nong, 209.

²⁷https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/cti_documents/rc_cti_1989_interpretazione-dogmi_en.html.

²⁸ Fransiskus Budi Nong, 208-209.

Fenomenologis Bersama Heidegger and Temporalitas dan Keseharian: Perspektif Skedios Heidegger, these two books seem to both talk about Martin Heidegger. So, what is the connection between the reference to his two books and the interpretation of dogma? Let us return to the document *The Interpretation of Dogma*. In it, a main principle is emphasized that must be considered in making a theological interpretation. The main principle states that, —*As far as the theological problem of interpretation is concerned, the Church regards it as a first principle that the revealed truth which she teaches is universally valid and unchangeable in its substance*℥.²⁹

For the commission, that main principle brings consequences for the use of metaphysical hermeneutics, not reductionist hermeneutic³⁰ in theology. Why the metaphysical hermeneutics model? Thus the commission explains, —*Unlike the more or less reductionist positions mentioned so far, a metaphysical hermeneutic raises the question of the very truth of reality itself. This begins with the fact that the truth manifests itself in and by means of human intelligence in such a fashion that in the light of the intelligence the very truth of reality itself shines forth.*”³¹ Thomas G. Guarino in *The Unchanging Truth of God? Crucial Philosophical Issues for Theology* clarifies what the commission means. Since the Catholic Church asserts that its dogmatic teachings —*universally, definitively, and perpetually true*℥,³² accordingly —*metaphysics is helpful for defending the claims of the Catholic faith*℥.³³ Guarino in this case only wants to reiterate what was said by St. Pope John Paul II in the encyclical *Fides et ratio*. Regarding the type of philosophy that can fulfill the appropriate task of supporting the truth of divine revelation, Guarino presents the opinion of the Holy Father who says that —*philosophies with a “metaphysical horizon” are essential for theology*”.³⁴ He continued with the affirmation from the Holy Father that —*a philosophy which shuns metaphysics would be radically unsuited to the task of mediation in the understanding of Revelation*℥.³⁵

Metaphysical thought seeks some kind of substantial unity in history and culture. Metaphysics tends towards certainty, finality, and totality. Its characteristic is seeking the "foundation" or "first principle."℥.³⁶ These characteristics were certainly not of interest to Heidegger as an existentialist. The search for foundations for him actually causes science, including theology, to experience a crisis. Making theology "be in the corridor of darkness"℥.³⁷ Theology is experiencing a crisis because it is only busy with "textual debates and terminology that are far from everyday human life"℥.³⁸ In short, theology does not humanize human being. The crisis experienced by theology as articulated by Heidegger might be valid. That is why for those who seek a local-contextual theology, according to Guarino,

²⁹https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/cti_documents/rc_cti_1989_interpretazione-dogmi_en.html.

³⁰Positivist hermeneutics, anthropocentric hermeneutics, and cultural hermeneutics are models of hermeneutics that, in the eyes of the Commission, adopt a reductionist position.

³¹https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/cti_documents/rc_cti_1989_interpretazione-dogmi_en.html.

³² Thomas G. Guarino, *The Unchanging Truth of God? Crucial Philosophical Issues for Theology* (Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 2022), 13.

³³*Ibid.*

³⁴ *Fides et ratio*, no. 83. Thomas G. Guarino, 2

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ Thomas G. Guarino, *Foundations of Systematic Theology* (New York, T&T Clark, 2005), 79.

³⁷ Armada Riyanto, Berfilsafat —Being℥ and —Time℥ Martin Heidegger: Catatan Sketsa, *Jurnal Studia Philosophica et Theologica* Vol. 17, No. 1 (2017), 9. <https://doi.org/10.35312/spet.v17i1.35>.

³⁸ Armada Riyanto, 11.

Heidegger's emphasis on historicity becomes a unique attraction.³⁹ However, Guarino also reminded that,

—Neither thinker offers a philosophical —forml which can support the transcultural and transtemporal stability, universality, and material identity of Christian doctrine. In the language of *Fides et ratio*, neither thinker offers a philosophy which can fulfill the —*officium congruum*—the suitable office subserving divine revelation. On the contrary, their thought profoundly undermines Catholic doctrinal claims.⁴⁰

Guarino's statement above seems to address the issue related to Fr. Budi who refers to Heidegger. He uses the thoughts of a philosopher in examining a cultural phenomenon that he believes can serve as a means to understand and explain the Christological dogma, yet at the same time, the philosopher himself opposes the essence of the dogma, which the Church considers to have transcendental and universal significance. Author definitely does not mean to say that theology does not need philosophy. St. John Paul II in *Fides et Ratio* stating fervently that theology needs philosophy, —*to confirm the intelligibility and universal truth of its claims*.⁴¹ In the context of contextual christology that Fr. Budi is working on, the author just wants to reiterate what is stated in the document *Donum Veritatis*, that how necessary and important discernment is for a theologian. Theology, once again, has never been a personal idea of a theologian. In the Catechism of the Catholic Church, it is emphasized that there is an organic relationship between the spiritual life of the faithful and the dogmas. —*There is an organic connection between our spiritual life and the dogmas. Dogmas are lights along the path of faith; they illuminate it and make it secure. Conversely, if our life is upright, our intellect and heart will be open to welcome the light shed by the dogmas of faith*.⁴²

3.2.2 A Brief Discussion on *Rampang Tuak*

“*Rampang can be used as a technical term to explain the humanity of Jesus*.”⁴³ This opinion, for the matter of fact, shocked the author. The primary reason is because the author know quite well how Dayak people treat *rampang* (ampas) *tuak*. In author's village, for instance, it is usually processed into food. *Gawai Dayak* (harvest festival) is one of the moments where we can find this local menu.

To celebrate the Gawai Dayak festival, the Dayaknese usually make a large quantity of *tuak*. That means the amount of *rampang tuak* produced will also be quite a lot. Will everything be processed into food? Of course not. The leftovers from what wasn't cooked will be thrown away because they can't be stored for a long time. Sometimes, even the cooked *rampang* is not fully consumed. For this, it is not thrown away, but – really sorry to say – it is usually used as feed for livestock.

"*Rampang tuak* is usually cooked mixed with ferns, mixed with fish or pork, mixed with fermented fish/pork." That was the answer the author received when asked a member of the group messaging about how the Dayak people treat *rampang tuak*. The answer, of course, did not surprise the author because that is how the Dayak people usually treat *rampang*. However, the author still have to ask so that the appraisal of Fr. Budi's idea does not seem overly subjective. This group messaging⁴⁴ consists mostly of Dayak people from various

³⁹ Thomas G. Guarino, *The Unchanging Truth of God?*, 11.

⁴⁰ Thomas G. Guarino, 12. "Their" here refers to Heidegger and Gadamer.

⁴¹ *Fides et Ratio*, no. 77. Cited by Thomas G. Guarino, 2.

⁴² KGG, 89.

⁴³ Fransiskus Budi Nong, 208.

⁴⁴ —Literasi Dayakl Group.

regions in Kalimantan. Asking them becomes extremely important, because although we are all Dayak, in some aspects related to traditions and customs, we each have our own uniqueness.

Did Fr. Budi, during his pastoral work in the Nanga Mahap Parish, ever try to find out how the Dayak people treat *rampang tuak*? The author had no idea. The author just thinking, if only Fr. Budi had done research first, he certainly would not have hastily concluded that *rampang tuak* could be used as a means to explain the humanity of Christ.

3.2.3 Phenomenological Research Method in Doing Contextual Theology

Fr. Budi's research emerged from his pastoral experience in the Nanga Mahap Parish, Sanggau Diocese. During his pastoral work in that parish, he discovered the tradition of *nyuling tuak*, which is still preserved by the Dayak people. That tradition seemed to truly captivate him. A fascination that then led him with full conviction to make that tradition a means to understand and explain Christological dogma. A research was then conducted, which according to him took place from August 2017 to January 2020. During this period, he divided his research process into two models. The first model (August 2017 - August 2018) he named as *Time as Phenomenology*. In this model, he said that he directly experienced the tradition of *nyuling tuak-tempayan*.⁴⁵ The second model (2019-2020) is named *Time as Research*. This model aims to further solidify the experiences gained in the first model. The consolidation was carried out by conducting interviews with the traditional leaders and customary officials, each representing the five sub-tribes of the Dayak people in Nanga Mahap: Dayak Mahap, Dayak Hulu Sekadau, Dayak Mentuka, Dayak Koman, and Dayak Menterap Kabut. The collection of information about *tuak tempayan* was also conducted through questionnaires, with the respondents being middle and high school students.⁴⁶ With all the stages and data collection techniques, Fr. Budi wants to say that his research was conducted using the phenomenological method.

With all those stages, he also wants to emphasize that the contextual theological effort he undertakes truly stem from his personal experiences. In other words, he wants to emphasize that the theological effort he carries out is autobiographical in nature.⁴⁷ One of the alternatives offered by Albertus Sujoko in the new theology for Indonesia.⁴⁸ A theological method that has actually been offered long ago by Johann Baptist Metz. A theologian's question about God, thus Metz's thesis, always has biographical elements. The question always has biographical elements because relevant discussions about God always address and question our preconceptions about life and existence, our interests, our memories, our experiences. And this means that theology cannot ignore the realm of personal experience when talking about God.⁴⁹

Let us get back to the phenomenological method. In theology, the phenomenological method is commonly exercised. In his writings, Fr. Budi has shown us several efforts in contextual theology that use the phenomenological method (socio-phenomenology). There is Liberation Theology (Gustavo Gutierrez), Black Theology (James H. Cone), Feminist

⁴⁵After carefully reading Fr. Budi's paper, I did not find out exactly when his pastoral period at Nanga Mahap Parish took place. From what he meant by this model, I come to conclusion that the pastoral period lasted from August 2017 to August 2018.

⁴⁶Fransiskus Budi Nong, 202-203.

⁴⁷Fransiskus Budi Nong, 206.

⁴⁸Albertus Sujoko, —Contentl dan —Contextl dalam Berteologi Baru Indonesia! in Robert Pius Manik et al (eds.), *Berteologi Baru untuk Indonesia* (Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 2020), 206-207.

⁴⁹J.B. Metz, —Communicating a Dangerous Memory” in Fred Lawrence (ed.), *Communicating a Dangerous Memory Soundings in Political Theology* (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1987), 39.

Theology (Anne M. Clifford), Liberation Theology in the Asian context (Aloysius Pieris).⁵⁰ All these efforts in contextual theology seem not to concern themselves with explaining that Jesus is truly God and truly human. Their focus of attention is the "world of human experience."⁵¹ Because that is indeed how the phenomenological research method works. A research method "that lies within the realm of human experience (subject)."⁵² What kind of human life experience do those theologians then seek to approach and understand? The human life experience that suffers due to poverty, oppression, injustice, discrimination, racism, alienation, exploitation, and the like.

Feminist Theology, for example, emerged because in what we call "Christian theology," the typical experience of women with God was excluded. God is more often discussed from the perspective of men. Feminist theologians, as Anne M. Clifford states, even though they use their own methods, "*share in common the commitment to bring faith in God revealed by Jesus Christ from the perspective of women's experience to understanding.*"⁵³ In the context of Black Theology, the suffering and humiliation experienced by black people become the starting point when talking about God. The task of Black Theology, as James H. Cone formulated, "*is to analyze the black man's condition in the light of God's revelation in Jesus Christ with the purpose of creating a new understanding of black dignity among black people, and providing the necessary soul.*"⁵⁴ Liberation Theology in the context of Asia, as well as in the context of Latin America, starts from the reality of poverty. A reality that, according to Gutierrez, "*destroys peoples, families, and individuals.*"⁵⁵ The lives of the poor, including Christians in Latin America, then became "*the historical womb from which liberation theology has emerged.*"⁵⁶ The cries of humanity then became the starting point in theology: Can God be found in suffering?⁵⁷ The task of liberation theology is to voice the knowledge and experience of those whose voices are unheard.⁵⁸ In the Asian context, as Aloysius Pieris states, our understanding of the Scriptures "is the record of a religious experience of a 'nonpeople' struggling to be a 'people', a struggle in which God is an intimate partner."⁵⁹

3.2.4 The Phenomenon of *Tuak-Tempayan* Serves as a Tool for Analyzing Socio-Ecological Issues in the Land of Kalimantan.

We have noticed how the phenomenological approach works in conducting contextual theology. Does Fr. Budi apply the same methodology in conducting his research? He stated very clearly that he chose the phenomenological research method with the aim of seeking

⁵⁰ Fransiskus Budi Nong, 206.

⁵¹ Armada Riyanto, *Relasionalitas Filsafat Fondasi Interpretasi: Aku, Teks, Liyan, Fenomen* (Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 2018), 169-188.

⁵² Armada Riyanto, 171.

⁵³ Anne M. Clifford, *Introducing Feminist Theology* (New York: Orbis Books, 2001), 30.

⁵⁴ James H. Cone, *Black Theology and Black Power* (New York: Orbis Books, 1997), 117.

⁵⁵ Gustavo Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation History, Politics and Salvation* (trans. and ed. Sister Caridad Inda and John Eagleson) (New York: Orbis Books, 1973), xxi.

⁵⁶ Gustavo Gutierrez, xxxiii.

⁵⁷ J. J. Muller, *What Are They Saying About Theological Method?* (New York: Paulist Press, 1984), 56.

⁵⁸ Francis Schüssle Fiorenza, —Systematic Theology Task and Methods, in Francis Schüssler Fiorenza & John P. Galvin (eds), *Systematic Theology Roman Catholic Perspective* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2011), 47-49.

⁵⁹ Aloysius Pieris, *An Asian Theology of Liberation* (New York: Orbis Books, 1988), 124.

meaning in the phenomenon of *tuak-tempayan*.⁶⁰ The search for this meaning is the focus of his research. The meaning itself he has already found, and we can see it in his presentation on "Phenomenology of *Tuak-Tempayan*" (3.1). Up to this point, one can say that he has applied the phenomenological method as it should be. The problem arises when he expands his search for the meaning of the phenomenon of *tuak-tempayan* in an effort to understand and explain the dogma of Christology. This effort actually results in an entirely new topic. The emergence of this new topic inevitably causes a discrepancy between the research objectives and the research results.

The issue above might not emerge if he did the same as the theologians mentioned above in applying the phenomenological approach in his research. In such a way that the purpose of using the phenomenological method by him could yield grounded results. What the author want to say is that the phenomenon of *tuak-tempayan*, instead of being used as a means to understand and explain the divine and human nature of Christ, can be used as an analytical tool for current issues in the context of the Dayak people's lives. For example, underdevelopment (in the fields of economy and education),⁶¹ deforestation, respect for the noble dignity of human being, and respect for the dignity of women.

In order for the analysis process to proceed, the understanding of the jar (*tempayan*) should remain aligned with the existing understanding within the Dayak tribe. In other words, the jar is not interpreted as the body of Jesus, as Fr. Budi did. The jar is used by the Dayak people in the *Adat Pati* and *Adat Nikah*. The presence of the *tempayan* in both of these customs, as described by him, represents the human body and personhood.⁶² This understanding can serve as an entry point for him to remind how important it is to respect and value the dignity of human life. In the belief system of the Dayak people, it is not only rice or *tuak* that possesses a spirit (*semangat/semongat*). Human being also have *semongat/semangat*. That human being have a *semongat* seek to underline the following important point. Human being are the most noble and perfect creation. As the most noble and perfect creation, they must be a role model for other creations. Being a role model means that they must always strive for love, peace, truth, and justice in their daily lives. The *semongat* drives them to do good towards other creations.⁶³

Because the jar is used in traditional wedding ceremony, he can also touch upon the noble dignity of women, whose dignity is often belittled, trampled upon, and dominated in many ways within the context of the Asian Church. A concern that then prompted the Bishops of Asia to firmly state that a woman is an integral human person, regardless of her

⁶⁰ Fransiskus Budi Nong, 203.

⁶¹ Regarding this issue, it comes to my mind the idea of Bishop Agustinus Agus who once planned to erect a statue of Jesus Christ in Jagoi Babang, Bengkayang Regency. This statue, which is planned to be named "Patung Yesus Panglima Burung," was by him intended as a symbol of the liberation of the Dayak people from ignorance and backwardness in both education and economy. That from the perspective of its naming, the presence of this statue could have a negative impact on the understanding of the faithful regarding Jesus Christ. Through his idea, he shows deep concern and care for the progress of the Dayak people. He wants to inspire anyone with good will to participate in liberating the Dayak people from ignorance and backwardness. And from the Church's side, he hopes that the Church does not turn a blind eye to the factual issues faced by the Dayak people. What I have said is part of the notes I have previously conveyed regarding Bishop Agus's ideas. For a more detailed explanation, see F. Gregorius Nyaming, *Manusia Dayak dan Kebudayaan sebagai Locus Theologicus* (Tangerang: Lembaga Literasi Dayak, 2024), 93-111.

⁶² Fransiskus Budi Nong, 207.

⁶³ F. Gregorius Nyaming, 75.

race, class, ethnicity, or religion. She is created in the image and likeness of God. He was also given a divine calling to be responsible for the world that has been created (cf. Gen 1:27).⁶⁴

A jar is a place for the Dayak people to store valuable items. This understanding opens up opportunities for him to raise the issue of deforestation in the land of Kalimantan. Rice, *tuak*, and so on are indeed valuable stuffs for the Dayak people. However, there is something that is perhaps more valuable than all of that, without which the Dayak people cannot produce rice or *tuak*. That precious thing is the forest. During his pastoral period, Fr. Budi must have heard or seen with his own eyes that the valuable possession of the Dayak people was not in good condition. Or in the words of Pope Francis, the forests in Kalimantan are "*now cries out to us because of the harm we have inflicted on her by our irresponsible*."⁶⁵ Because humans have caused forest damage, he, for example, can discuss the need for ecological repentance.

To further strengthen his interpretation that the jar is the body of Christ, he refers to the Bishops in Kalimantan who include the *tempayan tajau* in their episcopal symbols. Bishop Agustinus Agus, for example, incorporated this cultural element with the intention of showing that the Church is a beautiful and comfortable place for everyone.⁶⁶ Here he can present a critical reflection regarding the identity and mission of the Church itself. Has the Church truly become a beautiful and comfortable place for everyone? Is the Church truly the House of the Father where the door is always open for anyone who wants to come and seek God? Where there is a place for everyone with all their life's problems.⁶⁷ Have the faithful, men and women, who through the baptism they received "are called to contribute all their strength as living members, which they receive by the goodness of the Creator and the grace of the Redeemer for the development of the Church and its continuous sanctification"⁶⁸, been given space to participate in building the Body of Christ? Has the Church moved out to meet others on the fringes of humanity? Accompanying someone who is limping on the roadside?⁶⁹ Becoming a Church that is bruised, hurting and dirty because it has been out on the streets, or closing itself off and comfortably clinging to its own sense of security?⁷⁰ Or in the words of Johann Baptist Metz, has the Church perhaps transformed Christianity, which is essentially a messianic religion, into a bourgeois religion? The transformation of Christianity from a messianic religion to a bourgeois religion, according to Metz, puts Christianity itself in very serious danger. Because Christianity becomes —*an endorsement and reinforcement for those who already have, those with secure possessions, the people in this world who already have abundant prospects and a rich future*l.⁷¹ Money, Metz went on to say, thus becomes the powerful mediation between the Christian virtues.⁷²

The themes of theological-contextual reflection above are merely some suggestions in an effort to interpret the phenomenon of *tuak-tempayan*. Fr. Budi could raise other contextual

⁶⁴ F. Gregorius Nyaming, —Perempuan-perempuan yang Melayani Yesus Tentang Partisipasi Kaum Perempuan dalam Hidup Menggereja in Deodatus Kolek and F. Gregorius Nyaming (eds.), *Non Ego sed Christus in Me Mgr. Samuel di Hati Imam Mudanya Catatan dan Refleksi* (Tangerang: Lembaga Literasi Dayak, 2024), 119.

⁶⁵ *Laudato Si'*, 2.

⁶⁶ Fransiskus Budi Nong, 208.

⁶⁷ *Evangelii Gaudium*, 47.

⁶⁸ LG 33.

⁶⁹ *Evangelii Gaudium*, 46.

⁷⁰ Cf. *Evangelii Gaudium*, 49.

⁷¹ Cf. Johann Baptist Metz, *The Emergent Church The Future of Christianity in a Postbourgeois World* (trans. Peter Mann) (New York: Crossroad, 1981), 2.

⁷² Johann Baptist Metz, 7-8.

issues. Even if he is willing to accept what author offers and develop it further, the author truly believes that his interpretation of the phenomenon of *tuak-tempayan*, linked to the struggles of the Dayak people and the cries of the earth they inhabit, will yield reflections that are not only critically constructive but also challenging. If this is what he does, he has helped voice various issues that are sometimes unheard by the local community.⁷³ Or even if he truly wants to fulfill the purpose of contextual christology, which he states is —*to communicate the essential message about Jesus in a way that resonates with local contexts*||⁷⁴, the author offers ‘Contextual Christology among the Migani tribe in Papua’ and ‘Ancestor Theology in the African context’ as references. In the context of the Migani tribe, it was carried out by Kleopas Sondegau. He made the figure of *Peagabega* in his efforts to help the Migani people understand the person of Jesus Christ. Surely, with the note “*always adhering to the teachings of the Church.*”⁷⁵ In the African context, Ancestor Theology was developed by Bénézet Bujo. The tradition of ancestor veneration is already an integral part of the daily life of African communities. This encourages Bujo to make Ancestor Theology the starting point for Christology. Jesus Christ is then seen by him as Proto-Ancestors. Bujo believes that his Ancestor Theology “*may bear abundant fruit in a way of life which is at the same time both truly African and truly Christian.*”⁷⁶

4. Conclusion

Exploring the local wisdom and experience of the community of God's people takes courage. The courage to “drink from the source of one's own well”.⁷⁷ This was more or less the message of Fr. Armada Riyanto at the opening of the Doctor of Theology program at the Widya Sasana School of Philosophy and Theological (STFT), Malang. Fr. Budi may show this courage through his idea of “Christology of *Tuak-Tempayan*”. However, the courage intended by Fr. Armada, in practice, should not be carried out recklessly. There are still norms that to be paid attention. In the context of Fr. Budi's “christology”, the norms are the communion of the Church and the growth of the People of God. Theology aims at building the Church, the People of God. Dogma is fundamentally social and ecclesial in character. Because of its ecclesial character, dogma makes the unity of the Church tangible.⁷⁸ Theology must serve the faith of Christian, protect and deepen the faith of all, especially of the simple faithful.

Certainly, *tuak* plays an important role in the lives of the Dayak people. However, this acknowledgement of the centrality of *tuak* has never led the author to think of “baptizing” or “christianizing” it. Or, in other words, to make it a means to understand and explain “how the divine and the human relate to each other in a particular person, namely in Jesus Christ,” as Fr. Budi did. It is really challenging to explain concepts such as *prosopon*, *hypostasis*, *physis*,

⁷³In carrying out a contextual theology, voicing issues that are sometimes unheard by the local community is the role of outsiders. The presence of outsiders is important because, thanks to them, local communities do not become self-satisfied individuals. Regarding the role of outsiders, we can see this in Robert J. Schreiter, *Constructing Local Theologies*, (New York: Orbis Books, 1985), 19.

⁷⁴ Fransiskus Budi Nong, 207.

⁷⁵ Kleopas Sondegau, Kristologi dalam Konteks Kebudayaan Suku Migani di Papua, *Jurnal Studia Philosophica et Theologica* Vol. 17, No. 1 (2017), 62. <https://doi.org/10.35312/spet.v17i1.38>.

⁷⁶ Bénézet Bujo, *African Theology in its Context* (trans. John O'Donohue, M. Afr.) (New York: Orbis Books, 1992), 76.

⁷⁷ Armada Riyanto, —Berteologi Baru untuk Indonesia Pengantar Pencarian Metodologi Baru!, in Robert Pius Manik *et al* (eds), *Sketsa Model-model Pertautan Filsafat dan Teologi* (Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 2020), hlm. 26.

⁷⁸ Karl Rahner and Herbert Vorgrimler, *Theological Dictionary* (trans. Richard Strachan) (New York: Herder and Herder, 1965), 134.

ousia and *homousios* to the faithful. However, this does not mean that local wisdoms or cultural elements, even if it has similarities with traditions in Christianity, can simply be used to understand and explain the mysteries of the Christian faith. Let *tuak-tempayan* remain as symbols of gratitude, hope, togetherness and brotherhood in the lives of the Dayak people. Making it a means of understanding and explaining the dogma of Christology is likely to bear only the confusing interpretations. There are still many humanitarian problems that afflict the Dayak people, as well as the issue of ecological damage that has hit the earth where they live. Interpretation or reflection on the phenomenon of *tuak-tempayan* may yield grounded insights when used as a ‘scalpel’ to analyze these issues.

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