

Cross-Cultural Pastoral: The Practice of Indoor Grave Traditions

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KEYWORDS	ABSTRACT
Pastoral, Pastoral Across Cultures, Traditions	The Sangihe tribe of North Sulawesi practices indoor graves as a hereditary tradition, perceived as natural and harmonious with daily life. Despite its cultural significance, this practice raises questions about its alignment with Christian teachings and modern norms. This study explores how the GMIST Getsemani Salurang congregation reconciles the tradition with faith, aiming to develop a cross-cultural pastoral model that respects local wisdom while fostering theological reflection. A qualitative case study approach was employed, with data collected through interviews with congregants (e.g., Inyong, 60; Andri, 72) and analysis of church practices. Thematic analysis was guided by Niebuhr's "Christ and Culture" framework. Indoor graves are viewed as acts of familial love and respect, not ritualistic worship. The church adopts a transformative pastoral approach, balancing cultural preservation with theological discernment. The research offers a model for religious institutions to mediate tradition and modernity, emphasizing cultural sensitivity in pastoral care. It contributes to broader discussions on indigenous-Christian syncretism in Indonesia.

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Introduction

Indonesia as the largest archipelagic country that has more than 17. 000 islands, is the birthplace of such a rich and diverse culture (Delvi, 2022a, 2022b; Engel, 2016a). Starting from Sabang to Merauke, there are thousands of customs and ethnicities that are different from each other. This diversity is reflected in various aspects of people's lives, ranging from ethnicity, religion, language, customs, art, to culinary. Each region has its own uniqueness and characteristics that make Indonesian culture so colorful and rich.

Through this article, the author wants to raise how the tradition of graves is carried out by the Sangihe tribe (Aart, 2017; Abineno, 2010; Anouw & Pattiata, 2024). The Sangihe tribe is one of the tribes in North Sulawesi Province, which inhabits the Sangihe Islands Regency. The Sangihe archipelago district is located between the islands of Sulawesi and Mindanao (Republic of the Philippines), so the Sangihe archipelago district can be referred to as a border area. In addition to the border area, there are two other characteristics that are quite significant to distinguish this

Regency/City from others, namely Sangihe Islands Regency as an archipelago and an area prone to natural disasters.

The uniqueness of the cemetery tradition in the Sangihe tribe environment is that the cemetery is only located in the yard of the house and there are even some in the house, the cemetery is used as a place to relax, the cemetery is used as a nap, the cemetery is used as a place to eat, the church is adjacent to the tradition of the Sangihe tribe cemetery, the cemetery is not regulated by the government even Christians do not consider such a tradition to be contrary to Christian teachings and this is not the case It was discussed in a congregational assembly (Engel, 2016b; Harianto, 2021; Hasan & Susanto, 2021).

The author chooses to focus on the tradition of the Sangihe tribe's graveyard, the reason is that the scenery has its own characteristics compared to cemetery traditions in general. In this article, the author only explains two cases, namely the first case named Inyong aged 60 years, When the wife died buried in the house. The second case is named Andri, 72 years old, who was abandoned by his grandson by suicide and then buried in the house.

Although there has been no other research on the practice of tardisi graves in the home, there have been other writings using a cross-cultural pastoral approach (Ibrahim, 2018; Pranata, 2021; Ronda, 2015). Bertha Titaley et al. in their paper "Cross-Cultural Pastoral Service for the Baduy Tribe in the Face of Modernization" emphasizes the influence of modernization that often causes dilemmas with the existence of customary rules. Cross-cultural pastoral assistance in the study plays a role in aligning the benefits of modernization with the preservation of customs and traditions through guidance, nurturing, healing, and nurturing (Ijong et al., 2020; Rumahorbo, 2020).

Furthermore, Nila Delvi in her writing emphasized the analysis of the role of Sikerei and the tradition of traditional medicine so that it becomes a medium for the church to provide cross-cultural pastoral assistance and counseling. Sikerei is believed to be a gift given by the Lord Jesus, so the church must open itself and have a dialogue in evaluating the relationship between the church tradition and the healing tradition . Based on this, the author feels the need to analyze the practice of tardisi graves in the house which is studied from cross-cultural pastoral. Thus there will be a new finding in the cross-cultural pastoral study for the congregation as an enlightenment in responding to tradition from the point of view of Christianity. The new findings intended by the author are a new model for church pastoral that weaves together the local wisdom of the grave in the home or constructive theology (Makbul, 2021; Nurdiana, 2020; Syarifuddin, 2021; Titaley et al., 2024; Vidmar, n.d.). Where this model is an approach that tries to integrate theological teachings with local wisdom in a more holistic and contextual way. In this regard, the pastoral of the church not only conveys universal religious teachings, but also seeks to understand and respect the cultural practices that exist in society, while maintaining the core of Christian teaching.

The current research on the indoor grave tradition of the Sangihe tribe within the GMIST Getsemani Salurang congregation offers novel contributions compared to prior studies like Bertha Titaley et al.'s work on the Baduy tribe (2024) and Nila Delvi's analysis of Sikerei healing traditions (2022), as it uniquely (1) focuses on burial traditions as an understudied aspect of indigenous-

Christian integration, examining their theological and social acceptability; (2) proposes a constructive theological model integrating local wisdom (indoor graves) with Christian teachings, advancing pastoral sensitivity beyond prior conflict-resolution or healing-focused frameworks; (3) documents unprecedented generational and spatial dynamics, such as graves serving as communal spaces for relaxation or worship seating; and (4) applies H. Richard Niebuhr's "Christ and Culture" typology, introducing a new theoretical lens to Indonesian pastoral studies.

Materials and Methods

The research approach is qualitative. According to Sugiyono, qualitative research is a research method used to research on the condition of natural objects, and the researcher himself as the key instrument, the data collection technique used by triangulation, the data obtained tends to be qualitative data, the data analysis is inductive or qualitative, and the results of qualitative research are to understand meaning, understand uniqueness, construct phenomena and find hypotheses. Meanwhile, according to Ibrahim, the qualitative approach is a way of working research that emphasizes the aspect of deepening data to obtain the quality of the research carried out. The qualitative approach uses descriptive words or sentences, starting with data collection to interpreting and reporting the results of the research. This is in line with Yusuf's opinion who said that qualitative research emphasizes the search for meanings, understandings, concepts, characteristics, symptoms, symbols, or descriptions of events that are natural and then presented in the form of words (Kuantitatif, 2016; Susilo, 2018; Yusuf, 2016).

The method chosen is a case study. According to the Committee on Javanese case study methods, a case study is a step or process of managing cases scientifically (sophisticated) based on reflections. Through this research process, the researcher describes things in a complex way, observes words, systematic reports from informants and conducts studies on natural circumstances. In this case, the researcher focuses on two informants as members of the GMIST Getsemani Salurang congregation.

Results and Discussions

Cross-Cultural Pastoral

According to the explanation in the Indonesian Latin Dictionary, the term "pastoral", this word comes from the Latin word "Pascare" which means to shepherd, nurture, care, maintain, feed. This is where the term "Pastor" emerged, which is a term for people who do pastoral or "pastoral". The most important thing for a pastor or pastor is that he has the task of curing spiritual illnesses with God's Word where a pastor must really know each member of the congregation he is serving so that in his ministry he can provide the right medicine.

According to Abineno, a pastor when carrying out pastoral duties, he must direct his attention to humans as a figure or individual in all relationships or social relations and even part of his ministry. Pastoral is one of the ministry activities that focuses on the life of the church or community with the aim of improving services both in quality and quantity. Pastoral ministry is the church's effort to help and heal, both individually and in groups, in order to thrive in the life of the community. In pastoral relationships, accompaniment is not only intended to ease the burden

of suffering, but to place others in relationship with God and others, in the sense of growing and condemning people in their spiritual lives in order to build and nurture relationships with others, experience healing and growth and restore people in relationship with God.

Pastoral assistance is a measure of church service that must be carried out because as long as in the world people will not be free from conflicts, crises, and even unexpected problems. Through pastoral ministry, counseling can help when dealing with conflicts in their lives. Therefore, in this activity, a relationship or mutual communication is very necessary. Counseling is an accompanying party or who is responsible for pastoral service. Although it does not mean that the counselor is not responsible, but for a decision to be left entirely to the counselor, the counselor only guides and accompanies the counselor. Everyone who has responded to God's grace, he must perform the task of pastoral ministry. Because pastoral ministry is not only the responsibility of pastors, pastors or clergy, but for all believers who are called to carry out the pastoral task. Pastoral ministry is not only to provide relief from the burden of suffering, but it can position a person in the relationship or relationship of God with man or in the understanding to grow and condemn people in their spiritual life in order to foster and build good relationships with others to find the process of healing and growth and can provide human recovery in relation to the Creator, namely the Lord God.

In essence, pastoral care is to pay attention to the people that God entrusts to a shepherd or pastor to be nurtured, such as "feeding, nurturing, protecting, and leading the congregation. According to Ellen G. White, a true shepherd will be concerned with the welfare of the sheep, it concerns feeding, guiding, and defending them. Meanwhile, according to Bons Storm, the essence of shepherding is a method that can help everyone to realize how they relate to God and teach people to acknowledge their obedience to God and their neighbor.

Cross-cultural pastoral is a process that takes place in the background of different cultural environments, genders, races, ages, economies and others. In this case, counselors and counselors come from different cultural backgrounds and perform in different places. For an effective cross-cultural pastoral ministry, a counselor must be able to understand personal values and his or her opinion about human beings in behaving and realize that each human being is different. Pastors who are pastors in the congregation must be able to be leaders who can manage the development and progress of the spiritual values of the congregation and should be able to set a good example through attitudes, behaviors and actions. To the leaders of the church, God gives the mandate for the responsibility of caring for His people because it is very important and every person must be led to be able to practice the truth of God's Word in daily life.

The role of pastors as social figures in religious society is expected to show a quality attitude. A pastor is expected to be able to adjust to the general customs that exist in the community. Hopefully the pastor can meet the general standards that apply in the community. Cross-cultural pastoral is an activity or effort to give. Provide services to individuals in diverse cultural backgrounds and adapt to them. It is affirmed that God's grace is present in the midst of every nation. culture, if the servant is willing to learn from other cultures, then the servant sees quickly God's gift that cannot be judged. Culture itself is very important to understand. This cross-cultural ability has a crucial role in overcoming the possibilities. Conversations that arise between

individuals who work together in different cultural realms. Cross-cultural pastoral suggests a cultural sensitivity in its implementation. In other words, counselors must have sensitivity to the culture that exists in the midst of society.

Tradition in Christianity

Sometimes people think that tradition and culture are the same so it is not surprising that in everyday use, people usually synonymize the definition of culture with tradition (tradition). Tradition in this case is interpreted as the general ideas, attitudes and habits of the community that are seen from the daily behavior that becomes the habit of the group in the society. Even though culture is different from tradition. Culture can include science in it, while tradition cannot include science in the tradition. Humans and culture are two things that are very closely related to each other. Tradition is a cultural heritage that is closely intertwined with the life of the community, influenced by the customs and heritage of ancestors. The relationship between tradition and culture is intertwined.

In his book, he said that as it has been widely understood, that Indonesia is an archipelagic country which is filled with hundreds or even thousands of small islands. As an archipelagic country, it is certainly inhabited by a variety of different tribes and ethnicities, so that this has an impact on the emergence of diversity of social systems and structures, diversity at the vertical and horizontal levels. At the horizontal level, Indonesia's diversity can be traced by looking at the plurality of cultures, customs, and traditions that are widely spread throughout Indonesia. Even to the most sacred dimension, which concerns the aspect of faith or religion, where Indonesia has many world religions such as Islam, Catholicism, Protestant Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism, Kong Hu Chu to the religion of belief which is considered the oldest religion that really comes from the earth or the ancestors of the archipelago.

The salvation of Christians is only in Christ Jesus has been ordained by God to be the way of atonement by faith, in His blood. He did this to show His justice, because He had forgiven the sins that had occurred in the past in the time of His patience. With His death and resurrection, Jesus became the way for man to return to God as there is in the Gospel of John chapter 14:6 which says "Jesus said to Him "I am the way of truth and life. No one can come to the Father except through Me.

Rev. Padoli wrote like this, how does the Christian faith highlight human traditions? Either by being tolerant and then compromising with human traditions, or even throwing away all traditions for fear of disturbing the Christian faith. Padoli further quotes in the Gospel of Mark 7:6-23 "how the Pharisees thought about tradition, they believed that their tradition represented the same authority as scripture. The Pharisees believed that God gave the written Torah (Genesis-Leviticus) and the Oral Torah (the tradition of the elders). The oral tradition is divided into six parts and contains laws and traditions about agriculture, celebrations, celebrations, about women, civil and criminal law, sacred things, sacred rituals. Judging from their skin, these Pharisees did practice their religion, but what they believed was not the Word of God, but their traditions all along. God's

commands were completely ignored, he worshipped God, but his heart was very dominated by existing traditions.

5 points of view on Christ and culture

Professor of Christian theology and ethics H. Richard Niebuhr (1894-1962) for 31 years at Yale University. In his most famous work entitled "Christ and Culture" he writes about 5 widely accepted points of view as follows:

1. Christ against culture
2. Christ and culture are two contradictory things. Christ is considered to be against culture. Where this attitude will view that the gospel message is always contrary to culture.
3. Christ of culture
4. Christ and Culture are harmonious. Christ was born from culture, therefore his message can be seen in terms of culture. Then it is aligned with the message of local culture or local culture. Nevertheless, Niebuhr still views loyalty to Christ as having to be more numbered than the local culture.
5. Christ on culture
6. Jesus Christ is united with culture. The gospel can adapt to and within cultures. Christ and culture have the same mindset.
7. 4. Christ and culture in Paradox
8. Jesus is contrary to cultural opinion, but the fact is that it contains the truth between Christ and culture. Christ and culture will not be able to go together, so these two things must be separated.
9. 5. Christ Transforms Culture
10. Christ renews culture and culture to Christ's. Niebuhr understood that the Christ who transforms culture will be better when he encounters Christ. In this model culture has been transformed by Christ and Christianity has become a new culture.

So based on the view that has been conveyed by Niebuhr, basically the five points of view on culture and the gospel can be a basic pattern of thought that can be used to see how culture and the gospel are related. When looking at the tradition of in-house burials in the Sangihe tribe, five perspectives of Christ and culture provide various perspectives in responding to this phenomenon. The most relevant approach is how the church can play a role in slowly transforming culture without creating a sharp conflict with indigenous peoples. The church can be a bridge that educates the congregation to understand that the Christian faith does not eliminate culture, but refines and renews it according to the truth of God's word.

Based on the results of research on the traditional practice of cemeteries in the house, the author analyzes several things, including:

Placing graves in a house is something that is no longer normal for the Sangihe tribe. For foreigners (outside the Sangihe tribe) indoor graves may be unusual. In the place where the author conducts research, many consider the grave to be like a decoration for them. The more beautiful the grave that is arranged, the more comfortable it will be. Because in the cemetery they can sit and

relax, in the cemetery they can sleep and if there is a worship fellowship if the seats provided are not enough, they will use the cemetery as a seat during worship.

This tradition has been carried out since ancient times or since they were born into the world, this tradition has indeed been done. It can be said that this has become a hereditary habit. When studied in depth, those who choose to practice the practice of burial at home have various reasons, including as a form of respect for family members who have left them first. Then as a form in which they love the dead very much. Placing graves in the house so that they can still see the dead even though they are only living in the grave.

Graves placed in the house are considered not to disturb the lives of others. That's why as long as it doesn't disturb the peace of others' lives, it means there are no problems. This is also what makes the traditional practitioners take it for granted because the graves are not placed in other people's neighborhoods but their own. That is why most of the residents at the research site admitted that the grave was a "house flower".

Perhaps in the eyes of others, the perpetrators of the tardison of the grave in the house have something to do with the act of ritual practice. But it has nothing to do with it at all. They still believe that God Almighty is the one who preserves their lives. They do not think at all that the dead will provide help for them. So the placement of graves in the house, apart from being a habit that has been done for generations, is also seen as a form of respect, a form of affection for deceased family members. In addition, the grave in the house is seen as a place that is not scary, but rather a place to sit and relax, sleep, and decorate the house.

Conclusion

The tradition of indoor graves among the Sangihe tribe, particularly within the GMIST Getsemani Salurang congregation, is a deeply rooted cultural heritage perceived as natural by its practitioners, requiring the Church to engage with cultural sensitivity to promote enlightenment and constructive values. Future research could explore *"The Role of Religious Institutions in Mediating Tradition and Modernity,"* focusing on how the GMIST Church balances cultural respect with theological and practical concerns, its strategies for engaging congregants, and generational shifts in perception. Using qualitative interviews, comparative analysis, and theological-cultural studies, this research would offer insights for churches, anthropologists, and policymakers on preserving tradition while fostering dialogue between faith and modernity.

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