

CONTEXTUALIZATION OF THE GOSPEL IN THE CONTEXT OF THE LIFE OF THE DANI TRIBE IN PAPUA

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Volume: 3

Number: 1

Page: 130-136

Article History:

Received: 2022-01-23

Revised: 2022-02-15

Accepted: 2022-03-18

Abstract:

Before the ascension of Jesus Christ into heaven, He gave the commandment, a Great Commission to preach the gospel to all nations. Dani tribe is one of the tribes in Papua and is certainly one of the objectives of the evangelistic mission. And it is not only Christianity that wants to reach out there but also other religions. In this study, to carry out this mission, the author formulated how the gospel could be understood and accepted by the Dani tribe. The authors used qualitative methods with a literature study approach. Each nation has a different culture and life from each other, even if the area is in the same country. Therefore, when the Gospel is preached in that area, the evangelists must study the context of the people's lives so that the gospel can be contextualized into the culture of life of the people. The authors hope it will benefit evangelists who will carry out missions on the Dani tribe through stone-burning ceremonies, work, and daily life.

Keywords: *Contextualization, Bible, culture, Dani tribe, Papua Contextualization, Bible, culture, Dani tribe, Papua*

Cite this as: TEDJO, T., SETIAWAN, T., SIMANJUNTAK, F., YULIANTO, T., SANYOTO, T.W., (2022). "Contextualization Of The Gospel In The Context Of The Life Of The Dani Tribe In Papua." *International Journal of Environmental, Sustainability, and Social Sciences*, 3 (1), 130-136



INTRODUCTION

The Great Commission that is generally known can be found in Matthew 28:19-20, where Jesus told the disciples to go and preach the gospel and make disciples of all nations, baptizing and teaching them as Jesus had taught the disciples. Jesus also promised that He would be with them to the end of time. Therefore, the commandment to preach the gospel is the responsibility of the church and of every believer. Of course, each nation and even ethnic groups have different situations/contexts, including its culture. Therefore, it is very important in carrying out evangelism first to know the culture and daily life of an area that is the target or destination where the gospel will be preached so that there are no frictions in the mission field.

On the eve of Jesus' ascension into heaven, He made known His authority and power. He stated clearly that He had been given all authority or power in heaven and on earth. He gave a Great Commission to His disciples to make disciples of all nations (Matt. 28:19-20); the Great Commission or this commandment is to be witnesses of Jesus in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria even to the ends of the earth. Jesus also promised the Holy Spirit would come upon them and give them the power to be His witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria even to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8). This authority and power are based on Christ's own words, "And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority (power) in heaven and on earth has been given to me." This verse says that the implementation of the Great Commission cannot be carried out by human strength alone. God will be with them.

This task more clearly is to continue the mission of Jesus' ministry when He came into the world; from the beginning of His ministry to the end of His ministry, He always spoke about the Gospel of the Kingdom of Heaven. After He was baptized and triumphed over temptation in the desert, He immediately served the world and preached that the Kingdom of Heaven was near and

invited people to repent (Matt. 4:17). Jesus traveled throughout the entire region of Galilee, teaching in places of worship and preaching about God's Kingdom. In each of His ministries, He healed every disease and infirmity that was in the Israelites (Matt. 4:23). Moments before His ascension into heaven, He also spoke about the gospel of the kingdom of heaven; for forty days He appeared to prove that He was resurrected and alive, He also always spoke about the Kingdom of God (Acts 1:3). So from the beginning of his ministry until he finally served in this world, his preaching always spoke of the gospel of the kingdom of God, and before he ascended to heaven, he also commanded his disciples to continue his ministry, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God. And of course, this commandment also applies to the church and every believer who is part of the church.

God has a will, and that is clearly stated. From the beginning to the end of the Bible, God has the will to redeem all men and women from all nations, tribes, and tongues, according to His grace and glory. Dealing with people with very different backgrounds from one another makes evangelism face challenge after challenge, but one thing Jesus will not give a command that cannot be done. Whenever He allows trials to come their way, He is sure to provide a way out so that everyone who experiences them can endure them. When carrying out missionary tasks, there is a fear of rejection, and so on; this can be broken by the power that comes from God Himself, who gives strength.

The Dani tribe lives in the Baliem valley, a famous valley in the mountains of Papua, which is located at an altitude of 1500 to 1700 meters above sea level. Every year, there is always a Baliem valley cultural festival that has become the agenda of foreign tourists every year. As an area that is quite well-known, let alone to foreign countries, of course, it is quite interesting to examine how the gospel can enter the Dani tribe, and they can also get salvation. It turns out that the land of Papua also attracts interest from other religions such as Islam and even Judaism. From the Muslim community, they came as immigrants in various areas of Papua, such as the Bugis, Javanese, and Sundanese. After there are enough migrants in one area, there will be a need for education for them so that then many madrasas are established in various places in Papua, including in places where the Dani tribe lives.

In a webinar held on June 19, 2021, Benjamin Meijer Verbrugge, a Jewish Rabbi, said that Judaism had entered Papua; although The state has not recognized Judaism as a religion, their community already exists in Papua. And if the gospel also wants to be preached to the Dani tribe, then we must find a way so that the gospel can enter and be understood and well received by the Dani people. Based on the explanation above, the formulation of the problem that will be explored and explored is how the Bible can be contextualized in the life of the Dani people in Papua? This research is different from previous research regarding the tradition of burning stones and the art of making up for the Dani tribe.

The purpose of this research is to help evangelists or missionaries who will enter and convey the gospel to the Dani tribe of Papua so that it can facilitate or at least they have good preparation on how they can enter through the culture and daily life of the Dani tribe that becomes the goal of the mission of evangelism.

METHODS

The research method used in this study is a qualitative method with a library research approach. The author collects data from books, journals, internet information, and also the Bible, which is related to the problem being researched, reads and explores and compares several references related to the title in this study, looking for information on how the life of the Dani people lives so that the Bible can be contextualized and can be included in the cultural context of the Dani tribe in Papua. Thus, an objective and comprehensive discussion can be produced and accounted for, which can be obtained a conclusion that answers the formulation of the problem being studied.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Contextualization of the Bible in Dani Culture

Contextual comes from the root word context from Latin, namely *con*, which means together to become one, and *textus*, which means arranged or intertwined, so literally, it can mean that it is intertwined or arranged together into a single unit. Meanwhile, according to the Big Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI), context has an understanding related to context.

The term contextual theology is a new term that used to be known as indigenization theology, as Angie Pears in her book writes: Stephen Bevans argues that in some cases, the term 'indigenous theology' has been replaced by the term 'contextual theology'. Contextual theology as distinct theology is much more than a theological perspective or approach." It can also be referred to as indigenization theology or indigenous theology.

Contextualization is the right step or effort to spread the gospel message into today's diverse society. Eka Darmaputera argued that functional theology is contextual theology. In line with Darmaputera, Banawiratma said that the terms inculturation and contextualization refer more to something that arises from the appreciation of the church's faith. The church tries to live its faith in the gospel of Jesus in a real cultural setting or environmental situation (context).

Sigurd Bergmann and Mika Vahakangas suggest that the notion of contextual theology has a long history, where its introduction began gradually in an event called "Fund for Theological Education". And this term was adopted by the World Council of Churches in 1970, which became widely known.

The term "contextualization" was first mentioned by a Taiwanese theologian named Shoki Coe (1976), whom he meant as a call to link the gospel and culture beyond mere adaptation. But, according to David J. Hesselgrave and Edward Rommen, there are two dangers in contextualization: if contextualization is not done, theology will not be relevant, and equally dangerous is that if contextualization is carried out too vigorously, compromise and syncretism will occur.

The gospel is the good news that Jesus Christ, who is the Son of God, died and rose so that the sins of everyone who believes in Him are forgiven, and that person is reconciled to God. The Gospels speak of the person of Jesus who fulfilled God's promise of the atonement of human sin. Man cannot finish his sins before God, and for that, God in His eternity designed the way of redemption through Jesus' sacrifice on the cross by shedding blood because without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness of sins (Hebrews 9:22). It is all because God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, and everyone who believes in Him does not perish but has eternal life (John 3:16). And this is the revelation of God's will, saving all humankind.

The background of events in Matthew 28:18-20 is the event after Jesus' resurrection; He appeared to the disciples. In that situation, He described His saving mission over the whole world. He gave the disciples the Great Commission, which is universal, not local but global; the Great Commission must pass over all nations.

Hariato GP wrote, based on the text, Jesus said: "Therefore, go away" (*Poreuthentes*), which means to go or leave, crossing social, racial, cultural, and geographical boundaries. Derived from the meaning of "*Poreuthentes*", a mission that is open to everyone regardless of background. It is further said that Jesus sent the disciples to make disciples of every ethnicity, all nations, tribes, and languages, or various cultural groups. Adrianus Sunarko gives an example of how the preaching of the gospel of the first century crossed cultural and religious boundaries, "The Acts of the Apostles is a book from which the church living amid various cultures can learn a lot. This passage of the Bible very well illustrates how the preaching of the gospel in the early centuries continuously crossed cultural and religious boundaries.

In English, the singular form of mission means "God's work" or God's mission or the task that God has given to believers, while the plural form of mission signifies the practical reality or

execution of the work. The mission cannot be separated from the notion of evangelism because the two are closely related. So, in the mission, there is evangelism, and vice versa in evangelism, there is mission. The mission is not a church activity, but it is a feature of God. God is a God who is missionary, and mission is born from the heart of God, who is full of love for this world. The mission is God's work involving the church as His instrument. Preaching the gospel is carrying out missionary activities wherever evangelism is. Missions earn the honor and trust to carry out the task of preaching the gospel. Indeed it is a privilege for the church and believers to be involved in the ministry of God's mission to the world.

The term "all nations" in Greek is *panta ta ethne* (nation). Not only some ethnic groups but all ethnic groups. Jesus is the Savior of this world, and all people, all nations, have the right to hear the good news of salvation. A strong motivation for many evangelists is the belief that God's plan for the world is for all nations to hear the good news and have the opportunity to respond with repentance and faith.

The term culture comes from the word *budhaya*, which comes from Sanskrit, which means a reason to interpret culture as the result of human thought or reason. Culture can also be said as: "everything created by the human mind, which is closely related to the quality, exploitation, management, possibilities like a creation by humans in the sphere of life. Culture is the blend of traditions, beliefs and experiences, and language that binds all community members as a unit together and expresses their identity. A culture generally has geographical boundaries and ethnic homogeneity. Based on the explanation above, culture can be interpreted as everything related to the habits and way of life of a human being as a whole, which includes how he thinks, and fills his life by doing what he thinks, to organize, maintain, and maintaining his life in the context of his life, where he lives.

Culture comes from God to follow God's values and must return to God; that is the essence of Christian faith. Culture cannot be separated from the existence of God, both from the beginning, the process, to the final destination. Every culture has its meaning, purpose, and message to be conveyed. Therefore, it takes skill to interpret culture to build an understanding, understanding, and acceptance in the culture itself. A culture is interpreted so that it can be understood by others who are culturally distant, and only then understood by those who are culturally close. Humans try to understand and understand the culture of other people who are far away so that they can enter and become part of the new culture.

The Dani tribe is one of the oldest of the many ethnic groups who live and inhabit the Baliem Valley area in the Central Mountains, Papua. Their dwelling was among the hills rich in copper, silver, and gold. The Dani tribe has been known for a long time as skilled farmers and has used tools that were originally invented, known to have been familiar with the technology of using stone axes, knives made of animal bones, bamboo, and also spears made using well-known dug wood. Very strong and heavy. The Dani's livelihood is agriculture. Farming is the main livelihood of the Dani tribe. They carry out farming activities on dry land, which is located in the Baliem Valley and on high and steep mountain slopes. The plants they plant are generally tubers; the Dani tribe is used to farming with shifting cultivation patterns.

The ceremony or culture of burning stones is a tradition of the Dani tribe in Papua. In other tribes, the culture of burning stones, such as the Lani tribe, is called *lago lake*. The people of Wamena called it *kit oba ago*, while in Paniai, it is called *mogo Kapil*. For coastal Papuans, this culture is known as *barapen*. The culture of burning stones is carried out in many areas in Papua with different terms.

This stone-burning cultural tradition is carried out as an expression of gratitude for the Papuan people's abundant blessings. This culture is carried out by inviting relatives and residents of the same village to symbolize peace. This tradition contains a deep meaning, namely as an expression of gratitude to God and a symbol of strong solidarity. This ritual is done by cooking together to manifest gratitude to God.

The culture of burning stones is also a tool to stay in touch with the whole family and relatives, welcome the news of joy, or gather soldiers for battle and after-war parties. It can even be used as a medium of peace between warring groups. This ritual is also often performed to gather people in processions of clearing fields, births, deaths, hunting, building houses, weddings, and other things requiring mass mobilization in large numbers. Finally, the tradition of burning stones is also a symbol of the simple Papuan people.

This stone burning ceremony is prepared by making a deep hole and arranging the stones under the wood, and then the wood is burned so that the stones under it become hot. And the pork, which is usually cooked in the stone-burning ceremony, is from a pig that the tribal chief successfully shot. They put in large quantities of chopped tubers, vegetables, and pork to share with all who came. While waiting for the food to be cooked, they dance and sing, and there is usually a greeting. After the food was cooked, they began to eat together. This stone-burning culture can create togetherness and solidarity among the tribes in Papua.

In addition to the culture of burning stones, the Dani tribe also has a uniqueness in the art of making up. They make themselves up in a distinctive way of dressing up by beautifying the appearance of their bodies and faces. This make-up aims to beautify themselves and express their character as an expression of gratitude for God's grace. This unique makeup from the Dani tribe is white spots all over the body and face to make it look beautiful for women and dash for men. The contextualization of the gospel will more easily enter through the culture of burning stones and also through the art of make-up.

Contextualization of the Gospel Through Work and Daily Life

The Dani tribal community is known as a tribe that has a strong temperament and is very fond of war. But actually, they are a very friendly tribe and have many abilities in the field of art. Besides, they also love to sing. So, there are always songs in the ceremony, such as in the ceremony or tradition of burning stones; they are always interspersed with songs. So, it turns out that they keep the softness behind the tough and scary appearance.

Another artistic ability possessed by the Dani tribe is making souvenirs from wood and bamboo, which are still designed in a traditional way that produce handicraft products in the form of sculptures, distinctive carvings, furniture, interior items, and others that can be sold. As a typical Dani souvenir and can increase economic added value for the Dani tribe. In addition to culture and art, contextualization of the Bible will also be easier to enter through everyday life, such as through their love of singing and also their skills in making handicraft products from wood and bamboo.

The gospel can also enter through the Dani tribe's habit of putting on make-up, both men and women, and they do the art of making up with a special way of dressing up to look beautiful and dashing as a thank you to God. Evangelicals, by understanding the art of make-up, can enter through this art, and can even make innovations in making-up, both in terms of creativity and in the use of materials needed in making-up so that there is an artistic transformation that is carried out, and when communication If it is well established, it will certainly make it easier to spread the gospel. The gospel can also be contextualized through their love of singing, in every ceremony they perform can not be separated from the songs they raise; they dance and sing, and the gospel can enter through this. In addition, the gospel can enter through their work or daily activities where the Dani tribe has artistic skills that produce a handicraft product from wood and bamboo. The resulting products can be in the form of sculptures, carvings, furniture, interiors, and others, whether for souvenirs, souvenirs, or displays at home. Evangelists can help them increase their knowledge of innovative designs by conducting training on how to make a good craft product that departs from good design, for example, by using computer technology so that the resulting product is not monotonous but more which in turn can increase the selling value and can improve the standard of living of the Dani people.

CONCLUSION

The gospel will be easier to enter and can be contextualized in the cultural context of the Dani people, namely by utilizing the tradition of burning stones where in this tradition can invite many people to attend; evangelists can use this tradition to gather as many people as possible. Then, while waiting for the grilled food to be cooked, the gospel can be shared. In addition, through fine arts, singing and the habit of applying make-up can be used as an entry point to spread the good news.

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