

Traditional Tunes Transformed

Resonances and Dissonances between Theology and Lived Religion
in the Protestant Church on the Central Moluccas



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Figure 1 - Classroom Contextual Theology (photo by author)

Abstract

This anthropological research studies the contextualization of church music. At the theological university in Ambon (the Moluccas, Indonesia), UKIM, theologians are developing contextual theology based on the living cultural context of Moluccan Christians. Theologian and musician Christian Izaac Tamaela taught and instigated the transposition of Moluccan traditional music to the Moluccan Protestant church, the GPM. This research asks how traditional music as framed within contextual Moluccan theology is interrelated with lived religion. It traces the grammar and lexicon of the contextual discourse in relation to religious attitudes and practices among UKIM theologians and students, pastors, GPM officials, church council members, congregants, and musicians. Moluccan contextual theology, religious practice in congregational life, and Moluccan traditional music are analyzed. The concept of ‘the Moluccan traditional’ is introduced to disclose the resonances and dissonances between Moluccan theology and lived religion. Defined by openness and mixing, the traditional refers to the process by which a cultural form becomes seen as traditionally Moluccan. It is argued that the implementation of traditional church music depends on a distance between theological innovation and original ritual context. The theological idea is fully brought into practice by resonances between conceptualizations of key terms in the contextual discourse. The recently established ethnic worship service is identified as having the potential to bridge idea and practice when it catches the flexibility of the traditional. Through the entanglements between traditional music, Moluccan culture and Moluccan Christianity, mediated by the ancestors, traditional church music can arouse a sense of Moluccanness.

Keywords: Contextual theology, Traditional music, Traditional church music, The Moluccan traditional, Lived religion, Contextual discourse, Transformation

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Figure 2 - Chris Tamaela teaching the contextualization of church music (photo by author)

I can worship the Lord as a Moluccan. With my face, with my hair, with my heart, with my mind, with my smile, with my voice, with my singing, with my dance.

Christian Izaac Tamaela – 2019

Small drops of sweat slide down from under his headband along his concentrated face

With his palms down he lowers his arms

Guided by his movements we don't move

The colorful place slowly becomes silent

While holding the ukulele he opens his hands and raises his body

We take a deep breath

Lifting our instruments to our heart we wait

On his sign we sound

Nature, drum and shell mix into music

With our eyes fixed on his passion we play

And together we start singing

Through the songs we are surrounded by the sweetness of Ambon

By the memories of our childhood and the taste of traditional food

In the Lord Jesus we are all brothers and sisters

Bamboo hits bamboo, the *pong pong* hits the floor

The calling sound of the echoing *tahuri* fills the room

The gong and *tifa* run the rhythm

We are the colors

His energy conducts our hands, our legs, our voices

We step back and forth in a dancing circle of traditional clothes

His smile and our smiles connect in a harmonious space of the love for music

He is the theologian and musician Chris Tamaela

We are his students - standing, singing and sounding in a classroom

This is Moluccan traditional music

An indescribable feeling of joy runs through my body

The lesson culminates in a cacophony of musical density

Following Chris' ascending and descending fingers we alternate between loud and soft

Until the sound of our instruments slowly fades away

Only in absolute silence the eyes are opened

Introduction

The above described experience marks the musical heart of this research and my anthropological fieldwork in the Central Moluccas, Indonesia.¹ The class by theologian and musician Chris Tamaela is called ‘Contextual Theology’ and takes place at the theological university in Ambon, the *Universitas Kristen Indonesia Maluku* (UKIM). Our performance was an examination at the end of a series of lessons on how to use traditional Moluccan music in the Moluccan Protestant church. Dr. Tamaela taught his students how to theologize in a contextual way with a specific focus on music. He introduced them to the traditional instruments and their sounds, their playing techniques and their rhythms. As a researcher I was part of his group of students. During his lessons I learned about contextualizing traditional Moluccan music. I learned to sing three songs: *Papaceda*, *Manise Manise*, and *Dalam Tuhan Kita Bersaudara*.² I learned to play several traditional instruments, such as the *bambu goyang*, the *toleng-toleng* and the *pong-pong*. I also learned about clothes. At the time of the examination everyone was obliged to wear traditional Moluccan costumes. The colorful combinations and variations were a beautiful sight. The students wore many typical blouses, the *baju cele*, with a colored blocked motive in red, blue, light green or black. The girls who originally are from other parts of the Moluccas represented their birth place with extensive garments. Tanimbar, located in the south of the Moluccas, has one of the most outstanding dresses, with long red scarfs draped around the upper body in a triangle-shaped form, finished off with long golden earrings, a headdress and a half-moon jewelry on the forehead. *Pak*³ Chris lent the blouse of his wife to me, which fitted me perfectly. He also brought red headbands and green tree leaves for everyone. The bands were folded horizontally and tied around the head, with the leaf vertically put behind it. As a unity in diverse colors we played, sang and danced barefooted on the upper level of the UKIM campus, slightly afraid of another earthquake but strengthened by the joy of the music. Although this is not my cultural and musical tradition, the shared experience of the lessons, the sounds and words I was able to create and the way I looked made me definitely feel part of the group. It is one of my most

¹ In this thesis the word ‘musical’ refers to the adjective of music. Moreover, although it may seem that the words ‘research’ and ‘thesis’ are used arbitrarily, they are not. Research is the overarching term for the whole research project, including the design, fieldwork and thesis. Thesis refers to the written result of the research project; it refers to this document.

² These songs are about childhood memories, about traditionally made food, about the way parents are valued, about the sweetness of the place where Moluccans live, and about the unity of people in God.

³ ‘Mister’ in the Moluccan dialect.

cherished and happy moments during the fieldwork because it touched the core of my interest in this research. Here I was, learning traditional music, just like everybody else. Music that, according to Chris Tamaela, should be transposed to the Moluccan Protestant church, with pastors in the making knowing how to produce this transition. What does it mean when traditional music constitutes a theological innovation? When it is taught to a new generation of young theology students? When it moves from its 'original' context to the church?

In many Western and non-Western contexts people, organizations and nations are in the process of coming to terms with their colonial history as colonizer or colonized.⁴ The process of decolonization is as complex as it is important. It takes place in the many corners of society where museums, universities and public spaces are confronted with their colonial roots. A sphere that is often forgotten in debates about decolonization is Christian religion. Not only is the concept of religion itself a Western-Christian construct (Meyer 2012; Hann 2014; Keane 2002), but Christianity became a colonial product when in many parts of the world colonization provided the context for the work of missionaries who set sail for the newly 'discovered' and conquered regions (Chidester 1996; 2010; Koschorke 2012). These religious histories continue to exert influence up to the present and are important to take into account when addressing colonial legacies.

An influential group of people seeking answers to questions of colonial Christianity are theologians. The development of so-called Third World Theologies addresses the search for self-identity located in the traditions, cultures and social worlds in which Christians live, thereby rejecting theological agendas that are set by the West. A place where one is currently occupied with the development of such a theology are the Moluccas. Referred to by Westerners as the 'spice islands', they are indicative for theological developments in Indonesia, because they are one of the rare regions where an Indonesian-ethnic theology is being built and exercised in interaction with international theological debates (Brinkman 2007, 218-219). Having been colonized by the Dutch for centuries, Calvinism became firmly rooted in Moluccan society. Dutch-Calvinist missionaries pursued a policy of complete displacement of the *agama Nunusaku*, the pre-Christian indigenous religion that was qualified as 'paganism' (Patty 2018, 57). Nevertheless, the Moluccas stand in a unique relation toward

⁴ Parts in this introduction include copied material from the proposal for this research that I wrote for the course 'Doing Research' in the first year of the Research Master Religious Studies (course lecturers: Christoph Baumgartner and Jo Spaans).

the Netherlands nowadays, since a large group of Moluccans forms the only Moluccan diaspora in the world which is permanently settled here.

Moluccan theology aims at the contextualization of Christianity in Moluccan culture. Moluccan identity forms the framework for developing a theology in accordance with the experience of believing of Moluccan Christians. This development is an iterative process. Theological thought influences religious practices and attitudes, while religious practices and attitudes inform theology. Although it is necessary to understand the viewpoints and works of Moluccan theologians in order to see how they contribute to an academic debate on postcolonial religion, it is equally important to study laypeople and how they themselves deal with the colonial history of the church. Therefore, the aim of this research is to gain insight in the relationship between contextual Moluccan theology and lived religious attitudes and practices. Within the larger framework of Moluccan contextual theology, the focus of this research is traditional music. As one of the more concrete materializations of this theology, music evokes questions of religious practice, experience and identity that are central in understanding the overarching phenomenon of religious contextualization.

Moluccan contextual theology on the Moluccas stands in relation with the foundation of the Moluccan Theological Council in 1992 in the Netherlands.⁵ Moluccan theology and churches were experienced to be replicas of the Calvinist Dutch church frozen in colonial time (Ririhena 2014, 23). The perceived incongruence between Protestant theology and Moluccan church life led to the wish to develop a theology that incorporated Moluccan culture (Miedema & Ririhena 2014, 7). In light of theological cooperation between the MTB and the GPM (Protestant Church of the Moluccas) on Ambon, several Dutch-Moluccan and Indonesian-Moluccan theologians obtained their PhD at the theological faculty of the Vrije Universiteit (VU, Amsterdam) in the past six years. One of them is Chris Tamaela, who argues for the contextualization of traditional music in the GPM. Tamaela (2015, 14) encourages the GPM to “foster the development of contextualized church music and liturgy, so that Moluccans can clearly understand the meaning of the Gospel in its worship services, as it is expressed through local cultural forms such as music, dance, arts, symbols, and local languages.”

The work by Tamaela forms the starting point for this research because of the focus on the contextualization of traditional music within Moluccan theology. The research asks how

⁵ *Moluks Theologisch Beraad* in Dutch (MTB).

traditional music as framed within contextual Moluccan theology is interrelated with lived religion. Therefore, the theological interpretation and legitimization of Moluccan traditional music is studied. Since the Moluccas have a centuries-long history of hybridization, it is important to understand what is meant by ‘traditional’. Moreover, in a complex interreligious context where different opinions and interpretations are available, the theologians have to legitimize their ideas in relation to actual religious practices and attitudes among pastors and church communities. Questions of identity formation play a large role in this since the reevaluation of traditional music is situated on the interface of ethnic, religious and national identity. In this condition of tension and negotiation, a discourse originates regarding the interaction between theology and practice. This research traces the transformation of this discourse among theologians, clergy, church members and musicians. The focus on theologians and music makes the ‘direction’ of the research innovative in two ways: firstly, it starts at the level of the educated theologians and hereby corrects the ‘still lingering reluctance to study elites’ among anthropologists (Robbins 2006, 286), countering dominant anthropological preferences towards mere ‘bottom-up’ perspectives. Secondly, religion is studied through music. Because music on the Moluccas is intimately related to daily social and religious life, this perspective uniquely provides insights into Moluccan cultural identity and religious practice.

Anthropology of theology: theoretical embeddedness and relevance

This thesis is embedded in three academic fields based on place, topic, and focus. Firstly, because Christianity is studied in a local, non-Western context, the thesis is situated in the frame of World Christianity. The term ‘World Christianity’ refers to the increasing awareness that Christianity is not a Western religion,⁶ and that one can better speak of ‘Christianities’ in the plural (Phan 2008, 27-28; Frederiks 2009). World Christianity is mainly situated in a multireligious, postcolonial, and multicultural context (Phan 2008, 43). The field seeks to understand Christian communities, faith and practice as they are found on six continents, expressed in diverse ecclesial traditions, and informed by the multitude of historical and cultural experiences in a globalizing world (Irvin 2008, 1). To grasp the meaning of this diverse and open-ended actuality, one needs to attend to the interplay between indigenous cultural appropriation and World Christianity in its variety situated in local realities (Irvin

⁶ Even more so since nowadays the center of gravity of Christianity has shifted to the ‘Global South’ (Phan 2008, 28).

2008, 11). Peter Phan (2008, 35-39), who focuses on doing theology in World Christianity, identifies several specifically Asian resources as Christianity moves out of its hegemonic Western cultural context. Together with Christian sources of scripture and tradition, contextual realities have to be used, such as “the cultures of peoples, the history of their struggles, their religions, their religious scriptures, oral traditions, popular religiosity, economic and political realities and world events, historical personages, stories of oppressed people crying out of justice, freedom, dignity, life, and solidarity.” An important point is the idea that ordinary people themselves, both Christian and non-Christian, form a resource for theology related to World Christianity: “The totality of life is the raw material of theology” (Bevans 2018, 168). This research studies Protestant Christianity in the locality of the south-east of Indonesia that continues to be appropriated by Moluccans in their own dynamic and diverse cultural experience. Although the Moluccas have not been given elaborate academic attention, this thesis builds on several, mainly historical, studies of culture and Christianity in Indonesia in general and the Moluccas in particular.⁷ The thesis thereby contributes to the anthropology of Christianity in Indonesia. Especially in the Pacific context, Christianity is often regarded by anthropologists as a colonial product rather than as ‘authentic’ local culture: “Christianity is the perennial outside force – threatening, corrupting, or merely dusting the surface of the authentic focus of anthropological concerns. In and of itself, it is of no interest. It can never become cultural” (Robbins 2004, 27-28). The anthropological tendency to recoil from hybrid cultures prevents a serious understanding of people who are living their lives in part in Christian terms (Robbins 2004, 29, 31). Focusing on the relation between Christianity and Moluccan culture in the context of a history of colonialism and contact, this thesis contributes to a reorientation in anthropological work on Christianity among non-Western groups.

Secondly, the overarching topic of contextual theology relates the thesis to the field of Third World Theologies. Third World Theology replaces theological agendas that are set by the West with agendas that come from different questions asked in different contexts (Parratt 2004, 7). Although all theology ultimately is ‘contextual’, determined by its specific historical situation (Parratt 2004, 3), for long Western theology has been the normative backdrop for theology in general. The guiding principle in Third World Theology has therefore been that of contextuality (Parratt 2004, 13). Another present issue in doing Third World Theology is the situation of religious plurality, especially in Asia (Parratt 2004, 7). These characteristics are

⁷ Aritonang & Steenbrink 2008; Schröter 2010; Bartels 1994.

apparent in Moluccan theology as well, that searches for a basis of cultural self-identity which on the Moluccas is set within an interreligious environment. This environment mainly consists of Muslims and other Christian denominations, as well as mixed influences from centuries-long intercultural religious contact.⁸ Apart from theology, contextual theologians also make use of social science to evaluate the context (Parratt, 2004, 8). As an anthropological study situated in the field of religious studies, this thesis inverts this relation, by ‘evaluating’ and understanding Moluccan theology in interrelation with religious practices of laypeople. In line with what Carroll (2017, 2) states, a reappraisal of what theology is within ethnographic practice is necessary when theology is something present in the field site.⁹ Studying theology as a socio-cultural phenomenon which informs Moluccan Christian culture, this thesis contributes to the scholarly dialogue between anthropology, religious studies and theology. Theology thus is not ‘the other’ against which religious studies is defined, but regarded as a relevant field in interdisciplinary communication on the understanding of religious life. As has already briefly been touched upon, for a long time anthropologists rarely studied mainstream Christianity at all, because the discipline was understood as the study of ‘other’ cultures and societies, and Christianity was deemed to be a Western phenomenon (Robbins 2017, 238).¹⁰ Although nowadays anthropology pays more academic attention to religion and Christianity in particular, theology has so far not been an area of interest in such studies (Robbins 2013, 329-330; Robbins 2017, 239). However, Robbins (2013, 329-330) states that one of the new ways “of taking religion seriously is to assume that theology is an important part of it, and not only a matter of interest to elite intellectual specialists.” Theology should therefore be seen as “the wide range of places one can find either implicit or explicit expressions of well-developed religious ways of thinking that demand to be taken seriously as intellectual positions” (Robbins 2013, 330). Focusing on theology in context, this anthropological research will introduce a new dimension in the anthropology of Christianity:

⁸ An author who is often referred to among Moluccan theologians involved in the process of doing contextual theology is Martien Brinkman (2007), whose concept of ‘double transformation’ is taken up fervently. Brinkman studies new inculturations of the meaning of Jesus in non-Western cultures. Double transformation takes the central stage here, which is a creative process that does not leave either side – the adopted concept and the new context – untouched (Brinkman 2007, 38). With respect to the Indonesian case, Brinkman (2007, 237) regards contextual theology as interreligious dialogue and states that “the Indonesian Jesus always leads us not only to the treasures of Indonesian culture but also to those in international Christian-Muslim dialogue” (Brinkman 2007, 215).

⁹ Being used, discussed, and engaged with by individuals who clearly are not ‘elites’.

¹⁰ Keane (2007, 33), however, precisely claims a virtue in this ‘lack of drama’, especially concerning the Reformed Church. The seeming ordinariness of this church can show the quality of everydayness in which religion has some of its most important consequences: “Some of the most momentous historical processes take place at the level of everyday life.”

the anthropology of theology. Although theology has been anthropologically studied, these inquiries have mainly focused on theology ‘on the ground’ among laypeople. This research explicitly takes as a starting point the place where theological innovation is produced and discussed in order to be able to trace the relation between idea and practice in a content- and context-based way. Moreover, since religious practitioners are “as fully intellectually involved with the world as are those of us who study them”, a focus on the intellectual side of religion next to “the body and its habits, routines, affects, and experiences” can complement the more mainstream interest of the anthropology of religion in the latter (Robbins 2013, 331).¹¹

Thirdly, the focus on music places the thesis within the academic practice of musicology. There is very little detailed field research on music and its context in *Maluku* (Kartomi 1994, 3).¹² The main reason for this has been the scholarly focus on ‘pure authentic musical forms’ (Barendregt & Bogaerts 2013, 12) while the Moluccas know a centuries-long history of musical hybridization. ‘Purists’ feared so-called pollution that would disrupt musical hierarchies and notions of authenticity. Musicologists therefore had very little affinity with hybrid genres which to many were an outright degradation of local arts (Barendregt & Bogaerts 2013, 12). One of the few scholars who focuses on the Moluccas is Margaret Kartomi. Giving insight in various music cultures in the province of *Maluku*, Kartomi (1994, 145) states that “*Maluku* contains many diverse micro-musics, each based on a unique, creative synthesis of local traditions and outside influences.” Round and martial dances, bronze gong-chimes, drum ensembles, indigenous flutes, reed and string instruments as well as instruments from European and Middle-Eastern origin are widely distributed all over the Moluccas, with the *tifa* drum being the dominant musical instrument (Kartomi 1994, 145).¹³ As Kartomi (1994, 145) makes clear, many Moluccan musical forms are linked to religious practices and this research studies religious practices through music in the context of postcolonial theology. Because “a great deal of fieldwork (...) into the musical styles,

¹¹ Robbins (2013, 331) recognizes that a focus on religious embodiment in contemporary anthropology of religion is important to challenge mind/body dualisms, however he questions how fully we as researchers ourselves have accomplished this on the level of our own unchallenged prejudices, “such as those that make other people’s religion a matter of the heart and not the head.”

Also, the research focus on theological institutions and practices addresses a fervently uttered critique about ‘culturalist’ tendencies in the anthropology of Christianity (Robbins 2014, 162).

¹² The Indonesian term for the Moluccas.

¹³ With respect to Central *Maluku*, Kartomi (1994, 155) explains that the performing arts, including church music, are influenced by European models and local versions of dances and music that were popular in Holland in the nineteenth century. Nevertheless, some of the pre-Christian ancestral, ritual musics and dances are well-preserved, especially on the island Seram (Kartomi 1994, 155, 162).

repertoires, objects and social context of the thousand islands in *Maluku* remains to be carried out if this province is to become musicological *terra cognita*” (Kartomi 1994, 144),¹⁴ this field research addresses the lack of musical knowledge in providing detailed musicological information on hybrid Moluccan (church) music.¹⁵ Nevertheless, attention is also paid to the broader sociological and political aspects of music. Music forms the starting point for drawing a larger analytical picture on religious-musical issues in historical and contemporary Moluccan society. As Barendregt and Bogaerts (2013, 1-3) state, music may offer possibilities to study colonial and postcolonial life, and the intricate power relations involved. Indonesian-Dutch musical encounters can give insight in religious contestations, innovations and transformations as well as the structures behind discourses about these issues in a national, postcolonial context. Music can thus be considered to be “a particularly useful prism through which to study mutual forms of Indonesian-Dutch heritage” (Barendregt & Bogaerts 2013, 4). The study of the discourse and practices of implementing a musical-theological innovation in the Moluccan Protestant church is situated within a historical colonial and contemporary postcolonial context of contact, globalization, modernity and nationalism, which brings broader contested discursive questions of tradition, heritage, politics and religion forward. Music can hereby act as a ‘sonic monument’, resonating encounters and offering a window to changing presents (Barendregt & Bogaerts 2013, 26) and pasts that continue to be present.

Theoretical and methodological stance and aim

This is an anthropological research about the interaction between theology and lived religion with a focus on music. Theology is approached as an ethnographic object. Theological insight and practice is included in the social scientific study of religion and theology is regarded as part of larger local cultural systems. I follow Robbins in the idea that theology can be read as “data that can inform us about the particular Christian culture that produced it” (Robbins 2006, 286). In this research theology is used as socio-cultural data that travels and is produced through various layers of voices of people – theologians, clergy, musicians and church members – which gives insight in the ethnographic-theological interrelation under study. The dialogical theme which forms the focus here is music. Music is studied by using two additional theoretical-methodological approaches deriving from the fields of religious studies and musicology. The first is ‘cultural musicology’, which uses both ethnographic and

¹⁴ Known territory.

¹⁵ A focus on musicological information also responds to the expressed regret of Barendregt (2014, 33) that many music studies have purely focused on political and sociological aspects, to the exclusion of musical structures. This research tries to counter this tendency by doing both.

musicological techniques (Merriam 1960, 5), and regards music as a physical, psychological, aesthetic, and cultural phenomenon (Hood 1957, 2). The second is ‘material religion’, which means studying religion through the vector of practices and other media by which religion becomes tangibly present (Meyer 2012, 7). As an auditive practice and activity, music is the medium through which religion is studied.

Material religion aims to correct the Protestant bias in the study of religion. It counterbalances the tendency to emphasize text and inner belief over practice and lived religiosity (McGuire 2008; Meyer et al. 2010), asking how religious actors use and create material culture to shape their religious world and identity (Morgan 2015; Vásquez 2011). In this way the definition of religion is framed in proposition rather than in opposition to materiality (Meyer 2008, 227).¹⁶ As materiality is inextricable from religion, religion should be seen as a network of people, divine beings, institutions, things, places and communities (Meyer 2008, 209): “there is no such thing as an immaterial religion” (Meyer 2010, 210). Material forms engage bodies, sensations, feelings and experiences. The body is trained to mediate between the immanent and transcendent, leading to embodied practices which involve all the senses. Embodied practices link the material aspects of people’s lives with the spiritual (McGuire 2008, 13). In the same light, already in 1992, the American theologian Bevens wrote that one of the internal factors for the imperative of contextual theology is the sacramental nature of reality: “The doctrine of the incarnation proclaims that God is revealed not primarily in ideas but in concrete reality. (...) Encounters with God and Jesus continue to take place in our world through concrete things” (Bevens 1992, 8). His words point to the idea that mediation underlies theology, just as material religion points to the same idea in religious studies. Religion is not an absolute entity; the transcendent becomes present in concrete reality through material mediation. Bevens (1992, 8) also names several clear examples: “God is encountered in the poured water of baptism, in the remembering of the Christian community gathered around the table with bread and wine, in oil given for healing or as a sign of vocation, in gestures of forgiveness or commissioning.” The quote demonstrates the indispensable role of the body and the senses in mediating religious experience through material forms. Although the statements made by Bevens are rooted in doctrinal and theological reflections, while material religion works from an empirical perspective,

¹⁶ Which makes more than sense according to Keane (2008, 230-231), because beliefs always take a material form: “materiality is a precondition for the social circulation and temporal persistence of experiences and ideas (...). Perhaps the very idea of the immaterial is ultimately an effect of reactions to materiality.”

conceptual similarities about religion are apparent.¹⁷ The fundamental difference between the disciplines – centered around religious truth claims or claims about the existence of God – does not need to be a reason for non-communication between the two. Especially since theology incorporates perspectives from other disciplines, such as anthropology and religious studies (many contextual theologians at UKIM have even studied these disciplines), and since religious studies by definition is an interdisciplinary field, a dialogue would prevent similar trains of thought running separately from each other, mutually benefitting the development of insightful ways of thinking about religion. Furthermore, the imperative for contextual theology that Bevans talks about is in itself a similarity with material religion. In the same way as the term material religion functions as a corrective but actually is a pleonasm because religion always is material, theology also always is contextual: “there is really no such thing as theology, but only contextual theology” (Bevans 2018, Xii). Bevans even seems to support the correction of the Protestant bias by negating the primacy of ideas over material reality. While material religion counters the longstanding perception that religion is about belief and canonical religious texts of which theological output is an important part, a contextual theology approach counters the idea that theology necessarily means texts: “Theology is wider than scholarship, and various cultures have other preferred ways of articulating their faith. Works of art, hymns, stories, dramas, comic books, cinema – all these media can become valid forms for theology in particular cultures” (Bevans 1992, 12). Seen from both disciplines, music forms the material means from which one can approach questions of religious experience, and also forms an essential part of theological practice. Emphasizing the fruitful interconnection between contextual theology and material religion, music points to a broadening of the concept of theology and to the existence of a strand of thought on what could be posed as ‘material theology’.

Traditional transformed: goals and concepts

This anthropological research asks how traditional Moluccan music as framed within contextual Moluccan theology is interrelated with lived religion. In order to study this interrelation, it is important to understand what Moluccan contextual theology constitutes and

¹⁷ While Bevans’ comments on the sacramental nature – “If the ordinary things of life are so transparent of God’s presence, one can speak of culture and events in history, of contexts, as truly sacramental, and so revelatory” (Bevans 1992, 9) – show the difference in starting point in comparison with anthropology or religious studies, this does not have to stand in the way of academic exchange.

how it relates to Christian everyday life, practices and attitudes on the level of the congregations; what Moluccan traditional music is; how the religious and musical practices, attitudes and experiences among clergy, church members and musicians can be characterized; and how the theological idea of introducing traditional music in the Moluccan Protestant church is apprehended in congregational life.

Contextual theology

Contextual theology is a widespread way of doing theology among theologians in the present world. It is an internationally influenced and entangled academic practice that started in the '60s. In the Moluccas contextual theology began to really blossom after the year 2000, which was an immediate effect of the religious conflict that happened from 1999 to 2002.

Theologians who do contextual theology aim at developing theology on the basis of the cultural context in which they are situated. In the Moluccas this means that Moluccan cultural traditions, customs and identity, as well as current societal issues, form the starting point for theological ideas. Context thus constitutes the central concept when talking about contextual theology. However, I argue that three different 'operational modes' of context are important to take into account, namely the context in which contextual theology develops in the Moluccas, the Moluccan context as a resource for doing contextual theology, and the context of the discourse about contextual theology that takes place. The Moluccan Protestant church originated under three centuries of Dutch colonialism. The Dutch Calvinists strived for a complete copy of their own reformed church in the Netherlands and thereby for the disappearance of perceived 'pagan' indigenous belief systems and religious practices. An absolute break between religion and culture was envisioned and employed, which often resulted in contestations about assigning agency and power to materiality or other spiritual beings.¹⁸ This colonial legacy and the imposed incommensurabilities surrounding culture/religion is part of, and continues to exert influence on, the postcolonial present. The move to cultural revivalism and contextuality of the past decades offered possibilities for a fusion of Christianity with Moluccan culture.¹⁹ Through theological processes and practices Moluccan culture and tradition became accommodated in church. However, it is a mistake to think that these cultural resources form static objects of appropriation, well preserved in a

¹⁸ According to the Dutch Calvinists only God has absolute power, which means that things or ancestors do not have the animated agency to control human life (Keane 2007).

¹⁹ With which I do not mean syncretism, as syncretism has some negative connotations for Moluccan Christians themselves. With syncretism one generally refers to the belief in both the Christian God and in powers of the ancestors – a fusion of indigenous religion and Christianity – while the point is that the accommodation of Moluccan culture in Protestant Christianity should be regarded as 'pure' or full Christianity.

frozen past. Moluccan culture and identity are not the same as in the colonial past. The Moluccas are situated in a national context with consecutive political regimes, and in a millennial era characterized by modernity, digitalization and globalization. Moluccan culture is therefore not uncritically and directly transposed from the past to the present, from tradition to church, but accommodated through a conscious and filtered process, and hereby transformed and even produced. Van de Port and Meyer (2018, 2) poignantly state about many argumentations in anthropological writing that these often present as a conclusion “that the history is ‘assembled’, the community is ‘imagined’, the tradition is ‘invented’ or the identity is ‘staged’”, and that “Such conclusions (...) stop at the point where the research should begin.” This thesis responds to the encouragement of moving beyond the premature closure of constructivist argumentation, since it is the process of selection and transformation that this study is interested in.

Heritage

In this operation of appropriation, the concept of ‘heritage’ plays a central role. Heritage formation “denotes the processes whereby, out of the sheer infinite number of things, places and practices that have been handed down from the past, a selection is made that is qualified as a precious and irreplaceable resource, essential to personal and collective identity and necessary for self-respect” (Van de Port & Meyer 2018, 1). As Meyer and De Witte (2013) explain, heritage formation entails some sort of ‘sacralization’ through which cultural forms are lifted up and set apart. Although heritage refers to the past, it is not automatically and directly inherited from the past, but the outcome of a selection of cultural forms that are canonized (Meyer & De Witte 2013, 276). Selected heritage items are thus not given but fabricated (Meyer & De Witte 2013, 280). However, the appeal of cultural heritage partly lies in its denial of being merely made-up – “on its promise to provide an essential ground to social-cultural identities.”²⁰ Nevertheless, the process of heritage formation does not guarantee ‘success’, in the sense that the singled out cultural forms may found to be lacking ‘authenticity’ and thus fail to be persuasive for the intended beholders. Moreover, the process entails inevitable contestations, paradoxes, ironies, doubts, and tensions, which is why it is important to carefully consider the politics of authentication and the aesthetics of persuasion involved (Meyer & De Witte 2013, 276, 280).²¹ In the Moluccan discourse on contextual

²⁰ Heritage formation is namely entangled with the ‘culturalization’ of areas of social life whereby cultural identities and sentiments of collective belonging are brought into play (Meyer & Van de Port 2018, 1).

²¹ Politics of authentication refer to the process through which heritage is authenticated and authorized in specific power constellations. Aesthetics of persuasion refers to the appropriation and embodiment of heritage in lived experience (Meyer & Van de Port 2018, 6).

theology and the preservation of tradition, the selected items of traditional culture are very often referred to as heritage. Furthermore, the theological process of selecting traditional items from the Moluccan context shares many characteristics with heritage formation. Traditional culture, handed down from the past, is selected on the basis of its approved value that is in accordance with Christian doctrine, and transformed to fit a liturgical church context. Traditional customs are elevated to the collectively binding status of culture, and hereby neutralized and made innocent. As Van de Port and Meyer (2018, 13) note, the power of heritage lies in the fact that it is curated, which is why it can be easily harmonized with larger collective structures and values such as human rights, political directions, religious doctrines and ethnic or national identity. Despite the conscious selection and transformation of traditional cultural forms, these traditions are believed and felt to be authentic pillars of collective Moluccan ethnic and Christian identity.

Spyer (2000), who has conducted many studies on the *Aru* in the Moluccas, gives some general clues for this area as a whole. The underlying notion of a stable Moluccan identity lies in the linkage between the local and *adat*. *Adat* is “the customary usage (i.e. religion, manners, cultural traditions, customs, social organization and rights) which has been handed down by the ancestors and which is passed on from generation to generation” (Ririhena 2003, 22; Hendrik 1995, 18).²² *Adat* concerns the focal point in Moluccan people’s idea of ethnic identity, as it is seen as the locus of tradition (Spyer 2000, 31-32). The important argument Spyer (1996, 28) makes, is that although *adat* itself is a foreign term and has an inherently cosmopolitan character from its origin,²³ it is perceived as that which is held to have evaded the influence of time. The idea that the *adat* rules come from and are enforced by the ancestors plays a central role here. Nowadays, the revived focus on the traditional involves a, what I will call, ‘Moluccanness’ that is increasingly figured as a disappearing past (Spyer 2000, 8), which thus has to be protected and preserved, because it is perceived as Moluccan heritage. However, while *adat* as one of the essential foci of Moluccan culture and identity is seen as a token of enduring value, it is a historical artifact in its own right (Spyer 1996, 27-28) that has been developing and changing through time in a pre-colonial, colonial, and postcolonial context. Under the influence of modernity, nationalism and globalization, the nostalgic recovery of *adat* bears the trace of time.

²² Moluccan people think of themselves as intrinsically linked to the ‘local’, alongside a national and international connection.

²³ In Arabic *adat* means ‘custom’.

Tradition and traditional

In the selection process of contextual theology and the discourse regarding Moluccan culture and identity, the concept of ‘tradition’ is apparent. Tradition is a commonly used word; elusive, value-laden and of varied application (Finnegan 1991, 104-105). In general, tradition, in Latin literally meaning ‘something handed over’, refers to both to the process of handing down from generation to generation, and some thing, custom, or thought process that is passed on over time (Graburn 2000, 6). Tradition is important for the construction of identity and people grow more conscious of it in historical situations of change, when tradition is deemed to be continued and preserved (Graburn 2000, 6).²⁴ Although for a long time academics thought tradition would eventually vanish,²⁵ nowadays a revival and resurgence of tradition, and more specifically ethnicity, can be witnessed (Scars 1997, 9; Hobsbawm & Ranger 2012, 11).²⁶ In the public sphere, tradition is often associated with notions of conservatism, orthodoxy and continuity, and as the opposite of ‘modern’. Yet, as Graburn (2000, 8) makes clear, tradition is very much present inside modernity. Traditions are continually being created while assumed and authorized to be timeless.²⁷ Thus, while the concept of tradition is still associated with something old, it is no longer taken for granted that this implies ‘time immemorial’: “the questions now followed up when something is classified as ‘tradition’ or ‘traditional’ are often those like ‘how old?’ or ‘old in what sense?’ or ‘in whose eyes?’” (Finnegan 1991, 112). A famous work on creating traditions is the book *The Invention of Tradition* by Hobsbawm and Ranger (2012). The authors claim that traditions which appear to be old are often quite recent and invented. By ‘invented tradition’ they mean

²⁴ Bevir (2000) names some general characteristics of the contemporary notion of tradition: tradition is integral to our understanding of the human condition; individuals can extend and modify traditions they inherit; individuals can move from one tradition to another; tradition as a set of understandings acquired during socialization; traditions persist and develop through time; traditions are not limited to premodern ways of life; traditions can compete and overlap; and traditions are not necessarily conservative.

²⁵ In the 19th century, tradition came to be seen as backward and as something which would be overtaken by science, progress and modernity. Only later a feeling of ‘imperialist nostalgia’ developed among Western scientists, aimed at preserving disappearing ways of life – with the risk that this effort turns into a judgmental force that looks at indigenous peoples and their traditions as representatives from a frozen past, as “some sort of indicator against which to measure the speed of change or the measure of progress in the ever fickle mainstream society” (Graburn 7-8). Finnegan (1997, 107) makes the connection with the development of anthropology as a discipline itself: “It is doubtless no accident that both the development of anthropology and the particular associations among ‘tradition’, backwardness, and lack of change coincided with the particular historical experiences of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the expansion of Western commerce and education, and the imperial experience as a whole.”

²⁶ Most often in spaces that may be called ‘the public life of the citizen’.

²⁷ These ‘inventions’ even became the *sine qua non* for nationhood (Graburn 2000, 9). Historic continuity became invented and was accompanied with new symbols and devices such as an anthem, flag or personification of the nation. Moreover, national language taught in schools often is only metaphorically a mother-tongue (Hobsbawm & Ranger 2012, 7, 14).

a set of practices,²⁸ normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual and symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behavior by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past (Hobsbawm & Ranger 2012, 1).²⁹

According to Hobsbawm and Ranger (2012, 4-5), the invention of tradition occurs more often in times of rapid transformation which produces new patterns to which ‘old’ traditions are no longer applicable: former materials are used to construct novel traditions for novel purposes (Hobsbawm & Ranger 2012, 4, 6).³⁰

Invented traditions are closely connected to the idea of tradition as a reservoir. Nowadays, with tradition being composed of selected aspects of a past, it is a “strength to draw upon, a source of historically defined identity, and a source of a sense of safety, specialness, or difference” (Graburn 2000, 8-10). This reservoir of tradition is not static, and bounded by questions of accepted and possible use. Tradition therefore has a certain openness and closedness at the same time. According to Bruns (1991, 8), the openness of tradition means that tradition precisely is not the persistence of the same and not irreducible to institutions of interpretation. Conversely, the closedness of tradition forms part of critiques on the idea of the invention of tradition formulated by various authors.³¹ Turner (1997, 347) states that the emphasis on the malleability negates that traditions are a product of their historically situated action. Societies are embedded in certain pasts that limit and explain the process of self-identity. One must therefore acknowledge continuity and constraint as aspects of tradition (Turner 1997, 356-357).³² Concerning the central role of the past, Appadurai

²⁸ Hobsbawm and Ranger (2012, 2-3) discern between tradition, custom and convention. The characteristic of tradition is invariance. Custom, on the other hand, shows a combination of flexibility in substance and formal adherence to precedent. Convention is more pragmatic, while tradition has significant ritual and symbolic functions.

²⁹ The peculiar paradox lies in the response to novel situations which take the form of reference to unchanging, old situations (Hobsbawm & Ranger 2012, 2).

³⁰ Here a distinction between ‘old’ and ‘new’ traditions is made: the former are specific and strongly binding social practices, and the latter are quite unspecific and vague as to the nature of values, rights, and obligations of the group membership they inculcate – in other words, an undefined universality (Hobsbawm & Ranger 2012, 10).

³¹ In response to literature on tradition that conceptualizes it as ancestral restraints, immemorial habits, a ritual invention disguising upper-class power or anything displaying continuity, Scars (1997, 15-16) sees tradition as a resource warehouse for the living, and not just as a residue from the dead or a disguise for dominant social powers. He offers a new definition: “Tradition is a cultural resource which patterns the responses of particular communities to contemporary challenges. A living social tradition requires a distinct social group with a common identity derived from an interpretation of its past, whose collective memories have some objective expression in the material environment, and whose activities are guided by a spirit of continuity.”

³² Constraints are firstly formed by the nature of the physical and social world in which people live, because that world is a product of historical processes and the configuration of that world either limits or empowers efforts to define oneself and one’s past for others, and secondly by the cultural logic of people’s own prior interpretations (Turner 1997, 359). Continuity is to be found in the power of self-definition through personal or

(1981) questions the assumption that the past is an infinite and plastic symbolic resource, wholly susceptible to contemporary purposes. Instead, he suggests, the past is a rule-governed, finite, cultural resource, whereby “anything is possible but only some things are permissible” (Appadurai 1981, 218). A normative organization of discourse concerning the past is established through the existence of culturally variable sets of norms whose function is to regulate the inherent ‘debatability’ of the past itself (Appadurai 1981, 201, 218).

In this thesis, tradition is studied in the light of Moluccan identity, passed on ideas about ‘local wisdom’ and the formation of contextual theology with a specific focus on music. Through the contextual process (musical) traditions from an *adat* context are selected, transformed and produced for their transposition to the Moluccan church. These traditions are constructed as authentic, immemorial tokens of Moluccan identity through the ancestral chain. Although, on the one hand, they are open to contact and merging in relation to present and novel needs and times, on the other hand they are constraint by a strict rule-governed theological practice. To grasp the contextual approach in which Moluccan traditions constitute the central source of Moluccan theology and to emphasize the constructivist, hybrid quality of Moluccan music I will work with the noun ‘the Moluccan traditional’. Rather than a concrete practice from the past that is called tradition, the traditional refers to the historical process that makes something traditionally Moluccan. Traditional as adjective is defined by openness and mixing and the traditional refers to the process by which a cultural form becomes seen as traditional. The traditional enables me to capture the relation between theology and lived religion concerning traditional church music.³³

The traditional, place and culture

Situated in a modern era, characterized by rapid change through the force of globalization, and encircled by local, regional and national political parameters, various figures (i.e. theologians, musicians, citizens) construct, preserve and revive a traditional ‘Moluccanness’. The selection, interpretation or invention of the Moluccan traditional responds to novel circumstances and is bounded by specific religious and political historically formed pasts and presents, as well as by a cultural logic behind the discourse surrounding it. At the same time, the openness and vagueness of the traditional fit a broad frame of use and give way to a range

collective memory that validates people’s existence through time and sustains one’s identity in the present. People thus interpret and represent their personal, blurry traces of collective pasts that inevitably reflect the concerns and understandings of the present in which they are formed and differing points of view which are asserted, contested, and resisted in public and private discourse (Turner 1997, 373).

³³ I will further introduce this new concept in Chapter Six.

of understandings and contestations. In the Moluccas, traditional can mean innovative and conservative, colonial and postcolonial, and old and modern. In any case, the traditional is authorized to be a real connection between contemporary Moluccans and their ancestors. What is important to bear in mind, is that the cultural forms which are deemed authentic and which are drawn upon, are not necessarily connected to a demarcated place. In their famous essay 'Beyond Culture', Gupta and Ferguson (1992) deconstruct naturalized conceptions of spatialized cultures. In a postcolonial, globalized, mass-mediated world, space as a neutral grid on which cultural difference, historical memory, and societal organization are inscribed is no longer viable. Instead, the relation between space and place becomes important: "the identity of a place emerges by the intersection of its specific involvement in a system of hierarchically organized spaces with its cultural construction as a community or locality" (Gupta & Ferguson 1991, 8). Cultures are thus not mapped onto places and peoples.³⁴ In other words, space is deterritorialized,³⁵ and becomes reterritorialized again under the politics of place (Gupta & Ferguson 1992, 11, 13, 19-20).³⁶ One should therefore pay attention to the way spaces and places are "made, imagined, contested, and enforced" (Gupta & Ferguson 1992, 18), with hybridity taken as a starting point rather than the exception.³⁷

A postcolonial setting is one particular reality that poses problems to the assumed isomorphism of space, place, and culture. The question to which places the hybrid cultures of postcoloniality belong (Gupta & Ferguson 1992, 7-8) is highly relevant in the Moluccan case, as the colonial encounter created new cultures in both the colonized and colonizing country and destabilized the connections between people, culture and place. The Moluccan traditional is constructed from a hybrid base point, since Moluccan culture has been in contact with other cultures and religions as long as one can remember. Elements from the Dutch colonial church, indigenous religion, a globalized world, an incredibly large and diverse nation, and art forms from the inlands of Seram, from the Arab world and from the West are all incorporated, knitting imagined identity, culture and place together within the possibilities available. Although nothing is a crucial marker of community (Spyer 2000, 7), this does not mean that

³⁴ However, although places and localities are more blurred and indeterminate than ever, ideas of culturally and ethnically distinct places become perhaps even more salient, which is why the imagination is of central importance: imagined communities come to be attached to imagined places (Gupta & Ferguson 1992, 10-11).

³⁵ Homi Bhabha (Spyer 2000, 7) calls this 'the uncanny of cultural difference': "when the problem of cultural difference is ourselves-as -others, others-as -ourselves, that borderline".

³⁶ Often at just the point it threatens to be erased.

³⁷ To counter the mapping of anthropology's characteristic subjects, culture and locality onto each other, hybridity should be located among those 'indigenous peoples', especially when they have been colonized (Spyer 2000, 291).

traditional Moluccanness is not real. On the contrary, real hybrid pasts and presents are interpreted by real people to make, express and practice who they really experience to be. In the process, colonial church culture and traditional Moluccan culture can become one and the same thing. In short, tradition and traditional are concepts that are complex, loaded, and not fully-agreed upon. The traditional is open to change, interpretation, development and manipulation (Finnegan 106, 112-113). This thesis traces the contested, hybrid and diverse construction and transformation of the Moluccan traditional.³⁸ It complicates the traditional in a contemporary Asian context.

Music

In this thesis the heart of the traditional is music. Traditional Moluccan music is studied in both an anthropological and musicological way in the light of contextual theology and lived religion.³⁹ Religious and musical practices, attitudes, and experiences are studied on the level of Moluccan Protestant congregations, to see how these are interrelated with contextual theological ideas on traditional church music.⁴⁰ John Blacking (1969, 71) defines music as “humanly organized sound.” In general, this refers to ‘aesthetic sounds’, such as rhythms, melodies, songs, tunes, instruments and singing (Ter Laan 2016, 6). Music has affective power and is embedded in socio-cultural power structures (Ter Laan 2016, 29). In relation to religion, music can be seen as a ‘technique of the self’, forming religious subjectivities and communities through sensory experience.⁴¹ Therefore, music is a sensational form, which is a relatively fixed, authorized mode of invoking and organizing access to the transcendental (Meyer 2006).⁴² The role of sensational forms in the construction of religious subjectivities and communities is described by the term ‘aesthetic formation’ (Meyer 2009). Of central

³⁸ While the concept of tradition has been addressed in academic literature, the overall focus is Africa (i.e. *Beyond primitivism: indigenous religious traditions and modernity* (2004), by Olupona, Jacob K., ed.; "The invention of 'African traditional religion'" (1990), by Shaw, Rosalind; "Indigenous religion (s) as an analytical category" (2013), by Tafjord, Bjørn Ola).

³⁹ Lived religion refers to religion experienced and practiced in everyday life among people (Morgan 2010, 18). The internal coherence of lived religion requires a practical coherence, whereby it needs to make sense in one's everyday life (McGuire 2008). In sum, lived religion is besides beliefs, ideas and morals about everyday practices, involving bodily, emotional and religious experiences and expressions.

⁴⁰ Music lies at the heart of religions and concerns the material means through which emotions, the body and sensory perception are stimulated, mediating religious experience. Music provokes emotions and represents something beyond music (Rice 2014, 61). Music can thus express something extramusical. However, this can only be done if the experience to which it refers already exists in the mind of the listener (Blacking 1969, 39). Music also is a form of communication and plays a central role in many aspects of daily life: “the world of music is a world of human experience” (Blacking 1969, 59).

⁴¹ Moreover, sound techniques, which are embedded in certain environments, develop cultural techniques of listening (Larkin 2014, 1008-1009).

⁴² Sensational forms refer to a configuration of religious media in which a believer's sensorium is tuned through techniques of the body (Meyer 2012, 26-27).

importance to this research is the fact that music can be looked at as a way to express and construct both individual and group identities, discourses, worldviews and experiences. Music can thus serve as a site where identity discourses are displayed, constructed, reinforced and contested (Ter Laan 2016, 7). In this study music is taken as the entry point to trace the discourse of contextual theology on Moluccan culture and identity. Moving from a musical core more relevant and broader issues come to the fore.⁴³ As people actively use music to form identities, they position themselves in moral, political and aesthetic terms. The articulation of music is therefore connected to larger questions concerning ethnicity and religion, for example (Barendregt 2014b, 17). Moluccan traditional music is used, constructed and transformed in the discourse on contextual theology and Moluccan identity. Authenticity is of little relevance, while hybridity, change and continuity are so much the more: “in most cases no one actually seems to know what the original repertoire or style was. One knows only what people did within living memory, or what is thought to have been earlier practice” (Barendregt 2014b, 8). Music, by its nature, is suitable to connect the familiar with the new, the foreign with the local (Barendregt 2014b, 7), and in this thesis Moluccan traditional music exists on the interface of ethnic and modern, national and international, local and global, ‘pagan’ and Christian.

Discourse and context

As has been brought to the fore, music can serve as a site where discourses are constructed and contested. This research studies the theological idea of traditional Moluccan church music in relation to its apprehension in church life. In a condition of negotiation, the transformation of the discourse on this idea, the practical process and the concepts involved are traced among theologians, church leaders, clergy, church members and musicians. ‘Discourse’ is meant as the concept developed by Foucault, concerning the rules and structures which produce particular utterances and texts (Mills 2004, 6). Discourses are highly regulated groupings of statements with internal rules which are specific to discourse itself (Mills 2004, 43). A discursive structure is characterized by “the systematicity of the ideas, opinions, concepts, ways of thinking and behaving which are formed within a particular context, and because of the effects of those ways of thinking and behaving” (Mills 2004, 15). Moreover, discourses are not fixed but are the site of constant contestation of meaning. They are embodied groupings of sentences which are enacted in a social context, both determined by it and

⁴³ As Barendregt (2014, 3) also makes clear, a focus on music practices – “songs and sounds, the singers and musicians that performed them, the audiences they addressed, and importantly the musical life worlds they were simply part of” – can tell us something the official history of the region cannot.

contributing to the way that social context continues its existence (Mills 2004, 9-10, 13). In this study of the discourse on contextual theology and traditional Moluccan music, the actual utterances as well as the structures and rules are analyzed – the so-called ‘support mechanisms’ that are both intrinsic to discourse itself and also socio-culturally extra-discursive (Mills 2004, 44-45). The first will be named the ‘lexicon’ of the discourse, which consists of several open and contested terms of which the most important are ‘traditional’, ‘context’, ‘ancestors’, ‘culture’ and ‘ethnic’. The latter will be named the ‘grammar’ behind the discourse, that also involves the historical situation in which discourses develop.⁴⁴ Moluccan pasts and presents form the context for this analysis.

Robert Stalnaker (2014) developed a notion of ‘context’ as common ground: an evolving body of background information about the subject matter of the discourse, about the discourse itself, and about the situation of the participants in the discourse that is presumed to be shared by the people involved in a conversation. The course of a discourse and the interpretation of what is said in it are guided by that body of information and by the way it evolves in response to what is said (Stalnaker 2014, 3). In these discursive dynamics people negotiate what the common ground should be and how it should unfold (Stalnaker 2014, 10). In the Moluccan case, Dutch colonialism, missionization, Indonesian postcoloniality and national independence are such contexts that structure the contextual discourse and have discursive effects (Spyer 2000, 5, 36).⁴⁵

Semiotic ideology

Connected to discourse is the important concept of ‘semiotic ideology’, proposed by Webb Keane. Semiotic ideology refers to people’s underlying assumptions about what signs are, what functions signs serve, and what consequences they might produce (Keane 2018, 64).⁴⁶ It directs attention to the full range of possible sign vehicles and the sensory modalities they might engage (Keane 2018, 65).⁴⁷ Semiotic ideology provides the relationship between sign

⁴⁴ Nevertheless, one should not forget that discourse is not only about patterns of thinking. Discursive processes on, for example, the interpretation of one’s past or claims to identity are guided by deep and relatively enduring structures of “thought, feeling, and behavior, and those patterns of cognition and emotion as well as of action are all centered in the human body” (Turner 1997, 359-360).

⁴⁵ When talking about the construction and definition of the Moluccan traditional and Moluccan identity, these too are products of a certain structured discourse, while the social fields within which tradition and identity are asserted structure the manner in which the discourse operates. Therefore, it is important to explicate the culturally specific systems of symbols used in the discourse on tradition (Turner 1997, 357-358).

⁴⁶ It manifests a fundamental reflexive dimension of the general human capacity to use signs (Keane 2018, 65). Also, semiotic processes are in constant motion (Keane 2018, 84).

⁴⁷ As Howes (2011, 93) makes clear, it therefore is a worthy goal to understand the ways of sensing the world of the people under study.

vehicle and object (Keane 2018, 74-75). Different ontologies underwrite different sets of possible signs, and assumptions about what signs are contribute to the ways people use and interpret them (Keane 2018, 66-67). The clash over semiotic ideologies have consequences that can be matters of ethical and political value: “To take a sign a certain way is to take seriously the world it presupposes and the life that world recommends. It is perhaps above all for pragmatic questions, more than any epistemological or metaphysical ones, that semiotic ideologies matter” (Keane 2018, 83). This thesis pays attention to the semiotic ideologies of, among other things, language, tunes, spiritual powers, and music – especially in the light of the effects of colonialism and the clashes it caused.

In sum, what this study aims to disclose are the resonances and dissonances between contextual theology and lived religion – the everyday religious and musical practices, attitudes and experiences on the level of the congregations in the Moluccan Protestant church – with a specific focus on Moluccan traditional music. In order to do this, the process of selection, production and transformation of Moluccan tradition and identity in contextual theology will be explicated, Moluccan traditional music will be anthropologically, theologically and musicologically described, the Moluccan traditional will be complicated, lived religious and musical experiences and practices will be characterized, and the discourse concerning the musical interrelation between theology and lived religion will be traced along various ‘figures’ involved – whereby both the lexicon and the grammar of this particular discourse will be dissected. This thesis demonstrates that the relation between contextual musical theological ideas and lived religious practices, attitudes and experiences depends on the understanding of several key terms in the discourse under study. These conceptualizations transform when they move through the voices, perspectives and practices of the actors in this discourse, such as theologians, church leaders, clergy, church members and musicians. Dissonance, discussion, friction and contestation occur when conceptualizations differ among and between the people involved. When conceptualizations in the discourse on the theological innovation of traditional music in the Moluccan Protestant church resonate through linkages between actors, a connection between theological idea and religious practice is made. The resonance between theology and lived religion is therefore riveted by a harmonious association between discursive conceptualizations of key terms.

Research methods & Analysis

In this anthropological research fieldwork was carried out over the course of three months, from 12 October until 28 December 2019. The research questions required me to be present at the site where the people, practices and ideas under study live, experience, do and develop. As the research seeks answers to questions dealing with human beings and their worldview, their religion, their music, their theology, their church life and their intersubjective relations, connections and contestations, the most valuable insights could only be gained through a personal encounter between me, the people and the places.

Indonesian language acquisition formed part of the preparation of the fieldwork. Already in the Netherlands a foundation was laid in the summer months, building vocabulary through individual home study and nine private lessons. From 21 September to 11 October a three-weeks language course consisting of ninety hours was completed at the prominent language school *Alam Bahasa* in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, which resulted in a certificate that indicates the level of Indonesian as ‘natural communicator’ and ‘working Indonesian’. The course provided one on one lessons and a very loving and assisting host family. During the fieldwork period itself, language skills were improved by practice and use, through which I also learnt the Moluccan dialect.

The main location where the fieldwork took place was Ambon, the administrative center of the Moluccas. In addition, three surrounding islands were visited – Haruku, Seram and Saparua – each for respectively two to six days. The Moluccas as a place that is part of the Indonesian archipelago, its colonial and religious history, and its connection to the Netherlands are fairly unknown among non-Moluccan people,⁴⁸ and most peculiarly also among Dutch people, while the Moluccas have been shaped by three centuries of Dutch colonialism and while the Netherlands acquired their economic wealth through the trade on these ‘spice islands’ – perhaps the only term that rings a bell. As a debate and a reflection on Dutch colonial history is currently taking shape in Dutch society, this thesis aims to contribute knowledge and understanding about the place of the Moluccas in this history. During the fieldwork, the central research methods were participant observation and interviewing. The former refers to the method in which a researcher takes part in the daily activities, rituals,

⁴⁸ Even Indonesian people from other parts of the country, such as Javanese for whom Ambon is located 2300 kilometer away from the capital city Jakarta, only have vague ideas about the Moluccas and stereotyped images about Moluccan people, who are sometimes perceived as barbaric fighters and as collaborators with the colonial powers. Also from a political point of view, the Moluccas are treated as a second-rate area (Bartels 1994, 15-17).

interactions, and events of a group of people as one of the means of learning the explicit and tacit aspects of their life routines and their culture (DeWalt & DeWalt 2011, 1).⁴⁹ The latter can be divided into informal conversations (relevant casual talks), semi-structured interviews (open-ended questions on the basis of a prepared topic guide), unstructured interviews (following the lead of the informant on the basis of mental topics), focus groups (interactive discussion between pre-selected participants) and ‘vox pops’. Vox pops is the name I ascribed to the planned short interview activity in and around churches: after church services, several church members were asked approximately the same five open-ended questions.⁵⁰ The anthropological methods of participant observation and in-depth interviewing are specifically apt for this research. Firstly, it is important to be present in the cultural context that forms the basis of the contextual theology under examination. Moreover, besides the written theological output, both the place where it is being developed and the persons who are behind it are of relevance. Finally, the anthropological approach provides information about lived religious attitudes, experiences and practices in a cultural and personal context, as well as that it allows participation in and experience of the music practices that are the research focus. Together these methods and data give insight in the interaction between theology and lived religion.

There were three important research sites. The first was the theological university on Ambon, UKIM.⁵¹ The group of theologians that is developing contextual theology is working and teaching here. In-depth interviews were conducted with many of these theologians in order to understand the content, importance, motivation and consequence of the different facets of the theology in the context of their personal lives. As the starting point of this research concerns the work and ideas of Chris Tamaela, he was one of the essential informants. Also, participant observation was carried out in his classroom to see how contextual theology and Moluccan music are taught and transmitted to students, with whom has been spoken as well. I hope to contribute relevant insights to both the UKIM and the

⁴⁹ Participant observation enhances the quality of both data collection and data analysis, since by living and participating in the culture under study, speaking the language of the informants and building contacts and trust, a tacit understanding is achieved whereby the interpretation of meaning, the learning of local values and patterns of action, moving and being, and a process of enculturation to the level of ‘feeling’ the point of view of the other is achieved (Desjarlais 1992, 26; Grills 1998). Most importantly, because the approach of participant observation is itself based, even dependent, on experiencing, participating, seeing, hearing and feeling, it was the ideal method for this research about music, lived religion and the practice of theology.

⁵⁰ This was done in anticipation to the realization that the time after a church service is not the moment for a long in-depth interview, while it is the place where church members are easiest met.

⁵¹ At the UKIM an office was provided for me, as they were my official sponsor for the social-cultural visa, and as I participated in an educational exchange between my university and UKIM. Moreover, I had the opportunity to live in the UKIM guesthouse, which is a house close to the campus owned by one of the staff members.

GPM on the process and opinions of the implementation of contextual theological ideas among various people and in various places. Furthermore, one of the aspirations of this thesis is to make the academic theological institution UKIM known to a broader public, as they provide high-quality education and develop interesting theories which could possibly be useful in an interdisciplinary and international dialogue. The second field site were various churches on Ambon, in Ambon city as well as in villages and on surrounding islands. Three churches in the city were visited: the central and largest *Maranatha* church, located next to the synod, the *Rehoboth* church and the *Silo* church. Four churches in villages on Ambon were visited: in *Poka*, *Soya*, *Amahusu* and *Tuni*. On Seram the church in the village *Rohua Baru* was visited, and on Saparua two churches in the village *Haria* were visited, *Petra* and *Immanuel*. Participant observation provided data on a diversity of church services in general and the religious-musical practices in particular. Other related religious activities where participant observation was conducted were the MPL meeting on the island Haruku – the moment once a year when synod leaders and pastors from many congregations assemble to discuss GPM policy – and an evaluation meeting of a church council in *Haria*. Informal conversations, interviews and vox pops with clergy, laypeople as well as musicians were held, to gain insight in religious attitudes, opinions and musical experiences in relation to contextual theology. Also, several interviews with church leaders were conducted. The third research site were less official religious-cultural contexts. For instance, I travelled to an ‘indigenous’ village, Yalahatan,⁵² at the coast-line of Seram, I lived one week in the house of my friend, experiencing her family life and participating in family prayers, and I celebrated Christmas. Traditional Moluccan music was studied by visiting concerts, musical rehearsals and so-called *sanggar*, music workshops where children learn to play traditional music.⁵³

Gaining access to the field sites and informants was made possible through the various networks of Dutch-Moluccan Protestants, theologians and musicians in which I am involved. Besides that, UKIM helped me in establishing contacts with pastors and church leaders. After having built trustworthy relations, the so-called ‘snowball-technique’ led to additional informants. In total, 38 sessions of participant observation were conducted, and 110 interviews were held. The interview activities consisted of 13 informal conversations, 16 semi-structured interviews, 39 unstructured interviews, 3 focus groups and 39 vox pops. The

⁵² Christian Moluccans and Westerners working in this area refer to this village as ‘animist’, as the inhabitants adhere to their indigenous religion, believing in the powers of the ancestors.

⁵³ Both the traditional music in itself (musicology, instruments, songs) and the connection with its cultural surrounding were studied.

average duration of an interview was 48 minutes with 5 minutes being the shortest and 240 minutes being the longest. 27 interviews were done in English, 82 in Indonesian and 1 in Dutch. I talked to 18 theologians, 4 students, 5 GPM church leaders, 13 pastors, 7 church council members, 23 church members, 25 musicians and 15 ‘other’⁵⁴ people. The gender division consisted of 74 men, 26 women and various mixed group combinations,⁵⁵ and the age of the informants can be split into 20 young, 49 middle-aged and 33 old people.⁵⁶

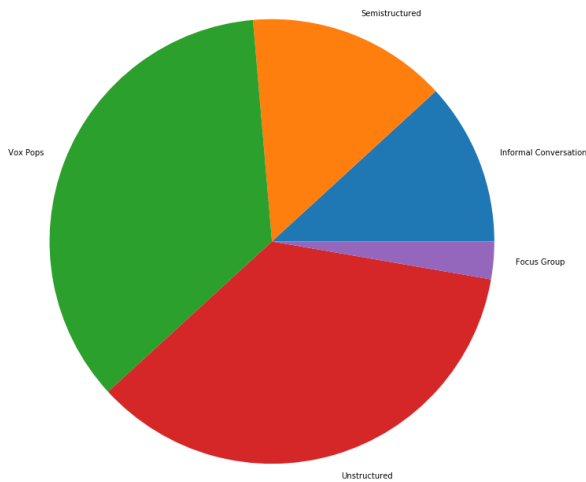


Figure 3 - Pie chart visualization of interview activities

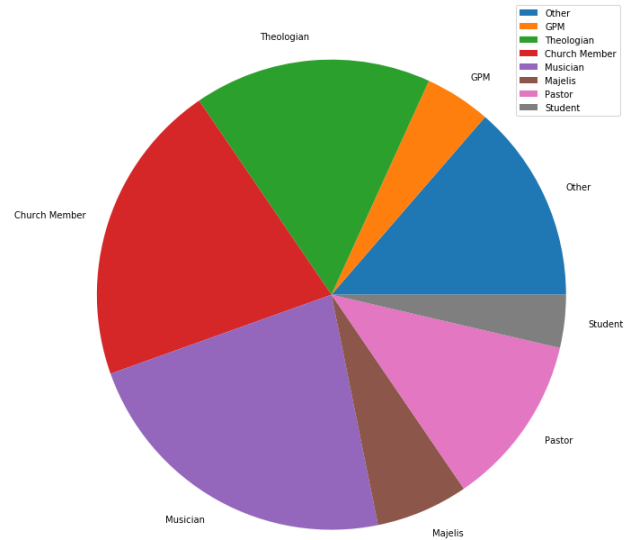


Figure 4 - Pie chart visualization of interview population - occupation

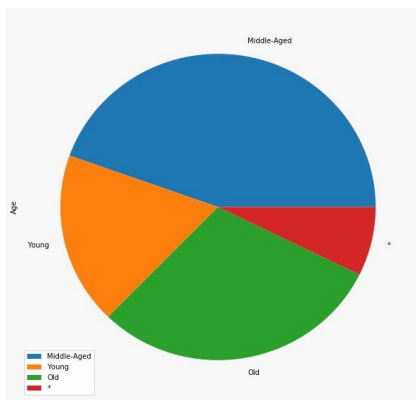


Figure 5 - Pie chart visualization of interview population – age.

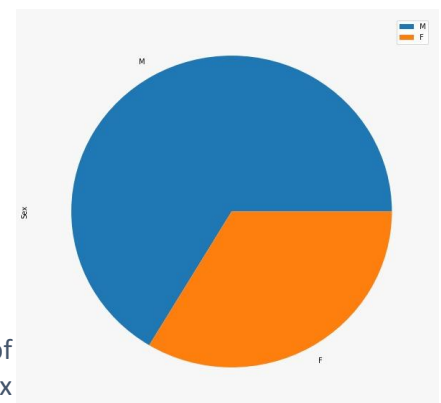


Figure 6 - Pie chart visualization of interview population - sex

⁵⁴ These were people who had knowledge about topics either related to theology and church services, or to music. For example: journalists, people working at the Ambon Music Office, teachers, artists, and people working for Wycliffe, an organization that provides translated Bibles in local languages for ethnic church services.

⁵⁵ 4 men, 1 man and 3 women, 2 women and 2 men, 3 men, 3 women, 1 man and 1 woman, and four times 2 women.

⁵⁶ This is not a precise division of age, since the exact age of many people was not asked as this is not an appropriate question to ask in Moluccan culture. Therefore, the division is based on flexible categories, whereby young should approximately be seen as below 35, middle-aged as between 35 and 60 and old as above 60.

To safeguard ethical principles, to each informant the subject, goal and procedure of the research was explained so that they could give informed consent regarding their participation. Interviews were recorded with the permission of the informants, and the possibility of receiving the thesis was offered to them. Also, the real names of the interviewees are only used with their approval, and otherwise anonymity is maintained through pseudonyms or the absence of names. With regard to objectivity and possible biases my own position as a researcher should be taken into account. I am a young, white, female master student from the Netherlands, which could have influenced access to certain places and people, as well as information provided to me. For example, in the beginning of the research I realized that because of my background and my perceived status it was fairly easy to get in contact with ‘elite’ layers of society, such as synod members and politicians from the regional government. I needed to make an extra effort to move out from an affirmative circle in order to be able to speak to laypeople and musicians with a close connection to ‘the ground’. Also, my appearance and Western background were rare among the Moluccan population and commonly judged as better than local people (which was one of the most difficult circumstances to deal with mentally), which can have influenced attitudes and answers given to me. Lastly, I was very conscious of the fact that I am a representative of a colonial history.

The fieldwork resulted in many visual materials (photos and videos), fieldnotes and transcriptions of the recordings of interviews that according to an iterative process of data collection and analysis (Boeije 2010) produced grounded analytical insights. During the data collection four reflections were written which formed the basis for further thought and research activities. Back in the Netherlands, all textual material was coded with the use of the software NVivo. This, together with the dissertation by Chris Tamaela, books acquired during the fieldwork and academic literature, resulted in the thesis.

Structure

The thesis consists of seven chapters and a conclusion. The first chapter sketches the cultural and historical context of the research site. In Chapter Two important characteristics of the GPM are described, and church culture, church music and Moluccan religious life are discussed. Chapter Three deals with the context of contextual theology. UKIM and its organizational, temporal and political embeddedness are explained, as well as the history of

the development and the content of contextual theology here. The fourth chapter focuses on the practice of contextual theology: the process and implementation. Opinions among various actors are illustrated. Chapter Five is about Chris Tamaela, his work and his lessons. The sixth chapter analyzes the Moluccan traditional and Moluccan music. Musicological aspects, instruments, songs and original contexts are addressed. The education of traditional music to children's groups is depicted, as well as the relation to popular music, politics and the church. Chapter Seven discusses traditional church music, mainly through the recent establishment of the 'ethnic service'. Several elements involved are delineated, such as heritage, language and, most importantly, music. Also, the implementation of and opinions about the ethnic church service and traditional church music are conveyed, including ideas about quality. Finally, the ambiguous, contested and complicated connection between church culture and traditional culture through the interesting position and concept of the ancestors is explained. This is illustrated on the basis of the description of a traditional ritual. The thesis closes with a conclusion, in which the main arguments are assembled to answer the research question.

In the first weeks of my stay in Ambon, on the first of November, we climb the slippery mountain road in the remaining rays of sunlight as the day comes to an end. The simmering sound of the motorcycle we are sitting on judges the steepness of this terrain amidst valleys of bright, green trees. We smell the pyres of fire burning garbage, we hear the birds, we taste the twilight fog and we see the sea surrounding this island. We feel fresh and
free.

Passing small houses, colorful villages, white churches and large families, gradually our journey becomes higher, darker and colder. We cross a narrow bridge made of old sagging planks and turn right into a sandy path that leads to the most spacious and pretty view over
Ambon Manise.

We are in a place called *Tuni*. In the dense darkness I descend the stairs and arrive at the round, dry, brown compound in front of the brick house owned by the musician who lives here. He sits on a tree trunk, I sit on a red plastic chair. There is no light. The absolute silence is only interrupted by zooming insects, barking dogs and our voices. It is as if we are alone in the world. Two boys approach us, each with a bamboo flute in their hands. In this moisty, tranquil atmosphere they play for me.

In the last weeks of my fieldwork, on the 19th of December, I again find myself on the back of a motorcycle. This time we almost fly through the mountains and jungle, avoiding holes and bumps in the road. Halfway we stop at a lonesome stall to buy a plastic bottle filled with green fuel to fill up the tank. Then we continue our way.

In a small group we sit in the green garden of another musician. From our cheap chairs and bamboo benches we look out over the village *Hutumuri*, which at its edges is protected by the deep blue of infinite water and the light grey of sharp, looming cliffs. The man next to me is old and active. He runs, plays, moves and smiles to the point that his few black teeth are openly visible. His young wife and sons help to carry the instruments from the house to the grass.

In a long row, from left to right, from very big to very tiny they are laid down: the conch shells from the Moluccan sea. This is the traditional *tahuri*, an indigenous wind instrument. A group of children joins us, picking up the shells of various sizes, carefully holding the circular forms in their hands. On the sign of the musician, they take a deep breath, place their lips around the single hole on top and blow their round cheeks full of air. The hollow, echoing sounds are carried away by the wind, into the
night.

1-Culture, Colonialism and Church: The Historical Context

These musical moments on these beautiful places are connected in their bliss and felicity. As a researcher studying music, I found myself in an anthropological heaven. Hopeful imaginations became reality. Sitting in the inexplicable vastness of nature, amidst darkness, silence and kindness, I learnt about Moluccan music. Friends voluntarily offered to bring me to less reachable parts of Ambon. People I interviewed invited me to come along and meet their friends who also were willing to help me with my project. Musicians and their pupils gave demonstrations of the songs and sounds that characterize the Moluccan traditional. The openness, cordiality, generosity, tranquility and flexibility not only made possible my whole research on traditional church music, but also form the core values of collectivity that define Moluccan culture and identity. This chapter sets out to sketch the basis of the concept of Moluccanness: it describes the Moluccas as a vast realm of islands, the indigenous religion, the organization, values and ritualistic ambience of Moluccan society, the musicality of Moluccans and the colonial and religious history of *Maluku*. The descriptions form the context of the Moluccan church, Moluccan theology and Moluccan music. As the foundation of the themes addressed in this thesis, an understanding of this context is necessary to grasp the development of the GPM, the process and content of contextual theology and the setting of traditional music.

The Moluccas

Since the Moluccas are not very well known, some general information is in place. The Moluccas are situated in the east of Indonesia on both sides of the equator, consisting of a total surface of 851 000 square kilometer of which ninety percent is water. The distance between the most northern and most southern point is 1300 kilometer, and the Moluccas comprise approximately 1300 islands, many uninhabited (Bartels 1994, 17-18).

Geographically the Moluccas can be divided in three areas: the North Moluccas that is predominantly Muslim, the South Moluccas that is predominantly Catholic, and the Central Moluccas that is predominantly Protestant and forms the focus of this study. The latter is the most densely populated area and includes Ambon, Seram, the Lease group (Haruku, Saparua, Nusa Laut), Buru, the Banda islands and some other small islands (Bartels 1994, 18-19). The Moluccas are characterized by an enormous ethnic, cultural and linguistic diversity, although

long having been connected by the *lingua franca* of trade, Malay.⁵⁷ Malay continues to be used as everyday language in a variety of local dialects, while the official language is *Bahasa Indonesia*, which is derived from Malay. In some places, such as in the inlands of Seram or in costal Islamic villages, indigenous languages are still spoken (Bartels 1994, 21). As the Moluccas are surrounded by water, fishing is one of the main activities that for a large part determines the way of life of the islanders. When walking on the streets and markets, one can find many delicious dishes with fish, shining with their silver color in the sun. Moreover, water in the form of much rain has resulted in lush vegetation, of which the *sago* palm is the most prominent product in Moluccan households. *Sago* flour and water are the main ingredients of the famous traditional food *papeda*, a semi-transparent sticky kind of porridge that is often eaten with a fish sauce (Bartels 1994, 23-26). By turning two sticks together a ball of *papeda* is cut loose from the mass, after which it is gulped down without using any cutlery. Over the course of three months I unfortunately did not manage to master the technique of kissing the dish and slurp the continuous line of *papeda* in. Afraid of an unstoppable supply of this sticky material, I used a spoon the two times I tried it, to be able to swallow it fast and at once.

Moluccan religious and cultural identity

The origin myth of the Moluccan people tells about the *waringin* tree on the top of a mountain on the mother-island Seram, *Nusa Ina*, from which the first ancestors came. The mountain bears the name *Nunusaku*, which is the first created land that arose from the sea (Ririhena 2014, 51-53). The first humans are called *Alifuru* and the name refers to the tribes of the inlands (Bartels 1994, 107-108; Ririhena 2014, 52).⁵⁸ A general division of tribes is made

⁵⁷ Malay appears to be a very old language. Originally it comes from east Sumatra and the language goes back three centuries before the arrival of the Portuguese (Bartels 1994, 21).

⁵⁸ Two of the biggest and most influencing *Alifuru* groups on West Seram are the *Wemale* and *Alune*. Both have their own cultural characteristics and language (Bartels 1994, 36). According to the oral tradition, the *Wemale* are the original inhabitants of west Seram, while the *Alune* migrated to this place (Bartels 1994, 36).

along the lines of the *Patasiwa* and *Patalima* groups.⁵⁹ Traditionally,⁶⁰ societal organization consists of clans that can diffuse over various villages.⁶¹ Each clan has its own leader and a *kapitan*, the captain of warfare. The village is governed by the *saneri negeri*, the village council. In addition, the *marinyo* is the village's messenger and the *kewang* is the village police. The latter guards, among other things, the *sasi*,⁶² which concerns measures to protect natural ecological regeneration through a temporary prohibition on for example fishing or harvesting. The *raja* is the head of the village, whose task it is to maintain the *adat* rules. He is assisted by the *kepala soa*. The *kepala adat* is the authoritative figure in all *adat* matters (Bartels 1994, 47, 307-312). As referred to before, *adat* is one of the most central cultural systems in Moluccan cosmology. Adhering to the *adat* rules benefits the harmony of daily existence as well as the relationship between nature and the divine. To prevent malediction and disaster, honoring the ancestors is of utmost importance (Patty 2018, 58). In more detail, *adat-istiadat* means 'the way of life of the ancestors', which is the way that should be followed. *Adat* forms the core of Moluccan identity and transcends religious affiliation. In connection to *adat* the *baileo* occupies a central position. Symbolizing the fundamental place of *adat*, this is the house where the village leaders assemble. The *baileo*⁶³ is an open building on posts made from wood with a thatched roof and veranda (Patty 2018, 52-53).⁶⁴

⁵⁹ *Pata* means people, *siwa* means nine, and *lima* means five.

The groups are traced back to the myth of *Hainuwele*. She was a special girl that produced valuable goods from her feces, which made her father a rich man, and which made the other families very jealous. During the ritual of the *maro* dance, they therefore decided to kill her and pushed her in a hole in the middle of the dancing circle. Because of the murder the people were cursed and dispersed into the two groups, of which the first settled in the west and the second in the east of Seram. Hereafter parts of both groups migrated to other islands (Bartels 1994, 38-39; Ririhena 2014, 51-53).

⁶⁰ 'Traditionally' here refers to the fact that, although society in cities and many villages is no longer organized in this way, there continue to exist villages that are, which is why the present tense is used. Traditional here is a place-based phenomenon, not something confined to the past.

⁶¹ A clan refers to an exogamous, unilinear group whose descent is traced via the male line until the ancient ancestor who was the first to settle in the village (Bartels 1994, 324).

⁶² The belief in the effectiveness of *sasi* has decreased, especially in Christian villages, which is why the church, concerned about ecology and environmental pollution, complemented the *sasi adat* with the *sasi gereja*, church *sasi*. It has exactly the same goal and measures, except that here the Christian God shall be the one to punish offenders (Bartels 1994, 311-312).

⁶³ Traditionally one believed that for the building of a *baileo* a human head was needed that should be chopped off from the body of the enemy. In general, head-hunting was a common practice in earlier times during war between villages or for ritual purposes. The head-hunting expedition was led by the *kapitan* (Bartels 1994, 40). Nowadays, head hunting is prohibited by the Indonesian state and seen as barbaric. For ritualistic intentions a substitute is sometimes used, such as a coconut. Occasionally a human head is still chopped off in conflicts between villages, after which the perpetrators are put in prison.

⁶⁴ When a village belongs to the *Patasiwa*, the *baileo* is built on posts, while if a village belongs to the *Patalima*, the *baileo* is an open piece of heightened land tamped with earth (Bartels 1994, 305).

The original context of the Moluccan traditional

Because *adat* ceremonies form the ‘original’ context of the Moluccan traditional that is used as a resource for contextual theology,⁶⁵ it is fruitful to devote attention to these ceremonies and their inherently connected elements of clothes, dance, language and music. *Pendeta* (pastor) Matatula of the *Silo* church poignantly described the importance of *adat* for Moluccan people:

Since childhood we are formed with *adat*, because we are born in *adat* society. (...) We all are not only guided by the Word of God to lead a moral life, but there is also *adat* that helps us in this process.⁶⁶

Before Moluccan people came into contact with Christianity, the *orang tua tua*⁶⁷ regulated their lives according to the *adat* in every aspect: spiritually, economically, politically and socially.⁶⁸ The idea of *adat* as continuous tradition via the ancestors is of central importance, up to today: “This is from generation to generation, from the past to the present, maybe the future. It is already tradition from the beginning of our ancestors. (...) Till now we keep it and practice it as a part of our life. That is called tradition.”⁶⁹ Although the *adat* system is very comprehensive, some cultural principles are often mentioned when talking about Moluccan culture. *Pela* is an indigenous cultural symbol that refers to a social-metaphysical alliance between two or three villages. The bond is endorsed by the involvement of the ancestors during the ceremony.⁷⁰ The villagers become blood brothers who always have to support each other (Ririhena 2014, 60). *Pela* is seen as the strong pillar that guarantees people relating to one another as brothers and sisters, especially with respect to Muslim-Christian relationships.⁷¹ Sharing with and giving to each other (*saling berbagi*) is also an important

⁶⁵ Traditional cultural forms used for contextual theology are transported from their original context to a Christian church context. Here the original context is described.

⁶⁶ Interview with Jan Z. Matatula, pastor of the *Silo* church in Ambon, 28-11-2019, Ambon. Translation by author.

When the information presented is based on an interview with a specific person the complete reference including place and date will be given the first time. Consecutive references to the same interview only state the name of the informant.

⁶⁷ A sweet name used to denote the ancestors.

⁶⁸ Interview with Jan Z. Matatula.

⁶⁹ Interview with Christian Izaac Tamaela, theologian and musician at UKIM, 30-10-2019, Ambon.

⁷⁰ The so-called ‘hard’ *pela* prohibits inhabitants of these village to marry each other. Apart from the ‘hard’ *pela*, which often originated during situations of war, there is also *pela gandong*, the womb *pela*. This bond is based on genealogical connections between clans of allied villages. Lastly, the *pela tempat sirih* is a pact of friendship, established through a ritual of chewing *pinang*, areca nuts with tobacco wrapped in betel leaves (Bartels 1994, 315).

⁷¹ Within the *adat* system, for Muslims it is allowed to attend church, even to renovate a church, and for Christians it is allowed to attend the mosque, or even build it: “They must help, because they are brother and sister” (Interview with Jacky Manuputty, GPM pastor and peace worker, 26-11-2019, *Amahusu*).

adat value. Moluccan culture is very much characterized by collectivity. This ideal is expressed in *masohi* or *kerja sama*,⁷² which implies that people combine their skills, energy and resources to achieve certain goals that exceed the capacities of individuals. This collaboration takes place in many daily activities such as building a house, or during more special occasions such as weddings or funerals (Bartels 1994, 360-361).⁷³ The philosophy behind the solidarity is illustrated in sayings as *tolong menolong* (mutual help), *ale rasa beta rasa* (you feel I feel), and *potong di kuku rasa di daging* (cut in the nail, feel in the flesh).⁷⁴ Nowadays, the *adat* rules are more commonly followed in villages than in cities. The term *negeri adat* denotes the rare villages that hold on to and protect the traditional *adat* system. As Bella from the village *Soya* explains: “We think it’s a ritual from the ancestors. So we don’t destroy it. Because it is hereditary, so it is our identity. We always maintain our identity.”⁷⁵ However, despite the difference between people who live in the city and people who live in traditional villages, all Moluccans state that they are aware of and give honor to their culture, precisely because they feel it is who they are.⁷⁶

There are many *acara adat*, *adat* ceremonies, that are mentioned as the ritual context for traditional Moluccan elements and practices. Festive activities include the receiving of guests, weddings, the celebration of the harvest and *makan patita*, a communal dinner whereby everyone shares her own-made food. More ritualistic activities are the cleaning, closure, opening or building of the *baileo*, the inauguration of a new *raja*, or the so-called *masuk minta* or *kawin minta*, when a boy asks a girl to marry him.⁷⁷ *Panas pela* literally refers to the heating of the *pela* bond between villages, a ceremony which is repeated each year. Moreover, when young people enter puberty or adulthood, initiation rituals mark this

⁷² *Badati* is a similar ideal. It means helping each other to solve a burden, mainly financially. Everybody in the community contributes something to solve the problem (Interview with Agus Batlajery, professor at UKIM, 8-11-2019, Ambon).

⁷³ Interview with John F. Beay, GPM pastor and musician, 12-11-2019, Ambon.

For example, people give money for the costs of the wedding and organize it together, or help in preparing the funeral – even to the point of dressing the deceased.

⁷⁴ Interview with Hery Siahay, GPM pastor, 21-11-2019, Ambon.

Besides interhuman relations, *sasi* protects human-nature relations. Moreover, local wisdom is a broad term that is often used in connection to or interchangeably with *adat*. An example is the technique of making traditional instruments of various types of bamboo (Interview with Ronny Loppies, director of AMO, Ambon Music Office, 19-11-2019, Ambon).

⁷⁵ Interview with Bella Soplanit, master student at UKIM, 18-12-2019, Ambon. Translation by author.

⁷⁶ Interview with Agus Batlajery.

⁷⁷ The ceremony consists of a large party with a large group of people, that, through music and dance such as a *tifa* ensemble and the *tari lenso*, ask the marital questions. While nowadays the ceremony is one day and uses money to ask the question, in former times the ritual could extend over one or two months with art and products such as fruits, animals or wood serving as leverage (Interview with Jonas Silooy, musician and leader of a children’s music group in the village *Amahusu*, 1-12-2019, *Amahusu*).

process.⁷⁸ Funerals fall under the category of sorrowful ceremonies, and practical activities like building a house together should also be seen as *acara adat*.⁷⁹

Clothes, dance, language and music are the inherent elements that together form the package of *adat* ceremonies.⁸⁰ Traditional clothes are called *pakaian adat*. The red headband or red cloth, the *ikat kepala*, is the most visible and well-known symbol of the *Alifuru* people.⁸¹ In traditional villages men wear the headband after initiation.⁸² During rituals red scarfs are often worn around the neck.⁸³ The traditional costume is called *kebaya*. For girls it consists of an orange-red long skirt with a shiny white motive and a white top with a tie around the belly, covered by a white transparent blouse that has flowery round motives and glimmering details.⁸⁴ The hair is tied together in a bun with a strap of shells or pearls and the face is painted a little bit white.⁸⁵ Make-up such as red lipstick or eye shadow is sometimes added, as well as jewelry. For boys the *kebaya* is composed of white trousers and a white blouse, supplemented with a colored long open jacket, characterized by vertical stripes on the sides. Apart from the *kebaya*, the already mentioned traditional blouse, the *baju cele*, is a popular garment. The blocked motive is most commonly colored in red and white, and nowadays many modern versions are available, figured with symbols like the *parang*, machete, or typical natural products like nutmeg and cloves.

There are many Moluccan dances, characterized by their own meaning, musical rhythm and movements.⁸⁶ The most famous are the *cakalele* and the *tari lenso*. These dances are accompanied by traditional music and the dancers wear traditional clothes. Originally the *cakalele* is a war dance, performed in preparation of headhunting or war (Bartels 1994, 41). Today the *cakalele* is used in several *acara adat* such as the *panas pela*, and most often to

⁷⁸ For example, boys have to cut off the head of an animal, which has to be dead at once. In former times, the head of a human was used for this ritual (Interview with Chris Tamaela, 13-11-2019, Ambon).

⁷⁹ Interview with John F. Beay, Chris Tamaela, Jonas Silooy.

⁸⁰ Music will be addressed in Chapter Six.

⁸¹ Red is the typical Moluccan color, because it is the sign of blood, which refers to strength and life: "always remember your ancestors. They want us to be brave, not scared" (Interview with Chris Tamaela, 16-11-2019, Ambon).

⁸² In some clans, such as in the village *Yalahatan* in Seram, there is a difference in style between married and unmarried men. Only the first can wear a headband that covers the full head.

⁸³ Interestingly, the Dutch farmer scarf is immensely popular for this purpose among Moluccan people and perceived as a precious gift, usually received from Dutch family members.

⁸⁴ Other colors also are possible, although this is the one seen most often.

⁸⁵ When Muslim girls wear this traditional costume, they tie the strap around their hair bun on the outside of the headscarf.

⁸⁶ Dances sometimes also go together with the singing of traditional songs.

welcome and protect guests, also in public and political contexts.⁸⁷ The *cakalele* is danced by men who are in attack position; bended knees, low to the ground and leaning forward. In one hand they hold a shield, which can either be round or thin, long and vertical, and in the other a stick or spear. Their feet positioned crosswise, weighed down and slowly turning, the dancers move back and forth from one foot to the other, from heel to toe. At the same time their arms drift menacingly from back to front where they hit the shield with the stick on the rhythm played by the *tifa* drum and *totobuang* gongs. *Tari lenso* is performed by women, also to welcome guests and also accompanied by the *tifa* and *totobuang*. *Lenso* refers to the white handkerchiefs the women have tied around one finger of each hand. Standing straight, they move on their feet from back to front, turning their hands and arms both ahead and behind as well as next to their bodies, which makes the handkerchiefs swing in a meditative way. Other dances are the *maku maku* (circle dance),⁸⁸ the *tifa* dance, *tari obor* (torch dance), and the exciting *gaba gaba* dance. The latter is danced by four men and four women. The men hold the ends of four bamboo posts and hit them on the ground and against each other in a fast rhythm. The women, while making a round, synchronically jump in between the bamboo posts: one mistake means a crushed foot!⁸⁹ Some traditional Moluccan dances are from the Moluccas and others have foreign influences, such as the *tari lenso* and the *katreji* that both come from Portugal. The *katreji*, originally a farmers' dance, is danced in male-female pairs, mostly in the evening during weddings or other parties. It is characterized by waltz music and played by the ukulele and *totobuang* or in Hawaiian style.⁹⁰

For some *adat* rituals indigenous languages, the *bahasa tanah*, are used if possible. Referring to languages of specific ethnic groups and places, it is spoken (among other things) in the communication with the ancestors. Only in more remote, often Muslim or indigenous,⁹¹

⁸⁷ A transformation of meaning took place: now *cakalele* is associated with passion, dynamics and spirit, not with war (Interview with Peter Salenus, GPM employee and teacher at UKIM, 4-11-2019, Ambon).

⁸⁸ The *maku maku* dance is from central *Maluku*. The circular dance direction is counter-clockwise. The dance can be performed by men alone or by a mixture of men and women. People hold hands while dancing and their foot movements fit the rhythm of the drums. The dance is accompanied by the playing of five or more drums and the singing of *kapata* (*kapata* is explained in Chapter Six). The *maku maku* has three main movements: the *maru maru* means to 'walk slowly'; *toti* means 'move' and is faster; and *amatoti* means 'move faster and agile'. The *maku maku* is danced until the night or early morning. It contains values of building harmony and peace, shown in the circle symbols (Tamaela 2015, 57). The *maku maku* can be danced to welcome guests or, for example, at weddings or at the inauguration of a village king (Interview with Rolly Matahelumual, musician and leader of a children's music group in the village *Tiouw*, 6-12-2019, Saparua).

⁸⁹ Interview with Rolly Matahelumual.

⁹⁰ *Katreji* is a very long dance, within which other sub-dances are performed, such as 'hakketeentjes', heel and toe in Dutch (Interview with Rolly Matahelumual).

⁹¹ Indigenous in the sense that people adhere to Moluccan indigenous religion, referred to as 'animists' by outsiders. I will sometimes use 'animists' as a synonym for Moluccan people who adhere to Moluccan

villages on the islands of Seram and Buru people still speak these languages.⁹² Usually, only specialists know how to use the indigenous ‘high class’, old and sacred words in specific *adat* rituals, and even these experts start to use a mix of indigenous and daily language.⁹³ On Ambon, Haruku and Saparua, especially in Christian villages, the indigenous languages are almost lost because the Dutch Protestant colonialists prohibited all indigenous cultural elements in church, including language:⁹⁴ “The church is our language. Colonialization made the local language dead in every Christian congregation.”⁹⁵ Moreover, the GPM and national political regimes of modernization also pursued a policy of banning local languages.⁹⁶ Nowadays, rapid change through globalization, media and mass communication increases the loss of linguistic cultural heritage.⁹⁷ As a pastor in *Haria*, Saparua, said: “Language is our identity. The Dutch speak Dutch, the English speak English, the Israelis speak Hebrew. We are Moluccans but where is our language? It is not there. It is such a pity.”⁹⁸ *Malayu* as a *Bahasa daerah*, a language of the region, is spoken as daily language by all Moluccan people, although villages have their own dialects that can be recognized by intonation and rhythm.⁹⁹ Furthermore, in contemporary Moluccan society almost everyone speaks Indonesian, especially in Ambon city.¹⁰⁰

indigenous religion. Although I am aware of the problems associated with this word, it is a short way to indicate a Moluccan ethnic group in indigenous-religious terms.

⁹² In Islam people namely did not try to destroy Moluccan culture, but used it as an instrument for religion. Moreover, in other places than the Moluccas, where the influence of the Dutch Calvinists was less strong, Protestant Christianity could interact more with local culture, as I experienced in Yogyakarta. Here I visited a Javanese Protestant church, which is a separate Christian denomination. In this church Javanese culture, language, music and philosophy are used so that people receive the Christian message in accordance with their cultural feeling.

⁹³ ‘Regular’ villagers do usually not know the meaning of the sacred words (Interview with Peter Salenus).⁹⁴

⁹⁴ Interview with Jance Rumahuru, Nik Sedubun, Semy Toisuta, Rence Alfons.

People who could speak an indigenous language when they were young often forgot it when they grew older, since there was no one to speak the language with.

⁹⁵ Interview with Elifas Maspaitela, general secretary of the GPM, 19-11-2019, Ambon. Translation by author.

⁹⁶ Teachers, both Sunday school teachers and regular school teachers, played a large role in prohibiting local languages as well as *Malayu* (Malay) language (Interview with Anonymous, 2-12-2019, Ambon).

⁹⁷ Even ten years ago more people still spoke indigenous languages (Interviews at Wycliffe, a Bible translation organization, 11-11-2019, Ambon).

⁹⁸ Interview with Anonymous, 6-12-2019, *Saparua*. Translation by author.

⁹⁹ There are many small differences between villages, which have their own traditions, ‘logo’ or flag, *adat* rules and dialects (Interview with Jacky Manuputty, Peter Salenus).

¹⁰⁰ There exist horrible stories of people, now middle-aged, who lost their local language because of the cruel punishments at public schools that followed the policy of development and modernization of the Indonesian government. For example, the hands of children who would speak in their own language at school would be put in boiling water. To protect their children from such punishments, parents stopped speaking the local language altogether.

Moluccan indigenous religion

Connected to *adat*, the ancestors occupy an important position in Moluccan cosmology. The indigenous religion that Moluccan people adhered to before they came into contact with other religious systems is called *agama Nunusaku* in academic literature.¹⁰¹ This is an ethnic, monotheistic religion – although it shows several polytheistic characteristics – in which the worship of one highest God, the *Upu Lanite*, is central. The *agama Nunusaku* is classified under animism by scholars and foreigners,¹⁰² as there are higher and lower gods of which the ancestors, the *tete-nene-moyang* also form part. Ancestors are a kind of ‘living dead’ who can intervene in the lives of human beings and with whom one can get in contact (Patty 2018, 57-58; Ririhena 2003, 24).¹⁰³ Somewhere halfway during the fieldwork I had the opportunity to visit the indigenous village *Yalahatan* at the south coast of *Seram*. The description below serves as a sphere impression of animist *adat* life that is often invoked in stories people tell about Moluccan tradition.

When I and my friend approached Yalahatan, we crossed a large group of men with bare chest and red cloth on their way to the swamp in the jungle to bury a deceased old woman. In the village we were received by a family that lives in a contemporary house: a very hot concrete building with a plastic roof built by the Indonesian government in their endeavor to ‘modernize’. Inside there were no windows nor

¹⁰¹ It should be noted that the term ‘indigenous’ is used in the absence of better alternatives. As Olupona (2004) makes clear, in point of fact the indigenous has little meaning apart from the colonial and imperial cultures in the modern period. He expresses the hope that the linguistic move from ‘primitive’ to ‘indigenous’ “means that we are no longer speaking of an a priori romantic and exotic reality that reveals the elementary forms of the religious and social life of humankind” (Olupona 2004, 89). Indigenous here indicates Moluccan religion before contact with other people and their religious systems, and I do not deny the inherent heterogeneity and complexity of the term. In this sense the thesis responds to the critiques of Tafjord (2013), who states that the term ‘indigenous’ originated as a rest-category invented by Europeans, which makes its use problematic in a postcolonial context (Tafjord 2013, 225-226). Unintended consequences may be the hiding of differences within one group, stereotyped or ahistorical images, et cetera (Tafjord 2013, 231). Therefore, ‘indigenous’ should not be used as an analytical tool, and case studies should be the starting point (taking into account globalization) to prevent generalization (Tafjord 2013, 232). This thesis merely makes use of the word in a linguistic, not analytical way, grounding it in an empirical case study.

¹⁰² Moluccans themselves generally refer to *agama suku*, tribal religion.

¹⁰³ Ancestors protect their families, but can also punish them when people do not adhere to the *adat* rules. It is important to realize that families and villages belong to the ancestors, and not the other way around. In Moluccan culture, the word ‘family’ refers to all persons with whom one feels related. This group can extend to the clans of great grandparents of both mother’s and father’s side (Bartels 1994, 328). In this way Moluccan society is ranked along old age. For example, the *rumah tua*, the ancestral or parental home, is a holy place for every member of the family (Ririhena 2014, 45-46) where the power of the ancestors is the strongest. In this sense, Moluccan identity is very much place-based: emotional bonds and nostalgic desires in relation to their ancestral village, home and place of birth are strong among Moluccan people, even when they have lived in other parts of the world for generations already (Bartels 1994, 303). Last names are another example. To Moluccan people their names indicate village of origin, and therefore social relations – even when one did not know the other before (Bartels 1994, 303).

furniture. On dusty plastic floor mats we drank a cup of tea, surrounded by many others sitting or lying on the ground and watching TV. The bedrooms were located behind several curtains, and in the adjacent room there was a kitchen where a group of women was cooking dinner in a large pot on both a portable gas stove and on natural fire, of which the smoke tickled our noses and eyes.

Three different clans live in Yalahatan. The village is situated at the foot of a mountainous jungle terrain of the most deep and bright green I have ever seen in my life. Everywhere the funny looking coconut trees rise out of this dense canopy of color, as little tropical parasols. Stone houses alternate with traditional houses, made of the wood and leaves of the sago tree. The ritual houses – where the families of the clan leaders live – and the baileo are located in the middle of the village. Sago and palm trees are used for these higher constructions standing on posts. On the corners the images of the clan totems are visible that are linked to origin myths. At the village edge stands a little secluded hut, intended for female initiation and child-birth. When girls have their first menstruation they have to spend one month inside, keeping the fire on and receiving water and food through bamboo pipes. After one month – or more when another girl joins in the process and the counting starts again – they are ritually washed after which their teeth are filed in a very painful procedure.

Village life is characterized by the drying of cloves, which peculiar sharp smell is recognized from afar, by women squatting down for ages, washing their clothes and dishes at the public water source, by naked little children running and playing around, and by hunting: wearing the red cloth and a rope around their hips, carrying machetes, spears, bows and guns, a group of men walked into the jungle. Old people only speak their indigenous language and knowledge about the religion and history of each clan is highly secret. The villagers fear the spirits and punishments of their clan-related ancestors, whom they satisfy with material fines.

In the evening, lying on a thin mat underneath my mosquito net in the excruciating heat, I pondered over my experiences in Yalahatan in the absolute darkness and silence that was only interrupted by the sounds of dogs and chickens, and the light of endless stars.

Moluccan identity

Although knowledge about *adat*, the ancestors and connected traditional practices has been decreasing, the associated values remain important in the lives of all Moluccan people.¹⁰⁴ However, one should not forget to look beyond the traditional *adat* system for a characterization of Moluccan culture and identity.¹⁰⁵ The character of Moluccans is metaphorically described as the *sago* tree: rough from the outside and soft on the inside.¹⁰⁶ Moluccans typically are outspoken, loud and honest people, have their judgement of others ready and love to laugh.¹⁰⁷ They don't shy away from their emotions and are perpetually loyal to persons whom they regard as family. The family also is the place where the core cultural value of respect is taught and passed down – respect for elderly, leaders and acquaintances.¹⁰⁸ Most interestingly for this research, Moluccan people love music and singing, from before they are born till after they have died: already as an unborn baby Moluccans hear their mother sing, and when they have died brass instruments are continuously played for three days long.¹⁰⁹ As someone explained to me, in every family at least one person can be found who has a nice voice, because that is Moluccan identity:¹¹⁰ “People internalize music in their life. Music is in the Moluccan DNA. (...) We have the rhythm in our soul.”¹¹¹ A beautiful interpretation I heard is the idea that the sound of the nearby waves of the sea causes the

¹⁰⁴ Albeit not many Christians would admit this openly because of ingrained feelings of shame linked to colonial stereotyped notions of paganism and superstition (Interview with Jance Rumahuru, theologian and teacher at the IAKN (2-12-2019, Ambon), Cornelis Adolf Alyona, theologian at UKIM (21-11-2019, Ambon)).

¹⁰⁵ Moluccan culture has always been changing and been in contact with other cultures: “They are also part of *Maluku*. So *Maluku* is not only ethnic Moluccan, but another people came here (...) and they contribute to and enrich our native culture” (Interview with Chris Tamaela, 31-10-2019, Ambon).

Moreover, besides *adat* characteristics, Moluccan people love interior home decoration through innumerable souvenirs, photos and big vases with fake flowers in it. In general, they are huge soccer fans, especially of the Dutch national team. Furthermore, when people are at home they wear comfortable clothes like shirts, shorts and flipflops, also when guests arrive. In relation to man-woman relations, from the outside a more patriarchal gender division seems to be maintained, whereby men occupy the most prominent positions and women take care of the household while having an equally strong voice in many matters.

¹⁰⁶ Interview with Anonymous, 22-12-2019, *Soya*, Ambon.

¹⁰⁷ For me personally it was sometimes hard to experience that people could laugh at each other, even at children, if they did not like what others were doing. For example, at a musical performance where the quality of the playing and singing was not exceptionally high, people openly started talking and laughing.

¹⁰⁸ Interview with Anonymous, 22-12-2019, Ambon.

Illustrative of this was my walk down the hilly mountain road in the village *Soya* together with a friend that lives here. With the sun mercilessly shining on us, our walking was characterized by the sounds of a mutual screaming of names, both of my friend and of the people living in the houses we passed, both close to and far from the road.

¹⁰⁹ Interview with Ronny Loppies.

¹¹⁰ Interview with Agus Batlajery.

¹¹¹ Interview with Jacky Manuputty.

musicality of Moluccan people. Moluccans have a high musical intuition,¹¹² their voices have many different colors and they especially love harmony and middle frequencies,¹¹³ which is expressed in the preference for mellow, melancholic pop songs. Traditional Moluccan music is specifically seen as an important part of Moluccan culture and identity. A musician narrated: “Music is a cultural identity of humans. When you travel to a certain place and people ask ‘where are you from?’, ‘what do you have?’, I answer I have music.”¹¹⁴ Music is played everywhere, from the beach to the mountain. Traditional music is regarded as heritage containing cultural values that bring this music in touch with people’s feelings: “When hearing this music, Moluccan people unite. We have soil, we have culture. Wherever you live, the sounds of the instruments certainly cause tears.”¹¹⁵ Nevertheless, with Ambonese people growing up in a globalized world with many circulating music styles, the ethnic and modern are merged together in Moluccan culture. Church music is also part of this constellation, accompanying many life stages of Moluccan Christians.¹¹⁶ As mothers sing Christian church songs as lullabies while rocking their baby, and as traditional songs become part of Christian religion,¹¹⁷ the boundaries between music in traditional culture and in church culture cease to exist. For Moluccan Christians their culture and faith are one identity that cannot be split. One of the informants stated: “My identity as Moluccan and my identity as Christian are the same identity.”¹¹⁸

According to Bartels (1994, 422-425), the core of Moluccan ethnic identity still lies inside the cultural values of the *agama Nunusaku*. Through *adat* together with Christianity or Islam this common identity is preserved until now. However, Moluccan identity does not have one single static core because it has always been blended. Pastor Manuputty explained that the single Moluccan identity is diversity, a construction without grand narrative. From the early days, *Maluku* has been a place of plurality and migration where languages, cultures and religions are exchanged. Mixture is literally in the blood of the Moluccans.¹¹⁹ Nevertheless, at the same time many experience a fundamental continuity in their identity as a Moluccan,

¹¹² When a person starts singing, others can intuitively join in a polyphonic way. Moreover, many Moluccan musicians are autodidacts, having learnt to play by themselves. In general they want to be able to play the music fast (Interview with Ronny Loppies).

¹¹³ This is seen to fit the character of ‘quickly angry and also quickly all right’; *cepat marah cepat juga baik*.

¹¹⁴ Interview with Maynard Reynolds Nathanael Alfons (Rence Alfons), musician and leader of a children’s music group in the village *Tuni*, Ambon, 1-11-2019, *Tuni*.

¹¹⁵ Interview with Jeffrey Leatimia, GPM pastor in *Haria*, Saparua, 5-12-2019, *Haria*.

¹¹⁶ “Singing originates from the bathroom to the church. It always continues” (Interview with Ronny Loppies).

¹¹⁷ Interview with Vally & Margery Weno (Eggy), master students at UKIM, 16-12-2019, Ambon.

¹¹⁸ Interview with Jance Rumahuru.

¹¹⁹ Interview with Jacky Manuputty, Steve Gaspersz, Rudi Fofid.

whether one's connection to traditional culture is strong or not. One of the pastors with whom I spoke made the comparison with a container of water and a drop of blood. The more water, the less visible the blood. However, the blood continues to be there, like the memory and feeling of Moluccanness.¹²⁰ Hence, Moluccan identity is not only perceived to be a construct, but as holding something ancient of the ancestors. When Moluccans move to other places, they bring their tradition: "That's me. What you have yourself, you have to hold on to, because it's where you come from. You have to be proud! Because if there is no Moluccan identity, who am I?"¹²¹

Colonial and religious history

The Moluccas have always attracted foreigners because of their spices (Bartels in Schröter 2010, 225). In the first century A.D. the islands were already known in the Roman empire. Trade between the archipelago, China and India also started in this period. Through merchants contact originated with other religions such as Hinduism (Patty 2018, 63). Arabic traders transported spices to the Persian Gulf and introduced Islam on the Moluccas from the 15th century onward. Moluccans learnt about the lifestyle of these Islamic tradesmen, but were not forced to adopt their religion (Bartels in Schröter 2010, 225; Patty 2018, 65-71).¹²² In 1534 the Portuguese brought Catholicism to the Moluccas. The Roman-Catholic church quickly set up missionary work to win souls, which happened via mass baptism.¹²³ In the end the Portuguese lost the battle over a trade monopoly on spices. The Dutch arrived on the Moluccas in 1605 and the VOC, 'the United East-India Company', established this monopoly. Although Dutch presence was purely motivated by economic gain through the trade in cloves

¹²⁰ Interview with John F. Beay.

¹²¹ Interview with Rudi Fofid, poet and peace worker, 3-12-2019, Ambon.

¹²² Nowadays, the influence of Islam is mainly notable in the North Moluccas. Besides, Indonesia is the largest Muslim country of the world: 85 percent of the population professes Islam (Patty 2018, 71).

¹²³ The Jesuits played the most important role in Portuguese missionization. In general, Catholics had much more respect for indigenous traditions and beliefs than Protestants. Instead of wiping these values out, they built on them and embedded them in a Christian framework. Also, Catholics set up many schools in the Moluccas. One of the most well-known and most influential Jesuits was Franciscus Xaverius, who alone is responsible for the Christian conversion of a large part of the Central Moluccas (Bartels 1994, 207). He translated many religious texts in Malay and he used songs and local material for the transfer of faith (Patty 2018, 75). Such catechism songs, together with liturgical responses, constitute the origins of church hymnody (Van Dop, personal document, 1).

The legacy of Portuguese presence on the Moluccas is to be recognized in Malay language that contains many Portuguese words. In comparison, the amount of Dutch words in Malay and Indonesian is much less. Reasons for this could be that Portuguese language is closer in sound to Malay and therefore easier to pronounce, and that the Portuguese were the first Europeans to arrive in the Moluccas, introducing many things that were not known before (Bartels 1994, 217).

and nutmeg – leaving a trace of violence and destruction behind – along the way Calvinism was introduced (Patty 2018, 73, 77).¹²⁴ After 1815 in particular the Dutch tried to reform Moluccan Christianity to Protestantism (Bartels in Schröter 2010, 241). Besides Dutch Calvinism strands of Pietism also played a large role in the attempt to evangelize Moluccan culture and to promote a ‘triumphalist’ Christianity, which refers to a perspective of superiority in relation to people of other religions.¹²⁵ The whole of local culture was qualified as ‘pagan’, to the point that Christian Moluccans needed to have a Christian name.¹²⁶ The legacy of this endeavor to separate Moluccan existential expressions – the idea that “who we are today is because of our ancestors yesterday”¹²⁷ – from Christianity is still strong. The VOC became bankrupt in 1799 and two periods of seven years of English domination from 1796 and 1810 resulted in better circumstances for the Moluccans and an intensified focus on religious conversion.¹²⁸ Moreover, political decisions offered expanded possibilities for the work of missionary organizations.¹²⁹ Although the administration in Batavia directly controlled the Protestant Church of the Dutch East Indies known as the ‘Indische Kerk’, the colonial authorities allowed the Dutch Missionary Society (NZG)¹³⁰ to enter the colony after 1848 (Kruithof 2014, 61-62).¹³¹ Joseph Kam worked for the NZG and is called ‘the apostle of the Moluccas’. During his initial months in the Moluccas he had already baptized more than

¹²⁴ Because both the Portuguese and the Dutch chose Ambon as convenient location for the administrative center of the area, the Ambonese acquired a dominant position among the Moluccans (Bartels 1994, 28). Moreover, there are several Moluccan ‘heroes’ who resisted Dutch domination in the 19th century and led successful revolts against the Dutch, of which the most important is Thomas Matulesy, Pattimura (Bartels 1994).

¹²⁵ The idea that people of other religions such as Muslims are not religious or that they profess false religions (Interview with Jacky Manuputty, Rachel Iwamony).

¹²⁶ In resistance to this historical and continuing practice, today some people consciously give their children indigenous Moluccan first names, or do not pass on their European last name (Interview with Rachel Iwamony, Steve Gaspersz, Rence Alfons).

¹²⁷ Interview with Steve Gaspersz, theologian at UKIM, 4-12-2019, Ambon.

¹²⁸ The English were in war with France, who occupied the republic of the Netherlands in that time (Bartels 1994, 244).

¹²⁹ Before, proselytizing was discouraged because the possible social unrest could hamper the trade activities of the VOC. Therefore, missionary activities only took place in areas where the position of the VOC was well established (Kruithof 2014, 56). However, in 1848 a new constitution was adopted in the Netherlands, which, as a by-product, resulted in more religious liberty in the colonies.

¹³⁰ The NZG was founded by Johannes Theodorus van der Kemp (1747-1811), who in earlier times had joined the London Missionary Society (LMS). The LMS was nondenominational and membership was open to all Protestants. Van der Kemp based the organizational structure of the NZG on the LMS. It became a nondenominational society, although in reality the majority was member of the Dutch Reformed Church (Kruithof 2014, 72-73).

¹³¹ Later, more missionary societies were founded and individual missionaries were sent to the colonies (Kruithof 2014, 76). Examples are the Dutch Mission Association (NZV), the Dutch Reformed Mission Association (NGZV), the Utrecht Mission Association, and the Rotterdam Mission Association (RZV) (Kruithof 2014, 76-77).

1500 children. Recognizing the essential value of education, Kam organized the supply of Christian teachers, offered catechization lessons and printed the Bible and Christian school books in Malay. Most importantly, he worked through music and singing. He imported several organs, he printed psalm books in the *lingua franca*, and, making use of available natural materials, he introduced bamboo flutes for the accompaniment of congregational singing (Patty 2018, 86-90). In the first instance Christianity adapted to and interacted with *adat*, resulting in localized religious forms (Ririhena 2003: 37; Bartels in Schröter 2010, 244). Gradually Christianity became an Ambonese cultural identity marker, called *agama Ambon*, and in 1935 the Moluccan Protestant church (GPM) was granted autonomy.

Independent Indonesia

On 17 August 1945, after the cruel occupation of Indonesia by the Japanese in the Second World War, Soekarno and Hatta declared Indonesia independent. A bloody war followed, in which the Netherlands tried to recuperate its colony, making use of the KNIL army – the royal Dutch Indian army – that for an important part consisted of recruited Moluccan men since the Dutch preferred Calvinist Protestants like themselves. This, plus the economic and social privileges granted to the Moluccan Christian elites, gave the Ambonese their nickname of ‘black Dutchmen’ and resulted in the myth of their perpetual loyalty to the Dutch (Bartels 1994, 255-256). Under international pressure from the UN, a decolonization process was started in 1949. The Netherlands recognized the republic of Indonesia.¹³² However, discontent

¹³² This brought many KNIL-soldiers in a difficult position. Out of fear for retaliation of the Indonesian republic, many did not want to join the Republican army nor demobilize themselves on Indonesian soil. On the other hand, the Indonesian republic did not want the soldiers to support the declared RMS (Southern-Moluccan Republic), which left the Dutch government no choice than to bring these soldiers with their families (12.500 people) to the Netherlands to discharge them (Van Amersfoort 2004, 155; Bartels 1986, 27). Because of their intended temporary stay, the Moluccan families were accommodated in former concentration camps in isolation from the rest of society, which resembled the barracks in the KNIL. Because the men lost their soldier status, which had formed the basis of their existence, conflicts arose and the camps were organized in an even more homogenized way based on religion and island of origin (Van Amersfoort 2004, 157). The political ideal of the RMS became the new social perspective and gradually the Dutch turned into the enemy because of their unfulfilled promise of a glorious return to *Maluku*, which in turn led to a reconstruction of Moluccan tradition (*adat*), strengthening identities along particular circles of belonging (Van Amersfoort 2004, 158-159). When it became clear that the situation was permanent and that repatriation was impossible, the Dutch government started building neighborhoods in different towns to improve circumstances. However, isolation partly continued because of homogenized community divisions and the resistance to integration out of fear for losing the political ideal (Van Amersfoort 2004, 161). The deadlock experienced by the second generation, who grew up in the Netherlands while being isolated and without political perspective, resulted in an outburst of frustration in the 1970’s (Van Amersfoort 2004, 163-164; Bartels 1986, 33-34): over the course of seven years the Indonesian embassy, an Indonesian ambassador, a Moluccan village and a school were attacked and several trains were hijacked (Bartels 1986, 13; Van Amersfoort 2004, 164-165). In the wake of the attacks Moluccans started to think about their Moluccan identity and position in the Netherlands, accepting their permanent stay (Bartels 1986, 37). This facilitated changes and slowly participation in Dutch society increased through social programs aimed at education, employment and social welfare, and through the fading of explicit

among many Moluccans about the decision to turn Indonesia into a republic instead of a federalist state led to the declaration of the RMS, the *Republik Maluku Selatan* or the Republic of the South Moluccas, on 25 April 1950 by J.H. Manuhutu. Although the Indonesian TNI army defeated the RMS soldiers and although the RMS has never exercised authority over the south Moluccas, it continues to be a highly sensitive topic.

The Indonesian state ideology is called ‘Pancasila’, the five points of righteousness.¹³³ The first president of Indonesia was Sukarno, who reigned from 1951 to 1967. The national motto, ‘Unity in Diversity’, was established with the Declaration of Independence, representing the congruence underlying the astonishing variety of peoples and cultures within the nation’s borders.¹³⁴ The second president, Suharto, reigned from 1967 to 1998. Suharto’s New Order regime was characterized by Indonesian centralization, which effectively meant

boundaries of the Moluccan community by intermarriage, migration out of the neighborhoods and cultural reorientation (Van Amersfoort 2004, 168-169). Although the principle of the RMS remained important, the actual practice of the political ideal decreased with generations (Verkuyten 1999, 68).

Concerning religion, in the Netherlands the Moluccan Protestant church was uncoupled from the GPM and became disintegrated. Resembling the army situation where soldiers were divided along ethnic lines (Van der Hoek 1994, 60), the Moluccan church in the Netherlands was grouped on the basis of local identity formations such as kin, village or island because of the isolated migration experience (Chauvel 1997, 133-134). The largest, more overarching denomination is the pro-RMS *Geredja Indjili Maluku* (GIM). According to Jansen (2008, 185), the Dutch reformed church has not completely been adopted by the Moluccan Protestant church in the Netherlands because of this Moluccan history. The Moluccan Protestant church is characterized by an emphasis on the emotional side of faith, and on hospitality, openness, collectivity and sociability. Nowadays, because of efforts made in the 90’s, the Moluccan Protestant church has moved in a more ecumenical direction, which is expressed in the Moluccan church center in Houten where all seven church custody councils are seated (Van der Hoek 1994, 250) (the information in this footnote is based on a paper I wrote for the course ‘Theories & Methods’ in the first year of the Research Master Religious Studies (course lecturers: Pooyan Tamimi Arab and Gerard Wieggers).

For more information about the history of the Moluccan diaspora in the Netherlands, see *In Nederland gebleven: De geschiedenis van de Molukkers 1951-2006* (2006), by Henk Smeets and Fridus Steijlen.

¹³³ The first principle is a belief in one supreme being. The second principle is variously described as a commitment either to internationalism or more literally to a just and civilized humanitarianism. The third *Sila* expresses a commitment to the unity of Indonesia. The fourth *Sila* emphasizes the idea of a people led or governed by wise policies arrived at through a process of consultation and consensus. The fifth expresses a commitment to social justice for all the Indonesian people (Morfit 1981, 840-841). Its lack of specificity and dynamism perhaps contributed to its success, because *Pancasila* is continuously invoked as the basis of political order and national identity.

¹³⁴ However, as Spyer (1996, 25) observes, the motto targets this diversity as an affair of the state. It represents a national process of selecting certain aspects of diversity that have come to stand for the whole of culture, tradition and custom, hereby imposing a standard upon difference. Diversity thus becomes a codification, even a prescription, cast as manifestation of the same underlying unity (Spyer 1996, 26). This became more clear under the presidency of Suharto. The transformations can become sites of confrontation, especially in places far removed from the capital such as the Moluccas (Spyer 1996, 26). A new colonization of *adat* happened under president Suharto (*adat* already retains the broad application it had under Dutch colonial rule, used as a “gloss for the allegedly immutable cultural forms that are held to distinguish one collectivity (...) from another”), whereby the domain to which *adat* is applicable has been shrinking, having been redefined to codify highly limited aspects of ‘traditional’ socio-cultural life (Spyer 1996, 28, 33). While *adat* excludes the nation-state, the national regime colonizes *adat*.

‘Javanization’:¹³⁵ Javanese culture had to become Indonesian culture. The ‘trickle down’ paradigm prioritized Java and stigmatized people far from the center.¹³⁶ Under the umbrella of ‘development’ and ‘modernization’ equal rights were disrespected, as well as local traditions.¹³⁷

Ethnic destruction and revival

Today, the younger generation does not have memories of a colonial past, nor the RMS, and is schooled with pan-Indonesian nationalist ideas.¹³⁸ Almost all Moluccans identify themselves as Indonesian, while being proud of their Moluccan identity as well (Bartels 1994, 288-289). In recent years a revival of interest for Moluccan traditional culture can be witnessed, which is also related to changes in political policy. Regimes after Suharto, with the current president being Joko Widodo, encouraged a focus on local identities of the sub-cultures that Indonesia has.¹³⁹ Centralistic power made place for self-managing autonomy and authority of Indonesian regions, which ignited a sense of ‘original’ identity.¹⁴⁰ On Moluccan schools children learn about local culture, language, dance and more. They play traditional instruments like the *suling* again, the bamboo flute that in earlier times was taught in school as well.¹⁴¹ In turn, in official political contexts traditional Moluccan music groups are invited to perform their local music.¹⁴² Moreover, Indonesia has many so-called ‘culture gardens’, *taman budaya*, a place for preservation, development and education of the traditional culture

¹³⁵ The government tried to unify and standardize many structures in Indonesia according to Javanese models. Moreover, the policy of *transmigrasi*, resettlement of Javanese farmers in the Moluccas, aimed at relieving economic pressure in densely populated areas on Java, caused resentment among the Ambonese, whose land is expropriated and who feel that the central government wants to destroy *adat* in order to impose a uniform national culture (Bartels 1994, 33).

¹³⁶ Almost all education materials are written from a Javanese perspective. While Moluccan children learn many things about Java, Javanese don’t know anything about the Moluccas. Generally, they think Moluccans are from Papua and have a black skin color which they associate with bad habits. Although nowadays the situation is better, it will take a long time to change these stigmas and to bridge the economic and social gap (Interview with Nancy Souisa, theologian at UKIM, 28-10-2019, Ambon).

¹³⁷ Interview with Nancy Souisa.

Moreover, for more than forty years there has not been a Moluccan national political representative (Interview with Mark Ufie, employee at AMO, 23-10-2019, Ambon).

¹³⁸ In comparison, old people above eighty years old can still speak Dutch! One time when I approached an old woman in the *Silo* church, she instantly asked if I was from *Belanda*, the Netherlands, and then she directly changed to Dutch.

¹³⁹ Some positive changes of the effect of Widodo’s policy are noticed. Lands of traditional peoples are protected, their rights are respected, budgets are more equally divided and remote areas are touched by positive effects of government policy, with development beginning from the grassroot level (Interview with Rachel Iwamony, theologian at UKIM, 14-11-2019, Ambon).

¹⁴⁰ Interview with Steve Gaspersz.

¹⁴¹ Also, Christian pupils are introduced to instruments associated with Islam and the other way around.

¹⁴² Interview with Jonas Silooy, Barce Istia.

that is showcased here.¹⁴³ Church and government are partners in this renewed focus on the traditional. The current general secretary of the GPM stated that the church has to adapt to political regimes in serving the people. Being part of Indonesia is an element in the eschatological basis of the GPM.¹⁴⁴ In turn, religion occupies a central position in the Indonesian state. For every citizen it even is obligatory to choose one of the six officially recognized religions for one's identity card.¹⁴⁵ Moreover, government officials always visit religious events to show their involvement and political positions are almost too tensely divided between religions.¹⁴⁶

When Indonesia became independent, the GPM tried to adapt to and build their church system in a national context. They consciously separated themselves from RMS ideals.¹⁴⁷ The GPM, together with the government, succeeded in a purification of Protestantism from the '60s onward, intended to eradicate *adat* and ancestor worship. The basis for this effort was the document called *pesan tobat*, literally 'message to repentance'. During the synod meeting in 1960 the GPM called for a reformation of the church. Everything not directly related to scripture became regarded as pagan. The church had to break with Moluccan cultural traditions and form a central part of national Indonesian society. Only in this way one could become a 'pure' Christian (Patty 2018, 157). The diminution of indigenous values perhaps is one of the reasons of the origin of a bloody civil war between Christians and Muslims in 1999, which experiences are forever stored in Moluccan memory and always play a central

¹⁴³ Interview with Semy Toisuta, director of the *Taman Budaya*, 12-12-2019, Ambon.

¹⁴⁴ Interview with Elifas Maspaitela.

This relation is expressed visually in the form of the national flag and the portraits of the president and vice-president hanging in almost every room where a religious activity takes place, and verbally in almost every sermon that addresses the smallest local context until the largest national context.

¹⁴⁵ Of course, the selection of religions (Islam, Protestantism, Catholicism, Hinduism, Buddhism and Confucianism) shows how religion is defined in political terms. For example, indigenous religion is not an option. Some years ago, there even was an incident in university where some students wore the red headband as a marker of their identity and religion, which resulted in them being expelled. Moreover, in Moluccan society people generally use the phrase *masuk agama*, enter religion, when referring to the change from indigenous religion to Christianity.

¹⁴⁶ Up to the point that it becomes artificial. An example was given about a reconciliation effort to include a predominant Muslim village, *Leihitu*, in the administrative province of Ambon to develop it and counter its marginality caused by the mismatch between its location and its administrative position. Despite long-term actions and the agreement by the mayor, the plan was rejected by the Christian part of the legislative body of the city, out of fear for the change in the amount of Christian voters (Interview with Jacky Manuputty).

¹⁴⁷ Interview with Elifas Maspaitela.

For more information about the history of the GPM, see the Indonesian book *Delapan Dekade GPM: Teologi GPM dalam Praksis Berbangsa dan Bermasyarakat* (2015), by Marantika, Elizabeth, Gaspersz, Steve, Takaria, Markus and Elifas Tomix Maspaitela.

role in current religious, political and personal issues.¹⁴⁸ The war marked a surprising divergence from the *pela* alliance system that assured the peaceful and much praised coexistence of Christian and Muslim villages. The religious violence resulted in the deaths of thousands of people and many displacements. People were killed with home-made and primitive weapons in very sadistic ways, and mosques, churches, houses and whole villages were burnt to the ground.¹⁴⁹ Interestingly, religion was not the initial cause of the conflict. Economic, political and social disputes paved the way for increased tensions that provided the possibility of the war.

The Moluccan conflict

Firstly, the economic crisis that started in Japan in 1997 disseminated across Asian countries. This crisis hit Muslims and Christians differently due to unequal economic positions and functions (Van Liere & Van Dis 2018, 376). Secondly, the rapid democratic transition on national level caused a fear of marginalization among Ambonese Christians. When the New Order regime of Suharto fell in 1998 during the Indonesian Revolution, the Christian positions of privilege and dominance, based on a colonial legacy, changed (Bertrand 2002, 85). The resulting situation of increased Islamic visibility, the perceived loss of higher positions and the openness of renegotiation of resources polarized the communities.¹⁵⁰ Thirdly, the historical division and inequality between Muslims and Christians, and the large immigration flow of Muslims – who were not so affiliated with customary *adat* rules such as the *pela* system – to the Moluccan islands fueled the tensions. Together these factors proved to cause the ground for the Moluccan war, that only afterwards or in its course became framed in religious terms:¹⁵¹ religion as identity marker became mapped onto the conflict (Brauchler 2003, 125).¹⁵² Spyer (2008b, 207) justly observes the effect of what she calls the

¹⁴⁸ Part of the information presented about the conflict is based on a paper I wrote for a masterclass (Religions and the Image Question) given by Birgit Meyer in the first year of the Research Master Religious Studies.

¹⁴⁹ Religious figures and churches also participated in the conflict via various media such as megaphones, press, radio and the more, calling for and helping the goal of *Maluku's* Christianization (Spyer 2008b, 203-204). For a more elaborate and complex layer of the Moluccan conflict, see "Some Notes on Disorder in the Indonesian Postcolony" (2008), by Patricia Spyer.

¹⁵⁰ The historically relatively marginalized position of Moluccan Muslims only changed in the 1990s due to political reform. According to Bertrand (2002, 85), in the absence of any clear institutional means of guaranteeing the protection of group interests, the potential for violent conflict was much stronger.

¹⁵¹ As Van Liere and Van Dis (2018, 373) argue, for most people the causes of the conflict were not religious while motivations for battle and the right to defend clearly were. Moreover, "religion not only played an important part in distinguishing between friend and foe, but also in understanding what was going on and how to deal with the conflict. As a result, traditional theological language was used to indicate the victimhood of the in-group and to legitimate violence towards the out-group" (Van Liere 2011, 323).

¹⁵² Patricia Spyer (2008, 2014) has written extensively about an interesting practice of identity politics during the conflict through large street images of Jesus. Christian painters plastered gigantic portraits of Jesus in the form of murals and billboards onto the city's main thoroughfares and Christian neighborhood gateways.

‘sedimentation of violence’. The hardening of religious communal identities must be understood as an outcome and not the origin of Ambon’s conflict: over time and to a much greater extent than previously was the case, religion acquired a publicly visible dimension. The difference between Muslims and Christians became something allegedly apparent. For example, nowadays almost all Muslim women wear the *hijab*, while before the conflict this was not the case. Moreover, while the first layer of Moluccan identity used to be place of birth, after the conflict this became religion.¹⁵³ Officially, the war ended in 2002 with the signing of the *Malino* peace agreement, although violence continued until 2004 and reverberated up to 2011.¹⁵⁴ The Indonesian government set up a team and promised to publish the causes of the Moluccan conflict six months after the agreement, however so far this has not happened. Many people suspect a conspiracy of political elites and army top provoking the conflict for political gain. However, perhaps the more relevant question is: how could they get the opportunity?

Sitting at the kitchen table of the well-known pastor Jacky Manuputty,¹⁵⁵ surrounded by the tropical sounds of the open little garden, I asked about the war. Stories that tell about the peaceful relationship between Muslims and Christians through the system of *pela* do not conform to reality – not in the past, nor in the present. According to Jacky, there already existed a long history of interreligious tension because of the inheritance of bitter memories since the colonial period.¹⁵⁶ Muslims feel that they are more authentically Ambonese than

Although the paintings reproduced the canon of standard Christian iconography – to be seen in and on Sunday school prayer books, posters, calendars, CD covers, t-shirts and more (Spyer 2016, 185) – Spyer (2008, 528-529, 535) states that the pictures ‘wanted’ a partial departure from it. A certain ‘monumentalization’ of Christ took place, whereby a close-up of Jesus was produced; ‘Christ at large’ (Spyer 2008a, 535). The paintings functioned in several ways. Spyer (2008, 525) argues that the images “bore witness and gave material form to Christian anxieties about invisibility, while aiming to alleviate the condition of being unseen.” The widespread perception of being overlooked and forgotten (even being invisible to God himself) led to the production of the images (Spyer 2008a, 527), to strengthen the faith so that people would know that God was always there (Spyer 2008a, 15). Moreover, the paintings were boundary markers; the Jesus pictures gated the community and branded it as decidedly Christian (Spyer 2008a, 546; Spyer 2016, 188), hereby also constituting a violent act of warding off the Muslim other (the information in this footnote is partly based on a paper I wrote for a masterclass (Religions and the Image Question) given by Birgit Meyer in the first year of the Research Master Religious Studies).

¹⁵³ Interview with Jacky Manuputty.

¹⁵⁴ An interesting, more deep, personal and novel-like Dutch book about the Moluccan civil war and experiences in this war, is *Het Verdriet van Ambon: Een Geschiedenis van de Molukken* (2008), by Tjitske Lingsma.

¹⁵⁵ Interview with Jacky Manuputty.

¹⁵⁶ This refers to unequal positions between Muslims and Christians, as well as to conversion: Muslims and Islam were the first to arrive on the Moluccas, while Catholicism and Protestantism converted people afterwards. Although these tensions are played out on an interreligious level, economic and social differences lay under the surface. The conflict was caused by a long history of entangled religious, social, economic and political tensions and inequalities.

Christians, having preserved local identity markers because Islam gave space to accommodate Moluccan culture. Moreover, Muslims nowadays rather affiliate with national Muslims than with Moluccan Christians. Most importantly, in reality *pela* is not a fully cultural inclusive ideal of brotherhood as it is traditionally based on ideas of biological genealogy via the ancestors, therefore excluding migrants or people from other ethnicities.¹⁵⁷ While all Moluccans use the word ‘family’ or ‘kinship’ when talking about their relations with Muslims, for the larger part these situations refer to *pela* bonds in villages origin, and not to current contacts or living situations.¹⁵⁸ For many people it is hard to talk about the euphemistically called *kerusuhan*, the ‘unrest’ or ‘riot’. Pastor Jacky was one of the few persons who was able to share his experiences. As only his own words do justice to this general traumatic Moluccan history, an excerpt is presented below.¹⁵⁹

I participated in the conflict since the first day till the end. The next question that always is addressed to me is: why do you dedicate yourself so deep in the peace process? I pay back my debt. I never carried a gun, but my prayer is more powerful than the most powerful gun that is produced. Because we sacralized the conflict, it became a stupid sacred conflict. By even blessing the youth groups, the grassroots, they could sacrifice themselves. (...) But I had no choice sometimes. We have been forced to choose: kill or be killed. So don't judge from the normal situation. You cannot just sit while the crowd came, killing your pregnant wife, taking the fetus out. Or eating the dead body. You have to defend yourself! Your beloved ones! (...) After the conflict I got numb for two years. No emotion at all. No emotion at all! I feel no feeling. I cannot cry, I cannot laugh. For two years! Every day I took the dead body, the brain from the street, put it in the helmet. Almost every day. I was on the street, I was on the battleground. I prayed for the people. For the people who have been killed, for the people who want to kill. It's like my daily life. I let my emotion behind. So I went to a psychologist. I got a treatment for almost one year.

¹⁵⁷ Interview with Jance Rumahuru, Steve Gaspersz, Jacky Manuputty.

¹⁵⁸ In that respect some people have the opinion that local Moluccan culture should not be romanticized, as it has been changing during colonial times, postcolonial New Order, Reformation Order and through a contemporary radicalization of Islamic movements. Other common grounds thus need to be sought, such as human needs or hobbies, and deeply layered mindsets about others need to be deconstructed on the basis of contemporary dynamic local contexts (Interview with Steve Gaspersz, Jacky Manuputty).

¹⁵⁹ Interview with Jacky Manuputty.

Some grammatical changes have been made for the benefit of the flow of reading.

Experiences like these are endless: pastors who needed to bury or burn killed people in overcrowded graves; people who in a condition between dead and alive had to flee into the mountains of Seram, living there for eight months with too little food for too many people;¹⁶⁰ traumatized young people who were child soldiers during the conflict, believing they were fighting a sacred war and killing an innumerable amount of people.¹⁶¹ With all these violent, emotional stories in my head, I felt uneasy when I drove through a flat green grassland on Saparua island, which somehow looked unnatural although I could not say why. Then, just at the moment when I saw the carcass of a mosque, my friend told me that this place used to be the Muslim village *Iha*, which was completely burned down by Christians twenty years ago. Even as an outsider I could sense the pain of these ever-lasting experiences.

Muslim-Christian relations

Today, although everyone repeats the official discourse of brotherhood, with *kita semua saudara* and *basudara*¹⁶² being the most heard words in relation to this topic, one needs to read between the lines to grasp a more nuanced and complicated reality of Muslim-Christian relations.¹⁶³ From people working in national politics it became clear that beneath the surface there is a clear religious border in the political domain. Also, stereotypes about ‘the other’ continue to exist on both sides.¹⁶⁴ Old stigmatized narratives have the danger to become a negotiation tool anew for political purposes, as the nickname ‘black Dutchmen’ could be heard again during the conflict, and as conflict narratives in turn are sustained across generations.¹⁶⁵ In a whispering voice people sometimes let go of negative comments about

¹⁶⁰ Interview with Jan Z. Matatula, Anonymous (18-12-2019, Ambon).

¹⁶¹ By coincidence I met Ronald, a former ten year old leader of Christian child soldiers whom Jacky Manuputty helped to overcome his traumas. As an artist he now promotes interreligious peace. For an impression of the experience of this child soldier, see the short documentary made by the BBC on YouTube: ‘I can’t remember how many I killed... aged 10’ - BBC News’.

¹⁶² We are all siblings. *Basudara* refers to *satu darah*, one blood, and represents the idea that as brothers people shared the same womb.

¹⁶³ For example, some people perceive the conflict of 1999 as an attempt to turn *Maluku* into an Islamic area, which in the end did not happen “because Ambon is strong.” These feelings are connected to national history whereby the first draft of the constitution turned Indonesia into an Islamic state, dominated by the ethnic majority of the Javanese (and to current difficulties experienced by Christians in Java who need the approval of seventy families to erect a church). After the surrender of the Japanese to the allied forces, the founders of the nation realized that areas with a Christian majority would not want to join Indonesia if Islam would be the official state religion. A shorter declaration was drafted, which only took two sentences from the nine paragraphs, stating that the president needed to be indigenous and omitting ‘profess Islam’ (Interview with John Titaley, guest-lecturer and theologian at UKIM, 4-11-2019, Ambon).

¹⁶⁴ For example, ideas about eating habits, about Muslims being terrorists, about Muslims ignoring Christian celebrations (the accreditation of UKIM was held on 24 December), or referring to Muslims with the abbreviation ‘M’. A person working for the church even used the word *bersih*, clean, to describe the religious condition of his village: all people are Protestant from birth – no one converted into Protestantism.

¹⁶⁵ Young students who were very little during the conflict know these narratives and reproduce them (Interview with Nancy Souisa, Steve Gaspersz).

their Muslim brothers.¹⁶⁶ On a very deep inner level, many Christians still adhere to an exclusive Christianity in the way they have been raised, believing that only Christians will be saved.¹⁶⁷ As a journalist said in reaction to political and religious discourses of brotherhood: “You cannot ‘create’ peace.”¹⁶⁸ The conflict caused and increased segregation (also by mind with animosity hiding below the façade) of Muslim and Christian villages that for a large part endures up to today. However, especially in more interreligious areas, there is a continuous effort to rebuild peaceful relationships on the basis of a cultural power that existed before the conflict.¹⁶⁹ My friend, who lives in the multi-religious area of *Poka*, explained how she had many Muslim friends: “I played with them, I ate with them, I slept in their house, I helped selling food with them for Muslim celebrations, [and] I went to the mosque with them”.¹⁷⁰ The conflict could only end with the remembrance of this communal cultural awareness, that all Moluccan people are siblings through the ancestors.¹⁷¹ Reconciliation initiatives also work from this perspective. Jacky Manuputty and poet Rudi Fofid, peace provocateurs, use physical theatre, music, photography, literature, painting and more to organize interpersonal meetings.¹⁷² Rudi, who himself lost his house, father and brother in the conflict, works to protect the peace of *Maluku* like a human protects his health, to prevent Ambon from being sick again by using art as medicine: “I never felt hatred, I never have been angry, I never wanted to split with Islam. The one that killed my father was in North *Maluku*, in the atmosphere of war there. I therefore work as usual, live with Muslims as usual.”¹⁷³ Local culture unites all Moluccans, and especially (traditional) music is used as an instrument for

¹⁶⁶ Paradoxically, in the discourse of *basudara* Christians always refer to Muslims as their ‘brothers’ or ‘sisters’ and the other way around, while deep down stereotypes and negative attitudes sometimes persist.

¹⁶⁷ On the contrary, pastor Jacky Manuputty believes that the Gospel touches everybody as a human being, regardless of ethnic and religious boundaries. He therefore organizes training sessions for pastors, to challenge their stereotypes about Muslims not accepting or not welcoming them. While they were supposed to stay one night in a Muslim village, the pastors came back one day too late, holding hands. They started crying, feeling sinful of their previous prejudices. The human encounter with their Muslim companions, who even asked the pastors to pray for them, made them want to repent for their bad mind (Interview with Jacky Manuputty).

¹⁶⁸ Informal conversation with Priska Birahy, journalist, 11-11-2019, Ambon.

¹⁶⁹ Not to mention the natural rehabilitation of Muslim-Christian relations. For example, in the afore discussed animist village *Yalahatan*, both a church and a mosque were built here, the first for the Christian community in the village and the second for the Muslim traders. Moreover, many interfaith marriages happen and are allowed, whereby women adopt the religion of their husband (although animists generally prefer Christianity over Islam due to difficulties with eating habits of Muslims).

¹⁷⁰ Interview with Verliany Riasty Vindy Manunay (Vally), Salomy Melatawun (Omy), Jeane Solissa (Jeane), masters students at UKIM, 11-12-2019, Ambon.

¹⁷¹ After the conflict, this feeling of cross-religious community could be recognized in pop songs (Interview with Jonas Silooy, Peter Salenusca (28-10-2019, Ambon)).

¹⁷² “By playing together they can be friends to one another. (...) Even place and language can change how you relate. The formal language just addresses their brains. But the dialect, the hearty language, can break your heart. But more than that you can mobilize them if they can feel it” (Interview with Jacky Manuputty).

¹⁷³ Interview with Rudi Fofid. Translation by author.

peace.¹⁷⁴ The most well-known musical symbol of togetherness is the musical collaboration between Christian and Islamic music. The resilience and perseverance of many Moluccans is apparent. While the reconciliation project is a never-ending process, interrupted by many (political) difficulties, people sacrifice themselves to promote peace.¹⁷⁵

One of the strongest current policy markers of the GPM is the promotion of peace based on the model of *pela*.¹⁷⁶ Officially calling themselves *Gereja Orang Basudara*,¹⁷⁷ they envision to be a church for the whole of Moluccan society and work for the wellbeing of everyone.¹⁷⁸ Almost all pastors have regular contact with their Muslim partners, paying their respect on Islamic celebration days while *imams* visit churches on Easter and Christmas.¹⁷⁹ There have also been interreligious services and sermons with musical collaborations. However, two years ago a large public discussion originated about the boundaries of such collaborations, with many people criticizing it, especially on the point of the religious content of lyrics. As one of my informants carefully commented, it is the top hierarchy of the church that organizes these events. They have a political responsibility to show stability, and although on ‘their own level of communication’ these religious and political elites agree, there exists a gap that causes friction at the grassroot level.¹⁸⁰ So, while it is important to recognize the positive effects of interreligious peace efforts, it is not yet enough for many activists, artists and theologians involved in societal issues. A deeper, more complex picture is necessary to make the next step of changing deep mentalities.

¹⁷⁴ Already during the conflict musicians travelled to Muslim parts of the city, risking to be killed, and after the conflict music groups played to collect money for destroyed religious buildings (Interview with Nico Tulalessy, musician and leader of a children’s music group in *Amahusu*, 25-11-2019, Ambon).

¹⁷⁵ Like pastor Jacky: “If you treat it as a burden, you feel really tired. But if you treat it as an art of building bridges, you will enjoy it. Part by part by part. Get back and make a leap again. (...) I love the process. (...) But sometimes I just cry. My goodness. Sometimes I just blame myself: how can I spend all these years in my life just to work for that stupid thing? Many friends of mine already have their lovely happy life, their own family. And I have to deal with...But then I remember the youth who have been poisoned during the conflict by my prayer, by my blessing. No, no, I am the indebted person and I have to pay it.” (Interview with Jacky Manuputty).

¹⁷⁶ In general, with the years the GPM adopted a more involved position in Moluccan society, acquiring a role in education, interreligious relations, politics, culture, et cetera (Interview with Nik Sedubun, vice-president of the GPM, 18-10-2019, Ambon).

¹⁷⁷ The church of brotherhood.

¹⁷⁸ Interview with Nik Sedubun.

¹⁷⁹ They guard the surrounding of each other’s religious buildings on celebrations like these. Moreover, after a big earthquake on the 26th of September all different religions organized prayer services for the citizens of Ambon. Religious schools admit students from other faiths to encourage interreligious studying (I met several people who studied Protestant theology but focused on Islam), and the MPL synod meeting of the GPM was even organized by a Muslim! However, in other parts of Indonesia radical Islam is on the rise and Christians become more and more marginalized (Interview with Jan Z. Matatula).

¹⁸⁰ Interview with Mark Ufie.

Conclusion

As a continuous tradition passed down through the ancestors, *adat* forms the core of Moluccan culture. Within this comprehensive system of rules that determine the way of life, collectivity and togetherness in the shape of *masohi* are central values in Moluccan society. The ritualistic *adat* ceremonies, comprised by an ensemble of clothes, dance, language and music, form the original context from which contextual theologians draw their inspiration. While there exist conceivable differences between places that continue to organize village life according to traditional roles, adhere to indigenous religion and protect the whole of *adat* customs, and places that do not, all Moluccans identify themselves in relation to these traditions and values. Together with the history of colonization that only in a later stage went hand in hand with missionization, with post-independent nationalist and developmentalist political regimes, with the establishment and evolvement of the GPM church and with the religious conflict of twenty years ago, these past and present realities form contemporary Moluccan society, culture and identity. This complexity of what I have termed ‘Moluccanness’, makes up the foundation of the context in which the Moluccan church, Moluccan theology and Moluccan music are situated, topics which will be addressed in the chapters to come.

Figures – Chapter 1



Figure 7 - Traditional houses in Yalahatan, Seram (photo by author)



Figure 8 - Baileo on Saparua (photo by friend of author)

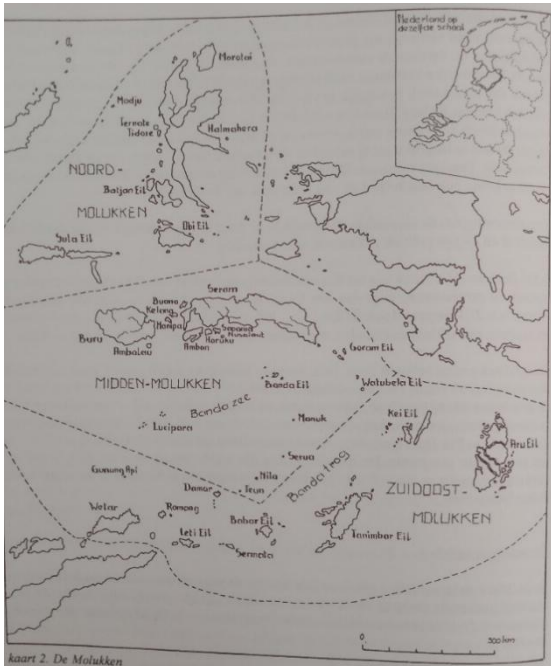


Figure 9 - Map of the Moluccas (Bartels 1994, 20)



Figure 10 - The green of the Moluccas (photo by author)



Figure 11 - The blue of the Moluccas (photo by friend of author)



Figure 12 - Fieldwork setting in Tiouw, Saparua (photo by friend of author)

Figure 13 - Interior of a house in Yalahatan, Seram (photo by author)



We are sitting in an immense white building, decorated with yellow lanes along the door and windows, and characterized by neo-classical elements. Columns rise up towards the sunny blue sky, carrying the red renovated roof. Imagined echoing sounds of the trumpet played by a sculptured angel roll over the green grass that stretches out in front of this church.

From the outer looks of it, the age of these stones is not directly visible. But we are in *Noloth*, a village in the far north-east on the island Saparua. After following the one and only paved straight road on the back of Dave's motorcycle along the houses in *Tiouw*, *Tuhaha*, *Mahu*, and *Ihamahu*, we arrive at this unexpected construction that is located at the brightest and bluest coast I have ever seen in my life. It is one of the oldest Protestant churches on the Moluccas, built by the Dutch in the year 1860. From then until the recent present the roof was made of the large leaves of the widely available *sago* tree, now replaced by an appearance that resists the ravages of time.

While making apologies for his simple work clothes and bare feet, a member of the church council in *Noloth* takes the time to tell me about his tasks as a servant of God. The devote man, already working ten years for the council, talks about his role in serving the community, about the facets of church services and about music. Suddenly and quickly, two seemingly simple questions become memorable moments.

'Why did you want to become part of the church council?'

'Did you go to Sunday school yourself when you were young?'

The answers are exactly the same:

Emotion.

His eyes filled with tears and his voice unsteady, the old man explains with full religious conviction that he serves the work of God in this world. Then the tears start to stream and the voice breaks: '*Tiga puluh lima tahun nona*'. Thirty five years he has been working as a Sunday school teacher.

Seng ada di luar Tuhan.

Hidup hanya untuk Tuhan.

He only lives for God, because there is nothing outside God.

The man sighs deeply and the sentence ends in an almost silent whisper.

The simplicity is the all-encompassing complexity.

Blown away by this communicated feeling of religiosity I leave the church.

The victorious Jesus nailed to the cross watches me walking to the sea.

2-Ministry, Music and Meaning: The Religious Context

Literally walking on colonial ground, it was in this church, built by fellow Dutchmen in the past, that I realized the meaning of Christianity for Moluccan people. Never before during the research I was that touched by other people's devotion. It felt strange. How could something brought by the colonizers be so emotional? It became clear that in a hybrid place like the Moluccas, contemporary Christianity is built through historic layers of encounter and acculturation. Dutch-Moluccan theologian Simon Ririhena (2014, 41) draws the appropriate comparison with the Moluccan delicacy called *spekkoek*. Every religious layer has its own taste and color, influencing each other and together forming a whole. The basis of the *spekkoek* still consists of Moluccan religious and cultural identity from the time before missionization and colonization, while colonial Christianity even so is an authentic layer of contemporary Moluccan Protestantism. In the complexity of religiosity, colonial church culture and traditional Moluccan culture have been shaping each other in a dialectical relationship. This chapter examines the layers of the religious *spekkoek* to sketch the historical and current context of Moluccan Protestantism. The cultural pasts and presents described in Chapter One are the context that forms the starting point for a description of the GPM, its church services, its church culture and its church music. These in turn serve as parts of the grammatical context that discursively and practically structures Moluccan contextual theology.

The Gereja Protestan Maluku

With the *pesan tobat* the GPM intended to eradicate perceived syncretism from their theological practice and faith,¹⁸¹ believing that Moluccan cultural heritage is not part of Christianity. However, in the 80s the GPM became aware that “we can't live in our faith without culture.”¹⁸², that “culture is related to our hearts.”¹⁸³ So, while in 1960 Moluccan culture was banned from church, the GPM's current policy revalues Moluccan identity as part of Christian religion, which is a contextual approach that really started to develop after 2000. An important moment in this long continuing contextual process was the synodal decision in 2018 to introduce the so-called ‘ethnic service’, the *ibadah etnis*, offering a place for

¹⁸¹ I will refer to the GPM with ‘they’, to indicate the total body of persons behind this organization.

¹⁸² Interview with Elifas Maspaitela.

¹⁸³ Interview with Jeffrey Leatimia.

Moluccan cultural traditions in the church service and preserving these at the same time. However, there is a certain boundary up to which culture can be accommodated in church and mind. For instance, no other powers than God can be invoked, such as the spirits of the ancestors. It also appears to be quite hard to teach people, who have grown up with the prohibition of mixing culture and religion, that suddenly *adat* is allowed in church.¹⁸⁴ Moreover, centuries of Calvinist colonization and in addition the *pesat tobat* bear their traces up to the present, leaving a gap between the Word of God and culture, between saying and thinking or doing.¹⁸⁵ At least to a certain extent many Christians regard the colonial history in a positive way in the sense that the Dutch ‘grew the seed of Christianity’ in the Moluccas,¹⁸⁶ and are the representatives of Moluccan Christian heritage, having prevented that Moluccan Christians would still believe in ‘trees and stones’.¹⁸⁷ As the GPM is historically based on reformed theology, doctrines and structures, critics state that the core of dogma remains untouched, even to the point that the GPM continues to practice a ‘colonial theology’ while GPM officials say they are doing contextual theology. This core is to be seen in hierarchical and liturgical structures, as well as in beliefs.

Hierarchy, liturgy and doctrine

The GPM has over 700 congregations that are dispersed across innumerable islands. The GPM is led by the synod board that is chosen for five years and located in the center of Ambon. The board closely works together with social initiatives, educational institutions, international organizations and the government. The GPM is embedded in broader national, continental and international religious associations, such as the ecumenical Communion of Churches in Indonesia (CCI), the Fellowship of Churches in Indonesia (PGI), the Christian Conference of Asia (CCA) and the World Council of Churches (WCC). The link between church and politics is especially strong, which is a remnant from the colonial era when all religious matters had to feed back to the government in former Batavia.¹⁸⁸ There are 34 so-called *klasis* that form the organizational leadership over the congregations in a certain

¹⁸⁴ Especially for the older generation, *adat* remains a very strong cultural power, however, not together with their Christian religion.

¹⁸⁵ Interview with Jacky Manuputty, Morika B. Telelepta (GPM pastor and musician, 11-11-2019, Ambon).

¹⁸⁶ Some people even recognize a continuation of the current line of contextuality, saying that the Dutch also had a contextual approach via local music and preparing their pastors and missionaries by educating them about Moluccan people and culture. While this may be true, the underlying financial and religious goals should not be forgotten, as well as their aim to destroy Moluccan culture in relation to conceptions of paganism, barbarism and civilization.

¹⁸⁷ Informal conversation with Anonymous, 7-12-2019, Saparua.

¹⁸⁸ Interview with Verry Patty, Dutch-Moluccan theologian and guest lecturer at UKIM, 16-11-2019, Ambon.

region.¹⁸⁹ Each five years the GPM formulates new plans that the *klasis* have to execute in dialectic relation to the specific needs of their congregations.¹⁹⁰ It is the task of the *klasis* to implement the mission and vision of the GPM through coordinating and facilitating general service, pastoral work, education, catechization, and more.¹⁹¹ A congregation can have multiple churches and consists of several sectors – church members living in a determinate area. A sector in turn consists of units, which are fifteen to twenty-five households.¹⁹² Every congregation has a church council (*majelis*) that assists the chair pastor (*ketua majelis jemaat*) and is democratically chosen by the church members.¹⁹³ The church council is made up of elders and deacons. They serve the congregation by implementing the vision of the *klasis* and finding solutions for daily problems among their church members. Becoming *majelis* is seen as a great honor, taking on the responsibility to serve God. Pastors are not necessarily connected to one church, but operate in teams and circulate across churches to preach. Many pastors graduated at UKIM, which is why changes in the curriculum can be recognized in the beliefs of generations of pastors, although some pastors also grow along with theological reconceptualizations. Older pastors sometimes hold on to an exclusivist, legalistic theology, a strict theology that generally lies more in line with the Dutch Calvinism brought to the Moluccas in colonial times. They repeat the things they know and close their mind for cultural influences. UKIM teacher Margaretha Hendriks gives her opinion:

Would you give yourself a chance to broaden your vision or not? Those who just stay pastor in a traditional way, they finished the theological study in those days, and they

¹⁸⁹ For example, there is one *klasis* for the islands of Saparua, Haruku and Nusa Laut.

¹⁹⁰ Currently, the general plan is to care for and equally divide life, which refers to both human beings and nature. The periodic plans of the GPM can be read in the Indonesian book *Himpunan: Pengakuan Iman, Ajaran Gereja, Pemahaman Iman*, compiled in 2019 by the synod. This collection contains the confession of faith, the understanding of faith, and the church plans – drawn up in 2016 and comprising the largest part of the book with many different categories and 584 topics in total.

On top of that, each *klasis* has its own missions connected to the overarching vision of the GPM. For example, in Lease they focus on poverty, domestic and inter-village violence, resources for living, education, health and nature. The church is thus very much involved with societal issues (Interview with Anonymous, 9-12-2019, Saparua). On the island Saparua for instance, the church has a separate building for these tasks, and is an important partner in the HGI (Happy Green Island) project of Kees Lafeber that works on reducing plastic waste to protect the natural environment. Children are taught to not throw away plastic and collect the waste they find in exchange for the opportunity to play games in the HGI building. The plastic is processed in a machine, after which recycling takes place and new products and materials are made, such as sustainable bags or compost.

¹⁹¹ Interview with Anonymous, 9-12-2019, Saparua.

¹⁹² Interview with Jeffrey Leatimia.

¹⁹³ A congregation also has a liturgy and music team.

keep onto that. Some people say, madam, I still have your notes. I say: throw it in the dustbin! Read a new book!¹⁹⁴

After their education theology students are a vicar for several years, and subsequently they become a pastor.¹⁹⁵ Generally, pastors see their choice for theology as a calling,¹⁹⁶ attracted by the significant role they can play in society, and often having multiple pastors in their Christian families.¹⁹⁷ Their daily tasks consist of decision-making, coordination, serving, communication, administration, praying and of course preaching in various services.¹⁹⁸ It is the role of a pastor to serve the people inside and outside the congregation and provoke their thinking about who they are and ought to be:¹⁹⁹ “We have a responsibility for embracing, for accompanying, for approaching.”²⁰⁰ In Moluccan society pastors enjoy high esteem and status. Pastors live in rectories close to their church, which in general are nice, modern houses with comfortable chairs and large vases.²⁰¹ Pastor’s words are strictly followed and sometimes regarded as the words of God Himself, with adherents feeling they have sinned if they did not

¹⁹⁴ The UKIM has a kind of refresh master’s program for older pastors to teach them new theological ideas. The general experience is that the first year is really hard on them, as they have to change their whole way of theologizing (Interview with Margaretha Hendriks, theologian at UKIM, 21-10-2019, Ambon).

¹⁹⁵ The profession requires flexibility, as the GPM chooses the working place. By moving to different congregations the pastors get to know many different Moluccan cultural contexts.

¹⁹⁶ The calling is often related to heavy life experiences, for instance the death of a parent or severe sickness. For example, pastor Jeffrey Leatimia, who works in *Haria* on Saparua, told his story: “When I was six months old, I was sick. There was no hope anymore. My father put on his black clothes as a *majelis* and went directly to church with me. In front of the pulpit, together with my mother, he prayed. God, if my son will live and will continue the lineage, he will work for the church. (...) When I did the test to enter university, I did not pass. All my friends did, but I did not. Because I was born from a calling of promise with God. So I did the test at UKIM, and I passed (Interview with Jeffrey Leatimia, translation by author).

¹⁹⁷ At the same time they emphasize the independent choice they made.

¹⁹⁸ For instance: birthday services in people’s home to thank God. In the living room family, friends and neighbors assemble to hold a short service and sing together. Afterwards they together eat the deliciously prepared food, with dog meat being a delicacy; or a short service on Monday around 4.30 a.m. via the loudspeaker to wish people a successful new working week.

¹⁹⁹ Interview with Hery Siahay, Jacky Manuputty.

²⁰⁰ The quote continues and expresses the perseverance of pastors in serving their community. One pastor said: “Frankly, I am ill. But the most important thing is that I rest and then I can serve again. There exists no difficulty when you are together with God. God gives strength, ability, to do my tasks” (Interview with Anonymous, 22-12-2019, Ambon).

²⁰¹ The exterior and interior of churches and rectories of the GPM are also copied in places such as *Yalahatan*, where the majority of the villagers is not Christian and lives in very different ways and circumstances than people in Ambon. Nevertheless, the newly built churches look the same everywhere. Christian villages also have a certain specific appearance, with roads, fences, gardens and houses made of concrete. These villages look more ‘ordered’ than *Yalahatan*, for example. So, interestingly, Protestant religion comes with ideas about how villages and buildings should look like, and with economic and social status of people serving the GPM.

listen to their pastor.²⁰² The organizational hierarchy thus comes with power structures – people have to do what people above them say.²⁰³

Although reformed doctrine comprises many aspects, the core is the centrality of God. All things are related to God, salvation is only achieved by the grace of Christ and the Bible should be meticulously followed.²⁰⁴ These are the central dogmas that the majority of Moluccan Christians adheres to.²⁰⁵ Pastors strengthen these ideas in their sermons.²⁰⁶ The more conservative sermons are characterized by pastors raising their voices to the point of screaming, looking down on the people from the pulpit, shaking their finger and sticking their fist in the air. The words they use the most are ‘right’ and ‘wrong’. In a paternalizing way they tell the congregation what they should and should not do to be saved.²⁰⁷ According to progressives, in the core the church thus continues to be very Bible- and Jesus-oriented, at the expense of taking into full account the socio-cultural context.²⁰⁸ Although for a long time already people speak about contextualization, they feel the church remains stuck in rules and routines, suspecting creativity or innovation – especially when it touches the core of dogma or critiques political programs.²⁰⁹ As one theologian summarized:

You know, here people still think religion is everything. Religion is God. You should follow religion as best as you can because otherwise you are being sinful. You see? And don't let anyone try to say something bad about your religion. You fight to the end! (...) And that's why they also feel that other religions are lower than us. Because we are the ones who have all the truth. We claim that, you see? So other religions need to be converted to Christianity in order to come to God. They use this Bible quotation: I am the way and the truth, nobody comes to God, to the Father, except through me. So they say, no other truth outside Christianity. Still! We have it.²¹⁰

²⁰² Therefore, pastors can be both actors of change and stagnation (Interview with John F. Beay).

²⁰³ And with economic status as well. The top of the GPM is rich and high-educated. They let build big houses because everyone wants to help a person with status.

²⁰⁴ Interview with Agus Batlajery.

²⁰⁵ Words or names associated with indigenous religion are kept out of church, people believe that only by strictly following the Bible one will be saved, and one approves of pastors who missionize, seeing Christianity in exclusive terms (Interview with Margaretha Hendriks).

²⁰⁶ For instance, one time I heard a pastor talk about the evil powers inside culture that only could be countered by Christianity.

²⁰⁷ To the point of giving the most beautiful banknotes during the offering.

²⁰⁸ Interview with Jance Rumahuru.

²⁰⁹ Especially since the conflict, the GPM has the urge to show that everything is peaceful. They want to maintain good relations with political leaders to assure this positive image, even if that means endorsing unjust social policy (Interview with John F. Beay, Steve Gaspersz).

²¹⁰ Interview with Margaretha Hendriks.

It is this type of legalistic, exclusivist ways of thinking that many theologians at UKIM currently intend to complement or redirect through a focus on local identity and social-cultural contexts. Considering the pluriformity of Moluccan society, they prefer a more open theology based on harmony, instead of a theology that suits a Dutch context in former times and that was transposed to the Moluccas.

The liturgical structure of the GPM is rigid and the same everywhere.²¹¹ Each five years these structures are determined and printed in a small booklet.²¹² There are five formats for every Sunday service each month, with the fifth (only occurring if there are five Sundays that month) being a creative service where one has more freedom to design the structure – and which can be used for an ethnic service or for a more Charismatic-styled service with corresponding popular music.²¹³ The liturgical structure also includes the selection of song books.²¹⁴ During the week there are other services as well, such as the Sunday school service (*tunas*), services for men, women, groups based on profession, youth and families.²¹⁵ The *Firman Tuhan* – the sentence from the Bible that is chosen as the basis for a sermon – is included in the liturgical planning and obligatory to use in all congregations on the same day. Sermons are also already designed and can thus be directly adopted by pastors, although they adapt to and reflect on it according to their own congregational context.²¹⁶

²¹¹ See appendix 1 for the order of the Sunday worship service.

Personally, after experiencing multiple Sunday services and other services each week, this structure becomes rather monotonous, especially in the end when a very long prayer is said. In this prayer all discussed topics are repeated and all possible related contexts and people are mentioned – such as many professional groups, the helpers of the sound system of the church and even suffering people in Africa or Afghanistan. Also, one time I experienced a pastor just reading pre-selected sentences of the votum, so automatically and un-inspiring that she did not even notice she skipped a line!

²¹² It is called *Himpunan Liturgi*, liturgy set. It includes the structures for the first until the fifth Sunday of the month; for the baptism of children; for the Holy Communion; for the ordination of pastors, deacons and elders; for the confirmation of the baptism of Christian adults and of adults who changed religion; for the confirmation and blessing of marriage; for funerals; for unit services from the first to the third week of the month; and for sector services.

Each newly chosen synod board determines these structures, although large conceptual changes do not occur often. Every congregation has to follow the liturgical structures. The rigidity consists of the observation that creative adaptations are rare; most pastors tightly stick to the pre-determined wordings and formats.

²¹³ Especially young people like this type of ‘modern’ music, which is often sung in English and accompanied by band instruments.

²¹⁴ And particular songs related to the message of that week.

²¹⁵ Interview with Jeffrey Leatimia.

²¹⁶ Pastors are allowed to make their own sermon also. Moreover, there are a handful of pastors who do not work according to the designed liturgical system and who develop a completely new liturgy based on their own place-based congregation. These pastors in general are creative and musical, have worked in remote places, and have close connections with people ‘on the ground’. Furthermore, popular themes outside the pre-designed topics are the growth of spirituality, the environment, social relationships and empowerment (Interview with Hery Siahay, Jacky Manuputty).

GPM churches

The appearance of GPM churches is roughly the same. They generally have neo-classical elements and are high and white with some space around (sometimes grass-covered), closed off by a fence.²¹⁷ Around the fence colored – mostly purple, yellow and white – square-shaped flags can often be seen. Next to the building stands a narrow, high, concrete construction with a bell on top. The interior of churches is characterized by a few stained-glass windows and a rectangular setup focused on the pulpit that stands on a platform. The pulpit is where the creativity is found. Some are traditional, resembling Western pulpits with nice woodwork. Some are modern, like a high cylinder with a crown of thorns around the top and an abstract angel on the wall behind. And some are unique, such as a gigantic white dove flying out of a wooden wall, the wide horizontal wings forming a little roof, or a large intensely pink seashell. One enters the churches from behind or from two sides in front. Many buildings also have a balcony in the back. Two doors are flanking the pulpit, leading to spaces intended for the church council and pastors. These doors are covered by curtains in the liturgical decoration color that changes each week and also includes scarfs worn by the pastors, the cloth on the altar which stands in front of the pulpit next to the lectern, and flowers brightening this altar. On the walls some posters with images and quotes from the Bible announce the liturgical themes of upcoming festive events, such as Easter or Christmas.²¹⁸ From the 1st of December, when the Advent weeks leading up to Christmas begin, the churches are perked up by the presence of big plastic Christmas trees, which height represents a visual power struggle between congregations: the more lights, signs, flashings and movements, the better. The description below serves as an impression on how a Sunday service looks like.

On my way to a church, I either travel amidst the sight, smell and sound of innumerable cars and scooters, or I enjoy the deep blue and green colors of the mountainous terrain with sea view through small villages and the jungle. When I arrive at the church, the pastors and members of the majelis, all wearing their typical long black robe with the scarf in the decorative color of that week around their neck, stand in a row to shake my hand and welcome me to the building. Quietly I take a seat, like the many other attendants who generally arrive early although the service

²¹⁷ These are the newly built modern ones. There also exist a few older churches; smaller, straight, simple, made of wood, and smelling like former times. Often they are situated in more remote beautiful places, higher in the mountains or directly next to the sea.

²¹⁸ Also, variations of the famous painting 'Jesus with the crown of thorns' often hang somewhere.

almost never begins on time. When people sit down, they say a short prayer, coloring the wooden brown benches with their beautiful Sunday clothes, shoes and hairclips. Some are alone, some come in families, some bring their girl- or boyfriend. If they talk, they do so in a whispering voice. Before the service officially starts, the choir arrives, traditionally wearing a long yellow-white wide dress with collar over their clothes. They begin with a song to focus our minds, or they take this time to practice a hymn that is less well-known among the congregants, a process that somehow always proceeds slightly awkwardly. If the songs are musically accompanied by a band I feel as if I am at a concert, overwhelmed by the sounds. If they are accompanied by the typical and most often used synthesizer keyboard I feel a strange mix of habituation, minor irritation and having to suppress my laughter, while when I hear brass I feel powerful because of my love for wind instruments. And when I hear bamboo flutes I feel utterly fascinated. As most churches have beamers, the lines of verses and hymns we have to sing and say are projected on the walls in front of us, alternating with dramatic religious images.²¹⁹ After having listened to the endlessly long announcements, the church bell rings three times. We rise and sing, while the church council enters. The pastor leading the service addresses us with 'saudara-saudara', brothers and sisters, and welcomes us with a 'syalom'. In the excruciating heat which makes clothes stick to the body the service proceeds according to a strict liturgical schedule: we sit and stand, we listen and respond, we sing and pray. Some, who firmly agree with what is being said, nod their heads and mumble affirmations. Some have their eyes closed in utmost concentration. Some watch their phones and whisper to their neighbors. Some flutter their fan to cool down and some have to catch their children who have run off. When the Word of God is read, everyone takes their combined Kidung Jemaat songbook with Bible, zips the leather brown case around it open and reads along with the verses that can be easily found through the little circles searching system on the outside of the pages. The sermon that follows can be long, strong, loud and scary, or funny, close, serene and reflective, or everything at once. Besides the congregational songs that we sing from the songbook which has been selected for that week, various vocal groups consisting of men, women, children or combinations of these perform during the service. Their polyphonic voices led by the energetic gestures of the conductor in front fill the church, provoking feelings of awe

²¹⁹ Such as emotional pictures of Jesus or believers.

and joy as the quality of their singing generally is incredibly high. On special occasions groups of children play poetic roles, reading a story, dancing a dance or acting in theatre.²²⁰ When the moment of the offering arrives, in all rows two collection bags are passed on, using the horizontal wooden sticks attached to the velvet textile, under the supervision of the majelis who are united by a weekly selected color of clothing. Accompanied by the sounds of happy hymns with the amount depending on the length of this process, the attendants, including the members of the singing choir, drop the money invisibly clenched inside their fists into the bags. This is also the time when people can walk to the two wooden square offering boxes in front, one regular and one for ten percent of your salary. The service ends with a prayer and blessing, after which we stand up. The people around me give me their hand and wish me a happy Sunday. If not using this time to pose and shoot pictures in front of the church, on the way out we again pass the line of pastors and majelis. And then we disperse into various directions, dots of colorful dresses or black suits and robes, of grey or black hair buns, of young running figures or old shuffling feet.

GPM relations and structures

The GPM maintains many interreligious relationships: with Moluccan Protestant denominations in the Netherlands, with other Christian denominations in the Moluccas and Indonesia, and with Muslims.²²¹ The GPM has an interesting inter-denominational relation with the Pentecostal church in *Maluku*,²²² whereby a kind of competition between the two

²²⁰ The range of participation and kinds of performances is very broad. One time, for a Christmas sector service, a group of children all dressed in white acted in a short theatre play. One group of girls and one group of boys were sitting on the ground, focused on their mobile phones. One boy and two girls in the middle started handing out little candles. They themselves lit their own candles and began singing. Slowly, the others paid attention, and one by one they got up and lit their candle also by holding it close to one of the little fires of the others. More and more children joined, until they all sang together with a burning candle in their hand: a simple and beautifully expressed message.

Another time a very large group of little kids played Christmas songs on many different instruments. I was a beautiful sight to see their excited and laughing faces and hear their high sweet voices. Fully concentrated their facial expressions and gestures moved along with the rhythm and tones.

²²¹ The GPM shares mission and dogma with the *Geredja Indjili Maluku* (GIM), the largest Moluccan church in the Netherlands, although their context and history differ. The same applies to the NGPMB, the branch of the GPM in the Netherlands. For instance, during the MPL meeting in Haruku, where church leaders, pastors and politicians assembled to discuss church policy, representatives of both the GIM and NGPMB were present as well.

²²² Pentecostalism is known for the making of “a complete break with the past” in order to receive the blessings of the Holy Spirit; Pentecostals should be utterly disjoined from culture (Bakker 2013, 311, referring to Meyer 1998).

seems to be going on.²²³ Many young Protestant Moluccans leave the GPM for the Pentecostal church, because they prefer modern church songs accompanied by live band music. Moreover, various Protestant theologians interpret this move in the following way: these people having trouble to comprehend the change of the GPM to *adat*, culture and traditional music,²²⁴ and the Pentecostal exclusivist, Christianizing doctrine of warding off anything from local culture fits the ‘old’ Calvinist dogmas that many people grew up with. The changing of denomination made the GPM to adopt Charismatic ways of music and preaching, to give the service more ‘color’ and ‘dynamics’. Since twelve years, in the central *Maranatha* church, all kinds of worldly music are played by many different instruments (drum, guitars, saxophone, keyboard),²²⁵ to reach the youth so that they can enjoy this music inside the GPM, not needing to change to Pentecostalism and to be rebaptized – a practice which many people oppose.²²⁶ The way of preaching also resembles Pentecostal pastors, building tension through a flow of upgoing and down-going sounds, winding like a bow, going on and on, and culminating in a climax of screams and gestures.²²⁷ A paradoxical dynamic thus characterizes the Protestant-Pentecostal relationship: Moluccan Protestants leave the GPM for the songs and perhaps the anti-cultural approach, and the GPM therefore

²²³ For example, a Pentecostal public service to usher in the Christmas month was held exactly one day before the GPM had planned a similar service. Moreover, GPM theologians criticize Pentecostal ways of baptism and rebaptism.

²²⁴ Interview with Margaretha Hendriks, Steve Gaspersz, Nancy Souisa, Dana Lohy.

However, although many young people participate in all the activities of the Pentecostal church, they want to be buried in the GPM church.

These reasons for moving to the Pentecostal church are slightly different from the reasons described in other researches about this topic (i.e. Bakker, André. 2013. “Shapes of “culture” and the sacred surplus: heritage formation and pentecostal conversion among the pataxó indians in brazil.” *Material religion* 9 (3): 304-327). For instance, Meyer (1999) found that many Christian Ewe in Ghana through their localized involvement with globalizing forces and modernity changed to the Pentecostal church because here they could deal better with the demonized Ewe Gods and spirits, being able to confront their past in order to move to the future:

“Pentecostalism’s popularity in Africa may to some extent be due to the fact that it offers a ritual space and an imaginary language to deal with the demons which are cast out in the process of modernity’s constitution, but which continue to haunt people the more they try to progress” (Meyer 1999, 216). Pentecostalism thus makes place for the satanic in the context of deliverance: “Pentecostalism, rather than representing a safe haven of modern religion in which people permanently remain, enables people to move back and forth between the way of life they (wish to) have left behind and the one to which they aspire” (Meyer 1999, 211-212). In the Moluccan context the ancestors’ powers seem not to be associated with the image of the devil, and people seem to move to Pentecostalism to escape a contextualized approach of the GPM.

²²⁵ Not only songs from books played by the piano or organ like before.

²²⁶ Interview with Anonymous (27-10-2019, Ambon), Anonymous, singer at the *Maranatha* church (27-10-2019, Ambon).

²²⁷ The *klasis* of Ambon city manages a strict selection process of pastors who are allowed to preach in the *Maranatha* church, as this church is not bound to one specific congregation. Attendants are highly critical and do not approve of pastors who preach like a teacher or politician. They even write their opinion down on the envelope they hand in during the offering, or they call the chairman of the *klasis*, or they make a video during the service with their own comments!

incorporates Charismatic styles of preaching and music while adhering to a contextual policy. Although this should mainly be interpreted in mere practical terms, pastors and church officials often see this policy as contextualization, with the GPM responding to current changes.²²⁸ Since the *Maranatha* church is located directly next to the synod, new policy and innovations are implemented the fastest here: *Maranatha* serves as an example for other churches. The church is very popular because of the band, the mix of song books that is used – including English ecumenical songs – and the large choir, but also because of the grand space that is fully airconditioned, the high-quality sound system, the four beamers, the soft big chairs with personal folding table, and the diversity of nationally famous music artists that is invited each week.²²⁹

GPM structures are upheld and the status quo continues to be enforced. Critics state that many rusted people stay too long in the same positions which comes at the expense of flow and development.²³⁰ People who work for change have to move inside the GPM layers to keep open the possibilities of change at all.²³¹ Nevertheless, some shifts in comparison with past structures are to be noticed. The GPM has started to make an effort for basing policy on contextual needs.²³² This is largely due to a change in leadership of the synod board, making place for progressive men, educated at UKIM, who through the rules of the system slowly implement reformations. For example, the vice-president and general secretary want to take the local context to further build a Moluccan church.²³³ This church takes on the role of teaching people that *adat* is not prohibited, and that “God is not only high and far, but on the ground, in the home and in school.”²³⁴ The goals start to succeed through close progressive relationships with specific theologians at UKIM and specific popular pastors.²³⁵ A contextual

²²⁸ This thus also has to do with definitions and interpretations of the word ‘contextual’, something which will be addressed in Chapter Four.

²²⁹ Interview with Anonymous, musician at the *Maranatha* church, 27-10-2019, Ambon.

²³⁰ Theologians and pastors who would like to see the structures of the GPM more open, with pastors taking that extra step outside the church into society, for example making use of new digital possibilities as well, are not accepted by the inner circle of teachers, pastors, theologians and leaders of the GPM, because they take a slightly different path that differs from how things are done within the existing structures. Moreover, I also heard a story about a pastor who was very involved in societal issues such as indigenous rights and land rights, and he was relocated by the GPM.

²³¹ For example, the influential and well-known pastor Jacky Manuputty works within the GPM system, but he tries to reform hierarchy by working in the same room with his staff, even sleeping inside the office and letting them call him by his first name. Moreover, he once was asked by the GPM to stop his involvement in a demonstration against the mining company. He told them that if he was not doing something wrong they should support him or otherwise he would resign as a pastor (Interview with Jacky Manuputty).

²³² Interview with John F. Beay.

²³³ They even see the ancestors in parallel with the Patriarchs.

²³⁴ Interview with Nik Sedubun. Translation by author.

²³⁵ Interestingly, the most progressive pastors generally are musicians themselves or work with other art forms.

approach is adopted and cultural traditions like local music, language, clothes, dance and liturgy are promoted, aiming for church members to move to God with their whole heart through the soul of Moluccan society.²³⁶

Church culture and church music

Church music, comprising instrumental and vocal music, is part of church culture and has been evolving over time. In the Moluccan church musical accompaniment to congregational singing started with the bamboo flute, *suling*, which was introduced by the already mentioned missionary Josef Kam.²³⁷ Recognizing the value of church music for accompanying church services and considering the impossibility of installing organs everywhere,²³⁸ Kam made use of the naturally widely available material bamboo to create a local diatonic instrument that could play Western Calvinist church songs. Diatonic refers to the complete scale of seven tones (do, re, mi, fa, so, la, si) with two half tones between the e and f, and b and c.²³⁹ Since the introduction of the *suling* in the beginning of the 19th century, this has by far been the longest used instrument in the Moluccan church, which only changed some decades ago when the trumpet slowly took over this position from the 70s onward. Brass ensembles, originally played for military purpose,²⁴⁰ became church music around the same time as the introduction of the keyboard, preferably the Yamaha version. The adoption of other instruments than *suling* (also the guitar, for example) gradually evolved from the 70s to the 80s, depending on place, and was accompanied by tensed discussions about the appropriateness of worldly music in church and the possibility it carried to disturb religious meditational states.²⁴¹ The popularity of the keyboard steadily increased, with churches copying each other when they had the financial means for it. After 2000 it became the widest used church instrument – which also is the time when the choir and song leader (*kantoria* and *prokantor*), guiding the congregation in community singing, were instituted by a synodal decision.²⁴² The reasons for

²³⁶ Interview with Nik Sedubun.

²³⁷ More about the instrument *suling* will be explained in Chapter Six.

²³⁸ Although some old churches had organs, these almost all disappeared during the religious conflict when many churches were burned down (Interview with Peter Salenus).

²³⁹ Especially the Dutch brought the diatonic scale and Western musical notation (*notasi balok*) to the Moluccas (Interview with Chris Tamaela, Cornelis Adolf Alyona).

²⁴⁰ Interview with Rence Alfons.

²⁴¹ It resembles the history of church music in the Netherlands (Interview with Jance Rumahuru, Nik Sedubun). Moreover, in the 80s already some experiments with traditional music were tried, although it was not very much accepted yet (Interview with Branckly Egbert Picanussa, musician and teacher at the IAKN, a Christian school in Ambon).

²⁴² Interview with Peter Salenus.

the popularity of the keyboard have mainly to do with the relative easiness it can be played and the practicality of the variety of musical effects that can be deployed. As has already been touched upon, around twelve years ago the full band started its advance, although so far the *Maranatha* church is the only place where it forms the standard musical accompaniment.²⁴³ This history of church music can be interpreted as a change in style from solemn to energetic, from serene to busy, from soft to loud, and from simple to variation. While in former times a tranquil atmosphere was created by slow, emotional, inspirational music with dominant tones, nowadays church music follows popular modern trends, is flexible and free, and uses different styles, chords and ornaments.²⁴⁴ Most churches use a single keyboard for their musical accompaniment and a general sound system which can play recorded music. The keyboard is almost always located in front of the church next to the choir. Generally, keyboard players may choose the sound effect themselves, and although I experienced that if professional musicians play in church they opt for the Western traditional organ, the echoing synthesizer sound backed up by standardized beats and drum rhythms is definitely preferred.²⁴⁵ In remote places where little financial means are available some churches use no instruments at all, except people's singing voices.²⁴⁶ Only in a few churches in villages one still uses *suling* as the standard instrument. Many churches work with a rotation system whereby instruments are changed per week or per service,²⁴⁷ often alternating between keyboard and trumpet or brass, and in rare instances complemented with *suling*. A *suling* ensemble normally consists of a fairly large and diverse group of people that closely sits together on the balcony of the church – or, if that is not possible, in church benches.²⁴⁸ When walking or driving to church the *suling* players can be recognized well since they carry the bamboo stick with them in their hand without any case or whatsoever. As bamboo is a widely available, strong and cheap material, the players stick the instruments in between all kinds of cracks if they do not need it for a moment. When musicking, the players position the instrument at a slight angle, so that their *suling* fits directly next to the *suling* of their neighbor. They always play from memory: the older generation knows all the songs by heart and the groups practice each week. The

²⁴³ Some other churches hire a band for special occasions, as this accompaniment is perceived as being festive, bringing life to the service.

²⁴⁴ Interview with Agustinus C.W. Gaspersz, teacher at IAKN, 20-11-2019, Ambon. For more information on the history of church music see his Indonesian book *Sejarah Penyebaran Nyanyian Gereja oleh Misionaris Belanda di Maluku* (2013).

²⁴⁵ Sometimes piano or brass sound is also chosen.

²⁴⁶ Interview with Omy & Jeane.

²⁴⁷ There are multiple services on one day.

²⁴⁸ Both quite young and very old, although I have seen more men than women playing the instrument. Often there are several family relations within the group.

sound of the *suling* ensemble is a bit shrill and high – and sometimes lightly out of tune – because of the preponderance of the first and second voices with some deep, warm, wood sounds underneath from the lower voices. Brass ensembles consist of instruments like trumpet, traverse flute, saxophone and euphonium. They are commonly positioned in a high place such as the balcony. It seems that while some people love brass in church for the powerful atmosphere it creates, others absolutely do not like it for its loudness that can drown out people's voices.²⁴⁹ Moreover, quality plays an important role. While pressing a keyboard note results in a steady tone, one needs skillful musicians to together blow stable, fluent and neat wind music.²⁵⁰ Traditional music is not yet often played in church, except in the new format of the ethnic service – although rarely –, or not often anymore, as most people associate the term 'traditional church music' with *suling*.²⁵¹ The type of accompanying instruments really influences churchly atmosphere and the character of the songs. The same songs from the same songbook sound decidedly different when they are played by another ensemble of instruments in a slower or faster tempo.

The history of songbooks

Concerning the history of hymns, the Moluccan church followed the Dutch Calvinist Order in liturgy and hymn singing,²⁵² with the Genevan Psalter being the most important source for the latter. These *Psalmen en Eenige Gezangen* were used in the congregations and translated around the middle of the 17th century. To the Psalter the *Evangelische Gezangen* (1807) and the *Vervolgbundel* (1866) were added, which resulted in the 19th century in a collection in Malay language: *Mazmur dan Tahlil* (Psalms and Hymns).²⁵³ Made by C.C.J. Schröder, the words of these hymnals were sometimes hard to understand, because of the use of archaic, uncommon language and Arab substitutions. Around 1920 a new songbook was compiled by Schröder and Tupamaha, called *Dua Sahabat Lama* (DSL; Two Old Friends). This book has become deeply rooted in the hearts of many generations of Moluccan Christians. The songs of these two songbooks have an introspective, sentimental and moralistic character, without

²⁴⁹ Interview with Jan Z. Matatula, Anonymous (GPM church member, 19-12-2019, Ambon).

²⁵⁰ As well as a good education system for the regeneration of this skill.

²⁵¹ Interview with Barce Istia, musician, 12-12-2019, Ambon.

²⁵² o.a. The Ten Commandments, the Lord's Prayer and the Apostle's Creed (two versions) (Van Dop, personal document, 2).

²⁵³ With four-part harmony for congregational singing and bamboo flute accompaniment. Moreover, at the beginning of the 18th century an Indonesian translation of the Bible was completed. Also, every missionary activity brought its own liturgical and hymnological tradition from the mother country. There are Dutch Reformed, German Evangelical-Lutheran, English Methodist, American Mennonite, Baptist, Pentecostal, Charismatic, Evangelical, Roman Catholic and other collections to be found in Indonesian churches (Van Dop, personal document, 3).

reference to social or political circumstances. After independence, in 1950, Kijne composed a new hymnal, based on hundred psalms from the old Genevan melodies and on two hundred hymns.²⁵⁴ Called *Mazmur dan Nyanyian Rohani* (NR; Psalms and Spiritual Songs), modern comprehensible Indonesian language was used which made it rapidly popular. After 1950, most songbooks were printed in cipher notation instead of staff-notes.²⁵⁵ In 1967 the Indonesian Foundation for Church Music (*Yamuger*) was established, which was assigned the task of musical education and the preparation of new hymnbooks. In 1975 a team started to work on a standardization of already existing hymn translations and on the composing of new, more contextual Indonesian songs. Combining old classics, heritage of early 20th-century Indonesian church history, and new hymns from all over the world, the result was the *Kidung Jemaat* (KJ; Songs of the Congregation) in 1984. It contained 475 hymns with over hundred songs of non-Western origin. In 1991 a supplement was published, the *Nyanyiankanlah Kidung Baru* (NKB; Sing the New Song), with 225 hymns of which many from local heritage and sources. In 1999 the *Pelengkap Kidung Jemaat* (PKJ; Supplement to Community Songs) was published, containing 300 hymns with a number of indigenous compositions (Van Dop, personal document, 1-5). Then, fairly recently, the *Nyanyian GPM* (NJGPM; GPM Songs) was released in 2010. In collaboration with the GIM, the objective was to make a contextual Moluccan songbook. To achieve this goal, composers based their songs on the daily life of Moluccan people in their relation with the world, with nature and with God.²⁵⁶ The book has 342 hymns, written in Indonesian, Malay or even indigenous language, that are not only diatonic but also scaled otherwise (such as pentatonic), and that can be musically accompanied by traditional Moluccan instruments.²⁵⁷ There are songs included which are adaptations of folk songs, and which are based on typical Moluccan musicological aspects. A variety of people was invited to compose several songs for the NJGPM, including artists, musicians, pastors and theologians who collaborated on lyrics, language, theological content and music. Inspiration came from cultural, social and musical contexts in Moluccan society,

²⁵⁴ From great classics in English and German traditions, from other European countries and from medieval hymns.

²⁵⁵ 1=do, 2=re, 3=mi et cetera. The key note can be moved. There are additional signs for accidental sharps and flats, meter, rhythm, and modulation (Van Dop, personal document, 5). For example, a horizontal line above the cipher says it is an eighth note, while no line says it is a quarter note (Interview with Branckly Egbert Picanussa, 20-11-2019, Ambon). Moreover, the number 0 means rest, and additional ciphers or the sign ' are used to denote octaves. For example, when a second c is reached in a song, the number 2 or the sign " show that this c is one octave higher than the former one. Also, the composer always states which tone is the do, to mark tonal arrangement (for example, f=do) (Interview with Chris Tamaela).

²⁵⁶ Interview with Anonymous, 9-12-2019, Saparua.

²⁵⁷ For instance, when the song is based on the rhythm of the *tifa* drum, the *tifa* drum can be used (Interview with Barce Istia).

which then was connected to parts of church services, as the hymns should fit a certain liturgical context.²⁵⁸ There are songs for ‘Gathering before God’, ‘Service of the Word’, ‘Response to the Service of the Word’, and also for specific services such as the Holy Communion or baptisms, songs related to certain times and seasons, short responses songs, songs to close the service and songs for daily faith life.²⁵⁹ Pastor John Beay explained his composition process:

A song can become the means for preaching the Gospel. People can feel the Gospel within their own culture [and] reality. What they do, think and work on. That song can become a strength. I make a song when I go to the sea, I catch a fish, I see the waves. I reflect about the nature and the blessing God gave us. There is a dialectic between Gospel and context, context and Gospel.²⁶⁰

Since the NJGPM is quite recent, it is apparent that not all songs of the book are already well-known and memorized by the congregations. A member of the choir in the *Maranatha* church commented that they did not often use this hymnbook,²⁶¹ and when attending Sunday service a clear difference in singing volume and attention can be noticed between the NJGPM and DSL, for instance.²⁶² Nevertheless, there are some popular NJGPM songs that are sung often.²⁶³ Musicological differences between the songbooks are interpreted as follows. Older, originally foreign, songbooks have chord sequences that are pleasant to listen to.²⁶⁴ People are used to ‘drag’ when singing these hymns, decreasing the tempo more and more. The base tones can vary and are a little bit more complicated as the whole congregation should sing

²⁵⁸ Such a composition process differs per person. Sometimes the text is created first, sometimes the melody, and sometimes both at the same time. However, it is most important that lyrics and melody fit based on meaning. The hymns themselves also have a certain structure with for example an intro, interlude and coda that have their own color and sound.

²⁵⁹ GPM. 2010. *Nyanyian Gereja Protestan Maluku*. Ambon: GPM.

²⁶⁰ Interview with John F. Beay.

²⁶¹ Interview with Anonymous, 27-10-2019, Ambon.

²⁶² See appendix 4 for some examples of hymns in the NJGPM.

²⁶³ Such as: number 55, *Tuhan Kasihani/Kyrie Eleison* by Chris Tamaela or *Ku s’Lalu Ingin Memujimu* (14) by Barce Istia. This one resembles the *keroncong* style, which is a Moluccan style based on string sounds; *Mari Basudara* (20) by Branckly E. Picanussa or *Tiop Tahuri, Pukul Tifa* (40) by Barce Istia, one of my personal favorites as it is energetic, rhythmic and tight with staccato notes. With this one there are guiding rules for when different parts of the congregation need to sing: first the choir, then the whole congregation and then the coda first by women, then by men, and then by all; a popular song for the offering is number 166, *Ayo Bawa Persembahanmu* by Chris Tamaela, and for expressing gratitude number 170, *Kami Bersyukur* by Barce Istia. Despite the latter being diatonic (with despite referring to the fact that diatonic scales characterize Western music), people love it and think “ah, this is our song” because for a long time the Moluccan ear has been used to diatonic music (Interview with Branckly Egbert Picanussa).

²⁶⁴ This refers to Western ‘ears’. Through centuries of influence and, now, globalization, Moluccan Christians embodied these sequences as easy and comfortable to listen to.

exactly the same tone that can be a ‘b’ or ‘e’ flat, for example. Newer songbooks have been strongly influenced by the development of pop music and Charismatic music. Now, the main requirement of good hymns is ‘singable’.²⁶⁵ In the liturgical structure a rotation system of songbooks is applied, with for each of the five Sundays per month another songbook. *Tahlil* is almost no longer used, as the majority of the people do not understand the words.²⁶⁶

Music in the GPM

The *kantoria* leads congregational singing and practices new songs with the church members.²⁶⁷ Often, it is a group of two to four people, standing next to the keyboard and singing in a microphone. The process of teaching new songs to the congregation can be a challenge, especially since the members of the *kantoria* sometimes have to learn these songs themselves at the same time. Difficulties with timing, tuning and rhythm make it a rather non-fluent, messy matter, although after trying and mumbling several times, the congregation generally gets the hang of it and starts singing more enthusiastically. If a hymn that is less well-known is used during a service, the *prokantor* occasionally recites the verses to assist the singing congregation. Music lovers who critically look at the quality of church music would prefer a better preparation by the *kantoria* and players,²⁶⁸ as well as better circumstances such as a timely provision of the selected hymns and the inclusion of cipher notation on the beamer.²⁶⁹ Besides the *kantoria*, vocal groups, *paduan suara*, have their own moment to sing in church – a-Capella or accompanied by recorded or live-played music. The vocal quality of these groups generally is exceptionally high.²⁷⁰ When *paduan suara* perform they are stylishly united by coordinated clothing colors. They sing polyphonously, in various styles and with

²⁶⁵ Interview with Branckly Egbert Picanussa, music teacher at IAKN, 13-11-2019, Ambon.

²⁶⁶ Only in more traditional villages such as *Soya* or *Hutumuri* (Interview with Anonymous, choir director and *suling* player, 10-11-2019, *Soya*).

It has been a conscious decision of the GPM to also keep using the songbooks from Western origin, despite the current contextual approach. Actually, Chris Tamaela was one of the proponents of not throwing out these older songbooks, as they reflect a Christian heritage that is also part of the Moluccan church of today, and on which should be built further. Therefore, these songbooks remain appreciated (Interview with Chris Tamaela, 7-11-2019, Ambon).

²⁶⁷ Interview with Anonymous, 27-10-2019, Ambon.

²⁶⁸ Mainly referring to musicians who also often play in church, thus music experts who are members of congregations.

²⁶⁹ When I experienced a music rehearsal for the service on the next day, the invited keyboard player was the only one who was on time. On the spot he received the liturgy and for an hour he practiced himself and assisted one less musically gifted singer. On our way back, climbing the narrow steps through the mountainous village, in the dark we encountered the too late arriving choir. In short, the quality of the *kantoria* depends on preparation and group. Some singers inspire the congregation with their passion, while I also experienced services in which the singers routinely sang the verses, in a flat way without energy, spirit or variation.

²⁷⁰ The vocal groups are led by a conductor, who chooses the repertoire. They prepare themselves for service by practicing each week (Interview with Anonymous, GPM member and leader of the choir in *Soya*, 10-11-2019, *Soya*).

myriad musical accents.²⁷¹ The beauty of musical expression comes in many forms: singers laugh, dance, move their eyebrows or stare to the ground, their phone or the sheet they are holding. They close their eyes, look up to the sky or hold their hands in their pockets. Besides groups, in church there is also a place for solo performances.

The experience of music in church is also expressed on the faces of the congregants. When people listen to a performance they sometimes fold their fingers in front of their bended head to better enjoy and concentrate on the music. Some close their eyes, softly sing along or move their hands. When people passionately sing the congregational songs, they slightly look up with a convinced glance in their eyes. Little children also fervently try to sing along. The importance and education of church music is namely taught at an early age. At home one is brought up with church music. Hymns are used as lullabies, performed during village events, and sung while doing all kinds of activities. Families sing and listen to hymns together during family prayers. In Moluccan society there is no day without music and a large part of that music is church music. As my friend said: “In church, outside church, until the bathroom, I always sing. I love to sing.”²⁷² Church music thus is of great importance, both for Moluccan culture in general and for church culture in particular. The main role of music and singing in worship is centered around the relation with God. Church music is a way of praising and glorifying God: “God has the power to do everything, except praising himself. Humans should do that, with music.”²⁷³ Through singing people can express gratitude, pleas and prayers to God. It generates a religious feeling that focuses people’s minds on God alone, for example in preparation to praying.²⁷⁴ In turn, singing makes people feel close to God: “We cannot see God, there is no image of God. But singing makes you feel He is with you.”²⁷⁵ For many church members music has a central role in the church service.²⁷⁶ It makes the

²⁷¹ For instance, churches also invite vocal groups specialized in Hawaiian music (Interview with Anonymous, *Majelis* member in the village *Noloth*, 7-12-2019, Saparua).

²⁷² Interview With Omy & Jeane. Translation by author. “*Di dalam gereja, maupun di luar gereja sambil mandi, saya senang menyanyi.*”

²⁷³ Interview with Rence Alfons. Translation by author.

²⁷⁴ Interview with Anonymous, 6-12-2019, Saparua.

²⁷⁵ Informal conversation with Vally, 27-10-2019, Ambon. Translation by author.

One woman I interviewed recounted a life experience which illustrates the centrality of church music in people’s lives. During her second pregnancy there were a lot of complications, and the doctor had said that there was a high chance they needed to abort the baby. She and her husband were very worried. Then she suddenly felt God right in her heart through a song. The woman sang the song for me, with tears in her eyes and a trembling voice. It is one of her favorite church songs. She safely gave birth to her second son (Interview with Anonymous, 19-12-2019, Ambon).

²⁷⁶ Which is even justified theologically by referring to Bible verses about music. For example: “why did the Israelites praise God with stringed instruments, harps, flutes, tambourines, dances? And just by singing the wall of Jericho is falling down, (...) it means that it has a very deep theological meaning” (Interview with Anonymous,

atmosphere more pleasant,²⁷⁷ bringing spirit, soul and joy, and supporting the course of worship. Music can be a source of happiness and consolation for people,²⁷⁸ and an opportunity to express what is inside emotionally, letting go of heavy feelings.²⁷⁹ At the same time, church music is a form of entertainment: “if there's no music, it feels like worship isn't fun. People not only need sermons. (...) When delivered with songs through music, it enters people's hearts.”²⁸⁰ Hence, without music the church service does not feel complete:²⁸¹ “it is impossible for the worship to occur without music.”²⁸² As happens more often, a comparison is made with food. When there is no church music it is as if a dish misses the sambal, or the fish misses the *colo-colo* sauce.²⁸³

GPM culture

Church music is embedded in overarching structures of church culture, which people regard as the ways things are done – as what characterizes them as Moluccan church members. It comprehends a certain church experience that transmits and develops from parents to children.²⁸⁴ Firstly, an important and rather visible aspect are the black clothes, a remnant of Portuguese and Dutch influence. While in former times everyone wore black during the service, nowadays it only is obligatory for pastors and *majelis* members. However, the typical black costume can also still be seen among old women in more traditional churches in villages. These women wear their black-grey hair in a vertical elongated bun and put on a dark-grey or black wide long skirt and blouse. The skirt and blouse have a slightly shining accent in the fabric. When I asked a woman why she wore black clothes, she said it was normal for her. She is used wearing these clothes in church since past times, and it would be

17-11-2019, *Hutumuri*). Also, the Gospel and Christian teachings can be transferred and made known through singing hymns (Interview with Anonymous, *majelis* member in *Rehoboth* church, 3-11-2019, Ambon). The importance of music in church also becomes clear in the special service one day before the funeral service, the so-called *pemakaman*, consolation service. The *pemakaman* mainly consists of singing the favorite church songs of the one deceased, and *suling* or brass music is played, because these instruments are regarded as appropriate for the mournful atmosphere, while keyboard is also played at parties, for example (Interview with Anonymous, 6-12-2019, Saparua).

²⁷⁷ Interview with Jan Z. Matatula, Jeffrey Leatimia, Anonymous (10-11-2019, *Soya*), Anonymous (18-12-2019, Ambon), Anonymous (22-12-2019, Ambon).

²⁷⁸ Interview with Anonymous, 22-12-2019, *Soya*.

Also, the goal of church music is that people take something home with them, spiritually, from the church service (Interview with Anonymous, 27-10-2019, Ambon).

²⁷⁹ Interview with Omy & Jeane, Vally & Eggy.

²⁸⁰ Interview with Anonymous, 27-10-2019, Ambon. Translation by author.

²⁸¹ Interview with Vally & Eggy, Anonymous (7-12-2019, Saparua).

²⁸² Interview Anonymous, 17-11-2019, *Hutumuri*.

²⁸³ Informal conversation with Dave, 7-11-2019, Saparua.

²⁸⁴ While the typical traditional Moluccan church culture that people refer to is most visible in certain villages, we should not forget that all Moluccan churches are located within a global, highly mediatized, modern world.

strange for her to change this tradition. Interestingly, some women even referred to this church outfit as *pakaian adat*, *adat* clothes, employing a specific term that is very much related to traditional pre-colonial Moluccan culture, while historically these clothes are connected to colonialism. It makes clear how for these women the black clothes are intrinsically linked to the Moluccan church. Additionally, female *majelis* members wear a black ribbon, embroidered with shiny little stones, diagonally over the shoulder (*kain pikul*, Chris Tamaela 2015, 78).²⁸⁵ The traditional costume of male *majelis* is made of black trousers, a white long blouse with an embroidered half-moon motif and small white balls as buttons, and a black open jacket. Although black still is the church color for *majelis*, the specific traditional costume is definitely worn more in traditional villages (while in cities variations in black clothes and also colors can be seen). As a pastor in the village *Haria*, Saparua, explained: “God does not look at color or clothes. But the black clothes have become our culture. It characterizes us, Moluccan Protestants. If we pray without these clothes, something is missing.”²⁸⁶ Pastors always wear a long black robe with a colored scarf vertically hanging around the neck. The black collar with white brim on the front side is internationally recognized as the pastor’s outfit. Secondly, in more traditional churches in villages the silent, meditative, solemn atmosphere is also part of church culture. People arrive early and wait quietly until the service starts. Others who are late are frowned upon through the stinging dark eyes of older women, and people who talk loudly are shush-ed very quickly.²⁸⁷ This atmospheric aspect relates to the already discussed styles of musical accompaniment. In villages the music is slow, solemn and serene, referred to as more ‘orthodox’ or ‘sacral’.²⁸⁸ Thirdly, in two far-away village churches, in *Hututmuri* and *Soya*, I found a rare aspect of traditional church culture that in these places has continued until today. Here the choirs and vocal groups are positioned with their backs to the attendants, facing the altar and the pastor. Therefore, they do not sing towards the congregation but towards the pulpit.²⁸⁹ This traditional position is connected to notions of hierarchy and musical purpose: it

²⁸⁵ Once I attended an evaluation meeting of pastors and *majelis*. The female *majelis* members suddenly put this black costume on over their normal clothes when the moment of prayer began, which demonstrated the importance of these clothes for church tradition.

²⁸⁶ Interview with Anonymous, 6-12-2019, Saparua.

²⁸⁷ Interview with Bella Soplanit.

²⁸⁸ Interview with Anonymous, 27-10-2019, Ambon.

Moreover, the Sunday is very much respected and children who do not come to church have to be silent and stay inside their homes until the service has ended, and even then they are not allowed to make noise (Interview with Anonymous, 6-12-2019, Saparua).

²⁸⁹ In all other churches I visited, both in the city and in villages, the choir and vocal groups sing towards the congregation. This also has to do with notions of acoustics.

is not respectful to turn your back on the pastor, and the singing should be aimed to God instead of the congregation. These ideas are also the reason that in many churches vocal groups end their performance almost in a hasty way, already moving back to their place while the song has hardly stopped. In some churches people do not even clap, while in the city this is common practice. Traditionally one should not give much attention to these performers, as the focus is God alone. Fourthly, position with regard to sitting place is also an aspect of church culture. The *majelis* always sit in front of the church, right or left from the altar, perpendicular to the direction of the other congregants. Moreover, older churches in villages are classified into different sitting areas for different people. In *Soya*, for example, there is a separate elevated space for the *raja* and his family on the left side, for the *saneri* on the back left, for the elders on the back right and for the *majelis* on the right side. Lastly, an interesting component of Moluccan church culture are the ancestors. In accordance with GPM doctrine and the centuries-long colonial prohibition on indigenous belief syncretizing with Calvinism, no Moluccan Christian would say they believe in the ancestors: God is the first and only powerful transcendental entity. This shows how religious discourse became colonized under Dutch rule. The Dutch state determined the concept of religion according to modern Western ideas. Religion was introduced as a universal and ahistorical category in which local religious discourses rarely fitted. Many indigenous religious traditions were not considered actual religions by European colonials, but as backward superstition (Kruithof 2014, 56-57). Nevertheless, practically the ancestors play an important part in Moluccan culture and as cultural heritage they are respected, remembered and appreciated, also in relation to Christian religion: “Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, they are our ancestors. We became Christian because of the ancestors in our family. Our grandparents are Christian, our parents, we, and our children. Christianity already became Moluccan culture.”²⁹⁰ An illustration of this is the religious-cultural symbol of the *piring natzar*. This is a white offering plate with a white cloth on top under which lie coins. Before one goes to church, the family gathers around it and prays. It is a sacred meeting place with God and the ancestors. The coins of the plate are donated in church, after which the religious service is closed at home, again around the *piring natzar* (Hendrik 1995, 9). It is a practice that has been passed on from the ancestors until now, although not all people from current generations have one in their house any longer.²⁹¹

²⁹⁰ Interview with Anonymous, 6-12-2019, Saparua.

²⁹¹ Interview with Anonymous (6-12-2019, Saparua), Anonymous (18-12-2019, Ambon).

Moluccan religiosity

Among Moluccan Christians, religion generally has a very meaningful and central place in one's life. As a theologian commented, Moluccan identity means being religious: "Religiosity of Moluccans is very strong. Wherever they are, they are always expressing their belief."²⁹² This religiosity is articulated both through certain education structures and through personal experiences.²⁹³ As a baby one is baptized in church. Baptisms usually take place several times per year because groups of children are baptized collectively (Bartels 1994, 399).²⁹⁴ Already at a very young age the curriculum of the Sunday school begins.²⁹⁵ There are many 'stages' based on age-groups that range from one to seventeen years old. Each stage has its own program for one semester, which takes four months. The curriculum is developed according to three pillars: church, Bible and context. While for a very long time the Bible comprised more than fifty percent of the curriculum, a recent change gives more weight to context.²⁹⁶ Songs and singing comprise a large part of Sunday school,²⁹⁷ which is explicitly noticeable when walking past a school building. A cacophony of sounds – of scooters from parents and brothers bringing the children, of running feet, of playing voices and teachers' methods – are overarched by children singing.²⁹⁸ When young Christians have confirmed their faith they are offered the possibility to become a Sunday school teacher, which many accept, after which

²⁹² Interview with Agus Batlajery.

²⁹³ Protestant Moluccans born in Protestant families normally follow the same line of Christian education. By their family they are taught Christian values and are put in Christian schools (Interview with Omy & Jeane, 16-11-2019, Ambon). These teachings center around a strict following of God, Jesus and the Bible. If one commits sin, oneself and one's family will suffer from what has been done: "God is vengeantful" (Interview with Margaretha Hendriks).

²⁹⁴ There is a special baptism liturgy, with themes connected to baptism and joining the Christian community.

²⁹⁵ In Sunday school children start with the New Testament, as the stories are a bit easier to comprehend. High-school aged children learn about the Old Testament, after which one goes into more detail on certain issues (Interview with Vally, Omy, Jeane). Sunday school activities can be very creative. I saw some books, games and other Sunday school material that is very colorful and play-like.

²⁹⁶ The content and effect of the long-used Bible-focused Sunday school curriculum become clear among UKIM students that have experienced a deep incongruence between their Christian education so far and their current theological education. Previously, they thought the Bible was everything – a book that had to be venerated in itself, because it is literally written by God. Parents and teachers taught them that they should not do something which is not in line with the will of God, and therefore sinful, and that only people who know the Bible will be saved: "Back in the days I was so smart with the Bible, the names, questions. I knew everything!" (Interview with Vally, Omy, Jeane). When these students began studying at UKIM their learning experience was first characterized by confusion, because the teachers here taught them the Bible is about human experiences with God. They learned about multiple perspectives available when looking at a certain passage and they acquired a critical attitude. Now, these students see the Bible as one among many important sources and take context into account.

²⁹⁷ Interview with Anonymous, 19-12-2019, Ambon.

²⁹⁸ Each class has two Sunday school teachers. Therefore, every congregation has a minimum of 24 teachers.

they receive instructions.²⁹⁹ At seventeen youth enters the process of catechism. During three years the students follow lessons from the pastor, finished with an exam in which they are tested on their knowledge of Christian religion and the Bible. Consequently, they receive a certificate and confirm their faith. The Confirmation ceremony is an important moment that marks the transition from childhood to adulthood and provides a person full church membership with all rights and privileges attached, such as partaking in the Holy Supper (Bartels 1994, 401-402). After Confirmation there is youth club. This is a semi-independent church organization with its own structures and programs.³⁰⁰

The family probably is the most central place where religiosity is shaped: “Christianity is not only located in church, but in daily family life! When we as kids went to sleep, Christian songs were sung and Bible stories were told.”³⁰¹ An example that illustrates religiosity in families is the family prayer. The GPM provides liturgical structures for family services at home,³⁰² although many families pray together each evening, as I experienced when I lived with my friend Vally.³⁰³

The four of us sit down on the benches in the living room. We close our eyes and fold our hands to begin with a prayer. The voice of the father expresses his gratitude. Vally and I both may read several verses of a Bible passage. I receive the family Bible from her and with my heart beating fast as I feel the weight of this moment, I try to say the Indonesian words in the clearest and steadiest way I can. Here I stop observing; my whole being is concentrated on participating. I have an important role in this family who in all their generosity took me in for one week. It feels so special. After our words the father gives his personal reflection, emphasizing the unimaginable power of God. And then we sing. Without music it is only us. Only our voices together in this living room. I realize it is more intimate than anything else I have sung so far. We close our assemblance with a prayer. I hear the father ask for my personal success at university and for the health of my parents and brother. I feel overwhelmed by kindness and

²⁹⁹ At UKIM I met many theology students who were a Sunday school teacher as well.

³⁰⁰ Interview with Nancy Souisa.

³⁰¹ Interview with Anonymous, 6-12-2019, Saparua. Translation by author.

³⁰² Such as with Christmas. Here a patriarchal structure becomes clear. The liturgy divides parts of the service that have to be read aloud between family members. The father occupies the main role in the service, formulates a reflection on the Word of God and leads the prayer.

³⁰³ It truly felt as a blessing to become a family member and receive the wishes in this assemblage of Moluccan cultural cordiality and religiosity. Although I almost never pray myself, I still feel protected by Vally's father's words.

intimacy in this personal setting which I am part of this evening. When we give each other a hand I have tears in my eyes.

The family and educational experiences form Moluccan religiosity that shapes ideas about and contact with God. People feel that without God they are nothing: “we cannot realize our life in the world without connecting ourselves with God.”³⁰⁴ Jesus is a behavioral guidance for relating to humans and nature in a good way:³⁰⁵ “religion is a means for us to build life. Religion contains values, which can benefit us to do good things. For others, the environment, but also for God. When we say we believe in God, it must be visible, must be proven, be real in our behavior and attitudes.”³⁰⁶ God always walks together with His people, in happy and sorrowful moments.³⁰⁷ Being close to God thus is necessary, like food and drink, to feel healthy and strong.³⁰⁸ One congregant said: “It is like breathing. When I don’t breathe, I don’t live.”³⁰⁹

Conclusion

Together with and building on the information in Chapter One, this chapter carefully examined the layers of the *spekkoek* that as a whole forms contemporary Moluccan Protestantism: religious and cultural identity, colonial and religious history, the development of and changes in the GPM institution, and Moluccan religiosity. The organizational structures and doctrinal basis of the GPM compose the context for the relational embedding of UKIM, the center of Moluccan contextual theology. GPM churches, liturgy, services and culture are the setting in which contextual theology is implemented and received, while at the same time dialectically constituting a source for the contents of this theology. The history, development and importance of GPM music are part of the background against which the theological innovation of traditional church music is set, a topic that will be further addressed from Chapter Five onward. The image of the *spekkoek* indicates how colonial discourse,

³⁰⁴ Interview with Agus Batlajery.

³⁰⁵ Interview with Jacky Manuputty.

³⁰⁶ Interview with Jeffrey Leatimia. Translation by author.

Religion means having faith in a power that controls life. It is the building of a relation with God, it is the way of responding to God (Interview with Jan Z. Matatula, Anonymous (18-12-2019, Ambon), Margaretha Hendriks).

³⁰⁷ For example, this is literally illustrated by the practice of my friend who always prays before she leaves the house. Without praying she does not feel comfortable.

³⁰⁸ Interview with Anonymous, 3-11-2019, Ambon.

³⁰⁹ Interview with Anonymous, 10-11-2019, Soya. Translation by author. “*Seperti nafas. Kalau beta seng nafas, beta seng hidup. Maksudnya besar.*”

doctrine and culture enter into a relationship with ideas and practices on traditional Moluccan culture and identity. Together these layers build an authentic Moluccan Protestantism that in turn constitutes an important component of Christian Moluccanness. All past and present contexts delineated so far shape the grammatical structure in which Moluccan theology is practically and discursively located. The next chapter portrays the actual context in which contextual theology on the Moluccas is being developed: the educational institution UKIM.

Figures – Chapter 2



Figure 14 - Interior of the Maranatha church, Ambon (photo by author)



Figure 15 - Church of Noloth, Saparua (photo by friend of author)



Figure 16 - Interior of the church in Noloth, Saparua – author together with majelis member (photo by friend of author)



Figure 17 - Interior of the Silo church, Ambon (photo by author)



Figure 18 - Church Imanuel in Haria, Saparua (photo by author)



Figure 19 - Interior of church Petra in Haria, Saparua (photo by author)

Figure 20 - Interior of the church in Tunj, Ambon (photo by author)



I sit on a white, plastic chair in front of a desk in a rather dark office. Low, wooden screens divide the room into tiny cubicles. While there are many, we are alone. Laughing sounds of students' voices move through the open spaces between the horizontal lanes of window glass, between the wall and the ceiling. Heat touches my skin. I feel nervous. I look up to the brown, warm eyes of the older woman sitting here with me. And I know all will be good.

The topic of our conversation is contextual theology. With a soft, dry articulation she carefully and slowly constructs her gracious sentences. In a thoughtful, kind, serene way she explains in perfect English what theology means to her. Born in a Christian family and with four uncles being a pastor, she initially wanted to become a doctor. Reconsidering distance, financial burdens and risks of shame, she eventually studied theology. She went to India, was vice-moderator of the World Council of Churches, took part in an interfaith peace-and-reconciliation women's movement, and became a lecturer.

In the heat of the real Moluccan fight, when blood was all over, we needed another perspective. I think that is how we confess Christ in a new way. Contextual theology starts from our real context and experience. But contextualization is not only about local experience. We don't just start theology. We learn from others, and then we start. Cause for me religion is not God. Religion is the way we respond to God, and that's why we can differ in many places, in many ways, you know. How we see God, the way we worship God, the way we understand God. We could be different. To me God is so great, you cannot define God in only one way or the other. God is kind of a mystery, you see? So we need to broaden our vision, broaden our understanding, broaden our experience of God. By also learning from each other. To me it is like that.

The beauty of her worldview touches me. She is passionate, she is funny. I see her generous smile, the freckles on her cheeks, the white, neat, fluffy hair crowning her open face. *Listening to people's everyday experience, to people's questions about God, about life, about religion, about human beings; it helps us to reflect on and to define our theology. It's not an abstract kind of theory. It starts from the bottom, like a spiral. It comes down and goes up, and it transforms.*

I still remember her voice, the intonation moving along with dedication, the pleasant accent. Only a handful of people in your life blow you away with their intelligence, their elegance, their wisdom.

Reverend Doctor Margaretha Hendriks is one of them.

3-The Context of Context: Moluccan Contextual Theology

Theologian Margaretha Hendriks was the first person whom I interviewed during the fieldwork. On the campus of UKIM she gave me two hours of her time to tell me about her perspective on contextual theology. It was one of the most dense, informative and inspiring perspectives I would hear. It also was the starting point of my learning process about Moluccan theology and its contents, implementation and context. UKIM is the theological kitchen of the Protestant Moluccan church. Here theologians develop and teach new ideas. While the focus of this study is contextual theology, theological practice is situated in its own context as well. This context shapes both the theological discourse on Moluccan contexts and the grammar behind this discourse. The current chapter delineates the educational, organizational, historical and political context of Moluccan contextual theology. Situated in a contemporary national, modern and postcolonial setting this forms the grammar of the meaning, content and practice of Moluccan theology.

The Universitas Kristin Indonesia Maluku

At the edge of Ambon city, close to the sea, lies the campus of UKIM. Over the course of three months, almost every morning, I walked the same route from my house to my office. After waiting at least five minutes before being able to safely find my way through circumventing the cars, scooters and buses – the open mini vans recognizable by the passengers packed together and the thumping beat coming out of the large speakers in the back – I entered the narrow streets of a colorful neighborhood. Flanked by Jesus portraits on the walls I would circle around dogs, chickens and food stands, asking permission to pass the houses of the residents and receiving their greeting. Coming out of this cozy place, I crossed the street and arrived at the colored gate of the UKIM campus. A students' sports field is located in the middle of the terrain, surrounded by multiple two- or three-story buildings, all white. Open stairs and hallways and clean tiled floors lead to offices and classrooms that are filled with couches, desks or wooden chairs with individual tables attached to it. The balcony on the most far away building, across from the library, has a beautiful sunny view over the water and harbor. On this campus contextual theology is developed and taught. It is here that young Moluccans become pastors and theologians.

It is the vision of UKIM to develop a Moluccan-islands' theology focused on the wellbeing of life, pluralism, ecology and ecumenism.³¹⁰ The missions of organizing a Master's education in contextual theology, of organizing theological, religious and cultural research and of organizing community service are connected to this. UKIM's goal is to provide a study program which will engender an intellectual community that brings about change in church and society. Many different subjects are taught at UKIM, by many different teachers.³¹¹ The theologians teaching at UKIM demonstrate both similarities and differences concerning their background, career and specializations. The people I spoke to were all born in Christian families; some on Ambon, some on surrounding islands, some on very remote Moluccan islands and some in other places in Indonesia. Growing up or living in the Moluccas is part of their being and therefore of their theology. John Titaley, who only spent his formative years in the Moluccas, described it as follows:

For me *Maluku* is like harmony with nature. We went to school from seven to twelve, then we took a short nap, and then our mothers said we had to go to the woods, we had to get wood for the fire. And then we played! Basketball, swimming in the sea. That's the life that I used to know in *Maluku*. Harmony! I really enjoyed that part of my life.³¹²

To study theology for many felt like a calling. Chris Tamaela said it was something from his heart that pushed him to do that.³¹³ Others chose theology out of interest and explored many more unexpected aspects, like Steve Gaspersz: "I was surprised when I studied theology. I discovered that theology actually is a very challenging discipline. Because of the in between. You have to use your rationality, but on the other side you have to keep your faith. So I discovered many mysterious dimensions by studying theology."³¹⁴ The academic careers of the most prominent contextual theologians I talked with show striking similarities. They began their education at UKIM or at a theological university on Java. Some continued their Master or doctoral research in Indonesia or in other Asian countries such as India, the Philippines or Taiwan.³¹⁵ Others had the opportunity to do a PhD in Western countries like the United States (Berkeley) or the Netherlands (Amsterdam). Although many continued to be

³¹⁰ In former times the name of UKIM was STT: *Sekolah Tinggi Teologi GPM*.

³¹¹ See appendix 5 for the curriculum of UKIM.

³¹² Interview with John Titaley.

³¹³ Interview with Chris Tamaela.

³¹⁴ Interview with Steve Gaspersz.

³¹⁵ An important reason for theologians of approximately the same generation to move to other countries was the religious conflict that started in 1999 (Interview with Nancy Souisa, Chris Tamaela).

a GPM pastor as well, they focused on their academic progress, eventually becoming a researcher and lecturer at UKIM.³¹⁶ The paths of these theologians thus run through international contexts which often formed the starting point for their contextual specialization. These specializations, for example, are systematic theology and dogmatics, feminist theology,³¹⁷ Biblical studies, Christian education, liturgy and church music, missiology, public theology, and Indonesian theology.³¹⁸ Interestingly, many UKIM theologians work on the crossroads of theology, anthropology and religious studies. Adopting methods and perspectives from other disciplines in the social sciences and humanities, subjects such as indigenous religion, conflict and peace, Islam, Moluccan culture, and social methodology are addressed.³¹⁹ Through their work and positions the theologians operate within local and international religious and political contexts and organizations, fulfilling a social role as well, something that is reflected in the curriculum of UKIM. This curriculum aims to prepare students to consider the needs of church and society. Students are taught to open themselves to dialogue and to always respond to the question of what theology means for believing today.³²⁰ Theologians and pastors thus have a broader role in society – both in strengthening people and representing their struggle by voicing criticism.³²¹

UKIM teachings

The vision of UKIM, the theologians working here, and their perspectives and specializations result in several core teachings that UKIM transmits to its students. At the basis stands the idea that theology is not about God, but about the human experience with a transcendental entity. Therefore, theology is not only abstract and philosophical; it has to “touch the people around us.”³²² Theology includes an attitude of faith towards reality.³²³ A connected viewpoint concerns the Bible as historical document. The Bible also has context: it was

³¹⁶ Former rector Agus Batlajery even became a professor in theology last year. Moreover, there also are people who studied theology and in the end decided not to become a pastor. Jance Rumahuru (who does not work at UKIM but at the IAKN) figured that being a lecturer was his passion, and in this function he could also use the tasks and roles of a pastor: apart from churches there are more areas in society that need theologians (Interview with Jance Rumahuru).

³¹⁷ For instance, Margaretha Hendriks wrote about what Pentateuchal law says on women slaves, and about women, violence and reconciliation.

³¹⁸ Interview with Agus Batlajery, Margaretha Hendriks, Nancy Souisa, Peter Salenussa, Chris Tamaela, Rachel Iwamony, Steve Gaspersz, John Titaley.

³¹⁹ Interview with Jance Rumahuru, Steve Gaspersz.

³²⁰ Interview with Agus Batlajery.

³²¹ Interview with Margaretha Hendriks, Rachel Iwamony.

³²² Informal conversation with Steve Gaspersz, 16-12-2019, Ambon.

³²³ Interview with Cornelis Adolf Alyona.

written with reference to a people that confessed God in their own time and in their own way. This means that the Bible itself should not be worshipped:³²⁴

The Bible is not a timeless book where you can pick up a certain text and say: we have to do it this way cause the Bible says so. We have to reread the Bible! So how do we as Moluccans read the Bible? (...) With that in mind, do not read the Bible literally. You cannot. Do not read the Bible with a chronological line.³²⁵

At UKIM a contextual approach forms the starting point for the ambition to decolonize the church.³²⁶ Students learn that theology is embedded in daily life, which includes traditional life.³²⁷ They read a diversity of scientific books, they are challenged to live in a traditional village for two months to bridge seminary and reality by understanding the daily activities of others, and they are encouraged to excel and to show that as Indonesian Christians they have something to offer: “even though we are a minority in number, we should not be a minority in character!”³²⁸ This approach is reflected in specific course teachings.³²⁹ For instance, dogmatic problems are interpreted on the basis of the Bible, church tradition and Moluccan context;³³⁰ mission is not only about Christianizing, but also about empowering;³³¹ pastoral work should coincide with continuous theological reflection;³³² a Bible interpretation is not constructed on the dichotomy of ‘right’ and ‘wrong’, and cannot discriminate others but should be inclusive;³³³ and local culture, including music, has to be appreciated and dealt with in relation to worship and liturgy.³³⁴ Moreover, to practically stimulate these educational

³²⁴ Interview with John Titaley.

³²⁵ Interview with Margaretha Hendriks.

³²⁶ Interview with John Titaley.

³²⁷ Sometimes people do not even realize that they already theologized in an everyday manner. For instance, as an insider who knows traditional Moluccan life, one can retroactively develop new theological perspectives on animism, instead of following an outsider’s judgement from the past (Interview with Nancy Souisa).

³²⁸ Interview with Nancy Souisa, Margaretha Hendriks.

³²⁹ Moluccan cultural teaching styles are characterized by authoritative and hierarchical relations, and unidirectional information flows. For instance, sometimes lecturers do not show up or are late themselves, without having to justify their reasons. In comparison with Dutch education systems, Moluccan students perhaps develop a less critical attitude. This also is the reason that UKIM set up an exchange with lecturers from Western places. Theologian Verry Patty taught three months at UKIM and introduced open and critical spaces for equal group discussions (Interview with Verry Patty). Moreover, the Master program at UKIM is characterized by smaller groups of independent students and works with formats of informal discussion.

³³⁰ Interview with Agus Batlajery.

³³¹ Interview with Steve Gaspersz.

³³² As a pastor you should not stop theologizing. A pastor is a servant of his community, and he/she has to bring the stories of people that he/she hears into touch with theology. It is about to what extent pastors are able to make theology subservient to what they need to do in pastorate (Interview with Verry Patty, translation by author).

³³³ Interview with Nancy Souisa.

³³⁴ Interview with Chris Tamaela.

ideas, UKIM offers a central hall on campus where each Wednesday morning groups of students can experiment with different forms of services. UKIM students come from many places in the Moluccas – from Ambon, Buru and even Tanimbar, for instance – and are therefore regarded as a database for cultural contextuality in itself. Reasons for studying theology are similar to the pastors and theologians I talked with. The competency, status and role of pastors is attractive: through choosing theology one becomes a good person and one can change other people's lives. Severe childhood sickness and parents' prayers and promises led some people to the path of theology.³³⁵ Also, theology can feel like a calling, as it was for Vally. After her birth, her father performed the indigenous practice of secretly burying the placenta.³³⁶ During this act he prayed to God for her to become a pastor: "From a baby until I was grown up, I indeed always had the love to become a pastor, and it never changed."³³⁷ Students very much enjoy their learning experience at UKIM. They generally are hard workers and ambitious.³³⁸ They appreciate an open atmosphere and close relations with their teachers. Although for many students the contextual approach proved to be an entirely new perspective, they are fully convinced by it and repeat the contextual discourses that are prevalent at UKIM. They remember particular thoughts in courses related to this broader approach up to today.³³⁹

Religious and political embeddings

The UKIM as an educational institute belongs to the GPM. The GPM established UKIM in 1985.³⁴⁰ Their dialectical relationship therefore is naturally close, with the GPM asking UKIM to analyze and overthink things they want to implement in church, and with UKIM presenting their theological reflections to the GPM.³⁴¹ UKIM is seen as the kitchen of the GPM, where theologians cook, make, create, explore and experiment with new theological

³³⁵ The story of my friend Jeane shows striking similarities with pastor Jeffrey Leatimia in the village *Haria*. She was also cured from sickness at last. After graduating high school she made a test for studying law. However, she did not pass, after which she came back to theology to become a pastor, something that her mother had promised to God.

³³⁶ According to indigenous beliefs, there exists a mystic relationship between child and placenta. Burying the placenta protects the child against evil powers (Bartels 1994, 401).

³³⁷ Interview with Vally, Omy, Jeane. Translation by author.

³³⁸ I heard a story from Vally that for the first time in her life she received a grade 'c', because the whole class understood the assignment in the wrong way. After school she worked through the whole night to improve her assignment, only to discover the next morning that her teacher had already left to spend several months in another place (Interview with Vally). The story illustrates the diligence of many students I met.

³³⁹ Interview with Vally, Omy, Jeane.

³⁴⁰ Interview with Steve Gaspersz.

³⁴¹ Interview with Elifas Maspaitela.

ideas.³⁴² Development and change in the Moluccan church is thus also related to development and change in theological thinking at UKIM, although not necessarily in a unilinear direction. These developments basically function in two ways. On the one hand UKIM and the GPM together work on formulating the formation of church institutions. On the other hand, almost all GPM pastors are educated at UKIM, hereby disseminating updated knowledge.³⁴³ Moreover, several teachers also work inside the GPM. For instance, Chris Tamaela helped to develop ethnic liturgy and music for the GPM, and Peter Salenusso travels to many places in the Moluccas to study cultural traditions that could become a resource for ethnic services.³⁴⁴ Despite the fact that, institutionally, theologians at UKIM have the duty to express the formal teachings of the church,³⁴⁵ there exist some differences, discrepancies and contestations between several UKIM theologians and the GPM regarding future ambitions and reformations. The GPM rejected certain changes proposed by a few UKIM theologians who are part of the team working on formulating GPM teachings. These rejections mainly have to do with perspectives on disability, LGBTQ and politics.³⁴⁶ Some years ago the GPM asked the faculty to not allow disabled persons to study at UKIM, out of practical reasons as many congregations are situated in remote areas that are hard to access for pastors. However, UKIM responded that they are an educational institution and that it is not fair to discriminate people based on their existence. Furthermore, last semester UKIM invited a transgender to class, who gave insight in her experiences. The aim was to teach students that they cannot judge others when not knowing anything about who these persons are.³⁴⁷ The GPM does not agree with this approach and states that there is nothing outside creation except man and woman, while UKIM holds the view that LGBTQ are God's creation and that they have the same rights as other human beings. Lastly, UKIM would like to see a separation between church and politics. On the one hand, people working for the GPM can also become a parliamentary politician, and the GPM can support political candidates which results in a connection between church policy and politics. On the other hand, nepotism is high in GPM structures,

³⁴² Interview with Nancy Souisa, Chris Tamaela.

³⁴³ At the same time, the GPM cooperates with the UKIM to shape their educational curriculum (Interview with Nancy Souisa).

³⁴⁴ Interview with Chris Tamaela, Peter Salenusso.

³⁴⁵ These teachings are formulated by the synod board of the GPM and discussed in plenary synod and MPL meetings. UKIM advises the GPM on such matters, but the GPM ultimately decides.

³⁴⁶ Other issues involved elders being allowed to bless people, children being allowed to attend the Eucharist ceremony, and the discrepancy between the age of retirement of pastors and faculty members.

³⁴⁷ She told about the struggles she had with her mother. Her mother, being an elder in church, could not accept her transition from man to woman. Her mother and she went to church, and there her mother prayed to cut their relation as mother and child. Although as a mother she was very hurt, she felt she had to protect the church' point of view.

meaning that it is easier to acquire certain church positions when one has specific relations to specific persons.³⁴⁸

Besides their relation with the GPM, UKIM is also embedded in local, regional and national political structures, both because the Moluccan church is situated in this context, and because theological thought develops in interaction with this context. As has already been briefly touched upon, the GPM and the government operate as partners, and UKIM, belonging to the GPM, is part of this network. Theology at UKIM responds to multiple layers of identity of Moluccan Christians, referring to religious, ethnic and national identity, which in turn corresponds to local, regional and national political frameworks. The close relations between these three 'elite' levels (UKIM, GPM, politicians) certainly are visible in exclusive official educational, political and religious events. For example, when an employee of UKIM got promoted and joined the board, a party was held: typical white decorated chairs, round tables, plastic tents, fancy glasses, extensive buffets and live music were enjoyed by UKIM staff, representatives of the local government and GPM officials. Moreover, after the earthquake on 26 September the mayor called for a public religious interdenominational service and obliged civil servants to attend this event, who showed their support in their yellow-brown uniforms. The same combinations of people were present at the yearly MPL meeting where church policy is discussed among the GPM synod, UKIM theologians, *klasis* boards and pastors. Representatives from the local and regional government showed their face for the official opening service on Sunday morning. At the end of the service, both the GPM march and the national anthem were played, and consecutively many speeches were given by the organizer, the councilor, pastors and the vice-president of the mayor, all emphasizing brotherhood, ecology, society, social justice and Pancasila under the overarching theme of 'human and natural resources'. These speeches resemble a ritualistic routine. Political officials are always invited for considerably large public and religious events. They generally arrive much too late in their long escorted rows of fancy cars, are welcomed with music or announcements, take a seat in the comfortable empty chairs in front and delay the schedule with their multiple endless talks that all express the same content. After the ceremony, or even in the middle of the event, they then quickly leave again.³⁴⁹ Despite the superficiality of it, absence is not

³⁴⁸ Moreover, if you do not support high-ranked officials, GPM can send pastors to remote areas.

³⁴⁹ After the MPL opening service I could travel back from Haruku to Ambon with the governor and his entourage. This group of laughing, smoking men, wearing expensive traditional shirts or black and white costumes and their fingers decorated with huge rings, used their own speedboat and cars and were escorted by the police.

accepted due to colonial legacies of organizational structures and post-conflict discourses and peace ambitions. The GPM invites politicians³⁵⁰ to make sure that what the church wants for society is structurally transparent and developed in communication with the government.³⁵¹ They feel a responsibility to present a peaceful contextual post-conflict image, and politicians want to enforce this through balanced attendance.³⁵² In this way church and politics confirm each other, which is also expressed in prevailing discursive themes. The concept of *basudara*, brotherhood, based on the cultural foundation of *pela*, hereby forms the core. In their mutual confirmative relationship politicians are careful not to disturb interreligious connections, and the church in turn is careful to not go against political policies. Although UKIM is definitely implicated in this network, they have more room for other voices and for critically assessing reality.³⁵³ They are an educational institute that is independent up to a certain point, while politicians and the GPM are involved in and therefore benefit from a positive confirmative discourse. Nevertheless, connections between UKIM, GPM and politics – and conjoined aims, policies and effects – are strong, which especially becomes clear through the focus on Moluccan traditional culture: while UKIM theologizes on the basis of these cultural resources, the GPM tries to implement this contextual approach in church, and governments stimulate and facilitate this cultural focus more generally through money, education and the organization of performances.

The history of contextual theology at UKIM

The international movement of contextual theology started in the '60s. During the seventies several south-east Asian meetings took place where the point was brought forward that Western theology does not represent people in other contexts.³⁵⁴ Therefore, through pan-Asian relations theologians at UKIM became inspired by Asian contextual theologians, especially from the '90s onward.³⁵⁵ While for a long time theology had been dominated by

³⁵⁰ Politicians are seen as one among many professional groups that form supporting categories of the church (Interview with Elifas Maspaitela).

³⁵¹ Interview with Elifas Maspaitela, Nik Sedubun.

³⁵² Balanced in the sense that they attend Muslim and Christian events. Before the conflict these relationships were less tensely weighted against each other.

³⁵³ For instance, in one of his articles, UKIM theologian Steve Gaspersz even criticizes the concept of GPM as brotherhood church, as this excludes Christians from other ethnicities (Interview with Steve Gaspersz). More generally, UKIM theologians critically look at the conservative, rusted structures and dogmas of the GPM.

³⁵⁴ Interview with Margaretha Hendriks.

³⁵⁵ Although contextual theology was introduced in the '70s in the Moluccas, it was not yet so well developed (Interview with Margaretha Hendriks).

Western thinkers like Karl Barth, Emil Brunner or Herman Bavinck, now Asian and Indonesian writers began to be incorporated in curricula.³⁵⁶ In 1997 the seminar *Injil dan Kebudayaan*, Gospel and Culture, took place in the village *Amahusu*, which many Dutch and Dutch-Moluccan theologians and pastors attended in the context of normalizing bonds between Moluccan churches. The meeting started off with an explosion of conflicting opinions between Dutch and Moluccan perspectives. While the *Moluks Theologisch Beraad* (MTB; Moluccan Theological Deliberation) in the Netherlands was in the process of acknowledging their Christianity as Moluccan people through a reconsideration of the position of the ancestors and the practice of the afore-mentioned *piring natzar*, in *Amahusu* they were accused of reviving the just conquered paganism in the Moluccas: with the *pesan tobat* Moluccan Christians had buried *adat* and their ancestors, thus now professing a pure Christianity.³⁵⁷ However, in one week tension made place for mutual interest and understanding. The participants found each other in the same question of identity: to which extent can one be both fully Moluccan and fully Christian? Open workshops and lectures showed the similarities despite the differences, and the GPM reconsidered the power and pride of Moluccan culture (Patty 2018, 152-158). In retrospect, the seminar is seen as the starting point for a serious Moluccan contextual approach, with cultural sources beginning to play a role in Christian theology. The religious conflict of 1999 intensified this contextual shift: context could no longer be ignored, as it fully presented itself in the form of innumerable violent cruelties. A colonial Calvinist exclusivist theology was not workable in a pluralist Moluccan society where Christians and Muslims live next to each other.³⁵⁸ A contextual theology of harmony based on shared culture was needed more than ever. Therefore, after 2000 changes in education and church were gradually implemented. Courses were adjusted, contextual theology became a separate subject, special services for youth, Christmas or Easter were based on cultural liturgical forms, and UKIM experimented with the application of new knowledge – leading up to the point of the synodal decision in 2018 concerning the ethnic service.³⁵⁹ The development of contextual theology at UKIM now

³⁵⁶ Interview with Agus Batlajery.

³⁵⁷ However, it appeared that despite these statements, many Moluccans still possessed and used the *piring natzar*, and the ancestors were still important in daily life. This showed that the top of the GPM was not aware of what was happening in communities ‘on the ground’ – or did not want to see it.

³⁵⁸ Interview with Agus Batlajery.

³⁵⁹ Interview with Peter Salenusssa.

These changes are represented in topics of theses of students at UKIM. While before 1997 topics mainly dealt with theological perspectives from the West, between 1997 and 2013 an extreme shift took place with students only focusing on Moluccan culture. After 2013 a balance was achieved, addressing the question of how to be Christian as a Moluccan (Interview with Rachel Iwamony).

moves at a quick pace, with continuing possibilities of shaping belief from Moluccan cultural richness.³⁶⁰

The meaning of contextual theology

Moluccan contextual theology was inspired by and developed in response to broader international, especially Asian, theological thinkers who began advocating for a contextual approach.³⁶¹ In the African context Kwame Bediako is an important influencing figure. In his book *Theology and Identity*, he poses the thesis that theological concern is inevitably linked to a process of Christian self-definition.³⁶² Theoretical conclusions are drawn from actual Christian existence, and this means that theology is called to deal always with culturally-rooted questions. Therefore, the historical and cultural background of the work of theologians has to be taken into account (Bediako 1992, Xv).³⁶³ In relation to colonial and missionary history in Africa Bediako formulates two relevant points. The ethnocentrism of the missionary

³⁶⁰ Interview with Verry Patty.

³⁶¹ In his *Essays in Contextual Theology* (2018), Bevans outlines a short history on the development of contextual theology. Already in the first half of the twentieth century missiologists wrote about the need to adapt Christianity to African and Asian cultures. Paul Tillich sketched a method of correlation in which human questions set the agenda of theology. In the early 1960s, 'missionary anthropology' was developed, and efforts for an indigenous theology were started. In the late 1960s, the term 'political theology' was coined, and in Latin America a theology of liberation was articulated. In 1969 James Cone published *A Black Theology of Liberation*, rooted in the civil rights movement and the black power movement in the US. In 1973 Shoki Coe introduced the term contextualization (Catholics tend to use inculturation). After this, black theologies, feminist theologies, queer theologies and many others appeared. Theologies focused on cultural identity also emerged, in which Moluccan theology can be placed (Bevans 2018, 31-33). (Hesselgrave, David J. and Edward Rommen also present a short historical overview on the pages 28-30 of the book *Contextualization: Meanings, Methods, and Models* (1989).)

For more general information about the history and development of contextual theology and how it is embedded in the writings of theologians dealing with mission and World Christianity, see *Classic Texts in Mission & World Christianity* (1995), by Thomas, Norman E. Texts of John Calvin, David Livingstone, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Karl Barth, Friedrich Schleiermacher and David Bosch, for example, as well as summaries of WCC meetings, are interesting to get an idea of the reformed background of the Moluccan church and the influence of international theological developments. The parts on contextualization and inculturation are especially relevant: José Míguez Bonino about indigenization and theology as a stance of commitment; Juan Luis Seguno about orthopraxis; David Bosch about the epistemological break, moving to a theology from below by the people of God, about mission as liberation (Gustavo Gutiérrez is known as the father of liberation theology), and about mission as inculturation with self-theologizing as the central question; Henry Venn about the goal of a genuine native church; Laurenti Magesa about an authentic African Christianity; Charles H. Kraft about the idea that Christians should feel that their church is an original work within their own culture; Aloysius Pieris about the naturalness of inculturation; Kwok Pui-lan about feminist theology in Asia; Hendrik Kraemer about the missionary calling of the laity and about the witness to other faiths; and Majorie Suchocki about pluralism, feminism and dialogue as a search for justice (Thomas 1995).

³⁶² Christian identity emerges as an essential ingredient of the whole process that results in clearly defined theological interests.

³⁶³ Also, for example, of the second-century writers who achieved their early Hellenistic Christian self-definition in a specific cultural framework.

enterprise prevented a sufficient understanding of African religious tradition and led to a theological misapprehension of the nature of the Christian Gospel itself. As a response to both, modern African Theology emerges as a theology of Christian identity (Bediako 1992, Xvii). There is a need to deal with non-Christian heritage to set in better perspective the African religious past. Moreover, African theology needs to pay attention to the church at the grassroots, where Christianity already exists as a historical category in the African experience (Bediako 1992, Xviii).³⁶⁴ Bediako's thoughts have acquired a broad applicability in many other Christian contexts dealing with a history of colonization and missionization, like the Moluccas. Furthermore, the notion that theological questions and identity are closely linked, meaning that theology is always situated in context,³⁶⁵ has proven to be the core premise for the development of contextual theology.

Shoki Coe

In the Asian context an influential name is Shoki Coe, who both through his writings and his presence at Asian theological conferences has left his mark on the movement of contextual theology.³⁶⁶ The Taiwanese Presbyterian Coe is globally acknowledged as the craftsman who supported the liberation of theological articulation from Western doctrine and who reinforced the subjectivity of the people in theological discourse (Joseph et al. 2018, 1).³⁶⁷ Shoki Coe gave a new perspective to the term 'contextualization', emphasizing theology as an incarnational necessity that takes the word of God, its practice, and the context seriously. Theology is not a reiteration of past formulas and doctrines, but an attempt to respond to the living incarnation of the divine (Joseph et al. 2018, 2).³⁶⁸ Moreover, Coe encouraged former colonized people to engage seriously with the process of articulating their encounters with the living reality of God, since they for a long time were mere recipients of a theology of the

³⁶⁴ Some examples of African theologians who developed ideas in relation to this broader framework are: Bolaji Idowu, who argues that the internal monotheism underlying African pre-Christian religious tradition affirms the continuity of God in the African experience from pre-Christian heritage into Christian confession; and John S. Mbiti, who calls for an authentic African appropriation of the Christian Gospel, rooting the unity in the African experience in the unity of the geographical universality of Christ (Bediako 1992, Xv11).

³⁶⁵ Bediako expects that a fuller development of African theology will confirm that the early Christian experience in Graeco-Roman culture and the modern African experience belong to the same story (Bediako 1992, Xviii).

³⁶⁶ Examples of Asian theologies are the pain of God theology (Japan), third eye theology (China), yin yang theology (China and Korea), theology of change (Taiwan), Minjung theology (Korea) and Indian and Sri Lankan theology (Hesselgrave & Rommen 1989, 72).

³⁶⁷ Many theologians around the world consider Shoki Coe as their spiritual father who guided them in their theological journey. An example is Kosuke Koyama, a Japanese theologian who has also been very influential for the development of contextual theology in the Moluccas.

³⁶⁸ Incarnation replaces proposition, which refers to dogmatic language whereby God becomes predictable and unchanging. Incarnation, on the other hand, is an expression of God's freedom; an ongoing process in which the self-disclosing living God encounters the creation in time and space (Joseph et al. 2018, 13).

colonizers, that, in most cases, was constructed to satisfy political and economic ambitions.³⁶⁹ To counter this alienating God-experience of local people, Coe wanted to guide them to be creators of their own theology (Joseph et al. 2018, 3). Coe's theology marveled at the integration between text and context: gospelizing the context and contextualizing the Gospel (Joseph et al. 2018, 6).³⁷⁰ With respect to education, Coe imagined a 'tent' approach as being able to adapt in different places and new locations. He debunked the 'cathedral-mentality' – the idea of one pattern of theology suitable to all people and all times (Joseph et al. 2018, 7-8). Another contribution of Coe was the introduction of the term 'contextualization' at a WCC meeting in 1973, and his differentiation between contextualization and indigenization.³⁷¹ According to Coe, replanting the Gospel in the local soil is not the primary theological task. The plant can namely never become a local plant, while this exactly is the goal of contextualization (Joseph et al. 2018, 9).³⁷² One of the important impacts of Coe's legacy is a transposition from the omnipotent powerful God to the God of love (Joseph et al. 2018, 17). Besides Coe, the Indian M. M. Thomas is another proponent of Asian contextual theology. His two monographs in which he develops an Indian indigenous theology aim at a more inclusivist Christianity. He advocates openness to other religions and ecumenical discussion (Hesselgrave & Rommen 1989, 73-76). The Japanese Kosuke Koyama, greatly inspired by Shoki Coe, is a widely-read theologian who is famous for his Waterbuffalo theology. He approaches theology as locating the living seed of faith in what has been received – guarding, watering and nurturing it as faith roots itself in the native soil (Hesselgrave & Rommen 1989, 79-80). In general, Asian contextual theologies are characterized by a response to the immense cultural diversity of the continent and by a mixture of Asian religious concerns and Western influences (Hesselgrave & Rommen 1989, 85).

Stephen Bevans

Apart from Third-World theologians who inspired Moluccan contextual theologians, Western theologians also contributed to the contextual approach. At UKIM the work of the Catholic American theologian Stephen Bevans has an important place in the curriculum. His book

³⁶⁹ This theology, by extension, justified colonialism as part of God's providence (Joseph et al. 2018, 3).

³⁷⁰ The struggle between these is the root of political involvement.

³⁷¹ Indigenization refers to the process of adapting to the conditions or practices of a particular land, environment or people. Roman Catholic scholars use the term inculturation. Indigenization assumes that the Gospel and Christian theology are the same in all cultures. Deviations from orthodoxy are judged to be heretical (Thomas 1995, 169).

³⁷² Coe also makes a distinction between contextuality and contextualization. Contextuality refers to the discernment of the significance of the context, and contextualization refers to the discernment of signs of incarnation (Joseph et al. 2018, 10).

Models of Contextual Theology is a foundational, accessible source for students learning about contextual practice.³⁷³ Bevans argues contextual theology is an imperative, because cultural differences are so intrinsic to human nature as to make a mockery of any attempt at articulating a single ‘universal’ theology. Doing theology contextually thus is not an option, nor should it only interest people from the Third World; it is part of the very nature of theology itself. Bevans defines contextual theology as a way of doing theology in which one takes into account the spirit and message of the Gospel, the tradition of the Christian people, the culture in which one is theologizing, and social change in that culture.³⁷⁴ It is the attempt to understand Christian faith in terms of a particular context (Bevans 1992, 1). According to Bevans, a contextual approach to theology breaks with traditional theology – which is interestingly used as a synonym for ‘classical’ theology, referring to theology as an objective science of faith, whereby scripture and tradition are the two theological sources which content will never change – while at the same time being in continuity with it (Bevans 1992, 1).³⁷⁵ Tradition must be distinguished from traditionalism, when the past is preserved for the sake of the past. Tradition requires “an attitude of both dependence and independence, because tradition need to be upheld and innovated upon at the same time” (Bevans 2018, 73).³⁷⁶ Next to scripture and tradition, in contextual theology human experience – culture, history, contemporary thought forms – is an additional valid source. Theology is understood as subjective instead of objective, pointing to the fact that the culturally and historically bounded human society is the source of reality, not a supposed value-free objectivity already out there: “Reality is mediated by a meaning we give in the context of our cultural or our historical period, interpreted from our own particular horizon” (Bevans 1992, 2). With contextual theology one no longer speaks of culture and world events to which theology is applied; culture and world events become the very sources of the theological enterprise (Bevans 1992, 11). Bevans points to internal and external factors that demonstrate why theology must be contextual. An external factor is the growing dissatisfaction with theology as an unchanging, finished philosophy (now challenged in the name of relevance) because these traditional

³⁷³ In the 1960s, when Bevans prepared an Advent liturgy around the theme of the sun, an Indian participant appeared to be not very impressed, since the sun in India is seen as the enemy. For Bevans this was his “first encounter with the fact that some of our predominantly western and northern liturgical and theological images are meaningless in other cultural contexts” (Bevans 1992, xiii).

³⁷⁴ Brought about by for example technological process or the grassroots’ struggle for equality, justice and liberation (Bevans 1992, 1).

³⁷⁵ The continuity consists of the fact that every theology has been rooted in a particular context in some way, which is why theology only makes sense at a certain place in a certain time (Bevans 1992, 2-3).

³⁷⁶ Contextual theology loves, is inspired by, struggles with, and ultimately reverences tradition in creative fidelity (Bevans 2018, 73).

approaches do not make universal sense. Moreover, classical theology is oppressive in nature which is why there have been movements to make theology and church practice more consonant with what is good in various cultures and more critical of what is destructive in them, something which can clearly be recognized in Moluccan theology. Furthermore, the growing identity of local churches is contributing to the necessity of the development of contextual theologies. While colonization fostered a feeling among the colonized that anything good originated in the colonizing country, with everything in the colony only being an imitation of the real ‘thing’, the end of colonialism revealed the fact that this colonial mentality did not necessarily convey the whole truth, creating space for theological expression on one’s own terms (Bevans 1992, 5-7).³⁷⁷ The internal factors are dynamics within Christianity itself. The first is the incarnational nature of Christianity, which makes the divine particular. The second is the sacramental nature of reality, which means that God is revealed in concrete reality (Bevans 1992, 7-9). Contextual theology also changes the idea of the religious expert doing theology. The real theologians are ordinary people who are the subjects of their culture and should therefore have a prominent place in understanding Christian faith in their own context. The professional theologians work in dialogue to this, articulating, deepening and broadening people’s faith expression (Bevans 1992, 13): “Theology is an ongoing process. It is the habitus of praying Christians, of reflective ministers, and believing communities” (Bevans 2018, 35). An important issue remains the criteria of orthodoxy. How does contextual theology relate to a cross-cultural world religion? This question originates from the fear of syncretism, when contextualization would betray the Gospel message it tries to make relevant (Bevans 2018, 48).³⁷⁸ While theology namely is plural, it is not relativistic: “It is not enough to be sincere or religious. Theologies need to be true” (Bevans 2018, 49). The criteria come down to credibility and appropriateness. Theological expression needs to make sense in a particular context, and it must match in some way the original or ongoing experience of the Christian community (Bevans 2018, 49).³⁷⁹ These criteria show that

³⁷⁷ Underlying these factors is an empirical notion of culture; “Theology (...) is the way religion makes sense within a particular culture” (Bevans 1992, 7).

³⁷⁸ Hesselgrave and Rommen (1989, 1) express this fear in the following way: a potential hazard is the syncretistic inclusion of elements from the receptor culture which would alter or eliminate aspects of the message upon which the integrity of the Gospel depends.

³⁷⁹ However, the perfect way to achieve this goal is unknown. Moreover, judgement about the results can change through time. What in a certain period seemed right seems in another period wrong (Bevans 2018, 50). Bevans (1992, 17-19) names several other possible criteria. Firstly, anything running in contradictory direction than the basic proposal ‘God is Love’ cannot be an appropriate Christian theological expression. Secondly, orthopraxis is a guideline for theology that does not lead to actions that are clearly un-Christian. Orthodoxy is important, but does not have much meaning by itself. It must be adequate to context. Contextual theology emphasizes that experience is the ultimate norm for the adequacy of a contextual theological expression

contextual theology does not function along the lines of ‘anything goes’, and is a controlled, rule-governed practice.³⁸⁰ Bevans also articulates several dangers involved in doing contextual theology. It can easily lead to cultural romanticism, not basing theology on contemporary culture but on an unchanging fossil culture. Since cultures are always in flux, real contextualization is only achieved when theology does not deal with a culture that no longer exists. Moreover, too much emphasis on cultural identity can lead to conflict with so-called popular religiosity. For instance, practices brought by the colonizers enter into the fabric of local life and should therefore be taken seriously, although a purification of damaging dimensions often is necessary (Bevans 1992, 20-21). These dangers will prove to be important when analyzing Moluccan theology.³⁸¹ Lastly, in his book Bevans develops five models of contextual theology that can be ‘measured’ on the basis of their closeness to the Bible or to culture: the translation model, the synthetic model, the praxis model, the

(Bevans 2018, 36, 39). Thirdly, proper reception is a criterion of acceptance. Inner consistency and the ability to translate theology into worship are two other criteria, as well as the openness to criticism and dialogue, and the strength of a theology to challenge other theologies. In his essays, Bevans (2018, 57) even adds some other criteria. The criterion of community: the more a theology comes out of a community, the better chance it has of being on the mark; criterion of robustness: if a theological expression is robust enough, it can inspire all kinds of other theologies and practices; criterion of intelligibility: it should be able to explain the meaning of a doctrine in words that the average believer can understand; criterion of harmony: theological expression has to be in harmony with tradition.

³⁸⁰ However, there is no single criterion for certainty in contextual theology. This means that a constant dialogue of contextual theologians with one another (both within and outside their context), of contextual theologians with the believing community, and of contextual theologians with the sources of scripture and Christian tradition is necessary (Bevans 2018, 40).

³⁸¹ Like Coe, Bevans prefers the term contextualization over indigenization, while adding inculturation. Inculturation refers to a process which combines the theological principle of incarnation with the social-science concept of acculturation (Thomas 1995, 206-207). Contextualization is broader than the cultural dimension of human experience, and although including everything implied in the two older terms, it also deals with realities of contemporary secularity, technology and injustice, as well as social, economic and political questions. Contextualization is more open, flexible and critical (Bevans 1992, 21-22). Contextualization thus is holistic. It includes all aspects of the human context and relations between cultures and social groups, it is more global and dynamic, and it is applicable to all cultures, accepting the reality of socio-cultural change (Thomas 1995, 170).

transcendental model and the anthropological model.³⁸² This scheme in a way relates to the differences in degrees of and opinions on contextualization among UKIM theologians.³⁸³

Contextual theology at UKIM

The above discussed African, Asian and Western theologians influenced the contextual theological movement. Their ideas are clearly reflected in the contextual approach at UKIM and the conceptualizations of contextualization among Moluccan theologians. It thus appears that a paradoxical dynamic characterizes the practice of contextual theology: overarching international organizations and theological movements support the focus on local identity that forms the core of contextualization. While specific contextual theologies are defined by specific local contexts, the idea of contextualization itself is anything but local. In essence the beginning of the contextual process therefore is a global-local relation. In line with Bediako,

³⁸² 1) The translation model is the most commonly employed. It refers to translating the Christian message into ever-changing and always particular contexts. However, the message of the Gospel is seen as an unchanging message. Culture is the vehicle for this essential, unchanging deposit of truth (Bevans 1992, 30-31).

2) The anthropological model is located on the opposite side of the spectrum. While the primary concern of the translation model is to preserve Christian identity whilst taking culture, social change and history seriously, the primary concern of the anthropological model is to preserve the cultural identity of a Christian person. In this model, Christianity is about the human person and his or her fulfillment (Bevans 1992, 47).

3) The praxis model focuses on the identity of Christians within a culture as that culture is understood in terms of social change. It is most often identified with what has become known as liberation theology (Bevans 1992, 63).

4) The synthetic model tries to balance the insights of the former three models and reaches out to other cultures and ways of thinking. The model is located in the middle of the continuum between culture and Bible. The model is both/and (Bevans 1992, 81).

5) The transcendental model is based on the key insight that one cannot understand some things without a complete change of mind. The model proposes that the task of constructing a contextualized theology is not about producing a particular body of texts, but about attending to the affective and cognitive operations in the self-transcending subject (Bevans 1992, 97).

³⁸³ Contextual theology engages in conversation with many disciplines outside theology. Especially the social sciences such as cultural anthropology and sociology are valuable conversation partners in studying context. At UKIM this becomes very clear, as social research methods are taught, and as many theologians are also educated in other disciplines and work from these approaches too.

On the basis of the writings of Peter Phan, already mentioned in the introduction, in one of his essays Bevans situates contextual theology in the field of World Christianity. He develops four models: the contextual theology model, neglected themes model, global perspective model, and comparative theology model. The first has already been explained. It refers to a focus on a particular context – a personal or social experience, social location, a culture or social change – and this focus is put in a mutually critical dialogue with the Christian scriptures and the Christian tradition. The second is about doing theology out of a particular theme that has been heretofore neglected in mainstream theologizing, and yet is a vital one in the wider world, particularly among the peoples from the Global South. The third develops a broader dialogue between traditional approaches and various approaches that have emerged in more subaltern places and among subaltern groups. The idea is to construct systematic theologies in ways that use perspectives, sources, and theologians from the entire Christian world. The last puts a particular contextual theology in dialogue with another contextual theology (Bevans 2018, 67-76).

UKIM theologians state that essentially every theology is a contextual theology.³⁸⁴ This means that theology is a response to dynamics and changes happening in society.³⁸⁵ Contextual theology is expressing faith in relation with the social, cultural, economic, and political context.³⁸⁶ It is about theologizing from one's own culture and lived experiences. Contextual theology helps Moluccans as Christians to know Christ today: "Contextual theology opens our minds, our eyes, our hearts, to connect with our context, our culture, our daily life."³⁸⁷ However, it does not mean throwing out everything that came from the West through the forces of colonialism. As Chris Tamaela explains, Moluccan Christians also have to keep using Western liturgies, ways of worship, and music, because it is part of the heritage on which Moluccan theology is built. It involves a process of double contextualization through placing the message of the Gospel in the Moluccan context, as well as enriching the continuation of what one had before.³⁸⁸ Referring to Bevans, at UKIM God's incarnation in Jesus Christ forms the theological basis and justification for contextualization.³⁸⁹ The value and importance of contextual theology lies in the aim for closeness between the experience of believing and the experience of Moluccanness. Cultural forms, local language and traditional music are linked to the heart, which is why it is effective to use them in worship to touch the congregants.³⁹⁰ Pastor John Beay explained how by clarifying culture in worship as part of the expression of Christian faith one prevents people from becoming strangers inside their own religion. It is important to learn and encounter the Gospel by means of culture.³⁹¹ Theologian John Titalley uses the conversion experience of Paul as a starting point. Instead of seeing Paul's letter as the word of God, it is about the own personal experience with Christ:

People in every part of the world have any kind of supernatural experience. (...) And because of that, my question is, can I as an Indonesian have my own experience with God? Why not? (...) What we have in the Bible, is that we are reading how people in

³⁸⁴ So, also classical theology, which in fact is Western theology that for a very long time was regarded as universal theology. In the case of the Moluccas, this classical theology was the colonial theology of the Calvinist Dutch, which rather than context-free fitted the Dutch context.

³⁸⁵ Interview with Hery Siahay.

³⁸⁶ Interview with Steve Gaspersz.

³⁸⁷ Interview with Chris Tamaela.

³⁸⁸ Interview with Chris Tamaela.

³⁸⁹ Interview with Chris Tamaela.

³⁹⁰ Interview with Jeffrey Leatimia.

³⁹¹ Interview with John F. Beay.

that time are having their divine experience with God. To be contextual means, can we have our own divine and defined experienced with God?³⁹²

In contextual theology the Bible is no longer the sole reference. It is about God working within people's experience. Moreover, as the comments of Margaretha Hendriks in the vignette at the beginning of this chapter already alluded to, contextual theology is not only done by religious experts and does not only consist of texts – points that Bevans also makes. Theology is an attitude of faith towards reality which means that teachers, pastors, church members – practically any Christian – can theologize according to his or her context.³⁹³ Contextual theology is a natural process of reflecting on one's own faith and life. This basic principle, the ability to see God in context, is present in all people.³⁹⁴ In the academy theologians merely formulate what people have already done.³⁹⁵ Nevertheless, UKIM theologians have the ambition to change specific mentalities and practices among Moluccan Christians in the form of the spiral that Margaretha Hendriks described. Transforming theologies on the basis of lived realities and practices in the Moluccan context, the ambition of contextual theology in turn is changing the way people theologize God. The 'old' way is connected to a strict, legalistic, moralistic and exclusivist religious worldview. In consonance with Coe, Moluccan theology wants to move from the image of a punishing, vengeful God to a loving God; in consonance with Thomas it wants to move from an exclusivistic to an inclusivistic Christianity; and in consonance with Bevans from a singular context to a plural intercontext. Pluralism namely is inherently present in contextual theology: "Contextual theology serves pluralism. It points to the fact that there is never one way to understand the Gospel or to practice Christianity. It points to the fact as well that Christian theology can learn from the best in any particular context – any experience, any culture, any social location, any movement in history, any religious system" (Bevans 2018, 35). UKIM theologians take as the starting point the differences of responding to God in different places and times. They do not start from point zero, but learn from others in order to construct their own theology.³⁹⁶ In this dialogue, ideas, terms and practices are translated and adapted to the Moluccan Protestant context, a process that in itself has the goal to empower people by doing theology.³⁹⁷

³⁹² Interview with John Titaley.

³⁹³ Interview with Cornelis Adolf Alyona.

³⁹⁴ Interview with Nik Sedubun.

³⁹⁵ Interview with Nancy Souisa.

³⁹⁶ Interview with Margaretha Hendriks.

³⁹⁷ Interview with Nancy Souisa.

Modernity and nationalism

Theological thoughts and utterances – the lexicon – are embedded in and shaped by international and political relations, organizational, doctrinal and liturgical GPM structures, Moluccan culture and church culture, a history of colonialism and a present of nationalism, modernity and postcolonialism. Together these contexts produce the grammar behind the discourse on contextual theology. The selection, production, construction and transformation of Moluccan cultural forms on the basis of the concepts of Moluccan traditions and identity are situated within these parameters of the process of contextual theology.

UKIM is the main context in the Moluccas for the development of contextual theology. This institution where contextualization is practiced is embedded in a national framework. The history and present of this framework brings in questions of modernity, postcolonialism, nationalism and globalization.³⁹⁸ These contextual realities are intricately entangled, both infusing and unsettling possibilities and limitations in the contextual process. Situated in these contexts of past and presents, Moluccan contextual theology is located in the ambiguous nexus of place-based contextuality and imaginative processes of selection and construction of tradition and ethnic identity. It continues to work with terms that for a long time have been maligned and defined under the practices of governmentality of the colonial powers and the nationalist state. The key terms worked with in the contextual approach (such as ‘tradition’, ‘culture’, ‘religion’ and ‘ancestors’) therefore are not neutral but political terms that are situated in various specific historical and contemporary discourses. It is important to

³⁹⁸ These questions are extensively discussed in a vast body of literature on the relations between religion and nationalism, religion and (post)colonialism and religion and modernity. For example, Van der Veer (2002, 2015) states that especially when studying religious practices in South Asia, an understanding of the colonial histories as well as regimes of globalization that are formative for the postcolonial nation-state is required (Van der Veer 2002, 184), since in turn nationalism in important ways shapes religion in modern times (Van der Veer 2015, 7). In post-independent Indonesia, the New Order regime combined nationalism with a development policy modeled after Western modernity. Concerning religion, in the Moluccan context Calvinist colonial discourse conceptualized religion in Western terms, devaluing indigenous beliefs and traditions to paganism and backwardness. After independence these conceptions have continued exerting influence on religious discourse and reality; Chakrabarty (2005) writes how New Order nationalism was supported by a pedagogical style of politics that reenacted hierarchies between nations, classes, or leaders and the masses, with those lower down having to learn from those higher up (Chakrabarty 2005, 46); Appadurai (1996, 1) characterizes today’s world as ‘modernity at large’, moving beyond traditional oppositions between culture and power, tradition and modernity, and global and local. In Indonesia, regimes of developmental modernization made place for a revival of diversity, “which allows modernity to be rewritten more as vernacular globalization and less as a concession to large-scale national and international policies” (Appadurai 1996, 10). Moluccan theologians mobilize cultural material to construct ethnic group identity, in line with current political foci and in communication with international events, ideas and practices, forming Moluccan tradition and modernity in their own way. Moluccan contextual theology is a postcolonial response to religious and political colonial legacies, which presence in the present cannot be ignored.

realize that these terms carry this history on which theological futures are built. Itself being a modern, international phenomenon, contextual theology in the Moluccas responds to the colonial Calvinist roots and the national ideology of ‘Unity in Diversity’. Both moving along with and critiquing political regimes, Moluccan culture, Christian tradition, global developments, ideas and images, cultural differences and ethnic symbols together form the sources for the contexts that construct a Moluccan identity which stands at the basis of Moluccan theology. The selection of these various items are cast as localized – yet global – contexts or forms of heritage, and are set apart, adapted and incorporated in theological development. Situated in a postcolonial, globalized era, Moluccan contextual theology collects relevant resources, and transforms them into an authentic and real ethnic group identity that tunes in with a broader revived focus on the local.³⁹⁹ In the process a Moluccan ‘modern’ and a Moluccan ‘traditional’ are created.

Conclusion

The main context for the development of Moluccan contextual theology is UKIM. The history of this institute, its educational goals, the theologians with their specific focus, the organizational relations with the GPM – including doctrinal, liturgical and authoritative structures – and the embeddedness in layers of political regimes all shape the context in which UKIM exists. The contextual theology that is practiced here is in turn situated within certain rules or parameters that structure the reality in which contextual theology is afforded to operate. In other words, these contexts form the grammar for the discourse on contextual theology. A characterization of the grammar is indispensable for an understanding of the content of this discourse, the lexicon. This lexicon thus functions within grammatical rules – the historical and contemporary contexts that politicize the terms that contextual theology makes use of. Indigenous and Christian religion, traditions, culture and identity, church culture and religiosity, and colonial and religious history together comprise this grammatical context that discursively and practically both structures and constitutes the content of contextual theological practice. This practice takes place in a modern, national, globalized and postcolonial reality through a process of dialogue, selection, transformation and production of Moluccan cultural forms that construct the core of Moluccan identity that shapes the basis of

³⁹⁹ However, despite the constructive nature of Moluccan theology, one should not forget that ethnicity and cultural identity are no less real in a modern world, and that globalization does not result in an ultimate form of placelessness (Chakrabarty 2005, 62).

Moluccan theology. This context of context is necessary to grasp the content and meaning of Moluccan contextual theology. Besides tradition and scripture, the living context is a fundamental theological source. The Bible is reconceptualized as a historical document, and theology as practice is done by more people than religious experts only. It became clear how in a paradoxical global-local direction, the focus on local identity as the core of contextualization is an internationally supported idea.

Figures – Chapter 3



Figure 21 - Mural paintings in a Christian neighborhood in Ambon (photo by author)

Figure 22 - Campus of UKIM (photo by author)



Figure 23 - View from the campus of UKIM (photo by author)

The cold breeze blowing from the air-conditioning cools down my body in an unnatural way. After months of living in a tropical climate, I strangely forgot the sensation of chilliness. I feel the wind from the machine touching my nose, arms and ankles, turning the spacious office into a parallel atmosphere without sweat and humidity.

Across the long table on which lengthy sides we both occupy a seat, I look at the fierce face of Steve Gaspersz, theologian at UKIM and GPM pastor. Leaning forward to carefully listen to my questions, and relaxed leaning backward in his chair while talking, he sits up when the weight of a matter that is dear to him needs emphasizing. In a serious tone, in effortless English and in complete openness, Steve describes his view on contextual theology.

We need to find the basic faith in our culture. We need to recognize and acknowledge that our faith is not a strange faith. Our faith is basically based on our cultural expressions and identity. Let people talk about themselves, their culture! Do not determine what we think is true for the people. Just listen to their stories, their narrative. By this, we can understand their living experience, their suffering, their history. So in that way I think that theology for me is the continuous task to find the meaning of life in relation with God, human beings and the living environment. That's is my understanding. My belief is not a final belief. I think our theology or our faith is challenged by our changing context.

Not only his words, however also his attitude is provoking and stimulates reflection. A certain proudness, a certain courage, a certain untouchability radiates from his being.

How as a Moluccan, Indonesian Christian to contextualize? How to face the new challenging context in postcolonial Indonesia, in modern society inside the paradigm of our government, and in post-conflict Maluku? I found that to understand contextual theology I need interdisciplinary knowledge. I am the first pastor that uses the word Mena-Muria. Did you know? This is a very dangerous word that is like a war yell. It means readiness. I use this idiom as the spirit of reform, to replace syalom. Because we belong to the reformed church, so that is the spirit of reformation! I want to revitalize Christian theology. And this is not merely about my intellectual exercise, but this is my calling to give something, intellectually and theologically, to my church. I hope to introduce a new way to build the contextual theology of Maluku. I think that is my dream.

It is remarkable how other people's dreams communicate via character, personal investment and perseverance. After two hours, impressed by the academic environment I am part of here, I stretch my stiff legs and walk into the warming sun.

4-Moluccan Contextualization: Material Theology

The danger of the word *Mena-Muria* lies in its association with the RMS, the movement that fights for an independent South-Moluccan republic.⁴⁰⁰ Although Steve belongs to a generation that grew up with a nationalist discourse, the RMS continues to be a highly sensitive political topic, even more so since separatist desires still exist in the Moluccas and especially among the Moluccan diaspora in the Netherlands.⁴⁰¹ For Steve the term is a small start from which Moluccan Christians can explore their cultural heritage to find their religious-cultural identity. In practice Steve uses *syalom* and *Mena-Muria* at the same time, giving meaning to his intention so that people understand the idea. Steve is a theologian and religious studies scholar who teaches contextual theology. Not all Moluccan pastors, church members, GPM officials and other UKIM theologians agree with his reformist perspectives and approach. Steve's ideas, methods and ambitions show the progressivity present at UKIM. However, contestations and a multiplicity of opinions also show that the content, process and implementation of Moluccan contextual theology is not a unilateral endeavor. This chapter discloses the multi-layered process of contextual theology practiced at UKIM. Moluccan cultural contexts which form the substantive sources are depicted, as well as the relation between ideas and practices. Traditional church music is one particular theme within Moluccan contextual theology as a whole, which will be addressed in the next chapter.

The process of contextual theology

The sources for Moluccan contextualization are culture, identity and local wisdom, aimed at feeling the faith through the Moluccan traditional. However, this process involves a critical attitude towards traditions and customs, selecting good aspects and developing new meanings in a contemporary context.⁴⁰² In the dialectic between religion and *adat*,⁴⁰³ something new originates. Values from *adat* and Christianity are brought together, and in this process

⁴⁰⁰ In traditional society, the group that went on a headhunting expedition under the guidance of the *kapitan* was called *muli mena*, which means 'behind me, in front of me'. In reverse order *Mena-Muria* became a battle cry (Bartels 1994, 40).

⁴⁰¹ On the 25th of April, the birthday of the declaration of the RMS, processions, gatherings and demonstrations take place each year. In many communities or villages the blue-white-green vertically striped flag with the large red block on the right is raised. While in the Moluccas this is often accompanied by the presence of the army and police violence, in the Netherlands events are organized that need to follow specific protocols.

⁴⁰² Interview with Branckly Egbert Picanussa.

⁴⁰³ *Adat* is used as a synonym for Moluccan cultural traditions and customs.

scripture and social-cultural context (including contemporary culture) are taken into account. For instance, *sopi* is a popular traditional alcoholic drink that is prohibited by the church and government because it causes drunkenness and problems. However, seen from *adat*, *sopi* is an instrument of mediation; a symbol of union and peace. Through a transformation of this traditional practice in reference to Christian religion, the positive idea and value behind *sopi* can be used in theology.⁴⁰⁴ Another example is the interaction between modernity and tradition. From a modern, feminist perspective, the *harga kawin*, the bride price that the family of the groom has to pay before a man can marry a woman (Bartels 1994, 96), is seen as an instrument of oppression since the payment allows bad treatment, and as a financial burden on the community since the required expenses result in debts.⁴⁰⁵ Nevertheless, it also is necessary to understand the rationale behind the practice from its own context. Only in this interaction a contextual theological position can be achieved.⁴⁰⁶ In the mixture of modernity and tradition, modern culture becomes Moluccan culture while specific sets of traditional culture are preserved.⁴⁰⁷ As contextualization can essentially not be based on cultures that no longer exist (like Bevens stated), Moluccan theology gets inspiration from traditional communities currently adhering to *adat* rules and practices.⁴⁰⁸ While the theology thus refers to living realities, the recognized rare – yet positive – traditions form the reason for the ambition of preservation and revival through theological contextualization. The selection process is based on a specific direction of adaptation and transformation: *adat* values have to be compatible with Christian values, so that the *adat* practice can be incorporated into Moluccan Christianity.⁴⁰⁹ UKIM theologians adopt a critical attitude to judge the good and destructive aspects inside traditional culture. Positive things can be used, negative things have to be removed or transformed: “we have traditional culture, and it is part of our make-up, but some of it is good, and some of it is bad”.⁴¹⁰ The ‘criterion of orthodoxy’ thus is the accordance with Christian values. Cultural values such as helping each other, sharing, love and brotherhood are values which are also taught by the church. Therefore, they can support and strengthen the church teachings. In this way, there exists a reciprocal relationship between

⁴⁰⁴ Interview with Peter Salenusca.

⁴⁰⁵ As a contextual solution, some congregations replaced money with a Bible as a symbol that carries the traditional value, but practically and financially is more simple (Interview with Nancy Souisa).

⁴⁰⁶ Interview with Nancy Souisa.

It points to what Bevens meant with tradition both needing to be upheld and innovated upon.

⁴⁰⁷ Interview with John F. Beay.

⁴⁰⁸ Interview with Agus Batlajery.

⁴⁰⁹ Interview with Jance Rumahuru.

⁴¹⁰ Interview with Margaretha Hendriks.

Again, the discernment of good and bad aspects can be recognized in the approach of Bevens as well.

Christianity and Moluccan culture.⁴¹¹ In the opposite direction, cultural aspects that reject values in the church and Bible cannot be accepted. Moreover, some aspects are no longer relevant in current times and must be renewed:⁴¹² – “There definitely needs to be a strong filter, in order that not all things from culture end up in the service.”⁴¹³ In essence the process of contextualization comes down to the following:

A lot of culture and local wisdom is in accordance with the values of the Gospel. This we have to keep and preserve so that our culture permanently lives. Sometimes there are also things which do not go together with our religion. These we have to remove. Now we have to land Christianity in our soil, in our hearts, in order that Christian religion becomes our religion.⁴¹⁴

In this quote the most prevalent terms in the discourse on contextualizing Moluccan culture are summarized: Gospel and *adat*; in accordance with; and preserving or removing. It shows how contextualization works according to a specific rule-governed process, to control the selection of sources and the production of the results. In this way unrestrained contextualization is prevented which can lead to dreaded syncretism and heresy. The issue of control is often waved away by pastors in particular, when they are asked which cultural aspects cannot be used in contextual theology. Repeating the standard phrase ‘in accordance with context’, many state that everything from culture is eligible.⁴¹⁵ Theologians, more directly involved in the outset of this process, emphasize the controlled way in which cultural sources are transformed, although differences arise among each other on the question of boundaries which determine the sources that are qualified for transformation.

Positive and negative aspects

Several examples of negative and positive cultural aspects illustrate the thinking process behind contextualization. The bottom line for aspects that cannot enter the church are traditional practices associated with other transcendental powers than God.⁴¹⁶ For instance,

⁴¹¹ Interview with Omy & Jeane.

Anything that can become a power for Moluccan religion can be used (Interview with Jan Z. Matatula).

⁴¹² For instance, over time it became common practice to spend enormous amounts of money on the celebration of religious ceremonies, such as the party after baptism. The church, promoting modesty, now regards this as squander and thinks it does not fit Christian values (Interview with Hery Siahay).

⁴¹³ Interview with Hery Siahay. Translation by author.

⁴¹⁴ Interview with Anonymous, 6-12-2019, Saparua. Translation by author.

⁴¹⁵ Perhaps this also has to do with the relative novelty of the practice. While Christianity has become part of *adat*, for example in the form of praying before an *adat* ceremony starts, *adat* for a long time had absolutely no functional place in church. Theologians are currently in the process of changing this (Interview with Peter Salenus).

⁴¹⁶ Interview with Nik Sedubun.

spells that invoke the ancestors with the ritualistic purpose of killing an enemy are absolutely banned from church.⁴¹⁷ While there is still a place in culture for the ancestors, Moluccan Christians only believe in God.⁴¹⁸ Moreover, traditions associated with discrimination, inequality between men and women,⁴¹⁹ drunkenness, and violence or murder are regarded as negative:⁴²⁰ “These are no good. You have to throw it away, far!”⁴²¹ Aspects that contain a positive meaning are *masohi*, *makan patitia*, *sasi* and *pela* – values connected to helping each other, sharing happiness and pain, living together, and love; values that bridge differences between people.⁴²² Interestingly, many Moluccan Christians emphasize the idea that the ancestors taught these good cultural values to them, while this is not the case with the negative aspects:⁴²³ “the ancestors already did things like this. So this is good for us to continue, because the basis is also present inside the Bible. We have to continue it in our life and in the church service.”⁴²⁴ Moreover, there also are cultural sources that are currently discussed as to whether they can or cannot be used in church. Contestation originates on the wearing of the *ikat kepala*, the red headband, by pastors in office. Some state that it is not allowed for a pastor who wears the black costume with stole to wear any additional accessory, while others see it as a positive symbol from Moluccan culture.⁴²⁵ In the end, the key point surrounding appropriateness and possibilities for selection and transformation of cultural forms is focused on how such a form can be theologized, hereby becoming a symbol. One needs to be able to explain it in a universal way, as part of Christian faith: “If you cannot explain the use of that symbol, don’t ever try to use it in worship.”⁴²⁶ For example, while the *parang*, the Moluccan machete, and the *cakalele* dance are traditionally associated with war,

⁴¹⁷ Interestingly, one pastor I spoke to used these spells in the music he makes as a musician, while stating that it would be really bad if these words would enter the church. Here a distinction between popular music, public sphere and Christian context is visible (Interview with Morika B. Telelepta).

⁴¹⁸ Interview with Hery Siahay.

⁴¹⁹ For instance, Margaretha Hendriks pointed to the fact that there are not many women who assist the *raja* in a village, which according to her is something negative in culture because it affirms patriarchy (Interview with Margaretha Hendriks).

⁴²⁰ Interview with Agus Batlajery, Jan Z. Matatula, Anonymous (22-12-2019, Ambon), Omy & Jeane.

⁴²¹ Interview with Anonymous, 22-12-2019, Ambon.

⁴²² Interview with Agus Batlajery, Anonymous (9-12-2019, Saparua), John F. Beay.

⁴²³ Interview with Anonymous (9-12-2019, Saparua), Chris Tamaela, Jan Z. Matatula.

It shows how the ancestors are used as an instrument of authentication and authority for the positive aspects, which is not the case for the perceived negative ones as these are not selected.

⁴²⁴ Interview with Jan Z. Matatula.

⁴²⁵ Interview with Anonymous, 9-12-2019, Saparua.

⁴²⁶ An example is a ritual that is part of indigenous religion and which cannot be theologized in any other way (Interview with Elifas Maspaitela).

they can be theologized anew as a welcoming and guarding symbol.⁴²⁷ Furthermore, the *tifa* and *tahuri* can be theologized as instruments to invite God's presence in church, instead of instruments to call the ancestors. Contextualization thus is about substance and customizing.⁴²⁸ The relation between religion and culture that characterizes the process of contextual theology can be compared with what Bartels (1994, 417-418) calls semantic extension and inversion. The first points to loading extra meanings derived from religion onto traditional elements. Because the latter are regarded as useful, however not completely appropriate anymore in the light of contemporary Moluccan Christianity, new insights are added to revalue traditions without losing validity. Aspects viewed as belonging to the core of Moluccan identity are selected or 'saved' and incorporated in Christian religion to preserve and evoke a sense of ethnicity.⁴²⁹ Inversion points to adding Christian practices to *adat* customs to justify these through their reference to Christianity. Both processes entangle Moluccan culture and Christianity with each other.

The Moluccan context

Besides the context where contextual theology is developed – UKIM – and the present and past contexts that together produce the grammatical structure behind the discourse on contextualization, the third and last context is the Moluccan context that is selected as source for the practice of contextual theology. The aim of contextual theology and its practical implementation in church is to build awareness among Moluccan Christians that context cannot be neglected nor refused in relation to Christianity. Context – which is theologically understood in broad terms, meaning culture, 'neighbors' that are living next to Moluccan Christians, the development of technology and communication, changes in politics or economics, et cetera – needs to be appreciated.⁴³⁰ Theologian Agus Batlajery summed up the range of contextual sources quite extensively:

We realize our belief (...) in our real context in the Moluccas. In the Moluccas we have many religions. We also have what we call *agama asli*, indigenous religion. And

⁴²⁷ In the *cakalele* dance for instance, the hard, violent material of the *parang* can be changed into wood to prevent people from becoming scared (Interview with Jan Z. Matatula).

⁴²⁸ Interview with Elifas Maspaitela.

⁴²⁹ Keane (2007, 21-22) sees this process as a changing of semiotic regime, which can turn an object or practice into a different realm of logics and meanings through the very materiality which makes them always open to another unrealized, unspecifiable range of future possibilities.

⁴³⁰ Interview with Agus Batlajery.

then we have Moluccan culture, local wisdom. We are living in this context, so we have to relate our belief by considering this context, by considering our culture, and by considering our other believers who are living with us. So we have to use local wisdoms for strengthening our belief. Because God works in that culture, through our ancestors.⁴³¹

The Moluccan contexts that UKIM theologians refer to as important sources when dealing with contextual theology can roughly be grouped into seven categories. These cultural forms are often referred to as ‘cultural symbols’, which already, semiotically speaking, points to an interference in traditional culture. The source is turned into a symbolic register, transformed to be accommodated in liturgy. The first source is culture, or local wisdom. Cultural institutions like *masohi* or *makan patita* are mentioned most often in this respect,⁴³² emphasizing the collectivity, togetherness and cordiality that are the core values in Moluccan culture. Another example is the so-called *tempat garam*, the place for the salt or salt container. On each Moluccan table stands a *tempat garam*, not in the function of adding salt, but in a philosophical function related to *adat* as a medium to bind the family together.⁴³³ These symbols can be contextualized into liturgy.⁴³⁴ Connected to culture is the source of the ancestors and Moluccan indigenous religion. In fact, the ancestors underlie any cultural form as it is the ancestors who pass down the *adat* rules which determine how to live as a Moluccan. In Moluccan theology the ancestors are contextualized as the patriarch sons, who in the Bible can also be regarded as the Christian ancestors.⁴³⁵ Regarding indigenous religion, language is an important aspect. Since in the *agama suku* one supreme God is worshipped as well, many contextual theologians state that the name of this God can be used to denote the Christian God – *Upu Lanite*. However, dealing with indigenous religion is a precarious business for its dangerous association with ancestral powers, and it is the task of theologians

⁴³¹ Interview with Agus Batlajery.

⁴³² Interview with Agus Batlajery, John F. Beay.

⁴³³ For instance, when people are eating and one is not hungry, he or she sits with them and takes a little bit salt to symbolically eat with the others. Or, when one has to leave while the others are still eating, he/she moves the salt from the plate, and when one is gone the salt is placed back, to symbolize that despite leaving, the person is part of the family (Interview with Peter Salenus).

⁴³⁴ Contextual theology is based on these shared cultural symbols, while on the other hand responding and giving witness to the enormous richness of many local Christianities in the Moluccas (Interview with Peter Salenus).

⁴³⁵ Interview with Nik Sedubun.

to find a way to employ these words safely.⁴³⁶

The third and fourth source are the two most often referred to contexts or issues in contextual theology. Contextual solutions in response to these issues are part of the cultural institutions that comprise Moluccan culture. Pluralism is a reality that is very much visible in Moluccan society. On a national level Christians are a minority among a large Muslim majority and in the Moluccas Christians live next to their Muslim neighbors.⁴³⁷ *Pela* is a local symbol that is used in contextual theology to build interreligious relationships between communities. It teaches how to live together, help each other and appreciate other ways of being. It is an instrument to unite the diverse Moluccan society by not looking at religious difference but by looking at Moluccan cultural sameness.⁴³⁸ Nevertheless, despite the positive value of *basudara*, brotherhood, which needs to be affirmed, theologians also look critically at *pela* as a cultural source for contextualization. The concept of *pela* should be broadened in order to become more inclusive. *Pela* namely only connects two or three villages to each other, based on Moluccan ancestry. People from other villages or non-Moluccans can never become part of it,⁴³⁹ which is therefore seen as a negative aspect that needs to be transformed in facing modern society.⁴⁴⁰ Especially after the religious conflict Moluccan theology made an effort to relate Christianity to other faiths in a different way, seeing other believers “as our partners in moving forward and finding the truth, finding God.”⁴⁴¹ In this respect education is very important in teaching a young generation to destigmatize and deprioritize religious groups.⁴⁴² Because Islam is part of the context Moluccan Christians are living in, some teachers at UKIM are experts in Islamic studies, by which students learn about Muslims and their religion.⁴⁴³ Besides pluralism, a second pressing issue is ecology. Global environmental problems like climate change and plastic waste are effecting the Moluccas. During colonial

⁴³⁶ Therefore, among theologians themselves this is a contested point. While some see no harm in using terms and practices from indigenous religion, for others it is too close to other powers than the power of God. Moreover, in order to implement ideas like these a change in GPM dogma should happen first.

⁴³⁷ “I think the main issue as a Christian in Indonesia is that I have experiences in daily life with Muslims. So how can I understand the Calvinism from a European perspective and how can I bridge the two different contexts – Indonesia with a majority Muslim population and a country like Holland?” (Interview with Steve Gaspersz).

⁴³⁸ Interview with Chris Tamaela, John F. Beay, Nik Sedubun.

For instance, the white fabric that is used in *pela* rituals and that symbolizes brotherhood can be used in church to establish awareness about cross-religious communities (Interview with Peter Salenussa).

⁴³⁹ And in former times could even be regarded as the enemy (Interview with Margaretha Hendriks).

⁴⁴⁰ Interview with Margaretha Hendriks, Jacky Manuputty.

⁴⁴¹ Interview with Margaretha Hendriks.

⁴⁴² Interview with Nancy Souisa.

⁴⁴³ Interview with Agus Batlajery.

times Christianity destroyed local ways and mindsets of dealing with natural regeneration.⁴⁴⁴ To confront this issue, *sasi* is theologically employed as an indigenous symbol that has the power to restore humans' participation in the protection of nature.⁴⁴⁵ For instance, on the Lease islands (especially on Saparua), a 'green' theology has emerged, whereby theologians, politicians and churches collaborate to promote a sustainable society. At the same time, Islamic communities are encouraged to participate as well, hereby combining the ambitions for interreligious community building and sustainability.⁴⁴⁶

The fifth and sixth source relate to modern and political contexts. Moluccan theology has to respond to 'layers of identity', with people being Moluccan, Christian and Indonesian. It is on this interface that differences, positions and similarities between people are negotiated.⁴⁴⁷ Since the independence in 1945, *Maluku* became part of Indonesia in a political, social and economic way. This means that contextual theology has to connect these two identities, the national identity and the primordial Moluccan identity, in a dialectical process.⁴⁴⁸ For theologian John Titaley, the political reality forms the basis for a Moluccan theology based on the Indonesian constitution:

Calvinist doctrine did not emerge out of diversity or plurality. But Indonesian history united Muslims and Christians. So we have to develop our doctrine that is not only limited to Indonesian Christians. My fellow Muslims have also been saved by that God. The constitution allows that. This is the equality provided to Indonesians, regardless of background as Moluccan or Christian. In front of the law every Indonesian is equal. But in front of the Indonesian *tuhan* (lord) everybody also is

⁴⁴⁴ "There is no replacement point to protect the nature. (...) They secularized the nature. And now, globally, we have an environmental problem! Because there is no spirit of the holy one within us inside the nature" (Interview with Jacky Manuputty).

Connected to politics, the Moluccas are facing the big impact of development programs that lead to environmental devastation. For example, transnational companies get licenses to exploit Moluccan natural resources (Interview with Steve Gaspersz).

⁴⁴⁵ Interview with John F. Beay, Margaretha Hendriks.

It demonstrates how teachings of the ancestors about traditions they have practiced a long time before the here and now are relevant in specific contemporary issues such as the climate crisis.

⁴⁴⁶ For example, during meetings one does no longer use plastic bottles but cups, and at Sunday schools children clean things, sell plastic and make something new of it, hereby learning about waste and sustainability (Interview with Verry Patty).

⁴⁴⁷ Interview with Jance Rumahuru.

⁴⁴⁸ Steve Gaspersz illustrated this by describing the time when he was invited to give a presentation for Moluccans in the Netherlands. While he saw himself as a Moluccan, coming from Ambon and with Gaspersz as his family name, the attendees suspected him being an Indonesian New Order agent, talking about national development (and with the history of the RMS this is especially sensitive among Moluccans in the Netherlands). Steve Gaspersz then realized that he carefully needed to negotiate his ethnic and national identity (Interview with Steve Gaspersz).

equal. This is the new theology!

Moreover, while contextual theology draws on traditional Moluccan culture to affirm and preserve its values and strengths to bring Christianity in line with Moluccan identity, contemporary Moluccan Christianity is also situated in a modern context. For example, Moluccans enjoy English music and culture is influenced by globalization, rationalization and development.⁴⁴⁹ Theologians therefore not only focus on Moluccan traditional culture, but also look at ‘glocal’ present-day culture that is relevant in the here and now.⁴⁵⁰ Moluccan theology thus synchronizes layers of identity in a blended, modern society characterized by global forces, an absence of geographical or temporal borders and endless affordances of comparatives from all over the world. This world shapes a complex situation in which Moluccan Christians have to identify themselves as locals while relating to global Christianity.⁴⁵¹

Lastly, in contextual theology the Moluccas are used as specific place to change the Dutch-Calvinist vengeful and punishing God-image. The Moluccas have an abundance of natural resources: “If you need fish, you just go to the sea. God has been very generous! But the God from the Bible is a God from the desert: a warrior God – you have to fight for a living. The understanding of God basically is a reflection of our life within the flora and fauna that we have.”⁴⁵² Hence, Moluccan theology tries to bring this experience of generosity in line with an understanding of a godhead that is generous.

A community of Moluccanness

Based on these contexts, which form the substantive sources of the contextual process, a notion of Moluccanness is symbolically constructed, what Cohen (2013) would call ‘community’. Cohen describes that while a re-assertion of community is made necessary by contemporary circumstances, its symbolic expression refers to a putative past or tradition

⁴⁴⁹ Interview with Nik Sedubun, Anonymous (27-10-2019, Ambon).

⁴⁵⁰ For instance, *pela* as a bridging symbol needs to be broadened to become more inclusive. Music and other arts, used by youth groups to make connections between Christians and Muslims, or basic human needs can become new foundations for *pela*. A good example is the work of the already mentioned poet Rudi Fofid (Interview with Steve Gaspersz).

⁴⁵¹ Interview with Jacky Manuputty.

Although contextual theology attempts to reconnect people with their local culture in interaction with modern society, modernity is on the other hand seen as the major cause for the erosion of traditional values. In that sense, Moluccan theology reacts to the fast changing context in a millennial era, filtering new influences and trying to lift back up, affirm and strengthen ‘old’ cultural values (Interview with Hery Siahay).

⁴⁵² Interview with John Titaley.

which is threatened by politics, modernity or globalization.⁴⁵³ The symbols of the past that are selected have a strong mnemonic competence which triggers emotional response. They are timeless and effective during periods of intensive change (Cohen 2013, 102). The imprecision of these references to the past makes it an apt device “for expressing symbolically the continuity of past and present, and for re-asserting the cultural integrity of the community” (Cohen 2013, 104). One of the reasons for the revival of ethnic communities lies in the implication when the moment arrives that groups feel they have nothing more to lose than their sense of self (Cohen 2013, 104). According to Cohen (2013, 117-118), the renewed affirmation of community, whether local or ethnic,⁴⁵⁴ therefore is not an exception, but part of modern society as one of the modalities of behavior available. In this way people construct community symbolically by investing boundaries with meanings within the community’s social discourse, providing a referent for identity which in turn is expressed and reinforced in social life (Cohen 2013, 118). In the Moluccan context a political history comprising colonial oppression, development programs and a current focus on local particularity, as well as modern influences from global society, the building of contextual theology and the religious conflict of twenty years ago influence the rise of ethnic revivalism. Moluccans feel the need to affirm, preserve and strengthen their Moluccanness since they are the only ones who can protect their own identity (and which in the Christian perception already suffered great losses under the destroying forces of colonialism and development politics).⁴⁵⁵ Moluccan theologians hold on to and revive traditional cultural heritage to build anew an interreligious ethnic community in the light of change instigated by modernity, while at the same time being situated in modernity. Contextual theologians select symbols – the Moluccan contexts – of Moluccan traditions which are open and unspecific enough to trigger emotional memories among an inclusive group of Moluccans. The content of the contextual discourse hereby constructs a sense of Moluccanness which is practically expressed through political and religious implementation.

The new old

The selection of timeless symbols that undergo a transformation in producing an ethnic community under modern circumstances has been described as the invention of tradition (Hobsbawm & Ranger 2012). However, while invention implies a contrived character, the

⁴⁵³ The malleable past is thus used as a resource, as a selective construction which resonates with contemporary circumstances (Cohen 2013, 99).

⁴⁵⁴ Although community largely is a mental construct, locality or ethnicity give it credibility as objective manifestations.

⁴⁵⁵ In this way, cultural or ethnic identity, besides being related to religious identity, also is a political act.

cultural forms that are used as sources are experienced as real, hereby basing theology and Moluccanness on existing and practiced notions of culture and custom. An assemblage of traditional symbols becomes modified and transformed in the process of contextual theology. After all, it is not that ‘the old’ ways are no longer available, but that they are deliberately controlled (Hobsbawm & Ranger 2012, 8). To prevent unrestrained use of cultural forms inside Christianity, specific Moluccan traditions open to Christian theological values are selected and brought in line with liturgy. These symbols become institutionalized in the GPM church and ritualized in the ethnic service. Hobsbawm and Ranger (2012, 10) make a distinction between ‘old’ and ‘invented’ traditional practices. While the former are specific and strongly binding, the latter are vague as to function in the creation of a broad sense of group membership. In the Moluccas, a fairly open ethnic Moluccanness is constructed to accommodate all Moluccan Christians who are embedded in various ‘sub-Moluccan’ contexts. In the process of contextual theology, interestingly, ‘old’ or ‘traditional’ on the one hand refers to pre-modern, pre-colonial Moluccan culture, and on the other hand to Western Calvinist theology brought by the colonizers. Countering the latter while at the same time building on it, contextual theology uses the ‘old’ Moluccan traditional as one of its sources. In the process of selection and transformation that is situated in a modern, nationalist society a ‘new old’ is constructed.

Heritage, culture and the past

Lowenthal (2015, 21) describes the way people “celebrate, expunge, contest and domesticate the past to serve present needs” as a process in which an inherited legacy is manipulated to secure it as heritage. Some aspects of the past are concealed or disapproved, whereas other aspects are amplified and become sanctified as heritage (Lowenthal 2015, 21). In relation to religion, Bakker (2013) analyzes the heritagization of culture and the past.⁴⁵⁶ A careful discerning of which elements of the past can be brought in tune with Christian identity and which elements menace this project is cast along the lines of harmless, non-spiritual culture. The positive elements are encouraged as legitimate sources of ethnic pride and affective attachment. Conversely, any association with traditional spiritual forces that are held to be potentially present is disapproved of (Bakker 2013, 307). Bakker (2013, 307) calls this ‘a project of disenchantment of cultural form’: “the stripping of certain materials made to feature as culture from their potentially sacred entanglements.”⁴⁵⁷ However, a constant danger,

⁴⁵⁶ André Bakker researches the Pataxó Indians in Brazil.

⁴⁵⁷ This project is characterized by the question of giving shape to a cultural canon of distinctive ethnic identity. Specific cultural forms can be made to feature as legitimately Christian insofar as they are found to be devoid

suspicion, hesitancy and watchfulness underlies this process of heritage formation in its blurry edge with sacred matters, because of the ever-present lying-under-the-surface possibility of evoking something else than intended: rather than merely celebrating ethnic identity, cultural engagement can cross the line into the sacred register of ritual invocation of ancestral spirits (Bakker 2013, 317-318, 320, 322-324).⁴⁵⁸ As explained in the introduction, the Moluccan project of contextualization resembles the process of heritage formation. Selected positive aspects become sanctified as heritage – aspects that can be brought in tune with Christian identity along the lines of theology through the correspondence between cultural and religious values. The most fundamental, central point that is located at the heart of theological disagreements and contestations in this process are the spirits of the ancestors. These spirits posit a danger to the necessary innocent and harmless substance of the cultural forms that form the source of ethnic Moluccan identity, because the core criterium of Christian orthodoxy consists of God as the only transcendental powerful entity. Therefore, the boundary for the possibility of theologizing cultural forms associated with the ancestors is debated among Moluccan Christians.

The implementation of contextual theology

Contextual theological ideas developed at UKIM are taught to a new generation of students who will later become pastors. In this way UKIM students are seen as agents of change who will influence the people in the congregations, who will in turn influence GPM policies from bottom-up.⁴⁵⁹ In another direction the theological ideas are implemented in church through policies of the GPM which Sunday schools, church organizations and pastors have to execute and which then influence congregations in a more top-down manner.⁴⁶⁰ Around 2000 the GPM started to base its policy on local wisdom inside Moluccan culture.⁴⁶¹ Increased

of traditional spiritual entanglements. They can even come to be perceived as suitable media for divine Christian presence (Bakker 2013, 314).

⁴⁵⁸ Also, or perhaps especially, through the means of songs.

⁴⁵⁹ Interview with Steve Gaspersz.

⁴⁶⁰ Interview with Agus Batlajery, Margaretha Hendriks.

⁴⁶¹ Some GPM officials even state that the congregations influenced the GPM to adopt a contextual approach and to introduce the ethnic service. The GPM, for example, saw that people greatly enjoyed services in their own local language: “They said, that is our God! God is in us. You say that God in our language so that is our God!” Some people therefore see contextualization as something pure from the ‘ground’. However, while it may be true that enjoyment was recognized which pushed the development further, it should be noted that contextualization as a theological innovation comes from above, not from below. Either way it is a process aimed at congregations who do not receive the contextual shift in a unilinear way. Moreover, the implementation process is not yet fully completed.

plurality in Ambon city, in both religious and ethnic terms, contributed to this change. General secretary Elifas Maspaitela stated: “We want to say to our congregations, whoever you are, if we come together before God we can worship based on our identities.”⁴⁶² In line with this view, the GPM started a partnership with Wycliffe, an international organization which translates Bibles in local languages. Their translated texts are used in Moluccan worship to contextualize liturgy. With respect to the future, the GPM has the ambition to teach the congregations how they themselves can theologize their religion based on culture. So, Moluccan Christians should want to protect the environment, or grow friendships with people regardless of one’s religion, because these are Gods’ words spoken via culture.⁴⁶³ Hence, while culture is now already appreciated as local wisdom in church, an internalization of contextual theology is GPM’s future ambition.⁴⁶⁴ Generally, the central object or place that is identified for the implementation of contextual theology is the church context:⁴⁶⁵ “Contextual theology should be implemented at the grassroots level. Everyone should theologize! Because theology is part of our Christian being. So it should not only be practiced in theological schools, but also by people in the church.”⁴⁶⁶

Once I went to one of the advent services in the central *Maranatha* church where one of the UKIM pastors led the worship. I soon recognized the techniques he applied in his sermon. He started by addressing the congregants in a more personal way, including a variety of attendants (such as children). He alternated between the serious message he wanted to communicate, expressed in a very loud voice and heavy gestures, and daily examples. A clear difference was apparent: the examples were characterized by him leaning forward on the pulpit in a relaxed way, speaking the Ambonese dialect in an easy manner. He made many jokes and the congregants laughed out loud several times.⁴⁶⁷ The stories made the message feel closer, which was about becoming a dynamic church that is liberated from fear and inequality; an active church that moves along with changing times. Another time I attended a sector service just before Christmas. A female pastor began the service by stating that an Indonesian word to open worship with would be better than a Greek or Hebrew term. In her sermon she delivered a message about modesty. She first explained the context in which Jesus

⁴⁶² Interview with Elifas Maspaitela.

⁴⁶³ Although in a certain controlled, constructed and approved way (Interview with Elifas Maspaitela).

⁴⁶⁴ This means that local wisdom will become a way of doing theology whereby values from people’s daily life and experiences are brought to theological themes by people themselves (Interview with Peter Salenus).

⁴⁶⁵ Interview with Agus Batlajery.

⁴⁶⁶ Interview with Margaretha Hendriks.

⁴⁶⁷ For example, he made comparisons with the words people used in the dialogues in his story, and the words Jesus said in the Bible, which all people recognized instantly and found hilarious.

was born in a detailed way, being aware of the fact that this environment is not familiar to many Moluccan people (the specific animals, the crib, et cetera). She pointed out that Jesus had been born in very modest circumstances and transposed this to the Moluccan preparation of Christmas, which generally is quite lavish. While not condemning the way of celebrating, she reminded people to give something to people who have less. Both sermons show how contextualization is achieved by relating messages of the Gospel to daily, relevant experiences in Moluccan society in a nuanced or even humorous way. The formats and materials used also are important here. For instance, traditional dress and local music are elements which can be used to contextualize liturgy.⁴⁶⁸ Some pastors make videos of the subject or people they want to address during their service beforehand, to show a real example to the congregants. One pastor I spoke with sometimes even comes down from the pulpit to have a dialectical discussion with the church members. Moreover, while following the liturgical structure, the forms in which the parts are communicated can change: a commitment of faith can be sung or even only listened to by placing a bare hand on one's chest to hear the rhythm of the heart.⁴⁶⁹

The role of pastors

The examples demonstrate how pastors play a major role in communicating contextualized messages to Moluccan Protestants, teaching them that *adat* is allowed in church and creating awareness about the fact that people are living their religious life in a certain (changing) context which they therefore have to appreciate and constantly adjust to.⁴⁷⁰ While pastors bring contextualized sermons based on their education at UKIM or on GPM policy guidelines, the theology lying behind is in itself based on the culture and daily life of Moluccan Protestants, who at the same time are the object of implementation. In the contextual process, explained in the former paragraphs, cultural values, ways of life and worldviews form the basis for theologizing.⁴⁷¹ Thus, according to theologians, pastors and church officials, by grounding theology in Moluccan worldviews, religious messages are better understood, appreciated and received.⁴⁷² Moreover, as pastors travel around to various congregations within the placement system of the GPM, they acquire broad knowledge about specific

⁴⁶⁸ Interview with Agus Batlajery.

⁴⁶⁹ Interview with Jacky Manuputty.

⁴⁷⁰ Interview with Agus Batlajery.

⁴⁷¹ Anonymous explained how the sea and the island are viewed as the mother and father who created life. From this perspective, the earth became a symbol of collective power (Interview with Anonymous, 9-12-2019, Saparua). Another example is the theology of John Titaley, who sees the Indonesian independence and constitution that provided equality for all reflected in the Gospel, with Jesus fighting against injustice (Interview with John Titaley).

⁴⁷² Interview with Anonymous, 9-12-2019, Saparua.

Moluccan cultures – knowledge they can apply in their sermons.⁴⁷³ However, as the vice-president of the GPM emphasized, it is not intended that pastors impose formal ways of contextualization. Congregants have to be seen as subjects, living in their own contexts and assisted by the church to understand and theologize in their own way.⁴⁷⁴ I would like to argue that this exactly is the space in which contextual theology operates: *adat* is allowed in church, but should not be imposed. However, although the congregants need to become the subjects of their own theology, the way in which they theologize themselves should also not deviate from the controlled process that is based on the positive accordance between *adat* traditions and Christian values. Naturally, the implementation of contextual theology by pastors severely depends on the theology of GPM pastors themselves. While many move along and are effected by the contextual shift – mainly through colleague relations and teacher-student lineages – from the perspective of UKIM a small group from the ‘older generation’ keeps adhering to a Calvinist doctrine that focuses on the Bible rather than context.⁴⁷⁵ Nonetheless, I would like to note that this does not mean that contextualization is a completely new phenomenon that stands in opposition to ‘traditional’ ways of thinking of older pastors. Since missionization, contextualization has been happening automatically in a practical way, for Christianity moved from one place to a different context and has thus been transforming from below ever since. What is new is a contextual theology that is consciously formulated by UKIM and the GPM and implemented in church, mainly in the period after the religious conflict. This contextual theology does not disregard Western theology, nor all aspects from Dutch Calvinism. Rather, it builds on these and looks anew at certain issues through a contextual lens. Moluccan contextual theologians aim at changing specific, for them colonial, Calvinist mentalities and discourses that have to do with particular theological aspects which do not sit comfortably with the Moluccan context: an ahistorical, legalistic, complete focus on the Bible that is seen as the Word of God, a rejection of culture in church, an image of a vengeful Godhead, and, most importantly, a Christianity in exclusive terms, meaning that only Christians hold the absolute truth and will be saved – an idea which is practically unattainable in a pluralistic society and a majority Muslim country. Moluccan theology counters these specific aspects of Dutch Calvinism, that actually in the Dutch context for the larger part belong to the past too but exert influence on the Moluccan presence via colonial legacies. It is in this light that the efforts of UKIM should be placed. As explained before,

⁴⁷³ Interview with Anonymous, 18-12-2019, Ambon.

⁴⁷⁴ In the same light context should not be seen as object, but as subject (Interview with Nik Sedubun).

⁴⁷⁵ Interview with John Titaley.

UKIM offers pastors an educational program aimed at transforming ‘old’ or traditional ways of theologizing, and at upgrading and refreshing theological knowledge. In this program pastors learn how theology is not a black/white, right/wrong question; many theological interpretations can exist next to each other based on people’s life experiences. In a reciprocal way, the program grows in richness exactly because of the inclusion of pastors. They bring real experiences from congregations to class which form sources of contextual knowledge in themselves and add to the educational dialogue.⁴⁷⁶ The reciprocity and dialectics between idea and practice, education and experience, and theology and lived religion are strongly emphasized by UKIM theologians and GPM leaders. In a spiral-like construction, theological knowledge is based on research about contextual real-life sources and in turn aims to influence and transform practices of theologizing in churches and among Moluccan church members.⁴⁷⁷ It is recognized that often religious communities already practice contextualization themselves, unconsciously or naturally:⁴⁷⁸ “Local people who grow up as a Christian and who are not yet influenced by Christian theology already are dealing with contextualization before knowing it, because they have real experiences as Christians.”⁴⁷⁹ In some way, people can even be ‘beyond’ contextual thinking. An example was named about church members in a specific congregation who do not throw the garbage out but keep it in the corner of the room. While theologians first interpreted this taboo practice as part of indigenous, mystic beliefs, it appeared that the practice was a result of people’s own interpretation of the Bible. It demonstrated how local practices are a source for understanding contextual theology by theologians themselves.⁴⁸⁰ This alters the perspective on who religious experts are; people implicitly and explicitly reflect on their lives within a theological frame. Religious practitioners’ actions are informed by their religious intellectual understandings of

⁴⁷⁶ Interview with Margaretha Hendriks, Nancy Souisa.

⁴⁷⁷ An example was mentioned by Margaretha Hendriks about the traditional alcoholic drink *sopi*. In a meeting UKIM organized people told that the prohibition on *sopi* by the government threatened their livelihood. People even drowned in the sea because of hiding from the police. Based on these experiences *sopi* became a theological topic that stirred discussion. It was judged unfair that international companies can sell their alcohol in local Moluccan shops, while Moluccans who earn their living from *sopi* cannot (Interview with Margaretha Hendriks).

⁴⁷⁸ For instance, someone told me that in her place of birth, an area far away from Ambon, the local language had two different words for God: one for a higher, powerful God who could punish humankind, and one for a loving, close God. She compared this with the word ‘God’ and ‘Jesus’ and viewed this as contextualization from the ground.

⁴⁷⁹ Real in the sense of living experiences (Interview with Chris Tamaela).

⁴⁸⁰ Interview with Nancy Souisa.

the world. Moluccan theology is defined by this realization and theologians underline the mutual relation whereby a top-down and bottom-up approach are constantly combined.⁴⁸¹

The contextual spiral

So, Moluccan theology is implemented and put into practice, while practical realities in a changing society also prompt new aspects which one can do theology on.⁴⁸² Moluccan theology is thus characterized by a dialectical spiral and grassroots communication. How people view the direction of the contextual process also depends on one's own opinions, positions, perspectives and critiques within this constellation. People's descriptions reflect the multiple actors, forces and influences which are at work at the same time. Nevertheless, in the theological spiral of implementation which moves along local practices, theological education, GPM policy, *klasis* execution, preaching pastors, organizing groups of *majelis*, and believing congregants, there is one particular core that stirs motion and determines direction: UKIM. Although contextual sources are based on practical realities of local people, the theological ideas that result from these experiences have to be taught and implemented, intended to change attitudes in congregations. Education tools have the purpose of bringing theological perspectives down to earth and UKIM alumni are seen as the subjects who disseminate new productions of theological thinking to others in a centrifugal way.⁴⁸³ Through practice, meetings and workshops it is intended that Moluccan people undergo a paradigm shift so that they start to trust the contextual process and become involved in it themselves.⁴⁸⁴ Disagreements, contestations and incomprehension on the part of congregants are explained by theologians as misunderstandings that can be solved through extensive informing. Having another opinion is like ignorance, for if the process and reasons behind contextualization are well explained it is expected that all people will understand and support it.⁴⁸⁵ In short, Moluccan theology is aimed at change in church and this movement starts at

⁴⁸¹ Interview with Agus Batlajery.

Nancy Souisa even pointed out it is not fair that only academics take credit for their research because they have a voice in their writings, whereas local people are the ones who gave the inspiration: researchers get so much from the locals, but what do they get in return? As a pastor, theologian and researcher Nancy Souisa therefore promotes the facilitation and empowerment of the people that contextual theology learns from, in order that the researcher is not the only one who speaks and represents (Interview with Nancy Souisa).

⁴⁸² An example is a reinterpretation and reformulation on the ten commandments, referring to the obligation of children to be obedient to their parents: stories told during Sunday school classes reflected many cases of violence and saying to children that they have to respect their parents whatever happens therefore is not fair (Interview with Nancy Souisa).

⁴⁸³ Interview with Nancy Souisa.

⁴⁸⁴ For instance, by starting to speak the local language to their children (Interviews at Wycliffe, 11-11-2019, Ambon).

⁴⁸⁵ Interview with Branckly Egbert Picanussa.

university. Teaching, publishing and writing are seen as the tools that begin the implementation process of theological ideas:⁴⁸⁶ “To know our faith today in context, we need the science of theology.”⁴⁸⁷ The beginning of the spiral thus is UKIM, where ideas are developed and implementation processes are discussed and evaluated. Therefore, doing logically follows after thinking, especially since putting ideas in practice in a variety of places by a variety of people and institutions is complicated. Several progressive pastors – who through their experience and relations are close to the source where the ideas come from, who understand the intentions well and who themselves have the ability and techniques to apply contextualization – expressed their thoughts on how the GPM and other GPM pastors can further improve the implementation of contextual theology. They state that while contextualization as a discursive term has been around for a long time already, practice is somewhat behind, mainly because implementation has to fight against long-standing doctrines and rules on how things are done in church.⁴⁸⁸ Although the GPM has started to pay more attention to the needs of congregations on the basis of a contextual bottom-up approach, according to these pastors this shift can be intensified. In many cases, namely, contextual theology is not yet based on an equal relation. New ideas are often from the outside planted in a certain context. Pastor Jacky Manuputty explained:

Sometimes we borrow something without spirit to use it in contextual theology – adopt and adapt. No! You just took it and put it in the church. Did you ask the people to participate? No? They will feel it! (...) It is triumphalist Christianity in a very soft way, defeating people from their own mind. Let people accept it in their own way! Contextual theology for me is a mutual encounter, an equal encounter. Christianity can contribute to enrich the local set of beliefs, but also should open itself to be enriched. So we can develop it in togetherness.⁴⁸⁹

The perspectives show how Moluccan theology in design is a bottom-up process, which nevertheless moves from a certain core in a certain direction. In practice top-down relations often characterize implementation. Different opinions or critiques concerning this process

⁴⁸⁶ Interview with Steve Gaspersz.

⁴⁸⁷ Interview with Chris Tamaela.

The original term was *ilmu*, to be translated as science.

⁴⁸⁸ Interview with John F. Beay.

⁴⁸⁹ For example, in Seram pastor Manuputty used the rituals of the *Nuau* tribe in his service. While names for the sacredness in nature and for God differed, according to Jacky Manuputty the essence was the same through which they could relate to each other (Interview with Jacky Manuputty).

mainly result from setting the boundaries: how far can one go in the use of contextual sources, and how much authority and control is one willing to give to the people?

Church practice, religious attitude and place

Implementation and internalization of contextual theology is determined by theological, organizational and practical constellations in churches among groups of pastors and *majelis*, and reflected in church practice, religious attitudes and places. As has been said, backgrounds and theological convictions of pastors naturally have an effect on the content and style of the sermons they give. Furthermore, group relations of teams of pastors and *majelis* result in specific theological and practical directions on how to set up religious activities and contextual content. Because contextualization is official GPM policy, the word is well-known and circles around in religious discourse everywhere. However, the interpretation of context and the application of the idea by pastors differ: while some pastors mention the word *konteks* in their sermon but further stick to an ‘older’ theological worldview and lay-out of the service, others design the whole gathering and sermon content according to a deep theologizing of the Moluccan context. In relation to the former, I once was present at a Sunday service that was characterized by a ‘traditional’ moralizing sermon and standard liturgical set-up. However, the songbook that was used for that week was the *Nyanyian GPM*, the songbook that is generally known as the contextual songbook. The pastor was very much focused on practicing two songs which clearly were not yet familiar for the congregants, as soft mumbling and mistakes in rhythm were apparent. The pastor kept repeating the singing in order that the church members memorized the songs, however, not out of a contextual effort per se, but out of fear for shame if this congregation would not know the songs while other congregations possibly already would. Here it became clear how a mentality of competition between churches on the application of GPM contextual policy created motivation.⁴⁹⁰ Most importantly, pastors are located at an ambiguous ‘in-between’. Especially younger pastors, who have been educated at UKIM according to a contextual curriculum and who have to follow contextual policy directions of the GPM, also have to deal with diverse congregations which results in a gap that hinders implementation. On the one hand, UKIM is relatively progressive – baggage which pastors carry with them – while on the other hand pastors are afraid to employ this knowledge in church as they know their acquired attitudes will not be accepted by a large part of the congregants. Many Moluccan Christians – who do not study

⁴⁹⁰ Moreover, combinations between contextual and non-contextual elements often occur in service. Multiple times I listened to a sermon which content-wise evidently was contextual, but was illustrated with images on the beamer which, for example, showed a young, blond, Western girl with blue eyes.

theology – continue to be raised according to ‘traditional’ Calvinist beliefs, viewing the Bible as a holy document written by God. Young pastors, for whom it is vital to integrate in the church community, often do not dare to go against core doctrinal stances.⁴⁹¹ UKIM students also recounted that what they learn on campus is very different from the churches they go to on Sunday.⁴⁹² A chasm between education and congregation becomes visible, which shows the difficulty in bridging diverging theologies. Paradoxically, the implementation and incorporation of the Moluccan traditional is complicated by generational and educational differences in theological thinking. An ‘older’, traditional Calvinist theology adhered to by many congregants is here pitted against a theological innovation based on traditional Moluccan culture and identity. Traditional thus almost has opposite meanings in relation to conservatism and innovation.

The gap described here relates to religious attitudes and the internalization of contextual theology at the grassroots. Many people – theologians, GPM officials and pastors – state that almost all church members positively receive the contextual approach. On a discursive level this is true: the word context buzzes around and people are taught that it is something good. In this way one can say the contextual approach has travelled fast among Moluccan Christians. Through educational and GPM structures culture is accepted as part of religion,⁴⁹³ while some time ago this would have been prohibited terrain. However, while *klasis* leaders and pastors univocally express the positive response towards and reception of contextual theology by all congregants, even to the point of theologizing contextually on a personal level,⁴⁹⁴ UKIM theologians and GPM leaders are more critical: “Changing your view on God is difficult. It is very difficult. (...) Thinking deeply about faith is a different thing.”⁴⁹⁵ Although many Moluccan Christians enjoy contextual elements in church services, theologizing one’s God image based on the cultural context is much harder as it touches the core of belief and religious upbringing – and therefore, religious identity. On a discursive level the majority of church members does not see a deep connection between religion and culture. It is important to notice that Dutch Calvinist doctrines influenced and became ingrained in Moluccan Protestantism, and form part of the religious history and identity of Moluccans. At this moment in time, proponents of contextual theology find it hard to reach

⁴⁹¹ Informal conversation with Omy, 25-12-2019, Ambon.

⁴⁹² Interview with Vally & Eggy.

⁴⁹³ Interview with Jance Rumahuru.

⁴⁹⁴ Interview with Anonymous, 2-12-2019, Ambon.

⁴⁹⁵ Interview with Margaretha Hendriks.

people ‘on the ground’ to independently theologize on the basis of culture, mainly because it is a relatively recent approach and because there is only a handful of people who is able to explain, teach and illustrate the approach thoroughly.⁴⁹⁶ UKIM theologians and GPM leaders recognize the current situation, acknowledging the infancy of contextual implementation and related shortcomings, and continue working towards their ambition for the future aimed at mass capability of contextual theologizing.⁴⁹⁷

Lastly, place also is of relevance with respect to implementation. Relations of center-periphery, city-village, and modern-traditional are important here. On the one hand, it seems that the discourse on contextual theology and practical implementation of this theological innovation is adopted the fastest and strongest in areas close to Ambon city, where UKIM and the GPM are located. Logically, churches that are situated closer to the GPM are earlier reached. Moreover, in urban contexts congregants generally do not live in a traditional way any longer. They receive information from and communicate across the whole world, and are used to and embedded in global, modern conceptions of life. When congregants in and near to the city are taught to value culture and Moluccan traditions in relation to their religion interest is aroused, especially because Moluccan traditional identity is less familiar to these urban church members. Age is another important factor. As Bakker (2013, 317) also points out, it is less difficult to root new ideas (in this case the place of culture in Christianity) among younger generations, and more complicated to do this among older generations, because the latter have done things in a certain way their whole lives (in this case separating *adat* and religion). On the other hand, in churches located further away from the city, and especially in churches in traditional villages, the traditional context that theologians and the GPM draw on is *still* present. In a natural way Moluccan culture and traditional identity stand in relation to Christianity based on a long history of pragmatic, automatic contextualization. Nevertheless, this natural contextualization is at the same time intrinsically part of colonial church culture and ‘old’ or traditional Calvinist worldviews. Moreover, people in modern city-places are in the position to revalue Moluccan tradition ‘again’,⁴⁹⁸ while people in less modern village-

⁴⁹⁶ And because not all pastors and church members want it.

⁴⁹⁷ The fact that others only emphasize the success of implementation has to do with position and hierarchy: pastors, *majelis* and *klasis* have the responsibility to execute GPM policy which is why they will not admit certain difficulties, as this comes with associations of failure that could affect their image and status. As a relatively independent educational institute that develops the ideas, and as the top of the church that designs policy, UKIM theologians and GPM leaders have more freedom to judge the state of affairs concerning contextualization.

⁴⁹⁸ In her book *Sensational Movies* (2015), Meyer talks about this privilege of being traditional in the context of Ghana. When one is judged to be modern, one can afford it to value the traditional.

places turn to modernity which in turn instigates the contemporary feeling of the necessity of ethnic revivalism and preservation, as Moluccan identity is perceived to risk disappearance. Two seemingly oppositional meanings of ‘traditional’ are connected here.⁴⁹⁹ Interestingly, contextual theology is less implemented in places that are closer to the source of contextualization, while places further away from this source more easily adopt the contextual approach. The traditional thus is theologically progressive and innovative, while practically it can be seen as conservative.

Opinions on contextual theology

The relation between theological idea and lived practice is influenced by perspectives on and opinions about Moluccan contextual theology. Although almost all people involved in the process positively agree on a contextual approach,⁵⁰⁰ the way to deal with contextualization and meanings of core terms in the contextual discourse show diversity. Among theologians themselves differences also exist, differences that mainly have to do with content and boundaries, and which can lead to tensions.⁵⁰¹ A clear source of tension is the importance of the Bible. Several theologians see the Bible as the core, unchanging, holy document within their contextual thinking, whereas others conceptualize the Bible as a historically, politically and culturally bound text, which attitudes toward it are open to transformation on the basis of cultural values.⁵⁰² The most radical side of the spectrum consists of theologians who almost do not use the Bible any longer as they feel all theology is located in culture. On the other side theologians are completely Bible-oriented.⁵⁰³ Topic-wise a variation in opinions on what contextual theology ought to be can also be recognized. For example, theologian John Titaley views the preamble of the Indonesian constitution as a contextual Bible. In his opinion an Indonesian theology should be developed, and the GPM should become more than an ethnic church in response to the new reality that was created after the independence in 1945.⁵⁰⁴ The fact that *Maluku* must be perceived within the Indonesian context has not yet been thoroughly

⁴⁹⁹ Chapter Six and Seven will go into more detail about this.

⁵⁰⁰ The figures: theologians, GPM, students, pastors, musicians, and church members.

⁵⁰¹ For instance, some senior theologians express concern about an anthropological approach, warning against cultural romanticism. Others see anthropology as a necessary discipline to connect with people’s reality.

⁵⁰² For example, some theologize that Old Testament texts were developed out of political interests of centralization in the time of David (Interview with John Titaley).

⁵⁰³ Interview with Margaretha Hendriks.

⁵⁰⁴ All ethnicities were equally united as Indonesians, and all religions as worshipping *Tuhan*, Lord – the name of the divinity for Indonesia (not God, Allah or Jaweh, for example).

contextualized, according to Titaley.⁵⁰⁵ Obviously, theologians who think the Bible has to be the focus judge this kind of theology as not even being theology. However, in the words of theologian John the starting point is stating that God has been working through history which means that attention, affection and cognition have to be focused on specific experiences instead of merely transferring theories. Only in this way the church can be fully decolonized,⁵⁰⁶ breaking through past structures of isolation that prevent liberation: “Contextualization means knowing what is going on outside the church, reaching political, economic and social issues”.⁵⁰⁷ Apart from the position of the Bible, core Calvinist doctrines and political relations also form a source of tension. Recalling theologian Steve Gaspersz’ use of the word *Mena-Muria* and his ambition to thoroughly turn the GPM into a church of reformation, his progressive approach – drawing on local culture yet rejecting traditionalism by situating tradition in the modern context – is not approved by everyone. Most of his colleague pastors state that he is able to express his radical position because he is an academic and has no experience on how to serve a real congregation. In response to this he answered: “I don’t know. Maybe that’s true. But this is not about my intellectual exercise merely, but this is my calling (...).”⁵⁰⁸ When Steve Gaspersz explains some liturgical concepts in a contextual way, many pastors agree. However, when he states that the idea of the Trinity actually does not match the Moluccan context, almost no one does anymore because the doctrinal core is touched. In the opinion of Steve Gaspersz, the GPM sometimes is reluctant to fully implement the contextualization of Moluccan traditions, adhering to previous church teachings that the synod board still deems relevant in an authoritative way.⁵⁰⁹ While academically agreeing with him, Steve’s fellow UKIM colleagues often remind him about the fact that besides being a

⁵⁰⁵ While many Moluccan theologians have been contextualizing Moluccan ethnic identity, John Titaley is one of the few who focuses on national identity as well, an approach he teaches to his students: “I don’t care if they want to listen to me or not, my obligation is to tell them. That is my accountability to god.” He even stated that places of religious pilgrimage are not located in Jerusalem or Mecca, but at the place where the fathers of the nations drafted the constitution: “In that room the Indonesian *tuhan* has worked” (Interview with John Titaley). On a critical note, this kind of theology can also potentially lead to an uncritical attitude towards the state and nation.

⁵⁰⁶ In his perspective, decolonization refers to the idea that this contextual theology will break specific GPM structures that have been installed since the colonial times. The church was an isolated institution from society, as it was not preferred by the colonial government that the church would express criticism on things happening outside their own realm. These structures have contributed to the late emergence of contextual theology. Contextual theology wants to do away with specific structures and mentalities that some therefore see as colonial as they are legacies from colonial times.

⁵⁰⁷ Interview with John Titaley.

⁵⁰⁸ Other pastors suggest a more gradual approach, educating the congregation step by step (Interview with Steve Gaspersz).

⁵⁰⁹ In the same way, Jance Rumahuru thinks that the GPM is very Bible-oriented. He would like to see that the church paid more attention to the social context in Moluccan society.

lecturer he also is a pastor who needs to represent GPM teachings, and ask him to be careful with expressing his perspective.⁵¹⁰ Interestingly, different expectations are thus connected to academic and church contexts. A last source of tension is the boundary up to which traditional cultural forms may be used, which centers around the ancestors. It is widely known that Chris Tamaela made almost anything possible,⁵¹¹ because he was always going further than people expect, want or even agree on. Although Chris Tamaela worked from the Christian monotheistic principle, he drew on the ancestors for the equipment of ceremonies, language, liturgy and music, which by others sometimes is mistaken – in his eyes – for invoking ancestral powers. Chris Tamaela used native tongues to call God, basing his theology on traditional Moluccan cosmology in which the ancestors are the mediators between living people and God. In this way he formed a Moluccan Christology, which core is located in pre-Christian religion and thus stayed the same when people converted to Protestantism, despite the different name. In this continuation Christ is a Moluccan ancestor. Understanding and worshipping God in Moluccan culture therefore is possible from local language, traditional music, indigenous buildings, et cetera.⁵¹² Hence, differences among theologians are not so much played out on the level of contextual theology per se, but on the gradation or degree from which it is approached.⁵¹³ Along these lines the ‘contextual continuum’ at UKIM is similar to Bevans’ models and their relative closeness to either Bible or culture.

Pastors

GPM pastors not only show differences in approach concerning contextualization, but conceptualize ‘context’ differently from UKIM theologians and disagree about techniques and relevance among each other. As has been touched upon already, many GPM pastors have been educated at UKIM which means that most of them are open to contextual theology,⁵¹⁴ besides the fact that they officially need to deal with contextualization according to the GPM teachings.⁵¹⁵ Therefore, no pastor will express him- or herself negatively about contextual theology. All pastors I spoke to emphasized that context forms the basis and medium of the Gospel and their sermons.⁵¹⁶ Nevertheless, the way in which this is done, the profoundness,

⁵¹⁰ Interview with Steve Gaspersz.

⁵¹¹ Interview with Verry Patty.

⁵¹² Interview with Chris Tamaela.

⁵¹³ Interview with Jance Rumahuru, Nancy Souisa.

⁵¹⁴ Interview with Agus Batlajery.

⁵¹⁵ And, as Nancy Souisa made clear, sometimes senior pastors who were not trained at UKIM are contextual theologians on their own, because they have lived in a specific congregation for a long time (Interview with Nancy Souisa).

⁵¹⁶ Interview with Hery Siahay, Jeffrey Leatimia.

and the meaning of context show variety. As is the case with UKIM theologians, pastors too are situated along a continuum of contextualization, with some closer to cultural context and some closer to the Bible.⁵¹⁷ Theologian and pastor Verry Patty explained that there always will be a small group of older, ‘rusted’ people who will not adapt to new theologies. This group continues to see themselves first as Christian, and only then as Moluccan. Moreover, they are moved by fear of breaking habit and answering to pagan calls.⁵¹⁸ Naturally, pastors are a product of their education and time,⁵¹⁹ although older pastors who are involved in academics generally underwent a deep contextual change.⁵²⁰ Pastors who were raised and educated according to a different theological curriculum, and who serve congregations that consist of a variety of people and views, cannot always easily shift to contextualization in the way it is practiced in academic circles. Apart from the fact that they themselves often theologically think in the traditional Calvinist way,⁵²¹ they also need to respond to the congregation that for a large part experiences belief according to this mentality – which is a context in itself. Moreover, the GPM is the institution that in the end sets the boundaries for contextual practice in church. Whereas several UKIM theologians would like to see a reformation whereby contextual theology is incorporated in dogma, the doctrinal core of the Moluccan church so far stayed the same. This means that pastors need to move within these structures to secure their position.⁵²²

Nonetheless, it does not take away the fact that all pastors state the importance of contextual theology.⁵²³ Some pastors mention central values and symbols from Moluccan

⁵¹⁷ In the eyes of theologians, some pastors address the social and practical reality in their sermons, and others merely speak about doctrines; some are open-minded, others are quite conservative (Interview with John Titaley, Rachel Iwamony).

⁵¹⁸ Interview with Verry Patty.

⁵¹⁹ Mainly pastors educated before the 1990s do not agree with the contextual approach and want to work the way they always did. Moreover, place is also of relevance here. Generally, pastors in the city are more open to contextual theology than pastors in villages (Interview with Rachel Iwamony).

⁵²⁰ Interview with Jance Rumahuru.

⁵²¹ Meaning strictly following the Bible because only via this way one can be saved. On the other side of the spectrum, I heard that one UKIM theologian stated that being saved, or heaven, perhaps also could mean a certain state of mind in the here and now, feeling happy and peaceful. Perhaps heaven is something which is inside a person (Interview with Vally, Omy, Jeane).

⁵²² It also seems that the adoption of contextual policy by the GPM has been experienced as quite a sudden change. While for a very long time Moluccan culture was absolutely forbidden in church, suddenly pastors had to develop a different way of thinking and start using cultural forms in church (Interview with Jeffrey Leatimia).

⁵²³ Interview with Anonymous, 6-12-2019, Saparua.

culture, such as *masohi*⁵²⁴ or elements from Moluccan identity,⁵²⁵ that can be taken to deliver a religious message in the sermon.⁵²⁶ However, a slightly different concept of ‘context’ is brought forward by many. *Sesuai dengan konteks* (in accordance with context) is the most used sentence concerning the topic of contextual theology, and refers to issues, problems and situations in the specific congregations that these pastors are serving. Rather than profoundly re-theologizing Moluccan Protestantism on the basis of cultural identity, as UKIM theologians aim to do, many pastors state that they have to apply the by the GPM preselected Gospel text to answer the needs in the context of their congregation. It is the task of pastors to reflect on the word of God by taking real issues that the community is facing into consideration, and consequently to offer a solution.⁵²⁷ ‘Context’ here equals situations in the specific congregation, and the Moluccan traditional is less important. In short, for pastors contextualization means answering congregational problems, such as unwanted pregnancies, alcohol consumption, or family attendance in church.⁵²⁸ Along these lines all pastors thus pay attention to context, whether social, economic, political or cultural, reflecting on issues that play a role in their congregation to relate to and communicate in a close way with the community, who in turn also expect this attitude of pastors. A preaching pastor therefore always needs to be aware of the background, condition and developments of his or her particular congregation.⁵²⁹ What became clear, is that a deeper theological connection between culture and religion is not conceptualized by pastors, except on the level of the widely known repetitive contextual discourse. Referring to the *Injil dan Adat* (Gospel and Culture) conference and the ensuing contextual approach of the GPM, relations between God and humans, humans and the environment and humans with each other are mentioned to answer the question on the link between culture and religion.⁵³⁰ It shows that among many GPM pastors, while being aware of official terminology concerning contextual theology,

⁵²⁴ Or *pela*, for example. In Saparua the church helped to resolve a longstanding conflict between the villages *Haria* and *Porto* on the basis of culture. Awareness was built and shared economic activities could be resumed (Interview with Jeffrey Leatimia).

⁵²⁵ Anonymous referred to the saying that Moluccan people are like *sago*: a rough skin and able to grow big, while white, pure, clean and soft from the inside (Interview with Anonymous, 22-12-2019, Ambon).

⁵²⁶ Interview with Anonymous, 18-12-2019, Ambon.

⁵²⁷ For example, in the village *Haria* waste and the natural environment are big issues, and in the city a pastor explained how the church can intervene in excessive use of electronic gadgets by young children. Moreover, context also means placing problems in a broader context. For instance, poverty or sickness are perhaps not only driven by economic or physical, but also by political and mental factors. Pastors see it as their role to recognize these factors (Interview with Jeffrey Leatimia, Hery Siahay).

⁵²⁸ Interview with Jeffrey Leatimia, Anonymous (2-12-2019, Ambon).

⁵²⁹ Interview with Anonymous (18-12-2019, Ambon), Nik Sedubun, Anonymous (22-12-2019, Ambon), Jan Z. Matatula, Anonymous (2-12-2019, ambon), Anonymous (16-12-2019, Ambon), Anonymous (6-12-2019, *Haria*).

⁵³⁰ Interview with Anonymous, 18-12-2019, Ambon.

contextual practice takes place on another level than Moluccan theology at UKIM. While context and culture play a significant role for pastors, they do so in relation to congregational background rather than to re-theologizing Moluccan Protestantism on the basis of cultural context. A chasm between the cultural/social and religion/God continues to dominate religious mentalities, instead of theologizing from the intricate relation between the two.⁵³¹ The interesting difference between conceptualizations of UKIM theologians and GPM pastors has to do with the only recently started implementation process and with capacity building. There exists no GPM model for contextual church practice, and it cannot be expected that everyone has the intellectual and creative ability to build contextual services over night. In a continuous process over a longer period of time the implementation process is aimed at preparing pastors to use contextual communication: they have to be taught to develop contextual skills.⁵³² Nevertheless, the congregation-based conceptualization of context does not indicate that this meaning is not part of contextual theology (although it is not the only one intended by theologians), nor does it mean that there are no pastors who have the capability and creativity to theologize from culture. For instance, I met a fascinating young pastor who uses a ventriloquist doll to bring religion closer to people's experience. His talent has been recognized by the GPM synod board who now invites him for many religious activities.⁵³³ Another example is pastor Jacky Manuputty, who brings Christian religion and Moluccan cosmology in interaction: "It is really interconnected. I (...) criticize the way Christianity sometimes is expressed in Moluccan culture. (...) Don't just adopt some *adat* symbol to put in the Christian ritual. It is about the set of values. It is the expression of a way of life, closely related to cosmology, philosophy."⁵³⁴

Congregants

Lastly, as both the source and receivers of contextual theology, it is equally important to look at the opinions of church members. During the research it became clear that an in-depth interview with congregants after service about this topic was not a fruitful strategy. Due to already discussed hierarchical structures and the status of pastors, many congregants do not express their opinion on how things are done in their church. Therefore, short related questions were asked to many different church members – female, male, old, young, et cetera – about the relation between culture and religion. Chapter Seven will deal more extensively

⁵³¹ For example, the relation between religion and culture is often interpreted as church culture.

⁵³² Interview with Jacky Manuputty, Peter Salenusu.

⁵³³ Interview with Verry Patty.

⁵³⁴ Interview with Jacky Manuputty.

with their answers, as these results represent the voices of church members themselves, while many others, such as theologians, pastors, and GPM officials, also talked about the opinions of church members. A difference between self-expressed opinions and ‘second-hand’ opinions thus is important to take in mind. Generally, pastors and people working at the *klasis*, who are responsible for executing GPM policy, state that church members are all very positive about contextual theology. Congregants feel comfortable because they have grown up with *adat*, which means there is a fit between what people experience in life and the contextual service, making people understand and receive the message better.⁵³⁵ However, theologians, who have the possibility to be more critical and realistic because of their privileged and independent position, do not give such a univocal representation of congregants’ opinions. While some theologians state that many church members show a positive response, simply because of the fact that cultural sources that are used are integrated inside them, they also acknowledge that contextualization is enjoyed on a superficial level. While congregants like to hear a contextual sermon or experience a contextual service, their religious mentalities have not changed yet.⁵³⁶ Many theologians see differences of opinions between generations and places. Reasons which are given for this observation include education level or embeddedness in modern life. In their view, young people who live in cities are more open to the shift of contextual theology than older people in villages, who for a long time have lived according to traditional Calvinist theologies.⁵³⁷ Theologians who as a pastor used *adat* in church have experiences with people from older generations judging them as being blasphemous.⁵³⁸ Other theologians simply stated relatively fast that most people at the grassroots do not like contextual theology. It is even seen as a contributing factor for people moving to the Pentecostal church. These theologians think it thus requires more hard work for the future to come to change people’s view on God. While creative pastors and musicians can make congregants to sing and follow liturgy in a contextual way, it is a completely different question to make them theologically think in a new way: “It is still the old God.”⁵³⁹ Quite unexpectedly, I once had the opportunity to interview a Moluccan Christian who was not afraid to express his criticism on contextual theology. While understanding the concept, he simply did not agree with the idea of context that was being used. For him context meant the way people have been believing for centuries. The introduction of *adat* confused him, because

⁵³⁵ Interview with Jan Z. Matatula, Anonymous (2-12-2019, Ambon), Anonymous (18-12-2019, Ambon).

⁵³⁶ Interview with John Titaley.

⁵³⁷ One theologian even used the word ‘indoctrinated’.

⁵³⁸ Interview with Steve Gaspersz.

⁵³⁹ Interview with Margaretha Hendriks.

he thinks Christianity only is about God.⁵⁴⁰ While the man approved of adding aspects to the service to give it more color, he said these additions should not dominate. In that way, namely, they become an allurements that is no longer directed at God. Interestingly, for this particular church member contextual theology was felt not to relate to his experience of believing,⁵⁴¹ which, ironically is part of the aim of the contextual approach. Despite these critical opinions, there also are congregants who profoundly understand and positively respond to contextual theology. Certain congregations invite contextual theologians to share their perspective which is deemed to increase awareness on religion situated in reality. These congregations are willing to change their style of liturgy and perspective on God.⁵⁴² I also encountered a musician in church who deliberately announced that the topic of his song was about Jesus, *the Moluccan ancestor*, and a young choir leader who explained the concept of contextual theology very clearly, stating that every individual has his or her own paradigm and therefore has to theologize according to the own context.⁵⁴³ Obviously, a positive opinion and understanding of the contextual approach are also connected to positive experiences with contextual, high-quality services made by capable pastors. Nonetheless, it should be concluded that the overall majority of the Moluccan congregants has not yet an open attitude towards contextual theology,⁵⁴⁴ or do not know what it means.⁵⁴⁵ The opinions about contextual theology among various ‘figures’ demonstrate that the culture-religion relation underlying the discourse on contextual theology at UKIM is not present among all actors implemented in the contextual process, and not automatically transferred in the same way as intended.

Conclusion

After having described the cultural context, the church context and the context of contextual theology, this chapter was about the implementation of the Moluccan theology practiced at UKIM. First, the process of contextualization requires a critical attitude towards cultural forms. Forms that have the possibility to be theologically transformed because they are in accordance with Christian values are selected. Consequently, the third notion of context as

⁵⁴⁰ God was enough to communicate with; he did not need *adat* sources.

⁵⁴¹ Interview with Ronny Loppies.

⁵⁴² Although these churches are mainly located in the city and consist of relatively high-educated church members, who for instance work at the *Pattimura* university (Interview with Steve Gaspersz).

⁵⁴³ Interview Anonymous, 10-11-2019, *Soya*.

⁵⁴⁴ Interview with Vally, Omy, Jeane.

⁵⁴⁵ Interview with Anonymous (27-10-2019, Ambon).

source for contextual theology was presented on the basis of seven different categories – local wisdom, indigenous religion, *sasi*, *pela*, identity, modernity and place. In connection with academic literature, it was argued that contextual theology enables the preservation of a Moluccan sense of self through the construction of a ‘new old’; a sentiment of Moluccanness that affirms the ethnic community. The process involves a heritagization of culture and requires the disenchantment of the past. The implementation of contextual theology is articulated via the image of the spiral: a top-down and bottom-up approach are constantly combined, with living realities that transform theologies and theologies that in turn transform religious attitudes and church practices. Nevertheless, UKIM, as the institution where the ideas are developed which have the clear goal of changing mentalities among congregations, stirs the motion and determines the direction of the spiral. Moreover, the novelty of the contextual approach lays bare a gap between theology and lived religion with pastors being located in-between. This is related to views about contextual theology. The majority of the church members does not see a deep theological connection between religion and culture and experiences belief along the lines of a traditional Calvinist worldview. Whether their background and education brings pastors closer to the contextual theology advocated by UKIM or to Calvinist doctrines adhered to by their congregations, either way pastors are positioned in the middle. They have to execute a contextual GPM policy while also relating themselves to the church community. Possibly this is the reason for their different, somewhat more practical concept of context: for pastors context means responding to congregational problems. Thus, while discursively embedded in contextualization, with terms like *Injil dan Adat*, *sesuai dengan konteks*, *basudara*⁵⁴⁶ and *sosialisasi*⁵⁴⁷ being fervently used by pastors, practically contextual implementation as intended by UKIM is less easy. This difficulty shows the dualism Moluccan theology is based on: tradition versus innovation, and Calvinist versus contextual. Although the reality of ‘old’ Calvinist worldviews and lives among church members can be seen as context too, this context is disapproved by theologians and forms the object of theological change. In this way contextual theology runs against a long process of ‘natural’ contextualization. The implementation of contextual theology thus takes place between allowing *adat* in church, while not imposing it. At the same time the congregational context of traditional Calvinist attitudes is seen as ignorance, and the goal of congregational

⁵⁴⁶ The term of brotherhood related to *pela* is the most often used example of contextualization, referring to building interreligious relations on the basis of this cultural institution.

⁵⁴⁷ This means socialization, and is used in relation to implementation: congregants needs to be socialized in order to understand and receive contextual theology.

theologizing should proceed according to a specific rule-governed practice based on particular Christian values. It is in this playing field of tensions that Moluccan theology is implemented. Nevertheless, the realization of this reality makes the contextual process less unambiguous which would hinder implementation. Besides, among theologians themselves tensions concerning approaching contextual theology also exist. These tensions mainly center around questions of doctrine, the ancestors and the prominence of the Bible. It shows how contextualization is a complicated, vulnerable practice which involves many pitfalls.⁵⁴⁸

The past chapters have addressed the historical and religious context and the context of context. These produced the grammar of the contextual discourse and practice. The content and process of the discourse and practice of contextual theology have been delineated in this chapter. The coming chapters will focus on music, as one realm within the frame that has been set. Chapter Five will zoom in on the central theme of this research: the theological idea of traditional church music.

⁵⁴⁸ The more so as contextualization is situated in a religiously local plural context, with Moluccan Christians being a minority in a Muslim country, and influenced by an increasing presence of Pentecostalism and radical Salafism on a national scale.

Figures – Chapter 4



Figure 24 - View over Ambon (photo by author)

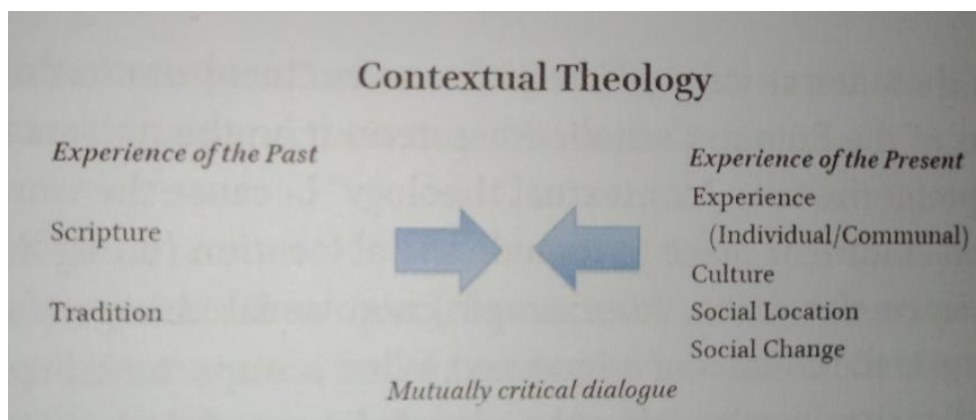


Figure 25 - Contextual theology as mutually critical dialogue (Bevans 2018, 3)

We bend our heads, fold our hands and close our eyes.

A serene yet expectant silence descends on us.

Then we hear a bright voice.

Rather than breaking the tranquility, this voice flows from it.

Words in a native language that I don't know form a melody.

It is a prayer sung by Chris Tamaela.

Sentences begin with elongated high-pitched sounds, shaping the gratitude expressed to God, bridging the distance I have travelled for this research and wishing for my success and well-being. Alternating between only a few tones, the music glides up and down like a timeless wave. The lengthy, loving lines end in a slowly accelerating pace of increasing lowering phrases.

The beauty of this praying song,

the beauty of this singing prayer.

The beauty of this sung speech,

the beauty of this spoken song.

It brings me in a placeless, weightless trance.

I want it to go on forever.

Music of *Maluku*: Chris Tamaela

The sound of his singing voice will go on, but unfortunately not forever and only in my own memory. On Sunday 19 April 2020, around 11.50 A.M., quite abruptly and unexpectedly pastor, musician and theologian Chris Tamaela left this world (*meninggal dunia*) at the age of 62. During my research I spent the first few weeks chasing the shadow of this remarkable man. His talent and publicity required him to be at many places at the same time. No one ever knew exactly where he was or what he was doing, and since digital communication was not preferred the best way of ‘catching’ the famous Mr. Tamaela was to wait for a lucky moment and then cling on. Several friends at UKIM as well as people I was living with, who knew him well or even were related to him, helped me in this project. It brought me in the very fortunate position of having gotten the chance to meet and become friends with *Pak* Chris. Soon we developed a routine. Together with many other students I would come to his class to attend his lessons about contextual theology. As excited as they were about me sitting amidst them, as excited I was about being allowed to fully participate as a student. I was always welcomed in the most amicable way, which gave me a perfect sensation of happiness. Before or after class Chris Tamaela would take the time to talk with me about his background, thoughts, visions and ambitions. Once, in one of his breaks he even brought me a little bag with drinks and snacks, and when it was time to go home he would walk with me until the fence of the house of *Usi Ita* where I was living, making sure I safely crossed the street. In the weekends he would sometimes pick me up to travel together to another village in a green public transport minivan. He wanted to show me Moluccan traditional music displayed in the museum or played by a family in *Amahusu*. Despite his untraceable busy schedule, despite his chaos, despite the fact that he was more than one month away to provide the musical opening of a UN meeting in Jakarta, Chris Tamaela took the time to help me. With great regret and sadness I need to say that I will never be able to return the favor.

This research project started with Chris Tamaela. His writings and ideas inspired me to study Moluccan theology and music. The relation between idea and practice was based on a living and dynamic notion of the innovation of traditional church music. With the sad event of Chris Tamaela no longer being among us, this relation has necessarily been changed. Nevertheless, his ideas are kept alive through his musical and academic legacy, the inspiration he provoked and his memory in many hearts. This thesis serves as a symbolic testimony to his vivid spirit. I still hear his voice, see his movements, smell his energy. I can immediately recall his round

face, wide mouth, and dark eyes with a bright blue circle around them, as well as the feeling that his heartiness awakened in me. Throughout my own life I will carry these experiences with me. Perhaps because of the distance, perhaps because of the closeness, I can hardly believe that Chris Tamaela is not in Ambon, nor somewhere else in the immanent present. The world lost a musical genius and a great human being. Maybe and hopefully, like a friend of mine commented, with his music he will shake things up a bit in the transcendent unknown.

I feel immensely honored to have known *Pendeta* Chris Tamaela. I have enjoyed our friendship and I am grateful for all the things he has taught me. With this chapter I will respectfully try to depict him and his vision, his way of teaching and his music. First, the impetus for a musical exploration shall be given theoretically. Consequently, the content of Chris Tamaela's dissertation, and his ideas, classes and dreams are described, as well as opinions about and experiences with him. I cherish the humble hope that this thesis will in some way contribute to keeping his musical memory alive. Although it will never be enough, it is the only thing I can do.

Music and materiality

The topic of this research concerns a specific aspect within the broader frame of Moluccan contextual theology, namely church music. The phenomenon of religious contextualization is studied through the material medium of music, by which religious practice, experience and identity are addressed. As one of the more concrete materializations of contextual theology, music mediates memories, emotions and feelings of identification as Moluccan Christian which form part of the process of selecting and transforming Moluccan traditional music and incorporating the sounds and texts into church music. With the core theme being music as religious practice, this thesis is firmly placed within the field of material religion, while the study of traditional church music in the Moluccan Protestant church places the thesis within the practice of contextual theology. Interestingly, there exist some striking conceptual similarities between material religion and contextual theology from the point of music, which in the introduction has been referred to through coining the term 'material theology'.

Music as the heart of theology

The theological ideas of Chris Tamaela as presented in his dissertation, vision and classes point to the important place of music within theology – music as theology. For many

theologians, music is a subsidiary element in the church service, an instrument that helps congregants to reach a certain state of mind to experience a unity with the divine. Thus, when it comes down to it, lyrics are often seen as the dominant part. One theologian commented: “The crucial part is the words. Because theology is in the wordings.”⁵⁴⁹ To a certain extent this seems to be true when looking at the practice of contextualization of church music. Melodies and rhythms from traditional music are rather uncomplicatedly adopted in church, while traditional texts are used as theological inspiration but need to be transformed on the basis of Christian values. Nevertheless, an important contribution of the work of Chris Tamaela is his demonstration of how music is not merely an instrument, but an equal substantive part of worship. This idea on the intricate relation between theology and music reached other Christian musicians and progressive theologians and pastors. Jance Rumahuru, teacher at the IAKN, stated that music is not only sound, but also meaning: by music people know the greatness of the almighty God.⁵⁵⁰ Musician Semy Toisuta warned against the lack of awareness about the power of music in liturgy: “Music is the spirit and soul of liturgy. (...) It touches the heart. Without people knowing it, music can influence and change them. (...) You don’t need a sermon for this. Just singing and music to make the connection with God.”⁵⁵¹ Pastor Jacky Manuputty agrees, noting that music is not attached to liturgy, but a main part of it. For him music plays a similar role as the sermon and prayer: “Sometimes we speak too much in our sermon. The power of the message will come through the music. I will just speak three or four sentences, and then I will drive all the energy of the people to the center and pull it out from the music. And without telling every single word, the meaning is heard.”⁵⁵² In the same light, theologian Agus Batlajery said that doctrine and convictions can be expressed by music. Music becomes theology, strengthening and implementing belief.⁵⁵³ The emphasis on Moluccan musicality and the implementation of Christian religion is brought forward more often. Singing and hearing music affects an internalization of Christian values.⁵⁵⁴ Theologian Steve Gaspersz beautifully summarized this point: “music is the heart of theology. There is no theology without music for me. Especially for us as Moluccan people. We learn our faith through music. So I think I cannot imagine that we can be Christians without music.”⁵⁵⁵

⁵⁴⁹ Interview with John Titaley.

⁵⁵⁰ Interview with Jance Rumahuru.

⁵⁵¹ Interview with Semy Toisuta. Translation by author.

⁵⁵² Interview with Jacky Manuputty.

⁵⁵³ Especially for Moluccan people since they are musical men and women (Interview with Agus Batlajery).

⁵⁵⁴ Interview with Cornelis Adolf Alyona.

⁵⁵⁵ Interview with Steve Gaspersz.

The historical context of Moluccan music

Traditional church music in Moluccan Protestantism as theologically proposed by Chris Tamaela is situated in a broader historical context of popular music. The hybrid popular culture that characterizes the present-day Moluccan musical landscape is embedded in global capitalism, political regimes and historic colonial intervention (Barendregt et al. 2017, 12). In the 19th century, popular dances and accompanying music from the West influenced musical styles in the colonized land. In the beginning of the 20th century, Hawaiian music was introduced in the Moluccas which developed into one of the most popularly enjoyed genres in the archipelago up to today. Itself being a product of Austrian waltzes, military marches, Christian hymns, and native Hawaiian music, the novel sounds and instruments like the steel guitar and ukulele became incorporated in many Moluccan musical repertoires (Barendregt et al. 2017, 30-31). Also, under the forces of modernity and globalization rock and roll music and Western pop began to be dominant. Western music became associated with modernity and development and for that reason was propagated by the political regime of Suharto. He invested in Western-styled music which resulted in the formation of what today is called ‘pop Indonesia’. This refers to Anglo-American-inspired popular music sung in English or, more often, in the national language. It stands for modern amplified music, mostly played by Western instruments at indoor venues – therefore being marked as progressive as many traditional performances take place under the sky (Barendregt et al. 2017, 59-60). In this way music contributed to a Western-oriented lifestyle that helped people to distinguish themselves from the working class as well as from indigenous Moluccans (Barendregt et al. 2017, 12).⁵⁵⁶ Besides Hawaiian music and pop Indonesia, pop *Melayu* and *Kroncong* also fall under the category of ‘national music styles’ that emerged in the aftermath of the newly gained independence (Barendregt et al. 2017, 46, 67; 2014b, 28). Pop *Melayu* mixes Western instruments such as percussion, guitar, piano or violin with indigenous instruments, rhythms, and verse structures that signal a link to ‘*Melayu*’ identity.⁵⁵⁷ As many places in south-east Asia for centuries have been the crossroads where cultural practices from everywhere have merged in a multitude of new social forms and artistic genres, it is these places “that often

⁵⁵⁶ It became a tool to mark ‘us’ versus ‘them’, differentiating between the urban progressive and village backward (Barendregt 2014b, 18). So, the incorporation of Western popular music qualified music as being modern. Elements consisted of specific songs or dance rhythms, harmony or arrangement, and Western instruments (Barendregt 2014, 7).

⁵⁵⁷ This identity stood (and stands) for tradition, a connection to forge with fellow Malays, and for something larger than promised by the contemporary Indonesian nation and its neighbor Malaysia (Barendregt 2014, 28-29). Nevertheless, compared to pop Indonesia, pop *Melayu* always continued to be regarded as less modern (Barendregt et al. 2017, 60).

acted as entrepôt between the larger world and its hinterlands and as a main interface through which modernity was communicated among the new national communities of postcolonial Southeast Asia” (Barendregt 2014b, 26). As one of such places, popular music in the Moluccas thus mainly is a tale of modernity and technological progress, much shaped by nationalist interests (Barendregt 2017, 60).⁵⁵⁸ However, modernity is not an unambiguous, universal phenomenon, but relationally and situationally framed, having various meanings which especially become explicit in the realm of the entertainment industry: “In its constant urge to produce ever new fashions, lifestyles and markets, we find a glimpse of how and why people have taken up ideas of the modern, how it is made, unmade and remade, paying ample attention to how such reconfigurations may serve various claims and are constantly haunted by yet others” (Barendregt 2014b, 5-6). National musics themselves can be considered as hybrid forms which articulate local musical elements with Western elements that index modernity. This ‘strategic hybridization’ not only mediates between the local and global but also between cosmopolitanism and the preservation of cultural distinctiveness: “The ongoing dialectic of local, regional and the global, then, importantly feeds into what is popularized as being modern in a certain place and at a certain time” (Barendregt 2014b, 28). Towards the end of the 20th century, one such different meaning of modernity developed in Indonesia when music was used to mark identities in response to the coming together of a multiplicity of ethnicities through rapid urbanization. While national policymakers tried to subjugate ethnic sentiments to nationalist tactics, such as the folklorization of the regional arts, music particularly had an answer to these changing realities through the articulation of what Barendregt (2014b, 32) calls ‘the ethnic modern’: traditional music was connected to urban trends and technologies (*lagu-lagu daerah*). Localized forms of identity were re-engaged through music targeted at people from a specific region or ethnic group (resulting in for example pop Ambon).⁵⁵⁹ For instance, lyrics could be in local languages or dialects, such as Ambonese Malay (Barendregt 2014, 33). It is important to stress that the use of electronic instruments does not disqualify the music as ethnic or local. While keyboard synthesizers may have a standardizing effect on the pitch, the use of other ethnic elements such as language, instruments, tunings, rhythms, melodies and traditions make audiences recognize a regional

⁵⁵⁸ Popular songs may serve to harness the interests of leaders, politicians or others affiliated with the government apparatus. In this way the singing of songs also has something to do with power and status (Barendregt 2014, 29).

⁵⁵⁹ Moreover, local musical scenes become connected with larger communities beyond the nation or even the south-east Asian region (Barendregt et al. 2017, 93).

style through which they can identify with a traditional community (Barendregt 2014b, 34).⁵⁶⁰ Songs are thus presented in a modern setting, removing the image of backwardness while not losing pride of one's tradition. The old is combined with the new and local traditions with foreign cultural forms, making the music something novel and modern yet at the same time traditional (Barendregt et al. 2017, 10).⁵⁶¹ However, the ethnic modern also shows ambiguity as it mostly remains a prerequisite of urban residents, detached from traditional ritual contexts (Barendregt 2014b, 35). The history of Moluccan popular music demonstrates how 'ethnicity' and 'modern' are social constructs, showcasing various interpretations over time and space (Barendregt et al. 2017, 66).⁵⁶² Hence, the label 'ethnic' is quite flexible in the context of modern music. An ethnic song can be strategically articulated as modern in different ways and what counts as ethnic can be manipulated (Barendregt et al. 2017, 68).

Western musical influence, nationalist styles, associations with modernity and the ethnic modern all form the setting for a description of Moluccan traditional music and its theological replacement to a Protestant church context: dances and music introduced during colonialism, as well as the Hawaiian style, form part of the present-day repertoire of the Moluccan traditional; Western influence translates into the dominance of triadic harmony and an electrified instrumentarium (keyboard, guitar, drums) (Rasmussen 2010, 158); and pop Indonesia, pop *Melayu*, and *kroncong* continue to shape the popular soundscape in the Moluccas. As part of a movement of ethnic revival which is also embedded in a political, nationalist framework, a Moluccan 'ethnic modern' is currently constructed. Whilst severely influenced by Western music that is still associated with modernity, ethnic elements are selected, adapted, and transformed, and consequently form an innovative mix that is both modern and ethnically authentic at the same time.⁵⁶³ Thus, although the undoubtful truth is that because the material and social conditions under which traditional or ethnic music arose change the meaning of music and music itself, traditional music is nevertheless regarded as

⁵⁶⁰ In this way, modernity is seemingly articulated away from nationalist interpretations through recourse to a traditional, often ethnic affiliation (Barendregt 2014, 34).

⁵⁶¹ The process of the ethnic modern thus comprises adaptation, imitation and innovation, whereby original sources can be transformed (Barendregt et al. 2017, 49).

⁵⁶² Moreover, region or *daerah* also is a construct. It has a history and serves modern-day needs, and is related to political and commercial interests (Barendregt et al. 2017, 69).

⁵⁶³ Although Western harmony and electronic instruments are used everywhere, the ethnic part of the music aims at selecting elements that trigger identification as a Moluccan, and it is this part that gives this music an 'aura of authenticity' (Barendregt et al. 2017, 69).

immutable: it is timeless in time (Coplan 1991, 35-36).⁵⁶⁴ In the words of Coplan (1991, 40), tradition functions as the historically emergent framework of culturally grounded perception in which identity and meaning are dependent upon a symbolically constituted past whose horizons extend into the present. Tradition provides images, expressive principles and aesthetic values by means of which performances are made sensible. In this way, tradition provides authority to representations of the present by a seamless connection with the remote past. Music is particularly apt for this as music is crucial to the reapplication of memory and the recreation of emotional qualities of experience in the maintenance of a living tradition (Coplan 1991, 45).⁵⁶⁵ In the Moluccan context today an increase of groups playing traditional music is visible. Moreover, at school children learn how to play traditional instruments and in church these instruments are combined with keyboard or trumpet. Within contextual theology, traditional music is transposed to the Moluccan church as one of the efforts to bring Christianity in line with Moluccan ethnic identity. The term ‘ethnic’ or ‘traditional’ in relation to ‘modern’ are used in a rather flexible, vague way, which contests to the constructive nature of the ethnic modern. To achieve an authentic, immemorial connection between past and present, musical elements that evoke memory and emotion, and trigger Moluccan identification in a unified, harmless way among a large group of people are selected and used. However, this process goes not without contestation. The core of this contestation concerns the legacy of semiotic ideologies over the status of material items in religious practice (such as music), among Eastern Indonesian ‘ancestral ritualists’ and Dutch Calvinist missionaries (Robbins 2014, 168). Many Moluccan Christians grow up with the idea that cultural forms, especially things related to the ancestors, have no place in church. Therefore, mixing musical discourses and linguistic discourses – in the form of traditional music that is originally located in the *adat* context and local language practiced in combination with Christian liturgy and church music – is the source of controversy (Rasmussen 2010, 158).⁵⁶⁶ Material arts like music are thought to embody pagan spiritual qualities connected to indigenous pre-Christian religion (Rasmussen 2010, 159). While some Moluccan Christians accept the musical styles on the basis of cultural appreciation and the discourse of contextualization, others perceive this music to represent communities in opposition to their own beliefs (Rasmussen 2010,

⁵⁶⁴ The notion of immemorial tradition is essential to the symbolic construction of social experience, however has conscious origins and is “a matter of who claims what under which conditions and for what purposes” despite its performance as a reified, unitary form of identity (Coplan 1991, 36).

⁵⁶⁵ Tradition represents the immanence of the past in the present, linking modes of musical communication to the forces that have shaped them (Coplan 1991, 47).

⁵⁶⁶ While Rasmussen (2010) writes about Islam, her work is used here as comparison to the Moluccan Christian context.

167). Concerning the latter, traditional music is felt to not fit (*kurang cocok*) Christianity (Rasmussen 2010, 169). Interestingly, while an authentic connection between the Moluccan past and present depends on the living tradition of the ancestors, the ancestors also form the major point of contestation with respect to traditional church music. Therefore, a successful implementation of this music in church relies on a distance with traditional ritual contexts: traditional church music is a modern, progressive theological innovation. This thus causes a dissonance in places where the theological traditional and Moluccan traditional are situated next to each other, while the theological innovation resonates more easily in ‘modern’ places further away from a Moluccan traditional context. Now that a theoretical embeddedness of traditional (church) music within a history of popular music in Indonesia has been described, the remaining paragraphs will deal with the ideas of Chris Tamaela.

Contextualization of music and liturgy in the Moluccan church

This is the title of the dissertation Chris Tamaela wrote as a result of his PhD in the Netherlands. He has studied theology in many different places, always with a focus on music. On 17 September 1957 Christian Izaak Tamaela was born in the village *Soahuku*, on the island Seram. He grew up in a very musical and artistic environment, his father being a musician, composer, artist and conductor of a choir.⁵⁶⁷ Nevertheless, Tamaela decided to study theology. He graduated at the Theological Seminary of Ambon (what later would become UKIM), and as a second ‘Bachelor’ he went to Manila, the Philippines, to study at The Asian Institute for Liturgy and Music, where he also did composition (1886-1991). In 2000 he graduated his Master at the Tainan Theological College and Seminary in Taiwan, after which he went to the Netherlands (2006) to prepare himself for doing a PhD at the Vrije Universiteit in Amsterdam. In the Netherlands he took the path of contextual theology concerning liturgy and church music:

While I play native instruments, I also sing Christian music. So it means that I grew up already through Christian music by using our instruments. That is dealing with contextualization. So I just know that God wants to use me in his hands, to be one of the Moluccans to help the people to see that our own culture is important. To give our cultural music, and to use it in our Christian life.⁵⁶⁸

⁵⁶⁷ Interview with Ro Bolton (Wycliffe employee, 11-11-2019, Ambon), Chris Tamaela.

⁵⁶⁸ Interview with Chris Tamaela.

On 9 June 2015 Chris Tamaela defended his dissertation. In between his studies and research in international contexts he always came back to Ambon. As a very active, passionate man, he never ceased learning. Until his sudden death he was teaching liturgy, music and contextual theology at UKIM, while always composing and making native instruments.⁵⁶⁹ Chris Tamaela is seen as a talented musician, theologian, artist and liturgist. He composed many contextual church songs,⁵⁷⁰ and he established music groups at the theological university⁵⁷¹ and in church, teaching them to play traditional instruments. Through his musical creativity he assisted assemblies of the WCC and CCA, he provided workshops⁵⁷² at ecumenical seminars and was present at international religious and political gatherings.⁵⁷³ It is him who encouraged and inspired the GPM to implement a contextual policy, and he himself formed part of the team working on an ethnic liturgical model. In 1991 Chris Tamaela published his *Kapata-Kapata Rohani*, Spiritual Songs from the Central Moluccas. This book is the result of fieldwork he carried out in the Central Moluccas in 1988. He documented the musics found in these areas to transport this oral cultural richness to written forms, both in cipher and staff notation, in order that people from different parts of the world can read the music. On the basis of the indigenous melodies and rhythms that he researched, Chris Tamaela wrote contextual songs for the Moluccan church by composing religious lyrics on the traditional music. With this collection of spiritual songs Tamaela contextualized music in the cultural setting of Moluccan society: “to contextualize music is to enable the people to respond to God through their local musical expressions and allowing His love and grace through their

⁵⁶⁹ Interview with Chris Tamaela.

⁵⁷⁰ Of which some are even incorporated in Asian hymnbooks, such as the *Hymnal Companion to Sound the Bamboo: Asian Hymns in Their Cultural and Liturgical Contexts*.

⁵⁷¹ In the past this was a group of up to sixty or seventy persons.

⁵⁷² Chris Tamaela worked together with Wycliffe, the organization that translates Bibles into local languages. Wycliffe also works with music, and Chris Tamaela, for instance, participated in their ‘hymn translation workshop’ to stimulate people to create songs (Interview with Ro Bolton).

⁵⁷³ In the beginning of his career he worked in a team of the government that was dealing with culture, the *Lembaga Kebudayaan Maluku*, Institute of Moluccan Culture (Interview with Chris Tamaela). Later on, the government also asked him to perform music with a group as a national representative in an international setting. Once he went to Singapore with a traditional music group from the village *Amahusu*. It was an event about folklore stories for children aimed at teachers. Chris told the Moluccan story about an unhappy woman who asks a rock to swallow her. After a few days she comes out of the rock to search for her only family left, her grandmother. The birds help her search and bring her to a better place by giving her one feather each until the woman has wings. In the end they fly away together (Informal conversation with Chris Tamaela, 9-11-2019, *Amahusu*).

Another example is that Chris Tamaela was invited to provide the opening ceremony of a UN event on religious tolerance and equality. With Christian and Muslims students from the theological university in Jakarta he created a performance. The theme was about brotherhood between Christians and Muslims (Interview with Chris Tamaela).

indigenous songs and musical instruments” (Tamaela 1991, 45).⁵⁷⁴ A famous composition by Chris Tamaela is called *Tuhan Kasihani*, or Kyrie Eleison: Lord have Mercy. The motif of this song is based on a traditional Moluccan melody. According to Tamaela, this original melody was sung or recited in front of a large rock that symbolizes the presence of the ancestor spirit. The Moluccan legend, *Batu Badaong* (that is told in many different ways),⁵⁷⁵ says that a woman was so poor and suffered so much that she and her children came to the rock and begged it to swallow them to be relieved from their miseries. Chris Tamaela contextualized this story, reinterpreting it as a symbol of one’s sinfulness or helplessness approaching the rock of salvation, Jesus Christ. In an allegorical way, Jesus is the rock of life who instead of opening his mouth to swallow the woman opens his arms to save her. The sorrowful tone of the original song fits the mood of praying for mercy. The glides away from the tones (characteristic of Moluccan traditional music), marked with downward strokes, are important for performing the style and creating the mood. The notation also includes drum accompaniment. The notes with downward stems indicate a stronger, deeper, more open sound produced by the right hand striking the center of the drum. The notes with upward stems denote a high-pitched sound produced by striking the rim of the drumhead with fingertips, while the left palm presses the drumhead.

The dissertation of Chris Tamaela

This research started with the dissertation written by Chris Tamaela, and the document most clearly expresses his ideas on the contextualization of church music. Therefore, a summary of the dissertation shall be given. In the introduction Tamaela situates his manuscript within the field of contextual theology, because church music and liturgy are essential components in the expression of Christian faith which means that their contextualization is fruitful to establish a connection between the Christian message and cultural context. As a theologian and church musician Tamaela sees it as his task to develop contextual music and liturgy that will open up new ways of understanding: “By contextualization, we can communicate the meaning of the Gospel through our music, symbolic acts, and dances. We see it as our participation in God’s continuous creation” (Tamaela 2015, 13). Through this participation, God transforms culture

⁵⁷⁴ Moreover, Tamaela encouraged other church musicians to utilize their cultural roots in their liturgical services and worships.

See appendix 6 for some examples from this book.

⁵⁷⁵ Another version tells about a woman who no longer wants to live with her children, because they do not listen to her. This version serves as an education tool for children who are naughty. A third version is about a sad girl whose parents have died (Participant observation 30-10-2019 & 31-10-2019). See appendix 7 for the translation of this song and an additional example of a contextual church song.

and arts into dynamic media that will effectively communicate the meanings of the Gospel for people today. The focus of Tamaela's study is the GPM. While he believes that the use of Western music and liturgy by the GPM should be taken into account, the GPM should also use Moluccan musical and liturgical forms based on context: "the Moluccan cultural context includes both Western and indigenous influences" (Tamaela 2015, 14).⁵⁷⁶ Thus, contextualization is about the cultural past and the changing cultures of the present.⁵⁷⁷ The main question of his research is the following: 'How can the contextualization of Moluccan church music and liturgy strengthen the relation between religion and culture in the Moluccas?' As a theoretical contribution, Tamaela coins the term *supuization*. The local term *supu* means 'obtain', 'accept' or 'respond positively'. *Supuization* thus refers to the process of welcoming, mediating and giving between two parties. It is a form of positive, creative, constructive and transformative interaction in contextual theology.

Tamaela begins the dissertation with a general description of *Maluku*, after which an elaborate explanation of indigenous music follows. It is stated that music has always been an important part of social life and religious ceremony in *Maluku*. Moluccan music has been influenced by traders from other places, as well as by the colonial West. Nevertheless, indigenous music is still in use. Each ethnic group possesses its own unique musical instruments, scales, manners of playing, singing styles, composition repertoires and dances (Tamaela 2015, 37).⁵⁷⁸ Chapter four in the dissertation is about worship in the Protestant church of *Maluku*. Tamaela explains that at the end of the 20th century significant conceptual developments resulted in new orders of liturgy to increase the richness of liturgical elements and its use in a variety of settings. He states that today the order of worship has been adapted

⁵⁷⁶ "Contextual church music in *Maluku* is based on both cultural heritages, namely the *Maluku* traditional music and the Western church music (Tamaela 2015, 71).

⁵⁷⁷ During a seminar in 2004, the GPM expressed the willingness to renew its church music and liturgy by stating that the traditional music as cultural heritage should regularly be used in a maximal, optimal and contextual way as a manifestation of the testimony of faith in the Lord. As young people appear to be less interested in their traditional music, Tamaela encourages the GPM to stimulate appreciation of indigenous music among youth (Tamaela 2015, 70-71).

⁵⁷⁸ Consequently, Tamaela names seven important values of traditional music that can be used for contextualization: 1) Music – the indigenous vocal and instrumental music formed the ancestor's music in the past. People learn it by oral tradition. 2) Language – all indigenous songs have their texts in native languages. 3) History – events that happened in the lives of the ancestors can be known through the vocal music of *kapata*. These songs are the vehicle for knowing about Moluccan society and culture in the past. 4) Religion – the indigenous songs also have religious values. 5) Education – indigenous songs teach local people how to live according to the cultural norms. 6) Dance – singing and dancing are integral expressions of Moluccan culture and can even transform persons to be good people. 7) Unity – singing about *pela* affirms the unity of the alliance systems (more about Moluccan traditional music will be described in the next chapter).

from those used in the Dutch Reformed Church (Tamaela 2015, 73).⁵⁷⁹ In worship, music is one liturgical element that is divided in vocal/choral music and instrumental music. Liturgically, congregational singing – considered as more authentic or appropriate – takes precedence over other kinds of music. Through singing GPM members “not only lift their beautiful voices to God, but also communicate faith, hope and love to God with their hearts and minds” (Tamaela 2015, 92). Via music people feel and understand the meaning of the spiritual message. The GPM now makes an effort to contextualize liturgy⁵⁸⁰ next to using Western liturgies,⁵⁸¹ which in themselves can also contribute to contextualization: “not only specific contextualized liturgies, but also Western liturgies can be relevant to Moluccans expressing their faith in a contextual way” (Tamaela 2015, 98).⁵⁸² The GPM has officially approved the use of contextual liturgical forms during Sunday worship.⁵⁸³ Contextualized elements include traditional instruments and songs, offerings in other forms (such as cloves, nutmeg, fish, et cetera), the bringing of offerings to a central place in a traditional basket (*kamboti*), other languages than Indonesian, the use of the conch shell (*tahuri*) or *toleng-toleng* to mark the beginning of the worship, the use of natural elements (bamboo, wood, flowers, et cetera) to make liturgical symbols (cross, pulpit, offering box, et cetera), and traditional dance (Tamaela 2015, 100-101).

⁵⁷⁹ The Dutch, Western style of worship has been used in Moluccan churches for most of the religious history. The order of worship in the beginning of the 17th century consisted of 1) An opening hymn sung by all; 2) Prayer to prepare for the reading of the Word; 3) Sermon read by the teacher or comforter of the sick; 4) Prayer in response to the Word as intercession; 5) A closing hymn sung by all. In Ambon city, the Dutch language was used during Sunday morning worship and Malay during evening worship (Tamaela 2015, 78-79). Later, the order was as follows: 1) The singing of a Psalm; 2) A prayer to open worship and prepare for the Bible reading; 3) The reading of one chapter of the Bible; 4) The reading of a sermon; 5) An intercession prayer; 6) The singing of a Psalm; 7) Conducting the offering in front of the main door (Tamaela 2015, 80). Nowadays, one can still find these Dutch Calvinist legacies. Almost all liturgical models, for instance, follow Calvin and employ the use of Psalm 124:8 as votum. Other liturgical elements based on Calvin’s teachings include the Confession of Sin and the Declaration of Pardon (Tamaela 2015, 93, 97).

⁵⁸⁰ Two reasons are named: “To enable local people to express their faith in God, using their rich cultural heritage, and to let them experience God’s presence and enjoy His love and grace through indigenous songs, musical instruments, dances and symbols.” And: “To enrich GPM worship services with the contextual liturgies, and to infuse GPM congregations with a new understanding of worship through their own precious cultural art forms, in addition to expressing their faith through the Western liturgical tradition with its religious authenticity” (Tamaela 2015, 99).

⁵⁸¹ The reasons for continuing the use of Western liturgies is the fact that these formed the basis for ministry in the GPM for more than 300 years and are therefore felt to be still relevant; that Western liturgical expressions are an integral part of how GPM members learn about and connect with God; that the contents and formulas of Western liturgy have been ingrained into the spiritual life of the GPM and have been successful in the spiritual formation of Moluccan Christians; and that there are values in Western liturgical forms that culturally fit well with the Moluccan expression of faith (Tamaela 2015, 98).

⁵⁸² The liturgies can also be mixed.

⁵⁸³ Since 2005 the GPM has six new orders of liturgy (Tamaela 2015, 99-100).

For the purposes of this thesis chapter five on the contextualization of church music is the most important.⁵⁸⁴ The chapter begins with theological implications of church music. Church music is an integral part of Christian worship as it is expressed in both liturgy and daily life. Through hymns, psalms, choral music, musical instruments and other spiritual music congregants express their faith in God and share their Christian faith with others. Moreover, church music is art – an aesthetic expression of ecclesiastical character (Tamaela 2015, 104).⁵⁸⁵ Church music is biblical and God-centered and has a communal goal. Theology is about relationships, “and musical performance evokes and enacts these relationships, engages persons in intuitions of God’s presence and action within the church-at-worship, situates a community within its own political, social and cultural history, and shapes their actions in the world, as it is an integral part of the theology embodied in worship” (Tamaela 2015, 108).⁵⁸⁶ Tamaela continues with a brief history of church music in Indonesia,⁵⁸⁷ after which efforts of contextualization are addressed. In this light, *Yamuger*, founded in 1967, is an important organization, envisioning the development of church music in Indonesia.⁵⁸⁸ *Yamuger* published the songbooks *Kidung Jemaat* and *Pelengkap Kidung Jemaat*.⁵⁸⁹ The

⁵⁸⁴ Tamaela describes that the GPM Institute of Congregational Development, the GPM Church Music Team, and Wycliffe International work in partnership to contextualize music and liturgy.

⁵⁸⁵ The function of church music is based on biblical references, as music is mentioned in the Bible over 839 times. In the Old Testament, God ordained His people to worship Him by singing and praising, playing musical instruments, and lifting their hands up to the Lord, even dancing before His name. Tamaela describes several functions of church music: communication, expression of faith, praise, adoration and thanksgiving, supplication and self-surrender, inviting the presence of God, unity of the people, consolation, testimony of faith, aesthetic expression, and moral education (Tamaela 2015, 104-105).

⁵⁸⁶ In worship psalms, hymns, spiritual songs, choirs and musical instruments are used. Hymns refer to a lyrical composition expressing genuine religious feelings. The formal structure of a hymns is multi-stanzaic, each stanza being an arrangement of the same number of verses in their respective meters. A stanza is a portion of a hymn, consisting of a series of lines arranged together in a recurring pattern of meter and rhyme. Hymns are essential in education, teaching scriptures and doctrinal truths. It is seen as an essential liturgical element and the most commonly used form in worship. Spiritual songs refer to songs that exhibit Christian spiritual values. Both hymns and psalms are categorized as spiritual songs. The GPM uses both official songbooks and spiritual songs that are not officially recognized (spiritual pop songs, for instance). Choirs encourage and guide congregational singing (Tamaela 2015, 110-111).

⁵⁸⁷ The Dutch introduced the Genevan Psalms in *Maluku*, which means that many songs used in GPM services today are adaptations from those used in the Netherlands (Tamaela 2015, 114). The rest of the history has already been explained in Chapter Two.

⁵⁸⁸ Harry van Dop, having been involved in the *Yamuger* team, states that the future of church music is contextual church music. The Indonesian culture is very open to influences from outside without losing its own identity – a flexibility that is able to contextualize church music (Tamaela 2015, 119). This should be accompanied by critical judgment and ecumenical efforts. Furthermore, “the presence of music and texts created by the Indonesian composers within and for the Indonesian context may incite all of us to enrich church hymns with our own products” (Tamaela 2015, 120).

The tasks of *Yamuger* are: the collecting of hymns and songs, translation, composition, training, and publication (Tamaela 2015, 120-221).

⁵⁸⁹ Some information on this songbook, and on the subsequent songbook *Pelengkap Kidung Jemaat*, has already been presented in Chapter Two. *Yamuger* translated various songs from different cultures and

contextual songs in these compositions involved the cooperation between composers, theologians and linguists (who discussed historical backgrounds, church denominations, musical experiences, ethnic and cultural aspects, origins of songs, et cetera), the support toward ecumenism, and elements of ethnic music (other scales, motives, phrases, forms, and ornaments) (Tamaela 2015, 124-126). Subsequently, Tamaela focuses on church music in the GPM.⁵⁹⁰ The endeavor of the GPM to contextualize church music is based on the goal to “open new ways of understanding the Gospel and its message through the beauty and uniqueness of Moluccan indigenous songs and musical instruments” (Tamaela 2015, 135). Contextualization consists of the use of traditional music in worship services, the translation of Western hymns and psalms in local languages, and the collection of hymns by local composers (Tamaela 2015, 136-138).⁵⁹¹ Theologically, Tamaela (2015, 139-140) sees Christian theological values as the content of church music. Although there is nothing wrong with the fact that people internalized Western theological values in Christian music, a transformation of the theological meaning of these biblical words is needed so that Moluccan Christians can understand them in their cultural context.⁵⁹²

In the final chapter Tamaela (2015, 148) explains the process of contextualization in the field of church music and liturgy through introducing the term ‘supuization’: “The purpose of supuization is the interaction and working together between two parties in order to create something good.”⁵⁹³ The model can be applied to relations between humans and

countries into Indonesian. Several songs were composed by Indonesians, imitating a Western Gospel style with a diatonic scale, and several hymns were adapted from existing traditional folk melodies with Indonesian ethnic music scales. From the 478 hymns, 106 are composed by Indonesians. The *Pelengkap Kidung Jemaat* has 43 Indonesian-composed songs out of the 159. When Indonesian traditional music styles are used, the *pentatonic* scale, with five tones, is one of the main characteristics (Tamaela 2015, 122-123).

⁵⁹⁰ He stresses the use of hymns books and the Genevan Psalms that have been improved by *Yamuger* to make them easier to sing.

⁵⁹¹ While pleased with the efforts of the GPM, Tamaela (2015, 145) also indicates some issues for improvements: the older hymnbooks use difficult language for younger people; choirs do often not execute the primary function of leading which makes it difficult for congregants to sing new songs properly; music players and singing congregants often have not enough theoretical musical knowledge and perform by heart, which results in a lack of introductory music, no elaborated harmony and wrong tones or rhythms; there are only a few children’s choirs; many congregations do not have persons in charge of officiating the music program; and some church members are hesitant to accept the use of traditional music in church.

⁵⁹² Thus, Western church songs that continue to be used have the contents of Western theological values, based on the biblical context and Western cultural context in the past. This is not a problem, because this history is also part of the Moluccan church nowadays. Nevertheless, Tamaela would like to transform the theological meaning on the basis of contextualization in order that Moluccans can receive and respond to these songs from their Moluccan identity, thus adding a contemporary Moluccan context in the theological meaning. See appendix 8 for examples of contextual songs in diverse songbooks.

⁵⁹³ Ancestors (the higher Gods) are an integral part of the life of local people. They believe that the ancestors are giving themselves to be their protector, as a source of life and savior. The ancestors receive them as their descendants. They think, feel, meditate and work on the good things, which have to be passed on to their

ancestors, humans and the Christian God or between humans themselves. It shows the interaction between the Gospel and local culture or between Christ and Moluccans (Tamaela 2015, 148, 151): Moluccans receive the Gospel, and their faith responds through church hymns and liturgical elements in accordance with the culture and spirituality of Christianity in one's own context (Tamaela 2015, 152).⁵⁹⁴ The dissertation is concluded with some hopes for the future of the GPM, consisting of trainings on church music and liturgical services, the use of both Western and indigenously-inspired psalms which will change the perspective of church members, education for church musicians and artists, and the development of interfaith meetings – patterned after the cultural identity and values of *Maluku*'s existing art forms which could perhaps result in an interreligious confession of faith based on local culture expressed through songs, dances, symbols and language (Tamaela 2015, 170-172).

The vision and ambition of Chris Tamaela

Chris Tamaela theologized Moluccan local culture by using dance, language, clothes and mainly music. Interestingly, while he was one of the most progressive theologians, working with ancestral sources of communication, he also recommended the GPM not to do away with the older Western hymnbooks, seeing them as Christian heritage and contextual sources in themselves. In his studies he researched and documented many indigenous musical traditions,

descendants from generation to generation. Then the ancestors give a positive response to them by providing cultural values. In the other direction, Moluccans give themselves to communicate with the ancestors. They are accepting the ancestors as Gods who have great power and strength in their lives. They respect and obey certain words and promises of the ancestors and meditate and work on them. They respond by still making contact with the spirits of the ancestors (including the lower ancestors), also as Christians (Tamaela 2015, 150). This dynamic can be applied to the relation between Moluccans and Christ as well.

⁵⁹⁴ Tamaela employs the model to church music and liturgy by describing four steps: the will to accept the indigenous cultural art forms; the reception of the cultural art forms with a positive motivation; the process of creating contextual church music and liturgy (see appendix 9 for examples of contextualized symbols and dances); and the implementation of church music and liturgy in the GPM (Tamaela 2015, 152-168). All steps have sub-aspects that are important. 1: the nature of God's love and the love of ancestors as basic theological ideas for contextualization; the will to accept that the cultural art forms are contextual; culture is an integral part of the incarnation of God in Christ (with some aspects from culture that oppose positive values which thus cannot be used); all singing, musical instruments, dances and symbols are a gift of God; not all aspects of syncretism are contrary to the Gospel; xenophobic attitudes have to be avoided and interreligious relationships encouraged. 2: studying the background of music, dances and symbols; studying musical features; studying singing style and manner of performance; studying musical accompaniment; studying text and tune relationships; studying indigenous dance; studying the symbolic language of the local culture. 3: selecting materials and creating contextual hymns, dances and symbols; the role and position of ancestors in the Moluccan indigenous religion; transformation of God and Christ as the ancestors in the cultural context of *Maluku*; transformation of the name of Christ as ancestor in indigenous language in hymns and liturgy. 4: distinguishing between the role of indigenous cultural art forms and cultural contextual art forms used in worship.

so that next generations will know and play this music.⁵⁹⁵ Already in the 80s he started to develop ethnic services and set up ethnic music groups. He explained the reason as follows: “We have to go back to our own cultures, we have to dig, we have to uncover it.”⁵⁹⁶ For Chris Tamaela it was important to use native music as tool to worship the Lord: contextualization inherently means dealing with Moluccans’ own music. He called God in his native language, *Upu Lanite Kai Tapele*, and worshipped Him with traditional music: “I think God loves it”.⁵⁹⁷ As became clear in the dissertation, Tamaela based his theology on Moluccan cosmology. Although many people are hesitant to praise God by using one’s own culture in worship – afraid of the punishments of the ancestral spirits – Tamaela clarified that traditional music in church is not directed to the human ancestors, but to the divine ancestors; the highest God. Since the human ancestors also believed in one supreme creator, this core stays the same and also forms the core of Christianity. Historical change shows different names for the divine, but Moluccans always believed that “someone created the tree, the water, the air, even themselves.”⁵⁹⁸ This is why they can see Christ in context. Therefore, according to Tamaela, pre-Christian religion has an important place in contextual theology, because indigenous theology already is present in Moluccan culture. Only a small transformation enables people to meet Christ via culture. This process concerns a contextualization in context, which Tamaela conceptualizes in multi-layered ways. The biblical context, in which people in the Old Testament praise God by singing and playing different local instruments, allows for contextualization and forms the prime inspiration: “It is like the gate that opens our mind, our thinking. In dealing with contextualization today as people now in this millennium.”⁵⁹⁹ However, according to Chris Tamaela, the Christian context is not confined to the Bible, but also includes a human, cultural and environmental context.⁶⁰⁰ For instance, God gave everybody a voice to talk to Him, which means that one is already doing theology “in one’s context, in one’s life, inside oneself.”⁶⁰¹ In short, Chris Tamaela thought it is important to use local music in worship, because he is a Christian for whom it is allowed to use native music as it is described in the Bible, because God gave Moluccans specific musics, and because he feels and thinks as a Moluccan: “So I can (...) come to worship the Lord as Moluccan. With

⁵⁹⁵ Because in former times people merely heard it and played the music by feeling.

⁵⁹⁶ Interview with Chris Tamaela.

⁵⁹⁷ Interview with Chris Tamaela.

⁵⁹⁸ Interview with Chris Tamaela.

⁵⁹⁹ Interview with Chris Tamaela.

⁶⁰⁰ The problem before was that this was imposed by the Dutch and based on a Dutch context rather than a Moluccan context.

⁶⁰¹ Interview with Chris Tamaela.

my face, with my hair, with my heart, with my mind, with my smile, with my voice, with my singing, with my dance.”⁶⁰²

The creation of traditional music

Besides researching and playing traditional music, Chris Tamaela composed traditional songs and even made new traditional instruments, which demonstrates the interesting relationship between tradition and novelty in Moluccan contextual theology. According to Tamaela, music needs practical things. It is not enough to simply be happy with singing the music, but new songs need to be composed: “We have to give something new to our next generation, to enrich our church with music.”⁶⁰³ When he was thinking about Moluccan music – about the drums, the gongs, the flute, and more – he did not feel satisfied. He did not only want to preserve the traditions as musical heritage because his heart told him something else: “Chris, it is better to create something to add more and more and more for the next generation. In fifty years what I do now will already have become tradition again! In the future people will say: this is our tradition! That’s why I create.”⁶⁰⁴ Therefore, Chris Tamaela brought innovation through creating songs and inventing different instruments that no one yet thought of as instruments before. For inspiration he usually meditated. He went to the field, the forest, the beach or busy people-places. Sounds from nature, from stones, from leaves, and from the street inspired him.⁶⁰⁵ He collected tones and rhythms to get ideas for composing a song or making an instrument.⁶⁰⁶ Moreover, sometimes his ideas came from native people who told him stories about instruments in the past, which in turn formed the wisdom for Tamaela’s inventions.⁶⁰⁷ For example, *Pak* Chris used bamboo as a natural ethnic material from which he created aerophone, idiophone and cordophone sounds.⁶⁰⁸ Other materials included wood from trees or coconuts.⁶⁰⁹ Instruments could even be made of stones or from elements of the sea!⁶¹⁰ Although no one taught Tamaela how to build the instruments, he believed that historically the ancestors already developed all ethnic music. As he explained, his instruments

⁶⁰² Interview with Chris Tamaela.

⁶⁰³ Interview with Chris Tamaela.

⁶⁰⁴ Interview with Chris Tamaela.

⁶⁰⁵ For example, the sounds of rowing a boat when villagers return and bring back fish (Participant Observation, 14-11-2019, Ambon).

⁶⁰⁶ The rich Moluccan nature provides many materials that can produce sounds from which many instruments can be created.

⁶⁰⁷ Interview with Chris Tamaela.

⁶⁰⁸ Aerophone refers to the vibrating element being a column of air, idiophone to the body of the instrument itself, and cordophone to string.

⁶⁰⁹ Interview with Chris Tamaela.

⁶¹⁰ The next chapter will go deeper into the instruments created by Chris Tamaela.

come “naturally from my musical feelings and ideas. I believe this is a universal way, everybody can do that. But I cannot say I am the first one who created this.”⁶¹¹ Often, Tamaela decorated his instruments with red cloth.⁶¹² Regarding the composition of traditional songs, the process of creation could be very spontaneous. For example, suddenly Chris had a melody in his head while walking or working, after which he completed this basis by adding notes, motives and text to turn it into a whole composition. When making spiritual songs he thought about the message he wanted to deliver through the music. The words had to connect with the theme of the song as well as with the melody:⁶¹³ “the soul of the melody says something about my soul. Music is human, music as human.”⁶¹⁴ Thus, the text and melody should behave together to touch the people, because “music is the heart of humans.”⁶¹⁵ This process of the contextualization of music happens in two ways. First the traditional music has to be collected (such as war songs, child songs, working songs or healing songs). Then, according to a method called *contrafact*, the melody can be taken and combined with a new spiritual text, or it can serve as inspiration for creating new music based on the traditional identity and characteristics of the original song.⁶¹⁶ For his lyrics Tamaela sometimes also used native languages.⁶¹⁷ Besides instruments and songs, Chris Tamaela created dances,⁶¹⁸ made art works and statues, and even invented a new way of clapping hands, in response to the Calvinist taboo on clapping in church:⁶¹⁹ this is the “contextualization of human bodies to praise the Lord. With your body you can create sound.”⁶²⁰

Dreams

Concerning the future of contextualization of church music, Chris Tamaela had several ambitions and dreams. Through personal encounter and as a teacher he wanted to encourage the local people to not leave traditional music behind. Two years ago, he established a

⁶¹¹ Interview with Chris Tamaela.

⁶¹² Red symbolically refers to blood, which means strength and encourages people to remember their ancestors. Moreover, the *alifuru* people wear the red cloth on their head (Interview with Chris Tamaela).

⁶¹³ For example, a calling song cannot have a low, down-like melody, but has to be loud and ascending (Interview with Chris Tamaela).

⁶¹⁴ Interview with Chris Tamaela.

⁶¹⁵ Interview with Chris Tamaela.

⁶¹⁶ Interview with Chris Tamaela.

⁶¹⁷ For example, Chris Tamaela created a pentatonic song in native language about God as a woman and a feminine Jesus, in accordance with the Moluccan cultural way of referring to God as a mother (Interview with Chris Tamaela). Chris Tamaela speaks many indigenous languages.

⁶¹⁸ An example is the ‘coconut dance’ with people hitting parts of the coconut against each other (Interview with Chris Tamaela).

⁶¹⁹ There are three new clapping styles. The first is called *plok* style, folding the hands diagonally into each other. The second is called *plak*, and is similar to the straight way of clapping. The third is called *prik*, wiping the hands off against each other. The terms refer to the sounds that are made (Interview with Chris Tamaela).

⁶²⁰ Interview with Chris Tamaela.

laboratory of music and liturgy at UKIM where people (also locals outside this institute) learn how to collect, analyze and compose music, and to use native musics in worship services. Tamaela also planned to prepare *majelis* members about the importance of traditional music in church. By education (also in the form of seminars, lectures and workshops), fieldwork and publication he worked toward this goal.⁶²¹ Moreover, Tamaela hoped that in the future GPM congregations will themselves be able to organize ethnic services with traditional music and Moluccan elements and formulas of liturgy, using indigenous language. By theological education, preaching pastors and institutional change he aspired the GPM becoming an ethnic church, whereby atmosphere, context, and the order, execution and result of worship will all be based on Moluccan daily life. Appreciation of culture has to be stimulated, pastors need to be active concerning cultural practice and development of ethnic services, traditional church music needs to be taught at school, and he himself not only had to say and think about ‘Jesus as a Moluccan’, but also write about it to implement contextual terms in the Moluccan context and to convince people about cultural beauty.⁶²² In a humble way Chris Tamaela always said that it is not him, but God who used his musicality to develop Moluccan music. This humility was accompanied by his ambitious dream he revealed to me: “I have to enrich our own musical culture. My dream is that if someone asks you where you can find the most musical instruments, that you have to go to Moluccas.”⁶²³

Lessons by Chris Tamaela

This thesis began by a description of a musical examination of students following the course ‘contextual theology 2’ taught by Chris Tamaela. I joined two different groups to attend these lessons in order to see how and what Tamaela teaches. Generally, his class started with him arriving on time⁶²⁴ and with students carrying all the practical materials he needed, from music instruments to the marker for the whiteboard. He then encouraged everyone to sit as close to him as possible, which resulted in students shuffling to first rows and the shoving sounds of the wooden, brown chairs on the ground. The class always began with a prayer – sometimes in native style – and often with the singing of a spiritual song. His lessons were characterized by a combination between theory and practice, a method that is very much

⁶²¹ Interview with Chris Tamaela.

⁶²² Interview with Chris Tamaela.

⁶²³ Interview with Chris Tamaela.

⁶²⁴ This is worth noting as many teachers arrive too late.

appreciated by his students. The theory-part was presented via a document displayed with the beamer, and chaotic in an inspiring way. The students recited the text from the document, and *Pak* Chris explained the words in his unique passionate and energetic manner: frantically he wrote on the board, tapping the marker to emphasize important terms and illustrating what he said in gesture and performance. Somehow it seemed that the knowledge inside his head was too elaborate, too creative to be expressed in a straightforward way, which actually added to the feeling something special happened in this class. In between moments of chaos, truly beautiful sentences could be picked up, creative and philosophical at once, allowing to catch a glimpse of what was going on in his mind. Words alternated with dance, singing and music.⁶²⁵ When he explained different musical scales, from monodil until heptatonic (the equivalent of diatonic),⁶²⁶ swiftly he sang numerous examples. The class almost never ended earlier than planned and was closed with a prayer led by a chosen student and with assigning homework.

During these lessons I learned a lot about the contextualization of music from the perspective of Chris Tamaela. He began the series of classes with a question: how to theologize from our own musical tradition? How to deal with our own context?⁶²⁷ He first divided the term ‘context’ in two: con means challenge, and text means condition or situation. The challenge is to decide what to use from culture and how to give new meanings on the basis of Christian values. All kinds of sources can be used for contextualization (such as buildings and food). One only needs to know, “who is your God, and who are you?”⁶²⁸ Positive things from culture are transformed to enter worship service.⁶²⁹ The theologizing that accompanies this process requires an attitude of positive thinking, feeling and acting. Tamaela named two abstract contextual reservoirs. The first are cultural ideas and ways of thinking and feeling. Theologians need to use their brain to transform these ideas through creativity,

⁶²⁵ For example, when he said something about the *cakalele*, he invited one student to dance with him, and timidly the young man did under the laughter and joyfulness of the clapping class.

⁶²⁶ Western music is characterized by diatonic music, while indigenous music is not. Monodil refers to one tone, and in ascending order there are ditonic, tritonic, tetratonic, pentatonic and hexatonic scales (Participant Observation, 30-10-2019, Ambon).

⁶²⁷ The terms ethnic, traditional, local or indigenous carry the same meaning for him – the same meaning in the process of contextualization, because in themselves they differ. Ethnic refers to tribes, traditional to ancestors that pass on traditions from generation to generation, local to place, indigenous to native people and *daerah* to regional (Participant Observation, 31-10-2019, Ambon).

⁶²⁸ Participant Observation, 30-10-2019, Ambon.

⁶²⁹ Negative things should be deleted. If one makes a mistake in the contextualization process, the mistake travels to the worship service. For instance, when one wants to build a pulpit based on natural symbols, such as fish in the Moluccan sea, one has to choose a good fish, not a dangerous one! One thus cannot just take something but has to do something with it. Indigenous symbols can also be used. Tamaela mentioned the sign of a falling leaf as a dangerous omen preventing people from leaving their home. Symbols like these can be contextualized (Participant Observation, 31-10-2019, Ambon).

innovation and inspiration before they can be used in church service.⁶³⁰ The second is material or physical culture, including human beings, buildings, symbols, icons, altars or pulpits. Two approaches are employed for the contextualization of music: the spiritual approach and the practical approach. Concerning the first, a composer prays for the guidance of the Holy Spirit in creating music, to relate him- or herself to God.⁶³¹ Composers create songs and instruments that are original and that have the purpose to be sung or played by Christians to praise God in worship.⁶³² Moreover, they are bound by the ethics of spirituality of church music, referred to in Bible verses.⁶³³ These points form the basis of the practical approach, whereby one goes to the field – the context – to collect local music (which includes drawing and taking photos and videos). Questions about the function of songs, the way instruments are played and the time of singing or playing need to be asked. The music and context is then analyzed and used as inspiration for spiritual songs:⁶³⁴ “We baptize it to become Christian.”⁶³⁵ Originality is achieved through the technique of *contrafact*: the melody from the original song is taken, while the original text is replaced by a new spiritual text. In this way the song preserves its feeling of sacrality that resides in the “magical ancestral spirits” inside the melody.⁶³⁶ Tamaela emphasized the importance of the students knowing about the background of Moluccan music, because they are the ones who will later become pastors and will lead the congregational singing: they need to become a *kontekstualisator*.⁶³⁷

In his lessons Chris Tamaela stated that ‘what is music?’ is a very open question, which means that everyone can say something about it while never being wrong. For him, music is playing with sounds. He illustrated this with an experiment. As students we had to make music with our bodies. We clapped and stamped, we scratched our nails, we patted our

⁶³⁰ Only using the heart for composing songs or leading the singing is not enough. One needs to use the brains to connect with the feelings of the congregation, and to fully concentrate. Chris illustrated his point in a funny way, enacting examples of people who lift their pants, scratch their nose or do their hair – thus people who think of other things. Good songs come from the heart and the brain (Participant Observation, 31-10-2019, Ambon).

⁶³¹ Music namely comes from God, however not directly: through inspiration and creation humans do something with it. With a humble attitude, composers ask for this inspiration. In a state of *silentio*, silence, *meditatio*, meditation, and *contemplatio*, contemplation, they see the beauty in the local music and make decisions in the composing process (Participant Observation, 31-10-2019, Ambon).

⁶³² The church songs based on ethnic music are intended to praise God, not oneself. Moreover, they are a form of testimony, proclaiming Gods’ works (Participant Observation, 31-10-2019, Ambon).

⁶³³ For example: Romans 12:12 – you have to be happy; 1 Corinthians 14:15 – you have to be patient; 1 Corinthians 14:40 – you have to pray and work (Participant Observation, 31-10-2019, Ambon).

⁶³⁴ Participant Observation, 30-10-2019, Ambon.

⁶³⁵ Participant Observation, 31-10-2019, Ambon.

⁶³⁶ Participant Observation, 31-10-2019, Ambon.

⁶³⁷ Furthermore, as music is connected to customs, symbols, ornaments and other cultural elements, through contextualization Moluccan culture can also be introduced to another public.

cheeks and arms, and we waved our hair. We also had to experiment with melody, saying ‘la la la’ to create our own tunes that polyphonically crossed each other in the classroom. To show his definition, *Pak* Chris began making rhythms and melodies with his own body and voice too, while instantly starting to dance. The class began to cheer and clap, feeling his energy. In these moments it became clear that in essence Chris Tamaela is a musician with all his heart.⁶³⁸ Another time we hummed in canon, loudly and softly, as accompaniment to the singing of this musician as our teacher. With his eyes closed, in full concentration and surrender, he sang both in Indonesian and English while conducting our sounds that slowly faded away. Listening intently, he waited to open his eyes until the last tone was gone. During one class we started singing while standing in a circle. Subsequently, we had to walk counter-clockwise,⁶³⁹ stepping from right to left and clapping on the rhythm. Then, with our hands opened and arms spread, we followed his movements from bottom to top, placed our hands on our hearts, and shoveled our arms as if we were moving a boat. We ended up holding each other and swinging back and forth on the rhythm. After that we made a quarter turn, and one by one we placed our right hand on the back of the person standing in front of us, blessing each other: “*dalam nama Yesus Tuhan memberkati engkau*”. As becomes clear, illustrations and examples characterized the lessons of Chris Tamaela. Even in moments of austerity, when the students had to be called to order because they did not fully participate, Tamaela used song and laughter to wake the students up and activate them.⁶⁴⁰ The best part of Tamaela’s lessons was that they culminated in practice, whereby we as students could try the instruments he had made, performing what he had told. We sang several native and spiritual songs and instruments were distributed to us.⁶⁴¹ Subsequently, Chris Tamaela explained the different playing techniques and rhythms. For instance, the *tifa* drum has two ways of making sound: open and closed (*bunyi tabuka dan bunyi tatutup*). The first is called ‘bam’, whereby one does not put the other hand on the membrane of the drum. The second is called ‘tak’, whereby one places the hand on the membrane. The terms originate from the sounds that are produced, which is referred to as ‘onomatopaea’. Consequently, *Pak* Chris divided the class into three voices or groups that had to play on specific moments in the song, which for many were

⁶³⁸ Rather than a theologian or teacher who needs to transfer knowledge with words.

⁶³⁹ This direction is related to Moluccan cosmology.

⁶⁴⁰ In his class he showed videos of dance choreographies he made, with men and women dressed in red dancing on the beats of native music. He told about contextualized liturgies, like the funeral service of his own brother, in which native songs, native language and native instruments are worked with. For example, the conch shell was blown nine times because he belonged to the *Patasawa* ethnic group. Tamaela calls this ‘native counting’ (Participant Observation, 31-10-2019, Ambon).

⁶⁴¹ See appendix 10 for the native song *Papaceda*.

difficult to discern. Chris reminded us to play with our heart, since music also has a heart, and since music is human: “Without humans no music!”⁶⁴²

These are instruments from nature. Be one with the nature! If you want to get the inner feeling of the instrument, you have to enter it. We are learning in a room, but there is a whole world outside. Imagine that we are in nature. The air, the wind is touching us. Music has to touch us too! Music is like people speaking together. Touch and feel the instrument, that is very important. You can even kiss it! Music is human.

With tremendous velocity, energy and focus Chris Tamaela taught us how to accompany our own singing with native instruments. Counting out loud and gesturing the timing, he made us quickly understand. Tamaela even created a choreography, moving back- and forward, from front to back, waving and clapping, and turning in the end while yelling ‘olé!’ He encouraged all musicians to move a bit and not to “stand still like a closet.”⁶⁴³ With the greatest of fun and endless repetitions the practicing resulted in the performance as described in the introduction.

In his classes, Chris Tamaela taught us to use the beauty of Moluccan music in the church service, not for artistic purposes, but to worship the Lord.⁶⁴⁴ Theologizing from the cultural context also means getting to know oneself. As ‘contextualizers’, the students will be able to connect local culture and Christian theology, entangling Moluccan and Christian identity.

Experiences with Chris Tamaela

UKIM students, theologians, musicians, pastors and church members all have opinions about and experiences with Chris Tamaela. These opinions are honest, with the greatest respect for and recognition of his musical brilliance. Students see him as a unique teacher who aspired to develop Moluccan traditions, looking at religion from the character of Moluccan people. Despite the fact that he sometimes continued the lessons until evening, they enjoyed learning many new things, especially because they could sing and play directly in class. One student recounted that she met friends who said that he was a crazy person, thinking that he evoked ancestral spirits in church with music, symbols and native language. However, she was fascinated by his approach that starts at the beginning of Moluccan identity, and adopts

⁶⁴² Participant Observation, 7-11-2019, Ambon.

⁶⁴³ Participant Observation, 13-11-2019, Ambon.

⁶⁴⁴ Participant Observation, 13-11-2019, Ambon.

different sounds, words and forms. Chris Tamaela taught her and other UKIM students to appreciate their cultural origins in church. Besides acknowledging their interest in his lessons and his creativity, students also emphasized he had a good heart.⁶⁴⁵

As has already been explicated, theologians who are more theory-, Bible-, and Western-Calvinist-focused tend to disagree with the contextual approach of Chris Tamaela. Generally, progressive theologians who are not afraid to express their contested opinion and are closer to 'culture' on the contextual continuum very much admire Chris Tamaela. For John Titaley Chris was the one who could truly create contextualization.⁶⁴⁶ Steve Gaspersz emphasized the importance of Tamaela's attempt to introduce music as a medium, not only to understand God, but to experience God:

I learned a lot from Christian Tamaela. How stone, wood, trees, sand and even water can be a medium of music. And we can sing with these materials! We don't need the electric guitar or electric drum, but we can just use everything around us as a medium for praising God. I think that is the lesson that I learned from him.⁶⁴⁷

These theologians think it is of utmost importance that pastors also build their knowledge about traditional Moluccan music made from and based on natural materials. They recognize Tamaela's unique ability as a musician to lift people to another level, and express the hope that he can transfer his knowledge to his students so that they as future pastors will also be capable of doing contextualization in this way – studying culture and its intentions and implementing it in liturgy in a theologically contextual manner.⁶⁴⁸ Paradoxically, from this hope also originates the fear that Tamaela's knowledge will not be fully shared, preventing further development and propagation.⁶⁴⁹

This fear relates to opinions of musicians who are critical of the GPM policy on music while Chris Tamaela worked together with the GPM. It should thus be remembered that positions and relations often coincide with perspectives.⁶⁵⁰ One musician said that Tamaela's

⁶⁴⁵ Interview with Vally, Omy, Jeane.

⁶⁴⁶ Interview with John Titaley.

⁶⁴⁷ Interview with Steve Gaspersz.

⁶⁴⁸ Interview with Jance Rumahuru.

⁶⁴⁹ Interview with Verry Patty.

⁶⁵⁰ Chris Tamaela is a successful musician and academic, which can also arouse feelings of jealousy. Often when specific persons are chosen for specific projects, others are excluded, which is one of the main reasons for tensed relationships. An example of such a project is the making of the contextual songbook NJGPM. It became clear that musicians who did not participate are more critical of the GPM and its policy, as well as of people who were involved in the making of this book.

chaotic character prevented him from participating in local events to transfer his knowledge in a structured, comprehensible way to a broader public. According to this person, Chris Tamaela was not so much directed outwards. He, for instance, did not have a music group that played his music: “Only two people know what Chris Tamaela knows – himself and God.”⁶⁵¹ Young, local, ‘normal’ people from Moluccan society do not know who Chris Tamaela was, because Chris Tamaela only made programs for national or international purpose, which reduced impact on a local scale. Up to a certain point this may be true, however it should be noted that Chris Tamaela had music groups and transferred his knowledge to young people, yet in the Christian theological context of UKIM. Since his ambition was focused on music in the GPM, this reality makes sense. Moreover, brilliance often goes together with chaos. Nevertheless, musicians praise Tamaela’s ability of creation, his musicality and his knowledge, and agree with his musical-theological idea.⁶⁵² Some, however, think that the GPM does not yet listen carefully enough. Many musicians who support Chris Tamaela’s ideas and music-making regard him as their great inspiration.⁶⁵³ Musician Barce Istia gratefully explained that he got to know traditional music via Chris Tamaela. Transposing me to the past through his memories, he told about him and Chris singing in the Moluccan *kapata* style:⁶⁵⁴ without needing to practice, the soul of Moluccan music arose.⁶⁵⁵ Furthermore, there are more Moluccan musicians who develop Moluccan traditional instruments, following the example of Chris Tamaela. At the Christian university IAKN, music teacher Branckly Egbert Picanussa is widely known for his new plastic *suling* flute that has a better, more stable pitch and a wider range of tones.⁶⁵⁶ Moreover, the IAKN has a so-called *bengkel*, workshop, where music students create all kinds of creative traditional instruments.

Many pastors who know about Chris Tamaela support his focus on traditional church music and the ethnic service, probably also because Tamaela seems to be the protagonist of this new GPM policy that needs to be executed.⁶⁵⁷ Some well-known progressive and creative

⁶⁵¹ Anonymous, informal conversation, 14-12-2019.

⁶⁵² Interview with Rence Alfons, Semy Toisuta.

⁶⁵³ For example, as a student of Tamaela, Agustinus C.W. Gaspersz learned about the potential of local music. In his own church he then brought a *tifa* drum to accompany a church song, using the instrument as a symbol to call the Holy Spirit. Consequently, the pastor and *majelis* asked him why he took an *adat* instrument related to the ancestors to church, and in simple words he explained what he had learned from his master, stating that it was not a mistake if the music was directed at Jesus (Interview with Agustinus C.W. Gaspersz).

⁶⁵⁴ This will be explained in the next chapter.

⁶⁵⁵ Interview with Barce Istia.

⁶⁵⁶ Interview with Branckly Egbert Picanussa, Jeffrey Leatimia, Ronny Loppies.

⁶⁵⁷ Interview with Hery Siahay.

pastors even worked together with him.⁶⁵⁸ Pastor Jacky Manuputty, who himself has experience in theatre, said about Chris Tamaela that he is a very kind, humble man, and a master in music: “I really adore him in music. (...) But he tends to go in trance. So if you give him a chance, when he is in trance, then you don’t know how to stop him.”⁶⁵⁹ This did not stop Jacky Manuputty from working with him. Through communication and collaboration, with Tamaela providing the music and Jacky orchestrating the performance as a whole (with dance, symbols, poetry, artifacts, et cetera), a beautiful result was achieved.

Chris Tamaela himself said that in comparison with the past, nowadays most church members agree with his approach. More often he was invited to give a lecture at congregations or to lead a traditional liturgical worship, dressed in a native costume and with his own instruments.⁶⁶⁰ This change is also related to GPM policy. Musician Barce Istia, who knew Chris Tamaela well, recounted that when Tamaela started using traditional music and other ethnic elements in church, already in the 70s, it was not accepted by the people (who saw him as a crazy man) and prohibited from above by the GPM. Another musician remembered an international church assembly in 1984, where Chris Tamaela performed an ethnic program. Some pastors enthusiastically agreed, other pastors absolutely did not.⁶⁶¹ The disapproval had to do with the suggestion that he called the ancestors in church. They did not understand his intentions, which caused rejection. Although nowadays especially the church members of an older-generation still reason along these lines, thinking that Tamaela’s ethnic equipment of ceremony is related to the human ancestors,⁶⁶² the GPM slowly adopted a contextual approach. Recognizing Tamaela’s knowledge as a theologian and musician dealing with ethnic music and culture, they initiated a collaboration.⁶⁶³ Thus, while rejected from many sides in former times, Chris Tamaela now needed to take a patient stance to help the GPM in making small steps towards his ultimate goal. Through new contextualized GPM policy more and more people allow culture in church,⁶⁶⁴ becoming open to receive traditional

⁶⁵⁸ Interview with John F. Beay.

⁶⁵⁹ Interview with Jacky Manuputty.

⁶⁶⁰ Interview with Chris Tamaela.

⁶⁶¹ Interview with Branckly Egbert Picanussa.

Moreover, another person remembered that Chris Tamaela conducted an ethnic service somewhere, and the pastor asked him to stop (Interview with Ronny Loppies).

⁶⁶² Interview with Agustinus C.W. Gaspersz.

⁶⁶³ Interview with Chris Tamaela.

⁶⁶⁴ This does not mean that a cultural context did not exist before theologians started a project of conscious contextualization. Nevertheless, people are taught that cultural forms can be revalued on the basis of their Christian religion, and that these cultural forms are allowed in church, which diverts from what generations Moluccans have been hearing in their religious education in line with what the Dutch allowed and did not allow, and with former GPM policy.

music as they realize it is directed to the spirit of the Lord who created the ancestors.⁶⁶⁵ However, some church members are not convinced, and have the opinion that Chris Tamaela worked in a direction that is too ethnic (*etnik*). Being used to certain liturgical orders, songs and ways of worship, and embedded in a modern context, some are afraid the music merely becomes an attraction in church and an individual show. For them Western music and worship styles feel more Christian than native songs and styles. Interestingly, for this group the ethnic approach of Chris Tamaela goes too far and does not mean contextualization any longer, since they do not recognize their Christian lives in it. Moreover, unclarity adds a feeling of confusion. The concept behind an ethnic music performance is not always transparent nor straightforward. One church member stated that he did not know why and how Chris Tamaela used specific elements. For this person the ambiguity resulted in a loss of spiritual feeling, while at the same time greatly respecting Chris Tamaela as a person and musician.⁶⁶⁶ These opinions demonstrate how in a way ‘too much context’ – referring to truly ethnic Moluccan culture contrary to the modern lives most Moluccans live – can lead to the negation of contextualization. It also shows how the question of what music is not is of relevance: not all people see the music of Chris Tamaela as (church)music.

Conclusion

This chapter paid homage to the theological ideas and musical legacy of Chris Tamaela. First, the theoretical groundwork for Moluccan traditional music was laid. A history of popular music in which the musical construction of the Moluccan ‘ethnic modern’ is situated was presented. It became clear how the implementation of traditional church music, as part of the whole of contextual theology, depends on a distance between theological innovation and ritual context. In places where the seemingly oppositional meanings of ‘traditional’ – in the sense of old Calvinist theology contrary to contextual theology, and the Moluccan traditional as source of contextualization – are naturally and intrinsically linked to each other, a dissonance between contextual idea and practice is apparent. Second, Chris Tamaela’s background and studies were presented, as well as his contextual composition products on the basis of the example of the spiritual song *Tuhan Kasihani*. Consequently, the content of his dissertation with which this research initially began was summarized. Third, based on the many conversations we had, the vision of Chris Tamaela was delineated. *Pak* Chris dealt with

⁶⁶⁵ Interview with Chris Tamaela.

⁶⁶⁶ Interview with Anonymous, 19-11-2019, Ambon.

the contextualization of music from the core of Moluccan cosmology: with everything he had and was he worshipped the Lord as a Moluccan. Alongside studying, playing and theologizing music, Tamaela also composed spiritual songs and made traditional instruments inspired by Moluccan music; he created new traditional music for the next generation. He envisioned the GPM as an ethnic church with congregations being able to develop contextual liturgy and music themselves, and he dreamt of *Maluku* becoming a place of musical abundance. Fourth, Chris Tamaela's way of teaching was described. His lessons in contextual theology were characterized by a combination of theory and practice. Beautiful philosophical sentences, such as his definition 'music is playing with sounds', were directly illustrated with song, music-making and dance. Fifth, opinions about and experiences with Chris Tamaela, expressed by students, theologians, pastors, musicians and church members, were outlined. A feeling of fear for incomplete transmission of Tamaela's knowledge originates from the hope that future pastors will be capable of doing creative contextualization. Some regard Chris Tamaela as their source of inspiration, others communicated honest critiques – however all with the greatest respect and recognition of him being a musical genius. Together Chris Tamaela's ideas lead to the central contribution of his work which was stated in the beginning of the chapter, and has touched progressive theologians, pastors and musicians: music is the heart of theology.

In my heart Chris Tamaela continues singing, and in my head I repeat his life motto;

Music is human.

Figures – Chapter 5

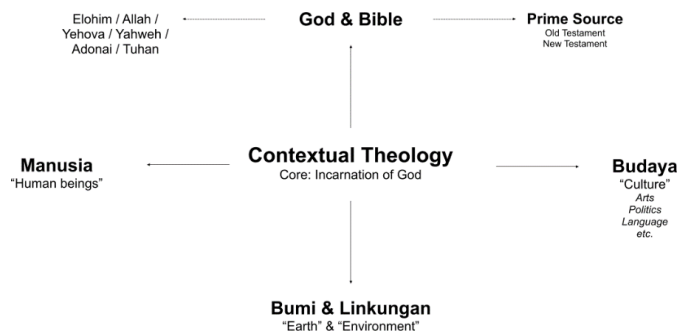


Figure 26 - Scheme of contexts in contextual theology

The image shows musical notation for the song 'Batu Badaong'. It includes rhythmic notation (numbers 1-5 with lines above) and lyrics in Indonesian. The lyrics are: 'Ba-tu ba-da-ong, ba-tu la ba-tang-ke. Bu-ka mu-lut-mu te-lang-kan be-ta. Bu-ka mu-lut-mu te-lang-kan be-ta. Gu-na-la a-pa be-la hi-dop san-di-ri, se-dang-kan i-bu su-da seng a-da. Hi-dop san-di-ri ta-la-lu su-sa. Ba-tu ba-da-ong, ba-tu ba-da-ong, Ba-tu ba-da-ong, ba-tu ba-da-ong.' There is a 'decrescendo' marking under the final line.

Figure 27 - Original song Batu Badaong (Tamaela 2015, 182)

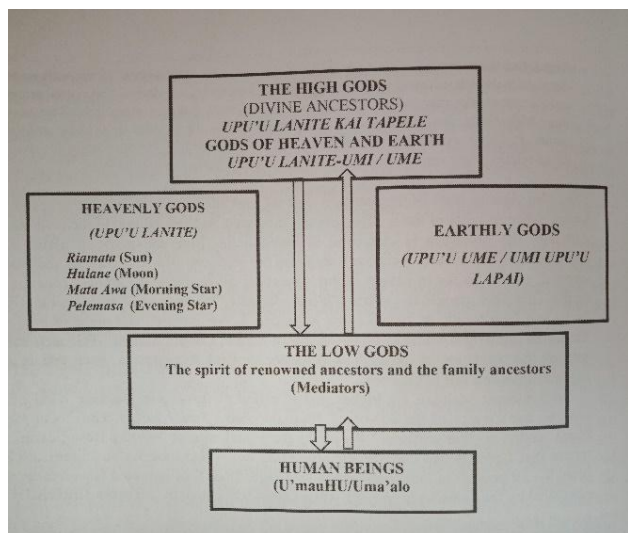


Figure 28 - Scheme of the Moluccan Gods (Tamaela 2015, 162)



Figure 29 - Chris Tamaela teaching the contextualization of church music (photo by author)

Torches with orange fire light the path that leads to the stunning view over Ambon. From the mountains of *Tuni* we see the sea, the harbor and the illuminated city. In the darkness we descend into the amphitheater of sand and climb to a place on the bamboo benches amidst children and elderly, Moluccans and Dutch, Christians and Muslims. We are waiting for the Moluccan Bamboo Orchestra, conducted by Rence Alphons.

In groups dressed in white and red the musicians are introduced. They sit down on the blue plastic chairs that form a semicircle in this arena covered by nature. Standards with microphones, large boxes and amplifiers, lamps, and black cables surround the flute players and decorate the green trees. The factions are positioned from the highest left to the lowest right, with the exception of the fifth deep *suling* voice located in the middle. Several violinists and percussionists, as well as one guitarist and cellist make the orchestra complete.

The sounds of the jungle, the insects, and the birds turn into the background of bamboo music. A woman, sitting on a blanket encircled with stones, enlightened by a high wooden torch, tells about a father returning to his family with his *perahu*, the traditional Moluccan boat. *Nafas dan ombak, naik dan turun* – waves are like breath. Blue, white light floods the landscape. All musicians start breathing into their *suling* flutes, guided by the rising and retreating tide of Rence's arms. When I close my eyes, I am truly hearing the Sea.

But the sea is full of waste. The players start walking, and a cacophony of bamboo sounds fills the air. The storyteller is standing on Dryland. Her voice is accompanied by one low, virtuoso horizontal flute, and by human-made animal tones, soft and high. The *suling* is made from nature! The orchestra begins playing, low and soft. Slowly, with Rence's position changing from weighted down to outstretched swaying, his movements from tiny to persuasive, the instruments, density and volume increase. Suddenly a poet runs barefooted through the musicians. With a lilting, sometimes shouting voice he talks about the City. The world, the nature is changing, but we are focused on digital gadgets; on our phones and on making selfies. The sung words 'extinction', 'extermination' and 'creation' shape the soundscape of the poem. What are we going to do?

The performance culminates in a message of musical Joy. Everyone is free, everyone is laughing, everyone is ecstatic. We dance, we clap and we sing on the ever-swelling sounds.

The musicians get up and repeatedly we respond to the singer together, pointing and screaming. It is a party, there is euphoria, it is an explosion of happiness. I cannot stop smiling.

6-Traditional as Modern: Moluccan Music Reconstructed

Before this third and final concert of the bamboo wind orchestra I had the opportunity to attend one of their last rehearsals. In the village *Tuni* I sat on the porch of the brick house of Rence Alphons, close to the musicians who kept arriving, up to one hour after the official start of the practicing that had been announced to me. Attendance seemed to be the most complicated problem of this whole project; the week before only one violinist out of four was present. This time the full orchestra was there, consisting of mostly young boys (from primary school up to students), a couple of girls and three older men in *suling* faction three. Freshly washed, in comfortable clothes, with the protection tube for their *suling* hanging on the black lectern, the musicians waited for the rehearsal to start. This extensive musical project involved many artistic professionals.⁶⁶⁷ In addition to the mix of creative Moluccan, Dutch and Dutch-Moluccan people, a sound engineer and a social media team were present. These young, smoking, swinging men with earrings, tattoos and striking hairstyles confirmed the artistic scene with their appearance. A cameraman walked around to shoot memorable pictures. The sound engineer controlled the boxes, microphones and lamps with his iPad, coloring the ground blue and red and the trees intensely green. In the meantime, a group of men set up some lighting installation made of scaffolding poles, with cigarettes resting in the corner of their mouth. This Moluccan atmosphere of relaxedness cannot be put into words. In a relatively short period of time the ensemble practiced a few times each week.⁶⁶⁸ During rehearsal, the playing was sometimes interrupted for discussion: *suling* faction five could not be heard well, the percussionists were too slow and the cello too loud, or intonation needed to be better. When a girl, slumped in her chair, yawned openly, Rence signaled her by slapping his cheek: wake up! The cool boys, heads covered by hats and hoods, looked at their papers with staff notation, complemented with cipher notes, and snapped or counted their fingers to follow the timing and measure. Gently they moved back and forth on the rhythm. Concentration and discipline were combined with fun: Rence made jokes and the cellist balanced his instrument on his fingertip: “*hati-hati nanti jatuh!*”, yelled the children.⁶⁶⁹ The

⁶⁶⁷ Victor Joseph and Pierre Ajawaila were the producers, Anis de Jong the director, Nel Lekatompessy the theatre-maker and storyteller, Rudi Fofid aka *Opa* Rudi the poet, Niels Brouwer the guitarist and composer of the whole piece, Ernst Reijseger the cellist, Monica Akihary the famous jazz singer, Rence Alfons the conductor and the MBO (Moluccan Bamboo Orchestra) the musicians.

⁶⁶⁸ When the team from the Netherlands arrived, it first appeared that Niels had intended a completely different sound for the sea than had been played by the MBO. However, within one hour a transformation occurred, and together they improved with incredible speed.

⁶⁶⁹ Be careful, or it will fall! Translation by author (Participant Observation, 6-11-2019, *Tuni*).

rehearsals resulted in three astounding free concerts, attended by the most diverse public I had ever seen. Little children, of whom some could predict what was coming next because they were present all evenings, were given cookies from a plastic bag by their mothers. Despite the Moluccan noisiness, all tremendously enjoyed this world-class performance on this remarkable place. The movements of the orchestra factions became an entity of itself. The voice of the singer, the range of her vocal chords, and the native language in which she sang gave me goosebumps.⁶⁷⁰ The evening had a magical atmosphere: *luar biasa*.⁶⁷¹ This assemblage of professional musicians and amateur *suling* players coming from all layers of society,⁶⁷² of indigenous instruments and Western ones,⁶⁷³ of Moluccan relaxedness and Dutch strictness, and of traditional music and an ultimate modern composition resulted in the dream of Rence Alphons. This assemblage on a unique place in a beautiful corner of the world resulted in artistic and Moluccan pride. Built on nothing but persistence, it was a success of musicality that I had never heard nor seen before.

The MBO orchestra of Rence taught me how traditional music can be modern and the other way around. Both conceptions are shaped in relation to each other and embedded in local and global musical realities. Because the theological idea of traditional church music deals with Moluccan traditional music that originated in *adat* context, Moluccan music will be the focus of this chapter.⁶⁷⁴ Thus, in this chapter I will zoom out to conceptually, empirically and musicologically analyze Moluccan traditional music. This is a necessary step in order to understand its transposition to the GPM context, which is the subject of Chapter Seven. Although the GPM works with traditional church music from a theological motivation, it is embedded in a broader societal and political revival and preservation of traditional music that is authorized through a heritage regime. This chapter particularly demonstrates how the focus on music gains insights in the construction of the traditional and the process of contextual theology. First, the conceptualization of what I will call the Moluccan traditional will be explained, followed by an ethnomusicological account of Moluccan music. Musicology, instruments, songs, and styles are discussed. Then, on the basis of five musicians and their music groups, various questions on musical education and social roles are addressed.

⁶⁷⁰ And still, when I listen to the videos I made.

⁶⁷¹ Extraordinary.

⁶⁷² The orchestra even includes *ojek* drivers, people who bring other people from one place to the next with their motorcycle for little money. This job is considered as relatively low on the social-economic ladder.

⁶⁷³ Apart from *suling*, the orchestra included Christian and Muslim percussion, a type of samba balls made of bamboo, and a xylophone.

⁶⁷⁴ With Moluccan music I also refer to Moluccan traditional music in its original *adat* context, to be distinguished from Moluccan church music or traditional church music.

Consequently, the popular music scene in which traditional music is situated is explicated. The chapter ends with a return to music in the GPM through the expression of criticism by Moluccan musicians.

The Moluccan traditional

The word ‘traditional’ is one of the key terms in the discourse on contextual theology. Moluccan traditional culture is the main source of contextualization, and traditional music is one aspect herein – central to the theology of Chris Tamaela. Therefore, it is necessary to delineate the meanings behind this term, especially since it is used in a rather open, broad and vague manner. Moluccan people who academically deal with traditional music in a theological way generally discern four different words: traditional, ethnic, local and *daerah*. Although in discourse these terms often overlap and are practically related, the Moluccan academics attach diverse meanings to them. ‘Traditional’ draws on local and ethnic culture, but is broader than that. Traditions can enter from outside, becoming incorporated in and changing local culture.⁶⁷⁵ Over the course of a very long time, these traditions evolve into something that is seen as traditionally Moluccan. For instance, the originally Western diatonic scale is nowadays seen as part of Moluccan traditional music. Introduced by Europeans, this scale has become common to the Moluccan ear since generations already. The same holds true for music styles that are from different places and came to be viewed as Moluccan music, such as the Hawaiian and Portuguese *kroncong* style. Thus, tradition is the concrete container or holder which can be explicated by all four adjectives; I see tradition as a synonym for custom which can be ethnic and local, but also traditional.⁶⁷⁶ While traditional mixes and merges, ‘ethnic’ refers to what are considered original, indigenous and pure cultural forms connected to a specific group of people. It includes the full range of ways of life that shape ethnic identity, which in this case concerns the Moluccans as a whole as well as separate ethnicities within this group. It comprises aspects like indigenous language, clothing, dance and music.⁶⁷⁷ Regarding the latter, separate ethnic groups can have their own styles of playing

⁶⁷⁵ Interview with Rence Alfons.

⁶⁷⁶ Tradition does not necessarily need to be related to Moluccan *adat* in some way; it can also be used to refer to certain manners in which Moluccan people are doing things in contemporary contexts. For instance, the elaborate preparations for Christmas, buying enormous amounts of food and presents, et cetera, is called a tradition.

⁶⁷⁷ For instance, instruments made from Moluccan natural materials such as stones, elements from the sea, bamboo, et cetera.

and singing that still share typical characteristics which define Moluccan native music.⁶⁷⁸ The terms ‘local’ and ‘*daerah*’ are connected to geography. Local points to a designated place or environment,⁶⁷⁹ and *daerah* (to be translated as ‘region’ or ‘area’, encompassing a wider space than local) has a political connotation. People in a certain region share particular traditions with each other that are impossible to trace because of the length of time these have been present in this place.⁶⁸⁰ This means *daerah* is a territorial concept that denotes traditions that by outsiders are uncritically characterized as part of the large Moluccan area.⁶⁸¹

An important distinction made by Moluccan musicians is between traditions that are from *Maluku* and that are in *Maluku*.⁶⁸² When looking at the categorizations above, I argue that the first refers to ‘ethnic’, as the tradition is held to be independently born from an indigenous Moluccan place, while the latter became a Moluccan tradition because of its presence in the Moluccas for a long time: this tradition is a mix – a collaboration with outside influence. It is the result of a transformation, and refers, in my analysis, to a traditional tradition.⁶⁸³ This is why traditional is connected to time and relevance. A tradition or custom that is regarded as traditional by Moluccans is a habit or a normality that people for a long time have been practicing in their daily life up to today, because the ancestors before them did the same.⁶⁸⁴ It comes to be seen as part of the soul of Moluccan culture, protecting cultural values, which is why people feel they have to hold on to it.⁶⁸⁵ “It is something that people practice because they still gain the meaning of that. Even though we cannot say that it is static, but dynamic. (...) Because it comes from their parents, it is part of their communal identity.”⁶⁸⁶ In my view, the mixed character is the reason that Moluccans often use the term traditional as a synonym for ethnic, local or regional: the openness of the traditional can encompass these other terms.⁶⁸⁷

⁶⁷⁸ Interview with Chris Tamaela.

⁶⁷⁹ Interview with Chris Tamaela.

⁶⁸⁰ An example is Hawaiian music that is shared by many people in the Pacific region.

⁶⁸¹ Interview with Peter Salenus.

⁶⁸² For instance, some instruments come from outside the Moluccas (for example Java or the Middle-East) while they are seen as traditional Moluccan instruments because they have been here since a long time. This is traditional music in the Moluccas, not from (Interview with Branckly Egbert Picanussa).

⁶⁸³ Interview with Agustinus C.W. Gaspersz, Barce Istia.

⁶⁸⁴ Interview with Chris Tamaela, Nik Sedubun, Omy & Jeane.

⁶⁸⁵ Interview with John F. Beay, Margaretha Hendriks, Anonymous (1-12-2019, Ambon).

⁶⁸⁶ Interview with Nancy Souisa.

⁶⁸⁷ For example, ethnic, local or regional music can all be traditional music (Interview with Branckly Egbert Picanussa, Barce Istia).

Exactly for this openness I use traditional as a noun in the context of ‘the Moluccan traditional’ – the Moluccan traditional that is constructed in the process of Moluccan theology.⁶⁸⁸ Thus, I use traditional (as a noun) as an analytical concept instead of tradition, mainly because the term tradition, with its many confusing and diffuse connotations, stands in the way of an adequate conceptualization of what is going on in the relation between theology and lived religion concerning church music. Tradition is often defined in a rather static way against modernity. The traditional, on the other hand, is employed to enable me to capture the empirical reality of traditional Moluccan music becoming church music. The concept catches the openness of the adjective traditional and has a processual character that is conducive to grasp the possibility of mixing: pasts and presents, ethnic and modern, local and global can come together in the construction of the traditional. The concept of the traditional allows to bring into the picture the historical construction of Moluccan cultural forms and traditional music, authenticated through the Moluccan ancestral lineage, which is developed upon by Moluccans in contemporary contexts. Rather than a concrete practice from the past that is called tradition, the traditional refers to the historical process that makes something traditional – a process that is to be recognized in Moluccan contextual theology.⁶⁸⁹ Hence, concrete traditions or customs travel to different places and, by time and relevance, become regarded as traditionally Moluccan. Traditional as adjective is defined by openness and mixing and the traditional refers to the process by which something becomes seen as traditional. Past and present, ethnic and modern, and local and global influences all inform this construction of the traditional. The traditional demonstrates how Moluccan traditions are not necessarily ethnic – mostly not as the Moluccas know a centuries-long history of cultural mixing – nor necessarily opposed to modernity. In unhinging the opposition between tradition and modernity, the

⁶⁸⁸ Moreover, while there exists much academic literature about the term ‘tradition’, less is true for ‘traditional’. This thesis complements writings about the concept ‘traditional’. One scholar who wrote about the traditional is Rosalind Shaw (1990). Dealing with the idea of African traditional religion, she suggests to do away with the term. The term originated from a Judeo-Christian bias, as a fill in the hole of evolutionist religious classification systems (Shaw 1990, 240-241). According to her, it is an ahistorical, essentializing and homogenizing term which therefore is not useful. On these points, whereby traditional is used as an adjective, I agree with Shaw. However, in this thesis the traditional is conceptualized as a noun on empirical grounds, whereby it is recognized as dynamic yet authentic, and from this empirical notion a reconceptualization of the word traditional follows.

⁶⁸⁹ This processual idea relates to what Alsayyad (2004) proposes in relation to the term ‘tradition’. Wanting to emphasize the process by which tradition comes to be, Alsayyad sees tradition as a model for the dynamic reinterpretation of the present: “the tangible products of tradition are those processes by which identities are defined and refined” (Alsayyad 2004, 6) – much in line with how the construction of the traditional functions in the Moluccan case. In a time of globalization, tradition has become reshaped, both co-dependent and mutually exclusive with modernity (Alsayyad 2004, 12). Alsayyad (2004, 13-14) sees the end of tradition as the end of traditional ways of thinking about tradition. Nostalgia, formalized in the form of heritage, consequently is often used to construct authenticity.

traditional is especially able to grasp how musical traditions from now and then, and from here and there, become regarded as Moluccan traditional music. Thus, to emphasize the constructivist, hybrid quality of Moluccan music and of the cultural forms that become the sources of Moluccan contextual theology I work with the noun ‘the Moluccan traditional’.

In Moluccan public discourse the term traditional is used in reference to many different contexts, both contemporary and historic, cultural and ecclesiastical. The aspects of Moluccan culture that are seen as traditional in the form of *adat*, passed on by the ancestors (such as language, clothes, dances and music as described in Chapter One), are developed upon in relation to modernity.⁶⁹⁰ For instance, nowadays modern *baju cele* are made with the addition of little figures such as the machete, shield, cloves and nutmeg that are judged to represent Moluccan culture, hereby ‘updating’ traditional clothing.⁶⁹¹ With respect to music, the same interesting combinations are apparent. For example, the ukulele is seen as both a traditional and a modern instrument, as both Moluccan and universal. Moreover, one can play all kinds of music with Moluccan indigenous instruments: traditional, modern, Moluccan, national, international, Western, indigenous and religious. Often, these instruments are even created to be able to play a Western diatonic scale, making them applicable for all music.⁶⁹² Besides the Moluccan cultural context, the traditional is also fervently used with reference to the Moluccan Christian context.⁶⁹³ In theological terms, traditional denotes a particular Calvinist mindset that forms the legacy of Dutch colonialism. From the perspective of UKIM, the Moluccan traditional that they construct as a source of contextual theology is a modern and progressive kind of traditional that is employed to correct a conservative, colonial traditional which comprises a Bible-centered, exclusive and anti-cultural way of believing.⁶⁹⁴

⁶⁹⁰ Another interesting observation about the use of the term traditional, is that I encountered several people who told me that I would find the traditional among Moluccan Christians in the Netherlands. These comments referred to two different meanings in itself: one person had the opinion that the Moluccas were already too much influenced by Western culture which led to a decrease of their own traditional identity. Another person referred to the Moluccan church in the Netherlands that is closer to the theological traditional than the Moluccan church in the Moluccas nowadays. Both comments have to do with the fact that the migration and isolation experience of Moluccans in the Netherlands led to a strict maintenance of how things were done, both in religious and cultural sense. They wanted to protect the things they knew from where they came from.

⁶⁹¹ These blouses are literally referred to as modern *baju cele*. Another example is dance. In church I once experienced a dance performance by five girls. Although their movements – the positioning of the feet, from heel to toe, and the elegance of the hands – were definitely taken from Moluccan traditional dance, the music to which they danced was from Mariah Carey.

⁶⁹² Interview with Carolis Elias Horhoruw, leader of a *tahuri* childrens’ music group, 19-12-2019, *Hutumuri*.

⁶⁹³ Examples concerning Moluccan church traditions are the Western Christian names given to Moluccan children or the black clothes worn in church.

⁶⁹⁴ Hence, this process concerns not the mere invention of tradition, but a conscious construction of a certain tradition as traditional.

In that sense, Moluccan church history is divided in groups of traditionalists and modernists, with the latter wanting to introduce a broader range of elements to praise God from the 1970s onward (such as electronic music or traditional music instead of silent worship).⁶⁹⁵ However, I would argue that such a dualistic framing of the traditional as opposite to the modern could lead to a problematic denial of the entanglements between the two, as well as of the natural contextualization relational to specific temporal and spacial embeddings that is happening since the colonial times. Indeed, many Moluccans emphasized the relational nature of the traditional, deliberately connecting it both theoretically and practically to modernity and innovation, especially regarding traditional music. Musician Jonas Silooy often organizes collaborations between his traditional music group and groups that use modern, electronic instruments. These contemporary collaborations have the potential to beautify, improve and enrich traditional music.⁶⁹⁶ Another informant told about his hip-hop group that researches local wisdom written in indigenous language as a traditional source for their lyrics. Incorporating the local within the composition of modern music, they envision to enliven and revive the traditional.⁶⁹⁷ These examples show that, whether in a popular or church context, traditional Moluccan music is innovated upon to make it interesting for present-day people, matching it with the modern context. Poet Rudi Fofid even defined traditional as innovative: “In that time traditional was innovation. What is contemporary now will later be called traditional.”⁶⁹⁸ The traditional can thus be a modern creation, a process that characterizes contextual theology too, whereby an ‘ethnic modern’ or a ‘new old’ is developed.

Since the traditional is defined in relation to (and not opposed to) the modern, it is important to know what the modern comprises in the eyes of Moluccans.⁶⁹⁹ Broadly speaking, Moluccan theology and the aimed for ethnic revival are situated in a modern context that is

⁶⁹⁵ Interview with Steve Gaspersz.

⁶⁹⁶ Interview with Jonas Silooy.

⁶⁹⁷ Moluccans use the word *tradisi* as noun and *tradisional* as adjective (Interview with Mark Ufie). The local and global can also become mixed in the opposite way. Rudi Fofid told about an example from *Kei* islands, where the people viewed one particular song in their native language as their ethnic song. However, it appeared to be a very popular international song that has been translated into innumerable contexts (Interview with Rudi Fofid).

⁶⁹⁸ Interview with Rudi Fofid, Branckly Egbert Picanussa.

⁶⁹⁹ When Moluccans state that a certain traditional people is largely closed off from modernity (*tertutup modernitas*), they mean little communication and connection with the outside world. However, this is a reality that for a large part belongs to the past. Even very remote villages now have access to internet, television, electricity and global communication. Rachel Iwamony told about the village she comes from. When she left, there was no telephone, no television, and no electricity. Ten years later many changes had happened. People even no longer eat much corn, the typical food in that place, because younger generations do not want to be a farmer (Interview with Rachel Iwamony).

defined as global and millennial, characterized by a zeitgeist of digitalization.⁷⁰⁰ Theology⁷⁰¹ as well as traditional music need to be developed in relation to this global changing context.⁷⁰² While modern life and globalization are at the same time seen as forces that threaten the traditional,⁷⁰³ preservation partly and paradoxically depends on the building on these forces. As pastor Jan Matatula explained: “We don’t want that our *adat*, our culture, is slammed down by the millennial world. We want to combine it in order that society will live happily with their preserved culture which however is not closed off against contemporary developments and changes.”⁷⁰⁴ Thus, although modern culture becomes Moluccan culture too, people think it should not erase traditional culture.⁷⁰⁵ In the same light, modern developments shape the importance of the continuation of traditional music, which does not mean that one cannot be modern – on the contrary.⁷⁰⁶ Modern music commonly means electronic instruments, such as keyboard, guitar and drums, or Western instruments, such as violin or trumpet. Songs are sung in English or Indonesian and popular styles are hip-hop, pop, R&B and rock. Modern music is often associated with the West, with technological development and with higher status.⁷⁰⁷ In church, theologians and pastors who execute GPM policy express the need to integrate traditional music, that is experienced to be a strong part of Moluccan culture, with modernity to follow the change of times so that all can enjoy the service.⁷⁰⁸ Here, people mainly refer to keyboard and brass when talking about modern music.⁷⁰⁹ It is

⁷⁰⁰ Interview with Anonymous (9-12-2019, Saparua), Chris Tamaela.

An example is the conceptualization of contextualization. As musician and Christian Egbert Picanussa stated: “I think we have to make a new meaning of contextualization. Because sometimes people will think about contextualization and think about the old one. But for me, it is how we use the good from the old, and how we can develop it now, so that people will know that God is present here.”

⁷⁰¹ In this respect, a pastor told me about his theological idea of the ‘liquid church’. The millennial generation does not often come to church anymore. He wants to respond to this reality by downgrading the importance of the church building, focusing on the development of theology from the viewpoint of the younger generation.

⁷⁰² Traditional music groups collaborate with other instruments and play modern music to revive Moluccan traditional music by making the connection with modern culture that is popular among the youth.

⁷⁰³ Interview with Rudi Fofid.

⁷⁰⁴ Interview with Jan Z. Matatula. Translation by author.

⁷⁰⁵ Pastor John F. Beay stated that traditional culture can be revived again because despite the fact that present-day generations start to forget their culture through modern life, they will always be moved by the core of their Moluccan identity (Interview with John F. Beay). One of the UKIM students stated that although they develop their identity as people living today, they do not forget but remember their Moluccan culture and identity (Interview with Omy & Jeane).

Nevertheless, it should be noted that while in a Christian theological and musical context it is largely agreed upon that the traditional should be preserved in relation to the modern, others in society regard the Moluccan traditional as primitive and uninteresting, blocking their way to a modern life (Interview with Peter Salenus).

⁷⁰⁶ Interview with Barce Istia.

⁷⁰⁷ Interview with Agustinus C.W. Gaspersz.

Much in line with what Barendregt et al. (2017) stated, presented in the former chapter.

⁷⁰⁸ Interview with Anonymous, 17-11-2019, *Hutumuri*.

⁷⁰⁹ Interview with Anonymous (*suling* player, 10-11-2019, *Soya*), Anonymous (18-12-2019, Ambon).

these instruments that children nowadays often want to learn, rather than traditional instruments.⁷¹⁰

Moluccan traditional music

Now that the Moluccan traditional has been conceptualized in relation to ‘ethnic’, ‘local’, ‘regional’ and ‘modern’, the meaning of Moluccan traditional music can be addressed. In line with the afore-mentioned concepts, musician Rence Alphons stated that strictly speaking, from an ethnic point of view the Moluccas almost no longer have a local musical tradition since the arrival of the missionaries. Indigenous Moluccan music is characterized by rhythm, not to be compared with anything familiar to the Western ear.⁷¹¹ Driven by both religion and politics, in spreading Christianity missionaries tried to extinguish Moluccan culture that had a connection with indigenous religion, including ethnic music because this music was used in *adat* rituals. Moluccan music that is nowadays seen as traditional, originally comes (for the most part) from Europe or the Middle-East – even the instruments that are named first when asking about Moluccan music have their origin in Christian, Islamic, Hindu or Buddhist culture.⁷¹² Through time, these instruments and musics became incorporated in Moluccan culture, a process that John Beay indicated as ‘naturalization’: they came to be used as an expression of Moluccanness, transforming into something characteristic of the Moluccas in interaction with own Moluccan styles and feelings.⁷¹³ Chris Tamaela confirmed this process. Since a long time in the past Moluccans were in contact with other people from other places who brought their musical traditions, which led to musical development.⁷¹⁴ In the process of naturalization, foreign music becomes a Moluccan tradition, mainly through the key aspect of the traditional, the ancestors. The Moluccan ancestors had native music and through acculturations and developments a dynamic musical history has been created. The ancestors sang, played instruments, made instruments, and expressed the music – for example to entertain themselves or in worship. They practiced the music from generation to generation by

⁷¹⁰ Interview with Ronny Loppies.

⁷¹¹ Moreover, every village or ethnic group had its own way of rhythm. Furthermore, while musicians nowadays use a tuner to make sure a certain tone is exactly that tone, in former times people just made an approximate tone based on hearing (Interview with Brankly Egbert Picanussa). Also, lyrics were sung in indigenous language, which nowadays is almost completely gone (Interview with Semy Toisuta).

⁷¹² Interview with Rence Alfons.

⁷¹³ Interview with John F. Beay.

⁷¹⁴ Examples are Chinese, Arabs, Portuguese, Dutch, et cetera (Interview with Chris Tamaela).

oral or mnemonic communication.⁷¹⁵ Ancestral transmission is signified by the term *turun temurun*, which means ‘hereditary’. This, in combination with musical use since a long time ago (*digunakan sejak dulu*), for many concerns the core of what traditional music is.⁷¹⁶ Another important aspect is soul, *jiwa*. Traditional music contains a certain core that is connected with peoples’ lives and culture, with how they grew up and with how they were formed,⁷¹⁷ bringing it close to personal feelings: “There is identity inside traditional music”.⁷¹⁸ This soul is expressed in an assemblage of music, singing, instruments, dance, clothing, and ritual,⁷¹⁹ among people in their relations with each other, with their environment and with God, engendering societal values and norms.⁷²⁰ Thus, traditional music is part of a whole network of interconnecting appearances that evoke a deep feeling associated with Moluccan character and identity.⁷²¹ “It’s not something that you can just hear and understand, but you have to feel it. Music nowadays, you just listen to it and you understand. It is gonna be different with traditional music.”⁷²² Musician Semmy Toisuta combined the aforementioned elements in his definition of traditional music: “It is a musical power that has an identity, a soul and procedures for following the owners’ tradition.”⁷²³ Apart from these central aspects, I spoke to some people who had their own beautiful interpretation of what traditional music means to them. Jacky Manuputty said that for him, Moluccan traditional music is not an instrument, but the way of composing which expresses Moluccan uniqueness. He wants to draw inspiration from movements of daily life with a rhythm and administrate the particular notation. Compositions can be based on these movements related to value and custom, such as people returning with their boat, the morning sounds of starting up daily life, the production of *sopi*, and rhythms connected to nature (for example waves):⁷²⁴ “It will be

⁷¹⁵ Interview with Chris Tamaela.

⁷¹⁶ Interview with Anonymous (1-12-2019, Ambon), Anonymous (17-11-2019, *Hutumuri*).

⁷¹⁷ Traditional music, namely, is also connected with place. Certain villages have a certain musical culture, such as rhythms, melodies and instruments (Interview with Jan Z. Matatula, Anonymous (10-11-2019, *Soya*)).

⁷¹⁸ Interview with Jance Rumahuru.

⁷¹⁹ Rituals such as the heating of *pela gandong*, the inauguration of a village chief, the signaling of an announcement, working together on a building or a marriage ceremony (Interview with Jonas Silooy, Rudi Fofid).

⁷²⁰ Interview with John F. Beay.

⁷²¹ Moreover, traditional music is not only connected with daily culture and character, but also with questions of environmental conservation. For instance, some instruments depend on the availability of natural materials, such as bamboo. The knowledge about the techniques to make instruments and to preserve the natural environment is part of the local wisdom connected with traditional music (Interview with Ronny Loppies).

⁷²² Interview with Mark Ufie.

⁷²³ Interview with Semy Toisuta. Translation by author. “*Satu kekuatan musik yang memiliki identitas, jiwa dan tata cara mengikuti tradisi pemiliknya.*”

⁷²⁴ And even how the youth adjusts itself to modernity.

unique. And it will be in rhythm.”⁷²⁵ Rudi Fofid sees traditional music as part of traditional culture and religion, which is always connected to other people because traditional music means ‘bringing together’. Moreover, traditional lyrics have a strong social-emotional relation, expressing love for and memories of other people, family, one’s village, and more: “From music you can get harmony.”⁷²⁶

The fact that many Moluccans see traditional music as part of their cultural identity in turn forms the main reason for the wish and importance of preservation.⁷²⁷ In this respect the words *mempertahankan*, *melestarikan* and *kembangkan* (maintain, preserve and develop) are often used to denote what needs to be done. Especially in what is called the ‘global era’, people find it important to hold on to their original roots of which traditional music forms part. So, despite the technical meaning of traditional, referring to a historic reality of mixing, traditional music is regarded as indigenous culture, shaping the feeling of Moluccanness – which does not mean that this is a static ahistorical construction. It should be further developed, created and improved in order that future generations will know and learn about it, preventing its obliteration.⁷²⁸ Present-day Moluccans received traditional music from their ancestors, the *tete-nene-moyang*, and need to pass it down to both their own children as well as other people in the world so that the musical tradition becomes more widely known and appreciated, and so that others can enjoy and play the music as well:⁷²⁹ “if it is not us, then who? That is the problem. Traditional things [go from] generation to generation, and if we count [one] missing chain, we are going to break the whole chain for the ancestors. (...) [It is about] preservation so we don’t lose our identity.”⁷³⁰

⁷²⁵ Jacky Manuputty also recounted an anecdote about his dance group with which he once performed in Java. They were so nervous that they almost could not get on stage, sweating and being scared that they would be judged as bad in comparison with the Javanese professional dancers. Then Jacky did a contemplative practice with them, with the ‘magical’ words ‘you are a Moluccan’: “while you hit your feet, while you move your hand, just say, ‘we are Moluccan and you are Javanese and not Moluccan’. Repeat what I say. We are Moluccan, and we have to show them something different than they ever knew before.” The group danced, and after that they got a standing ovation. They all started crying, saying that they now knew how to convince people because they found the power of their identity. Although the story was about dance, Jacky told it to make the comparison with music (Interview with Jacky Manuputty).

⁷²⁶ Interview with Rudi Fofid.

⁷²⁷ The information and opinions on which this part is based mainly come from creative people, musicians or theologians working with music.

⁷²⁸ Interview with Carolis Elias Horhoruw, Rolly Matahelumual, Jance Rumahuru, Anonymous (*Suling* player, 10-11-2019, *Soya*).

⁷²⁹ Interview with Jonas Silooy.

⁷³⁰ Interview with Mark Ufie.

As has already been briefly touched upon, the original context of Moluccan traditional music, meaning the places or situations in which traditional music has been practiced for the longest time, are *adat* rituals and daily life. Songs and music in ceremonies, for instance the inauguration of a village chief, the making of a new village house, the fixing of the *baileo*, the welcoming of guests, *makan patita*, the celebration of the harvest, marriage, or the installment of *pela* systems, are regarded as the traditional ancestors' culture.⁷³¹ Moreover, traditional music is used as a medium of communication. The *marinyo* delivers messages to the whole village by using traditional instruments, for example to let the people know someone has died⁷³² or to announce a ritual or project in which one needs to work together.⁷³³ It is the proclaiming of news, denoted by the term *tabaos*.⁷³⁴ In this sense, traditional music, especially the drum and conch shell, is a symbol of calling, of summoning and of signaling.⁷³⁵ The music is also played to accompany dance.⁷³⁶ Village events and rituals often involve a collection of traditional dance, songs, music and clothing. Regarding religion, traditional music is related to the calling of ancestral spirits.⁷³⁷ Nowadays, a decrease in interest for traditional music is apparent, especially among the urban youth. This, accompanied by the influences of globalization, forms the main cause for the feeling that traditional music is endangered and should therefore be reproduced and transposed to other contexts to prompt preservation.⁷³⁸ This is possible through the memory of traditional music that is still inside every Moluccan person because of the ancestral chain, on which the reconstruction can be based.⁷³⁹ Under the dynamics of contextual theology and a politics of diversity and ethnic revival, traditional music moves out of its original context. Not only theologians, but also musicians and other people study Moluccan music and use it for different purposes than *acara adat* (*adat* ceremonies). Today, Moluccan traditional music is deployed to welcome foreign political guests, is part of an presented image of the Moluccas to tourists, is incorporated in

⁷³¹ Interview with Chris Tamaela, John F. Beay, Barce Istia, Agustinus C.W. Gaspersz, Jonas Silooy, Jan Z. Matatula, Omy & Jeane, Peter Salenussa, Rence Alfons, Rolly Matahelumual.

⁷³² There is a specific rhythm that is used to announce death. The strokes start loud with a long pause between them, that becomes shorter and shorter until the strokes follow each other very fast. The rhythm can be slightly different for different villages (Interview with Chris Tamaela).

⁷³³ Interview with John F. Beay.

⁷³⁴ Interview with Peter Salenussa.

⁷³⁵ Interview with Agustinus C.W. Gaspersz, Carolis Elias Horhoruw, Omy & Jeane.

Music is even used to indicate belonging to the ethnic groups *Patasiwa* or *Patalima*, beating the drum nine or five times (Interview with Chris Tamaela).

⁷³⁶ Interview with Mark Ufie.

⁷³⁷ This original relation between music and the ancestors is the reason of theological contestation (Interview with Chris Tamaela).

⁷³⁸ A feeling that is mainly present among musicians, theologians and politicians.

⁷³⁹ Interview with Morika B. Telelepta.

popular culture and begins to be played in church.⁷⁴⁰ The GPM is seen as one of the institutions that can assist the continuation of traditional music.⁷⁴¹ Since the GPM is literally called the church of the Moluccas they take on the task to preserve Moluccanness inside church. Although this research focuses on the transposition of Moluccan music to the GPM, this chapter will also address the contexts of popular music and politics.

Musicology of Moluccan music

Traditional Moluccan music has specific musicological aspects that characterize this music as Moluccan. Originally, the music is sung or played by feeling and heart, without notation, since it is transmitted orally.⁷⁴² In terms of scales, the pentatonic scale is the most characteristic of Moluccan music, although scales with more or less than five tones are also possible (monotonic, ditonic, tritonic, tetratonic, and hexatonic).⁷⁴³ Scale refers to a series of notes arranged in a plan of half steps and whole steps (Tamaela 2015, 60). The pentatonic scale can be hemitonic or anhemitonic, which means including or excluding halftones. Nevertheless, nowadays most Moluccan traditional music has a diatonic scale, which is typical of Western music. Because diatonic music has been present for such a long time in the Moluccas, local composers incorporated this scale in their own music. Through this process the Western scale became part of the Moluccan traditional.⁷⁴⁴ Even more so, traditional instruments that are currently used or made generally all have diatonic scales, and traditional music is often played in collaboration with electronic or Western diatonic instruments, or in highly modern diatonic compositions of which the concert by MBO is an example. Besides scale, there are the elements of melody, rhythm and harmony. The melodic character is also called melodic contour. Important aspects are tonal hierarchy and musical forms. Tonal hierarchy deals with the tonal center of a song, which can be determined by frequency, duration, appearance at the end of the composition, appearance at the low end of the scale or

⁷⁴⁰ Interestingly, one person whom I shortly met inversed this relation, by saying that Moluccan traditional music originally comes from the ancestors in church, and only after moved outside this context.

⁷⁴¹ Which is important because the music holds cultural values that shape Moluccan identity: "*Inilah kita*" – this is us (Interview with Barce Istia). Translation by author.

⁷⁴² *Modus* or mode is connected to scale, and refers to scale coupled with a set of characteristic melodic behaviors, such as the beginning tone and tonal arrangement (Branckly Egbert Picanussa). Different modes are Ionian, Dorian, Phrygian, Lydian, Mixolydian, Aeolian, and Locrian.

⁷⁴³ Interview with Chris Tamaela, Rudi Fofid, Peter Salenususa.

Moreover, the Moluccan pentatonic scale is different than for example the Javanese pentatonic scale (Interview with Semy Toisuta). This is determined by the selection of tones that will form the scale.

⁷⁴⁴ Among present-day Moluccans the diatonic scale is by far the most popular (Interview with John F. Beay).

center, interval relationship with other tones or a rhythmically stressed position (Tamaela 2015, 60). Musical form has to do with phrase construction of which motive is part. A motive is a short harmonic, melodic or rhythmic fragment or figure from which a theme, melody or entire composition is developed (Tamaela 2015, 65). Together notes form motives, and motives form phrases.⁷⁴⁵ Harmony basically refers to triad which involves chords and intervals. It is important to note, as Chris Tamaela stressed, that these are Western concepts to analyze music. Although they can be used to explain Moluccan music, this music not always follows Western rules of composition, possibly causing a mismatch.⁷⁴⁶ For instance, while Moluccan music nowadays works with Western harmonic systems, originally it does not have harmony as musical element. This has to do with different distances between tones, with notes only by ‘coincidence’ forming an harmonic interval, which is called an ‘accidental chord’.⁷⁴⁷ Apart from the pentatonic scale, typical Moluccan musicological features are gliding up and down (two notes that are smoothly ascending and descending), reiteration or repetition,⁷⁴⁸ the use of drones (a persisting, continuing background tone throughout the song, or two at the same time), a contour of undulation (the composition moves smoothly up and down), and decoration notes. The latter are short, ‘extra’ notes that connect with and precede the regular note. Furthermore, the tonal range of the melody, the *ambitus*, is small,⁷⁴⁹ and songs are often responsorial. Rhythmic patterns of Moluccan traditional music are usually simple and connected to specific villages, messages that need to be communicated, and rituals. Although there exist many rhythms, one can identify the Moluccan style.⁷⁵⁰

⁷⁴⁵ Interview with Chris Tamaela.

⁷⁴⁶ For instance, Moluccan music is generally relatively modest or plain, with many repetitions (Interview with Agustinus C.W. Gaspersz). The motive can even be that short, for example consisting of one sentence or of the reiteration of only two or three notes, that it almost makes no sense to call it a motive.

⁷⁴⁷ So, a harmonic chord comes about spontaneously. Moreover, most traditional songs are sung in unison (Interview with Chris Tamaela). Nevertheless, harmony can be created by feeling, with multiple people adding voices that together will form harmony without notation or composition (Interview with Branckly Egbert Picanussa, Rence Alfons).

Sometimes it is difficult to analyze the musical forms of indigenous songs, for example when songs have very long phrases or sentences and free rhythmic patterns. Also, strong and weak accents can be hard to recognize because of old indigenous language (Tamaela 2015, 65-66).

⁷⁴⁸ In Western musical analysis this is called *ostinato* (Interview with Branckly Egbert Picanussa).

⁷⁴⁹ In the majority of the cases it is a major and minor second, major and minor third, sometimes a fourth and fifth, or a perfect prime interval (Tamaela 2015, 65).

⁷⁵⁰ Interview with Mark Ufie.

Moluccan instruments, styles and songs

Besides definitions of traditional music and musicological elements, one of the most centrally named characteristics of Moluccan traditional music are the instruments. The instruments that are always mentioned by Moluccans are the *tifa* drum and *totobuang* gongs. Apart from these the *tahuri* (conch shell) and the *suling* (bamboo flute) are definitely categorized as traditional. In addition, the ukulele is often suggested, and especially musicians bring up instruments that are made of Moluccan natural materials, such as bamboo, wood⁷⁵¹ and stone.⁷⁵² Which people include which instruments in their list of traditional music largely depends on their knowledge of music as well as on ideas about what the concept of traditional entails. Despite the fact that many instruments do not originally come from the Moluccas, they are regarded as Moluccan. The openness on the one hand and the real sense of Moluccan identity that the music generates on the other hand are central to the concept of the traditional. *Tradisional* is the word people used to categorize this hybrid music, which formed the background for the creation of the traditional as a broader concept. This paragraph will discuss a fairly elaborate list of Moluccan instruments, styles and songs.

Tifa

The *tifa* drum is generally viewed as an ethnic Moluccan instrument that is the most common across the whole of the Moluccas.⁷⁵³ The drum is made of wood from a tree trunk, which is hollowed out to make the frame. Various types of wood can be used, although a type that lasts long and is not too hard is preferred. A drum with a hole on top, not yet covered by the membrane, is called *loang*. The membrane, the surface on which one hits the hand, is made of the skin of a deer or goat. First it is cut, then it is put in water, after which it is scraped off (*dikikis*) to make it smooth. Consequently, the skin is sewn onto the *loang*, turning it into a *tifa*. The skin then needs to dry in the sun before the instrument can be tuned. This is done with the *baji*, wedges; wooden little blocks that are thicker and broader on top and become thinner and smaller as it shapes into a point. Two parallel, horizontal lines, vertically connected with each other and made of two types of rattan (*anyaman* and *lakare*), hold both the membrane and *baji* in place. The rattan is braided in various, complicated techniques. Especially the lower band is difficult, because it needs to be flexible enough to adjust the *baji*

⁷⁵¹ In former times, the membrane of a drum was even made of wood before people started to make it from animal skin (Interview with Semy Toisuta).

⁷⁵² Interview with Branckly Egbert Picanussa, Agustinus C.W. Gaspersz, Barce Istia, Anonymous (22-12-2019, *Soya*), Jance Rumahuru, John F. Beay, Jonas Silooy, Rence Alfons, Nik Sedubun, Semy Toisuta.

⁷⁵³ Although one musician recounted that originally the *tifa* comes from Indo-China (Interview with Rence Alfons). However, I did not research these lines of origin and all Moluccans see the *tifa* as ethnic Moluccan.

while also being tight; it needs to be exact (*pas*). By pushing the *baji* behind the rattan, the membrane is pulled tensed until the right tuning is achieved.

The *tifa* has many sizes that all have different rhythms, playing techniques and roles in a music group. The largest *tifa* is a long, independently standing drum (*badiri*). The musician stands behind it and plays the drum with either the hands or the *gaba-gaba*, two drumming sticks made of *sago*.⁷⁵⁴ This standing drum is quite rare in the Central Moluccas, and merely used at large opening ceremonies. The *tifa jikr* can be seen as the equivalent of the base. It is, except when a standing drum is present, the largest *tifa* in a drum group. If one is left-handed, the *tifa* is held under the right arm positioned on the upper right leg, with the hand resting on top. The *jikr* needs to be played with the hands; *gaba-gaba* are not allowed. In one music group there is a minimum of two *jikr*, since two rhythms – the basic rhythm and the cut rhythm (*dasar* and *potong*) – have to be combined. The next in line is the *tifa dasar*, which also has two rhythms and therefore requires two drums in one group as well. The *dasar* gives the basic rhythm.⁷⁵⁵ The same holds true for the *tifa jalan*. Then there are the *tifa potong* and *tifa tasa*. These have one rhythm each. The *tasa* indicates the measure, in order that no one in the group plays too slow or fast. The *potong* equals the melody and has the function to beautify the whole. Except for the *jikr*, the other four *tifa* types are played with the *gaba-gaba*.

Besides sitting and playing (especially with a bigger type of *tifa*), a group of musicians generally stands, with the *tifa* hanging on a rope around the shoulder. The hand-playing technique consists of drumming with flat hand or with palm, in an open or closed way: when the ‘non-playing’ hand does not touch the membrane (the thumb is positioned perpendicular to the hand, locking the *tifa*, while the hand is horizontally placed in the air on the same level as the edge of the *tifa*), a more open, echoing sound is produced than when the hand touches the membrane (the hand is folded down), producing a more flat, closed sound.⁷⁵⁶ The *gaba-gaba* technique requires one to hold the stick in a loose, flexible way. Motion comes from both the arm and wrist, resulting in an almost circular movement. In former times, every ethnic tribe or clan had its own *tifa* rhythms (*irama tifa*). Nowadays, differences in rhythms

⁷⁵⁴ Musician Jonas Silooy told me that they have to be made of this material because the ancestors already used this (Interview with Jonas Silooy).

⁷⁵⁵ Jonas Silooy compared the *tifa dasar* with the background keyboard or base guitar in a band. It is not the melody, but the basic rhythm (Interview with Jonas Silooy).

⁷⁵⁶ Interview with Chris Tamaela.

are associated with villages.⁷⁵⁷ For example, musician Jonas Silooy, who leads a *tifa totobuang* music group, teaches the particular rhythm of *Amahusu*, “so that the rhythm that we have from the ancestors, from our grandparents, from my father, will certainly be maintained, from then until now.”⁷⁵⁸ Furthermore, specific traditional songs and dances are accompanied by specific *tifa* rhythms. Although a player needs to play according to particular techniques and basic rhythms, he/she has the freedom to add elements from one’s own inspiration, as long as the tempo is strictly followed.⁷⁵⁹ In relation to the *tifa* being used as a symbol of announcement and gathering, in former times it also was the sound that marked the beginning of Christian worship when there was no church bell.⁷⁶⁰

Totobuang

The *totobuang* is almost always named in combination with the *tifa*, because in *tifa totobuang* groups these instruments are played together. The *totobuang* is a melodic instrument made of bronze gongs.⁷⁶¹ The standard amount is twelve, although variations and modifications with more gongs exist.⁷⁶² The gongs are hollow from the inside and open at the bottom. They are round, with a knob in the middle. The gongs lie loose on a wooden table, consisting of two rows of square boxes that each have two very thin triangle-shaped threads against each other which assure perfect resonation. Originally, the *totobuang* comes from Java.⁷⁶³ In the 15th century, Javanese Muslims probably brought the instrument to the Moluccas.⁷⁶⁴ The Javanese version, the famous and widely-researched *gamelan*, has two scales – a pentatonic scale and a

⁷⁵⁷ Interview with Bella Soplanit.

This explanation of the *tifa* is based on the village *Amahusu* on Ambon island. Moreover, other villages have other names for the different types of *tifa* or call them by number (Interview with Jonas Silooy). Different techniques can also have different meanings. John F. Beay told about the island Buru where a specific technique can mean an apology (Interview with John F. Beay). One research identified nine ways of playing that have nine different meanings or philosophies (Interview with Peter Salenus).

⁷⁵⁸ Interview with Jonas Silooy. Translation by author.

There also is a *tifa* rhythm both for the *Patasiwa* and *Patalima* groups. The first comprise villages near the beach, characterized by a relatively slow rhythm, while the second relate to mountain villages, characterized by a fast rhythm that is associated with climbing.

⁷⁵⁹ The complete explanation about the *tifa* is based on the interview with Jonas Silooy.

⁷⁶⁰ Interview with Rence Alfons.

⁷⁶¹ Apparently, the first gongs were made of wood instead of bronze (Interview with Jonas Silooy).

⁷⁶² Interview with Peter Salenus.

⁷⁶³ Interview with Agustinus C.W. Gaspersz, Chris Tamaela.

⁷⁶⁴ A gong was used as a gift to the new village king (Interview with Rence Alfons, Semy Toisuta).

diatonic scale.⁷⁶⁵ The Moluccan *totobuang* is diatonic and has more gongs, influenced by the missionaries who adapted the instrument so that it could play Christian songs.⁷⁶⁶

The *totobuang* is played with two sticks from wood. The sticks, as well as the gongs, are ordered from Yogyakarta, where a factory is located.⁷⁶⁷ The top of the sticks is covered in rubber to protect the gongs. The sticks are held in a flexible way, approximately in the middle, so that it can move easily and the player gets less tired. One has to hit the knob on the gong to produce the fullest sound. The musician can start to play a song from different positions, for example from below, from the side, or from the top of the table. The order of placement of the gongs can slightly differ between villages, which also influences playing positions.⁷⁶⁸ In *Amahusu*, the gongs correspond to the following notes:

La	Sol	Fa	Mi	Re	Do
Si	Do	Re	Mi	Fa	La

The *totobuang* is often used to accompany dance, such as the *tari lenso*,⁷⁶⁹ or to welcome guests. One particular traditional song called *lagu totobuang* is the most famous *totobuang* song, played by all *tifa totobuang* groups.⁷⁷⁰

Tahuri

The *tahuri* is an ethnic Moluccan instrument, made from conch shells out of the sea. *Tahuri* expert Carolis Elias Horhoruw went to the island Seram in the year 1964 to trace the indigenous name of the instrument that they called *kulibia*, and found out it was a *tahuri*. The first part of the word means ‘sound from the earth’, and the second part means ‘calling’ or ‘gathering’. The shells can be discovered all over the Moluccas. To make a *tahuri*, the shell is hanged (after which the contents from the sea are removed) and cleaned with water. As Chris Tamaela explained, the *tahuri* needs water to be tuned: “the instrument has a soul. (...) His or

⁷⁶⁵ The Javanese pentatonic scale, however, has a different tonal arrangement (*pelog* and *slendro*) (Interview with Chris Tamaela).

⁷⁶⁶ Despite this historic reality, there exists a folk myth about the ethnic origin of the *totobuang*, which tells that the *Alifuru* ancestors already played the instrument and had knowledge on how to make bronze (Interview with Semy Toisuta, Rence Alfons).

⁷⁶⁷ This is also the reason that not many places possess a *totobuang*. The materials are not available in the Moluccas which makes it an expensive instrument.

⁷⁶⁸ For example, the notes do and mi are often played together. In the village *Amuhusu*, these corresponding gongs are located on the upper left and on one place to the right on the lower row. The right stick hits the first, the left the second. However, in other villages the second gong is located on the lower left and the first on one place to the right on the upper row, which affects the position of the arms.

⁷⁶⁹ Interview with Rolly Matahelumal.

⁷⁷⁰ Interview with Peter Salenusu.

The complete explanation about the *totobuang* is based on the interview with Jonas Silooy.

her life [has always been] in the water. If you want to play me, please give me some water.”⁷⁷¹ When the shell is dry, one hole is made to create a tone. This is a careful, precise practice which requires a great deal of expertise to determine the right position. The shells have different shapes and sizes, but on all an axis can be detected from which multiple round levels turn downwards. The position of the hole can differ from the top in the middle to the side several levels lower, and this position corresponds to the tone. When Carolis sees a shell, he knows by heart where the hole needs to be. However, to reach a perfect tuning the hole needs to be adjusted by making it slightly bigger or smaller.⁷⁷² A small *tuhuri* has a higher tone than a large *tuhuri*. Carolis managed to create two full diatonic octaves. Since each shell only produces one tone, he collected many shells (from tiny to very large) and made holes inside them so that the range would increase. Also, he introduced an innovation consisting of two holes inside one *tuhuri*. When one hole is closed, a half-tone is produced.

The playing technique is similar to the trumpet. One has to press the lips together in a tensed way, blowing in a ‘puhpuhpuh’ manner.⁷⁷³ A bigger *tuhuri* needs more air and therefore more stamina and abs power. The largest type of *tuhuri* functions like a tuba; one has to blow from the stomach, with full round cheeks. The sound of the *tuhuri* is deep, far-reaching, and echoing.⁷⁷⁴

Suling

The *suling* bamboo flute occupies a special position within the field of Moluccan traditional instruments, because it never belonged to an *adat* context but originated in a church context. The already mentioned missionary Josef Kam introduced the *suling bambu* as a local instrument to accompany congregational singing.⁷⁷⁵ While there existed an ethnic vertical bamboo flute,⁷⁷⁶ the *suling* is played horizontally and has a diatonic Western scale. In this way the *suling* bears resemblance to the traverse flute. However, although the technique of blowing is the same, the fingering is slightly different. The *suling* is played with the index, middle and ring finger of both hands and has a relatively small range.⁷⁷⁷ There are five *suling* voices: the smaller and thinner - the higher, the bigger and thicker - the lower. During the

⁷⁷¹ Interview with Chris Tamaela.

⁷⁷² A bamboo flute is used to check the tuning.

⁷⁷³ Interview with Rolly Matahelumual, Peter Salenus.

⁷⁷⁴ The complete explanation about the *tuhuri* is based on the interview with Carolis Elias Horhoruw.

⁷⁷⁵ Since the Moluccas do not have a metal tradition (*logam*) (Interview with Rudi Fofid).

⁷⁷⁶ The vertical flute only has five tones (Interview with Chris Tamaela).

⁷⁷⁷ In comparison, the traverse flute uses much more fingers, including the thumb on the bottom side of the flute, and the palm below the index finger (Interview with Marco Dhyllan, music student at IAKN, 18-11-2019, Ambon).

research I found myself in the lucky position of being invited to stay one weekend over in the beautifully located house of Rence Alphons (leader and conductor of the Moluccan Bamboo Orchestra and *suling* expert), to learn how the *suling* is made.

*In the early Saturday morning on a day in December I travelled to Tunj again. Together with two friends of Rence and his son, I directly walked into the green jungle. In a row we climbed and descended the mountainous and slippery path. It took me some effort to keep up with the speed of these skilled men, who were used to the terrain. With a stick in my hand I followed their steps and their glimmering machetes in the sun. It was a powerful feeling. In the vibrating heat, surrounded by the sounds of nature, I enjoyed the intense green view. When we heard far-away sounds from a solitary house amidst the leaves, one of the members of our group yodeled in the local Moluccan communication style to greet across large distances. On our way we came across a hut where the local alcoholic drink sago is made, with two men carrying bins hanging on a wooden trunk over their shoulder. After some time, when the jungle grew denser, we found a good spot to cut bamboo. The size and thickness of the bamboo trees need to correspond to the required voices of the *suling*. Within the blink of an eye the men disappeared in the green mass; when I glanced into the trees it appeared that they were cutting long bamboo sticks many meters lower than from the place where I was standing. There exist multiple types of bamboo. *Suling* voices one to four need a thick (tebal) kind of bamboo, called 'tui', while voice five needs a thinner kind, called 'sero'.⁷⁷⁸ The sticks were brought to the path where they were cut in equal pieces, the length approximately correlating with the voice. With one hand holding the stick upward, turning it towards him, the man chopped small notches into the bamboo until a perfect round was made and the stick broke into similar sized flutes in the making. I felt the richness and closeness of the Moluccan nature: within this short amount of time we collected an astonishing amount of this material. The sticks were bound together in two bundles, firmly held together by a stripped stem of a plant. Then we headed home again. With small drops of sweat dripping from my face and back I happily saved this unique anthropological moment in my memory.*

When we arrived at Rence's house we brought the bamboo to his workshop; an open, wooden space with innumerable nails on the wall from which *suling* flutes were hanging. First, the

⁷⁷⁸ There is a third type, called *tapir*. However, it does not grow on Ambon, only on Seram. It has a very high quality; higher tones stay good, stable and soft (Interview with Rence Alfons).

bamboo sticks need to be dried in a former bread oven – 200 degrees for two hours long. The necessity of this already became clear to me when a jet of water flowed from the cut bamboo in the jungle. After the drying process a template or mold of a *suling* that is perfectly tuned is used.⁷⁷⁹ On the basis of this mold a pencil line is drawn and the blowhole is indicated. With a professional, fixed drill on the workbench a hole (*lubang*) is made through one side of the cylinder.⁷⁸⁰ After sanding the hole from the inside with a sandpaper connected to a hand drill, the tuning can begin. Voices one, two, three and five have the basic tone ‘G’ (which means that when all holes are closed or when there are no holes yet, note G sounds), while voice four is based on the ‘D’.⁷⁸¹

G	A	B	C	D	E	F-sharp	G
D	E	F-sharp	G	A	B	C	D

With the use of an electronic tuner on the phone, placed in a holder on the workbench, the stick is cut shorter until this basic tone is achieved. Consequently, a piece of *sago* is cut, formed into a circle and hammered inside the *suling* – one centimeter from the top, preventing the air coming out of this side and creating a resonance space.⁷⁸² Then the mold can again be applied to determine the position of the six finger holes,⁷⁸³ which consequently are drilled in one go, only changing the size of the drill several times as a larger hole produces a lower sound and a smaller hole a higher sound.⁷⁸⁴ *Suling* voice one is able to play one octave and five tones, voice two and three can play one octave and two tones and voices four and five one octave exactly.⁷⁸⁵ When the *suling* is finished, it is cleaned and sanded. After Rence and I finished the process, he gave me the *suling* we made together: I created an instrument!

⁷⁷⁹ To make the mold, an enormous amount of bamboo is needed: Rence had to drill the holes and test the tuning, and if it was not right he needed a new piece of bamboo, until the tuning was good. He had to repeat this for all *suling* voices.

⁷⁸⁰ In former times, the traditional way of making *suling* was by drying it in the sun (which is never perfect) and by making a hole with hot iron. However, the heat prevented a stable tone, because the tone would change after the bamboo was cooled down. Moreover, the human ear is not as precise and has not such an elaborate range as a tuner. This is why, in the year 2005, Rence Alfons started to use a tuner, oven and drill. The drill comes from Austria, because this provides better quality than Indonesian drills (Interview with Rence Alfons).

⁷⁸¹ Between the first three and last three holes, an extra tiny hole can be added on voice four, which produces the tone ‘F sharp’ – a discovery of Rence from 2016. Interestingly, while the ground tone of voice five is G, one needs to tune tone E when making this *suling*.

⁷⁸² There exist different types of *sago*: the ‘tuni’ kind is quite soft, while the ‘lhur’ is stronger and thus better.

⁷⁸³ One measures from the bottom. The sticks do not need to be equally long as the mold, but have to be put aside the mold from the bottom. After tuning it appeared that length is a less important issue than thickness: voice two eventually can be shorter though lower than voice one.

⁷⁸⁴ The drill sizes for *suling* voice one were 997886.

⁷⁸⁵ When you lift one finger, beginning down, the tone becomes higher with one step. To reach the second G, one octave higher, one has to close all holes except the one on top. Voice one can make four more tones.

The different voices correspond to the different factions in an orchestra or choir: the *suling* can be divided in high, middle and low sections. In comparison with the voices one to four, the playing technique of the fifth voice is completely distinct. Instead of horizontally, it is played vertically. This *suling* has no finger holes, is cut diagonally at the end, and is placed in a hollow, second bamboo tube that is closed at the bottom. Similar to the trombone, tones are produced through positioning and moving the tube over the *suling* by feeling; the more inside - the lower, the more out, even to the point of a slanting position - the higher. In my experience, the fifth voice makes a beautifully deep, primordial sound. The movement the musicians make is powerful and dance-like. Their arms and bodies move in opposite directions, away from each other or towards each other, which creates a big, hard, unique shaking motion.⁷⁸⁶

Nowadays, *suling* is not often played in church any longer, especially since the increase of popularity of the trumpet.⁷⁸⁷ The trumpet is generally viewed as a modern instrument. Nevertheless, I visited a traditional music group where children, besides traditional Moluccan instruments, also learned how to play the trumpet.⁷⁸⁸ In practice the boundaries thus are not as clear as they might seem.

Ukulele

Originally the ukulele comes from Portugal and was brought to the Moluccas by the Portuguese.⁷⁸⁹ It became immensely popular through its instrumental role in two styles of music: Hawaiian and *kroncong*.⁷⁹⁰ The ukulele is a diatonic, melodic and harmonic instrument, has four strings, and comprises three voices: the bigger the ukulele, the lower. Despite the universality of the instrument, the traditional character of it is formed by the Moluccan name people use, *juk*, and the specific Moluccan way of playing called *rofol* which is quite loud and energetic. Interestingly, *Maluku* is regarded as the ukulele province of

When you count the holes from the top, the fingering is as follows: 1256: A; 12346: B; 1236: C; 12356: D. Actually, the *suling* can reach more octaves, because when one blows softer or harder one can go up or go down one octave. However, when, for example, voice one blows soft, it reaches the same octave as the lower voice two, which is not useful in an orchestra arrangement. Therefore, Rence explained it in this way.

⁷⁸⁶ The complete explanation about the *suling bambu* is based on Participant Observation in the weekend of 14/15-12-2019 and on informal conversations with Rence Alfons that weekend.

⁷⁸⁷ Interview with Anonymous (10-11-2019, *Soya*), Semy Toisuta, Anonymous (27-10-2019, Ambon).

⁷⁸⁸ Interview with Rolly Matahelumal.

⁷⁸⁹ Some people say the Moluccans had their own type of ukulele before the arrival of the Portuguese, made of coconut.

⁷⁹⁰ Interview with Agustinus C.W. Gaspersz, Peter Salenus, Branckly Egbert Picanussa, John F. Beay.

Indonesia, which was partly realized by the adoption of the ukulele in schools, and the fact that both Christian and Muslim children learn to play the instrument.⁷⁹¹

Rebana

The *rebana* is a frame drum and shows strong Middle-Eastern influence.⁷⁹² In the Moluccas the *rebana* is associated with Islam and mainly played by Muslims, because the instrument accompanies religious ceremonies.⁷⁹³ Often, the frame drum is played to accompany *sawat* and *hadrat* dance (Tamaela 2015, 50). The type of dance correlates with the size of the *rebana*: for *sawat* a larger *rebana* is used than for *hadrat*.⁷⁹⁴ The *rebana* is made from the same materials as the *tifa*, however has a completely different resonance because the instrument is much wider and flatter. Sometimes, metal disks are incorporated in the rim, much like a tambourine. The *rebana* is played by hitting the edge or middle of the membrane. It is hit quite hard, and this movement reflects in facial motion. The *rebana* is drummed in groups. The musicians all play different rhythms, thus polyrhythmically, and stand very close to each other in a facing circle to be able to hear the rhythms well so that they do not run from it.

New ethnic instruments

Besides existing instruments that are regarded as traditional, new Moluccan instruments are being created – some based on original ethnic instruments, others invented out of inspiration from Moluccan life and nature. Chris Tamaela was one of the main creators in this respect, and several of his instruments will be discussed here.

Akapeti

This instrument, made of bamboo or wood, is similar to a xylophone. With two wooden hammers one hits the slats, which optionally resonate into calabash boxes hanging under the construction. The length of the slats determines the pitch.⁷⁹⁵

Toleng-toleng

This is a hollow bamboo tube, with on top a projection that serves to hold the instrument. The front has a vertical hole for resonance. It is a bamboo slit drum, struck with a wooden mallet

⁷⁹¹ The complete explanation about the ukulele is based on the interview with Nico Tulalessy.

⁷⁹² Nevertheless, Rasmussen (2010, 158) states that despite “*rebana* rhythms, characterized by tight, interlocking patterns performed by anywhere from three to twenty players, have been mistaken by observers as derivative of Arabic practice, perhaps due to the similarity of the *rebana* in shape (but not in materials) to frame drums found throughout the Middle East (...) and to the pairing of *rebana* drumming with Arabic language songs” the instruments and the various ways they are played are completely indigenous to Indonesia.

⁷⁹³ Interview with Jonas Silooy.

⁷⁹⁴ Interview with Jonas Silooy.

⁷⁹⁵ Interview with Chris Tamaela.

to produce sound (Tamaela 2015, 45). One can hit the top or bottom and middle part, which gives two different noises.⁷⁹⁶ The size and hole determine the thickness and pitch of the sound. The *toleng-toleng* is an ethnic instrument used to summon and signal people, for instance to let people know that one has entered his/her garden.⁷⁹⁷

Pong-pong

The *pong-pong* is a long, slender, hollow stomping tube made of bamboo. In traditional life these tubes are used to carry water to drink from. The bottom end is closed by a node, while the top end is open. The instrument is played by hitting the base of the tube on the ground (Tamaela 2015, 43), not straight but slantwise. Originally the *pong-pong* produces a random musical sound. However, nowadays it is tuned according to scale.⁷⁹⁸ Each tube has one tone or pitch, depending on its size. In this way one can make different voices.⁷⁹⁹ An additional tone sounds when the tube is half-closed with the hand.⁸⁰⁰

Klong

The *klong* is a bamboo tube zither with one string. The tube measures between sixty to eighty centimeters. The fingerboard is at the upper end of the body while the resonance hole is near the lower end of the body. A pin at the upper end is used to tune the string. Originally, the instrument is from the *Nuauulu* tribe in Seram, where they use(d) it when starting a war.⁸⁰¹ In former times the string was made from the bladder of an animal. Nowadays, nylon is used.⁸⁰²

Takatak bulu

The bamboo clapper is made of two pieces of bamboo, which are played by putting the skin sides back to back. One piece is placed between the thumb and index finger, and the other piece is placed between the middle and little finger. Different pitches are produced depending on different sizes of bamboo (Tamaels 2015, 45). The first piece is held tightly, while the second is held loose, ticking against the tight one. By turning the wrist in a circular movement, the pieces hit each other on top and at the bottom, which goes so fast that it almost seems as if there are three pieces of bamboo! Fascinated by this technique, movement, and

⁷⁹⁶ When I played the instrument myself, I could still see the splinters in the wood!

⁷⁹⁷ Interview with Chris Tamaela.

⁷⁹⁸ Interview with Chris Tamaela.

⁷⁹⁹ A modern variant of this is the 'boomwhacker'; a plastic, colored tube with the same idea. There exist ingenious, virtuoso music performances with these on YouTube.

⁸⁰⁰ Interview with Chris Tamaela.

⁸⁰¹ Interview with Peter Salenusssa.

⁸⁰² Interview with Chris Tamaela.

In the workshop at the IAKN, traditional instruments are created or innovated upon as well. For instance, here they try to make a *klong* with more strings (Interview with Branckly Egbert Picanussa).

rhythm I once approached a musician to ask him about this instrument. After explaining it to me, he gave me his instrument as a present. He told me to practice at home, in order that I mastered the technique when I returned to *Maluku*.

Bambu gesek

This instrument is similar in shape to the *toleng-toleng*, though horizontal instead of vertical. The body has notches which are scraped over with a stick.

Keku hatu

This instrument, literally ‘beat the stone’, is made by collecting different sizes of coral or river stones. Two stones are used to beat the stones that make up the *keku hatu*, which hang in a row on a wooden construction. The stones can be arranged according to a certain scale or at random (Tamaela 2015, 43).

Bambu goyang

Chris Tamaela invented a harmonic instrument made of two pieces of bamboo.⁸⁰³ The pieces hang vertically down, with their convex sides turned to each other, connected by a horizontal slat on which one can hold the instrument. A thin stick has to be moved horizontally between the two pieces, ticking them consecutively and fast. It is a flexible instrument of which many combinations can be made. Only accidentally Western harmony is achieved.⁸⁰⁴

Kapata

From instruments we move to singing and song. *Kapata* is a Moluccan indigenous singing style that holds the middle between speaking and singing. People in the whole of the Moluccas have *kapata*.⁸⁰⁵ According to Chris Tamaela (2015, 46), *kapata* means ‘to lift our voices in communication’. Originally, it is a way to converse with the ancestors, to pass on messages during *adat* rituals and to tell stories of the past. Moreover, it is used to accompany certain dances, such as the *cakalele*. *Kapata* are sung in indigenous languages and can thus be found wherever these languages are still spoken. Often, the words are so old or sacred that most people do not know any longer what they mean.⁸⁰⁶ Most *kapata* use the same basic set of notes on a pentatonic scale or on a scale with less notes than five, although enlivened by decoration or grace notes, called *not bunga* – florid note in Indonesian.⁸⁰⁷ *Kapata* songs communicate different messages, such as teachings, advises, warnings, taboos, praises,

⁸⁰³ On purpose, Chris Tamaela used two pieces instead of three. Three would lead to Western harmony, while two is the native way.

⁸⁰⁴ Interview with Chris Tamaela.

⁸⁰⁵ Interview with Barce Istia, Semy Toisuta.

⁸⁰⁶ Interview with Peter Salenusu.

⁸⁰⁷ Interview with Chris Tamaela.

thanksgivings, and more. They are all related to rituals and cultural events (Tamaela 2015, 46).⁸⁰⁸ In essence, *kapata* is an oral form of recording history. For instance, there are *kapata* about the ancestors' life, about Moluccan culture and civilization,⁸⁰⁹ and also about the Dutch period or the Japanese occupation. Through *kapata* historical narratives are stored, preserved and transmitted.⁸¹⁰

Songs

Songs that are seen as traditional fall under a broader category than *kapata*. While *kapata* is a unique ethnic and sacred type of singing, traditional songs generally are diatonic. The topics are the central characteristic by which traditional songs can be distinguished (for instance from pop songs, that usually talk about love and are embedded in modern life). Common are themes connected to Moluccan culture, such as life in the past, the good days, the place where one comes from, nostalgia, the love for one's mother, the environment, peace, or hardships.⁸¹¹ The most popular theme is brotherhood, *gandong*. Language is another characteristic, as the songs are most often sung in the Ambonese dialect.⁸¹² The songs already exist for a long time but are constantly innovated upon by many different people. However, the basic traditional ingredients stay the same.⁸¹³

Kroncong

Besides traditional instruments and songs, there also are traditional music styles. *Kroncong* refers to the sound this style makes, produced by a group of string instruments.⁸¹⁴ A *kroncong* ensemble usually consists of the ukulele, flute, double bass, guitar, violin, cello and a vocalist. While people think *kroncong* is a music style that originally comes from Java, all Moluccans contest this official story, as the Portuguese, who influenced this style, arrived on Ambon first. In Moluccan eyes, *kroncong* moved from the Moluccas to Java.⁸¹⁵

⁸⁰⁸ See appendix 11 for an example of a *kapata* song that Chris Tamaela analyzes in his dissertation.

⁸⁰⁹ Interview with Chris Tamaela.

⁸¹⁰ Interview with Jacky Manuputty.

⁸¹¹ Interview with Barce Istia, Omy & Jeane.

For instance, the song 'Beta berlayar jauh' is about travelling far from home, not coming back for a long time; 'Io io' is about the preparation of war; 'Mama bakar sagu' is about the love for a mother or the love of a mother for her children; 'Nusa Niwe' is a story about Ambon (Interview with Marco Dhyllan).

⁸¹² And sometimes in indigenous language.

⁸¹³ Interview with Mark Ufie.

⁸¹⁴ It sounds like *cong, cong, cong*, resulting in the name *kroncong* (Interview with Peter Salenus).

⁸¹⁵ Interview with Agustinus C.W. Gaspersz, Nico Tulalessy, Barce Istia, Chris Tamaela, Brankly Egbert Picanussa, John F. Beay, Peter Salenus.

Hawaiian

Lastly, Hawaiian music is a very popular music style on the Moluccas. A Hawaiian group consists of several instruments, with the central one being the steel guitar.⁸¹⁶ There is a discussion going on about where Hawaiian music originally came from. Although the name implies Hawaii, some Moluccans state that Hawaii merely had the media to make it well-known. Hawaiian music should be seen as a pacific, regional style, with each place having its own characteristics. The style in Hawaii is relaxed with tones that are not exact but glide in a slow, happy and free manner. In the Moluccas the style is more loud and energetic.⁸¹⁷ From the 1930s onward artists made Hawaiian music popular in the Moluccas, and events, festivals and even national competitions are organized.⁸¹⁸

In short, traditional Moluccan instruments, songs and styles confirm the conceptualization of the traditional. While some are ethnic, others are influenced by foreign cultures, improved upon in modern times or even created anew. Most of them have diatonic scales and can play all kinds of different music – local and global, ethnic and modern. Traditional music is an umbrella category for music that in the eyes of the Moluccans feels part of Moluccan culture and identity. As Rasmussen (2010, 170-171) makes clear, a ‘really’ traditional music tradition does not need to be based on indigenous historic reality, but becomes real in the modern project of discovering an authentic cultural soul. In the Moluccan case, hybridization is part of the traditional in the construction of the ethnic modern.

Traditional music groups

The preservation of Moluccan traditional music and the ethnic revival is not only taking place in the GPM, but also among musicians in a broader societal context. An example of this are music groups where children learn how to play traditional instruments in an effort of regeneration. Five different musicians with their music groups will be discussed to show how this process works and which educational and social role these groups serve.

Carolus Elias Horhoruw is the leader of a *tahuri* group in *hutumuri*. Although he is an older man, who only has a couple of black teeth left in his mouth, Carolus is one of the most active figures I met. He is an autodidact, educated in music not by attending a school but by

⁸¹⁶ When the steel guitar did not yet exist one used a normal guitar (Interview with Nico Tulalessy). The ukulele is also used, however not as the main instrument.

⁸¹⁷ Interview with Nico Tulalessy, John F. Beay.

⁸¹⁸ Interview with Agustinus C.W. Gaspersz, Peter Salenusssa.

his family lineage passing on musical knowledge.⁸¹⁹ The music group was established in the 1950s by Carolis' father.⁸²⁰ It started with twelve people, and Carolis took over in 1978. Now, the group consists of more than sixty children who start playing from their eleventh year. The children motivate each other to learn, hereby preserving this ethnic tradition. When the children enter the group, Carolis wants them to run the hill next to his house up to ten times. While standing halfway himself, he listens to their breathing. On this basis he judges which tone, and thus which *tahuri*, a child can play: for a large one a child needs stamina and muscles! Other methods Carolis uses are lying on the back with the legs in the air or standing bent down while playing the *tahuri*. The group plays a variety of traditional songs – local, national, or spiritual – however all diatonic. They perform during village events, ceremonies or other activities,⁸²¹ and they also play in church.⁸²²

Jonas Silooy is the leader of a *tifa totobuang* group in *Amahusu*. As a little child he learned how to play traditional instruments from his father, who in turn learned it from his father and so onwards: “I also wanted to learn, so that the traditional music that we have will not disappear. From my grandfather it passes down to my father, to me, and also to my children, and to other children too.”⁸²³ Already for thirteen generations this music is being regenerated in his family. In 2005 Jonas took over the music group from his father.⁸²⁴ Jonas has a workshop next to his house, located on a beautiful place by the sea. When I, a friend and Chris Tamaela once visited the place, Jonas immediately called his children, nephews and nieces, who carried the instruments outside the wooden shed and almost instantly started playing together. Jonas has different groups with children (from primary school until young adults), all from *Amahusu*. In total, an amount of two hundred people is taught how to play *tifa* and *totobuang*, as well as how to dance many traditional dances. Children want to learn as a distraction from technological gadgets and see it as a way to strengthen traditional music by their knowledge about the instruments. They are taught how to play all drums, the *totobuang*,

⁸¹⁹ Carolis sees his musical talent as a gift and power of God which he needs to use, and this makes him happy.

⁸²⁰ Carolis told the origin story of the group. The third governor of Ambon came to *Hutumuri* and met the village king. The *tahuri* was then used to communicate in the mountains. Different levels corresponded with different sounds. However, it appeared that where the response-sounds came from, no persons were present! It was interpreted as a sign from the ancestors, and then the governor decided to develop ethnic Moluccan *tahuri* music with a group of which the father of Carolis became the leader (Interview with Carolis Elias Horhoruw).

⁸²¹ For example, on the Indonesian National Day. Moreover, they also performed in an international collaboration with Spanish children playing the violin.

⁸²² This explanation is based on the interview with Carolis Elias Horhoruw.

⁸²³ Interview with Jonas Silooy. Translation by author.

⁸²⁴ Chris Tamaela closely worked together with Jonas' father.

and the different rhythms. Jonas' teaching method consists of him playing first and the students watching, imitating and memorizing – exactly how he learned it from his father. The group often performs together with Muslim children playing *rebana*. The collaboration functions as a tool of peace and reconciliation. The Christian and Muslim children also learn how to play each other's instrument.⁸²⁵ Jonas' group makes music during many events in the village, city, province, country or even in other countries. They have thus travelled a lot and are internationally known. The type of event determines the music that is played, which can be traditional, modern, local, national, popular, or religious. They also often play in church.⁸²⁶

Nico Tulalessy is the leader of a ukulele group in *Amahusu*. He had not an easy youth and from this situation he learned to play the ukulele as a child. He knows Jonas Silooy well, having played with his father's music group, which demonstrates how a musical community is built in a certain place through generations and family connections. Nico established his music group with the aim that more children are able to play ukulele and will therefore make less use of electronical gadgets, which according to Nico is a dangerous activity. Moreover, he wants to preserve the instrument and hereby Moluccan culture.⁸²⁷ The group consists of children from a variety of villages and from a variety of religious and social backgrounds.⁸²⁸ Although the majority is Protestant, some also are Catholic or Muslim. By playing the same instrument together, the children learn about religious tolerance and social values. Nico's group practices outside, in an open building on poles above the sea. With in the background the beautiful view of the setting sun and boats lying on the beach, the almost hundred children of various ages sit or stand in rows and play their colored ukuleles.⁸²⁹ Nico starts by teaching them different chords. Consequently, they learn the rhythm, and only in the end they sing while playing. Naturally, some have a better musical feeling than others, and the very little ones only play one note according to the rhythm, whereas the older, more skilled children can already play many different chords. The practice always begins (after Nico has tuned almost all ukuleles) with an individual prayer: with their eyes closed the children stand next to each other, embracing their ukulele in front of their chest. Generally, they start playing one note repeatedly and fast, after which the song begins. A sequence of chords sounds, all in the same rhythm all through the song, while the children sing to it at the same time. The music is

⁸²⁵ This idea is a governmental program to promote peace.

⁸²⁶ This explanation is based on the interview with Jonas Silooy.

⁸²⁷ In the beginning, the group only had cheap ukuleles of bad quality. Then Nico applied for funding and better instruments were donated.

⁸²⁸ From children from government officials to children from very poor families.

⁸²⁹ They started with eight.

alternated with chaos, running, screaming, noisiness and little arguments between children. However, Nico has great didactic skills and is able to capture and hold their attention.⁸³⁰ Apart from music, Nico teaches the children equality, heartiness, discipline, performance skills and self-confidence. His ‘Amboina ukulele kids community’ plays a diversity of music, from songs that Nico composed⁸³¹ to traditional songs, jazz, blues, reggae, Spanish songs, slow rock, and more. They perform in many organized music events, but also during events commissioned by the government. However, besides official performances, the group also plays out of social initiative, for example after the earthquake to strengthen victims by trauma healing through music, or during the Ramadan to support their Muslim brothers: “With little money you can create and do something big! (...) You have to have a good idea, work hard, be creative and love what you do.”⁸³² Sometimes the group plays in churches in a more creative or ethnic service. The ukulele can thus be used to praise God, and Nico even writes songs for this purpose. Moreover, the children are always very proud to play in church. In Nico’s opinion, ukulele is the real Moluccan instrument, as his group is internationally known and built without government plans or money: the group is popular and established from the own community.⁸³³

Rence Alphons, as mentioned before, is the leader of the MBO *suling* orchestra in *Tuni*. Rence sees the *suling* as one aspect of cultural identity: “I am from the Moluccas, and what do the Moluccas have? I answer we have music. I have the *suling bambu*. (...) That’s why I am interested in the *suling* and why I develop the *suling*.”⁸³⁴ For Rence, *suling* music is inside his heart. He established his group in 2005. It all started with the mayor who asked him to perform traditional music for the city’s birthday. With a group of thirty players, Rence presented the *suling bambu*. Many people had not been hearing the instrument for a long time, and because of the positive response they got Rence decided to develop the instrument again. His students come from *Tuni* and surrounding villages. First, children were less interested in

⁸³⁰ Sometimes the group can scream their answer when something is asked, letting go of energy and knowing that one has to listen to him afterwards. Moreover, if new children join the group, he/she has to stand in front and say his/her name, after which the group repeats it, hereby including the new student in their midst.

⁸³¹ An example of one of his songs is ‘Laut kaya Maluku’, about the sea in the Moluccas that is very rich with fish, and about *Maluku* being a beautiful place. Other songs they played were: ‘Bulan pake (pakai) payung’, ‘E Tanase’, and ‘Can’t help, falling in love with you’.

⁸³² Interview with Nico Tulalessy. Translation by author.

⁸³³ In between the lines, some criticism could be heard with reference to other traditional music groups who are politically and financially supported.

This whole piece is based on the interview with Nico Tulalessy and on Participant Observation, 25-11-2019, *Amahusu*.

⁸³⁴ Interview with Rence Alfons. Translation by author.

the *suling* because it was only played in church. The tones were never completely neat, and there was no arrangement of harmony. Rence learned how to make *suling* instruments which sounded better, and he arranged them in different voices based on Western harmony. In this way children became fascinated to play *suling* outside church and to ‘rebuild’ the instrument. Now, the orchestra consists of more than sixty young people. Rence starts by teaching the children how to sit in the right position: straight, so that one can blow fully, with the left leg forward. Then they learn the blowing technique, after which they learn to read notes. This first process proceeds in one to one sessions before a student enters the orchestra. The students cannot choose their voice, because the size of the *suling* correlates with the size of hands. The MBO plays pop music, local music, modern and international music, and also classical music.⁸³⁵

Rolly Matahelumual is the leader of a traditional music group in the village *Tiouw* on the island Saparua. He established the group in 2016 and has his own workshop next to his house. Here, the children learn to play almost all traditional instruments (ukulele, *tifa*, *tahuri*, and more), except the ones made from bamboo or stones and the *totobuang*, which is an expensive instrument to obtain. Rolly is an autodidact, whose parents did not even play music. With his group he intends to help children and to change their way of thinking and doing by giving them something to do. Furthermore, he wants to preserve the traditional music culture that otherwise disappears. The group now consists of approximately twenty young children. Rolly brings children in from when they are in primary school, because after high school all youth leaves Saparua and goes to Ambon.⁸³⁶ Rolly teaches techniques of playing, rhythm and tempo by doing and imitating. While some students enter with a natural talent and an existing musical hobby, others develop it in his workshop. The group only plays traditional songs. They perform during ceremonies in *Tiouw*, or when guests or tourists arrive. They do not yet play in church. Apart from music, in the workshop the children also learn the English language, and Rolly’s wife teaches them traditional dance.⁸³⁷

Based on these stories about five musicians and their music group several comparisons can be made. Often, these musicians come from musical families in which knowledge and music-making is passed down from generation to generation. They usually are autodidact, have a modest background and did not receive a higher musical education. When they did,

⁸³⁵ This explanation is based on the interview with Rence Alfons.

⁸³⁶ This is why it is important that they learn how to play when they are a child.

⁸³⁷ This explanation is based on the interview with Rolly Matahelumual.

teaching methods and repertoire are slightly different. Rence Alphons, for instance, teaches his students to read music in Western notation, arranges compositions and plays highly modern, complicated and Western music with his orchestra. In general, it seems that musicians who studied music and, for example, are teachers at music schools,⁸³⁸ are very much influenced by Western music and especially enjoy these genres. In comparison, musicians coming from relatively lower strata of society, often farther away from the city (like Rolly) teach traditional music based on oral transmission without addressing music theory. Nevertheless, all musicians play many traditional instruments, which have important meanings in their lives because this music is regarded as part of their identity. They are great teachers, organizing their groups in local places although people from outside the particular village sometimes join out of popularity. The groups perform a diversity of songs during a diversity of events. Moreover, they often collaborate with other musicians who play other instruments, both modern and traditional.⁸³⁹ Strikingly, the reasons for establishing the groups also are similar. While the musicians emphasize the idea that children cannot be forced to play and need to want to learn it from their own eagerness, with their group they intend to promote, develop and preserve traditional Moluccan instruments, in order to prevent their annihilation. Most importantly, these musicians have a strong impact on Moluccan society, popularizing Moluccan music in the public sphere among a diverse range of young people.⁸⁴⁰ Standing themselves with both feet in the community, close to the variety of ‘regular’ people around them, they build traditional music from the grassroots – from their own initiative, ambition, perseverance and drive. This is the reason that their groups are successful and make a positive difference. Apart from stimulating traditional music, the groups of these musicians also provide social roles. In a psychological way they make children happy and active, decreasing the influence of electronic gadgets. They teach them social values, contributing to interreligious peace and reconciliation. During and after the conflict, music was, and continues to be used as a tool of support and bridging. Instruments that are mainly played by Christians, such as *tifa*, *totobuang* and ukulele (or trumpet, although this one is not

⁸³⁸ Apart from uneducated musicians who have music groups and educated musician who are teachers, there are also many musicians and singers who sing and play in church. Some of these play voluntarily, because it is their hobby to do so, others are professional musicians or singers who earn their money with music-making at events and parties, for instance. Either way, music has an important meaning in the lives of these people too.

⁸³⁹ I also once attended a performance with a *tifa totobuang* group who played together with a brass orchestra (Participant Observation, 18-11-2019, Ambon).

⁸⁴⁰ For instance, nowadays more girls play traditional music too (Interview with Mark Ufie).

traditional), are combined with instruments played by Muslims, like the *rebana*.⁸⁴¹ Moreover, Christians and Muslims start to learn each other's instruments, both at school and in music groups. In the group of Nico collaboration goes one step further: different instruments are not combined, but all children from various religious backgrounds play the same instrument together.⁸⁴²

Popular music, church and politics

The stimulation of Moluccan traditional music is embedded in larger political structures, as well as in the broader category of popular music in Ambon. The Ambon Music Office (AMO) is an organization that was established in 2016 to work towards the goal of making Ambon a 'City of Music' on the UNESCO list of the 'Creative Cities Network'.⁸⁴³ The idea to start this process originated in 2011 from the initiative of the mayor and local government.

Consequently, AMO was founded with the task of developing a strategy for turning Ambon into a *kota music dunia*, a music city of the world. Working together with the local government and an organization called BEKRAF, AMO organized events and conferences, met with other representatives of music cities and applied for the recognition by UNESCO in June 2019. The ambition to become a city of music is based on the idea that Moluccans have a high musical intuition. Moluccans live with music from before they are born until after they have died; music pervades almost all aspects and places of daily life. Ambon accommodates many types of music, has a thriving popular music scene, and several famous Indonesian singers come from Ambon.⁸⁴⁴ A popular saying of the Ambonese is that although one is poor,

⁸⁴¹ The fact that some instruments are played by Christians and others by Muslims is caused by historical reasons. The ukulele became associated with Christianity because it originally is a European instrument (Interview with Nico Tulalessy). While the *totobuang* is similar to the Javanese gamelan, played by Muslims, the Christians adapted it according to a diatonic scale so that it could play Christian hymns (Interview with Chris Tamaela). The *suling* by definition is a Christian instrument, since it was developed to accompany congregational singing. The *rebana* is an Islamic instrument because it is influenced by the Middle-East and used in Islamic religious ceremonies. While both Christian and Muslim communities have the *tifa*, Muslims only use the *tifa* in *adat* ceremonies (Interview with Jonas Silooy). Muslims do not have *tifa totobuang* groups, but they have *hadrat* and *sawat* groups, which are also related to specific dances. In general, music influenced by the West, characterized by the diatonic scale, is prohibited in Islam. Music that is a product of Western Christianity is not allowed (Interview with Peter Salenus).

⁸⁴² Interview with Nico Tulalessy.

⁸⁴³ Other fields that can be chosen besides music are: crafts and folk art, design, film, gastronomy, literature, and media arts.

⁸⁴⁴ One of the persons who works for AMO, Mark Ufie, sketched the Ambonese popular music scene. In his opinion, Ambon was (and sometimes continues to be) for a long time dominated by so-called '*pop lagu daerah*'; cheesy, superficial, but very popular songs about love that have been around since the 70s. However, approximately since 2006, young musicians started to play different types of music, like hip-hop, jazz, rock, alternative, and folk, giving color to the music scene in Ambon city. AMO wants to provide more space for

one certainly is happy because he or she makes music. AMO formulated music as a tool of peace and conflict reconciliation as their unique point of branding, related to the specific Moluccan history concerning the religious conflict. Moreover, it brought Ambonese music in line with the UNESCO Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), of which number eleven is the most important in this respect: music, as part of the creative economy, has the potential to contribute to city and community development. The vision of AMO is to move from music as hobby to music as creative industry and to incorporate Ambon in a global music network. AMO facilitates the community from below so that people themselves will develop music. Current effects of this vision are music events taking place in the city,⁸⁴⁵ the building of a professional music studio and cafés which offer space for live music.⁸⁴⁶ Traditional or ethnic Moluccan music is one type of music that is part of the focus of stimulation, especially because this is the unique ‘selling point’ of music in Ambon that cannot be found somewhere else. In this light, within the framework of UNESCO, Moluccan traditional music is encapsulated as heritage, which needs to be preserved because it is part of Moluccan identity. In October 2019, Ambon officially became a UNESCO music city of the world.⁸⁴⁷

In achieving their goal, AMO thus worked and continues to work with local partners and organizations, musicians, the local government and also the church.⁸⁴⁸ In this way, the UNESCO heritage regime concerning traditional music travelled across many contexts and people, with ‘heritage’ becoming a central discursive term in relation to traditional music culture. The preservation of traditional music and its related local wisdom is mainly aimed at children, since they are the most influenced by outside forces, growing up in a globalized world, while also being the future hope of the preservation of musical traditions. Through the ministry of education in Jakarta⁸⁴⁹ and the regulations introduced by the local government,

these musicians to express their music which will help to develop a more diverse music industry (Interview with Mark Ufie).

⁸⁴⁵ Examples are workshops, conferences, concerts and festivals (such as the ‘Amboina international bamboo music festival’ (Interview with Ronny Loppies)).

⁸⁴⁶ Moreover, Ambon has a Vocational High School with music department, as well as a specialized music education on the campus of the Christian Religion Institute (IAKN), and the Islamic Music Study Program on the campus of the State Islamic Institute (IAIN).

AMO developed 25 strategies to reach their goal: some of these are already accomplished, others are still plans, such as the wish for building a conservatory in Ambon.

⁸⁴⁷ The complete explanation about AMO is based on the interview with Ronny Loppies, director of AMO. Mark Ufie and Pierre Ajawaila are two others who are involved in the organization of AMO.

⁸⁴⁸ Apart from becoming a city of music, the Ambon Music Office is created to train musicians and professionals with business skills and to prepare them to work with international partners as part of artistic exchanges, participation in festivals or international co-productions. AMO will continue to perform these tasks.

⁸⁴⁹ This is part of the recent governmental regime focusing on ethnic diversity and revival.

traditional music entered the curriculum of primary and middle public schools.⁸⁵⁰ All children now learn how to play the *suling* and ukulele in class,⁸⁵¹ and also participate in clinics given by professionals which acquaints them with different types of music.⁸⁵² The involvement of politicians in the promotion of traditional music is very visible in the public sphere. The local and even national government commissions performances of traditional Moluccan music which allows traditional music groups to travel to and play their music in a variety of local, regional, national and international places.⁸⁵³ In turn, when a music event is organized somewhere in the city, a delegation of local politicians is always present to demonstrate support. An example was an art show performed by many different school classes in the ecumenic *baileo* next to the *Maranatha* church. Representatives from the local government, including the mayor who opened the event, and representatives from AMO were part of the audience. The children all wore a beautiful diversity of indigenous costumes and the enormous amount of groups performed in turn on stage. The majority of instruments used consisted of *suling*, although the *tifa*, *tahuri*, *totobuang* and some other instruments were also played. There was one group with violins, which was called a ‘modern instrument’. A couple of classes performed a dance, such as the *tari tifa* and the *tari tifar mayang* (the children danced with a stick with calabash fruit). Moreover, several groups sang local traditional songs,⁸⁵⁴ while others sang national traditional songs.⁸⁵⁵ Interestingly, a local/national distinction of layers of the so-called *lagu-lagu*, the popular traditional songs, thus became apparent. As Barendregt (2014, 31) states, “Popular music, then, frequently acts as a tool to sanction new modern and nationalist culture, but at the same time its values are challenged

⁸⁵⁰ Other programs (among others) are: a program that encourages high school students to set up bands, establishing an annual inter-school competition for them; the Musicians Visitation Program - a mentoring program in which experienced musicians, playing traditional instruments, visit the surrounding villages around Ambon and perform masterclasses for local musicians, for whom the main instrument is a traditional one; and the *Taman Budaya* Concert Building, which seats up to 800 spectators. Once, I saw a theatre group rehearsing here. Poet Rudi Fofid gave a workshop, after which the group wrote the script and songs, practiced, and performed. Rudi taught them to improve the content of their composed songs. In line with AMO, he stated that it is allowed to write songs about love, but it should not be too simple. One also has to write from a critical perspective, for example about poverty and corruption (Interview with Rudi Fofid).

⁸⁵¹ And therefore also about their own local identity, according to many.

⁸⁵² Young, creative artists who are part of Ambon’s music scene visit schools to teach music to children. This program is called ‘GSMS’; *gerakkan seniman masuk sekolah*, movement of artists entering schools (Interview with Agustinus C.W. Gaspersz, Jeffrey Leatimia, Brackly Egbert Picanussa).

In former times, children also learned to play *suling* at school. Egbert Picanussa remembered how he would walk home from school while playing the *suling*. This practice now returned.

⁸⁵³ Interview with Barce Istia.

⁸⁵⁴ For instance about *pela*, or songs called *Sayang kane rasa saya*, *Ola bapak ja*, *waktu hujan sore-sore*, *gandong*, *Laju laju perahu laju*, *Ayo mama* (Participant Observation, 16-12-2019, Ambon).

⁸⁵⁵ For instance, the popular national song *Tanah airku*, or *Indonesia Pusaka*, *Pancasila rumah kita* (Participant Observation, 16-12-2019, Ambon).

through the very same popular songs that serve as a vehicle for yet other, alternative forms of belonging.” The “hybridization of the local unique and the cosmopolitan modern” could be recognized well during this event, where local Moluccan expressions of music, clothing and dance were combined with modern and national expressions of the same kind.

The role of the church

The church is a partner in the promotion of traditional music.⁸⁵⁶ Although their motivation derives from a theological perspective, the GPM policy aligns with political and musical motivations.⁸⁵⁷ The installment of the ethnic service, of which music forms part, is seen as a positive contribution, from the perspective of AMO, to help and strengthen the ambition to preserve traditional music. The church can play an important role here, since it constitutes a central part of Moluccan Christians’ lives and can therefore influence musical experiences, mindsets and practices.⁸⁵⁸ In this respect, many musicians themselves also regard the role of the church as something positive. Sometimes, traditional music groups are invited to accompany the church service. The children and musicians enjoy this religious role they play and state that they receive satisfying responses from the congregants. Most of the musicians I spoke to therefore have the opinion that the GPM and the ethnic service can help to further develop traditional music.⁸⁵⁹ The official, convincing and powerful position that the GPM occupies among Moluccan Christians makes the church a promising partner from which traditional music can spread to a diversity of contexts. Thus, the ethnic service of the GPM can help to lift up the feeling of Moluccanness, since music is a question of identity.⁸⁶⁰ Some musicians think the church will not play a decisive role in whether traditional music develops in Ambon or not, believing that this will happen either way. Nevertheless, the church is still seen as one of the places where this music can flourish.⁸⁶¹ Other musicians do not view the GPM as a partner in their project of promoting Moluccan music, and even express criticism on its music policy. This criticism mainly takes place on the level of GPM music in general, and on quality, rules, money, the songbook NJGPM and terminology.

⁸⁵⁶ One of UKIM’s teachers, who is an expert on traditional music and also works for the GPM to develop the ethnic service, works together with AMO.

⁸⁵⁷ Chapter Seven will go into more detail about the practice of traditional church music.

⁸⁵⁸ Interview with Ronny Loppies.

⁸⁵⁹ Interview with Nico Tulalessy, Carolis Elias Horhoruw.

⁸⁶⁰ Interview with Jonas Silooy, Semy Toisuta.

⁸⁶¹ Interview with Semy Toisuta.

Reasons of musical criticism

Firstly, according to certain musicians, the GPM does not yet have a serious attitude towards church music in a structural manner. While contextualization is a popular idea in the GPM, the idea is not translated into practice.⁸⁶² Moreover, church music is severely influenced by popular, modern trends, which results in unilateral, simple, echoing keyboard music.⁸⁶³

Almost no GPM churches play (from the musicians' perspective) 'real' traditional music in church.⁸⁶⁴ Furthermore, some stated that church music is not fully incorporated in the church service. One musician called it a horizontal function of music, while the purpose and power of church music is to connect with and deliver a religious message in vertical communication with God.⁸⁶⁵ In short, this group thinks the GPM underestimates the central role of music in worship in their project of contextualization.

Secondly, quality is an important issue. In the eyes of these musicians, the problematic socialization and implementation of traditional church songs and music are caused by laziness and poor preparation. For instance, choirs practice too little and too late, the music notation is not presented while learning a song, and the chosen musical liturgy is delivered rather close to the actual Sunday service.⁸⁶⁶ Moreover, the team responsible for organizing the church music often does not have the capability nor creativity to set it up in the right, full contextual way, and lacks musical knowledge.⁸⁶⁷ Although these statements reflect the opinions of individual musicians, in church I had several empirical experiences which corresponded with what these musicians said.⁸⁶⁸ The large majority of church services is indeed accompanied by one keyboard. Furthermore, the tuning between different musical parts is not always in balance, for example when one section drowns out the other, or when microphones are too loud or too soft. In this sense quality depends on place, capability and organization.

⁸⁶² One musician I spoke to even said that in practice the GPM functions along the lines of a colonial theology, by which he referred to the rules and dogmas that have stayed in place since colonial times, according to his perspective.

⁸⁶³ Interview with Anonymous, 12-12-2019, Ambon.

⁸⁶⁴ Interview with Anonymous, 12-12-2019, Ambon.

⁸⁶⁵ Interview with Anonymous, 12-12-2019, Ambon.

⁸⁶⁶ Interview with Anonymous, 12-12-2019, Ambon.

⁸⁶⁷ Interview with Anonymous, 12-12-2019, Ambon.

Therefore, pastor Jacky Manuputty's ideal image of the church would include a permanent group supporting musical liturgy, which would have experience with and knowledge about these matters, approaching church music in a holistic way – focusing on message, performance, lighting, emotion, et cetera (Interview with Jacky Manuputty).

⁸⁶⁸ This does not mean that their statements therefore are necessarily true, because other experiences also could contradict what they say. Often, the quality of the church music was exceptionally high, however not traditional.

Thirdly, the ethnic service is the most obvious framework for traditional church music, but the word ‘ethnic’ causes confusion in relation to the mix of music that is often used. For this critical group of professional musicians, ethnic means truly indigenous, which, in their eyes, does not correlate with church reality. Modern, electronic instruments and Indonesian language are mixed with other elements, which consequently is called ‘ethnic’ – a combination that therefore is not understandable for these musicians.⁸⁶⁹ From the perspective of one musician, the church did not yet develop a feeling of love for traditional music and instruments made of Moluccan materials, which should be facilitated and practiced with under the coordination of the GPM.⁸⁷⁰ Thus, the ‘ethnic’ part of the ethnic service is not a clear concept when looking at church music.⁸⁷¹ Moreover, some musicians feel that particular ethnic elements are willingly not used in church, such as *kapata*, while this is a typical indigenous cultural form that could function as a medium to praise God or as a form of prayer. However, the GPM does not invest in information, collaboration and preparation to work with *kapata* as a religious source of Moluccanness.⁸⁷²

Fourthly, criticism centers around political support and financial gain. The church has money to realize the ethnic service in the fifth week of the month.⁸⁷³ In between the lines it seems that some musicians suspect religious-political alliances from which a financial motivation rather than a substantial motivation for the ethnic service and traditional music arises.⁸⁷⁴

Fifthly, the NJGPM, the songbook that is characterized as contextual and used in ethnic services, is regarded as actually non-contextual by some people. The book has been made in a very short period of time, according to a tight schedule, and with a set hierarchy. Rather than a creative process, several musicians see it as the product of a blueprint: a local song is picked, after which the text is removed and a new Christian text is added. However, while the music is played in other places, the context of the song stays the same and is not fully worked with.⁸⁷⁵ Moreover, this group thinks that only a tiny percent of the songs in the book is truly ethnic, whereas the rest is not.⁸⁷⁶ It is true that some composers I spoke to indeed

⁸⁶⁹ Interview with Anonymous, 14-12-2019, Ambon.

⁸⁷⁰ Interview with Anonymous, 12-12-2019, Ambon.

⁸⁷¹ Interview with Anonymous, 19-11-2019, Ambon.

⁸⁷² Interview with Anonymous, 12-12-2019, Ambon.

⁸⁷³ Interview with Agustinus C.W. Gaspersz.

⁸⁷⁴ Informal conversation with Anonymous, 19-11-2019, Ambon.

⁸⁷⁵ Informal conversation with Anonymous, 19-11-2019, Ambon.

⁸⁷⁶ For instance, many songs are diatonic (Interview with Anonymous, 14-12-2019, Ambon).

stated that they created diatonic songs because this Western influence is more popular and therefore commercially a better choice, even calling the pentatonic scale ‘weird’.⁸⁷⁷ Also, Bible texts are literally taken as lyrics,⁸⁷⁸ and one composer did not know what diatonic meant and saw no difference between NJGPM and other songbooks in terms of contextuality.⁸⁷⁹

Lastly, criticism is focused on church rules, traditions and dogmas. The prestigious role of the pastor is one such object of contestation. For instance, some churches do not allow music groups or choirs to perform with their face towards to congregation, as this would be unrespectful to the pastor. However, in this way the direction of sound does not enhance listening quality. Musician Nico Tulalessy therefore firmly disagrees with this rule, since the music is part of the congregational experience and directed at God, and God is not only present in front of the church.⁸⁸⁰ Thus, traditional church music has to fight against longstanding rules, theologies, structures and hierarchies.⁸⁸¹ For some musicians this means that the GPM is busy maintaining their doctrinal status quo instead of developing traditional music.⁸⁸²

Conclusion

This chapter served to describe the Moluccan traditional music that forms the cultural source for developing traditional church music, which is the topic of the last chapter. The ‘traditional’ has been conceptualized with reference to the terms ‘ethnic’, ‘local’ and ‘*daerah*’. The traditional as a noun is a historical process that makes something traditional (as an adjective), characterized by time and relevance. The openness of traditional allows for mixing and merging, whereby the Moluccan traditional can encompass a variety of elements which are relational to modernity. Concerning music, a process of naturalization, ancestral transmission (*turun temurun*), and the use over a long period of time authenticate traditional

⁸⁷⁷ Interview with Anonymous (12-12-2019, Ambon), Anonymous (20-11-2019, Ambon).

⁸⁷⁸ Interview with Anonymous (12-12-2019, Ambon).

⁸⁷⁹ Interview with Anonymous, 18-12-2019, Ambon.

Nevertheless, it should be noted that a selection of pastors and musicians contributed to the composition process and criticism on the book generally comes from people who were not involved as composer.

⁸⁸⁰ Interview with Nico Tulalessy.

This point of criticism in general touches the broad role of pastors, who should only deal with preaching and counseling (Interview with Anonymous, 12-12-2019, Ambon).

⁸⁸¹ Interview with John F. Beay.

⁸⁸² For example, the instrument *suling* is part of the identity of the Moluccan church, however it is not developed by the GPM. Another point concerns the large church buildings and wealth of the GPM. The system morally obliges people to give money to the church with the idea that God will then give back. Even very poor people donate their money to the church (Interview with Anonymous, 14-12-2019, Ambon).

music as having a Moluccan soul and therefore as being part of Moluccan identity. This musical feeling of Moluccanness is the reason for the wish of maintaining, preserving and developing traditional music. Consequently, Moluccan music has been musicologically described, focusing on scale, melody, rhythm, instruments, styles, and songs. The stories of five traditional music groups were presented to illustrate how they promote, develop and preserve traditional music by a regeneration process aimed at children. These musicians and their groups have high impact on society, serving important roles in the education of social values and in religious reconciliation. In the project of preservation, traditional music thus moves from its original *adat* context to other public, political and religious contexts.

Traditional music is a unique focus of attention of the organization AMO which turned Ambon into a UNESCO city of music and stimulates the popular music scene in general. Recent political regulations on the teaching of traditional instruments in the curriculum of public schools, as well as GPM policy concerning the ethnic service, are viewed as positive contributions to the promotion of Moluccan traditional music by many musicians.

Nevertheless, regarding the role of the church some musicians are not convinced by this religious partner and express criticism on the level of the place of music in the GPM service, and on quality, money, the NJGPM, terminology and church dogmas.

Figures – Chapter 6



Figure 30 - Akapeti & klong (photo by author)



Figure 31 - Pong-pong & toleng-toleng (photo by author)



Figure 32 - Tifa totobuang group of Jonas Silooy (photo by author)



Figure 33 - Totobuang (photo by author)



Figure 34 - Various sizes of the tifa (photo by author)



Figure 35 - Various sizes of the tahuri (photo by author)



Figure 36 - Takatak Bulu (photo by author)



Figure 37 - The cutting of bamboo for the making of suling (photo by author)



Figure 38 - Ukulele children's music group of Nico Tulalessy (photo by author)

Figure 39 - Suling flute that the author made (photo by friend of author)

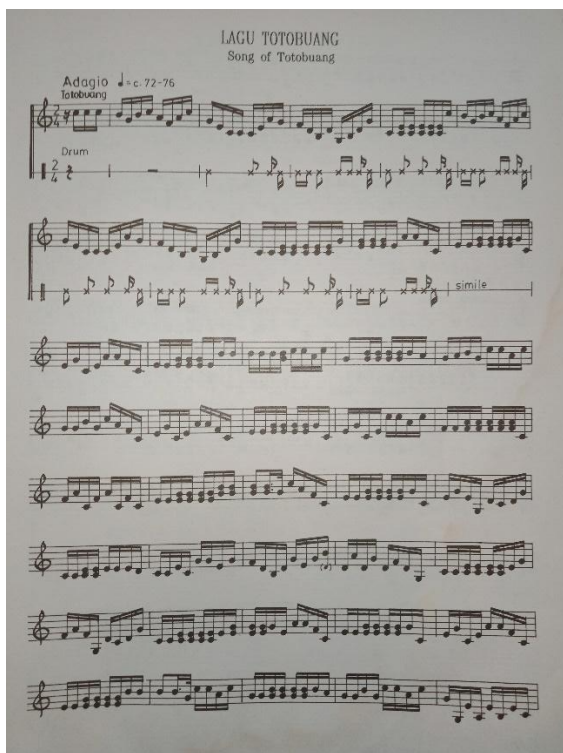


Figure 38 - Notation Lagu Totobuang (Tamaela 1991, 9-10)

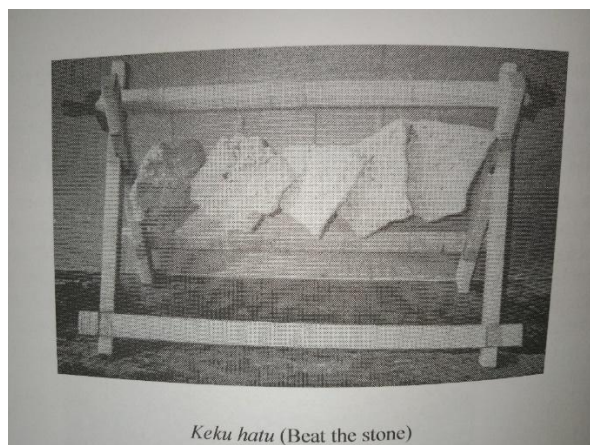


Figure 39 - Keku Hatu, Beat the Stone (Tamaela 2015, 174)



Figure 40 - MBO orchestra (photo by author)

Wood.

It is the first word that comes to my mind when I think of the little church in *Soya* village. The rectangular nave forms the whole body of this house of God, narrow and small. The inconspicuous building is located on the left of the road when driving from Ambon into the green mountains. I visited the place twice. The first time to hear the *suling bambu* flutes that each week accompany worship here. The second time to complete my fieldwork by attending service in one of the most beautiful churches I had ever been.

A pure and happy feeling of awe arises the moment I cross the threshold. The round shapes of the roof and the windows, the light entering the space, the resigned silence descending upon me – I feel peaceful. I sit down in one of the simple, tiny brown-wooden benches, my knees pressed against the next row. On both sides of the nave thin, elegant columns carry the atmosphere. The brilliant woodwork that characterizes this church is yellow-white combined with dark green. In front of me I see the flowered altar, solemn lectern and modest pulpit behind each other, crowned with a stained-glass Last Supper and surrounded by the higher, decorated compartments where the king, village leaders and *majelis* take their seat. Above me I sense the majesty of the semi-circled roof made of white, long, wooden slats. Around me I see the black and colored clothes of the men and women who, packed together in this cozy place, silently and patiently wait for the worship to begin. Behind me I hear the high, sharp sounds of the many *suling* flutes, played by younger and older musicians who are positioned on the open balcony in the back of the church, demarcated by a wooden balustrade framed with organ. A short, almost straight staircase leads to this loft close under the ceiling, where innumerable *suling* players perfectly fit their instruments next to each other, blowing the tones over the heads of the congregants. I see a butterfly floating on subtle waves of air.

I smell the old wood.

We read the Bible passage out loud. The taste of the mint candy I am given flavors the Word of God. The pastor talks about the status of an abundance of faith, transforming us in the totality of our existence. We close our eyes, bend our heads, fold our hands and pray. From all sides of the church a gigantic choir assembles, standing in between the benches and facing the pulpit. Their polyphonic voices and musical range express a sacral, noble ambience. Together with one keyboard the musicians play without notation. We sing *Dua Sahabat Lama* without beamer. A moment of wonder flows through my being. The acoustics, the quality, the place. The power and volume of our chanting. The solemnity, the tranquility, the beauty. Everything is right, everything is in balance. I am immersed.

7-The Ancestors, The Ethnic, The Ordinary: Traditional Church Music

This was it. Like the ‘wow’ (Meyer 2016), or ‘the rest of what is’ (Van de Port 2010), I cannot describe what happened precisely or how I felt exactly. I just knew. The experience touched the core of what I was trying to understand. An assemblage of words, music and atmosphere resulted in a spiritual feeling inside me, not in a religious sense per se, however definitely in a sense of love and beauty. Originally, the church in *Soya* is one of the oldest churches on Ambon island, although unfortunately it once burnt down and was rebuilt in the same style. It is one of the few places where each week a *suling* ensemble accompanies congregational singing. It also is the only place I visited where they did not use electronic tools such as a beamer. The first time I came here, I sat in between the *suling* players on the balcony. Overwhelmed by the number of musicians, the small and low space, the techniques and the sounds, I enjoyed the uniqueness of the service.⁸⁸³ The centrality of music was astonishing. The choirs consisted of almost half of the congregants that were present, including a large part of the *suling* ensemble. Moreover, the congregants themselves sang as if they were an immense choir – loud, with full conviction and unparalleled quality. The music and singing was slow, serene, peaceful, majestic and pretty. After attending countless worship services, I wished to end my fieldwork in the church of *Soya*, together with my friends. The second time I entered this special, beautiful place, I felt it again. The edges of the windows and doors were decorated for Christmas in a rare sophisticated way. The keyboard sounded like an organ or piano instead of an echoing synthesizer, not disturbing the tranquility. I liked the accompaniment of the *suling*, which did not dominate but conformed perfectly with our singing voices. I also enjoyed the older songs of the DSL. I noted that acoustics, building, quality and regeneration make a profound difference for the religious experience one has. I could go along with it, I could feel it. At this moment I began to reflect on why this happened to me in this particular situation. I realized that perhaps the atmosphere, the serenity, the music and the songs came the closest to what my mind and body remembered from attending (although seldomly) church in the Netherlands. In *Soya* I no longer merely observed and appreciated worship. I participated and practiced worship from my own being. I also realized that this personal context determines the core of religiosity. Religious knowledge acquisition (including theology), religious memories and religious upbringing are stored deep inside a

⁸⁸³ It was organized well; a tin can, for instance, was passed around among the players before the offertory, since they had to provide the music during this part of the liturgy.

person, connected to emotions and experiences. This could well be the reason for the complicated process of contextual theology, as context is not a unidirectional nor unambiguous idea, and certainly not easy to change. While it is possible to learn and speak about contextual theology as envisioned by UKIM and the GPM, and even enjoy it in service, the question remains whether it will touch and transform ways of religious thinking and feeling – and whether this should be the goal aimed for.

This chapter addresses the last part of the journey from theology to lived religion. Practices, opinions and attitudes concerning traditional church music are discussed, mainly through the process and implementation of the ethnic service. Central points that form the red line through the thesis will come together, such as heritage, language, music and the ancestors. The chapter will close with the interconnectedness between Christianity, Moluccan culture and church culture.

The bamboo bridge

Before turning to the ethnic service and traditional church music, some additional words about the *suling* have to be said. The *suling* namely, as a traditional instrument, occupies a special position in relation to the traditional, the ethnic service and church music. While in the former chapter the original *adat* context of traditional instruments has been addressed, the original context of the *suling* is the Moluccan church. For the longest time, the *suling* was the prime instrument for the accompaniment of congregational singing, having been created for this purpose. Only after the introduction of other instruments in church, such as trumpet and keyboard, the popularity of the *suling* severely decreased. Now, in only a few villages the *suling* is still played in church. As the beginning of this chapter recounted, *Soya* is one of these villages. On the beautiful, tiny balcony a large ensemble of young and old men, as well as a few young girls, blew the *suling* factions – mostly the highest, although one lowest *suling* was present too. Another village where I encountered the *suling* was *Haria*, on Saparua. *Haria* has three churches in which the musical accompaniment rotates each week. Besides keyboard and trumpet, there also is one *suling* group. In the simple, old, small, rectangular church of *Immanuel*, beautifully located right next to the grey sea, I again experienced this Moluccan sound of worship on a rainy day in a melancholic atmosphere. This time the group, mostly consisting of men of various ages, was smaller and sat together in the benches at the front right. They played rather slowly, with clear, demarcated notes which sometimes did not

entirely reach the sung tone as the range of the *suling* not always perfectly correlates with the hymns – which in my view adds to the charm but is seemingly not agreed upon by many Moluccan Christians.⁸⁸⁴

It appears that the tradition of playing *suling* in church is confined to specific places where a strong effort of regeneration is taken through the transmittance of the instrument via family ties, hereby preserving this traditional instrument in church. The older male musicians I talked to generally began playing when they were a teenager, meaning that they have been part of the *suling* ensemble for over fifty years now. They were taught to play the instrument at school and also learned it from their parents who often played the *suling* in church themselves. As children they sat next to them, thinking about the moment they would form part of the group. In continuation, their own children and even grandchildren nowadays play together with them.⁸⁸⁵ For many of the musicians, the *suling* means Moluccan culture and identity.⁸⁸⁶ The meaning causes the feeling that it is important to preserve this culture in their congregation. The *suling* has a characteristic, own sound that has been heard in church for generations already, which is why it is seen as the traditional instrument par excellence.⁸⁸⁷ The instrument was created by the ancestors and is regarded as essential in guiding worship: “Because this is a traditional music instrument inherited from our ancestors or past down from our ancestors, so we do not want to lose it.”⁸⁸⁸

Most Moluccans instantly associate traditional church music with the *suling*, because this instrument has been designed for the Moluccan church and has been used here for the longest time. In the current project of preservation the *suling* moves out of church to other contexts (the MBO is an example). The broadening of the context of the *suling* results in different repertoires and interesting mixtures; not only spiritual songs but any kind of music can be played by the *suling*, which is one of the reasons that makes the *suling* more popular among the youth. For the other traditional instruments that have been discussed the opposite direction is true. Instruments such as the *tifa* and *totobuang* are not yet associated with church

⁸⁸⁴ The pastor with whom I attended the church service even started explaining the reason for the *suling* sometimes being slightly out of tune. It became clear he felt ashamed when a mistake was made or when it did not sound perfect, wanting to assure the highest musical quality for a foreign guest, while I, on the other hand, was greatly fascinated by this church instrument (Participant Observation, 8-12-2019, *Haria*).

⁸⁸⁵ Not all children want to learn *suling*. Some change to ‘modern’ instruments like keyboard or trumpet (Interview with Anonymous, 10-11-2019, *Soya*).

⁸⁸⁶ Interview with Anonymous (*suling* player, 10-11-2019, *Soya*).

⁸⁸⁷ Interview with Anonymous, 10-11-2019, *Soya*.

⁸⁸⁸ Interview with Anonymous, 10-11-2019, *Soya*. Translation by author. “*Karena ini adalah alat musik tradisional warisan nenek moyang atau leluhur turun temurun maka kami tidak mau menghilangkannya.*”

music, having originated in an *adat* context. In stimulating this music the church is one of the new contexts in which traditional instruments are popularized. In this light, traditional church music is part of a theological progressive innovation that bases Moluccan Christianity on Moluccan (musical) culture and identity. The traditional instruments are conceptualized as cultural heritage and theologically transformed to be incorporated in liturgy. The *suling*, on the other hand, is seen as religious heritage which does not need transformation because it always belonged to church.⁸⁸⁹ Interestingly, the *suling* is often connected to the other meaning of traditional: in a few places the instrument is *still* present since a long time, places that in UKIM-theological terms would be described as religiously conservative – a solemn, tranquil style of singing and music, a Bible-centered, exclusivist, anti-cultural God-image, et cetera. Thus, the *suling* is associated with traditional Christian culture that now moves to public, popular contexts, while other traditional instruments are associated with Moluccan *adat* culture, which, among others, move to a church context. From a contextual theological view, the latter have to become part of church culture, while reversely, the *suling* is already regarded as Moluccan cultural identity: “The *suling bambu* culture lives from Moluccan culture. We are Moluccans. When service is supported by *suling*, it feels as our service. It is our Christianity, not someone else’s. (...) We are Moluccan Christians. Our religion is our origin.”⁸⁹⁰ I would argue that the *suling* therefore forms the bridge between two meanings of traditional: it is part of a theological contextualization and musical preservation because it shapes Moluccan cultural identity, while it also is related to ‘conservative’ traditional church culture. However, the theological contextualization is not new in itself. In fact, the *suling* is the perfect proof of a centuries-long contextualization that automatically has been going on; the instrument clearly shows Western influence but became a symbol of both Moluccan Christianity and Moluccan culture. The *suling* is the prime example of the traditional.

The ethnic church service

The *ibadah etnis* is a recent decision made by the GPM in cooperation with UKIM that was strongly influenced by the ideas of Chris Tamaela.⁸⁹¹ It originated from the contextual

⁸⁸⁹ The *suling* is one of the instruments that is solely associated with Moluccan Christian religion. For instance, when a Moluccan Christian has died the *suling* is played, because the sound of the instrument is deemed to fit the grievous atmosphere. While instruments such as the keyboard are also played on parties, the *suling* is not (Interview with Anonymous, 6-12-2019, Saparua).

⁸⁹⁰ Interview with Anonymous, 6-12-2019, Saparua. Translation by author.

⁸⁹¹ The fact that the GPM made this synodal decision of the *ibadah etnis* in 2018 does not mean that they were the first who designed it. UKIM was already for a longer time working according to a contextual approach and

approach, and the idea that worship would feel closer and would be better understandable through the connection between theology and daily Moluccan life.⁸⁹² Moreover, the *ibadah etnis* aims to show appreciation for all Moluccan cultures within the GPM.⁸⁹³ One pastor explained:

The ethnic worship (...) aims to build a sense of pride in the culture of each tribe, so that they do not feel alienated. (...) The church must create an atmosphere of ‘at home’ for each culture/ethnicity. The church must not ignore the reality of ethnic and cultural diversity. The church must not carry out cultural hegemony or the imposition of a dominant culture.⁸⁹⁴

The ethnic service is also designed to prevent the submergence of Moluccan culture and customs in the fast-changing millennial world.⁸⁹⁵ To many the ethnic shift came as a positive surprise, because for a long time anything associated with culture (such as local language, music, et cetera) had been banned.⁸⁹⁶ The GPM is currently grappling with their decision, thinking about what it means in practice. The question is how to develop contextualization in church in the modern era – how to innovate upon traditions in order that people feel God present in their own Moluccan, contemporary context.⁸⁹⁷ The fifth week of the month is now reserved for a more creative form of worship which can be used to do an ethnic service.⁸⁹⁸ Churches have to execute this policy, although there does not yet exist a model which outlines rules for how it should be done.⁸⁹⁹ This means that pastors, *majelis* and liturgy teams have to find their own way in setting up this kind of service, which nevertheless is bound to a liturgical structure that is pre-set each five years.⁹⁰⁰ The term ‘ethnic’ in *ibadah etnis* is not defined in a determined way. It is a creative service in the form of ethnic worship, to be

saw the ethnic service as a good framework for bringing it in practice. Moreover, several progressive and creative pastors who generally worked in congregations that are situated in more remote places, with many church members coming from different ethnic tribes, set up ethnic worship services already in the beginning of the 2000s – also based on the idea to bring Christian religion closer to people’s cultural experience. This means that multiple persons claim the original idea of the ethnic service.

⁸⁹² Interview with Peter Salenusca.

⁸⁹³ Interview with Hery Siahay.

⁸⁹⁴ (written) Interview with Rudi Rahabeat, GPM pastor, 27-11-2019, Ambon.

⁸⁹⁵ Interview with Jan Z. Matatula, Omy & Jeane.

⁸⁹⁶ The Bible-translation organization Wycliffe, for instance, always was very careful in the translation work they presented in Ambonese Malay or local languages. They were first not allowed to work with scripture or songs (Interviews at Wycliffe, 11-11-2019, Ambon).

⁸⁹⁷ Interview with Branckly Egbert Picanussa.

⁸⁹⁸ Earlier, only in special services this new format was tried, such as in Easter or Christmas services.

⁸⁹⁹ Together with the GPM Chris Tamaela was working on a more specific ethnic liturgy.

⁹⁰⁰ One of the ambitions of UKIM is to make this structure a little bit more loose in order that there is no endless repetition for the whole five years (Interview with Rachel Iwamony).

interpreted by people themselves. The reason for this is practical reality: the Moluccas have an innumerable amount of ethnic and sub-ethnic groups that are situated in many different places, which is why an openness instead of a general structure or definition is preferred.⁹⁰¹

The process of the ethnic service

The process of building an ethnic service is quite extensive. Despite there being no model,⁹⁰² the GPM assists congregations in developing the capacity for doing an *ibadah etnis*. Peter Salenussa, who works for both UKIM and the GPM, travels to many places in the Moluccas to collect data about the variety of cultural sources and music which can be contextualized in the ethnic service. He also helps congregations everywhere to teach them how to use their cultural richness: together a liturgy is designed after which one practices, so that later the congregation can try it on its own.⁹⁰³ Chris Tamaela was seen as one of the experts in building an ethnic service, also assisting congregations in the process. He explained how he first always studied the congregational context. He checked if they still spoke an indigenous language and met with people in the congregation. Then, he wrote the liturgical skeleton, making use of elements that people in that place used in their village.⁹⁰⁴ Thus, as described in Chapter Four, in the contextual process cultural forms from Moluccan life that are appropriate in relation to Christian values are selected, turning into symbols that are theologized and transformed with a new spiritual meaning.⁹⁰⁵ In the ethnic service these cultural forms can be songs, music, folklore, cosmology/philosophy, languages, local wisdom, dance, food, natural materials, clothing, and more. For example, dances such as the *cakalele*, the *pata cengkeh*, the *tari lenso* or others are performed at the start of the service, during the offering, or to welcome people and the presence of God in church.⁹⁰⁶ The *tahuri*, *toleng-toleng* or *tifa* are sounded three times as a substitution of the church bell.⁹⁰⁷ The *tahuri* can also be blown to call the

⁹⁰¹ Interview with Peter Salenussa.

⁹⁰² Although the GPM is working on a model, this kind of standardization also poses some dangers. It is hard to grasp the diversity of Moluccan ethnicities in a fitting way, and a model can undermine the goal of ethnic particularity because it affords easy appropriation. As Rutherford (1996, 597) states, standardization allows the possibility of the learning of ethnic ways by a broad, non- or other-ethnic public.

⁹⁰³ In each place particular cultural forms can be chosen, which are contextualized for liturgy to match the daily experience of the specific people there (Interview with Peter Salenussa).

⁹⁰⁴ For instance, he asked the congregants to enter the church on the *Patasiwa* or *Patalima* beats of the *tifa*, he let them dance when they gathered before God, and he called Jesus the *tete manis*, the sweet grandfather. Contextual songs were sung, traditional costumes were worn and local symbols were employed – based on particular Moluccan philosophies of life that were transferred through theological values. For example, movements went counter-clockwise, the offering box was made of sago, coconut or bamboo, and decorated with red – referring to Christ's blood and ancestral strength – and typical leaves that the ancestors use to protect their family became instruments of blessing.

⁹⁰⁵ Interview with Chris Tamaela.

⁹⁰⁶ Interview with Jan Z. Matatula, Anonymous (18-12-2019, Ambon), Anonymous (22-12-2019, Ambon).

⁹⁰⁷ Interview with Anonymous, 22-12-2019, Ambon.

Holy Spirit.⁹⁰⁸ Other traditional instruments are played to accompany the songs, which almost always come from the NJGPM. The altar, pulpit and offering box are decorated with Moluccan natural materials such as leaves of coconut, nutmeg or cloves. The congregants, and sometimes the pastor and *majelis*, wear the *baju cele*, the *kebaya* or even the *ikat kepala*. The songs, prayer and sermon are translated in local languages (such as *Wemale* or *Alune*) or in Ambonese Malay.⁹⁰⁹ In sermons pastors make use of cultural symbols too, such as the *kain gandong* or the *tempat garam*.⁹¹⁰ Indigenous communication methods can also enter church, for instance in the shape of a call and response.⁹¹¹ Moreover, the ethnic elements can form a synthesis with contemporary cultural styles, in order that an ethnic nuance in popular models attracts a broad range of congregants. In this way, also young people can receive their cultural origin, transformed to the present, in church.⁹¹² Which forms are used in the *ibadah etnis* in which way completely depends on context and content. In this light, the ethnic service is not a trial on error, but based on knowledge of communal traditions that can be developed in church.⁹¹³ In Ambon many congregations are multi-ethnic, which means that one ethnic group is chosen, such as Kei or Tanimbar, alternated the next time with another group or the general *Malayu Ambon* culture. Sometimes the ethnic service is multi-ethnic, with combinations of clothing, languages, et cetera.

Peter Salenussa and Chris Tamaela, experts in the process of liturgical contextualization, explained the theological transformation in a detailed way. The traditional cultural forms, found and studied in various Moluccan places, are selected if they contain a relevant theological message.⁹¹⁴ The transposition to the church consequently requires the observation of both cultural and church context to implement the cultural form in a fitting manner. For instance, the *kain gandong* can be used in service as a symbol of brotherhood. This meaning is easily recognizable for a broad scope of people in many places. *Sopi* as a symbol of communication, however, has a smaller receptive scope and can therefore only be

⁹⁰⁸ The ancestral spirits may even be called too, however to praise God together (Interview with John F. Beay).

⁹⁰⁹ Interview with Anonymous, 7-12-2019, *Noloth*.

⁹¹⁰ *Kain gandong* refers to a white cloth which connects *pela* brothers and sisters (Interview with Peter Salenussa).

⁹¹¹ Interview with Rudi Rahabeat.

⁹¹² Interview with Peter Salenussa.

⁹¹³ Interview with Branckly Egbert Picanussa.

⁹¹⁴ Interview with Agustinus C.W. Gaspersz.

The core of this process is the point in which the original value fits with the Christian value and church context. Core Christian values are love, unity, equality – which also refer to the value of nature and animals (Interview with Peter Salenussa). Thus, the cultural form becomes an idiom or symbol in liturgy to express a theological message.

implemented in congregational contexts in which this cultural practice makes sense, or needs additional theological explanation for the intended audience. Moreover, the cultural form should answer the theme of the service and be functionally embedded in it. In this way, people are brought in contact with Moluccan traditional culture that is situated in a relevant religious, theological and contemporary context.⁹¹⁵ Hence, powerful cultural forms that express a peaceful living together with God, people and nature enter the church service. The reception of the transposition depends on a clear explanation on how the form is theologically used, creating awareness and understanding about Christian faith from the perspective of Moluccan culture.⁹¹⁶ Theological meaning is central to the process: “Don’t ever try the new thing before you explain it! You assume that [it’s] oke, that it is a custom, it’s common in our culture. You should be careful. You should connect it with the Christian worship. (...) Why you use it in the worship? It should be clear.”⁹¹⁷ So, understanding, explanation and meaning are required for turning the power of custom into a message of Christianity. Moreover, Moluccan cultural forms are not the only contextual sources that need to be used. Chris Tamaela explained how the first step of liturgical contextualization is appreciation of what the Moluccan church already has. In this light, Western influence is very important because certain structures and ways of worship have been practiced for centuries, with Moluccan Christians feeling comfortable with these. One has to build on these forms since for successful contextualization a sense of ordinary, pleasant worship is needed. Consequently, the creation of something new is based on both culture and religion. This process needs a filter, to ‘clean’ culture from ‘magic powers’, with which Chris referred to the human ancestors: only the

⁹¹⁵ Peter illustrated his words with various examples. *Siri pinang* is something people eat to symbolically show they are *saudara*. This value can be transformed to show the relationship one has with God. The Moluccan traditional boat, the *perahu*, can be used in service during the introitus. Missionaries brought Christianity by boat, but the *perahu* is a typical Moluccan boat which symbolically represents social relationships in a village. When people enter church, coconut leaves can be waved as a Moluccan reference to the palm leaves that were used when Jesus entered Jerusalem. And the *ba meti* dance can be performed as a thanksgiving to God, relating to the condition when the sea retreats and people can find many fish in the little pools – a moment that is a blessing from God (Interview with Peter Salenus).

⁹¹⁶ Interview with John F. Beay.

⁹¹⁷ An example was the communication word *kulei* that Jacky Manuputty used in his sermon. Before using it in the liturgy he needed to explain it, even to the people of Haruku for whom it is custom to use the word to communicate across large distances in the dense forest. Because the word was transposed to a church context, an explanation of meaning was required: “It signifies the meaning [that] I am not alone. So it’s closely related with the conviction that we are part of one another. (...) It is a very deep meaning [in] Christianity. So if I stand inside this pulpit, and I can see you all, but I cannot define that your mind and your heart are with me. (...) So by response to my *kulei*, I want to know that all your minds and hearts are with me. I am not alone” (Interview with Jacky Manuputty, Participant Observation, 20-12-2019, Haruku).

beauty of the ‘cultural heritage’ that deals with the divine ancestors can shape worship, allowing Moluccan Christians to profess their religion from their own ethnicity.⁹¹⁸

Selection and contestation

The committees in church that are responsible for making an ethnic service choose the aspects to be used in the fifth week of the month. Most people say this process goes without contestation.⁹¹⁹ The fact that the absence of contestation is often mentioned by people executing GPM policy probably has to do with the controlled procedure of contextualization, despite the openness of the concept *etnis*: only ‘pure’ cultural forms in line with Christian values can be displayed.⁹²⁰ The pastor, together with his/her *majelis* and liturgy team, discusses and prepares the idea behind the ethnic service, recruits people for support and practices several days before worship.⁹²¹ Naturally, the way an ethnic service is built depends on the congregation and its pastoral team. Theologian Peter Salenussa once used the *kapata* singing style (that accompanies the *cakalele* dance) in church, whereby men dressed in red, ferociously and wildly pretending to cut themselves with the machetes, entered communal trance. A theological reflection on the presence of God inside cultural language (the *kapata*) was done.⁹²² However, it is not likely that many congregations would go this far in their ethnic service. The use and theological transformation of such elements have to be explained well in order to be accepted by church members, as people’s first associations are *adat*, indigenous religion and the ancestors. Not many pastors and *majelis* are willing to take this risk – considering the context of their own congregation – or have the theological and creative capacity for an elaborate theological transformation and explanation. This is the reason that local language and clothing are the most used elements in the *ibadah etnis*, as these are the ‘easiest’ to prepare and implement. Furthermore, economic and organizational capacity are additional factors for the manner in which ethnic services are developed. An ethnic service costs more energy and money to set up than other services. For example, churches need help from organizations like Wycliffe to translate Bible texts and songs; pastors need to practice the reading or singing in the Ambonese dialect or local language to prevent mistakes and

⁹¹⁸ Informal conversation with Chris Tamaela, 21-12-2019, Ambon.

⁹¹⁹ Although there exist questions on the appropriateness of specific aspects. An example is the use of traditional clothes or the *ikat kepala* by the pastor. Some say it is forbidden for the pastor to use other accessories, while others see it as a characteristic symbol of culture (Interview with Anonymous, 9-12-2019, Saparua).

⁹²⁰ Interview with Anonymous, 2-12-2019, Ambon.

⁹²¹ Interview with Hery Siahay.

Discussion only takes place about the best way to accommodate culture in service, so that congregants will feel comfortable (Interview with Jan Z. Matatula, Jeffrey Leatimia, Anonymous (2-12-2019, Ambon)).

⁹²² Interview with Peter Salenussa.

laughter;⁹²³ when a specific indigenous language is used, congregants or others who are native speakers have to be involved in the preparation and execution process; and often, when traditional dance or music is included, professional groups must be hired.⁹²⁴ These time-, energy- and money-consuming factors, in combination with the newness of the ethnic service, are the reasons for the fact that an *ibadah etnis* differs in execution and is not yet done very often. Moreover, many congregations for now only focus on an Ambonese ethnic service before they learn how to address other ethnic forms.⁹²⁵

Experience of the ethnic service

Because the *ibadah etnis* is only realized in the fifth week of the month, I experienced such a service solely three times. In the beginning of my research I visited the congregation in *Poka*. The ethnic theme was Tanimbar, a place in the far south of the Moluccas.⁹²⁶ Many people wore normal neat clothes, some wore colored traditional blouses or skirts,⁹²⁷ and some had a traditional scarf with the colors of Tanimbar around their neck – including me because a friend beforehand ritually handed this scarf to me. The pastor wore an orange detail around the waist. The songs that were sung came from the NJGPM, and several of them were translated in native Tanimbar language.⁹²⁸ Musical accompaniment consisted of one keyboard with synthesizer and brass sounds, sometimes complemented by one small *tifa*. The service was initiated by a young man who hit a large standing *tifa* very loudly. Another man entered, and screamed a text in the native tongue, after which the other did the same in Ambonese. A song began and from the back a group of female dancers, dressed in the Tanimbar costume, entered. In two rows they danced to the altar. The first woman hit a small *tifa* on the rhythm of the church songs, and bended down they together repeatedly did three steps, moving their arms aside their bodies after which they slightly turned. When they reached the front of the church the *majelis* team appeared. The pastor spoke about the appreciation of local culture and preached in the Ambonese dialect. Several high-quality choirs performed as well, and on these moments the beamer displayed images of typical Tanimbar traditions and landscapes. The point that came back several times in both song and sermon was togetherness and unity

⁹²³ Interview with Jacky Manuputty.

⁹²⁴ Interview with Anonymous (2-12-2019, Ambon), Anonymous (18-12-2019, Ambon).

⁹²⁵ Interview with Jeffrey Leatimia, Anonymous (22-12-2019, Ambon).

⁹²⁶ A friend of mine, who originally is from Tanimbar, especially came to this service to experience worship based on her ethnic culture.

⁹²⁷ These are considered generally traditional, not specifically related to Tanimbar, as their costumes are very elaborate.

⁹²⁸ Most songs were sung in Ambonese or Indonesian, some in the native language and one choir also sang a song in English.

on the basis of *gandong*. The pastor concluded with mentioning the ancestors as bridge between God and people: God gave *adat* to the people via the ancestors.⁹²⁹ In short, this ethnic service showed a combination of clothes, music and language, included traditional dance and incorporated contextualized texts within the liturgical structure.

Another time I had the chance to experience the process and execution of a first ethnic service in the Christian village *Rohua Baru* in Seram,⁹³⁰ based on the ethnic traditions of the *Nuaulu* tribe – as most congregants here are part of this ethnic group. Interestingly, all church members still speak the *Nuaulu* language, although this capacity is decreasing among children. The pre-set liturgical structure was translated in the native language, as well as the songs, which was done by a *Nuaulu* language expert from Wycliffe.⁹³¹ Preparation required extensive organization, including technology, linguistics and practice. Ro, the translator, rehearsed several times with the keyboard player, the choir of young girls and the conductor. In a perfectionist way they sang the words over and over to say the right things on the right tone, tempo and rhythm. Expectations for this worship were high. The pastor had invited many guests to participate in their first ethnic service.⁹³² On Sunday almost all people wore a variety of traditional clothes; *baju cele*, red blouses, the *kebaya* and the *ikat kepala*. Even the pastor and *majelis* team wore traditional clothes, which is rare to see. The preparation of the girls-choir proved its value. Sometimes the congregants had some difficulty with following the words on the right rhythm, after which the choir brought everyone back on track.⁹³³ I found the singing in native language very beautiful. It gave the service a special atmosphere through the sounds of the words. Moreover, the pastor read many lines in the native language, including the Word of God,⁹³⁴ which, additionally, was also said in Indonesian. The sermon was in Ambonese dialect,⁹³⁵ and the Apostles Creed in Indonesian – to the disappointment of

⁹²⁹ Participant Observation, 27-10-2019, *Poka*.

⁹³⁰ The village is called *Rohua Baru*, *New Rohua*, because after the conflict the Christians from *Rohua* fled to this new place and built their community again. In *Rohua* village live the so-called animists. In 1970 a person in this village became the first Christian.

⁹³¹ She lived among these people for many years and now has her own house in this village.

⁹³² This also led to a contestation concerning the songs, because the pastor was afraid of embarrassment and her loss of status since many guests would sing the songs slightly different than the translations required – as meaning, words and accentuation needed to be in line.

⁹³³ Although sometimes the choir was lost as well and a short silence followed.

⁹³⁴ When this happened the church became a little bit more noisy because some people started whispering as they did not understand the Word of God in this language and therefore did not pay attention.

⁹³⁵ The content of the sermon, in my eyes, was not very contextual. Although the sermon had been designed especially for this service, the tenor felt somewhat exclusivist. It was said that all people have culture, and that from these cultures people have the human reaction to take revenge or commit violence. However, Christianity will save one from doing these things.

Ro. Interestingly, some guest choirs performed as well, however singing in Indonesian or even English language. Hence, the ethnic service in *Rohua Baru* showed a combination of elements, with again a large focus on clothing and language.⁹³⁶ After the service, many photos were taken with the goal to demonstrate to the outside world that this congregation had done an *ibadah etnis*, revealing the competitive character of the implementation of a synodal decision. Apart from the Apostles Creed and the skipping of one song Ro was satisfied with this first result. Although in my eyes participation of the guests seemed a bit higher when Indonesian or Ambonese was spoken, the people of *Rohua Baru* gave a positive response.⁹³⁷

Lastly, on Wednesday morning UKIM students get the chance to design and execute worship on campus, and here I attended an ethnic service as well. A combination of ethnicities was used, namely Lease, *Babar* and *Aru*, and many people wore *baju cele*. Interestingly, the theme was in English: 'This is true love'. Before the service started, a song in *Aru* language was practiced with the attendants. Musical accompaniment consisted of keyboard, saxophone, ukulele and electric guitar. The call for worship was done by a young man who hit the *tifa* three times and shouted something in *Aru* language. The songs we sang were from the NJGPM and the musical notation was displayed on the beamers. Furthermore, the service contained a beautiful animation video about the love of God for everyone.⁹³⁸ The Word of God was read in three different languages, after which a student presented the textual material for the service. She spoke about the Song of Songs from a feminist perspective.⁹³⁹ In a fairly long exposition, the student interweaved the text, feminism, Moluccan culture, nature

⁹³⁶ It appeared that the pastor had ordered everyone to wear traditional clothes, which resulted in some people not attending service because they did not own such clothing. Out of fear for shame they stayed away, which seems to go against the idea of the ethnic service.

⁹³⁷ They used the words 'really good' and 'interested'.

In a neighboring village, a colleague of Ro prepared and executed a first ethnic service as well. Here, the pastors and *majelis* did not use traditional clothing, but they fully decorated the altar with natural materials, something Ro wants to do too next time. Out of poverty only one *tifa* was played for musical accompaniment, which actually matched the concept better than the keyboard in *Rohua Baru*. The pastor and choir spoke the whole service in *Nuaulu*, and the congregants gave a very positive response (Participant Observation, 24-11-2019, *Rohua Baru*, *Seram*).

⁹³⁸ The video was in English and translated in Indonesian. It showed a boy who gave a heart to God. Then he needed it back to give it to a girl. Then he gave God a clock; his time. Others played games but he devoted himself to God. God wanted to show the boy something, but it seemed they took a road that was very long and complicated. The boy checked another road, but eventually returned. The he gave a little doll to God; himself. God could make and mold him. However, at a certain point he wanted it back. A question was asked to the viewer: do you also only love God when you are happy or when you are sad? In opposition to humans, God is always there and loves everyone. He will never leave someone, no matter how far one goes. It was quite a touching clip, illustrated beautifully with animated simple drawings.

⁹³⁹ Women often want to be beautiful and skinny for men. However, love is not about appearance, but about one's soul. Referring to the image of the tree and the fruit, a woman has to be valued on the basis of her inner qualities.

and God's love in an ingenious way.⁹⁴⁰ This ethnic worship demonstrated how UKIM functions as a kitchen to test and practice contextual services. I was quite impressed by the clarity of the set-up and concept. A combination of ethnicities and languages was used, combined with modern media such as the video.⁹⁴¹

The heritagization of culture

The term heritage is often used within the discourse concerning theological contextualization and the preservation of Moluccan traditional culture. Contextualization, tradition and preservation are words that are closely linked. From a theological perspective the contextual approach aims to base theology within the Moluccan Christian experience, while at the same time being embedded in political policies of ethnic revival.⁹⁴² Past developmental regimes and the historical anti-cultural stance towards religion from both the colonial church and the GPM threatened Moluccan culture in the past, and current processes of globalization and modernization are felt to continue this process. A feeling for the need of preservation of Moluccan cultural identity has therefore arisen among politicians, theologians, church leaders, musicians and others. Moluccan cultural traditions need to be revived and innovated upon in the here and now, to bring people in contact with the roots of their identity. The church is one context where Moluccan culture and identity are now worked with from a contextual approach, with the ethnic service as its most central expression. Recalling the introduction of this thesis, the process of contextualization resembles the process of heritage formation, and not coincidentally, the word heritage pops up in relation to contextualization, preservation and tradition. Graburn (2000, 6-7) states that the concept of tradition is almost equivalent to inheritance: cultural traditions are naturally close to heritage, as they are inherited from generation to generation. In the Moluccan case, the cultural forms that are valued to be positive inherited traditions from the ancestors, viewed as part of the Moluccan identity and selected to be theologically transformed or publically stimulated, are generally called 'heritage', both in a religious and in a popular context.

⁹⁴⁰ Then, one of the teachers gave a reflection as well, which was very conservative – both in my and others' opinion. He talked about eroticism as the first association with the Song of Songs, and stated that this is only allowed within marriage, condemning all sexual activities of any other kind.

⁹⁴¹ Participant Observation, 27-11-2019, Ambon.

⁹⁴² Keane (1997, 38) points to how the national framework of Indonesia lays claim to 'cultural heritages' while at the same time envisioning that these connected local identities can be encompassed by national culture.

An acceleration of heritage production in the contemporary world has been noted. This is to be seen in organizations like UNESCO that safeguard ‘world heritage’, but also in the religious field where certain forms and practices currently in decline have been recast as heritage, as well as in the arena of identity claims (Meyer & Van de Port 2018, 8). While different collectives may not agree on what heritage precisely is, many of these are increasingly versed in heritage vocabularies; heritage has become a conceptual framework and a discursive realm to assess, evaluate and act upon material and immaterial remnants of the past (Meyer & Van de Port 2018, 11-12). These heritage regimes organize “the cultural production of the real”, evoking a sense of authenticity through shared sensations and experiences – heritage is real because it is felt to be real (Meyer & Van de Port 2018, 15-16, 19). In this light, heritage is a sensational form, conveying a real essence of the direct presence of the past that can be appropriated in diverse contexts (Meyer & Van de Port 2018, 22-23). As Meyer and Van de Port (2018, 24) state, to understand why and how people identify with such forms as an essential part of their being in the world, aesthetics of persuasion need to be taken into account that vest authorized forms of cultural heritage with authenticity. Persuasiveness thus is a quality of aesthetic strategy, realized in the heritage design and practices which assert one’s legitimate belonging to a particular cultural form. The preservation and stimulation of Moluccan cultural forms are certainly situated in the discursive realm of heritage, and heritage vocabularies have entered the discursive realm of contextual theology as well.⁹⁴³ A sense of Moluccanness, realized in practices such as music, dance, language or other *adat*-related customs or activities, is authenticated by the ancestral chain which links the past to the present and evokes a feeling of Moluccan belonging. A heritage regime focused on selected innocent, broad-ranged cultural forms is appropriated in public, religious and political contexts and authorized by theologians, politicians and others. The ethnic service is one of the central places in which these elements coincide. The aim is to trigger a sense of identification, embedding Christian religion in Moluccan culture and hereby preserving the traditional forms that have been sacralized as cultural heritage. Bakker (2018, 46)⁹⁴⁴ calls the construction and reassertion of ethnic belonging ‘ethnogenesis’, seeing it as an expression of modern identity politics. Before one can select something as cultural heritage, research needs to be conducted, much like how Chris Tamaela and Peter Salenussa did and do

⁹⁴³ The link here between theory and empiricism is based on the ideal idea behind Moluccan contextual theology, not on the actual implementation process or state of practice at the moment.

⁹⁴⁴ Bakker, who himself researched the *Pataxó* Indians in Brazil, is used here theoretically to make a connection with the Moluccan case.

for the GPM by finding appropriate sources which can be theologized in church. The authority and authenticity of this process depends on accepted canonized knowledge about what the cultural forms mean, from which creativity can extend and deepen this meaning in present times and contexts (Bakker 2018, 53-54). This is the reason that the capacity of cultural and theological creativity is required, to prevent the ethnic service from degrading into something cut off from content – merely focused on appearance. Thus, as Bakker (2018, 55) also makes clear, ethnic construction is not sheer invention, but a resignification built upon convention. In the Moluccan case, cultural forms turn into symbols of heritage through a theological resignification which embeds them in Christian liturgy, building on both recognizable cultural and religious meanings, which assure a continuity between the cultural traditions and the identity of Moluccan Christians. Nevertheless, while success of persuasion is determined by creativity based on convention, the follow-up question, as Bakker (2018, 67) notes, is whether one can let creativity flourish or whether it is better to bind it to a standard. The Moluccan contextual process is clearly bound by a controlled standard; only positively valued cultural forms that are viewed as in line with Christianity can be selected, content-wise the cultural forms have to express a spiritual message and the boundary of entrance is drawn at the ancestors. The decision on this standard is where contestation and discussion emerge. In short, the authentication of a heritage regime is mediated by a grammar of sensing: it needs the power of aesthetics to render the cultural forms present in the body, as these play a central role in the ‘representational economy’ (Keane 2018, 68) of authentic (in this case) Moluccanness in which people find themselves implicated (Bakker 2018, 68). Moluccans who feel threatened by the loss of their culture become involved in heritage politics through which traditional culture can be preserved and revived. “The relationship between the conventionally inherited and the creatively invented”, grounded on ancestral reference (Bakker 2018, 69), creates an image which both evokes the past and future simultaneously – a dynamic that almost perfectly describes processes of Moluccan popular preservation and theological contextualization.

In the Moluccan discourse on contextual theology and traditional (church) music, many different actors refer to the importance of working with traditional cultural forms and reviving Moluccan music to contribute to the preservation of Moluccan heritage. This preservation is deemed necessary because of forces of globalization that cause rapid change and almost unconsciously make people lose their cultural heritage.⁹⁴⁵ Traditional instruments

⁹⁴⁵ Interviews at Wycliffe, 11-11-2019, Ambon.

and styles of singing should not be left behind or disappear. The musical traditions come from the ancestors and therefore form part of Moluccan identity which is the reason they have to be reproduced.⁹⁴⁶ Therefore, both in popular music scenes, in political regulations and in the *ibadah etnis*, traditional music is revived (*menghidupkan*) so that younger generations get acquainted again with these musics and start to develop them. Theologians, musicians, church officials, pastors and also congregants speak in this same manner about the preservation of musical and cultural heritage. One congregant in the *Maranatha* church said about the ethnic service: “I think it is very good, so that children who are still small and growing up can know and recognize traditional music, which is an inheritance from their ancestors, so that our culture does not disappear but still exists and survives or can become even better.”⁹⁴⁷ Memory is an important element as well. Often, congregants stress the idea that the ethnic service will contribute to the remembrance and knowledge of traditions by future generations.⁹⁴⁸ In this sense, the GPM is seen to have awakened Moluccan cultural life in worship, which teaches people “to get to know their identity again”, and “to remember their language, culture and local wisdom.”⁹⁴⁹ So, the stimulation of Moluccan music in general and the *ibadah etnis* with traditional church music in particular are situated in a discursive network connected to heritage. Current changes instill the need for preservation, maintenance, regeneration and development of traditional culture, including music. These cultural and musical forms should not disappear (*tidak boleh hilang*), because they are heritage passed down from the Moluccan ancestors. They contain something unique – possessing cultural values that shape Moluccan identity. This is why Moluccan traditional culture should not be lost but has to be lifted or brought back (*angkat lagi*), so that Moluccans are able to explore and find their own identity for many future generations to come.⁹⁵⁰ Interestingly, linguistically heritage, the ancestors and preservation are also closely linked. *Warisan* means ‘legacy’ or ‘heritage’, and the verb *mewariskan* means ‘to pass down’ or ‘transmit’.⁹⁵¹

⁹⁴⁶ Also when a young person rarely thinks or deals with traditional music, it is still located deep inside his memory through the ancestral chain.

⁹⁴⁷ Interview with Anonymous, 1-12-2019, Ambon. Translation by author.

Moreover, not only Moluccan children can learn about these traditional forms, but also people from other places can become acquainted with Moluccan heritage (Interview with Jonas Silooy).

⁹⁴⁸ Interview with Anonymous, 22-12-2019, Soya.

⁹⁴⁹ Interview with Omy & Jeane.

⁹⁵⁰ This part is based on an innumerable amount of interviews with all different figures involved in this research (theologians, students, pastors, musicians, church officials, church members) who used the same words.

⁹⁵¹ Especially because of modern influences and the fact that many Moluccan people no longer live a traditional life, Peter Salenusca commented that the church is a good space, a new medium, for this transmittance of traditional culture, embedding Christianity in Moluccan identity (Interview with Peter Salenusca).

Apart from the preservation of heritage, creativity is another important component, as Bakker (2018) also noted. Not only are cultural forms maintained but they are innovated upon or even created. Chris Tamaela is the perfect example of someone who not only wanted to keep the Moluccan musical heritage, but who created new traditional instruments. Here the relation between invention and convention is apparent. His creations are inspired by Moluccan music and instruments in the past, and by stories, memories, nature, daily life, and more. Moreover, besides Moluccan traditional culture and music, another form of heritage on the side of religion is the Dutch Calvinist influence in the GPM. Inherited from the colonial church, this is a Christian heritage that shapes the identity of Moluccan Christians: “we have a Christian heritage, [a] Christian faith, a way of worshipping. Today we still maintain it as part of Christian Protestant spiritual heritage.”⁹⁵² For instance, older, Western-influenced songbooks such as *Dua Sahabat Lama* are preserved in the GPM, both because many Moluccans grew up with these songs that therefore touch the core of who they are and feel as Christians, and because in this way the books are conserved, protected and transmitted to a new generation who will not lose this dimension of the history of the GPM.⁹⁵³ In short, many different figures in Moluccan society make use of heritage vocabularies when referring to the preservation of Moluccan culture. The realm of heritage, among other factors, shapes the discourse on contextual theology as well. Traditional forms and music are recast as heritage, transformed and developed as symbol, and contextualized in liturgy. Both Christian and cultural heritage are the sources for contextual theology and traditional church music.

The aesthetics of language

Language is the most prominent component of the ethnic service and a central factor in traditional music as well, considering the lyrics of religious songs.⁹⁵⁴ Before the installment of

⁹⁵² Interview with Chris Tamaela.

At the same time, this Christian heritage is innovated upon as well, for instance through contextualization.

⁹⁵³ Interview with Jance Rumahuru.

Strikingly, as was alluded to in the beginning of this chapter, the instrument *suling* – connected to the colonial church while being an element of contextualization too – also is part of this Christian heritage and therefore shares in the effort of preservation and revival.

⁹⁵⁴ Although Keane (1997, 40) researched the Sumbanese, some parallels can be noted. Local identity is mainly based on ‘shared culture’ and ‘traditional customs’ (*adat*). Language here forms a central component, which in the Moluccan case is represented in the ethnic service. Within the category of language ancestral speech is a specific element. Keane explains that these official words are connected to ritual. In the Moluccan ethnic service such words cannot be used, precisely because they are related to non-Christian rituals and because it concerns words. Someone I know had some knowledge about these ancestral, ritual words; only a few village men generally know the meaning of the words, while the rest listens and just knows they are important and sacred. Interestingly, concerning language in the ethnic service, I saw some conceptual connections with the

the ethnic service, language already was an important element in the growing effort of contextualization. In 2008 the GPM entered into a partnership with the organization Wycliffe.⁹⁵⁵ Wycliffe translates the Bible and other religious material in different local languages.⁹⁵⁶ Apart from these, Wycliffe also translates religious songs, which is one of the most difficult and delicate tasks. The translation must namely do justice to textual meaning and to rhythm and melody. Notes and syllables need to be counted, the meaning has to be summarized and the stressing on certain syllables must be natural.⁹⁵⁷ Because of this difficulty, Wycliffe also promotes the composition of new songs with translated Bible texts as lyrics.⁹⁵⁸ After Wycliffe's long-term translation work the GPM receives the results and consequently uses it in the congregations.⁹⁵⁹ The ethnic service opened the doors for the work Wycliffe is doing and became the main setting for the implementation of translated materials. Through this official, synodal endorsed structure, the use of local language is nowadays faster normalized and accepted, because it started a paradigm shift about God speaking in Moluccan languages too. However, some people do not agree, mainly because for a long time local

Indonesian language. Local language is introduced to increase understanding as 'high Indonesian' can be difficult for some people. However, local language itself also has 'layers', of which ancestral speech is one of the highest forms. While the level of exact understanding is low, the sacred meaning and experience is high. One should thus be careful just to dismiss a 'high' form of language as less suited for religious ritual because of the lack of understanding. Keane (1997, 53) himself also sees the connection between Indonesian and ancestral speech, as people may find it to possess special knowledge coming from beyond the present context.

⁹⁵⁵ The partnership originated from a mutual aim for 'evangelism and communication'. Wycliffe thus has an evangelizing character. This became extra clear in the terminology that was used when some translators, who have been working for years in animist villages to learn their language, referred to conversion as *masuk agama* (entering religion), and to indigenous beliefs as *hocus pocus* and 'dark powers'.

See appendix 12 for an elaborate explanation about Wycliffe and the language translation process.

⁹⁵⁶ Examples of other materials are songs, videos, or oral texts. Wycliffe also started to work with apps. When I visited them, several people were busy with Sunday school images.

⁹⁵⁷ Here again the literal approach of Wycliffe became apparent. A song cannot be translated word for word because of the rhythm and melody. For example, it is 'God' in English, 'Allah' in Indonesian, but 'A na ha ta na' in *Nuaulu*. However, the impossibility of literal translation is not a problem, one employee said, because it does not concern scripture. With scripture nothing can be changed, while with songs this is possible. Stories are another example of translations which do not need a literal approach. I received many little books with stories that were translated in Ambonese Malay: *Orang Samaria Satu Yang Bae* (The Good Samaritan); *Hoe Sakaesus Turung Lakas-Lakas Kamari!* (Come Down, Zacchaeus!); *Lukas pung Kabar Bea soal Yesus* (Luke has Good News about Jesus); *Paulus pung Surat-surat par Timotius, Titus, Pilemon, deng Jamaat Tesalonika* (Paul has the Epistles of Timothy, Titus, Philemon, with the Thessalonians); *Esther: Kitab Ester Dalam Bahasa Ambon* (Esther: The Story of Esther in Ambonese Language); *Danyel: Kitab Daniel dalam bahasa Ambon* (Daniel: The story of Daniel in Ambonese language); *Yunus: Kitab Yunus Dalam Bahasa Ambon* (Jonah: The story of Jonah in Ambonese Language); *Rut: Kitab Rut Dalam Bahasa Ambon* (Ruth: The Story of Ruth in Ambonese Language); *Yesus Pung Utusang-Utusan Pung Carita: Kitab Kisah Para Rasul dalam bahasa Ambon* (Jesus has the Messengers: The Story of the Book of Acts in Ambonese Language).

⁹⁵⁸ They gave the workshop 'Culture and Gospel' in which people composed new spiritual songs in local language.

⁹⁵⁹ Interestingly, when a translated Bible is finished, the government also receives one copy as the GPM and the government are close partners.

languages were prohibited in church and because people were taught that Indonesian is the official religious language.⁹⁶⁰ Moreover, Christians living in the city especially prefer to learn English, sometimes seeing local language in church as a step back in the modernity process.⁹⁶¹ Another group which should not be forgotten are the animists, who still speak certain native languages and who occasionally complain that it is not allowed to read the Bible in their language – both because their native language is unwritten and because they fear punishment from the ancestors through the mixing of the ancestors' tongue with Christian texts. It is important to take this perspective into account as well.⁹⁶²

Usually, preaching in a local language or in Ambonese Malay is quite hard for pastors. The general policy of the GPM is to send pastors away to different places so that they learn various cultures and cannot be influenced by people through personal relationships. However, this also means they almost never speak the native language – if the congregants still speak one. Moreover, although Ambonese Malay is spoken by almost everyone in the Moluccas, this language is used in an informal, daily manner and did not form part of official theological education (and for a long time was even forbidden in church). For many, therefore, preaching or praying in Malay is difficult, all the more because reading the dialect is different and strange at first in comparison with daily speech. Pastors learned all central terms and ways of speaking in high Indonesian, which is why it makes sense that during service one can note an alternation between Indonesian and Malay; when daily examples are used pastors shift to Malay, while official parts such as the sermon or prayer are often done in Indonesian. To change the latter liturgical parts to Malay requires thorough preparation, even more so for the risk of being laughed at when mistakes are made:⁹⁶³ “You need full concentration. If not, people will certainly laugh.”⁹⁶⁴ The opinion and experience concerning language use in worship greatly differ among congregants. People at Wycliffe, theologians and pastors

⁹⁶⁰ As Keane (1997, 43) makes clear, Indonesian is the language of political power, modernity and literacy. The most authoritative genres – the speech, the sermon and the official notice – are written in Indonesian. Indonesian is deemed to encompass all local languages from a nationalist point of view (Keane 1997, 46).

⁹⁶¹ People who do not agree also sometimes have the opinion that Ambonese Malay is not a full language, seeing it as a dialect and not as an official language such as Indonesian. However, the linguists from Wycliffe stated that Ambonese Malay is a language in itself which has grammatical, lexical, and phonological differences, and was already established before the official Indonesian originated. Thus, it is not ‘broken’ Indonesian, as some people might think.

This whole explanation about Wycliffe is based on the interviews at Wycliffe, 11-11-2019, Ambon.

⁹⁶² Interview with Jacky Manuputty.

These opinions differ between indigenous groups. Another example is the singing of Christian songs or praying inside animist villages. While some groups absolutely do not mind, other groups prohibit this Christian practice.

⁹⁶³ Interview with Jan Z. Matatula.

⁹⁶⁴ Interview with Jeffrey Leatimia. Translation by author.

dealing with local or Ambonese language commonly say that when congregants receive the possibility of the use of Malay or an indigenous language in service, they definitely love it because it feels closer to who they are.⁹⁶⁵ To a certain extent this is true. Many congregants stated they prefer their daily language in church, because it increases understanding and feels comfortable. As a person in the congregation of *Hutumuri* noted: “it is great to use Ambonese language so that it is easy to understand. We pray with our daily existence, it touches our lives. [It is] not too formal or in accordance with routine.”⁹⁶⁶ Another person in *Soya* commented that it feels as if she is in her own house, because it is the language they speak at home. An UKIM student said the same, namely that when she attends an ethnic service in which her language is spoken she is transported to her place of origin.⁹⁶⁷ Nevertheless, it seems, generally speaking, that people who prefer Ambonese Malay are older than twenty years old, have lower education levels and almost never speak Indonesian in their daily existence – often living in places further away from the city. The influence of the national language is strong at schools, which is why city youth begins to understand Malay and local languages less well,⁹⁶⁸ therefore perhaps preferring Indonesian. Above all, the majority of the people who went to school is used to Indonesian in working life and in church.⁹⁶⁹ One church member from the city explained she found Malay difficult to comprehend during worship because she had to fully concentrate on translation and therefore could less pay attention to the actual message and reflection.⁹⁷⁰ Her words demonstrated how Malay distracted her from the actual purpose of being in church. Another congregant from the city said she preferred Indonesian, mainly out of habit. Hence, opinions about language seem diffuse and ambiguous. Indonesian is part of Christian heritage, of what people are used to and of common church practice. Preaching in Malay or local language is a theological innovation that is mostly applied in the city, whereas the people here speak these languages less fluently. In rural areas, where people speak them more often, Indonesian usually is the standard language in church. This paradoxical reality results in the fact that when one starts to work with Ambonese Malay

⁹⁶⁵ One pastor commented he prayed in the dialect after the earthquake, and many people in his congregation started crying (Interview with Jeffrey Leatimia). Nevertheless, it should be noted that the use of local languages in church is thus based on translation. As Keane (1997, 53) also makes clear, the source of legitimacy still lies with the language from which one translates, in this case Indonesian and English. This partly undermines the project of basing religion on local culture, as this ‘local’ needs a supralocal entity to have authority.

⁹⁶⁶ Interview with Anonymous, 17-11-2019, *Hutumuri*. Translation by author.

⁹⁶⁷ Interview with Omy & Jeane.

⁹⁶⁸ Interview with Anonymous (18-12-2019, Ambon), Omy & Jeane.

⁹⁶⁹ Interview with Jance Rumahuru.

⁹⁷⁰ Interview with Anonymous, 19-12-2019, Ambon.

in more far-away villages a fairly positive response is expressed by people who really understand worship better, while others do not agree with the change of church tradition, being used to Indonesian when dealing with a religious context. In turn, in cities negative responses are expressed by people who understand do not understand other languages than Indonesian, while others are interested in learning more about various Moluccan cultures.⁹⁷¹ This again demonstrates how the two different meanings of the traditional – contextual theology and church tradition – are practically related in places further away from the city, while the reverse is true for places closer to the city: in the first instance traditional sources of contextual theology, in this case language, are still present next to traditional church practices. In the latter instance the traditional sources are less present in daily life but sooner implemented in church since traditional church practices are also less present and countered with a contextual approach. The source of contextual theology is located close to the church tradition that is countered by contextual theology, while the implementation of contextual theology is located close to the absence of traditional sources which leads to a change in church tradition.

Traditional church music

The core of this research deals with the relation between the contextual idea of traditional church music and musical practices and attitudes in church. Now that the idea and the main practical framework for traditional church music, the ethnic service, have been discussed, I turn to traditional church music in practice. Traditional church music forms part of the contextualization of Moluccan Christianity by embedding religion in Moluccan culture. Context here means both reviving ethnic music and following the changing times. In practice this often results in ‘ethnic music’ being a mix of music, including ‘modern’ electronic or Western instruments and styles. In the ideal way, traditional church music appeals to all Moluccan congregants because it touches the cultural identity of Moluccans and is situated in a contemporary context. It is intended that traditional church music brings about a different atmosphere because of its quality to ‘win people’s hearts’.⁹⁷²

In practice, traditional church music is one of the least developed elements of the ethnic service, a reality that the GPM itself also recognizes. Traditional clothing and local

⁹⁷¹ Interview with Anonymous (1-12-2019, Ambon), Omy & Jeane.

⁹⁷² Interview with Carolis Elias Horhoruw, Nico Tulalessy, Barce Istia.

language are used far more often than traditional music. In most of the congregations the instruments that accompany congregational singing are not changed when an ethnic service is held.⁹⁷³ Sometimes the *tifa*, *tahuri* or *toleng-toleng* is sounded as an ethnic substitution of the church bell which announces the beginning of worship. In places where traditional instruments are used to accompany singing, it most often concerns one *tifa* combined with non-traditional instruments. Moreover, usually this *tifa* is only played for secondary musical accompaniment, which means that vocal groups use the instrument when the composer of the song has specifically indicated that it can be accompanied by the *tifa* rhythm.⁹⁷⁴ The playing of traditional music in church thus is limited and bound to the musical rules of songs that are interpreted as permission by the congregational team.⁹⁷⁵ Primary musical accompaniment of congregational singing generally stays the same. An exception is the *suling*. Since the *suling* is seen as a traditional church instrument, therefore belonging to both Christian heritage and cultural heritage which forms the source of contextualization, it is one of the few instruments that accompanies congregational singing in an ethnic service.⁹⁷⁶ In short, traditional church music, if it is used, mainly takes place on the level of secondary music. In this light, vocal groups that perform with ukulele or in the Hawaiian style and are invited to play in church are also regarded as traditional church music. Traditional church music thus commonly requires the hiring of a music group, as many congregations do not have their own traditional group nor the musical creativity or capability. To my knowledge there only exists one ethnic music group in Ambon that is hired by many different congregations to accompany congregational singing. This group was established by Chris Tamaela. I once experienced a sector service that was supported by this ethnic music in the style in which Tamaela envisioned traditional church music. In collaboration with guitars, a ukulele, and a keyboard the male group played the *tifa*, the *toleng-toleng*, the *marakas*,⁹⁷⁷ the bamboo clapper and one gong that was hanging on a wooden box. Also, several men hit two bamboo sticks and two stones against each other. Regarding singing, the spiritual songs that are sung in an *ibadah etnis* always come from the NJGPM. Songs that are often chosen are songs that are written in the Ambonese dialect and

⁹⁷³ Only rarely, when special events are organized, ethnic music is arranged, while most of the congregations do not change their musical accompaniment when organizing an ethnic service (Interview with Anonymous, 27-10-2019, Ambon).

⁹⁷⁴ Interview with Anonymous (2-12-2019, Ambon), Jeffrey Leatimia.

⁹⁷⁵ Thus, congregations almost never organize primary musical accompaniment by traditional instruments based on their own creativity. Only when a specific song from the NJGPM states that it can be accompanied by the *tifa* rhythm, a *tifa* is used. This again shows how rule-governed the Moluccan church is.

⁹⁷⁶ Although often this is true for congregations that normally also already have a *suling* ensemble, which means that the music still does not change for the ethnic service in these congregations as well.

⁹⁷⁷ A kind of samba balls made of bamboo.

are easy to follow.⁹⁷⁸ Interestingly, the rhythm and melody of these traditional spiritual songs may be directly based on original versions, whereas it is absolutely not allowed to directly transpose original lyrics to church; the songs have to be transformed with a spiritual text. Thus, while language and music can be used, text needs adaptation as the context from which the original content derives is seen as cultural or even secular – not fit for church.⁹⁷⁹ This dynamic demonstrates the paradox of how in contextual theology *adat* sources are stripped of religious relations which requires Christian transformation while at the same time still containing a possible dangerous relation to indigenous religion which requires the securing of these sources within a innocent, controlled cultural realm. Resembling a circular reasoning, the fact that these forms are cultural requires Christian transformation, while the possibility of contextualization depends on the forms being cultural. Hence, at the moment traditional church music in the Moluccan church either means a collaboration between one *tifa* and modern instruments as accompaniment to a specific NJGPM song; or a vocal group that uses traditional instruments or styles; or a *suling* ensemble; or one ethnic music group that accompanies congregational singing. This reality shows that GPM congregations in general do not yet have the sources and capability to create traditional church music in a complete way.⁹⁸⁰

I argue that there are two reasons for this practical reality of traditional church music. The first is pragmatic whereas the second is conceptual. Firstly, only a few people can play traditional music.⁹⁸¹ Especially since the ethnic service is a recent development, not many congregations have their own traditional music group which means that this accompaniment needs to be hired,⁹⁸² also placing an extra financial burden on church organizations. This makes it hard to implement the idea as the music enters the church from outside and is not yet

⁹⁷⁸ Interview with Barce Istia, Jeffrey Leatimia.

⁹⁷⁹ Interview with Semy Toisuta.

The point that Keane (1997, 40-41) makes about the textuality of language interestingly does not apply here. Keane explains how this dimension makes it possible to treat language independent of the context in which it is used. However, in the Moluccan case the original context and the semiotic ideology of language and music make this direct transposition impossible.

⁹⁸⁰ For instance, Semy Toisuta noted how no single church has a *tifa* ensemble that accompanies singing. Only one *tifa* is incidentally used, while an ensemble gives a completely different color to the music (Interview with Semy Toisuta).

⁹⁸¹ In comparison, traditional clothing is far easier to organize, as all people have some sort of traditional costume which they can wear to church.

⁹⁸² And these groups are not fully focused on church. Examples are the groups of Jonas Silooy, Nico Tulalessy or Carolis Elias Horhoruw. Thus, traditional music aimed at broader society is transposed to church by hiring traditional music groups that then play traditional songs as one aspect of their repertoire.

developed from within.⁹⁸³ Moreover, considering the fact that the songs which are sung in church – selected from the five standard songbooks – are strongly influenced by the Western tradition, it can be hard to arrange traditional music as accompaniment to these songs. This requires musical creativity, which not every music and liturgy team or pastor has. Furthermore, the Moluccan ear has been used to Western music for centuries now, and the majority of people finds these musicological features easier to receive and sing than traditional music.⁹⁸⁴ One simply has to acknowledge that Western-styled music forms part of the cultural and religious context of *Maluku* with which contextual theology needs to practically deal with. Secondly, the relative ‘underdevelopment’ of traditional church music has to do with the semiotic ideologies of language and music (or sounds) in the Moluccas. Generally, greater value is ascribed to words than to sounds. On a structural level this can be recognized in the preparation of church services in the GPM: while sermons are prepared well and great honor is assigned to the reading of the Bible, and while local language is the most prominent feature of the ethnic service, music is prepared rather late and unconcise. The majority of people sees music as instrument and words as content. In his book *Christian Moderns: Freedom and Fetish in the Mission Encounter* Keane (2007) traces semiotic ideologies through the religious-colonial relation between the Sumbanese and the Dutch.⁹⁸⁵ When transferring his insights to this thesis, both Moluccans and Dutch Calvinists place(d) great value on language and words. However, in the eyes of the Calvinists, submitting to fixed discursive forms undermines the agency proper to humans (Keane 2007, 2) and the idea that words are the external expression of inner thoughts, constrained by the norm of sincerity (Keane 2007, 15). Thus, “Words should be subject to the agency of a speaker who stands apart from the words he or she masters” (Keane 2007, 15). For Moluccans, on the other hand, words themselves have power, regardless of intention.⁹⁸⁶ This is the reason that church practices are very much rule-governed and formalistic,⁹⁸⁷ that it is hard to change certain ways of saying, and that original lyrics need to be transformed into a Christian text before entering

⁹⁸³ This does not mean that this will never develop in the future. At UKIM students learn about traditional church music and a new generation of church members might also develop this type of musical accompaniment.

⁹⁸⁴ Interview with Ro Bolton.

⁹⁸⁵ Although of course the Sumbanese are a different case than the Moluccans, some parallels can be drawn.

⁹⁸⁶ Ancestral speech also works in this way: the majority of the people do not know the meaning of the highly sacred words which nevertheless and perhaps even because of that contain the strongest power.

⁹⁸⁷ Bartels (1994, 398) also emphasizes the formalistic character of Moluccan Christianity. Christianity means mechanically executing certain actions and sayings, such as prayer, baptism and confirmation.

church as they can contain ancestral power.⁹⁸⁸ In the same light, Bartels (1994, 397) states that in Moluccan Christianity rather than intention the exact words or actions count. Resembling *adat* and the ancestral traditions, the rules and prescriptions of Christianity have to be followed literally and precisely: mistakes have great consequences and changes are not welcomed.⁹⁸⁹ As Keane (2007, 4-5) makes clear, relations among, and boundaries between, words, things, and subjects is often driven by the question ‘what beings or entities have agency?’. The colonial encounter between the Dutch and the Moluccans and its postcolonial consequences have to do with “Protestant efforts to escape some of the apparent implications of the ways human subjects are embedded in social and material worlds” (Keane 2007, 5).⁹⁹⁰ The Calvinists linked moral progress to practices of detachment from materiality, trying to change the role of semiotic forms in relation to, for example, objects, ancestors or sounds (Keane 2007, 6-7), that were deemed to possess agency by ‘the others’. The missionaries thus made distinctions about the “proper place of objects in the lives of subjects or with the possibilities and limits of human agency” (Keane 2007, 24-25), embarking on a project of purification through dematerialization – drawing a line between agency and natural determinism, freedom and fetishism, modernity and backwardness, and words and things (Keane 2007, 6-7). Moreover, not only language but also music formed part of the representational economy of the missionaries (Keane 2007, 21-22).⁹⁹¹ Centuries of influence from the perspective of the semiotic ideology of the missionaries left its trace in the Moluccan church, while at the same time, as Keane (2007, 23) notes, purification is never entirely successful. The result is a mix of religious attitudes and practices that operate in a hybrid representational economy:⁹⁹² Dutch colonial Calvinism, Moluccan Christianity and Moluccan culture have become entangled with each other through the encounter of semiotic ideologies that themselves have changed and mixed. Keane (2007, 20-21) names the example of

⁹⁸⁸ Apart from the fact that the content of the lyrics sometimes does not fit a spiritual message, such as drunkenness. Chris Tamaela explained how a filter is necessary before a song can enter church. The song has to be directed to God, not the ancestors. Moreover, when certain topics do not match the spiritual message the texts cannot be used, as well as when it contains ancestral power (Informal conversation with Chris Tamaela, 21-12-2019, Ambon).

⁹⁸⁹ Bartels therefore sees Moluccan Christianity as another form of *adat*.

⁹⁹⁰ This effort often focuses on semiotic forms, which can include “things as the sounds of words, the constraints of speech genres, the perishability of books, the replicable shapes of money, the meatiness of animals, the feel of cloth, the shape of houses, musical tones, the fleshiness of human bodies, and the habits of physical gestures” (Keane 2007, 5).

⁹⁹¹ The idea of representational economy is meant to situate words, things and persons dynamically within the same world with one another. Semiotic ideology here plays a mediating, crucial role (Keane 2007, 19).

⁹⁹² In which, in the words of Rutherford (1996, 589), the ‘foreign’ can become the ‘proper’ or ‘real’, or, in the words of Rasmussen (2010, 170), in which the perceived authentic ‘real’ actually ignores the ‘real traditions’.

changing theological views that have consequences for other domains in the same representational economy. The turn to contextual theology with its basis in culture and with its most recent expression in the ethnic service forms an exemplary stage where these dynamics become visible and from which realities can be explained. Local language is now allowed and implemented as one of the first elements. While the material properties of language historically differ between the Dutch Calvinists and the Moluccans, the importance of words and texts in both semiotic ideologies reinforced the value of language in the GPM. Music, on the other hand, continues to be valued less and, paradoxically, in the ethnic service – in the few instances when traditional music is implemented – congregants generally either do not see the difference in atmosphere or meaning compared with other music,⁹⁹³ or are wary of the fact that traditional sounds enter the church as they contain *adat* powers.⁹⁹⁴ Dematerialization and materialization became enmeshed in the semiotic encounter which makes it hard to trace the responses towards traditional church music in the complex representational economy of Moluccan Christianity.

Implementation of the ethnic service

From the perspective of Moluccan theologians, implementation of the ethnic service largely depends on the transmission of the idea to pastors and *majelis* teams, and on building capacity to independently organize and execute such as service. The novelty of the ethnic service requires many current pastors and church teams to make a shift in thinking and doing, while a new generation of pastors – namely students at UKIM – are from the beginning educated on the basis of a contextual approach, acquiring skills for building an ethnic service, making music, and preaching in Malay. As an institution that produces pastors, UKIM teaches students how to study culture in relation to liturgical elements so that they can build an ethnic service from a theological point of view rather than just as a performance.⁹⁹⁵ Besides capacity building, a clear explanation has to teach congregants the purpose of the ethnic service and

⁹⁹³ Interview with Anonymous, 22-12-2019, Ambon.

⁹⁹⁴ The latter has to do with both the former prohibition on anything from culture entering the church, including music, and with the material powers that Moluccans ascribe to music. Thus, one response can have its basis in different semiotic ideologies on the level of culture, agency and religion that became paradoxically related to each other.

⁹⁹⁵ Interview with Jance Rumahuru.

The implementation process through the education of future pastors became clear in the campus worships on Wednesday mornings in which ethnic services were held by students. In such as service that I attended, the concept and ethnic design was explained very well, and was connected to a contemporary city context. It demonstrated the knowledge and capacity of this new generation of students concerning the ethnic service.

the meaning behind it.⁹⁹⁶ The GPM and *klasis* facilitate and coordinate the establishment and socialization of the ethnic service in many different places, by helping to improve quality and by practicing different elements.⁹⁹⁷ Conferences, workshops and seminars given by experts are organized, demonstrating the strong commitment of the GPM to stimulate churches to use culture in worship.⁹⁹⁸ The ideal is an *ibadah etnis* that is well thought through and practiced in a complete way, enabling congregants to experience worship from their own culture because of their reception of the transmitted symbolic meaning and their own theological thinking on the basis of identity.⁹⁹⁹ Nevertheless, the achievement of this level of implementation needs a long process.

In Ambon almost all churches are already doing the *ibadah etnis*. Despite the fact that little original cultural sources are around to build an ethnic service with, the close position to the GPM – the place where the new policy line comes from – results in a relative fast implementation in these churches. The hierarchical church structure means that pastors and *majelis* teams have to bring this new idea into practice, and even causes a competition between churches for the execution of the ethnic service is regarded as proof of ability which possibly increases prestige.¹⁰⁰⁰ In part, the reception of the ethnic service by congregants is also determined by this hierarchical structure: many people just follow what higher ranked persons in church say about what is good and allowed.¹⁰⁰¹ In places further away from the GPM not yet all churches already implemented the ethnic service. Paradoxically, often the contextual sources – such as native language, dance, music, and more – are still practiced in these areas, however not in church.¹⁰⁰² One pastor I spoke with indicated he never experienced an ethnic service himself and did not yet understand the concept behind it. He said he had no knowledge about the mechanisms or techniques for how to set it up, because in his *klasis* no system of execution existed yet.¹⁰⁰³ Implementation thus depends on the understanding of the concept and methods by pastors, and also on their (and the *majelis*'s)

⁹⁹⁶ Especially young people are targeted as they are the future hope for developing the practice further (Interview with Elifas Maspaitela, Egbert Picanussa).

⁹⁹⁷ Anonymous, 9-12-2019, Saparua.

⁹⁹⁸ Interview with Chris Tamaela.

⁹⁹⁹ Interview with Agustinus C.W. Gaspersz, Branckly Egbert Picanussa.

¹⁰⁰⁰ In this light, the implementation of the ethnic service is done according to repetition and imitation, while the term 'ethnic' seems to point to something unique.

¹⁰⁰¹ Interview with Barce Istia, Chris Tamaela.

This is also the reason why it is rare to hear a critical perspective about the ethnic service from congregants in church.

¹⁰⁰² An example is the village *Yalahatan* in Seram that I visited. While they practice all kinds of native elements in daily life and ritual, an ethnic service is not yet held.

¹⁰⁰³ Anonymous, 16-12-2019, Ambon.

willingness, ability and creativity.¹⁰⁰⁴ Besides these factors, money and resources form practical limitations.¹⁰⁰⁵ Together with congregational attitudes, these realities shape the context to which an ethnic service has to be adjusted.¹⁰⁰⁶ In the end, a match between church practice and congregants needs to be made. Some people might see certain ethnic forms as secular or syncretistic influence. Others might prefer a collaboration with elements that are regarded as modern. These congregational opinions have to be taken into account when bringing the ethnic service into practice.¹⁰⁰⁷ In short, the implementation of the *ibadah etnis* follows a sequence of actions. The GPM designs policy and researches cultural forms from various areas that can serve as contextual sources. Pastors need to be prepared on how to develop an ethnic service and how to deliver a theological message through cultural symbols; if pastors do not understand the idea and process they pose a danger to the project as they can influence the congregation in unintended ways that are deemed wrong by theologians¹⁰⁰⁸ – again demonstrating the control executed over the practice of contextual theology. Lastly, reception and socialization by the congregants is achieved through thorough explanation during the sermon and through practice in service.¹⁰⁰⁹

The implementation of traditional church music is one component within the implementation of the ethnic service. Ideally, traditional rhythms and instruments are used to accompany spiritual songs that are inspired by Moluccan cultural life. Experts on music travel to congregations to encourage people to use traditional music in church. They prepare congregations through practicing together and they give workshops on how to do this, illustrating their words with music-making. Besides practically assisting congregations in implementing traditional church music, theological education and writings on the contextualization of church music are also instruments of implementation. The quality of the implementation of traditional church music is an important factor for the reception by congregants. Apart from *suling*, the Moluccan church has no religious traditional instruments, which means that traditional music from outside church enters worship. To design and

¹⁰⁰⁴ Moreover, theologian Steve Gaspersz noted how some can feel inferior or jealous as no one will ever be capable of designing an ethnic service like Chris Tamaela: “You have to spend half of your life to learn [to be] like Christian Tamaela.” This feeling can diminish motivation (Interview with Steve Gaspersz).

¹⁰⁰⁵ Interview with Jance Rumahuru, Anonymous (2-12-2019, Ambon).

¹⁰⁰⁶ Interview with Peter Salenussa.

¹⁰⁰⁷ The situations in which the ethnic service is most often applied are official GPM gatherings as well as politically oriented events. The first context makes sense as it forms the source of the ethnic policy, whereas the second points to the close relation between church and politics concerning ethnic revival.

¹⁰⁰⁸ Interview with Peter Salenussa.

¹⁰⁰⁹ Interview with Verry Patty.

arrange this transition, someone who has knowledge about music and both contexts is needed. This person, who can be a pastor, a *majelis* member or someone else in the congregation, must have the capability and creativity for developing traditional church music in such a way that the congregants learn about the meaning and purpose of this music in church because a feeling of both spirituality and identity is aroused.¹⁰¹⁰ Furthermore, again context and congregational attitudes are important.¹⁰¹¹ An example are collaborations between traditional and modern instruments to address contemporary life, global influences, and preferences of the youth that wants to ‘move with the times’, while at the same time enhancing interest in traditional music. In places further away from Ambon, where people still use traditional music in daily and ritualistic life, it is possible to fully build church music from these musical sources, which ideally results in feelings of increased understanding, closeness, strength and identity.¹⁰¹² However, it is rare to find places in the Central Moluccas where this result can be achieved.¹⁰¹³ In almost all Central Moluccan villages in which people still practice and have knowledge about traditional music, a strict separation between culture and religion is maintained. Chris Tamaela explained that in areas where *adat* practices are very strong, people are afraid to use their cultural music in church because they fear that this ‘mixing’ is not allowed, from both a Christian and ancestral position. Conversely, people in the city are generally more open to the use of traditional church music, because they no longer have such a strong connection to *adat* and the ancestors.¹⁰¹⁴ In conclusion, implementation of traditional church music comes into effect through knowledge, capability, creativity, quality and context. To bring the theological idea of traditional church music in practice in the most ideally intended way, a close connection through all layers of the ‘idea-to-practice’ process must be accomplished. This means that specific UKIM theologians, GPM officials, pastors and musicians agree on the content and purpose of the idea, on the interpretation of central discursive terms in the contextual process of transformation, and on the direction and execution of traditional church music.

¹⁰¹⁰ Interview with Semy Toisuta.

¹⁰¹¹ For example, someone from Wycliffe told me that a pastor once asked for a liturgy translated in *Alune*, while no one in his congregation spoke this language. This illustrated how the organization of an ethnic service sometimes misses the point of connecting with context.

¹⁰¹² Interview with John F. Beay, Agustinus C.W. Gaspersz.

¹⁰¹³ Often such an implementation of traditional church music is only possible in areas that were less influenced or under control by the Dutch missionaries during the colonial times. This generally does not apply to the Central Moluccas.

¹⁰¹⁴ Interview with Chris Tamaela.

Opinions about the ethnic service and traditional church music

The resonances or dissonances between figures in the idea-to-practice process are reflected in opinions about the ethnic service and traditional church music. Generally, all theologians support the idea, since the *ibadah etnis* is the practical expression of contextual theology and was established through the cooperation between UKIM and the GPM. Differences in opinion mainly concern gradations on the question of boundaries for what is possible to use and do, and on what ‘context’ means in the ethnic service, which relates to the balance between traditional cultural context and the contemporary context.¹⁰¹⁵ Theologian Steve Gaspersz supports the decision of the GPM but thinks the concept or perspective of basing worship on Moluccan culture is not yet fully accepted. In his opinion the church is somewhat reluctant to reinterpret and use some aspects of Moluccan traditional culture, which results in an ethnic service that is not profoundly different from a regular Sunday service. According to Gaspersz, serious attention has to be paid to several features, such as the ancestors and their connection to Christianity in *Maluku*.¹⁰¹⁶ Students who receive classes from contextual theologians logically have a positive stance towards the *ibadah etnis*. They are familiar with the contextual discourse and know the meaning, purpose and process of the ethnic service as they are close to the theological sources – their teachers whom they greatly respect.¹⁰¹⁷

Since the ethnic service is official policy which needs to be executed, pastors won’t openly express their personal opinion about the idea. Many pastors just want to organize the *ibadah etnis* because of church hierarchy, to show they are capable of implementing GPM policy. However, the manner in which an ethnic service is done reflects attitudes of pastors and their *majelis* teams; often more ‘conservative’ mindsets – mindsets that from the perspective of UKIM are less contextual in the sense of Bible-centered, anti-cultural and exclusivist – result in a thin ethnic coating over the usual worship content. For many, namely, the ethnic shift is hard to digest as these pastors have been raised and educated with the idea that cultural customs are contrary to the Christian faith.¹⁰¹⁸ Other pastors, mainly in places further away from Ambon, want to follow this new ethnic policy but do not have the resources, knowledge or capability to develop an ethnic service. One pastor commented he needed to prepare a strategy of socialization because his congregation would not accept it at

¹⁰¹⁵ To some a too tight focus on the first negates the purpose of contextualization in that religion needs to match people’s life worlds which increases understanding and feeling.

¹⁰¹⁶ Interview with Steve Gaspersz.

¹⁰¹⁷ Interview with Marco Dhyllan, Omy, Vally, Jeane, Eggy, Bella Soplanit.

¹⁰¹⁸ Interview with John F. Beay.

this moment – which again demonstrates how ‘context’ can be something different than intended by contextual theologians at UKIM (context as anti-contextual).¹⁰¹⁹ Conversely, a small group of progressive, creative pastors greatly appreciates the initiative as they themselves already developed services in the past that matched the cultural context of their congregations. These people are able to build an *ibadah etnis* from the ground, based on a contextual theological perspective that permeates the whole worship. They critique the ethnic service when it merely is a superficial appreciation of culture. Pastor Jacky Manuputty called this a temptation instead of a blessing. If he organizes an ethnic service, every detail needs to be interconnected with all other details: “The interconnection between the elements is really important. The practicing is really important. The sound system is really important. I have to check all the cables!”¹⁰²⁰ In line with UKIM theologians, these pastors strive for a complete ethnic service, which reaches its limitations because of unchanged dogmas. This progressive group of specific UKIM theologians and pastors would like to see the GPM moving in a full contextual direction which includes the revision of certain doctrines.¹⁰²¹

The great majority of the church members does not express a personal opinion about the ethnic service, because they feel it is not their place to say something about what is done by someone higher than them in the church hierarchy: the pastor. They simply go to church to participate in worship. Therefore, to study church members’ attitudes towards the *ibadah etnis* and its underlying idea, I had to ask different questions about the relation between culture and religion, which I will address in the next paragraph. Only one couple anonymously expressed their discontent with the ethnic service to me.¹⁰²² To them a confusing combination between *adat* and God is created. The man feels as if worship is not only about God any longer – as if God is put in second place, which contradicts his belief. Moreover, certain indigenous terms should not be used because an association with the ancestors has to be prevented. For the woman the ethnic service results in an unclear mix of incomprehensible elements, an exploration that to her does not fit in church – *kurang pas*. The space of religion should differ

¹⁰¹⁹ Interview with Anonymous, 16-12-2019, Ambon.

¹⁰²⁰ Interview with Jacky Manuputty.

¹⁰²¹ Interview with Morika B. Telelepta, Jacky Manuputty.

In short, Peter Salenusca discerned five different groups of pastors in dealing with the ethnic service. 1) Some do it because they have to according to GPM policy. 2) Some do it because others do it too. 3) Some do not know how to do it; they do not have the capability and knowledge. 4) Some do it because they feel comfortable with the ethnic service and therefore are happy to work with the idea that they experience as pleasant and good. 5) And some (mainly older) pastors do not do it because they have a traditional Calvinist mindset (Interview with Peter Salenusca).

¹⁰²² I spoke to them separately, and they said they came to their opinion independently and were not influenced by each other.

from the space for culture. Since her childhood she has been used to a certain church ritual which is ordinary to her and which she enjoys: a service that is neat and tranquil. When she experienced an ethnic service she wondered: what is this? She feels forced to experience an *ibadah etnis* which feels impure and unnatural, also because she lives a modern life. According to these two congregants not everything can be implemented to praise God: “We don’t live an ethnic life!”¹⁰²³ Such critical perspectives of congregants were not represented at all when I asked pastors and others about the responses of church members to the ethnic service. In similar ways they said the ethnic service is a way to preserve Moluccan culture and identity. When an *ibadah etnis* is held the church is full, and people experience worship in an excited and happy manner (*sukacita*), because they “live the faith in their world, in everyday life, in history [and] culture.”¹⁰²⁴ Congregants learn that religion is not separated from traditional culture, connecting with God and their own identity by realizing they have culture in this religious space (*kita pun budaya*). According to many, congregants enjoy the ethnic service, feel proud and understand the message better.¹⁰²⁵ To a great extent this is true. It seems that many people appreciate the *ibadah etnis* by mainly referring to the importance of it in the regeneration and preservation of Moluccan culture.¹⁰²⁶ This general feeling reflects how the contextual shift is implemented and received in a rather fast and successful way. The fact that a revival of Moluccan culture is also effectuated via political regulations and education helps furthering the habituation of the focus on one’s own cultural identity. However, enjoyment and appreciation of culture exactly is the level up to which the ethnic service is accepted. The deeper aspect of theologizing on the basis of culture, which is the perspective of UKIM and the future aim of the GPM, is not yet received and understood. Many people do not see a profound relation between culture and religion, and regard the ethnic service as just another form to praise God.¹⁰²⁷ Some people, mostly in villages further away from Ambon city, do not even recognize a service as ethnic, let alone they experience an *ibadah etnis* in a fundamentally different way. This became clear when I asked people if their church already

¹⁰²³ Interview with Anonymous, 19-11-2019/19-12-2019, Ambon. Translation by author.

They had the feeling that more people feel this contradiction inside themselves, but do not want to admit or say that to others.

¹⁰²⁴ Interview with Anonymous, 9-12-2019, Saparua.

¹⁰²⁵ Interview with Peter Salenus, Anonymous (22-12-2019, *Soya*), Anonymous (6-12-2019, Saparua), Anonymous (2-12-2019, Ambon), Anonymous (7-12-2019, Saparua), Anonymous (18-12-2019, Ambon), Jeffrey Leatimia, Jan Matatula, Hery Siahay, Elifas Maspaitela, Egbert Picanussa, Anonymous (9-12-2019, Saparua).

¹⁰²⁶ Interview with Anonymous (1-12-2019, Ambon), Anonymous (22-12-2019, *Soya*), Anonymous (17-11-2019, *Hutumuri*).

¹⁰²⁷ One congregant stated: “I agree, because the aim is to praise God; it is fine if ethnic worship is enforced in worship” (Anonymous, 1-12-2019, Ambon). Translation by author.

had done an ethnic service. Once a person said yes, and when I continued asking about how that had looked like, she referred to the service we just experienced, which actually was a regular Sunday service. Another time a man said no and was immediately interrupted by the pastor who was present, correcting the other man's statement and explaining to him that that was the time when they wore different clothes. It demonstrated how the meaning of the ethnic service had not reached this person, how the concept had not been communicated in a profound way, and how the pastor attached great importance in showing me that his congregants knew about it although this was not the case.¹⁰²⁸ Enjoyment or indifference does not take away the fact that some, mostly older, 'traditional' congregants reject the ethnic service because they think it leads to syncretism or secular influence.¹⁰²⁹

People who themselves clearly express their opinion about the ethnic service generally are religious people who are less involved in the institution of the church, which allows them to critique certain aspects from outside. Often, their critiques deal with quality – the aesthetics of persuasion are not strong enough to generate authenticity. While the initiative is judged as valuable, practice lacks meaning. A journalist whom I spoke to stated that for her the ethnic service in Ambon feels like 'seasoning' or 'clothing': several unrelated elements are assembled as a coated layer, preventing her from experiencing the service in a profound way based on who she is. She would love to feel the connection with her ancestral cultural identity in church, but so far this did not yet happen.¹⁰³⁰ Another person expressed the same opinion, calling it an experiment and an attraction. For him there is no balance and no deeper meaning, which diminishes the higher spiritual goal and feeling.¹⁰³¹ In general, issues of quality thus deal with content and 'lay-out'. Content-wise the ethnic service is seen as superficial and incomplete.¹⁰³² Efforts need to be made to make it a profound whole, by using more ethnic elements and interconnecting them by a red line of contextual theology.¹⁰³³ Practically, acoustics and sound systems need to be improved, and congregations need to prepare and

¹⁰²⁸ This again relates to the issue of status.

¹⁰²⁹ I did not speak with people who said this to me, except from the couple's opinion that I presented. Other people, such as theologians, stated that there always is a group of people who does not agree with this direction the church is going. Interestingly, secular influence and syncretism are close to each other, since traditional forms are regarded to be both related to ancestral powers and to non-Christian and therefore secular culture.

Apart from 'traditional' congregants, younger church members who prefer modern music and also do not like the ethnic direction of the GPM are the people who transfer to Pentecostal churches.

¹⁰³⁰ This is one of the reasons that she stopped going to church.

¹⁰³¹ Interview with Anonymous, 11-11-2019/23-10-2019, Ambon.

¹⁰³² Not only by religious people outside church, but also by some pastors, musicians and theologians when they judge the current practical state of the ethnic service.

¹⁰³³ Interview with Chris Tamaela, Agustinus C.W. Gaspersz, Barce Istia,

rehearse in order to execute it in a thorough way.¹⁰³⁴ Especially because the *ibadah etnis* is a recent development by the GPM, people recognize it is not yet executed in the most optimal and maximum way.¹⁰³⁵

Among musicians the opinions about the ethnic service greatly differ. Some criticize the concept and quality precisely because they have musical knowledge. One musician stated he did not understand the word *etnis*, as for him this meant pure cultural forms that are uninfluenced by outside forces, while in church all kinds of different elements are mixed.¹⁰³⁶ However, it should be noted that the idea as intended by theologians and the GPM is not built around the literal meaning of ethnic. *Etnis* merely denotes the contextual approach, which allows mixing and merging as the service should connect with cultural identity in a contemporary context. Conversely, other musicians see the ethnic service as a symbol of cultural appreciation. The atmosphere in church changes as one can feel the cultural richness based on one's identity as a Moluccan.¹⁰³⁷

A last perspective comes from a group that is often forgotten in the theological discourse: Moluccans who adhere to indigenous religion. Some of these ethnic groups do not approve of Christians using their cultural elements and symbols in church. For them, namely, these elements are not merely cultural but also religious. Here, the issue of appropriation and ownership becomes apparent. While Christians filter and transform the forms to be able to use them in Christian liturgy, hereby safely securing and controlling these forms into the cultural realm, animists see it as a dangerous practice of mixing which is not allowed by the ancestors, precisely because the forms are part of a religious realm too: for this group it is not their cultural heritage, but their religious life. Examples are the use of native language for reading the Bible, or the wearing of the *ikat kepala* by young men in church.¹⁰³⁸ Concerning this issue, Chris Tamaela stated that the GPM should enter into dialogue with these indigenous groups to establish intercommunication and exchange. They should explain the contextual process and

¹⁰³⁴ Interview with Ronny Loppies, Jacky Manuputty.

¹⁰³⁵ Interview with Jan Matatula, Anonymous (2-12-2019, Ambon).

¹⁰³⁶ Interview with Anonymous, 14-12-2019, Ambon.

¹⁰³⁷ Often, the term to describe this atmosphere is *enak*, which is a very broadly applied word. It means something like delicious, nice, good, comfortable or pleasant (Interview with Nico Tulalessy, Agustinus C.W. Gaspersz).

¹⁰³⁸ Especially children form a point of contestation, as in animist groups the *ikat kepala* can only be worn after initiation or marriage, which is why it is seen as an impossibility and insult if children in church wear the red headband. Moreover, it also is a question of protection and preservation. These people consciously choose to adhere to their indigenous religion, and feel that they are being threatened by the contextual practices of Christians (Informal conversation with Ro Bolton, 23-11-2019, *Rohua Baru*).

transformation of the cultural forms, demonstrating how their efforts are not aimed at Christianizing but at worshipping as Moluccan Christians through the culture that also belongs to Christians.¹⁰³⁹

Opinions on traditional church music

People's opinions about traditional church music are strongly related to opinions about the ethnic service, as traditional church music is one element within this framework. Concerning music specifically, opinions are connected to preferences of instruments and songbooks. In spite of the fact that many congregants felt the desired answer to my question about which music or songbook they liked the most was 'I like all',¹⁰⁴⁰ some people expressed their favorites or talked about favorites of others in general. These favorites are closely entangled with generation, place and memory. When *suling* is no longer played in a specific church, mostly older congregants stated that they loved this accompaniment the most because they grew up with it and therefore it evoked nostalgic sentiments. As one congregant described: "the sound of the *suling* instrument calms the heart and mind when we listen to it, like it gives us peace in life."¹⁰⁴¹ Younger people do not enjoy it that much, mainly because they are not used to the *suling*'s sound and sometimes off-tone pitch, although some appreciate the atmosphere of former times and village life that it generates. In places where the *suling* ensemble has been preserved and regenerated, such as in *Soya*, most congregants – young and old – see this instrument as the best fitting and perfect instrument to accompany worship. A young woman explained: "When you come in church and you hear the *suling*, your heart is so blessed. It is closer, calmer."¹⁰⁴² An older man from *Soya* clarified that they prefer attending worship in a quiet, serene (*syahdu*) form, not wanting any interference that affects their hearing. This is why they prefer bamboo flutes, because the sound is soothing and feels comfortable and calm when praising God.¹⁰⁴³ In general, the majority of congregants likes the keyboard with synthesizer effect.¹⁰⁴⁴ The keyboard is a trend, can be found in almost every

¹⁰³⁹ Interview with Chris Tamaela.

¹⁰⁴⁰ This is again related to the issue of hierarchy. Even the stating of preferences is felt to be an opinion or critique on how things are done, which is why most congregants say they like everything.

¹⁰⁴¹ Interview with Anonymous, 17-11-2019, *Hutumuri*. Translation by author.

¹⁰⁴² Interview with Bella Soplanit. Translation by author.

¹⁰⁴³ Also, people perceive worship as more direct and sincere (Interview with Anonymous, 6-12-2019, *Soya*).

¹⁰⁴⁴ Moluccan people like the echoing, strong sound of it which causes emotion for them (Interview with Agustinus C.W. Gaspersz). However, the keyboard must sound different from the sound heard at parties, as the keyboard is also used for this secular purpose (Interview with Rudi Fofid). Interestingly, I met several musicians who had studied music according to Western musicology, and they often preferred the organ sound of the keyboard which resembles the sound of organs in Dutch churches. For them this sound was very sacred. Moreover, several theologians I met also preferred the organ sound (Interview with Cornelis Adolf Alyona, John Titaley).

church and is capable of innumerable instrumental sounds: it is a symbol of modernity. In extension, the *Maranatha* church has a permanent band to accompany the church service. Although the age range of the congregants here is broad, older people usually do not enjoy a full band in church that much, because for them a service has to be tranquil, solemn and meditative, while a band gives a happy, energetic atmosphere – precisely the factors why younger others love it. Lastly, brass, as the successor to *suling*, for some disturbs the spiritual atmosphere because it is quite loud, while others intrinsically connect it to the identity of the church. For this latter group the trumpet gives them goosebumps and establishes contact with God.¹⁰⁴⁵

The names of the different songbooks are sometimes used to denote generations of congregants, demonstrating how people's favorites are related to age.¹⁰⁴⁶ This generally means that older people love the DSL or NR, middle-aged people the KJ or PKJ¹⁰⁴⁷ and younger people also the PKJ/KJ, or NJGPM, or more charismatic ecumenical songs. Although NJGPM is the newest songbook it is appreciated by a broad range of people because many value the fact that the songs are composed by Moluccans, are written in the Moluccan dialect and make use of Moluccan cultural and daily-life terms. However, the lines of classification of favorites are not only drawn by generation, but also – and perhaps more strongly – by memory and upbringing. The way in which people grow up, acquire religious knowledge, and build their experiences of religious spirituality is formed by specific music and songs. I spoke to several young women who chose DSL as their favorite songbook because their religious formation was shaped by these songs and the poetry, words, style and atmosphere that come with them. The book is connected to their village of origin where they attended worship, which was tranquil, solemn and serene. Although they now live in the city, where the church service can be loud, crowded and festive, they prefer the form of worship from their past when they were a child: this form feels true and right, allowing one to focus on God and to remember the message for application in daily life.¹⁰⁴⁸ Moreover, for them the words of DSL match their feelings better, with the songs being only focused on living life together with

¹⁰⁴⁵ Interview with Vally & Eggy.

¹⁰⁴⁶ Interview with Anonymous, 9-12-2019, Saparua.

¹⁰⁴⁷ People who prefer these songbooks generally state that the translations are good, while the language used in the DSL or NR is hard to understand because these entail very old words. Moreover, KJ nowadays is the most often used book in church, which results in the fact that the majority of people is familiar with these songs (most people even have the standard package of the Bible and KJ in one book). In service the volume of singing therefore is high, which increases the joyful experience of worship (Interview with Anonymous, 22-12-2019, *Soya*).

¹⁰⁴⁸ Instead of merely sitting, listening and going home.

God: “I seem to be talking directly to God.”¹⁰⁴⁹ Hence, in general, older generations (approximately aged above sixty) prefer older songbooks and instruments that match a tranquil, slow, serene church service, while younger generations prefer newer songbooks and modern instruments that match an energetic, happy church service. In the end, preferences are shaped by what is ordinary and comfortable to people – instruments, songs, atmospheres and styles that have built one’s inner feeling of religiosity and therefore touch the heart. This musical network has partly shaped the core of people’s religious identity, which is the reason for why it is hard to describe religious-musical feelings, and why it is hard to change or introduce new church music.

These preferences for songs and music form also part of the context of contextual theology in which the ethnic service and traditional church music are implemented. Moreover, they form the context for people’s opinions about traditional church music. Strikingly, Moluccan traditional music was never named the first when I asked people about favorite instruments in church. This demonstrates that few people are familiar with the possibility of this type of music as church music; congregants are not used to it because they almost never experienced it, which points to the practical reality of traditional church music. The first association with a traditional instrument in church was, naturally, the *suling*, since the *suling* per definition is a religious instrument and part of Christian Moluccan heritage. When I myself consequently referred to instruments such as the *tifa* or others, many congregants stated it was important to use these too to preserve Moluccan culture. Thus, traditional church music was more linked to preservation than to theological thinking and the relation between culture and religion. Most people have a rather indifferent attitude towards it, as long as it is used to praise God (*puji Tuhan*). However, some young people simply stated they preferred modern instruments over traditional ones: “I am more used to the use of modern music, because it excites us in singing. With traditional music (...) I feel less excited. When we sing we must adjust to the sound. (...) It is not full singing.”¹⁰⁵⁰ Another congregant explained why he felt traditional music was less fitting in church. He is used to harmonic music, while traditional music is more rhythmic. To him, traditional music seems randomly assembled, made from unclear sounds of nature which are not right for church. He lived his whole life in Ambon and grew up with Western music. This is his culture, and in his opinion one cannot be forced to suddenly like ‘original’ Moluccan culture and music. Considering his own life

¹⁰⁴⁹ Interview with Omy & Jeane, Vally & Eggy.

¹⁰⁵⁰ Anonymous, 1-12-2019, Ambon. Translation by author.

context, he thinks traditional church music does not mean contextualization.¹⁰⁵¹ Other reasons for disliking or disapproving traditional church music, mostly among older congregants, is the perceived relation with ancestral spirits and *adat*. In short, the large majority enjoys traditional church music as one of the ways to accompany worship, not theologizing music on the basis of a contextual perspective which links culture and religion, but seeing it as an effort of preservation. A small group disapproves on the basis of an anti-cultural (‘traditional’) religious mindset, and a slightly bigger group on the basis of a regarded mismatch with their modern lifestyle.¹⁰⁵² Nevertheless, another small group of congregants is very happy with traditional church music and feels that in this way the church service expresses what they have as a Moluccan person, experiencing belief from their cultural identity – thus from a more profound theological basis. These latter opinions are generated through the earlier mentioned network of idea-to-practice implementation, when quality, context, explanation, capability and creativity are assured through a mutual understanding of core terms among actors involved.

The ancestors of Christianity and culture

The Moluccan ancestors have already been emphasized in many different contexts in this thesis. They form part of indigenous religion, Moluccan culture and traditional music, and constitute the chain of preservation. However, they also have an important and peculiar position in relation to Moluccan Christianity. This paragraph delineates the ways in which the ancestors are conceptualized, entangling Moluccan culture and Christianity through the idea of the traditional.

The ancestors are the core point where contestations on the boundaries of contextual theology, the ethnic service and traditional church music are located. During the colonial times, Christian missionaries pushed the Moluccan ancestors to the realm of culture, prohibiting the belief in the powers of human ancestral spirits. They constructed a separation between religion and culture, and since in Moluccan cosmology the ancestors formed the central entity in life as a whole, anything culturally related was banished from church. Keane (2007) explains how the underlying semiotic ideology imposed by the Dutch was connected to ideas of agency and modernity that were fraught with moral implications. As Keane (2007,

¹⁰⁵¹ Interview with Anonymous, 19-11-2019, Ambon.

¹⁰⁵² And also practically on the basis of the perceived difficulty of traditional church music.

4-5) states, these involved intuitions about historical progress, intuitions that “center on the idea that modernity is, or ought to be, a story of human liberation from a host of false beliefs and fetishisms that undermine freedom.” He goes on by describing how the Dutch-Indonesian colonial encounter was situated within a Protestant strand that runs parallel to certain ways of understanding modernity: progress is not only a matter of improvements in technology, economic well-being, or health but is also about human emancipation and self-mastery. As people become modern, they realize the true character of human agency, while antimoderns persist in displacing their own agency onto traditions or fetishes (Keane 2007, 6-7).¹⁰⁵³ Using the terminology of Keane on which basis the Dutch Calvinists made their distinctions, the Moluccan ancestors were put in the category of unmodern fetishism, as in their eyes it reflected false beliefs whereby agency and power were assigned to dead human spirits. The effects of this semiotic regime are strong. Moluccan Christians make a distinction between appreciating or respecting the ancestors, which is allowed, and worshipping the ancestors, which is not allowed.¹⁰⁵⁴ No Moluccan Christian would ever say that the ancestors have a place in church, because this is what has been taught to them centuries ago and since. It also is the reason why contextual theology is such a large shift. Moluccan Christianity is being re-theologized on the basis of cultural identity which means that culture enters church. This process is precarious, dangerous business, because for many culture is still connected to the ancestral spirits. For Moluccans, namely, the ancestors are present and have powers – however not in church. In fact, the semiotic ideology underlying the ancestors did not change, but the ancestors became confined to the cultural realm. Precisely because of the perceived existence of the ancestors a bigger contestation arises when culture mingles with religion. Moluccan Christianity has been built on the separation between culture and religion through the missionaries’ semiotic ideology, which however did not change the semiotic ideology underlying conceptions about the ancestors themselves – what was taken over was a mere discernment of spaces. In a way, both semiotic ideologies thus strengthened each other in guarding the religious realm.

This is why the ideas of Chris Tamaela have been controversial; many saw the music he used as instruments for calling the ancestors’ spirits, while he himself clearly distinguished

¹⁰⁵³ So, this story about modernity as the emergence of a relatively more free subject is both about the difference between present and past and about the West’s difference from the non-West, a story that was played out in the missionary encounter with those who were not Christian, not Western, and not modern (Keane 2007, 13-14).

¹⁰⁵⁴ Interview with Anonymous (9-12-2019, Saparua), Hery Siahay, Barce Istia, Jeffrey Leatimia, Anonymous (18-12-2019), Anonymous (7-12-2019, Saparua), Anonymous (2-12-2019, Ambon), Anonymous (22-12-2019, Soya).

between human and godly ancestors. Another example is pastor Jacky Manuputty, who actually goes much further in bringing contextual theology in practice. Jacky uses the concept of the Catholic saint to bridge all religions. For him, saints are like ancestors, mediating between humans and God. The medium is part of different religious systems, but all people direct themselves to a shared sacred one: “I join the line in the mosque. I go and pray there. I go to the synagogue. I pray everywhere! (...) I pray to the other Gods”¹⁰⁵⁵ In this way he also includes the Moluccan ancestors. Pastor Jacky expressed severe critique on the contextual processes in which people take *adat* only as an instrument, cutting off the spirit that lies behind. This practice namely affects the people who adhere to indigenous religion: “Common, you really hurt them! (...) You have to reconcile what you say about God with the ancestors or what they say about the holiness. On their terms! You cannot say: we don’t believe it, it is like paganism, but the cultural instrument is very great [and] we can use it.” For Jacky this is a very empty contextualization. He therefore has the opinion that the ancestors need to be reconciled with God. Interestingly, his approach even pushes the boundaries of many contextual theologians at UKIM who work on the level of symbolism,¹⁰⁵⁶ and certainly of the doctrinal stances of the GPM.¹⁰⁵⁷

Not many Moluccan Christians would agree with Jacky Manuputty’s approach, on a discursive level at least. In words most people maintain a strict separation between the ancestors and church, and between culture and religion. Since many congregants did not give their opinion about the ethnic service and traditional church music, I asked if there was a relation between culture and religion for them. Some people said yes, and consequently either referred to church culture or to Moluccan culture, but not to their entanglement.¹⁰⁵⁸ Some (older) people said no; in line with traditional theology Christianity and culture each have their separate space. However, the large majority did not understand my question. In itself this dissonance meant that for many people it was not an item in which terms they thought or

¹⁰⁵⁵ Thus, the ancestors contain a power and wisdom from which Christians can learn (Interview with Jacky Manuputty).

¹⁰⁵⁶ Not all, though.

¹⁰⁵⁷ Elifas Maspaitela stated: “In our church doctrine we respect the ancestors as our parents. (...) But we don’t believe that they have the power to control the world. Just respect. Because they are the first generation God sent and through them we are here now” (Interview with Elifas Maspaitela).

Jacky Manuputty is a rare example of a creative figure who has always been working from his own contextual theology with which he is able to touch the congregants because he pays attention to the full meaning of context. It illustrates the central mediating in-between position of the pastor from another point of view.

¹⁰⁵⁸ A few, however, did, although incidental (Interview with Anonymous, 27-10-2019, *Poka*). Most people (not only congregants but also pastors) started referring to how things were done in church, or to cultural customs such as *pela*, *masohi*, dance, *sasi* music, et cetera.

spoke. In contextual theology culture and religion are central terms, whereas for most of the congregants they are not. The theological idea-level and discourse thus do not correlate with religious attitudes in practice. This does not mean congregants do not accept cultural forms in church, such as traditional music in the ethnic service. Most people relate to this development in another way, embedding it in the broader societal discourse of preservation and heritage instead of contextual theology. In that sense, people view the culture-religion relation through the recognition of Moluccan traditions and identity in church, but refer to the religious context as a place of preservation. The ancestors give authority to the necessity of preservation, because traditional culture and music came to Moluccans through the ancestral chain.¹⁰⁵⁹ The discourse of preservation is much safer, because theologically the two spaces stay separate: people do not start believing in a different way through their cultural identity, but appreciate their cultural identity in church. Because of its special position, *suling* forms the exception. The *suling*, a diatonic instrument introduced by a westerner but made from and for the Moluccan context, is seen as a traditional church instrument which has been passed on by the ancestors and should therefore be preserved in church. The *suling* is the perfect example of intricate entanglement between Moluccan culture and Moluccan Christianity with the ancestors as mediators.¹⁰⁶⁰ Nevertheless, this position of the *suling* is not a conscious analytical stance, but a taken-for-granted reality. In short, in discourse people do not conceptualize a theological relation between culture and religion on which the contextual approach of the ethnic service and traditional church music are based.

However, discourse differs from what people feel and who people are, which is why pastor Jacky actually is rather successful in reaching congregants as he is able to design and explain worship from a practical reality in which the ancestors play an important role. In cultural life people definitely ascribe power to the ancestors in the here and now. Moluccan people always maintain a close relationship with their ancestors and, consequently, with their ancestral home (*rumah tua*). Several people whom I met described that when they are away from home they remember the ancestors in every situation they face.¹⁰⁶¹ A friend of mine

¹⁰⁵⁹ E.g. Interview with Barce Istia, Anonymous (17-11-2019, *Hutumuri*), Anonymous (27-10-2019, Ambon), Anonymous (1-12-2019, Ambon).

¹⁰⁶⁰ This is my analysis. People themselves do not see the *suling* as having a different position. This is not the way in which they themselves think about the culture-religion relation. For them it is just the way things are.

¹⁰⁶¹ Interview with Jance Rumahuru.

One person told me he once promised his aunt to visit her and stay the night in their ancestral home. However, he was very tired and decided to go back again in the evening. When he entered the boat it appeared the motor was broken, and he had to stay the night. He realized it was the power of the ancestors who pulled the boat back, because the ancestral home is holy.

explained that she respects her ancestors because they created her life as a whole through many generations. Her grandfather prayed for her in the ancestral home to always be guarded overseas: “Therefore I never ever feel alone. I have God, but I also have my ancestors who always protect me wherever I am.”¹⁰⁶² While they are not visible, one can thus feel the ancestor’s presence. Although she stressed she respects and not worships the ancestors, her story illustrates how important the ancestors are in people’s lives: they guard, they have power, they can be prayed to and they have influence.¹⁰⁶³ Because of this lived reality, it cannot be denied that Moluccan Christianity has always had a relation with Moluccan culture. Theologian Steve Gaspersz explained that most Moluccans keep their faith in the ancestors. He named an example of how people in a Christian village ask permission to the ancestors if they pass a certain tree: “this kind of belief, consciously or unconsciously, inserts in Christianity in *Maluku*.” Some pastors even pray to one’s ancestral home to solve certain personal problems, as a kind of recheck (besides praying to God) to ask forgiveness to the ancestors if one did something wrong. In Steve’s experience, pastors who do this are very respected among people because they are able to reconcile the ancestors and the Christian God.¹⁰⁶⁴ Hence, in practice there has been a long contextualization of culture in religion. Bartels (1994, 413) recognizes this in the earlier mentioned formalistic character of the Moluccan church, and in the amalgamation between Christianity and *adat*. He states that Moluccan Christians in daily life often turn to both the ancestors and God, and that the church sometimes plays a role in *adat* ceremonies.¹⁰⁶⁵ I also heard stories in which this blending and double assurance became clear. For instance: a pastor blessed a coconut to strengthen *sasi*; a Christian feared he got tuberculosis again from the punishments of the ancestors because he used his native language in church; animists prayed to all the ancestors in which they included Jesus and Mary;¹⁰⁶⁶ someone’s aunt prayed in the ancestral home to give the wish extra power; and in various old, traditional village-churches there is a separate place for the *raja*

¹⁰⁶² Interview with Omy & Jeane.

She told an anecdote about a travel to another island with school. She slept in a village, and in the morning the people asked if she had not been afraid or disturbed by spirits which always bothered guests in that place. She had slept very fine. She knew this was because not only God, but also her ancestors protected her because of the prayer of her grandfather. She never feels afraid (Interview with Omy & Jeane).

¹⁰⁶³ Another example is the earlier described anecdote of my friend whose father buried the placenta and prayed to it for her to become a pastor.

¹⁰⁶⁴ Interview with Steve Gaspersz.

¹⁰⁶⁵ For example, to renew *pela* alliances and at the inauguration of village kings.

¹⁰⁶⁶ The other way around, Peter Salenusza told about Moluccan Christians who prayed to God in Indonesian and to the ancestors in native language. When they entered into trance they could not mention God’s name. In this way they guarded a certain boundary of perceived syncretism (Interview with Peter Salenusza).

who is the prime protector of *adat* and ancestral matters.¹⁰⁶⁷ Interestingly, in reference to Moluccan Christianity the same terms – ancestors and *adat* – are employed. Moluccans have become Christians through their ancestors. Christian culture which originally is not Moluccan but derives from colonial, Dutch traditions (for instance, the black clothing or music) has become Moluccan Christianity – traditions that are in turn referred to as *adat*.¹⁰⁶⁸ This colonial Christian culture thus is not seen as colonial, but as Moluccan, authorized by, again, the ancestors. Thus, from various angles culture and religion are practically mixed through the mediation of the ancestors. One practical example which brings together all these elements and arguments is the ritual called *cuci negeri*, cleaning the village, which is still held in a few villages. Originally being a tradition that comes from the ancestors, it is now linked to Christmas and New Year for which people need to physically and mentally clean themselves and their environment. A description of the ritual in *Soya* will follow below.¹⁰⁶⁹

The ritual of cuci negeri

The ritual each year takes place in the second week of December. Originally this time correlates with the natural arrival of strong winds that make the village more dirty. Nowadays *cuci negeri* is viewed as a preparation for Christmas. Everything starts with the announcement of the *marinyo* who invites everyone to partake in the ritual. When the *marinyo* screams in the evening, the ancestors arrive. All activities need to be stopped and all children need to be silently at home. When a person breaks this rule, he will be punished.¹⁰⁷⁰ The day after the announcement, a big meeting is held among certain village men, among which the *raja*, a representative of the school and the pastor, to discuss the preparation of the cleaning. The women prepare the food in the meantime. On Wednesday the women start cleaning; the public space, the environment of the church, the school, et cetera. These women are called *mata ina*. The important criteria for becoming a *mata ina* is to be married.¹⁰⁷¹ In their *kabaya* they clean the village with their traditional broom, while drinking *sopi*. The next day they continue to finish their tasks. On Thursday a group of young and old men climbs the mountain *Serimau*.¹⁰⁷² Dressed in black with the *ikat kepala*,¹⁰⁷³ they sit, drink and wait the whole night. It is a secret what happens during this time, although it is said that they communicate with the

¹⁰⁶⁷ For example, in places such as *Booi* and *Soya*.

¹⁰⁶⁸ Interview with Anonymous (10-11-2019, *Soya*), Anonymous (6-12-2019, *Saparua*).

¹⁰⁶⁹ This description is based on the interview with Bella Soplanit.

¹⁰⁷⁰ This is not directly visible, but a symbol will be given, such as a motor cycle accident.

¹⁰⁷¹ Moreover, you have to have the right to become a *mata ina*, which has something to do with family name and ancestral lineage.

¹⁰⁷² The men who are allowed to go are men who take the place of their father, their grandfather, et cetera.

¹⁰⁷³ Black is seen as a sacred color, which is interesting because it is the sacred color of Moluccan Christianity.

ancestors who talk to the young men via the old men. The next day they descend and are awaited by an ensemble of people, including the *mata ina*. A special group sits down and eats, such as the king and his wife, the pastor, the teacher, the *kepala soa* and the *kepala adat*. Hereafter they enter into the *baileo*, where children are not allowed. The *soya* rhythm is played on the *tifa* and the *mata ina* dance with specific leaves called *gadihu*. Responsorial songs are sung in the native language.¹⁰⁷⁴ The *tahuri* is blown to mark the beginning of the ceremony. Afterwards, each family – excited and singing – goes to its natural pond where one drinks the water and is blessed by a *mata ina*. This part of the ritual is called *mata air*. Completely wet, everyone returns to a central place to eat. There is freedom, all are allowed to drink, and people dance. Consequently, there is the ritual of *kain gandong*, a large white cloth in which the villagers enter to symbolize togetherness. This is accompanied by dancing, music and singing. The procession with the cloth ends at the church, after which one eats the famous traditional cake. The next day, Saturday, the ritual of *makan patita* is held. People again go to the pond to wash themselves, after which they eat, dance and drink until they are drunk. On the 31st of December all dress in black and attend church to express gratitude for the past year, and to inaugurate a new year. In the end of January another party is held to celebrate its start.¹⁰⁷⁵ This is the end of all the rituals.

The traditional

The ritual of *cuci negeri* shows how in *Soya*, as the people say there, ‘religion and culture walk together’. One person commented that when an outsider looks at them, he or she might think that “we worship the stones. But no, actually it is only an act of gratitude to God through his creation.”¹⁰⁷⁶ While the pastor participates in the *cuci negeri*, the *adat* leaders attend church. The people from *Soya* call this constellation the *tiga batu tungku*, which is a triangle of the pastor, teacher and king who are nothing without each other.¹⁰⁷⁷ For the people in *Soya* there is a strong relation between the ancestors and Christian religion, because the ancestors have supported them when Christianity came. Everyone believes in this relation, including the pastor. As a *negeri adat* they protect the rituals of the ancestors as the context in which Christianity developed here.

The traditional in *soya* can be used to analyze the relation between theology and lived religion concerning the idea of traditional church music in the ethnic service. In *Soya*

¹⁰⁷⁴ Only a few people still know this language and know the meaning of the words.

¹⁰⁷⁵ The *katreji* is the most important dance performed here.

¹⁰⁷⁶ Interview with Anonymous, 22-12-2019, *Soya*.

¹⁰⁷⁷ The symbol refers to the construction that is built to make a fire.

Moluccan traditional culture in the form of *adat* is protected and maintained. At the same time, traditional theology (Bible- and God-centered) is maintained as well. On a theological, discursive level people do not conceptualize a profound relation between culture and religion. The reason for this exactly is the practical contextual relation between the two. In *Soya* the sources on which contextual theology draws are still present. Moreover, *adat* and Christianity have a close relationship through the mediation of the ancestors. Since the distance between the two forms of traditional are close to each other, it is of vital importance to not cross the boundaries, which would lead to perceived feelings of damage to both people's Christianity and *adat* system. In the village *Yalahatan* the same dynamic can be recognized. While *adat* and Christianity mutually influence each other, an ethnic service is not held and traditional instruments are not used in church. These instruments are associated with the animists who live next to the Christians in the same village, and from whom the Christians need to distinguish themselves to experience an authentic form of Christianity. Hence, because the two spaces are related they are protected through guarding the cultural and theological traditional. One pastor in *Soya* even explained that since his village is a *negeri adat* the inhabitants have to continue their traditional culture,¹⁰⁷⁸ which for him included both *adat* and Christian culture as these are one and the same thing.¹⁰⁷⁹ However, theologically speaking the belief in God would never mingle with *adat* or the ancestors, because practically it does. Ironically, the shift in theological mentality that is intended by the contextual approach is more effective in places that lack centuries-long automatic and practical contextualization, which is why the ethnic revival is a modern movement. People in these places can easier grasp the theological idea and contextual discourse because their lives are practically further away from the traditional culture on which the ethnic service and traditional church music are based: the traditional is an 'ethnic modern'.

In sum, I say that the ancestors form the core mediators of the traditional. In Chapter Six the analytical concept of the traditional was explained, referring to the process through which something becomes regarded as traditionally Moluccan, with traditional as adjective being defined by mixing and openness. This concept has been applied to music: traditional Moluccan music is a construction of merging by time and relevance, which nevertheless is deemed authentic through a conceptualized ancestral link, to the point that innovative can be traditional. This perspective on music is useful when looking at the interrelation between

¹⁰⁷⁸ Interview with Anonymous, 22-12-2019, *Soya*.

¹⁰⁷⁹ The accompaniment of the *suling* in church here is the prime illustration.

theology and lived religion concerning traditional church music within the frame of the ethnic service. At the moment idea and practice are often not yet directly connected, because the key terms on which the approach is based are defined in diverse and contested ways by the figures involved. For instance, traditional is used in at least three different styles, ethnic is confused with purity, the context of traditional theology is neglected, culture refers to both church and religion, and the ancestors are the debated core of everything. However, the ethnic service has the potential to bridge the contextual idea and practice of traditional church music. When both modernity and traditional theology are accepted as contexts, when an automatic, centuries-long contextualization is acknowledged, and when the practical importance of the ancestors in Moluccan life is worked with, capacity can be built to turn the idea into reality in a holistic manner. In rare instances this is already achieved, if close links between the actors involved are established by shared creativity, progressiveness and contact with real people from all layers of society whom the project eventually concerns and is based on – thus attending to context in the broadest sense of the word. These people think the Moluccan context which contextual theology has to take into account is a context that is not original but hybrid, a dynamic which can be described by the traditional. Moluccan church culture has been influenced by colonialism, reflected in certain mindsets and worship styles that are ordinary and therefore comfortable to people as it defines their religious identity. At the same time, Moluccan church culture has been influenced by Moluccan traditional culture, since in the core semiotic ideologies concerning the ancestors have not been changed. These long processes of contextualization have blurred the realm of culture in mutual ways. Moluccan culture has become church culture and Moluccan Christianity has become Moluccan culture – for instance reflected in the black clothes or church songs sung at home; in the practical contextualization and now in the theological contextualization.¹⁰⁸⁰ Moluccan identity and Christian identity have become one through the ancestors. The ethnic service is a theological innovation that possibly forms one point in the process of constructing the Moluccan traditional. Although to acquire its full potential changes in doctrine need to be made which would break open the possibilities (also, paradoxically, to address the valid context of traditional theological mindsets and the role of the ancestors),¹⁰⁸¹ it is able to bridge idea and practice because it catches the openness and flexibility of the traditional. The Moluccan

¹⁰⁸⁰ I discern here between the ways in which culture and religion have naturally and automatically become entangled through centuries of mutual influence, and the ways in which this entanglement is consciously theologized by people themselves in discursive sense.

¹⁰⁸¹ This is not my personal opinion, but based on statements made by theologians.

cultural context, in all its diversity and complexity, namely forms the source of the ethnic service. What this context exactly entails – the entanglements described above – is changing, open, mixing and diverse, but also real and authentic as an expression and evocation of Moluccanness with the ancestors as authority. Traditional church music, when designed and implemented based on this idea of context and on this idea of the traditional, grasps the “sacred rhythm for the feeling with God”,¹⁰⁸² hereby fully arousing the sense of Moluccanness by working from the open dynamics of traditional music, Moluccan culture and Moluccan Christianity. As a central experiential and theological medium in worship, traditional church music then makes people feel the work of God in Moluccan culture through the Moluccan and Christian ancestors.

Conclusion

This chapter formed the last part of the journey from theology to lived religion concerning traditional church music. Firstly, the *suling* was conceptualized as a bridge between the theological and cultural. In this position it is the perfect example of the traditional, being part of both practical and theological contextualization. Consequently, the practice of the ethnic service was delineated. A theological transformation of cultural forms such as songs, music, folklore, cosmology, philosophy, language, local wisdom, food, natural materials and clothing results in the contextualization of liturgy. On the basis of three examples it became clear that language and clothes are the most used elements in the ethnic service. Thirdly, a theoretical argument was constructed about contextual theology as heritage formation. The terms tradition, contextualization and preservation are implicated in the discursive network of the heritagization of culture. In the Moluccan case this refers to both cultural and Christian heritage. Thereupon the central role of language in the ethnic service was discussed. For pastors preaching in the local language is rather difficult and the responses of congregants are diffuse: the meanings of traditional language are practically related in a reverse city-village nexus. Fifthly, two reasons were given for the practical reality that music is the least developed element in the ethnic service. When traditional church music is played in church it is characterized by mixture or incompleteness, but generally primary musical accompaniment does not change in the *ibadah etnis*. Practical limitations as well as the historic encounter of semiotic ideologies account for this. The implementation of the ethnic service and traditional

¹⁰⁸² Interview with Elifas Maspaitela.

church music depends on understanding, knowledge, capability, creativity, quality and context concerning the idea-to-practice process executed by pastors and their *majelis* teams. Important factors regarding the reception by congregants are socialization and explanation. Opinions regarding the ethnic service are almost never directly expressed by congregants themselves. The majority of them appreciates the *ibadah etnis* on a superficial level. Criticism is related to perceptions on bad quality, the relation with *adat*, confusion over the term *etnis*, and unrespectful appropriation. Opinions on traditional church music are strongly linked to preferences of accompanying instruments and songbooks – created through musical-religious upbringing which forms religious identity – of which traditional instruments are not yet part (except *suling*). Most Moluccan church members enjoy traditional church music out of a feeling of the importance of preservation. Small groups of congregants disapprove on the basis of traditional theology or modern life styles, or profoundly approve on the basis of contextual theology. Lastly, the ancestors brought all aspects together in the final argument. The colonial encounter between Dutch-Calvinist and Moluccan semiotic ideologies resulted in a hybrid representational economy that underlies current religious and cultural attitudes towards the ancestors. Moluccan Christians do not theologize a deep relation between culture and religion on the basis of contextual theology, but recognize the idea through a discursive regime of preservation and heritage. Nevertheless, the lived reality of the cultural importance of the ancestors in the lives of all Moluccans indicates the centuries-long practical, automatic contextualization of culture in religion. The ritual of *cuci negeri* was used as an analytical illustration on how the spaces of religion and culture are theologically separated because they are practically related. The ethnic service has the potential to bridge the contextual idea and practice of traditional church music when it catches the flexibility of the traditional. Attending to context in the broadest sense, it can arouse the sense of Moluccanness by working from the entanglements of traditional music, Moluccan culture and Moluccan Christianity, with the ancestors as mediators in the process.

Figures – Chapter 7



Figure 41 - Interior of the church in Soya (photo by author)



Figure 42 - Interior of the church in Soya (photo by author)



Figure 43 - Ritual Cuci Negeri (photo sent by friend of author)



Figure 44 - Suling players (photo by author)



Figure 45 - Suling players (photo by author)

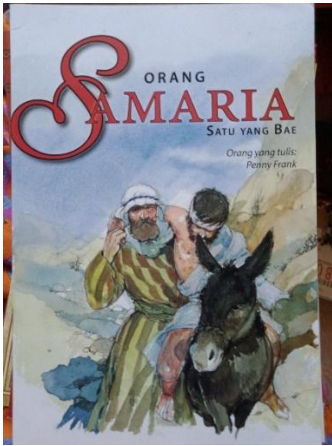


Figure 46 - The Good Samaritan translated in Ambonese Malay (photo by author)



Figure 47 - Decorated altar for an ethnic service (photo sent by friend of author)



Figure 48 - Ethnic service in Rohua Baru, Seram, with the pastor wearing the ikat kepala (photo by author)



Figure 49 - Kain Tanimbar (photo by author)

The sounds of the busy traffic in Ambon rage around us
Cars honking, music blasting, motorcycles roaring
Everything is warm, humid, loud and intense
Yet, in this dome of noise we experience a secluded moment of silent emotion

I am sitting across Vally, my best friend in Ambon
In the corner of the terrace of café Sarinda we talk about religion, music and life
Our words are flavored by the sweetness of the Indonesian delicacy we are eating

Vally is a theology student at UKIM
At the age of seventeen she lost her mother
She therefore decided to study in Ambon instead of Salatiga, to not leave her father
I look into her beautiful, brown, tearful eyes

*The feeling of loss is very strong
The first year was hard for me, continuing life without mama
But I am a person who never wants to fall apart – up to today I am strong*

I see her strength
Every day, from the early morning until evening she studied
She took over her mother's role in Sunday school
Although she was tired, she continued, full of joy for what she was doing

*When I remember my mother I can finish everything I want
She was always singing
Before we prayed and when my mother was sick we sang together*

Vally sings
It is a hymn from the PKJ, the songbook her mother loved
Her breakable voice breaks the cacophony of life around us
The sad smile on her face creates an emotional connection between us

*I think in myself I have a place to become a pastor
I can no longer see my mother's proudness of me
I have a dream, and I must make my mother's dream come true*

This is power, this is beauty, this is vulnerability, this is pride, this is love

Conclusion

Blinking my eyes and wiping a tear of my cheek I felt an immense pride for the strong woman sitting in front of me. I felt grateful to know her. I felt privileged that she opened her heart to me. I had seen pictures of her mother hanging on the wall of her room. I had heard stories about her mother during the time we spent together in Ambon. Yet, the song said everything and more. I cannot describe the emotion in the moment Vally began singing for me.

Suddenly, heavy weighted and unexpectedly fast, a wave of intermingling happiness and sadness invaded my belly. To be honest, in typing these words the memory causes watery eyes. The song Vally sang brought me the closest to an unreachable experience. I sensed her love and her pain. It showed her character, her life, her religiosity. It showed music and singing as the heart of experience. It showed Vally's identity as a Moluccan Christian. It showed how a religious song, defined by its own context and history, continues to acquire and express new meanings in the personal and cultural contexts of people's lives, each time it is sung and played again.

Studying the contextualization of church music, in this thesis I used Moluccan (church) music as a lens to gain insight in Moluccan cultural identity and religious practice. The starting point formed the contextual theological idea of Christian Izaak Tamaela about the transposition of Moluccan traditional music into the Moluccan Protestant church. The aim of this research was to understand the relationship between contextual Moluccan theology and lived religious attitudes and practices. As one of the materializations of this theology, music evokes questions of religious experience that are central in grasping the overarching phenomenon of religious contextualization. Therefore, the research asked how traditional music as framed within contextual Moluccan theology is interrelated with lived religion. To examine the theological interpretation and legitimization of Moluccan traditional music, I analyzed the meaning of the term 'traditional', interpreted Moluccan music, and mapped the contextual discourse in relation to religious attitudes and practices on the ground. I traced the transformation of the discourse on the 'idea-to-practice' process among UKIM theologians and students, GPM pastors, GPM board members, *majelis*, congregants, and musicians.

Moluccanness and the traditional

In researching and disclosing the resonances and dissonances between Moluccan theology and lived religion, I employed several concepts that were theoretically apt to analyze the empirical interrelation under study: heritage, tradition, discourse, context and semiotic ideology.

Moreover, to grasp the theological idea of traditional Moluccan church music in relation to its apprehension in church life, and the transformation of the discourse on this idea, its practical process and the concepts involved, I introduced the terms ‘Moluccanness’ and ‘the traditional’. These two concepts catch the openness and processes of authentication in the construction, implementation and reception of Moluccan theology and Moluccan church music. Firstly, through the contextual process (musical) traditions from an *adat* context are selected, transformed and produced for their transposition to the Moluccan church. In relation to novel, changing, modern contexts in a globalized world, these traditions are constructed as authentic, immemorial tokens of Moluccan identity through the ancestral chain. Moluccan theology thus involves the construction of a neutralized, broadly-applicable sense of Moluccanness that is increasingly figured as a disappearing past, to be protected and preserved within its constitution as Moluccan heritage. Secondly, the political, religious, musical and theological revival of ethnic Moluccanness, on the one hand, reflects the possibility of openness and merging while, on the other hand, is constrained by rule-governed practice. In analyzing the contextual approach and traditional church music, and in emphasizing their constructivist, hybrid quality, I worked with the notion of the Moluccan traditional. Rather than a concrete practice from the past that is called tradition, the traditional refers to the historical process that makes something traditionally Moluccan. Traditional as adjective is defined by mixing and the traditional refers to the process by which a cultural form becomes seen as traditional.

Summary of chapters

Chapter One to Three dissected the grammar in which the Moluccan contextual discourse is afforded to operate. First, the cultural and historical context were delineated. As a continuous tradition passed down through the ancestors, *adat* forms the core of Moluccan culture, with collectivity being a central value in Moluccan society. The *adat* ceremonies, comprised by an ensemble of clothes, dance, language and music, form the original context from which contextual theologians draw their inspiration. The history of colonization and missionization, the post-independent nationalist and developmentalist political regimes, the establishment and evolvement of the GPM and the religious conflict of twenty years ago shape the past and present realities of contemporary Moluccan culture and identity. Chapter Two was devoted to the religious context. As pointed out, the churches, liturgy, services, culture and music of the *Gereja Protestant Maluku* are part of the background against which the theological innovation of traditional church music is set. Through the image of the religious layers of the *spekkoek* I demonstrated how Moluccan Protestantism is and continues to be built. Chapter Three

depicted UKIM as the actual context in which contextual theology on the Moluccas is being developed. Embedded in the organizational structures and doctrinal basis of the GPM, the history of UKIM, its educational goals, the theologians with their specific focus, and the entanglements in layers of political regimes all forge the setting in which UKIM exists. Grammar made place for the lexicon of the contextual discourse, which consists of the contested terms ‘traditional’, ‘context’, ‘ancestors’, ‘culture’ and ‘ethnic’. Situated in a modern, national, globalized and postcolonial reality, the content and meaning of the contextual practice introduces ‘living context’ as a fundamental theological source besides tradition and scripture. Chapter Four closed the section on the overarching framework of contextual theology. The process of Moluccan theology is based on a theological transformation of cultural forms – Moluccan contexts – that are selected by their accordance with Christian values. I argued that contextual theology enables the preservation of a Moluccan sense of self through the construction of a ‘new old’; a sentiment of Moluccanness that affirms the ethnic community in modern society. The implementation of contextual theology was articulated through the image of the spiral: a top-down and bottom-up approach are constantly combined, although UKIM stirs the motion and determines the direction. I stated that a gap between theology and lived religion originates when the congregational context of traditional Calvinist worldviews and the historical process of natural, automatic contextualization are ignored or disapproved.

Chapter Five zoomed in on the central theme of this research – the theological idea of traditional church music. Chris Tamaela’s background, musical products, dissertation, vision, and lessons led to his central contribution: music as the heart of theology. Chapter Six served to describe Moluccan traditional music. Musicological features were named and the stories of five traditional music groups were presented. I identified the process of naturalization, ancestral transmission, and use over a long period of time as authenticating traditional music as part of Moluccan identity. This musical feeling of Moluccanness is the reason for the wish of maintaining, preserving and developing traditional music. In the project of preservation, traditional music moves from its original *adat* context to other public, political and religious contexts. Chapter Seven focused on the theological transposition of traditional music to the Moluccan church. Firstly, I conceptualized the *suling* as a culture-theology bridge, forming part of both practical (or natural) and theological contextualization. The practice of the ethnic service was delineated, with clothes and language being the most used elements. Consequently, I theoretically constructed the contextual process of ethnic worship as heritage

formation. As I pointed out, the terms tradition, contextualization and preservation are implicated in the discursive network of the heritagization of culture and Christianity. Language and music were discussed in more detail. I argued that practical limitations as well as the historic encounter of semiotic ideologies account for music being one of the least developed ethnic elements. The implementation of the ethnic service and traditional church music is effectuated by an ensemble of understanding, knowledge, capability, creativity, quality and context concerning the idea-to-practice process executed by pastors and their *majelis* teams. The majority of the congregants appreciates the ethnic service on a superficial level. Conversely, criticism is related to perceptions on bad quality, *adat* relations, confusion over the term *etnis*, and unrespectful appropriation. Opinions on traditional church music are strongly linked to preferences of accompanying instruments and songbooks. I asserted that most Moluccan church members enjoy traditional church music out of a feeling of the importance of preservation rather than theological contextualization.

Argument

The colonial encounter between Dutch-Calvinist and Moluccan semiotic ideologies resulted in a hybrid representational economy that underlies current religious and cultural attitudes towards the ancestors. Moluccan Christians generally do not theologize a deep relation between culture and religion on the basis of contextual theology, but acknowledge the idea through a discursive regime of preservation and heritage. Nevertheless, the reality of the cultural importance of the ancestors in the lives of Moluccans indicates the centuries-long practical, automatic contextualization of culture in Moluccan Christianity. I used the ritual of *cuci negeri* as an analytical illustration on how the spaces of religion and culture are theologically separated because they are practically related. I demonstrated how the implementation of traditional church music, as part of the whole of contextual theology, depends on a distance between theological innovation and ritual context. In places where the seemingly oppositional meanings of ‘traditional’ – in the sense of old Calvinist theology contrary to contextual theology, and the Moluccan traditional as source of contextualization – are naturally and intrinsically linked to each other, a dissonance between idea and practice is apparent. The ethnic service has the potential to bring the contextual idea of traditional church music into practice when it catches the flexibility of the traditional. Attending to context in the broadest sense, it can arouse the sense of Moluccanness by working from the entanglements of traditional music, Moluccan culture and Moluccan Christianity, with the ancestors as mediators.

Academic contributions

This thesis contributes to the academic field of the anthropology of World Christianity by studying musical-religious practices and attitudes in the Moluccan Protestant church. On the basis of the theological idea of traditional church music, the research can be seen as an, what I call, ‘anthropology of theology’ about the relation between Christianity and Moluccan culture. I studied theology as a socio-cultural phenomenon which informs Moluccan Christian culture. Embedded in the overarching field of Third World Theology, the meaning, process and implementation of Moluccan contextual theology were analyzed to understand a specific musical-theological idea in interrelation with religious practice in the Moluccan Protestant church. Music constituted the lens through which religion was looked at and formed the central topic within the broader strand of Moluccan theology. To prompt interdisciplinary academic dialogue and to emphasize the conceptual similarities between contextual theology and material religion, I coined the term ‘material theology’. Moreover, to grasp the theological transposition of traditional music to the church, this thesis provided detailed musicological information on Moluccan music. Attending to a history of hybridization, I introduced ‘the traditional’ to characterize the process by which past and present, local and global, and ethnic and modern musical traditions become regarded as traditional Moluccan music. The traditional unhinges the opposition between ‘tradition’ and ‘modern’, encapsulating their entanglements in the construction of a real sensation of a sense of self – Moluccanness.

This thesis also provokes new questions which could possibly stir directions for future research. Since Moluccan music and Moluccan theology continue to develop, the interrelation between theological ideas and church practice about traditional church music would need revisiting in a few years, especially because the ethnic service has been established highly recently. Moreover, this study demonstrates the central position of musical preferences that shape the Moluccan context in which traditional church music is theologically implemented. It therefore would be fruitful to analyze the role of religious song texts and their accompanying music in the formation of Moluccan religious identity. Lastly, while this research only focuses on Moluccan Christians in the Central Moluccas, the unique relation with the Moluccan diaspora in the Netherlands makes a comparative study alluring.

The transformation and reconstruction of traditional music in its transposition to the Moluccan Protestant church is a development of contextual theology. Within the ethnic

service traditional church music can express a Moluccan experience of believing by evoking the sensation of Moluccanness. The theological idea of traditional church music is fully brought into practice by resonances between conceptualizations of key terms in the contextual discourse, through linkages among people involved in the idea-to-practice process who all have close connections to a diversity of societal contexts on the ground. It is in the tension between openness and closedness, in the controlled but not imposed allowing of culture in church, that I state that the crux in the contextualization of Moluccan church music is the traditional. The Moluccan traditional presupposes continuous openness and transformation while authenticating real Moluccanness through the authorization of ancestral transmission. In the same light, contextual theology is the conscious theological acknowledgement and anticipation of continuous contextualization which expresses and evokes a Moluccan experience of believing. In the entanglements between Moluccan culture and Christianity through the Christian Moluccan ancestors, traditional Moluccan tunes and church music continue contextualizing and transforming.

Glossary

Acara adat	Adat ceremonies
Adat	The customary usage which has been handed down by the ancestors and which is passed on from generation to generation
Adat-istiadat	The way of life of the ancestors
Agama Ambon	Ambonese form of Christianity
Agama asli	Indigenous religion
Agama Nunusaku	Pre-Christian Moluccan indigenous religion
Agama suku	Ethnic religion
Akapeti	Bamboo xylophone, traditional instrument
Ale rasa beta rasa	You feel I feel, Moluccan saying
Alifuru	First humans, tribes of the Seram inlands
Alune	Indigenous language on Seram
Ambitus	Tonal range
Angkat lagi	Lift, raise
Anyaman	Type of rattan
Aru	Ethnic group in The Moluccas
Ba meti	Condition when the sea retreats and people can find many fish in the little pools
Bahasa daerah	Language of the region
Bahasa tanah	Indigenous language
Baileo	Fundamental place of adat where village leaders assemble and rituals take place

Baji	Wedges used to tune the tifa drum
Baju cele	Typical blouse with blocked motive, mostly red and white
Bambu goyang	Harmonic instrument made of two pieces of bamboo, traditional instrument
Bambu gesek	Similar to the toleng-toleng, but horizontal instead of vertical. The body has notches which are scraped over with a stick. Traditional instrument
Basudara	Brothers and sisters, brotherhood
Batu pamali/batu meja	Altar or offering stone
Bengkel	Garage, workshop
Bunyi tabuka dan bunyi tatutup	Open and closed sound, two techniques of hitting the tifa drum
Cakalele	War dance, originally performed in preparation of war or headhunting
Colo-colo	Sauce that goes with a fish dish
Contrafact	Composition method whereby the melody of an original song is taken and a new text is composed
Cuci negeri	Ritual of cleaning the village
Daerah	Region
Dasar	Basic rhythm when playing the tifa
Digunakan sejak dulu	Used since a long time ago
Dikikis	Scraped off
Dua Sahabat Lama	Two Old Friends, GPM songbook

Etnik	Ethnic
Firman Tuhan	Word of God
Gaba-gaba	Drumming sticks made of sago
Gaba-gaba dance	Dance with four bamboo posts
Gamelan	Traditional Javanese instrument
Gandong	Brotherhood
Gereja Orang Basudara	The church of brotherhood, the GPM
Gereja Protestan Maluku	GPM church
Harga kawin	Bride price
Ibadah etnis	Ethnic church service
Ikat kepala	Red headband or red cloth, symbol of Alifuru people
Injil dan Adat	Gospel and Culture
Injil dan Kebudayaan	Conference 'Gospel and Culture'
Irama tifa	Tifa rhythm
Jiwa	Soul
Juk	Moluccan name of the ukulele
Kain gandong	Ritualistic traditional white cloth which symbolizes brotherhood
Kain pikul	Black ribbon that female majelis wear diagonally over the shoulder
Kamboti	Traditional offering basket in church
Kantoria	Church choir leading the congregation
Kapata	Traditional singing/speaking style
Kapitan	Captain of warfare

Katreji	Originally a farmers' dance which comes from Portugal and is danced in male-female pairs
Kebaya	Traditional costumes
Keku hatu	Beat the stone, traditional instrument
Kembangkan	Develop
Kepala adat	Authoritative figure in all adat matters
Kepala soa	Assistant of the raja
Kerja sama	People combine their skills, energy and resources to achieve certain goals that exceed the capacities of individuals, adat value
Kerusuhan	'Unrest', 'riot', the social religious conflict from 1999 – 2001
Ketua majelis jemaat	Chair pastor in a congregation
Kewang	Village police
Kidung Jemaat	Songs of the Congregation, GPM songbook
Kita pun budaya	We have culture
Kita semua saudara	We are all brothers and sisters
Klasis	Organizational leadership over the congregations in a certain region
Klong	Bamboo tube zither with one string, traditional instrument
Konteks	Context
Kontekstualisator	Contextualizer
Kota music dunia	Music city of the world

Kroncong	Traditional music style that refers to the string sound that the instruments make
Kulibia	Moluccan name of the tahuri (tahuri is the ethnic name from Seram)
Kurang cocok	Not or less fitting
Kurang pas	Not or less fitting
Lagu	Song
Lagu-lagu	Popular traditional songs
Lagu-lagu daerah	Traditional music connected to urban trends and technologies
Lakare	Type of rattan
Lease	Term that signifies the island group of Saparua, Haruku and Nusa Laut
Loang	Tifa drum not yet covered by the membrane
Luar biasa	Extraordinary
Lubang	Hole
Majelis	Church council
Makan patita	Communal dinner whereby everyone shares her own-made food, acara adat
Maku maku	Circle dance
Malayu	Malay language, Ambonese dialect
Maluku	The Moluccas
Mazmur dan Tahlil	Psalms and Hymns, GPM songbook
Marakes	Samba balls made of bamboo, traditional instrument
Marinyo	Village messenger

Masohi	People combine their skills, energy and resources to achieve certain goals that exceed the capacities of individuals, adat value
Masuk minta/kawin minta	A boy asks a girl to marry him, acara adat
Mata air	Part of the ritual of the cuci negeri
Mata ina	Married women who play an important role in the ritual cuci negeri
Mazmur dan Nyanyian Rohani	Psalms and Spiritual Songs, GPM songbook
Melestarikan	Preserve
Mempertahankan	Maintain
Mena-Muria	Battle cry
Menghidupkan	Revive
Meninggal dunia	Leave this world, to pass away
Mewariskan	Pass down, transmit
Negeri adat	Villages that still protect the traditional adat system
Not bunga	Florid note
Nusa Ina	Mother-island Seram
Nyanyian GPM	GPM Songs, GPM songbook
Nyanyiankanlah Kidung Baru	Sing the New Song, GPM songbook
Orang tua tua	Ancestors
Paduan suara	Vocal groups performing in church
Pak	Sir
Pakaian adat	Traditional adat clothing

Panas pela	Heating of the pela between villages, acara adat
Papeda	Porridge, traditional food made from sago
Parang	Machete
Pas	Exact
Pata cengkeh	Dance with cloves and nutmeg
Patalima	Ethnic group, 'five'
Patasiwa	Ethnic group, 'nine'
Pela	Indigenous cultural symbol that refers to a social-metaphysical alliance between two or three villages
Pelengkap Kidung Jemaat	Supplement to Community Songs, GPM songbook
Pelog & Slendro	Javanese pentatonic scales
Pendeta	Pastor
Perahu	Traditional Moluccan boat
Pesan tobat	'Message to repentance', the reformation of the GPM in 1960
Piring natzar	White offering plate with a white cloth on top under which lie coins
Pong-pong	Hollow stomping tube made of bamboo, traditional instrument
Potong	Cut rhythm when playing the tifa
Potong di kuku rasa di daging	Cut in the nail, feel in the flesh, Moluccan saying
Prokantor	Song leader in the church service

Puji Tuhan	Praise the Lord/God
Raja	Village king
Rame rame	Situation of happiness and exuberance
Rebana	Frame drum, traditional instrument
Republik Maluku Selatan	Republic of the South Moluccas
Rofol	Moluccan style of playing the ukulele, energetic and loud
Rumah tua	Ancestral/parental home
Sago	Product from the sago palm tree
Saling berbagi	Sharing with and giving to each other, adat value
Saneri negeri	Village council
Sanggar	Creative workshop
Sasi	Adat measures to protect natural ecological regeneration through a temporary prohibition
Saudara	Siblings, brothers and sisters
Sawat & Hadrat dance	Traditional dance accompanied by the rebana
Sesuai dengan konteks	In accordance with context
Siri pinang	Traditional type of food that people eat to symbolically show they are saudara
Sopi	Traditional alcoholic drink
Sosialisasi	Socialization
Spekkoek	Moluccan sweet delicacy with many layers
Sukacita	Happy

Suling	Horizontal bamboo flute, traditional church instrument
Syahdu	Serene, solemn
Syalom	Church greeting at the beginning of worship
Tabaos	The proclaiming of news
Tahuri	Conch shell, traditional instrument
Takatak bulu	Bamboo clapper, traditional instrument
Taman budaya	Culture gardens, places for the preservation, development and education of the traditional cultures of Indonesia
Tari lenso	Handkerchief dance
Tari obor	Torch dance
Tari tifa	Tifa dance
Tari tifar mayang	Dance with a stick of calabash fruit
Tempat garam	Culture practice associated with the salt container
Tete manis	Sweet grandfather, Moluccan name for Jesus
Tete-nene-moyang	Ancestors
Tidak boleh hilang	Cannot disappear
Tifa	Drum, most common, widespread traditional instrument
Tifa badiri	Standing drum
Tifa dasar	Tifa that plays the basic rhythm
Tifa jalan	Tifa that plays the basic rhythm
Tifa jikr	Bass drum

Tifa potong	Tifa that plays the melody, beautifying the whole
Tifa tasa	Tifa that indicates the measure
Toleng-toleng	Bamboo slit drum, traditional instrument
Tolong menolong	Mutual help, adat value
Totobuang	Melodic instrument made of bronze gongs, traditional instrument
Tuhan	Lord
Tunas	Sunday school church service
Turun temurun	Hereditary, passed on from the ancestors
Upu Lanite	The name of the highest God in the agama Nunusaku
Upu Lanite Kai Tapele	The calling of God in native language
Usi	Madam
Warisan	Legacy, heritage
Wemale	Indigenous language on Seram

Ringkasan

Penelitian ini mempelajari tentang kontekstualisasi musik gereja. Musik (gereja) Maluku digunakan sebagai suatu perspektif atau lensa untuk memperoleh gambaran yang mendalam mengenai identitas budaya dan praktek keagamaan. Titik berangkatnya adalah dari gagasan Christian Izaac Tamaela mengenai transposisi musik tradisional Maluku menjadi musik Gereja Protestan Maluku (GPM). Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk memahami hubungan antara teologi kontekstual dengan sikap dan praktek beragama di Maluku. Sebagai salah satu bahan berteologi, musik dapat memunculkan pertanyaan berkaitan dengan pengalaman-pengalaman beragama yang merupakan fenomena penting dalam proses kontekstualisasi. Oleh karena itu, pertanyaan penelitian yang diajukan adalah bagaimana musik tradisional sebagaimana yang digunakan dalam kontekstualisasi teologi dapat dihubungkan dengan kehidupan beragama. Untuk menguji interpretasi dan legitimasi teologis terhadap musik tradisional Maluku, maka sangatlah penting untuk menganalisis makna ungkapan ‘tradisional’, menafsirkan musik Maluku, dan mengkarakterisasikan wacana kontekstualisasi teologi dalam hubungan dengan sikap dan praktek beragama. Penelitian ini menjajaki proses transformasi wacana dari ‘gagasan ke praktek’ di antara para teolog, dosen dan mahasiswa di Universitas Kristen Indonesia Maluku (UKIM), para pendeta GPM, Anggota Majelis Pekerja Harian Sinode GPM, para majelis dan anggota jemaat GPM, serta para praktisi musik di Maluku.

Dalam meneliti dan menyingkap kesesuaian dan ketidaksesuaian antara teologi dan kehidupan beragama di Maluku maka ada beberapa konsep penting yang dipelajari, yaitu: warisan, tradisi, wacana, dan semiotika idiologi. Bagaimana pun untuk memahami gagasan teologis dari musik tradisional gereja Maluku dalam hubungan dengan pengertiannya pada kehidupan bergereja, dan transformasi dari gagasan kepada praktek secara konseptual, saya memperkenalkan ungkapan ‘Molucanness’ (ke-Maluku-an) dan ‘*the tradisional*’. Pertama, proses kontekstualisasi dilakukan melalui seleksi tradisi (musikal) adat, kemudian ditransformasi, dan diproduksi untuk ditransposisikan ke gereja Maluku. Sehubungan dengan suatu kebaruan, perubahan dari konteks modern di dalam dunia globalisasi, mereka mengkonstruksikan tradisi-tradisi secara autentik agar selalu diingat untuk menandai identitas Maluku melalui ikatan dengan leluhur. Dengan demikian, teologi Maluku melibatkan konstruksi rasa ke-Maluku-an yang dinetralkan dan bisa diaplikasikan secara luas karena dianggap sebagai masa lalu yang hilang, untuk dilindungi dan dilestarikan oleh

masyarakatnya sebagai warisan Maluku. Kedua, politik, agama, musik, dan teologi yang dihidupkan kembali dengan berfokus pada etnis ke-Maluku-an, di satu sisi, merefleksikan kemungkinan adanya keterbukaan dan penggabungan sementara semua unsur tersebut, namun pada sisi yang lain, semuanya dibatasi oleh praktik yang diatur oleh aturan. Saya mengerjakan semuanya di dalam tradisi Maluku untuk menganalisis dengan menggunakan pendekatan kontekstual dan musik gereja tradisional yang juga menekankan pada apa yang telah mereka konstruksikan dari persilangan semua unsur secara berkualitas. Konsep *the traditional* Maluku dalam kajian ini, bukan sekedar pada suatu tindakan konkret di masa lalu, lebih daripada itu, menunjuk pada proses historis yang membuat sesuatu tetap hidup secara tradisional di Maluku. Tradisional merupakan sebuah kata sifat yang dapat didefinisikan dengan menyatukan proses di mana sebuah bentukan budaya menjadi terlihat sebagai yang selalu traditional.

Bab satu sampai tiga dari kajian ini membahas mengenai tata bahasa di mana wacana kontekstual Maluku ada. Pertama, konteks budaya dan sejarah digambarkan. Sebagaimana sebuah tradisi yang diturunkan melalui para leluhur, maka adat membentuk inti dari budaya Maluku dan menjadi nilai sentra dalam masyarakat Maluku secara kolektif. Ritual adat yang menggunakan pakaian khusus, ansambel musik, tarian dan bahasa tradisional membentuk konteks asli yang menjadi inspirasi bagi para teolog menggarap teologi kontekstual di Maluku. Sementara itu, identitas masyarakat Maluku kontemporer turut diwarnai dengan pengalaman-pengalaman historis di dalam sejarah misi di era kolonial, kemudian sejarah politik kebangsaan di era pasca kemerdekaan Indonesia, evolusi menjadi Gereja Protestan Maluku dalam sejarah Indonesia, dan konflik agama di Maluku yang terjadi dua puluh tahun lalu. Bab Dua menjelaskan konteks agama. Analisis dilakukan pada GPM mencakup konteks jemaat-jemaat, pelayanan, liturgi, budaya dan praktek musik gereja sebagai bagian dari inovasi teologi musik gereja tradisional. Melalui gambaran lapisan agama dari Gereja Protestan Maluku diilustrasikan dibangun dan terus berlanjut. Bab Tiga menggambarkan Universitas Kristen Indonesia Maluku (UKIM) sebagai tempat mengembangkan proses berteologi kontekstual di Maluku secara aktual. Analisis dilakukan terhadap struktur organisasi UKIM, sejarah UKIM, peran UKIM sebagai ‘dapur’ atau basis dari ajaran GPM, para teolog yang fokus pada kajian teologi kontekstual, musik gereja, sejarah dan misi gereja, serta para pemimpin UKIM. Di samping itu, analisis terhadap tata bahasa yang menjadi leksikon wacana kontekstual, seperti ungkapan ‘tradisional’, ‘konteks’, ‘leluhur’, ‘budaya’ dan ‘etnis’. Dalam konteks modern, perlu juga menjelaskan mengenai

ungkapan nasional, global, postkolonial, pengalaman dan konteks kehidupan masyarakat sebagai sumber berteologi selain tradisi dan kitab suci. Bab Empat adalah kajian yang menutup pembahasan kerangka kerja menyeluruh dari teologi kontekstual. Proses teologi kontekstual di Maluku didasarkan pada transformasi teologis dari bentuk-bentuk budaya – konteks Maluku – yang dipilih sesuai dengan nilai-nilai Kristen. Teologi kontekstual dapat memungkinkan terjadinya pelestarian rasa ke-Maluku-an melalui konstruks dari sesuatu yang ‘baru lama’, suatu sentimen ke-Maluku-an untuk mempertahankan etnisnya di dalam realitas masyarakat modern. Implementasi teologi kontekstual dapat diartikulasikan melalui sebuah lingkaran spiral: pendekatan dari atas ke bawah, dan dari bawah ke atas yang terus digabungkan, di mana arah dan gerakan itu ditentukan oleh UKIM. Ada pula kesenjangan antara teologi dan agama yang dihidupi karena konteks jemaat dan sudut pandang Calvinis secara tradisional dengan sejarah kontekstualisasi secara alami dan simultan yang diabaikan atau tidak disetujui.

Bab Lima merupakan perluasan dari tema utama penelitian ini – mengenai gagasan teologi musik gereja tradisional. Dalam bab ini dibahas latar belakang seorang teolog musik gereja, Christian Izaac Tamaela, karya-karya musiknya, disertasi doktoral, visi dan berbagai pengalaman dan pelajaran musik yang memberikan kontribusi utamanya pada musik sebagai jantung teologi. Bab Enam membahas mengenai musik tradisional Maluku. Dalam bab ini disajikan berbagai kisah musikologis dan cerita dari lima kelompok musik tradisional di Maluku. Dijelaskan pula mengenai proses naturalisasi, transmisi leluhur, dan proses mengotentifikasi musik tradisional sebagai bagian dari identitas Maluku yang memerlukan waktu yang panjang. Rasa musikalitas ke-Maluku-an merupakan alasan untuk mempertahankan, melestarikan dan mengembangkan musik tradisional. Dalam proses pelestarian itu, musik tradisional bergerak dari konteks adat yang asli ke konteks publik, politik, agama, dan lainnya. Bab Tujuh berfokus pada transposisi teologi dari musik tradisional ke gereja Maluku. Pertama, instrument musik suling yang dikonseptualisasi sebagai jembatan antara budaya dan teologi, sebagai bagian dari kontekstualisasi praktis (atau alami) dan teologis. Elemen yang banyak digunakan dalam proses kontekstualisasi berasal dari ritual etnik seperti pakaian dan bahasa daerah. Proses kontekstual dari ibadah etnis secara teoritis dibangun sebagai pembentukan warisan. Istilah tradisi, kontekstualisasi dan pelestarian membentuk jaringan diskursus dalam pewarisan budaya dan agama Kristen. Pembahasan lebih detail mengenai bahasa dan musik, karena keterbatasan serta perjumpaan historis antara idiologi semiotik dengan musik menjadi salah satu unsur yang kurang berkembang.

Implementasi pelayanan musik gereja tradisional dan etnis dipengaruhi oleh penyatuan pemahaman, pengetahuan, kemampuan, kreativitas, kualitas dan konteks dari gagasan ke praktek yang dilakukan oleh para pendeta dan majelis jemaat. Mayoritas jemaat mengapresiasi pelayanan etnik pada level yang dangkal. Sebaliknya, kritik berkaitan dengan persepsi dari kualitas yang buruk terhadap adat, istilah etnis yang membingungkan, dan tidak dihargai secara layak. Pendapat mengenai musik gereja tradisional berkaitan erat dengan preferensi instrumen dan buku nyanyian jemaat yang dimiliki oleh gereja. Sebagian besar anggota GPM menikmati musik gereja tradisional dan meraksakan pentingnya pelestarian budaya tidak sebatas pada kontekstualisasi teologi.

Leluhur merupakan unsur penting dari semua aspek yang terjawab dalam pertanyaan penelitian. Perjumpaan dalam semiotic idiologi antara Belanda-Calvinis dan Maluku menghasilkan sebuah hibridasi ekonomis representatif yang mendasari sikap keagamaan dan budaya terhadap leluhur di masa kini. Pada umumnya, orang-orang Kristen Maluku tidak berteologi tentang hubungan yang dalam antara agama dan budaya pada basis teologi kontekstual, tetapi mengetahuinya melalui proses pewarisan dan pelestarian yang terwacana. Walau demikian, dari kenyataan pentingnya leluhur dalam kehidupan orang-orang Maluku menunjukkan bahwa kontekstualisasi budaya terus berlangsung secara praktik dan simultan selama berabad-abad dalam Kekristenan di Maluku. Dalam analisis, ritual cuci negeri digunakan sebagai sebuah contoh bagaimana ruang-ruang agama dan budaya dipisahkan secara teologis kendati dalam prakteknya saling terkait. Menjadi jelas pula bagaimana musik gereja tradisional digunakan sebagai bagian dari keseluruhan proses berteologi kontekstual sangat bergantung pada jarak antara inovasi teologis dengan konteks ritual. Di tempat-tempat di mana makna ‘tradisional’ tampak berlawanan – dalam arti teologi Calvinis lama dengan teologi kontekstual, dan *the* tradisional Maluku sebagai sumber kontekstualisasi – yang sesungguhnya secara alami dan intrinsik saling terkait satu dengan yang lain, disonansi antara ide dan praktik jelas terlihat. Ibadah etnis berpotensi untuk mewujudkan ide kontekstualisasi musik gereja tradisional ketika menangkap fleksibilitas dari *the* tradisional. Pemaknaan konteks secara luas dapat membangkitkan rasa ke-Maluku-an yang dimulai dari keterikatan pada musik tradisional Maluku, budaya Maluku, Kristen Maluku, dengan leluhur sebagai mediator.

Penelitian ini memberikan kontribusi akademik pada bidang antropologi dari Dunia Kekristenan dengan mempelajari berbagai praktek dan tindakan dalam musik agama dari Gereja Protestan Maluku. Fokus utamanya adalah hubungan antara agama Kristen dan budaya

Maluku berdasarkan ide teologi dari musik gereja tradisional, sehingga penelitian ini membentuk suatu daya pendorong antropologi teologis. Teologis dipelajari sebagai suatu fenomena sosial-budaya yang mengkomunikasikan budaya Kristen Maluku. Dalam bidang Teologi Dunia Ketiga secara menyeluruh, analisis terhadap proses, makna dan implementasi teologi kontekstual di Maluku bertujuan untuk memahami gagasan teologis-musikal dalam kaitannya dengan praktek keagamaan di Gereja Protestan Maluku. Musik menjadi sebuah lensa yang digunakan untuk mempelajari mengenai agama dan membentuk sebuah topik utama mengenai proses teologi Maluku yang lebih luas. Dalam kajian ini, saya menciptakan sebuah istilah ‘material teologi’ untuk mendorong dialog akademis interdisipliner dan menegaskan persamaan konseptual antara teologi kontekstual dan agama material. Selain itu, penelitian ini memberikan informasi terperinci mengenai musik Maluku secara musikologis untuk memahami transposisi teologis dari musik tradisional kepada musik gereja. Dengan menggunakan konsep sejarah hibridasi, saya memperkenalkan mengenai ‘*the tradisional*’ untuk menandai proses di mana masa lalu dan sekarang, musik tradisi etnik dan modern dianggap sebagai musik tradisional Maluku. Ungkapan *the tradisional* merangkum keterkaitan sekaligus melemahkan pertentangan antara tradisi dan modern dalam membangun sebuah rasa diri – ke-Maluku-an.

Transposisi dari musik tradisional ke Gereja Protestan Maluku dengan transformasinya adalah suatu perkembangan di dalam teologi kontekstual. Di dalam ibadah etnis, musik gereja tradisional mengungkapkan pengalaman sebagai orang Maluku, kepercayaan diri dan rasa ke-Maluku-an. Secara praktis, gagasan teologis dari musik gereja tradisional dipengaruhi oleh resonansi konseptualisasi istilah-istilah utama di dalam wacana kontekstual dari orang-orang yang terlibat dalam proses mewujudkan gagasan menjadi praktek yang saling terkait dengan keberagaman konteks masyarakat yang paling dasar. Menurut saya, *the tradisional* adalah inti dari kontekstualisasi musik gereja Maluku di tengah ketegangan antara keterbukaan dan tertutupan atau pada konteks pengontrolan budaya di dalam gereja. *The tradisional* Maluku mengendalikan keterbukaan dan transformasi secara berkelanjutan sambil tetap mengotentifikasi ke-Maluku-an secara riil melalui jaringan leluhur yang dihormati. Dalam hal yang sama, teologi kontekstual merupakan suatu pengakuan teologis yang sadar dan antisipatif terhadap proses kontekstualisasi secara berkelanjutan untuk mengungkapkan dan menghidupkan pengalaman iman orang-orang Maluku. Lagu-lagu tradisional dan musik

gereja terus mengkontesktualisasi dan mentransformasi keteritakan antara budaya Maluku dan Kekristenan melalui leluhur dari orang Kristen Maluku.

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Appendix

*1. Order of the Sunday worship service*¹⁰⁸³

Preparation

1. Possibility of teaching the congregation new hymns, led by the song leader and choir
2. Announcements, led by the church council, which include all the income and expenses of the church, and also the donations by certain families
3. Church bell rings three times, congregation stands up
4. A procession hymn

Gathering

1. Votum and Greeting
2. Introductory verse (guided by a pre-selected text)
3. Hymn (congregation is seated)

Confession of sin, Declaration of Pardon, Guide for the New Life

1. Confession of sin, which is a dialogue between the pastor and the congregation
2. Declaration of Pardon, led by the pastor
3. An optional hymn related to the former point
4. Guide for the New Life, led by the pastor (congregation stands)
5. Hymn (congregation is seated)

Service of the Word

1. Prayer for Illumination, led by elder
2. The Reading of the Word, by one or two members of the congregation
3. Response hymn
 - a. *Hallelujah* three times in ordinary Sunday worship
 - b. *Hosanna* three times on Passion Sundays
 - c. *Maranatha* three times on Advent Sundays
4. Sermon
5. Silence

¹⁰⁸³ Based on *Contextualization of Music and Liturgy in the Moluccan Church* (2015), by Chris Tamaela.

Congregational Response

1. The Affirmation of Faith (The Apostle's Creed or Nicene Creed, congregation stands)¹⁰⁸⁴
2. Special music by choir
3. Offering, accompanied by instrumental music or a hymn
4. An offering prayer, led by the deacon
5. Intercession prayer, led by the minister
6. The Lord's Prayer (everyone says it together)¹⁰⁸⁵
7. Hymn (congregation stands)

Sending Forth and Blessing

1. Dismissal with blessing
2. Hymn

2. Confession of Faith/Pengakuan Iman Rasuli

Aku percaya kepada Allah Bapa yang mahakuasa,

Khalik langit dan bumi.

Dan kepada Yesus Kristus,

Anaknya yang tunggal, Tuhan kita.

Yang dikandung dari pada Roh Kudus,

lahir dari anak dara Maria,

Yang menderita dibawah pemerintahan Pontius Pilatus,

disalibkan, mati dan dikuburkan,

turun kedalam kerajaan maut.

Pada hari yang ketiga bangkit pula

dari antara orang mati,

Naik ke sorga, duduk disebelah kanan Allah,

Bapa yang mahakuasa,

Dan akan datang dari sana untuk menghakimi

orang yang hidup dan mati.

Aku percaya kepada Roh Kudus;

Gereja yang kudus dan am;

¹⁰⁸⁴ See appendix 2.

¹⁰⁸⁵ See appendix 3.

Persekutuan orang kudus;

Pengampunan dosa;

Kebangkitan daging,

Dan hidup yang kekal.

Amin

3. Our Father Prayer/Doa Bapa Kami

Bapa kami yang di sorga,

Dikuduskanlah namaMu,

Datanglah KerjaanMu, jadilah kehendakMu di bumi
seperti di sorga.

Berikanlah kami pada hari ini

Makanan kami yang secukupnya

Dan ampunilah kami akan kesalahan kami,

Seperti kami juga mengampuni

Orang yang bersalah kepada kami;

Dan janganlah membawa kami kedalam pencobaan,

Tetapi lepaskanlah kami dari pada yang jahat.

Karena Engkau adalah yang empunya Kerajaan dan kuasa

Dan kemuliaan sampai selama-lamanya. Amin.

4. Nyanyian GPM

The first song in the NJGPM is made by Chris Tamaela, to be used in the liturgical part of the service 'Gathering before God', and is called *Akang Manis Lawang*. The meter and base tone are given, and on top is stated that the Moluccan *tifa* rhythm can accompany this song. The hymn is written in cipher notation and in the Moluccan dialect. The song is about being happy to be together and to praise the *tete manis*, which is a local way to refer to the ancestors, and here in a contextual way referring to Jesus. The *tifa* is hit and there is a situation of happiness and exuberance; *rame rame*. It is a diatonic song and the lyrics are based on *Mazmur*: 150. The language, rhythm and words referring to local wisdom make this a typical Moluccan church song, as well as the 'gliding down', which means that with the voice one smoothly glides down from one tone to the other.

An example of a pentatonic song is number 19, *Mea Pese Eko*, also written by Chris Tamaela. This song does not use the ciphers 4 and 7, which in this case, as the base tone is a (do = a), are the d and g. Another example is number 18 by Agustinus C.W. Gaspersz, *Mea Somba*

Upu Yesus, which only uses the ciphers 1 to 5, not using c and d as do = e. A third example is number 43, *Dari Lubuk Hatiku*, with lyrics by Edgard J. de Lima and music by Agustinus C.W. Gaspersz. Here the numbers 4 and 7 are not used, which are the g and c as do = d. This song is about shouting to Jesus from one's heart, asking him to liberate one from a problem.

A typical theme based on values of Moluccan culture is to be seen in number 310, *Satu Tangan Tak Kuat*, with lyrics by Wim Davidsz and music by Agustinus C.W. Gaspersz. It says that one hand is not strong, meaning that people have to work together to achieve their goal, which reflects Moluccan values of collectivity.

Number 57, *Tuhan Kasihani Kami*, has traditional church lyrics and Branckly E. Picanussa made the music. It is pentatonic, not using number 4 and 7 which here means g and c as do = d. Moluccan musicological elements can be recognized, such as gliding down and 'drone', a persisting tone in the composition.¹⁰⁸⁶

¹⁰⁸⁶ Interview with Branckly Egbert Picanussa.

43. DARI LUBUK HATIKU

do = d 4 ketuk

0 1 2 3 5 6 1 | 6' 6 5 3 1 2 3 | 3' 6 1

1. Da - ri lu - buk ha - ti - ku, Ye - sus a - ku ber - se - ru be - rat

2. Su - jud ku me - ne - nga - dah, Ye - sus yang ma - ha mu - rah dengan

6 5 3 5 | 6' 6 5 3 1 3 2 | 2 . . 0 ||

ni - an be - ban - ku, ya Tu - han, le - pas - kan - lah.

sungguh ku min - ta, ya Tu - han, le - pas - kan - lah.

Lirik : Edgard J. de Lima
Lagu : Agust C. W. Gaspersz

Figure 50 - Dari Lubuk Hatiku (NJGPM, nr. 43)

310. SATU TANGAN TAK KUAT

do = d 4 ketuk

0 5 1 3 | 5 . 3 6 5 3 1 | 2 . 0 5 7 2 | 4 . 6

1. Sa - tu ta - ngan tak ku - at ber - ju - ang, du - a ta - ngan tak

2. Sa - tu mu - lut tak ku - at ta - ba - os, du - a mu - lut tak

6 6 7 6 | 5 . 0 3 3 4 | 5 5 6 5 . 1 | 1 6

ku - at ber - ju - ang bi - la ki - ta se - mua ber - ju - ang hasil pas -

ku - at ta - ba - os bi - la ki - ta se - mua ta - ba - os o - rang pas -

6 5 6 . 6 | 5 3 1 3 4 2 | 1 7 | 1 . 0 5 5 5 |

ti be - sar, ma - ri ki - ta se - mu - a ber - ju - ang Ha - sil pas -

ti de - ngar, ma - ri ki - ta se - mu - a ta - ba - os Ha - sil pas -

5 2 2 . 0 5 | 5 3 3 0 5 5 | 5 2 2 . 2 1 2 |

ti be - sar, pas - ti be - sar. Ha - sil pas - ti be - sar, pas - ti be -

ti be - sar, pas - ti be - sar. Ha - sil pas - ti be - sar, pas - ti be -

3 . 0 1 1 3 | 5 5 6 5 0 1 | 1 6 6 5 6 0 6 |

sar. Bi - la ki - ta se - mua ber - ju - ang ha - sil pas - ti be - sar, B'ri -

sar. Bi - la ki - ta se - mua ber - ju - ang ha - sil pas - ti be - sar, Sak -

5 1 7 7 | 1 . ||

ta - kan na - ma - Nya.

si - kan fir - man - Nya.

Lirik : Wim. Davidsz, Juni 2005
Lagu : Agust C. W. Gaspersz, Juni 2005

Figure 51 - Satu Tangan Tak Kuat (NJGPM, nr. 310)

57. TUHAN KASIHANI KAMI

do = d 4 ketuk

Cantoria :

S-T : 0 0 0 0 | 0 0 0 0 | 5 . . . | 5 . . . ||

A-B : 1 . . . | 1 . . . | 1 . . . | 1 . . . ||

Hu -

Solo : Jemaat :

i . i . i | 6 6 1 6 | 5 . 5 . | 5 . . . |

Tu - han ka - sih - an - i ka - mi.

Solo : Jemaat :

6 . 6 . | 6 . 5 5 6 6 | 5 . 3 . | 3 . . . |

Kris - tus ka - sih - an - i ka - mi.

Solo : Jemaat :

3 . 3 . | 3 . 2 1 3 2 | 1 . 1 . | 1 . . . ||

Tu - han ka - sih - an - i ka - mi.

Lirik : Tradisional Gerejawi
Lagu : Branckly E. Picanussa. 2005

Figure 52 - Tuhan Kasihani Kami (NJGPM, nr. 57)

MENGHADAP ALLAH

Puji-pujian dan Pembukaan Ibadah

1. AKANG MANIS LAWANG

do = d 4 ketuk

Irama tifa dendang Maluku

0 3 2 3 4 | 6 5 . 2 3 4 | 5 5 3 6 . 3 | 5 4 . . |

1. A - kang ma - nis la - wang, ka - lo ka - tong sa - mu - a su - ba - kum - pul.

2. A - yo ba - su - da - ra ka - tong sa - mu - a ba - ku gan - deng ra - ngan.

3. A - yo lo - ko leng - so ka - tong ma - na - ri de - ngan su - ka - ri - a.

0 2 2 3 | 5 4 . 5 5 | 5 5 5 5 6 5 4 | 3 . . . |

Ka - tong ma - nya - nyi sa - ma - sa - ma pu - ji Te - te Ma - nis e.

Ka - tong ba - den - dang mu - li - a - kan ka - sih A - ma yang ke - kal.

Ka - tong som - ba - yang, ja - ga hi - dop o - rang ba - su - da - ra e.

0 3 2 3 4 | 6 5 . 2 3 4 | 5 5 3 4 . 5 | 6 . . . |

To - ki ti : fa den - dang, la ra - me - ra - me ang - ka su - a - ra.

To - ki to - leng - to - leng, ti - op ta - hu - ri ang - ka pu - ji - an.

To - ki to - to - bu - ang, deng ti - op su - ling ang - ka syu - kur

Refrain

0 6 7 . 2 | 1 . 6 5 . 10 2 3 4 3 2 | 3 . 5

Ka - tong bar - su ka som - ba te - te Ma - nis.

5 . 10 6 7 . 2 | 1 . 6 5 . 10 2 3 5 3 | 3 |

Ma - nis. Ka - tong bar - su ka som - ba te - te

2 . 1 1 . ||

Ma - nis.

Lirik : Christian Izaac Tamaela, 2010
(Berdasarkan Mazmur 133 : 1, 150 : 1-6)
Lagu : Christian Izaac Tamaela, 2010
(Disesuaikan dengan jiwa irama tifa dendang Maluku)

Figure 53 - Akang Manis Lawang (NJGPM, nr. 1)

19. MAE PESE EKO

do = a 2 ketuk

Kantoria/PS/Solo

Mae pe - se e - ko i - to su - pu Ye - sus.*

Perempuan :

0 1 2 | 3 3 5 3 | 2 1 2 1 | 1 . | 1 0

1. Ka - pa - ta su - pu Ye - sus.**

2. I - ma - ra su - pu Ye - sus.***

3. Ke - ku - ti - ha su - pu Ye - sus.****

Laki-laki :

0 5 5 | 1 1 1 1 | 5 6 | 1 . | 1 0

Ka - pa - ta su - pu Ye - sus.

I - ma - ra su - pu Ye - sus.

Ke - ku - ti - ha su - pu Ye - sus.

Arti Kalimat :
* Mari saudara semua kita sambut Yesus
** Menyanyi sambut Yesus
*** Menari sambut Yesus
**** Pukul tifa sambut Yesus

Lirik : Christian Izaac Tamaela, 2009
Lagu : Christian Izaac Tamaela, 2009

Figure 54 - Mea Pese Eko (NJGPM, nr. 19)

Figure 55 - Mea Somba Upu Yesus (NJGPM, nr. 18)

18. MAE SOMBA UPU YESUS

do = e 4 ketuk

1 1 1 1 1 2 1 | 1 . . 0 | 3 3 3 3 3 4 4 | 3 . . 0 |

Mae som - ba U - pu Ye - sus e Mae i - te som - ba Ye - sus e

5 . 5 5 5 | 5 . . 0 | 3 3 3 2 2 3 2 | 1 . . 0 |

Mae, mae som - ba e Mae som - ba U - pu Ye - sus e

Lirik : Agust C. W. Gaspersz, 2007
Lagu : Agust C. W. Gaspersz, 2007
(dinyanyikan secara kanon oleh laki-laki I dan perempuan II)

5. Curriculum/courses of UKIM

Pendidikan Agama: Religious Education

Pendidikan Kewarganegaraan: Civic Education

Pendidikan Pancasila: Pancasila Education

Bahasa Indonesia: Indonesian

Kewirausahaan: Entrepreneurship

Bahasa Inggris: English

Spiritualitas Kristen: Christian Spirituality

Filsafat Ilmu: Philosophy

Filsafat Barat Timur: East & West Philosophy

Filsafat dan Agama: Philosophy and Religion

Filsafat dan Teologi PAK: Philosophy and Theology of Christian Education

Bahasa Ibrani: Hebrew Language

Bahasa Yunani: Greek

Pengantar Perjanjian Lama: Introduction to the Old Testament

Pengantar Perjanjian Baru: Introduction to the New Testament

Hermeneutik PL: Old Testament Hermeneutics

Hermeneutik PB: New Testament Hermeneutics

Refleksi Teologi: Theological Reflections

Teologi Kontekstual Alkitabiah: Biblical Contextual Theology

Teologi Kontekstual: Contextual Theology

Etika Kristen: Christian Ethics

Teologi Sistematis Etik: Systematic Theology of Ethics

Teologi Sistematis Dogmatika: Dogmatic Systematic Theology

Ekklesiologi: Ecclesiology

Tata Gereja: Church Order

Teologi Agama-Agama: Theology of Religions

Studi Agama-Agama: Study of Religions

Sejarah Agama Kristen: History of Christian Religion

Sejarah Gereja Indonesia: History of the Indonesian Church

Liturgika: Liturgy

Musik Gereja: Church Music

Homiletika: Homiletics

Teologi Pastoral: Pastoral Theology

Pastoral Transformatif: Transformative Pastoral

Teologi Publik: Public Theology

Teologi Feminis: Feminist Theology

Agama dan Perdamaian: Religion and Peace

Teologi Hukum dan Advokasi: Legal Theology and Advocacy

Pengantar Ilmu Teologi: Introduction to Theology

PAK Kepulauan Transformatif: Transformative Christian Education in the Archipelago

PAK Komunitas Iman: Christian Education in the Faith Community

LSPB: Laboratory of Social and Theological Experience

Skripsi: Thesis

Teologi, Komunikasi dan Budaya Populer: Theology, Communication and Popular Culture

Pembangunan Jemaat: Church Development

Manajemen Gereja: Church Management

Studi Pemikiran Teologi Asia dan Afrika: Study of Asian and African Theological Thought

Agama dan Masyarakat Kepulauan: Religion and the Archipelago Society

Antropologi Masyarakat Kepulauan: Anthropology of the Archipelago Society

Psikologi Masyarakat Kepulauan: Psychology of the Island's Society

Metode Penelitian Sosial dan Teologi: Social Research Methods and Theology

KKN – PPM: Practical Learning in Society

6. Kapata-Kapata Rohani, Chris Tamaela

Several examples of spiritual songs created by Chris Tamaela show how traditional music and church music are combined. The song *Haleluya, Puji Tuhan*, Praise the Lord, is based on a traditional melody. The male voice part of the song is derived from the music that accompanies a community dance called *maku-maku*. The song *Toki Gong Sambil Menari, Haleluya*, Beat the Gong While Dancing, Praise the Lord, is a joyful song related to Psalm 150:1-6. Sounds and rhythms of the drums and gongs are imitated with the voice through interlocking vocables like 'taka-taka' and 'dong-dong'. Handclapping, the playing of bamboo percussions and tambourines provide interest to the composition. Some melodic ideas of the song come from a traditional *totobuang* piece.

Translation

Beat the gong while dancing,
play the flute while singing.

Thank God, praise the Lord.
rejoice, halleluiah.

Playing the flute and dancing,
singing thanks to God.

To make a joyful noise,
praise the Lord, halleluiah.

Another example is *Firman Tuhanku Teguh*, The Word of the Lord is Firm. It is based on a traditional melody from the village *Soahuku*, the place of birth of Chris Tamaela. The melody is derived from a genre called *kapata*, a song which records the cultural history and custom of the Moluccan people.

Translation

The Word of the Lord is firm.
It is majestic, holy and eternal.

I obey and proclaim It in my life.
It is a torch that lights every step of me.
I will never fear.

I hear the Word of the Lord.
I feel peaceful and happy.
I meditate and proclaim It in my life.
It is a living Rock which enables me to withstand anything.
I shall never fear.

The song *Anak Domba Allah*, Lamb of God, is accompanied by a bamboo flute called *suling* and drums.

Translation

Jesus, Lamb of God, have mercy on us.
Jesus, bearer of our sins, have mercy on us.
Jesus, Redeemer of the world, give us your Grace.

Hidup Gandong Manis E, How Lovely Is Your Dwelling Place, was composed by the father of Chris Tamaela, Dominggus Tamaela. It is usually heard at gatherings when a relative of a loved one leaves the village. The text of the song expresses courage and hope. ‘Lilipory kalapessy’ is the native name of *Soahuku* village.

Translation

When I look at the Cape of Kuako from afar
I remember Soahuku
Where my parents, brothers and sisters are.
I love them all.
Though they be far from sight
I remember them and pray for them
Let us keep our community nice
Lilipory kalapessy nice.
Brothers and sisters,
How nice is our community life
We feel together as one

When we shall meet each other again
The mountain and cape shall be far away and not visible from here.

Oh friend, be diligent in your prayer
And give thanks to your Savior
Although far away from your village and yard
Remember the promise of mother and father
Just put your happiness and sorrow in the hand of the Savior of the world.
Do not be hesitant in your life
We are always praying for you.

Lastly, *Angkat Muka Menghadap Tuhan*, Lift up your Face Before the Lord, is sung by native singers of Barbar island. The song is used as an opening song of worship. The first stanza of the song is in *Letwurung* language.

Translation

The Lord is our hope
We keep our hope in Him
Day and night we pray

To have a good life
Oh, be happy with the Lord
Like a flower that's always in bloom
Let us trust in the Lord
To have eternal life.

Only to the One exalted Name
Do we praise and adore
It is Christ our Savior
Who was crucified for us.
Oh friends, let us come
To spread His eternal Word
And obey the Lord's promise
As His grace for us is really great.

Interestingly, although Chris Tamaela is seen as one of the most progressive, contextual theologians, he incorporated one song of his father titled *Jangan Berilah Pada Kuasa Dunia*,

Do Not Adore Earthly Powers. While Chris Tamaela as a Christian only believes in God, he uses material associated with the ancestors. This particular song expresses a content that is more in line with 'old' Calvinist views than contextual views. The song tells people to refrain from worshipping other gods, spirits and magic. Moreover, the instruments that can accompany the song are besides drum also guitar and even organ.

Translation

Do not adore earthly powers

Do not adore them because they are not the Lord's power.

They cannot save your life.

Those are vain and have no meaning.

Pray and trust in the Lord.

He will save you from the power of sin.

Do not hope for what comes from the world

Do not hope for it because it is not the Lord's gift and blessing.

It does not give you strength in life

Those are in vain and have no meaning.

Pray and trust in the Lord.

He will save you from the power of sin.

Do not obey the promises of the world

Do not obey because these are not the promises of heaven which saves your life

Those are in vain and have no meaning.

Pray and trust in the Lord.

He will save you from the power of sin.

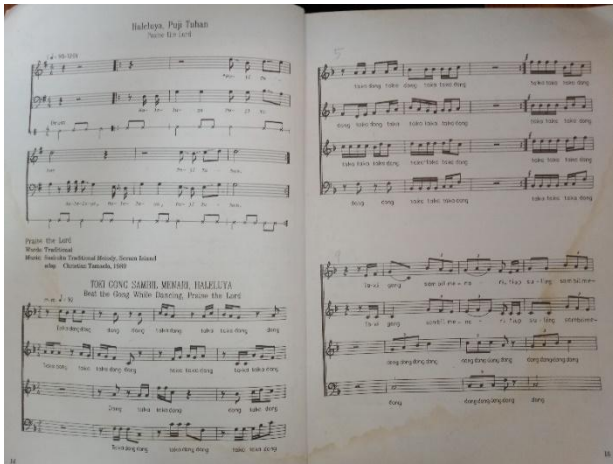


Figure 56 - Haleluya, Puji Tuhan & Toki Gong Sambil Menari, Haleluya (Tamaela 1991, 14-15)

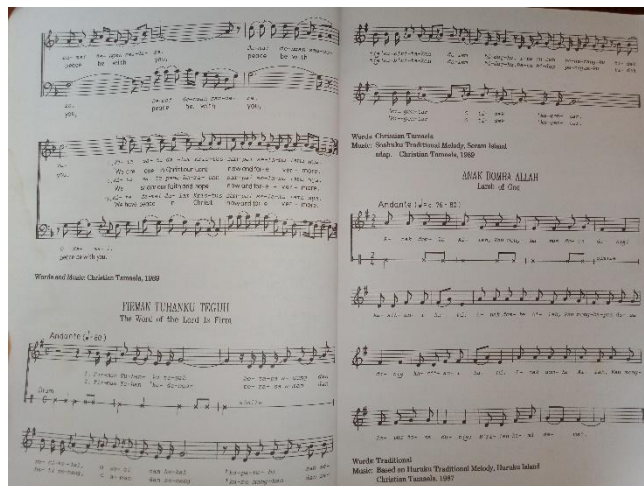


Figure 57 - Firman Tuhanku Teguh & Anak Domba Allah (Tamaela 1991, 26-27)

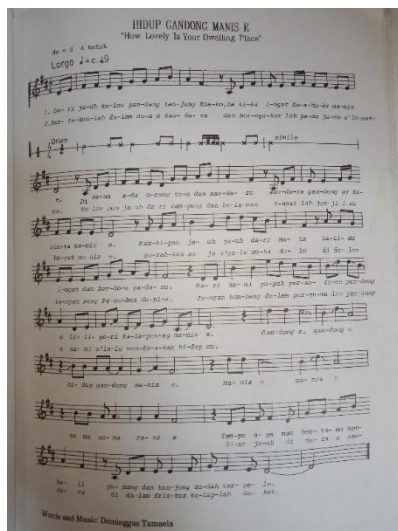


Figure 59 - Hidup Gandong Manis E (Tamaela 1991, 30)

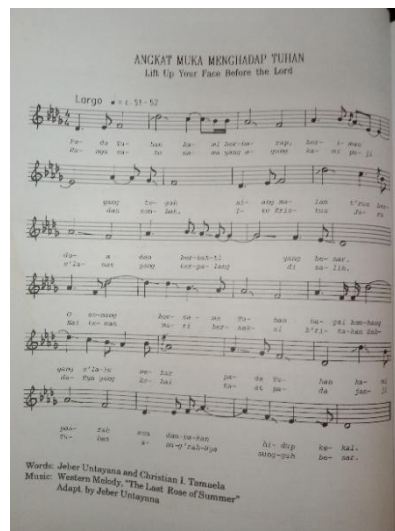


Figure 58 - Angkat Muka Menghadap Tuhan (Tamaela 1991, 40)

7. *Tuhan Kasihani & O Basudara, Chris Tamaela*

The original text of *Batu badaong* is in Ambonese Malay:

Batu badaong, batu la batangke
Buka mulutmu telangkan beta.
Buka mulutmu telangkan beta.
Guna la apa beta hidop sendiri
Sedangkan ibu sudah seng ada.
Hidup sendiri relalu susa.
Batu badaong, batu badaong.
Batu badaong, batu badaong.

Translation

Stone covered with leaves, stone with branches,
open your mouth, swallow me.
Open your mouth, swallow me.
For what purpose do I have to live alone
Since I have lost my mother.
Life alone is too hard.
Stone covered with leaves, Stone covered with leaves.
Stone covered with leaves, Stone covered with leaves.

The scale of the song is diatonic with the tonal center being ‘mi’. Its initial pitch is ‘sol’, the highest pitch is ‘si’ (B flat), the lowest is ‘sol’ and the final pitch is ‘mi’. The contour of the melody is called ‘undulation’, which means moving smoothly up and down. The form is: a b c a¹ b d. There are five rhythmic patterns of the original song (Tamaela 2015, 182-183).

Another example of a contextual song is *O Basudara, O Brothers and Sisters*. It’s original text, *Hio-Hio*, in the indigenous language of the Central Moluccas is as follows:

Hio Hio, manu tura meteng e,
Mnu tura meteng keno pela, keno e.
Ole manu, manu hata susa(h) e.
Ole manu hio wehe tupa hio e.
Lemba-lemba hio, hio e, lemba lemba hio..

Translation

Alas, black male bird e.

Black male bird screams continually e.

O the bird e, the bird above is worried e.

O the bird, alas, sits and is sad. Alas, alas.

The original song is about a black male bird screaming continually to call the *Patasiwa* and *Patalima* groups as brothers and sisters after they fought amongst themselves in the past (this myth was explained in Chapter One). The *manu tura meteng* as a sacred black bird is also believed to be the Moluccan ancestor. The *Hio-Hio* song reminds the groups that they must live in harmony, respecting and loving each other, as is desired by the bird as the ancestor. They have to return and unify as the *Patasiwa* and *Patalima* societies.

The scale has six tones, with the tonal center being ‘mi’. The melodic contour again is undulation. The initial pitch is ‘sol’, the highest pitch is ‘si’, and the lowest and final pitch is ‘mi’. The form is a b c b’ b’ d. There are six rhythmic patterns. The harmony is in two voices: the melody is sung by women and the lower voice by men. The men sing two notes only, namely ‘do’ and the lower ‘sol’, both as a drone – a continuing tone throughout the song. The descending notes reflect a sad mood, which fits the original text.

Chris Tamaela took two important textual ideas from the original song to compose *O Basudara*. The first is the image of the bird as ancestor. Contextually, Christ can be represented as a high ancestor and culturally the bird also is the spirit of the high ancestor. Biblically, the Holy Spirit is represented as a dove. Based on this theological idea, Tamaela transformed the Holy Spirit in Christ as the bird. The second idea is the will of the bird to call the two groups to live in peace again. The Moluccans have to be aware that culturally they have come from the same background. This meaning shows the unity of Moluccan society. The text of *O Basudara* is as follows:

O basudara e, mari datang memuji tuhan.

O basudara e, mari datang berdoa dan kerja.

O basudara e, jangan lupa berdoa padaNya

O basudara e, jangan lupa renungkan sabdaNya

O basudara e, bertekunlah berharap padaNya

O basudara e, bertekunlah memohon lindungan.

O basudara e, mari datang ucapkan syukurmu,

O basudara e, mari datang serahkan hidupmu.

Translation

O brothers and sisters, let us come to praise the Lord.

O brothers and sisters, let us come to pray and work.

O brothers and sisters, don't forget to pray to Him.

O brothers and sisters, don't forget to meditate His Words.

O brothers and sisters, keep your faith and trust in Him.

O brothers and sisters, be diligent to ask for His protection.

O brothers and sisters, let us come to give thanks to Him

O brothers and sisters, let us come to offer our lives.

So, Christ as the bird calls Moluccans to live in peace, which fits the mission of the GPM. The lyrics are based on Bible and psalm verses. Musically, the tone 'B flat' is the central pitch of the *Hio-Hio* song, symbolizing Christ as the center of life and worship. The drone notes symbolize the humble heart of Jesus and his goodwill to be in people's lives (Tamaela 2015, 177-181).

8.Examples of contextual songs in the GPM, Chris Tamaela

Chris Tamaela points to some examples of contextual songs in the *Kidung Jemaat, Pelengkap Kidung Jemaat* and the *Nyanyian GPM*. Song number 1 of the *Kidung Jemaat, Haleluya! Pujilah*, talks in the second strophe about '*Tabuhlah tifa dan gendang, iringi puji dalam tembang!*'. The composer uses local ethnic musical instruments, such as the *tifa* and *gendang* (well-known on Java, Bali and other islands). He shows how people can praise the Lord with musical instruments from their own tradition (Tamaela 2015, 140).

Tamaela's interpretation of the song in PKJ number 104, *Esa Tuhan Kita, Yesus Putra Allah* (One is Our Lord, Jesus is the Son of God), is that although there is a diatonic scale with the tonal center 'do', theologically the text points to contextualization: 'Our faiths' unity in Christ', *keesaan iman kita di dalam Kristus* and *keesaan gereja-gereja di dalam Kristus*, are brought in line with the melody, starting with a low 'do', climbing to a high 'do', and sliding down again to the central tone 'do' below. Tamaela symbolically sees this movement as having to be one with fellow humans in a horizontal way (from low 'do' up and back to this 'do'), and being one with the Lord in a vertical relation (from the low to the high 'do') (Tamaela 2015, 140).

In the NJGPM, number 280, *Hidop Dalam Tuhan*, is taken as an example, composed by John Beay. The hexatonic scale is used. The initial note is ‘mi’ and the final note is ‘do’. The tonal center is ‘do’. The melody uses the intervals Minor 2nd, Major 2nd, and minor 3rd. Its form is a¹ b b a¹. There is a specific melodic feature, with reiterated notes and rhythmic patterns at the beginning of each motive. It is a simple melody with one note for one syllable. The reiteration of notes is a traditional Moluccan melodic feature. Theologically, the hymn is an expression of faith: it is good to live as brothers and sisters in the Lord.

Translation

Living in the Lord is very ‘sweet’

One heart, one feeling, oh brothers and sisters.

Misery and joy, we feel it together.

Remember the covenant of the Lord, brothers and sisters.

In misery, don’t forget the covenant of the Lord, brothers and sisters.

Come, we hold our hands, so ‘sweetly’

Don’t turn your face from your brothers and sisters,

Remember the sweet covenant of the Lord.

Come, we develop our life together.

One heart, one heart.

Tamaela concludes that this song has a valuable appeal to the Moluccan Christians to live in peace and harmony with others in *Maluku*, especially in relation to the social conflict in the past. The word ‘sweet’, *manis*, is a common local term to indicate the good moral or good life of a person. This is why Christians tend to call Christ *Tete Manis*, the sweet grandfather. *Manis* also means a good situation or condition and living *manis* thus means living in peace as a proof of living in Christ. Moreover, the composer uses the Ambonese language. The sentence ‘turning one’s face’ relates to an indigenous proverb, *hata ela-ela, mansia lepu-lepu*: many large wood logs, many people – a heavy task can only be finished by many people together. Also, the word *gandong* refers to brothers and sisters in Christ, as well as in the overall Moluccan society in relation to *pela*. By singing this hymn, one can regain consciousness to renew the mutual relationship (Tamaela 2015, 141-144).

Puji-pujian dan Pembukaan Ibadah

1. HALELUYA! PUJILAH

do = f 4 ketuk

Refrain

3 5̣ 6̣ 3 1̣ 2̣ | 3 5̣ 6̣ 3 . | 5 3 5 6 5 | 3 2 1 2 . |
 Ha-le - lu - ya! Pu - ji - lah Al-lah Yang A-gung, Maha-e - sa!

Fine

3 5̣ 6̣ 3 2̣ 3̣ | 5 3 5 6 . | 5 6 5 3 1 | 2 3 2 1 . |
 Dalam Kris-tus ki-ta kenal Al-lah Yang Hi-dup, Ba-pa kekal!

3 1̣ 7̣ 6̣ 7̣ | 1̣ 7̣ 1̣ 3 3 . | 4 3 4 6 3
 1. Langit, bu - a - na se - mes - ta pa - tut memu -

1 | 7̣ 6̣ 7̣ 1̣ 7̣ . | 6 7 1 3 3 | 1 3
 ji kua - sa - Nya, kar - na ber - kat - Nya tak hen -

Refrain

4 . | 3 4 3 1 7 6 | 7 1 7 6 5 ||
 ti, lim - pah ka - sih - Nya tak ter - pe - ri.

2. Wahai dunia, soraklah!
 Angkat suaramu, nyanyilah!
 Tabuhlah tifa dan gendang,
 iringi puji dalam tembang!

Syair dan lagu : Subronto Kusumo Atmodjo 1978

Figure 61 - Haleluya! Pujilah (NJGPM, nr. 1)

104. ESA TUHAN KITA, YESUS PUTRA ALLAH

do = d 4 ketuk

5̣ 6̣ 7̣ 1 2 | 3 . 4 . | 5̣ 6̣ 5̣ 4 3 2 1 | 7̣ 6̣ 5̣ . |
 1. E - sa Tu - han ki - ta Ye - sus Pu - tra Al - lah
 2. E - sa peng - ha - rap - an, e - sa ka - sih ju - ga,
 3. Ti - mur a - tau Ba - rat, di se - lu - ruh ja - gat,

1 2 3 4 5 | 6 7 1 . | 1 7 6 5 4 3 . 2 | 1 . . 0 ||
 e - sa i - man ki - ta di dalam di - ri - Nya.
 e - sa Ge - re - ja ki - ta di se - lu - ruh In - do - ne - sia.
 Se - la - tan dan U - ta - ra ki - ta sa - tu a - da - nya.

Syair dan lagu : Bonar Gultom (Gorga) 1988

Figure 60 - Esa Tuhan Kita, Yesus Putra Allah (PKJ, nr. 104)

280. HIDOP DALAM TUHAN

do = c 4 ketuk

3 3 3 3 3 3 5 5 4 3 . | 3 2 3 . | 2 2 2 2
 Hi - dop da - lam Tu - han pa - leng ma - nis e sa - tu ha - ti.

3 2 1 2 | 3 . 4 3 2 0' | 3 3 3 3 3 3 5 5 4 |
 sa - tu ra - sa gan - dong e su - sah deng sa - nang si - sa - ma

3 . 3 2 3 . | 2 2 2 2 3 2 3 3 2 | 1 . . 0 |
 ra - sa e, i - nga jan - ji Tu - han, gan - dong e

1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 | 6 6 . 6 5 6 . | 6 6
 Dalam su - sah jang - an lu - pa jan - ji Tu - han, gan - dong e ma - ri

6 6 5 5 5 6 5 | 5 . . 0 | 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 |
 pegang tangan ma - nis e. Jang - an bu - ang mu - ka da - ri ba - su -

6 6 . 6 5 6 . | 6 6 6 6 5 5 5 6 5 | 5 . . 0 |
 da - ra gan - dong e, i - nga jan - ji Tu - han ma - nis e

3 3 3 3 3 3 5 5 4 3 . | 3 2 3 . | 2 2 2 2
 Ma - ri bangong hi - dop sa - ma - sa - ma e, sa - tu ha - ti.

3 2 3 3 2 | 1 . . . ||
 sa - tu jan - tong e

Lirik : John F. Beay, 2009
 Lagu : John F. Beay, 2009

Figure 62 - Hidop Dalam Tuhan (NJGPM, nr. 280)

9.Examples of contextualized symbols and dances, Chris Tamaela

The symbol of the *Siwalima* stands for the unity and the resurgence of the ethnic groups of the Moluccas. In the same light, Christians also need to live in unity and harmony which leads to the resurgence of the church in the Moluccas. Tamaela made a *Siwalima* cross, which consists of the two basic symbols of ‘being attentive to’ or ‘taking care’ of both communities. They are in the same shape, but the number of lines is in accordance with *siwa*, nine, and *lima*, five. The cross symbolizes the unity of life with the variety of backgrounds in the life of Jesus Christ. The cross is colored red and this in Moluccan culture means life, strength, bold, unity, brotherhood, leadership, protection and secret. All the meanings are related to nature and human blood. Theologically, it therefore also expresses the blood of Jesus, which in relation to the Bible can mean courage, fellowship, redemption, reconciling, et cetera. Tamaela designed the cross to have a function in liturgy. It can be placed on the altar or beside the pulpit.

A second symbol is the *batu pamali*, also known as the *batu meja*. In Moluccan culture it is an altar or offering stone, seen as a sacred place by indigenous people. It is a living sign of the presence of the spirits of the ancestors, and part of village ceremonies. The stone represents promises but also taboos and punishments. In *Patasawa* villages the stone is located at the landside part of the *baileo*, while in *Patalima* villages the stone is located towards the sea instead of the mountains. In an effort of contextualization, the stone can become the place to proclaim the Word of God. The stone is the witness of the promises that people make in return for wishes. If they break the promise, the stone shall punish. In the Christian context, Christ is the rock of salvation. The communion table can be built from this stone. The holy communion can also take place with traditional food like coconut water or *sago* cake. The stone can be used as pulpit as well, where the Word of God is preached. In Moluccan culture, village leaders also proclaim decisions and customs or promises at the stone. In liturgy the *batu pamali* can function as an altar or pulpit in contextual worship.

Moluccan dances can also be used in contextual services. For example, the *maku maku* can become a brotherhood dance in a contextual way. The circle symbolizes unity in Christ, bringing together brothers and sisters in the love of Jesus Christ. In liturgy it can function as a gathering dance in the beginning of the worship, after the sermon to express the unity of Christ, or at the end.

Another dance is the *cakalele*. *Caka* means ‘spirit who can cause harm’, and *melele* means ‘jump here and there’. In a contextual way, the dance can evoke the spirit of people’s faith in

God (instead of the spirit of war). The dance encourages people to fight against morally negative things in one's life. It is now the power of the Holy Spirit that works in the dancers, not the ancestors. In worship the dance can be used to guard the procession of the worship leaders and elders who enter at the beginning. Before or after the sermon the dance can also be performed, when, for example, the message is about fighting for a new life or fighting against an old life. It can also be a 'sending forth' dance, leading the congregation out of the place of worship (Tamaela 2015, 185-189).

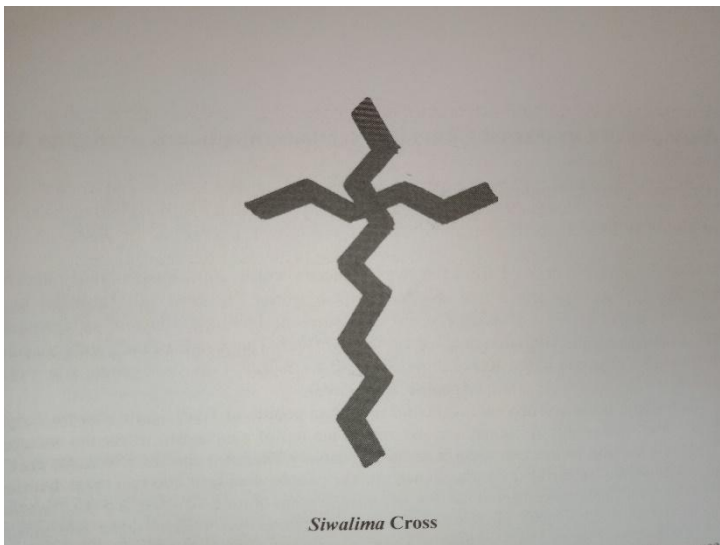


Figure 63 - Siwalima cross
(Tamaela 2015, 186)

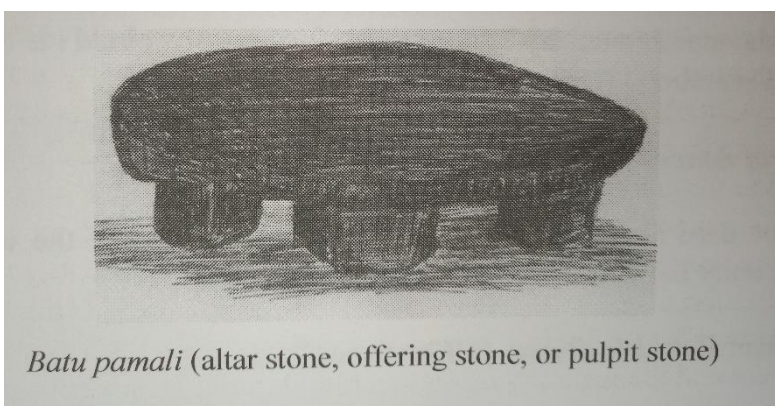


Figure 64 - Batu Pamali
(Tamaela 2015, 187)

10. Papaceda song

Papaceda kayu saika

Toruakang la di para-para

Makana papeda biar sondor ikang

Ibu, bapa punya la piara
Sunggu manis lawange sio
Ibu, bapa punya la piara
Beta seng lupa waktu beta kacil
S'lalu di pangkuan ibu, bapa e.

11. Kapata analyzed by Chris Tamaela
Kapata Upu Ama Kuru Pela (The Ancestors have given us Pela)

Ama o, ama o, heria moma nese pemu o, nese pemu o.
U pu ama karu pela, karu pela o, karu pela o.
Yale seinu hari hatu, hatu hari nese pemu o, nese pemu o.

Translation

Oh father, oh father...
The ancestors have established *pela*
Whoever turns over the stone
Will be turned over and crushed by the stone

Chris Tamaela (2015, 48-49) explains that the purpose of this song is to remind people to be faithful to their *pela* custom. If they do not obey their *pela* obligation, they will act against the *pela* role, or 'turn over the stone'. Because of that, the stone will crush him/her. The stone here refers to the sacred stone, the *batu pemali*, related to indigenous religion. The song is important to encourage Moluccans to appreciate their responsibilities to one another because of their *pela* obligation.

12. Wycliffe

Wycliffe is an international organization that has an office in Ambon,¹⁰⁸⁷ where language teams consisting of people who are specialized in Ambonese Malay and various native Moluccan languages work on the translation of religious materials.¹⁰⁸⁸ In their hallway hangs a large map with innumerable local languages in all areas of the Moluccas. As Wycliffe works in close dialogue with the local communities that speak a particular language, they have a

¹⁰⁸⁷ The official name of the office is '*badan penerjemah alkitab*', Bible translation group. The office even has a small recording studio, with mattresses against the wall, so that local languages, the Bible or songs can be recorded.

¹⁰⁸⁸ Apart from people who have been linguistically and theologically trained, locals also joined the translation teams as it sometimes is better to translate without preconceived ideas on the theological words and meanings.

fairly detailed overview about the state of vivacity of these languages and changes herein. The team clearly recognizes a rapid decrease of local language fluency among younger generations.¹⁰⁸⁹ Wycliffe even works with an index from one to ten, with ten meaning that a language is extinct. Number six is the balance point; 6a signifies the hope for revival, 6b signifies a challenge. Thus, apart from Wycliffe's main goal – translating Bibles with the idea that daily language will increase understanding and therefore will make the religious material feel closer – another goal is language preservation.¹⁰⁹⁰ The Central Moluccas almost have no native languages anymore. In all areas the regional language 'Ambonese Malay' is spoken in different dialects, but only in Seram three to five native languages still exist, and these speakers generally are not Christian but Muslim or animist.¹⁰⁹¹ The translators often received a very extensive language and culture training.¹⁰⁹² Two employees, British and American, whom I met already worked more than thirty years for Wycliffe. During a long time they each lived in one specific village in Seram, in this way becoming an expert on these tribal languages. Now, they work in a small or larger team and translate Christian material for particular congregations that have members who speak these languages. The goal of the translation is to be faithful to the original audience of the biblical text.¹⁰⁹³ There are three main aims for the result of a translation: accurate, natural and clear. The translation has to be faithful to the original Greek, Hebrew and Aramaic, it should relate to natural sounds when someone is speaking the language, and it must be understandable. The aims require to take into account place, education level and age variation as well.¹⁰⁹⁴ The translation of key terms is one of the most difficult and important tasks. One has to make sure that the biblical meaning of concepts like salvation or the kingdom of God are transferred by unpacking them and describing them in an understandable way.¹⁰⁹⁵ Thus, translation naturally involves

¹⁰⁸⁹ The last ten years showed a severe decrease. Reasons that were named were communication networks and media.

¹⁰⁹⁰ Although Bible translation is not the main method for this, as it can be a ten year process after which a language can be extinct. Only languages that have a longer term prospect of surviving are used for Bible translation. Better methods for preservations are songs, simple liturgies or dictionaries.

¹⁰⁹¹ Animist is the term used by people from Wycliffe.

¹⁰⁹² Culture is also very important, because translation has to take into account cultural views of interpretation.

¹⁰⁹³ One member of the Ambonese Malay team stated that, for instance, it is not their intention that when the Bible talks about ancestors Moluccans will think about their own ancestors, as the Bible is historically situated and thus refers to the Jewish ancestors in that moment in time. The translation thus is quite literal and not very contextual in terms of interpretation possibilities, although translation requires a contextual approach concerning linguistics.

¹⁰⁹⁴ Although they aim for a broad range of age, if they have to choose (for example, the word *kamong* is very much used among younger people while older people see it as vulgar), their target audience are people below 35.

¹⁰⁹⁵ This also means that two words in English or Indonesian can end up in two sentences to explain to concept well.

exegesis.¹⁰⁹⁶ The translation process generally starts with someone or a team making a draft based on the Indonesian *Terjemahan Baru Bible*.¹⁰⁹⁷ A growing number of translation notes, commentaries and books helps in this process.¹⁰⁹⁸ Then, another person who speaks both English and the local language compares the draft with the NIV.¹⁰⁹⁹ Consequently, the translation is tested among villagers who are native speakers and also among a GPM team of pastors,¹¹⁰⁰ after which refinements are made. In the end a consultant comes in who thoroughly checks the translation, often via a back translation if the consultant him/herself is not a native speaker.¹¹⁰¹

The results of the translations are implemented among religious practitioners in various ways, because implementation depends on reception which depends on socialization. Wycliffe organizes workshops to explain their process of translation. In the beginning people did not trust another language as many believed the Word of God cannot be changed. Wycliffe showed how Indonesian also is a translation and how they work in an accurate way.¹¹⁰² By this, pastors and congregants saw how daily local language could be more effective in bringing across a message, increasing impact, understanding and connection. Worship in the local language has the ability to reach people's hearts because they will feel their language which brings them closer to God. Moreover, the participants had to think themselves through some concepts they themselves mainly memorized, such as grace, and explain them in a close manner. Besides workshops, Wycliffe has a team called 'Tahuri', which consists of pastors who help to implement the translations in congregations and church services. This team practices with pastors to teach them how to preach in Ambonese Malay instead of Indonesian.¹¹⁰³

¹⁰⁹⁶ The local words that can be used for translation also differ per ethnic group. For example, *Upu* as the name for God or Jesus is perfectly possible for the *Nuaulu*, while it is not for the people in *Yalahatan* as they associate this word with the human ancestors only. The boundary for the use of certain words thus again lies at the ancestors and things related to that, such as death.

¹⁰⁹⁷ The team itself is quite diverse in background and age, which helps discussion on meaning, words and exegesis to achieve the most broad-ranged result.

¹⁰⁹⁸ One of the most used sources that helps translators is '*Mari Menerjemahkan Kata Kunci*'.

¹⁰⁹⁹ New International Version. This version is seen as an understandable but still literal translation. King James, for instance, is deemed to archaic. The Ambonese Malay team also makes use of other Malay translations which have already been done by others.

¹¹⁰⁰ This GPM team that has been selected also received a language training.

¹¹⁰¹ A back translation means that the local language is translated back into Indonesian or something else.

¹¹⁰² They showed how something that is said in two words in Indonesian is maybe said in five words in Ambonese Malay, which is why it looks different but still has the same meaning. They used the image of a cup of water: it is the same water but a different cup.

¹¹⁰³ The Tahuri team also works on two other topics besides church services, namely parenting and trauma healing.

