

The Dialogue of Christian Education and Minahasa Traditional Community in “Rumamba” Tradition in Disruptive Era:

A Reconciliation or Disaster?

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Abstract—The objective of this study is to describe the Christian Education values in the Minahasa Indigenous community in the *rumamba* tradition for the digital generation. This study uses a qualitative approach, using data collected from observation, interviews, and documentation studies. The results show that the encounter of Christian education practice in Minahasa traditional community especially the *rumamba* tradition has contextual educational value. Although it was found that several things have been negotiated from the concept of *rumamba* to Christian education. Moreover, the Christian education can coexist contextually with the Minahasa community and culture in a dialogical approach that takes place in formal and informal public spaces.

Keywords: *dialogue, christian education, minahasa indigenous peoples, rumamba tradition*

I. INTRODUCTION

Disruptive era is a time when there is fundamental changes in every area of human's life including religious education. The rapid changes is marked by the development of sophisticated technological science. It requires us to develop and improve ourselves otherwise we will extinct for unable to cope with changes. Indonesia is a country with 93% of generation Z (ages 18-21) who consider religion to be the most important. This condition shows that there are many young people who still have interest in studying religion despite experiencing transformational changes due to the influence of technology.

The important issue for the Minahasa traditional community in this disruptive era is how to connect Minahasa culture with the values of Christian education. Does the blend of Minahasa tradition with Christianity bring contextual educational values or disaster? Although the Minahasa region is familiar with the encounter of the cultures and the Christianity, are these cultures able to show their identity or are they lost in time? Can the Minahasa local cultures coexist with the existence of Christian education in the midst of educational and community environments?

II. METHODS

This study aims to describe the encounter of Christian Education values in the Minahasa Indigenous community in the *rumamba* tradition. This study uses a qualitative approach with methods of observation, interviews, and documentation studies. This study uses the religious theory from Daniel Pals and the contextual Christian education theory from Hope Antone [1]. According to Hope Antone, the contextual Christian educational practice includes preparation, aim, content, facilitators-enablers and methodology [1].

In this study we interviewed 3 people namely a traditional head, someone who was often involved in traditional events and, local education leaders. We also got several important documents from the head of tradition related to our research, for example the customary procedures of the *rumamba*, the text of the song used and examples of dances that were displayed during the event.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Preparation

Rumamba is a ceremonial tradition of Minahasa tribe to move in the new house which is known as 'nae rumah baru'. It is started with the beating of tetengkoren by the chieftain as a sign that the ceremony will begin. *Rumamba* is always accompanied by Maengket dance which is often called maramba with a distinctive song accompaniment. *Rumamba* tradition in the past and today has changed. Because of the influence of globalization era, this tradition began to be less interesting. There are several Minahasa tradition that has been transformed, for example the Maengket dance which has combined Tombulu, Tolour and Tontemboan tradition. Likewise, the *rumamba* tradition in South Minahasa has begun to fade. In general, people no longer do the *rumamba* ceremony when they are about to occupy a new house [1]. Furthermore, the form has changed completely, for example in the past there was no supply of fresh fruit cocktail in *rumamba* tradition. But now, the fresh fruit cocktail becomes a compulsory dish in a

housewarming party. Another example, Kumaus tradition (one week after someone's death) was once a grieving event but now it is festive like a party [2]. The way of eating in Kumaus is everyone sitting and eating together on a long table covered in banana leaves. In some villages, there have been many influences from the city which no longer compatible with Minahasa tradition. The third night after death tradition no longer exists [3].

In the past, people held *rumamba* to test the strength of their houses with unlimited invitations but now it is only for recognition and for other people to know. Therefore, the invitation is also limited to certain people determined by the family [4]. In the past, *rumamba* did not use any invitations, everyone felt invited if there was a *rumamba*, and there was no prohibition to attend it. Everyone in the village would come to join the fun regardless of religious [5].

Nowadays, housewarming is still initiated with a groundbreaking ceremony and the house building and it is ended with ribbon cutting ceremony to enter the new house. It is different with *rumamba* in the past, where there was no ribbon cutting ceremony but pouring traditional beverage of Minahasa people (*captikus*) round the house. In the past, if the house on construction was not yet finished but would be occupied, people called it borrowed even though they owned it because from the groundbreaking to the completion, it was an inseparable part of *rumamba* tradition.

In Christian education, the preparation is an important part because it shows initial efforts and actions which are sincere and well thought sharply and comprehensively of the performers and facilitators of religious education which shows the element of intention on the opened invitation and the hospitality attitude. A careful preparation means that they have gone through a process of exclusive self-examination of thought, theology, teaching and behavior so that they can be pluralistic. It means being able to be critical of their own religion and also being able to be critically opened to the religions and traditions of others [6]. Relating to the theory of Hope Anthone, in *rumamba* tradition, in the past, there was a very visible Christian education preparation that is the absence of invitation restricting people from coming. Anyone could take part in the ceremony without distinguishing religion or church denomination. All people were happy together and actively involved to test the strength of the new house. In contrast to *rumamba* today, known as the housewarming party. The invitations are limited to those close to the family only. So that the element of election becomes the basis of preparation. In addition, the guests are not actively involved in the housewarming because they only come and watch the enliven events that have been arranged (acting as spectators). This reduces the importance of opened preparation to show inclusive attitude and appreciating differences.

B. Aim

People's motivation to hold *rumamba* ceremony was initially to test the strength of a wooden house. In the present, beside the changing shape of the house, the motivation has also shifted in meaning that is for recognition and performance. It is

almost difficult now to find houses made of wood. Generally, most houses are made of concrete so that *rumamba* tradition is no longer carried out as previous. Today they only call the priest to pray and then invite people to come to watch [1].

Rumamba as a house strength test is believed relating to the strength of the household occupying. It was believed that if the house construction was strong then the household life of the occupying family was also strong. Nowadays, people only call priests to legalize their houses and some do not believe what is prayed for and they do not live according to God's commands (being gamblers, drunks, etc.) so that they often get sick, are not blessed and often fight. Such problems are believed caused by the bad manners of the people who live in the house, nothing to do with the building structure [7].

The aim of Christian education is to form obedience to God who creates humans in the plurality and example of Jesus Christ who has shown ways to establish good relationships with all people regardless of religious and ethnic backgrounds. In addition, the aim is also to fulfill the most important human needs for understanding, reconciliation, healing and peace. Differences make people fight and even kill each other because they do not understand each other. Togetherness in differences is an opportunity to complete and to enrich each other critically. Christian education is supposed to make learners a critical partner who will supplement the previous understanding with the goals of peace, prosperity and shalom [4]. The ritual in the *rumamba* tradition shows a person's belief in the power that can provide a place to live by fulfilling his primary needs as a human being. The belief in the strength of the house also affects the strength of household relations. It became a form of obedience to the ancient God. In contrast, carrying out housewarming to show ability and to get recognition from others indeed shows an attitude that does not trust God who has provided and fulfilled his main needs. So that, many cases of fragile married blame the improper housing constructions.

C. Load

The original house of Minahasa people is terraced and made of wood. Therefore, there are stairs that are used to go up and to enter the house. When the *rumamba* invited guests to enter through the stairs took to singing "rumamba-rumamba". On the inside of the house while holding hands around singing with jerky feet to the floor, its purpose was to test the strength of the house. When they sing, the family will stamp the traditional beverage of Minahasa people (*captikus*) to drink to get drunk, the goal is that the uncontrolled force to stamp his feet on the floor. After that, they will shout use meaning that the house is strong. "Rumamba" means to confirm a new house. Minahasa leader (*Tonaas*) will read the prayer for strength. They will stamp their feet 9 times. The sign of a new life will begin in the house [1].

After the strength of the house is confirmed, the guests sing in reply: What stone is used? Maruasey stone (along model stone /original stone from the river, not a cracked stone). What wood is used? (The wood functioning as the house pillars placed on a rock). Maruasey wood (strong wood for the base).

Wasian Wood (Cempaka) is used for the walls. After the house is finished, they ask about the lights to be installed. Traditionally, the lights are on for 9 days without being turned off. The meaning is to test the strength of the house. Will the house shake during the 9 days when strong winds or earthquakes occur? The lights at that time was called Kodo lamps. It uses coconut oil and hung at the top of the house, so that if it shakes, the oil will spill and the lamp will turn off. Some people still use this method but the lamp type has been replaced with a 25 watt bulb which is installed for 9 days without being turned off [8].

At *rumamba* ritual, there are special foods provided by the family, namely *pangi* vegetables and *tinorangsak*. These foods are believed as the symbol of the strength of the house. In Minahasa, there are many *pangi* trees and every family has a pig livestock, so that these two menus are not difficult to be provided. Therefore, *pangi* and *tinorangsak* must be available at *rumamba* ritual. People eat during the ritual or when it finished. Conversations happened while eating are usually around the cost of constructions, family, motivation of building house and so on [9].

There used to be no distinction between *Tonaas* and the other guests. Instead *Tonaas* will only eat after all the guests eat. While inviting everyone to eat, *Tonaas* will pray that everyone gets food and that the food will be enough to be eaten in one day and one night. Nowadays, the priests and servants are the first to eat. In the past, many roles played by *Tonaas* before the church took over around the 90s because since then, the church has had priests. Initially the church was only led by a congregation teacher who was also the principal at the GMIM foundation [9].

According to Hope Anthone, content is also something that cannot be eliminated from Christian education. The content of Christian education especially in Asia is closely related to everything that gives vitality and food is one of the things that gives meaning and hope to Asian. Food becomes the need that can unite any differences. In Asia, food is something closely related to spirituality and wholeness that can transcend religious and ethnic boundaries. Food is a symbol of freedom since the various menu offered is free to eat as needed. When the people are eating, they are enriched with the diversity around them and they learn to live together in joy, creativity and criticism [6]. Just like the opinion of Hope Anthone, *rumamba* tradition is inseparable from having meal together with dishes prepared by the family. In addition to the selected materials used in the house construction, there is also special menu that must be served, namely *pangi* vegetables and *tinorangsak* meat. Uniquely in *rumamba* tradition, *Tonaas* as the leader will allow guests to eat first while he pray for enough food for all. Nowadays, the housewarming seems like a party with various food. Usually the guests will be invited to eat if the priests and servants have taken the food. Food is the characteristic of the joy and sorrow meetings. Therefore, the content of Christian education in *rumamba* tradition has actually shown diversity that can bring joy and shalom.

D. Supporters

In *rumamba* tradition, *Tonaas* has an active role similar to now that the priest and the church servants take part in the housewarming. The difference is that *Tonaas* plays an important role from the initial construction to the house completion. Whereas the priest and the servants are only involved when the family calls for the groundbreaking and the housewarming after the house is built. In addition, the response of the priests regarding to indigenous traditions needed to be preserved is very negative. They always protest and disagree. They assume that there are still many people who worship statues like those who still visit the Pinabetengan stone. In fact, it is done only to protect the traditions and customs of Minahasa. All people in Minahasa have believed in God. Surprisingly, *Opo Wananatas* and *Amang kasuruan* songs have been often sung at the church whereas those are ancient songs sung by people who do not know God. They used them while praying before the gospel entered the land of Minahasa [1].

In the past, the Minahasa gathered under a big tree to do a joint ritual (worship). Trees are believed to have great strength and a source of protection as well as large stones. There are many priests who do not believe and even refuse. Church has not yet functioned in educating congregations to preserve the *rumamba* tradition, because generally priests against things like this [4].

The supporters referred to by Hope Anthone are the educators. A person who becomes a Christian religious educator especially in Asia should have been well rooted and committed to his religion but must possess an open attitude to learn from others (in this case from the teachers or educators from other religions or tribes). Christian educators should have attitude that is willing to learn and to share with others. As an educator, he should be wise in giving criticism by considering the time and the precision of the suggestion [9]. *Tonaas*, whose role to lead the guests not limited by ethnicity and religion, has shown an open attitude and willingness to learn every possibility occurred in his tradition. This is different from the attitude of priests or servants who are exclusive, refusing to learn from other educators and do not provide constructive criticism for the life of the church [1].

E. Methodology

Rumamba is an old Minahasa tradition indicating a housewarming. The process starts from the groundbreaking which started by asking and shouting *Manguni paka siow-sio*. After completing the construction, *tuasen-tuasen* who have drunk with *captikus* led by *Tonaas* began to bless the house by saying *oh empung ambia dangka tembone kami* (God Almighty, look at us who will occupy the new house and bless us). *Tonaas* as the person in charge for the command from the beginning to the end is the elder at the time. *Rumamba* tradition used no presenter, *Tonaas* take the role to lead. Simply put, *Tonaas* is the tribal chief [10].

After the groundbreaking is finished, the guests led by *Tonaas* began to question the materials to be used in the construction of the house. For example, what stones will be used? The selected stones from the river, the black ones. The

stones are chosen directly by the elders. What wood will be used? Maruasey wood was the strongest wood at that time. There are many bridges in South Minahasa using this type of wood when it was built. Colonizers especially the Dutch, used this wood because it was a type of wood with strength estimated to be the same as iron. What lights will be installed? Etcetera. It is believed that if the whole house is lighted, it will be blessed. The lights will make everyone in the house blessed. If it is associated with religion, lights mean lighting or lighting from God, becoming a light in the house. If the lights have been installed then all guests will be invited to go up the stairs to enter the house and start the *rumamba* ritual to test the strength of the house [9].

The concept of methodology referred by Hope Anthone in multicultural Christian education is a dining table metaphor that implies the meaning of sharing in togetherness, honesty, openness, perspiratory and dialogue. So, the approaches used in religious education are inviting approach and subtly commands. This is a beautiful practice, carrying the nuances of patient and caring actions to create a caring, loving, fair and peaceful community [11]. Similar to Hope Anthone proposal that religious education should use the inviting approach. *Rumamba* tradition is began with everyone felt invited. In practice, Tonaas will invite to go up on the house through the stairs to test the strength of the house and after that invite them to eat together. So that beautiful togetherness, caring for each other, loving, fairness and peace is created in it. In contrast, at the housewarming today, the limited invitation implies diversity, injustice, and indifference among the guests.

IV. CONCLUSION

The encounter of Christian education practice in Minahasa traditional community especially the *rumamba* tradition has contextual educational value. There are several things have been negotiated from the concept of *rumamba* to Christian education. Therefore, the church servants as educators for the congregation are needed to have inclusive attitude, to learn to be opened in accepting different opinions, to be opened learning new things including Minahasa tradition, to be able to be wise in criticizing and equipping the congregation with contextual Christian education. With lots of challenges in disruptive era, *rumamba* tradition can be a social identity of

Christian education especially for the youth because it can unite the family, parents, children and relatives even in diversity. So, this traditions needs to be preserved by the next generation in Minahasa.

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