

Indigeneous Communal Pastoral in the Dalihan Natolu Kinship System

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ABSTRACT

The Communal-indigenous Pastoral Paradigm is a pastoral theology attempt in the encounter of between Communal Pastoral Theology and the Dalihan Natolu kinship system of Batak culture. Indigenous Communal Pastoral is originally rooted and born from the local wisdom designed for the society and socio-culture of a community that has a system of values and beliefs as well as philosophies. These values and philosophies can be assimilated and integrated to build a contextualised pastoral approach. Indigenous Communal Pastoral combines and adjusts existing customary and cultural approaches and dialogues them with the perspective of Pastoral Theology. The research method used in this study is descriptive qualitative research method through literature study. The purpose of writing this article is to see how Indigeneous Communal Pastoral in the Dalihan Natolu kinship system as a form of local wisdom of Batak ancestral heritage represents pastoral assistance.

Keywords: communal pastoral, indigenous pastoral, customs and culture, dalihan natolu kinship system

Published Online: June 2022

ISSN: 2828-5492

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I. INTRODUCTION

Churches that theologise and are exclusively built affect the way they view the world around them indirectly. A church should be inclusive and try to live in the context of the culture and society so that she can relate the gospel with the people in their context.¹ Churches in Indonesia cannot be separated from colonial influences, therefore they must struggle to become an "ethnic" church that lives out its indigenusness in accordance with the context in which the church is present and at service for the people. In line with the criticism raised by Benjamin Fleming Intan, the influence of colonialism in evangelism in this country has

produced a pietist theology that emphasises *personalistic, spiritualistic, otherworldly* and *futuristic understanding of Christian faith and life*. Theology that emphasises piety and personal faith but ignores the social (cultural) realities around it is considered as an unfitted theology.²

Theology should be an open dialogue, listen to and accept social institutions of good will, this way, the church continues to proclaim the goodness and teach the love of Jesus. By doing it, theologians encounter the concrete realities of people's lives and reflect them in the light of life-transforming faith. Dialogue with reality wrapped in culture is a hermeneutic in theology that demands a willingness to listen to

¹Alexander Stevanus, *A Critical Theological Analysis of the Contextualisation Understanding of Church Leaders of the Assemblies of God in Tomohon City*, Euangelion-Journal of Christian Theology and Education, Vol.1 No.1, 2020

²Benjamin Fleming Intan, *Christian Missions in Indonesia: A Protestant Christian Testimony*, SOSIETAS DEI: Journal of Religion and Society: Vol.2 No.2, 2015

the history and life experiences of the people. And therefore, the proclamation of the church will be more targeted and contextualised.³

In its development, pastoral services which have been carried out by the church could not possibly achieve her goals if the church only focused on individuals' problems without paying attention to the system or environment where they live. This realisation comes along with the changing of the view that man is merely as the only target of pastoral care. Human beings cannot only be understood as a *living human document* as initiated by Anton Boisen which was long used in the pastoral world. This view is very closed-minded, and does not give any rooms to see that human's experience is also related to the influence of various external factors that must also be taken into account. Human existence can be understood in its relation to the other factors that are outside of itself while taking into account the influence of external factors that exist in humans, that is the culture.⁴ Therefore, pastoral theology should be *polyperspectival* to accommodate *indigenous* cultural traditions. The above issues must get a theological response. Modern and contemporary pastoral theology should provide a space to develop pastoral assistance that is *indigenous* as in how theology interprets elements of Batak culture in the Dalihan Natolu kinship system which is communal in an *indigenous* pastoral perspective. For this reason, the researcher

wanted to see how the *Dalihan Natolu* kinship system as a form of indigenous pastoral in a communal pastoral paradigm is contextualised in Batak culture.

II. METHODS

Research on Indigenous Communal Pastoral in the *Dalihan Natolu* kinship system uses a descriptive qualitative approach method by collecting data based on factors that support the object of the research through existing literature.

III. DISCUSSION

Looking at the context in Indonesian with its strong communal values, a model of caring community-based pastoral care can be developed emphasising participation and collaboration between individuals. Meanwhile, community-based ministry is a realisation of the development of the contextual communal paradigm in pastoral theology discussions which can be understood as a form of attention and care carried out in the context of ecclesial services.⁵

Biblically, the principle of pastoral care can be seen in Genesis 1:26-28: *The great confession underlying this concept is that God's Word reveals that He is a caring God who created a community to interpret His word in a way that gives power in human life. The interpretation of this verse suggests that man's responsibility is not to dominate and take control but rather to nurture.*

³Puplius Meinrad Buru, *Theology in a Multicultural Indonesian Context*, Ledralero Journal, Vol.19, No.1 June 2020

⁴Pattison, *A Critique of Pastoral Care*. London: SCM Press. 1988, pp 88-95

⁵Alvian Apriano, *KURIOS (Journal of Theology and Christian Education)*, Vol.4, No.2, October 2018.

According to Joseph Sittler, the word *dominion* is an attempt to directly translate from Latin into English. In English *dominion* means to *rule* but this is a mistranslation. In Hebrew, 'And God said you are to care for the earth and keep it in good order.' The latter translation is more correct. Humans have a pastoral role from dominion to care or in other words, humans have been given the duty to care for life on earth.

John Patton in his book *Pastoral care in Context: An Introduction to Pastoral Care* raises issues of race, gender, power, social problems and morality to discuss the significance of pastoral care with a contextualised communal approach. The contextual communal pastoral paradigm as pastoral care is a form of Christian community service that takes its place in the view of what God has done for humanity. God is the God who cares and nurtures his creation. Humans as *Imago Dei* should play the same role for their neighbours⁶. In line with the above understanding, Graham in his book *Transforming Practice: Pastoral Theology in an Age of Uncertainty* cited by Lartey states that the main focus of pastoral theology is not on pastoral agents but on pastoral practices in the Christian faith community itself.⁷ The notion of pastoral care is based on the theological conviction that care for fellow communities is possible because we are held in God's memory. Therefore, as members of a caring community, we must show that we care by listening and remembering one

another as God always cares for us. God created human beings for a relationship and He keeps in touch with us by hearing, remembering and encountering us through our relationships with one another.⁸

The contextualised communal paradigm views pastoral care as a ministry of the Christian community by remembering what God has done for us, remembering who we are as God's people and hearing and remembering those we serve. This paradigm has grown out from the weaknesses of the definitively constructed paradigm in the previous pastoral lexicons. In it, there is an opportunity for anyone in the church to be involved in pastoral ministry. It still encourages the quality of the pastor as a guide but does not intervene freely in the ministry. This shift was first reviewed by Seward Hiltner who asserted that those who could be involved in pastoral ministry were not only limited to the ordained office, but also by the congregation with whom the pastor and the ordained ministry performed their ministerial duties. However, he does not go to the extreme of stating that the pastor's portion of responsibility has become slightly less, but rather that the pastor still has a greater obligation than the congregation in this ministry. Based on this shift, a new view has emerged that pastoral care is about *growing together*. This paradigm emphasises pastoral care with an emphasis on the dynamic aspect of community. This definition adds to our insight

⁶ John Patton, *Pastoral Care in Context: An Introduction to Pastoral Care*, Westminster: John Knox Press 1993, pp 15-17

⁷ Emmanuel Y. Lartey, *Pastoral Theology in an Intercultural World*, Canada : The Pilgrim Press, 2006, p. 27

⁸ John Patton, *Pastoral Care in Context: An Introduction to Pastoral Care*, Westminster: John Knox Press 1993, pp 15-17

in the search for a communal value-based pastoral model. Pastoral care is also related to God's call for believers to live and grow together in the community. Paul's theology of the Body of Christ (Col 2:19; Eph 4:16) becomes a fundamental foundation of faith when talking about community as the basis of pastoral care. Furthermore, the body of Christ welcomes anyone from any background, any ethnicity, and any type of ministry into the church. Thus, people are called to embody the body of Christ.⁹

The contextualised communal pastoral theology paradigm explains the overall background of life, life events as well as the environment and circumstances relevant to the problem at hand. Contextualisation understands that social situations in their uniqueness demand the thoughts and actions of the church as a reflection of faith for a *re-membering* community of God's people and a *remembering community* in care.¹⁰ Clebsch and Jaekle explain that pastoral care is not only limited to pastors, but also by the representative Christians who are by *de facto* and *de jure* able to apply the resources, wisdom, and authority of Christian faith and life to people in trouble. Pastoral care is thus also seen as part of the responsibility of the church community as a whole. *There is therefore a need to organise the church community into a caring community and a healing community so that the church can develop community-based pastoral care to address various humanitarian issues.*¹¹

Dalihan Natolu- Local Wisdom in Batak Society

One of the cultural values that the Toba Batak people are proud of is the *Dalihan Natolu* social relationship system, which is manifested in a very strong kinship relationship based on blood descent (genealogical) and marriage that applies to this day. The Batak culture *Dalihan Natolu* symbolizes the three elements is often translated as the term of the three-legged hearth which function as guidelines that regulate, control and provide direction to the behaviour and actions (attitudes or action patterns) of the Toba Batak people. Therefore, *dalihan natolu* is a cultural system that for the Toba Batak people the value it contains becomes the order of life and at the same time becomes a motivation in behaving as well as a bond of social and cultural cohesion. Batak Toba people live the *dalihan natolu* as a triangular cultural value system that provides guidelines for orientation, perception and definition of reality or existence.¹²

The Batak philosophy describes the attitudes and responsibilities between these three elements as *Somba marhulahula* (to be respectful or courtly towards the relatives of the wife's surname and those of the same clans), *manat mardongan tubu (dongan sabutuha)* (to be mindful, vigilant, careful towards people who have the same clan as the patriarch surnames), *elek marboru* (to have the nature of nurturing and encouraging towards wife or women particularly

⁹ Alvian Apriano, *KURIOS (Journal of Theology and Christian Education)*, Vol.4, No.2, October 2018

¹⁰ John Patton, *Pastoral Care in Context: An Introduction to Pastoral Care*, Westminster: John Knox Press 1993, p. 40

¹¹ Clebsch, William A, and Charles R. Jaekle, *Pastoral Care in Historical Perspectives*. New York: Harper and Row Publishers. Page 4-5

¹² Armaidly Arnawi Journal, *Toba Batak Local Wisdom Dalihan Natolu and Good Governance in Public Bureaucracy*, Volume.18 2008

from the husband's sisters' relatives). Firstly, *hulahula disomba* (hulahula is respected). In the philosophy of the Batak people *hulahula* is even seen as *debata na tarida- the visible god*, meaning that a *hulahula* is a divine figure who has incarnated and can be seen. This philosophy causes a paradigm for the Batak people that the prayers of the *hulahula* are very influential and powerful. *Hulahula* is seen as a source of supernatural power they can give blessings to their *boru*. *Hulahula* is seen as an element that is specialised to receive special *sahala* (authority) beyond the *dongan tubu* and *boru*. The *sahala* of the *hulahula* is perceived to be able to influence and save the *boru*. *Hulahula* is seen as a conduit of blessings. The Batak people even have a proverb that says *hulahula so badaan, habiaran ma tondina*, which means that *hulahula* should not be disagreed or do bad deeds to, they must be highly honoured. The *hulahula* is given the responsibility to solve the *boru's* problems. When his *boru* has problems financially, misfortunes, and others then the *hulahula* has both moral and material responsibility to help. Secondly, the kinship created in the element of *dongan sabutuha* can be interpreted from its literal meaning, which is a fellow of one stomach or born from the same womb. *Dongan sabutuha* does not only apply to people born from the same mother (one womb) but also to everyone of the same clan/ the patriarch surnames. *Dongan sabutuha* must be *manat* or conscious, taking

care of each other in kinship not hurting each other and damaging the kinship. Finally, the *boru*, the philosophy for *boru* is *elek marboru*, meaning having an affectionate or patient attitude to nurture the *boru*. *Boru* is divided into two parts, namely *hela* (the son-in-laws) and *bere* (children from the sister's family from the husband's side). Compared to the position of *hulahula* and *dongan tubu*, *boru* is a position that is considered as the lowest, because they must have the attitude of submitting to *hulahula* and the responsibility to serve, as *parhobas* or *silojaloja* (people who do all the work in every *hulahula's* traditional party). A *boru's* seating position is always at the back of the meeting room because of its duties as *parhobas- the one that serves*. For their position, the *boru* are often seen identical to *hatoban* or slave. There is a Batak philosophy that says *durung do boru, tamburan hulahula*, meaning that *boru* is like a net to catch fish and the *hulahula* is a storage to contain the caught fish.¹³

This system of values and norms is passed down from generation to generation, creating a pattern of socio-cultural life. With this system of values and norms comes an intense social interaction, a feeling of togetherness, cooperation and peace, all of which constitute the local wisdom. The socio-cultural system is passed down from generation to generation so that the local wisdom is preserved and grows in the community.¹⁴ Local wisdom can be

¹³ Ruth Debora Butarbutar, *Dalihan Natolu as a Toba Batak Kinship System and its Reconstruction Based on Christianity's Theology of Friendship*, *Journal of Religion and Culture*, DHARMASMRTI, Vol.20, No.2, October 2020

¹⁴ Oloria malau, et al, *Local Wisdom of the North Tapanuli Community as a Vehicle in Building Religious Tolerance*, Immanuel, *Journal of Theology and Christian Education*, Vol.2 2021

understood as advice, orders, norms, and ancestral behaviours that are still urgent to apply in managing various phenomena. Usually the term of local wisdom is applied to the reciprocal relationship between humans and their environment. Humans as the subjects who influence the environment and as the objects that are influenced by their environment. Local wisdom is environmental wisdom in the form of values. In general, local wisdom is defined as wisdom in traditional culture. In essence, local wisdom is the wisdom from the ancestors.¹⁵ Thus, local wisdom is the ability of a region to absorb and conduct the selection and management of external or foreign cultural influences, so as to achieve a new form of creation that is not found in other regions. Since humans are bound by culture, it fosters a sense of loyalty, gives confidence and courage to interact with other cultures.¹⁶

The Theological Meaning of Dalihan Natolu

In the Christian concept, friendship is the deepest expression of love. The concept of friendship is demonstrated in God's act of accepting people as His friends. Friendship in love removes barriers between friends. Friendship is established in equality. The equality lies in the willingness of a person of higher dignity, with more wealth and anything that comes with the identity of *superiority* to give

in. There is nothing more beautiful than a friendship. On the other hand, equality means not regarding to become unworthy a person who has an inverse status. This concept of kinship is what Jesus demonstrated when He chose human beings to be His friends. He in His divine nature came and embraced man in their sinfulness and unworthiness. He also chose His disciples to be His friends despite the different status between Jesus and the disciples. Jesus showed a kinship that did not take place as a leader to his subordinates but as an egalitarian friend. With the differences in status that existed between Jesus and His disciples, Jesus referred to His disciples as friends not as servants. This designation aims to provide a balanced, egalitarian and horizontal relationship. There are two attitudinal transformations carried out by Jesus to become a friend of His disciples. Firstly, by changing people's understanding of their perspective on status. Kinship is not bound by status. Jesus abandoned the identity of *lordship* and embraced the *servanthood* instead. The second transformation is to leave out the *servanthood* and embraced *friendship* with God through Jesus Christ. These two transformations are not contradictory, but rather show that change happens from both sides. The relationship by eliminating *servanthood* is greater and becomes a more important form of relationship by making Jesus a friend.¹⁷

¹⁵ Askandar K, "The Role of Cultures and Religion in Promoting Peace." (2006): 25–27.

¹⁶ Wajidi, "Hubungan Islam Dan Budaya Dalam Tradisi Ba-Ayun Maulid Di Masjid Banua Halat Kabupaten Tapin, Kalimantan," *Penelitian Sejarah dan Budaya* (2014) (Journal of Social and Cultural Anthropology) Vol.6, No.2 2021: 350–354.

¹⁷ Ruth Debora Butarbutar, *Dalihan Natolu as a Toba Batak Kinship System and its Reconstruction Based on Christianity's Theology of Friendship*, *Journal of Religion and Culture, DHARMASMITI*, Vol.20, No.2, October 2020

Kinship in Christianity is a "mutual" harmony based on love. Love plays a big role in kinship. Jesus connects this by showing the meaning of friend and love that comes from one root word. The Latin word *amicus*, meaning friend, comes from the word *am*, meaning love, and *amicitia*, meaning friendship comes from the word *amicus*. Love which comes from the word *reassen* and *affection* is the source of friendship, and the foundation of friendship must be laid in love. This reminds us of Indonesian words that often describe the closeness of people in their friendship, namely: *kerabat*, *akrab*, and *karib*. These words have the same root as sacrifice in Arabic and Hebrew, *qrm*, means sacrifice. Based on this word analysis, He shows that kinship is a form of *relationship* characterised by the willingness to sacrifice one's life for his friend. Companions show a higher level of helpfulness, because that is how the first woman was created to be a helper. Helping and being helped is not an indication for strength and weakness, but rather an indication that the second human being was created from the substance of the first human being to show that humans are egalitarian.¹⁸

Indigenous Pastoral Perspective

Building contextual pastoral theology can be achieved by accommodating the communal role of indigenous people who make use of local traditions, experiences of faith and experienced

circumstances that affect the complex situations lived out by these communities.¹⁹ *Indigenous Pastoral Theology* is an attempt at contemporary pastoral theology in building an understanding/knowledge of religion, customs and culture that become the orientation of life in a culture that is rooted in cultural and religious life. The traditions that exist in a culture may undergo transformation when the presence of religion causes tension between indigenous theology and the values of the Gospel in Christianity could have a serious impact on the religious and cultural orientation lived by the community.²⁰ *Indigeneous* theology is one of the theologies that developed in Asia which was born from the theological struggles of minority groups of permanent residents in one region (indigenous people). The perspective of indigeneity is the speciality of the idea built by Wati Longchar quoted by Jan S, Aritonang to emphasise identity (*who we are and how we define ourselves*). Thus, Wati Longchar seeks to express Christian faith in socio-culture and the vital source for the *Indigeneous Theology* is the experience of the people and their connection to the environment where they live.²¹

Indigenous pastoral care is rooted and born from local wisdom designed for the society and socio-culture of a community that has a system of values, meanings, and beliefs and philosophies. These values and philosophies of

¹⁸ Ruth Debora Butarbutar, *Dalihan Natolu as a Toba Batak Kinship System and its Reconstruction Based on Christianity's Theology of Friendship*, Journal of Religion and Culture, DHARMASMRIT, Vol.20, No.2, October 2020

¹⁹ Robinson Simanungkalit, *The Pastoral Role of the Pushers in the Sigapiton Conflict (Looking at Contextualised Communal Pastoral*

Theology in Sigapiton), Journal of Cultivation Theology, IAKN Tarutung, Vol.3, No.2, 2019

²⁰ I Nguh Suryawan, *The Birth of the Happy Age. Transformation of Indigenous Theology in the Land of Papua*, Walisongo Journal of Sociology, Vol. 1 No.1 2017

²¹ Jan S, Aritonang, *Contemporary Theologies*, Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 2018, p 421

life can be assimilated and integrated to build a contextualised pastoral approach. Itsar Bolo Rangka, in his article entitled *Indigenous Counselling: Reconstructing Counselling in the Midst of Cultural Diversity*, said that the *indigenous* concept is eminently possible to implement considering that Indonesian people are *indigenous people*, people who still uphold customs as the main element of culture. Pastoral or *indigenous* counselling emphasises local wisdom, such as customs, values, norms are considered good in an area of a community. Rangka reiterated that the *indigenous* process aims to reconstruct certain knowledge and its derivatives that are appropriate or suitable for the culture where the knowledge is applied. *Indigenization* is pursued by: first, *indigenization from within*, the application of theories, concepts, and methods of counselling science originating from the *indigenous* community itself, by the *indigenous community* itself, and for the community itself. Second, *indigenization from without*, which is the development of pre-existing scientific theories, concepts, and methods that are purely from outside the *indigenous community* but are intended for the *indigenous community*.²² *Indigenous* pastoral combines or adapts existing traditional approaches, by incorporating cultural and religious materials so that expected behaviours can be shaped; pastoral approaches that are in accordance with the dominant culture in the local community; and

adopting elements of local culture that are still being implemented to serve as the basis for counselling. In other words, the counselling approach depends on the client's cultural perspective, the cultural context, and the living environment and resources available. By utilising values, beliefs and culture and combining the dimensions of pastoral counselling, it is possible to achieve more appropriate pastoral counselling goals. In other words, through *indigenous*, a community group or individual experiencing problems can be assisted and helped based on local understandings, principles and practices.²³

Functions of Pastoral Care

In pastoral care, there are four functions that are always used to help. *First*, pastoral care serves to *heal*. In this sense, healing refers to the possibility of positive effects arising from the pastoral relationship and to the wholeness or integration of a person with regard to his or her spiritual health and well-being in the broadest sense. Clebsch and Jaekle put it this way: "healing is a pastoral function that intends to address a person's imbalance by restoring his wholeness and leading him forward beyond his previous condition. This function is rooted in scripture which refers to Exodus 15:26, "I am the Lord who heals you".²⁴ *Second*, pastoral care functions for *sustaining*. In this case, sustaining means comforting and strengthening that people

²² Damaiyanti Sianga, *Batak Manulangi Ritual in Batak Culture as Indigenous Pastoral in Huria Kristen Batak Protestan*, *Anthropos: Journal of Social and Cultural Anthropology* Vol.6, No.2 2021

²³ Damaiyanti Sianga, *Batak Manulangi Ritual in Batak Culture as Indigenous Pastoral in Huria Kristen Batak Protestan*, *Anthropos: Journal of Social and Cultural Anthropology* Vol.6, No.2 2021

²⁴ William A. Clebsch and Charles R. Jaekle, *Pastoral Care in Historical Perspective*, London: Jason Aronson Inc, 1994, 33-34

feel from pastoral relationships when they are in distress because they experience loss, grief and suffering. This function is particularly relevant to help people who are experiencing situations or circumstances that can no longer be changed, for example due to grief, incurable diseases and other circumstances that can no longer be changed. The scriptures recognise various words for comfort. In the Old Testament, the word *nicham* literally means "to make breathing again" in the situations of distress and suffocation. In the New Testament, the term *paraklein* has the meaning of *admonish* and *comfort*, both of which imply revival. Clebsch and Jaekle distinguish the support in four tasks. Firstly the duty to care and to support the person who has experienced a loss so that he or she does not sink too far and the grief is overcome as much as possible. Secondly, the consolation to the extent that the sufferer is open to it. Thirdly, the stabilisation which seeks to mobilise and reorganise the remaining energy so that the person can deal with the situation including situations that can no longer be changed. The last task is the recovery when the person begins to build a new life plan based on the new situation so that they can live it well.²⁵ *Third, the* pastoral ministry function is to *guide*. In this case, guidance means the directions that can arise from pastoral relationships in which people feel supported in order to make choices and decisions

based on their worldview and thereby develop in terms of independent spiritual functioning. Clebsch and Jaekle formulate guiding as a function of ministry that cares for souls by achieving a certain wisdom with regard to what one should do when is faced with difficult problem of choosing between various possible thoughts or actions.²⁶ *Fourth, pastoral care* also functions to repair relationships/ reconcile. In this case reconciling means the possibility of pastoral relationships intended for people who have been alienated from each other and from themselves or from God to rediscover themselves, experience acceptance and forgiveness and thus begin to learn to live with new relationships.²⁷ *Fifth, the* nurturing function aims to enable individuals to develop fully in the various stages of life that must be passed even though the stages that must be passed are very difficult.²⁸ In addition to this, there are other experts who add other pastoral functions. One of them is Emmanuel Lartey who added the function of *liberating* and *empowering*. This function is to help a person become a helper for himself in the future when facing difficulties.²⁹

In the *Dalihan Natolu* communal kinship system, there are values that are relevant to pastoral functions, such as: the value of kinship, love, solidarity and care, which are *empowering* as a community that cares for each other. The *Dalihan Natolu* kinship system is also related to

²⁵ Gerben Heitink, *Basic Functions of Pastoral Care*, Yogyakarta: Yogyakarta Pastoral Centre, 2001, pp14-15.

²⁶ William A. Clebsch and Charles R. Jaekle, *Pastoral Care in Historical Perspective*, London: Jason Aronson Inc, 1994, 42-46

²⁷ Gerben Heitink, *Basic Functions of Pastoral Care*, Yogyakarta: Yogyakarta Pastoral Centre, 2001, p. 25.

²⁸ Gerben Heitink, *Pastoral Series 327: Basic Functions of Pastoral Care*, Yogyakarta: Yogyakarta Pastoral Centre, 2001, 9-10.

²⁹ Emmanuel Y. Lartey, *In Living Colour: An Intercultural Approach to Pastoral Care and Counselling* (London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2003, p. 62

the function of *sustaining*, which can be seen in the implementation of traditional events that are nuanced in misfortune or experience calamities as a form of compassionate care. A form of social empathy towards fellow community members (re-remembering). This concept of sustaining (read: mangapuli) is carried out by the three elements of *Dalihan Natolu* (*Hula-hula*, *Dongan sabutuha*, *Boru*). In every traditional occasion, the boru must be active in the success of the party that is being held by the Hula-hula by carrying out their responsibilities to take care of the consumption needs at the events. The role of *Dalihan Natolu* also represents a guiding function, in which *Hula-hula* can guide *his boru* in giving advice and praying for *his boru*. *Elek marboru*, which means having a loving/patient/nurturing attitude to persuade *boru* that can be interpreted as a guiding function. As has also been described earlier that for the Batak people the prayer of the *hulahula* is very influential and powerful. The *Hulahula's* role in praying for the *boru* is also a guiding function, especially when the *Hulahula* is seen as an element that is specialised to receive special *sahala* (authority). *Dongan sabutuha/Dongan tubu* must be mindful of each other, taking care of each other in kinship so as not to hurt each other and damage the kinship. Likewise, among the fellows of the *Dongan Tubu* (brothers), they must be able to guide each other to achieve goals in the implementation of adat. This *Dalihan Natolu* cohesive system can maintain (*as its*

nurturing function) the Batak customs by strengthening kinship and solidarity between the *Hulahula*, *Dongan Tubu* and *Boru* so that there is no disunion in their kinship system. All aspects built in the *Dalihan Natolu* kinship system actually represent the implementation of existing pastoral assistance functions.

Analysis

The cultural approach in *indigenous* pastoral care can be carried out because culture affects human social life communally and individually. Rituals in culture are also able to deal with personal, family, and group problems because culture contains values to unite. Aart Martin van Beek asserts that the pastoral approach does not only emphasise understanding the church with its dogma and theology, but also with its customs, although both must be dialogued. In addition, forms of communication conducted through culture or customs are also easier for indigenous communities to accept because these customs are part of themselves.³⁰

Jan S. Aritonang writes that the term context refers to what surrounds a text. Context means the parts of a word that precede and follow the text that are useful for understanding the text. The term context indicates the social, cultural situations in which events occur. Theological texts enter the context through traditions, faith experiences and circumstances that then influence the complex situations. Contextual theology means theology that takes two things

³⁰ Art Van Beek, *Pastoral Care*, Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 2015 pp 52-54

into account: both the past experiences of faith as recorded in the Scripture that continues to be maintained or preserved in tradition and the present human experience or the contexts. Human experience includes both individual and collective experiences such as success, failure, brokenness, death, etc. that allow or hinder people to experience God in their lives. Furthermore, social location is also another factor that limits and differentiates the places from which contextual theology is initiated and practised. All these things demand the sensitivity of a theologian because how theology is done, what is the content and function of theology depends entirely on the sensitivity of a theologian to recognise the context.³¹

Customs as socio-cultural activities including cultural ceremonies or rituals develop into traditions and contain values that are difficult to eliminate so that they are passed down from one generation to the next. These customs are manifested in various practices that they carry out since growing in the womb until they die. The characteristic of communality is very strongly attached to the practice of Batak life, moreover, the Batak people themselves are more afraid of being called uncivilised than unreligious. Adat is a habit that firmly organises all life in all aspects and in all relationships.³² In line with this, Lartey sees the empowering pastoral function as complementing to the previous five functions regarding the social pastoral care which is

focused on transforming the systems that affect people's lives. This is done in conjunction with the efforts to use resources outside the person in order to find greater freedom and participation in society.³³

IV. CONCLUSION

The church must reconstruct its approach to theology, especially in the context of Batak customs and culture. The concept of theology that is built must be rooted in the customary and cultural values of the Batak people which store a wealth of local wisdom in the communal social building of the *Dalihan Natolu* kinship system. Practical Pastoral Theology must accommodate *indigenous* cultural values contained in the *Dalihan Natolu kinship* system that represent pastoral functions (guiding, repairing relationships, empowering, supporting, etc.). This paper shows that the Pastoral approach through the *Dalihan Natolu kinship* system of the Batak community is highly possible to do as an effort to do *indigenous* communal Pastoral Theology because the Batak community has very strong communal ties in living out their customs and culture in the practice of the *Dalihan Natolu* kinship system.

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³¹ Jan S. Aritonang, (Peny), *Contemporary Theologies*, Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 2018, pp 245-248

³² Lothar Schreiner, *Adat and the Gospel, The Encounter of Adat with Christian Faith in the Land of Batak*, Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 2019, pp 220-221.

³³ Lartey, *In Living Colour: An Intercultural Approach to Pastoral Care and Counselling* (London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers. 2003, pp 62-68

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