THE QUICK GROWTH OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN MANGGARAI: A PHENOMENOLOGY OF CONVERSION AND SOME EXPLANATIONS

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Abstract:

Since the arrival of Christianity together with the colonial rulers, Manggarai, Flores, Indonesia, undergoes physical and spiritual changes. These changes can be explained with theory of intellectual voluntarism (the free will of the repentant) and theory of structural determinism (enforcement by external factor). It appears that the changes in Manggarai happen because of the mixture of both factors in their diverse variants, such as the political-economical, educational, social-services related, and religious-theological factors. There are two horizons in the whole process of encounter and transformation in this area. On the one hand, there is the horizon of European Christian missionaries (supported by government), and on the other hand, the horizon of the Manggarain, with their cultural life in the broadest sense of the word. The two horizons fuse to each other in one drama of cultural encounter throughout the growth of the Church. Following the hermeneutical discourse of Gadamer, it might be said that the fusion of the two horizons results in the emergence of a new face of unique local and contextual Christianity. In its uniqueness and locality, it has also something to be contributed to the universal Church.

Introduction

Scholars of religion hold the view that world religions have some claims: They claim an absolute truth (others particular truth), a final and universal salvation (others partial salvation). They also claim a missionary character (others local religion).[2] Those claims have a strong impact on their presence in the world. For example, they proclaim their religion to the whole world. Such a tendency exists in Christianity and Islam; it can be found also in Hinduism and Buddhism.[3] Through missionary activity, doctrines and institutions of those religions undergo an internationalization process. Missionary activity transforms religions from local religion to an international one. This internationalization process is strengthened by colonialism. With colonialism those religions spread to the whole world. With it, then occur the phenomenon of religious conversion; people convert from indigenous religions into those world religions.

The phenomena of religious conversion to world religions have become the interest of anthropology, comparative religions, sociology, and theology.[4] Their try to understand how and why those religions spread so quickly to the whole world with the power to expunge various cultures of the world and traditional societies. The spreading of those religions takes place not without problem. The coming of those religions destroy indigenous religions. In accordance with post-colonial discourses, Steenbrink[5] talks of world religions as the destructive-power to indigenous religions and societies. Its metaphor is bulldozers of palm-oil plantation[6] which destroy the rain forest in Borneo and Sumatera and then transformed into palm-oil plantation. One of the indigenous societies transformed by the presence of those religions is Manggarai.

Here I describe the phenomenon of religious conversion of Manggarain people. I will organize my elaboration in some stages. First, I explain the coming of Christianity to Manggarai. Then I describe my question on the fast development of Christianity in Manggarai. After that I will give some possible explanations, first by quoting Weber whom I confront with Horton's view. Their perspectives will be complemented with the perspectives of scholars who made a field research in Manggarai, and wrote on Manggarai. Then I will go on with an initial hypothesis which theological in character. In the end I will give some concluding remarks.

Christian Faith in Manggarai

Christianity came to Manggarai together with and through the colonial government. Such a phenomenon almost takes place everywhere in other places in Indonesia; for example the coming of Christianity to Sulawesi, the coming of Christianity to Batak, the coming of Christianity to Java.[7] It also takes place in the whole world. The decision to handle the pastoral care of Flores (including Manggarai) under Catholic missionaries, while Sumba and Timor under Protestant *zendings*, were decided by colonial government in one political decision in twentieth century, in 1913.[8]

Christian faith (Catholic) is relatively young in Manggarai. Although Portuguese missionaries have come to Flores in the sixteenth century, but there is no strong traces in Manggarai (West Flores). Their traces can only be found in East Flores, and in other part of Indonesia (Batavia, East Timor, Blambangan, Ternate, and Moluccas).[9] Christian missionaries officially entered Manggarai at the beginning of twentieth century. This is the pastoral services of Jesuits. First Christians were baptized in 1912, by H. Looijmans, SJ.[10] Jesuits were replaced by SVD who came and settled in Ruteng since 1920. This is the new stage in the development of Manggarain Church.[11] Since the beginning and its continuation under SVD, Catholicism was quickly accepted by Manggarain people. The development is so quick that it changes from minority to majority.

By quoting some archives of SVD in Netherland and other sources in Leiden, Toda gave us a statistical data illustrating such quick growth. In 1923-1924, there are three mission-centers in Manggarai. At that time there are 9607 Catholics. It was a high rate growth according to the data from 1926-1927. The rate growth is over average of 2000 people. The total amount of Catholics at that time was 9607. In 1930 Manggarain Catholics have reached the amount of 49.169 from the total amount of Manggarains (154.814). It means that only in three years the total amount of Manggarain Catholics increase around 5 times from 9.607 to 49.169 people.[12] This development was proved by the fact that only in no more than thirty years Catholicism becomes the dominant religion in Manggarai. Its people become Catholics. Catholic Church begins to take root in Manggarai. Catholicism becomes the self-identity of Manggarains. What has been said by a researcher of Flores, also apply for Manggarai: even in Flores the trees, the ants are also Catholics.[13] Maybe such statement is

too exaggerated, but it described the reality of how Catholicity has been rooted in the life of Manggarains, and has become the constitutive part of their socio-cultural identity.

Colonial government officially occupied Flores since 1859 after the treaty with Portuguese. But only in 1892 that the government's commercial ships started to routinely stop by Ende harbor. In 1896, the government acknowledged the king of Ende. But only at the beginning of twentieth century (1902-05), Resident F.Heckler started to take a strict act of interventions in Flores. For example: by making military operation in the civil war of 1904 in Sikka, and by replacing the king of Larantuka who was exiled to Yogyakarta. With this political-military action, the policy of non-intervention is over; it is replaced by the policy of intervention. Since then the political power is not again on the hands of local kings, but in the hands of colonial government. For that purposes the whole Flores should be explored and be made a map. This task was taken over by A.Couvreur in 1906. One year later, in 1907-1908, H.Christoffel launched a quick-war to show a military force. They should make this operation to launch a new economy policy which is related to the tax policy paid in cash, not in crops as it is made by local kings.[14] Since then there is a lot of change in policy. The government underlines the planting of coconut palm trees for copra (export).

The government, through forced labor system, construct a road for the mobility of traders, army, and especially for the development of educational system and other social services. Those changes in policy of government do not always accepted by local people. There is a local struggle to counter the policy in tax and forced labor. There is a socio-political unrest, similar to those described by S.Kartodirdjo in his study of Banten peasants' revolt in 1888.[15] The counter movement cannot be fully extinguished until 1915. The expansion also takes place in the amount of officials of government. The change is not only in the quantity of the officials but also the upgrading of quality. Besides the development of transportation, there is also the development in the inter-insular and inter-regions communication; the previous is by ships and the latter is by the system of wire-telephone nets and roads.[16]

In the meantime Catholic mission underwent a significant development. This development related to the changes in colonial officials. If before there is no official government staff that supports the mission of the

Church, now there are officials who are Catholics and they support the mission of Catholic Church. We can mention two names: A.Couvreur and Anton Hens. We detect the support of Couvreur in a letter he wrote to the head of the stations of Larantuka. This letter proved the existence of a disguised support of the resident as personal. The letter promotes the Catholic mission's presence in Bajawa and west part of Flores, Manggarai.[17]

At the beginning of its services, Catholic mission was focused in east Flores (Larantuka, Maumere, Ende). The west part of the island, Manggarai, was neglected. There are two reasons for this neglect. First, religious reason: Manggarai at that time was considered to be Muslim region. So the region should not be "touched" by other religions, to prevent socio-religious conflicts. Second, geo-political reason: at that time Manggarai was said to be under political control of Bima. But from the careful investigation of the region it is revealed that Muslims only occupied coastal area. Muslims and their socio-economic influences were strong in some coastal areas (Reo, Pota, Borong, Labuan Bajo). While indigenous people, living in mountain areas, were the adherents of local-indigenous religion.[18]

In the investigation of Couvreur, government's representative, mountain area also will soon be occupied by Muslims, should the Dutch missionaries do not take a serious action to prevent it. There should be a race against the Islam expansion to the area. Here we detect the race theory proposed by historians.[19] We get an impression that Couvreur pressures the Bishop in Batavia, by saying that if Catholic mission does not interested in Manggarai and Ngada (the fertile part of Flores), then those two areas will be given to Protestant mission. Being a Catholic himself, he endorses the Bishop to send missionaries to West Flores. Couvreur strongly proposes Catholic mission, just to make sure of hierarchy in Batavia of the importance of Manggarai. Couvreur wants to secure those areas, especially the most fertile Manggarai, under Catholic Church.[20] Around ten years later, the complaint and pressure still can be heard in one of Noyen's letters.

Government and missionaries finally came to Manggarai; but what have they done? On the next part, I will make a list of works, services, and breakthroughs that have been done by government together with the church in Manggarai. First the church and government started a work in educational realm. Then they try to establish a local government,

Manggaraian monarchy, to stand up to Muslim kings of Bima and Goa. At the request of local church leaders, the government representative in Manggarai try to form a local government by choosing one of the local leaders to be Manggarain King. Erb mentions some names (Tamur, Bagung, Baruk), but finally it is Baruk who was officially appointed and recognized as Manggarain King; he is crowned in 1930 after been baptized with a baptismal name Alexander.[21] Then they also made a transformation in the socio-cultural life of the local people by forcing them to change from the traditional way of life to the 'modern' way of life; one form of this transformation is the size of houses: traditional houses was big and inhabited by more than 200 people (extended family), while 'modern house' was small and inhabited by a limited amount of people (nucleus family).[22] They also provide a physical infrastructure by making system of modern roads and telephone, because it was strongly believed that roads will have a direct and immediate impact upon the economical life of the people.[23]

Especially in Manggarai, they establish a center for parochial and mission services which later become very big parishes in Manggarai.[24] They introduce and develop the modern way of agricultural technology with the use of wet-rice field.[25] They develop social services in education; for that purpose they brought teachers from outside Manggarai (Larantuka, Maumere, and Manado). They educate and train some local people to be teachers in elementary schools; they establish school buildings; they also inspect the realization of school management and maintain and increase the quality of schools. Schools, to rephares J.Connolly's words, become the missionary tool and have a great support in the process of the formation of the local elite.[26]

Realizing such quick progress of Catholic Church in Manggarai, I put forward a historical question: *Why does Christian faith was relatively easily accepted by Manggarain? What were the factors that conditioned the Christian faith to be easily accepted by Manggarain?* In this study I want to find out the elements that made the process of religious conversion happen so easy in Manggarai. There are many theories (factors) to explain such phenomenon of conversion to Christianity. There are many factors in this process. In the following part I will explain this process by referring to the study of some anthropologist, especially Robert Hefner's study.[27]

Some Explanations: Weber's Perspective

To explain the phenomenon of religious conversion, I will use the perspective of M.Weber which will be compared to R.Horton's perspective, based on Hefner's study.[28]

In social studies there is a theory of voluntary conversion; a group of people, in a particular time and place voluntarily stated that they want to be a convert from one religious belief into another. They want to change their religious affiliation by their own will. There is no party who endorses them to do so. It is they who decide to make a religious conversion. There is no external power to force them to be a convert. The theory of voluntary conversion is commonly connected with M.Weber. The opposite is called involuntary conversion. It is a conversion that takes place because of the factors of force and strong suppression from external party. There is no other choice for them except to admit the pressure by external party to make a shift in their religious belief.

But what is the rationale of this voluntary conversion? Weber's theory points to rationality and systematization of doctrines of revealed-religion. The religious doctrines (dogmas) of the great religions appears in the form of sheer rationalized and systematized system. This rationality and systematization is not only related to the doctrinal aspect of religion; it also related to its institutions, sacred authority and its social organizations. All of these aspects are thoroughly well organized; they are something that were never thought of and not yet exists in indigenous religious belief. It is said that this rationality and systematization of doctrine and authority that arouse great feeling of wonder on indigenous religious believers so that they are motivated to make a voluntary conversion into Christianity. All these factors are the interesting factors that attract indigenous people so that they convert to Christianity.[29]

Here, Weber made a distinction between local-indigenous religions and world religions.[30]Weber called the former traditionalism and the later rationalization. The first is under the law of tradition; the second is under the law of reason. Being related to a certain tradition, indigenous religions are only limited to a certain place; world religions become globalized because their basic tenets in rationalization. The success of those world religions is connected to this rationalization and systematization. This stands in mark contrast with traditional indigenous religions. Rationalization means formal

systematization, codification of rites, and documentation of doctrines, and standardized institutionalization of sacred authority. Successes reached by world religions are connected with those factors. These factors made them had a strong preoccupation with standardized religious ideas and actions. These factors have strong and lasting influences on the process of social conversion of people, including Manggarains.

Weber further exclaims that one factor that endorses the phenomenon of conversion of a group of people into great-world religions is because the rational characters of this new religion and its doctrines are well documented, codified, and canonized. This is something so different compared to what they have before. It seems that this idea of Weber is strong enough, because there are a lot of people who believe or follow it. I thinks this phenomenon also took place in Manggarain reality.

One of the significance of Weber's study is his emphasis on the important role of the intellectual group in the phenomenon of social transformation, and in a group of human being (community). It is said that the social change occurs because of the role of intellectual agency. The intellectuals groups have a transformative role in the dynamic movement of social transformation. In this sense Weber's view become a sort of correction for the old models of socio-historical changes which romantically collective in its character; those old models are the typical of many social theories, especially those that related to the variations of notions of the main figures of social thinkers like of Marx, Durkheim, which has a strong hold on the sociology and anthropology from the sixties and seventies. In contrast to these views, Weber believes that social change can take place because of the formative role of intellectuals.

It is Geertz and Bellah that follow Weber in identifying the doctrinal rationalization as a distinctive character of world religions.[31] Here I focus on Geertz elaboration of such religious doctrinal rationalization. Although Geertz takes a distance from Weber by not giving much emphasis on the role of charismatic prophet as Weber did, but, like Weber, he also gives to the intellectual group and agency a central role in the dynamic process of social changes. For example, he said that when the intellectual group of agency succeeds in suppressing the belief in magic and local spirits then the results is people will see the disenchantment of the traditional-indigenous religions.[32] According to Geertz, in supporting Weber's analysis, when people become disenchant then there will arise a spiritual gap. Why

disenchantment? Because they feel that the divine, the sacred cannot be anymore understood through various concrete ritual gestures and almost reflexive in its character which strategically intervened by a more general cycle of life.[33] It means that, in order to satisfy such spiritual need and thirsty, people are attracted to a more rational form of religions. Geertz said that such phenomenon is still take place also today in modern time in many places of the world.

Robin Horton's Perspective

Weber's perspective, however, has been criticized by R.Horton who emphasizes the important role played by local-indigenous people in the process of development and transformation of religion and culture.[34] Horton opposes Weber's proposition of rationality on the part of world-revealed religions, by insisting on the similar phenomenon in indigenous religion, although with a different level of quality.

In 1970s Horton published three essays which triggered a debate over the conversion process of Africa to Christianity or Islam.[35] The debate gave us an interesting profitable alternative point that can be used to evaluate the rationality of religions and the forces that leads to conversion into world religions. Actually Horton still retains Weber's view which gives emphasis on meaning as the key to religious change. Religious change is only possible because of meaning issue. Horton insists that traditional religions are not necessarily less rational compared to world religions; in indigenous religions, there is also rationality but the difference is that its focus is more limited compared to those in world-religions. Horton insists that the difference is only a matter of quantitative and not qualitative; it is not a matter of higher or lower rationalization. Indigenous religions concentrate more on the small-scale issues that has only local characteristics; they do not pay much attention to the topics that have a more universal relevance. It is understandable because, according to Horton, people in indigenous societies live in smaller and territorially limited communities.

In some of his writings Horton describes Africans as the active agent in religious changes. Horton insists that Africans are not only the object of the changing process. They are also the active players. They are not just the innocent victims who know nothing. Many people admit such way of thinking as a positive view of indigenous people. Horton's perspective

challenges the Weberian characterization on indigenous religions. In Weberian thinking indigenous religions are intellectually piecemeal. Those religions are not comprehensive; it is considered non-rational.[36] Horton put forward the opposite position. He proposes what Hefner called the "ecological appreciation" upon their logic of thinking process.

Horton believed that a shift to a higher goal of one cosmological spectrum can take places without external influences (Christianity or Islam). Maybe it is true. But people still cannot conclude that Islam and Christianity are not important in the cosmological changes that had taken place. The external influences also work in the process of transformation of the cosmologies of people. Maybe Horton is right in insisting that African people that confront the macrocosmos will adapt their cosmological horizons, without the presence of Christianity or Islam. In other words, the process of changes is an "internal process" of the people whether there is or there is no external catalyst of world religions. But it should be realized that the timing and the real content of such transformation is influenced by the presence of Europeans, and also by the crisis of identity and authority that appears because of those foreign presence.

Great religions (Christianity, Islam) have introduced the exclusive character of the system of membership in one religion and institution. This is unique. People are asked to be faithful and do not change their belief; people are not allowed to move from one religion into another. Once you are a member of this or that religion, you will be always the member of this or that religion, no matter how strong you struggle to get rid of it. But we should realize that this is one reason why such great religions can function as a strong catalyst for the drive toward change. But how such thing can take place and be explained? The reason is the fact that those great-religions with such characters, when once introduced and then take a root in one place or community, can become like a "juggernaut" that can work on its own forces to open up its way,[37] and, unlike what has been said by Horton, works according to the determination and the rules of the cosmologies of indigenous community.

Here there is a controversy between two extremes: intellectualistic voluntarism and structural determinism.[38] The challenge is how to seek for the equilibrium between those two extremes. Although politically are not equal, religious conversions always having two sides: its social

dynamics and intellectual dynamics. Those two sides determine the final product of the process. Rather than over-emphasizing the intrinsic and extrinsic variables in religious conversion, it is better that we should try to find the best way in which those two sides can interacts and from the process we can hope that the relative significance of the respective sides can be vary in different situations. In other words, the dynamic of religious conversion always presupposes the good cooperation between the extrinsic and intrinsic elements. In this sense I apply Gadamer's idea on the fusions of horizons;[39] the two sides have their own horizons; when they confront each other, they undergo a fusion by becoming a new entity; the one horizon does not eliminate the other, and the other does not eliminate the one; both now coexist in a fusion, in a new way of being. This approach can explain why there is a group of indigenous people are eagerly to accept Christianity, while other communities try to selectively take new meaning from it for its advantage, and the other communities do not want to accept it altogether.[40]

The same understanding also related to the discussion on religious rationalization process. According to Weber, the intellectual formulation of religious doctrines is only one element in the process of their effective institutionalization. The other element is the development of their authoritative organizations for the propagation and control of religious knowledge of its adherents and their identity; in this case indigenous religions are not lucky compared to their competitors, great religions. The reason is because many of those indigenous religions are illiterate so that they undergo many serious technical barriers in the process of codifications and disseminations of their doctrines. They live in oral (unliterate) tradition. In modern competition oral tradition is marginalized by literate tradition, though it is not disappeared. It is still there in the space of language.[41] There is still another factor. Those indigenous religions do not have institutions to coordinate the membership of its adherents; they also do not have an institutionalized authority over the social development. If they developed, then it is difficult for them to control it because there is no centralized authority. Their competitors can be labeled as 'world' religion because they have developed something that lack in those indigenous religions: the trans-regional organizations for of indoctrination of faith and the regulation of community.

It is not by accident that those same great religions sometimes accompany the political agents with their own agendas and political design over the life and resources of local people. Whether or not the policies of the government explicitly support the work of proselityzation, the impact of the expansion of foreign elements are seriously challenging the social structures of local-indigenous societies and plays a role in transforming and re-forming the religious identity of the people supported by those traditional structures. Therefore, though there is no missionary initiatives, but social dislocations can motivate people to seek, in another places rather than looking into the canons of their own religious traditions, an understanding of who are they (identity) and how they should live in this rapidly changing world.[42]

The neglect of political and sociological character of the phenomenon of religious conversion justify the critique that the approaches put forwarded by Horton are too 'mentalistic' in character and for that reason it unable to recognize how the world religions (Christianity, Islam) can give a 'religious identity and religious faith' and 'series of life regulations' as an addition to the tools for intellectual control over the time and space events of life. But the recognition of the broad influences to motivate religious conversion, do not imply that we reject Horton's attempt to see the event of religious transformation through the eyes of the believers. We cannot neglect this perspective because it is also important though it is not the only perspectives to be taken into account. The changing social environment in which the conversion often takes place is not a result of the material forces only. Its effect appears not only in the material welfare of the actors but also in their sense of self-esteem and community and in their various attempts to establish the supporting institutions. This is the problem of dignity and self-identification. Those two issues, in a world which is not so much pluralistic and politically unequal, are the nucleus of many hi-stories of the religious conversion.

Insights from Participants Observers

Those above factors (Weber, Horton) are important. Dami N.Toda (1999), however, in his study on the conversion of Manggarains, said that the decisive factor is politic: there is a political design by colonial authority (supported by missionaries) to create religion enclave in Indonesia.[43]

Colonial authority wanted to establish a Catholic kingdom in Manggarai, with Catholic King to weaken Muslim influence from Bima and Goa. The ambition of colonial authority is strengthened by the idea of 'race' between world religions to increase the converts and to enlarge its territory. Scholars say that there is a race between world religions in Indonesia, as in other part of the world. The domination and victory of Islam should not be repeated in other places, including Flores. It should become a Catholic island. This is a political design with a religio-cultural impact. The idea is supported by Kristiyanto (2009), Daeng (1989), Mboi (2011).[44]

Steenbrink emphasizes the significant role of education in the process of religious conversion in Manggarai. He said that religious conversion in Manggarai takes place because of and through the work of educational services. The development of education in Flores is mainly realized in a conscious way because of those following main goal. First, education was developed as the citadel to hamper the spread of Islam. Secondly, educational services were developed as a main means for spreading Christian faith in Flores.[45] At first this attempt at educational services was made in East Flores, Larantuka, with the main goal of providing teachers for elementary schools. This is something that should not made us wonder because Christian faith has reached East Flores and also rooted as a heritage of Portuguese. The effort was continued in West Flores, Manggarai. At first this was the responsibility of lay missionaries; Christian faith was brought to Manggarai through lay missionaries; they are elementary school teachers who came from East Flores; later this missionary endeavor was led by priest. This is an interesting phenomenon because this is one of the examples of the missionary activity which first led by lay persons, and continued and strengthened by priests.

Basic curriculum for such educational program consists of handicraft, weaving products, embroidery, culinary matters, healthy life, religious matters and education, introduction to biblical stories, catechism, liturgical and devotional songs.[46] There are some liturgical songs that are translated from the liturgical songs of Western Church. But there are also some liturgical songs which are taken from the treasure of indigenous songs, usually function in religious rituals in the *adat* life of people. Usually the whole content of its lyric was taken. But in other cases composers only took its main melody and then filled with lyrics from the Bible or Christian liturgical tradition.[47]

When the staffs have received some level of knowledge, then missionaries establish intentionally the community of believers consists of local believers who become a converts. Those local communities are established near the school based of missionary activities. It should be noticed that the first missionary schools was opened first in Reok, Labuan Bajo; those two schools already established in 1911.[48] The next year (1912), mission and government opened a new mission school in Ruteng. Those schools, together with teachers, became a basis for missionary activity. Schools and its basic facilities became a center for mission activity for surrounding area. It should be noticed that the development of schools are high. These are some detail informations: in 1925, there are 25 schools in Manggarai. In 1942 there are 42 school buildings.[49] Schools in Ruteng, as a means for missionary activity, get its first result, because the first baptized people are from Ruteng; it happens in 1912; at that time there are 26 people to be baptized into Catholic Church.

In 2008 there is a dissertation in the faculty of Communication Anthropology of Padjadjaran University Bandung. It postulated the education as the main factor in the transformation of Manggarai. When there was a political decision that gave the privilege to Catholic Church in Manggarai, then quickly the Church implant its influences through educational programs, especially through agents like elementary school teachers, who become a catechist teaching religion in remote places. This is the factor that brings about the transformation effect upon Manggarain people.[50] Marsel Robot describes the process of becoming Catholics in Lengko Ajang and Lengko Elar. It happens through the educational services especially through the establishment of elementary schools and its teachers. Through those schools, there are a lot of students baptized into Catholic Church. They also give the basic lesson in catechesis, praxis of prayers and devotion.[51] With those basic educational backgrounds they become teachers of religion in villages. They teach religion to each other and later they will be baptized. With this way there are a lot of people become Catholics.

In a smaller scope, Robot describes the process of becoming Catholic of people in Lengko Ajang and Lengko Elar, through the work of educational program, especially through the establishment of elementary schools. It is through those elementary schools, that there are a lot of

people (children) baptized Catholics. They are also given basic lessons in catechetical matters, in the practices of ecclesial prayers, the liturgical year of the Church. When they finished their elementary school, with this minimal lesson on religious matters, they become the teacher of religion (*guru agama*) in villages; they taught religion to their fellow villagers who later were baptized. In this way there are a lot of people become Catholics. This development was so spectacular.[52]

Religio-Theological Reasons

Those above factors (political design, educational program) also playing a role in the whole process of transformation, but there is still another factor. What is it? To answer this question, I start with the following hypothesis: Christian faith (Catholicity) was easily accepted by Manggarain people, because Christianity (missionaries) enters through the culture of local-indigenous Manggarain people, through the religious sense of Manggarain people. To support this religio-theological hypothesis I put forward two cases study. The first is the use and the incorporation of several vocabularies of Manggarain indigenous religion in the Book of Liturgical Songs of Manggarain Catholic Church, *Dere Serani* (will be abbreviated: *DS*). The second is the transformation of *"compang"* into altar for Eucharistic celebration.

In the following paragraph I describe the first case, *DS project*. There are a lot of aspects of indigenous religion that have been incorporated into *DS*, but here I will pay attention to those following two things. The first is the appropriation of the insights of ancestor veneration into *DS*. In the traditional ancestor veneration it is common to relate the High God with attributes of mother and father. God is recognized in the anthropomorphistic image as mother and father. This traditional image was incorporated into the liturgical songs of the Church. Though this parental-image of God also exists in biblical tradition, but the experiment to take the parental-image of local-indigenous religion into the official liturgical hymn book is revolutionary.

To prove this idea I will take some examples from *DS*. Let me take the example of a song with the title *Mori Ame Rinding Mane* (God the Father who gives protection in the afternoon, *DS* No.47). The attribute of *Mori Ame* (God the Father) is taken from local religion of Manggaraians. In the

second verse we find the other attribute, *Mori Ine Rinding Wie* (God the Mother who gives protection in the night). The attribute of *Mori Ine* (God the Mother) is also taken from the local religion of Manggarain people. In this song, those two attributes are connected with Christ. While in the other song the title of *Mori Ema* is related to God the Father. For example, a song with a title *Somba Ite Mori* (Forgives us o Lord, *DS* No.90), *Yo Mori Ema Mori Keraeng* (O Lord God the Father, *DS* No.5). Verheijen SVD qouted a prayer composed by a Manggarain in thirties in which he related the attribute of mother to Jesus Christ.[53]

Secondly, in *DS* I find Christological movements. In some songs Christ is put in the middle of local indigenous religious sense. To borrow the traditional Christological terms, I call it "Christology from below" or to use H.R.Niebuhr's terminology "Christ of Culture".[54] At the same time this Christology from below was complemented with "Christology from above" or "Christ above Culture".[55] In the first case, Christ was put in the middle of the local indigenous religion. Examples that have been mentioned in the previous part were also the illustration for this notion. In the second case, Christ was put above the local religion. To prove this notion let me give some examples. The example for "Christology from below," again I quote the song *Mori Ame Rinding Mane* (*DS* No.47). Here Christ was put in the middle of ancestor veneration. The example for Christology from above is the song *Jesus Kristus Mori ge* (Jesus Christ, My Lord; *DS* No.117). In this song we find the orthodox Christological doctrine of the church, translated into Manggarain Liturgical song. It starts with ancient creedal formula: Jesus Christ My Lord. Then it is mentioned the Johannian insight of the love of God, realized in incarnation and crucifixion. Then it is continued with the mystery of Eucharist. These are three doctrinal elements in this song. To take another example let me give the song with a title *Yo Laku Raja* (I Adore the King, *DS* No.159). In this song the Christological doctrine was elaborated in detail. We can find in it the doctrine of Jesus Christ as King, as Redeemer; even his death and resurrection was also mentioned in this song as something important for the life of faithful. There are still other examples that can be taken from *DS*, but for the time being I will restrict myself with those above examples. To conclude this part, I can say that it seems that Christological movement from below was superimposed by Christological movement from above.

The second is the transformation of *"compang"* into altar, by planting a cross on it. I call it *"Compang project."* This action change people's perception from indigenous religion into Christianity. The cosmic tree upon *compang* was changed by a new cosmic tree that is Cross. It has been a long Christian tradition that cross was viewed as cosmic tree, a tree that has brought the beginning of life in the beginning.

One of the important elements in Manggarain concept of living together is the place to offer sacrifice to God. Its name is *Compang*. Through *Compang* we see cosmos as holy, a center for holiness. *Compang* is a center for sacred cosmos for Manggaraians.[56] It is one of the five components that constitute an ideal *beo (village)*.[57] *Compang* is an altar in Manggarain traditional religion. It is a dolmen made of big stones. Upon it there is pillar of stone standing vertically to the sky. In some places there is banyan tree. This is a sacred-cosmic tree, source of life. Usually it is located in the center of village. It functions as a place where the inhabitants offer their sacrifice to god. Usually they gather around *compang* to offer sacrifice (chicken, goat, pig, cow, or buffalo).[58] The most common sacrifice for communal celebration is cow or buffalo (*Kaba naring Jari*: Buffalo for praising Lord the Creator).[59] So the background of *compang* is the local-indigenous religion of Manggarains.

When Christianity came to Manggarai, they put cross at the center of *compang*.[60] Such action changes everything because it has a transforming power. Traditional sense of holy and sacred now is given a new dimension from Christian's sense of holy, the cross. The center for traditional piety is changed by Christian symbol; and thus, everything is changed. Christianity, in that way, becomes an integral part of traditional sense of the sacred. Indigenous piety and spirituality are given a new meaning. Since 30's Christian missionaries try to Christianize Manggaraians. One way to enter into Manggarain culture is through its center for cosmic sense of sacred. Since fifties *compang* is used as an altar upon which Christians celebrate Holy Mass (especially when priest came to make a regular visitations to faithful in remote villages).[61] The message is clear: Upon this *compang*, we no longer offer offerings to ancestor. From now on it is Jesus Christ, Lamb of God, who is sacrificed on *Compang* as our offering to God for the redemption of human being, as it is stated in one song of *DS*: *Du compang ami podo Hia* (upon the *compang* we offer Him; *DS* No.147). Since then all

compang in Manggarai, especially where Christians are dominant, are given the cross. When *compang* is big enough then in the center of it people plant big wooden cross. In my view it is a symbol of cosmic tree and behind this cosmic tree there is a cosmic cross and further behind this cosmic cross is the image of Cosmic Christ.

In the Book of Acts it is said that Paul used an altar for the Unknown-God as a cultural bridge to enter into a dialogue with Hellenistic world (Acts 17:23). By using theological opportunity of *Agnostos theos* (Unknown God), Paul began to proclaim the God who is known as the Creator, the Redeemer of universe, and the Ruler of history. This God is a clear God. S/He reveals Him-Herself throughout universe, the whole creation. To know this God it is not necessary for us to grope like a blind. God shines like a sun. God always present in history of human being through Creation and the mystery of Incarnation. The whole history, therefore, becomes history of salvation.

By using a similar approach, Christian missionaries in Manggarai (under the initiatives of van Bekkum) entered into the culture of Manggarain people, through 'altar' the Manggarain people have known, altar of ancestor's veneration. Their altar is devoted to the God they know. It is God whom they are familiar with; even they feel that that God is close to their life. It is a kind of altar of ancestor veneration; this altar is not alienated from their life; it is something similar to the way of "Christology from below" mowing toward divinity, to the Almighty. H.Daeng, in his dissertation, supported this religio-theological hypothesis.[62] Daeng strongly points out that since its early presence, Catholic Church in Manggarai (through missionaries) try to practice inculturation or contextualization of Christian faith. It means to make Christian faith enter into and embedded in local culture, its particular context.

By these two "actions" then comes the great transformation to the world view of Manggarain people from local-indigenous religion to Christianity. Its primary factor is religio-theological one. The phenomenon of religious conversion of Manggarain people is, among other things, strongly influenced by the fact the new religion use the elements of cultural heritage of Manggarain people, songs, lyrics, and altar. Once those cultural elements were incorporated into liturgical services of the new religion, then local people see themselves reflected in it. They, therefore,

do not feel alienated from their indigenous religious senses once those senses were integrated into Christianity. Perhaps this is the "psychological integration" as the third level of the process of integration of culture, in the theology of Luzbetak.[63] Robert J. Schreiter would call this whole process "contextual model" which occurs by mutual opening of culture and church tradition done by local and external agents of transformation.[64] Stephen B.Bevans, using a different terminology, also names the similar process and event "countercultural model" with a special insight that "…. if the gospel is to be adequately communicated, it has to be done 'in the language of those to whom it is addressed and has to be clothed in symbols which are meaningful to them…'".[65]

Conclusion

Christian faith (Catholicity) was easily accepted by Manggarain. There are several factors influencing the process of encounter and transformation. There is the factor that coming from the internal dynamic of Christian faith itself, which has its own horizon to be offered to Manggarain. This dynamic is seen in the zeal of missionaries to proclaim Christian message to Manggarain following the grand commission of Christ in the end of Matthew's the gospel (Mat 28:19-20). In the frame of this religious zeal we see various social services given by missionaries to Manggarain. For example, the social services through educational and aggricultural programs. For that purpose missionaries build many elementary simple school buildings in several remote places in Manggarai to educate people. It is believed that education is a means of transformation. This is the external religious-theological aspect of this development. There is a theological design behind all this process of development.

Missionaries are not alone in that pursue. They are supported by government. Together they have a dream of establishing a "kingdom of God" in Manggarai with its own Manggarain Catholic King. Government also gave Manggarains infrastructure of road-system which opens the total isolation of Manggarain hinterlands. Government also tries hard to change Manggarain lifestyle, from traditional big living houses into small ones. This effort at changing houses was pushed by epidemical factor. People should be introduced into a healthier way of life. This is the political aspect of this development. This is the political design by political power, colonial government.

There is factor that coming from the dynamics of local culture and religious sense of Manggarain, which has its own horizon for the life of people. Local genius agents of Manggarain see this whole process of cultural encounter as a possibility of enhancing the quality of Manggarain lifestyle. This is cultural aspect of this development. Missionaries pay attention to the study of language and culture for the sake of the word proclamation. And local genius-agents contribute this process as a way of materializing and perpetuating culture through the modern means of knowledge. On the one hand, local-genius agents try to find their best of culture to be used as cultural means of word proclamation. They try to find it in their whole rituals of life cycle. On the other hand, missionaries (the external agents of the process of transformation) take all the positive aspects of local culture as means for word proclamation. They try to use those rituals as natural gate to enter into the heart of people. This is the internal religious and theological aspects of this development.

There are two horizons in this whole process of encounter and transformation. On the one hand, there is the horizon of European Christian missionaries (supported by government). On the other hand, there is the horizon of Manggarain, with their cultural life in the broadest sense of the word. Those two horizons fuse to each other in one drama of cultural encounter. Following the hermeneutical discourse of Gadamer, I would like to say that, the fusion of those two horizons results in the emergence of a new face of unique local and contextual Christianity. In its uniqueness and locality, it has also something to be contributed to the universal church.

These are 'theories' of Manggarain religious shift into Christianity (Catholicity). Manggarain drama, of course, is not an isolated event in the world. There are a lot of similar stories in the world of this religious shift. These world-wide stories are most valuable as cultural and anthropological comparison to make clearer my way of investigating the religious change in Manggarai.

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Endnotes:

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2   See Paul F.Knitter, *Introducing Theology of Religions*, 2003, New York: Orbis Books.

3   The fact that Hinduism and Buddhism were spread out of its original cradle of India throughout Asia, show their natural tendency as missionary religion want to proselityze others.

4   See the study of Chua (2012), Dubois (2009), Steenbrink (2006), Boelaars (2005), Hefner (1993), Aragon (2000), Kipp & Rodgers (1987).

5   See Steenbrink 2006:698ff.

6   The term proposed by Boelaars OFM Cap., 2005:19. In North American context, George A.Tinker (1993), talks about the missionary conquest; it is said the coming of mission is a dead for native American cultural life; there happens the cultural-genocide.

7   Respectively see Aragon 2000:84; Pedersen 1970; Hefner 1993:99-125.

8   See Bettray 1974:1261; Toda 1999:327.

9   See the study of Kristiyanto 2009:64-73; Kim 2008:72-73; Boelaars 2005:61-67; Muskens 1973:60-70, Heuken 2011:26-37, Steenbrink 2006(1):135-151.

10   That is why 2012 is considered as the centennial anniversary of Catholic Church in Manggarai. In October 2012 there was a celebration in Ruteng of this historical event.

11   See Bettray 1974:1254-1255; Kristiyanto 2008:66-73; Jehandut 2012:39; Steenbrink 2006 (2):185-199.

12   See Toda 1999:329.400; also Steenbrink 2006(2):194-195; 200.

13   See Webb 1900:1; also Erb's article, "Catholic and Identity in Manggarai," p.8.

14   See Steenbrink 2006 (2): 137-138.

15   Kartodirdjo 1966:104-139.

16   Steenbrink 2006 (2):138-139.

17   Steenbrink 2006 (2):139-140.

18   Steenbrink 2006 (2):141.

19   See Azra in Aritonang & Steenbrink 2008:9-22: "1530-1670: A Race between Islam and Christianity?" He quoted the race-theory of Schrieke, *Indonesian Sociological*

Studies. 2nd parts. 1955-1957. The Hague/Bandung: W.van Hoeve. K.Steenbrink also presupposes the existence of this race; see Steenbrink 2006:143.

20   See Steenbrink 2006 (2):142.

21   See Erb 1999:92; Bettray 1974:1277-1278; Toda 1999:242.362.

22   See Erb 1999:93; Verheijen 1991:25; Steenbrink 2006(2):197-198.

23   See Toda 1999:331.362; Allerton 2013:161-165; Rigg 2002:619-610.

24   See Toda 1999:329; and Steenbrink 2006(2):195-196.

25   See Erb 1999:93; and Toda 1999:362.

26   See Toda 1999:331; Steenbrink 2006 (2):194-198; Connolly 2009:179-185.

27   See Hefner 1993; in Introduction, Hefner refers to Weber (1956) and Horton (1971;1975).

28   Their perspective will be complemented by the perspectives of participant observers, or those who wrote some historical insights on Manggarai. Those points will be elaborated in the next part; I forward the study of J.A.Verheijen, W.van Bekkum, D.N.Toda, R.Lawang, H.Daeng, K.Steenbrink, and M.Robot. The insights of Weber and Horton are based on the book of Robert Heffner, especially its Introduction, by R.Hefner himself (1993).

29   See Hefner 1993:3-46.

30   This terminology can pose a problem, as if only they are the religions existing in the world; indigenous religions also exist in the world. But those great religions have a world-wide presence and followers. It had spread to various places, while indigenous religions only exist in their own place and space.

31   See Hefner 1993:14; quoting Bellah 1964; 1965; Geertz, 1973.

32   See Hefner 1993:14, quoting Weber 1956:125.

33   See Hefner 1993, quoting Geertz 1973:174.

34   See Hefner 1993:20-21.

35   See Horton 1971, 1975a, 1975b.

36   See Hefner 1993:22.

37   See Hefner 1993:23, quoting Fisher, 1985:153.

38   See Hefner 1993:23.

39   See Gadamer 2006:305.

40   We see this three phenomena in R.Hefner (1993), in three studies: the eagernes to accept Christianity (pp.47-128), the selective mentality (pp.129-232), the rejection toward Christianity (pp.232-322).

41   See Hefner 1993:24 quoting J.Goody 1986.

42   See Hefner 1993:24, quoting White 1988.

43   See Toda 1999; also DuBois 2009.

44   See Aritonang & Steenbrink 2008:9-22; Steenbrink 2006:157-199; the first two names are not participant observers. They, however, wrote historical books on Catholics in Indonesia (Steenbrink) and on the history of Christianity in Indonesia (Aritonang & Steenbrink). There is one chapter in those books dedicated to the description of Christian development in that region.

45   See Steenbrink 2005:157-165; also Bettray 1974:1261-1262.

46   See Steenbrink 2006:157-158; also Bettray 1974:1269-1273; and Jehandut 2012:40-45.

47 See Steenbrink 2006:196-197; also Bettray 1974:1269-1273; and Jehandut 2012:43-44.

48 See Steenbrink 2006:194; also Bettray 1974:1261-1265.

49 See Steenbrink 2006:194-195; also Bettray 1974:1262.

50 See Bettray 1974:1262; Robot 2008; Muskens 1970; Verheijen 1991.

51 See Bettray 1974:1273-1275.

52 M.Robot describes that one of the early preacher of Catholic faith, whom earlier was an adherent of local-indigenous religion (*atawoni*), return to this early local-indigenous religion, which similar to the tenets of Islam; it is interesting, however, that he still retain his baptismal name; this is a unique combination in Ntaram, the object of his research (Robot 2008:247-256).

53 See Verheijen 1991:41.

54 See H.R.Niebuhr 2001:101-108.

55 See H.R.Niebuhr 2001:116-148.

56 See Erb 1989:54; Bettray 1974:1269-1273; Janggur 2010:5.

57 Other components are *Lingko* (farming field) *Wae Teku* (natural fountain for drinking water), *Natas labar* (public space, in the center of village), *Mbaru Gendang* (house to keep communal-traditional music instruments: tambourines, gongs, etc).

58 See Verheijen 1991:155-159.

59 See Verheijen 1991:156. Besides *compang* there are also *langkar*; it is a place in the middle of a house where family have place for sacrifice (Erb 1999:107). This place is used every day. Usually they put some part of what they eat (*helang*) for ancestors (Janggur, 2010:131).

60 See Bettray 1974:1272, quoting the practice of P.Thoolen SVD; Daeng, 1989:277; Allerton 2013:117.

61 In this case Mgr.W.van Bekkum's roles (among others) were important. But I should mention also his percursors like Father Frans Dorn and Joseph Glanneman.

62 See H.Daeng 1989:267-294.

63 The first two levels are the cultural forms (the first level), structural integration (the second level), and finally psychological integration. See (1993:249-291) Louis J.Luzbetak SVD, 1993. *The Church and Cultures, New Perspectives in Missiological Anthropology*, NY: Orbis Books.

64 See Schreiter 1985:12.28.31.

65 See Bevans 2005:119; selections are mine; cfr.Bettray 1974:1271.