

INCULTURATION EXPERIMENTAL THEOLOGY AMONG THE TOBA-BATAKS OF NORTH SUMATRA Incarnation-Pascal Approach

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Abstract: A map setting and identification of the Toba-Batak in North Sumatra would be appropriate before dealing with the theme of inculturation among the Toba-Batak. In addition a short treatise on their inculturation experience, after an overwhelming conversion to Christianity since 19th century would be well to have a logic of inculturation exposition. It is not only experience, but most of all we desire a theological foundation, as it is exposed in the Vatican Council II, especially in the document *Ad Gentes*.

Keywords: *Toba-Batak, horbobius, ceremonies, boròtan, inculturation, Eucharist, Catholic, God.*

The Toba Bataks

The Toba-Batak tribe dwells around the Lake Toba of the North part of the island Sumatra of Indonesia, between the Malacca Strait and Indian Ocean, between the Acehese region in the North and the Minangkabause region in the South. "The Batak culture can be traced back to series of migration from South China, Yunan, and North Viet Nam sometime during the eight and seventh centuries B.C. The early Batak, setting in the region of Lake Toba in North Sumatra, were probably shifting cultivator of root crops or perhaps rice with nonmetallic technology".¹

As the Bataks prospered, they were differentiated from two exogamus patrilineal units into different tribal group, which are the Toba-Batak, the Pak-Pak-Batak, the Karo-Batak, the Simalungun-Batak, the Angkola-Mandailing-Batak, and the Pardembanan-Batak.² In the last decades of our

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¹P.B. PEDERSEN., *Batak Blood and Protestant Soul: The Development of National Batak Churches in North Sumatra*, Michigan 1970, 18.

²W.K.H. YPES, *Bijdrage tot de Kennis van de Stamverwantschap, de inheemsche Rechtsgemeenschappen en het Grondenrecht der Toba- en Dairibataks*, Leiden 1932, 24.

century, more and more people from Samosir Island, in the heart of the Toba-Batak district, emigrated to the Easter coast, and also to the whole Indonesia.³

It is not until 1860, when Lake Toba was first visited by H. N. van der Tuuk, any European has seen the “splendid isolation” district of the Toba Batak. Nevertheless, the Toba-Bataks among the sub-clans is politically rank above others.⁴ In addition to this the Toba-Batak enjoy a genealogical priority because Bataks in general regard *Siànjur Mulamùla*, which lies in the Toba-Batak region, as the dwelling-place of the first Batak or the common father of all.⁵

The first contact with Christianity seems to have occurred in the seventh century, with the coming of Nestorian missionaries to Barus in West coast of the Toba Batak district, but no trace of nowadays findings. In early of the ninth century, a Muslim padri movement from the West Sumatra has successfully converted the Southern part of the Batak district (Angkola, Mandailing), who until nowadays remain Muslims. With the coming of missionaries Richard Burton and Nathaniel Ward 1820 the first fruitful contacts was made with the Bataks. Systematic missionary works were started 1826, as the *Nederlandsche Zending Genootschap* began to working the Batak district. The ever most successful missionary works began 7 October 1961, when four missionaries of the *Rheinische Missionsgesellschaft* (Germany) arrived and settled in the South district, Sipirok. Since the leadership of L. I. Nommensen of this mission 1864, from some 2.000.000 Bataks there are some 150.000 remaining in the traditional Batak religion. The Catholics (since 1929) form some 300.000 of the Bataks. “The relation between the adherents of the original religion and the Christians may be called satisfactory, thanks to the ‘adat’, the complex of morals and customs⁶

³C.E.CUNNINGHAM, *The Postwar Migration of the Toba-Bataks to East Sumatra*, New Haven 1958.

⁴P.L. TOBING, *The Structure of the Toba-Batak Belief in the High God*, Amsterdam 1956, 13.

⁵VERGOUWEN, J.C., *The Social Organization and Customary Law of the Toba-Batak of Northern Sumatra*, Den Haag 1964, 21.

⁶The meaning of the Batak *adat* is the complex of moral, customary and religious imperatives, with which most of the missionaries have been wrestling in dealing with inculturation, is unfillable. “Like the term right (*Recht*) *adat* has no definite determination to begin with. On principle everything which lives and takes place according to a certain use and rule, has an *adat*, including the world of animals and plants, which exists in a basic interdependence with the human society. Sun and moon have their *adat*, which in fact comprises the totality of life and death... *Adat* is closely linked with nature in so far as the animal world, plants and the stars are conceived of as having their *adat*. Habits and customs of man have by force of nature and tradition grown into customary law... In recent times *adat*-law is generally understood as valid law of the people bearing legal consequences but being uncodified. Such *adat*-law consists of formal legal rules, which have been put into force through common consent of the elders of the community”

which have not been totally abandoned by the Christian and which they want to maintain as much as possible".⁷

Liturgical Inculturation Ceremony

It was 21-25 June 1978 when I was invited by a group of people of the clan *Sitanggang*, of the village *Salàon*, near Pangururan, Samosir, the very heart of the Toba Batak. The invitation sounded that I am to preside the rather pagan ceremony of the *mangòngkal hòli* or reburial of the ancestors' bones. Excavated from their old tombs, ceremonially in the manner of the Batak traditional religious ceremony, these bones were reburied. The order of the ceremonies comprises: (1) The official opening the traditional prayer to God with a traditional *gòndang* orchestra. There in the celebrant priest should dance the mystery of human creation and death. (2) The celebration of the Holy Mass in the middle of the village square under the Batak sacrificial pole, *boròtan*, where, afterwards the traditional highest sacrifice, namely a buffalo called *horbobiùs*, will be sacrificed; (3) The with holy water sprinkled consecration of the *horbobiùs* before its slaughtering; and (4) The benediction of the ancestor bones to be reburied in the communal cement menhir tomb. The bones of fifty four ancestors will be reburied and some 200 agnate relatives coming from many places in Indonesia, even from Singapore, will join the ceremonies.

Specialized in the Batak religion, I was fully acquainted of their purpose and expectation of the ceremony. And this village is the stubborn rest of the Batak pagan religion, maintaining their persistent religion against all neighbours who have been converted to Christianity. Some of them have been baptized Catholic, but the great majority are pagans. Nevertheless they unanimously agree to hold a Catholic bones reburial ceremony. A freedom to compose the format of the liturgy is given, only with a note: "So that all people will be satisfied and happy."

(Schreiner 1972: 288). The meaning of the Batak *àdat* is by far wider than the above described meaning. As it is understood by the 'Ancient People', *àdat* is "'order' or 'law' which signifies the unchangeable in all changeability, the imperishable in the midst of that which is perishable, the abiding essence of the changing phenomena" (Kristensen, 1971³:72). Among the Bataks, *àdat* is essentially related to possibility of existence and life in the context of the creation of the world by the High God, the Creator, *Mulajadi Nabòlon*. *Àdat*, order and rule are the creative power of the Creator to conquer the primordial Demon or Chaos. In order to constitute the possibility of existence and life in the world, the Creator has to conquer the primordial Dragon, *Nàga Paddha*, and to establish *àdat*, order (Warneck 1909:30). More over *àdat* too signifies 'life' and the 'possibility of life', for it is based on and derives from the cosmic *àdat*. More specifically *àdat* is "the order of life, abiding life, which gains the victory over finitude and destruction. It reveals itself in the mystery of life's law of life; truth, honesty, and righteousness are *àdat*". In the last analysis, *àdat* is a kind of *theion* or *numen* in being, something like *logos spermatikos* (St Justin Martyr, Ap. II:7) which we will further develop.

⁷TOBING, The Structure ..., 14.

I prepare myself as to compose the liturgies based on two principles: The liturgies have to be “based”, “centred on” and “under the criteria” of Jesus Christ, and in style or manner they should be in the Batak traditional format, especially the rhythmic and poetic Batak style.⁸ This regards especially the opening liturgical ceremony and the slaughtering of the buffalo sacrifice. As for the “rubric” of the official Holy Mass - no fear of defamation for they are particularly devote to any Catholic celebration - should be plausibly ornamented.

As for the opening official ceremony as to bless the whole hosts dancing in the Batak *gõndang* orchestra, first of all water benediction was held. As I started the solemn prayer on the holy water - centred on the theology of baptism as Israel passed through the red sea to the living water of Isaiah up to the baptism in the mystery of death and resurrection of the Lord, but fully in the Batak poetic and noblest style - a very deep as impressing silence fell on the whole crowd of some 500 people in the evening 20.00 o'clock. Up to the reading on the creation (Gen 1) they remained seated noiseless and devoted. Only during the homily, some five persons came in to look for place near to the priest. They were the most prominent *dåtus* (traditional magic priest, expert and shaman in one person). Later I was acquainted that they have had in somehow *mala fide* sitting together in the main gate of the village to consider magically disturbing the ceremony. But hearing the beautiful solemn benediction prayer, they could not help but to join the ceremony closely. As the priest danced in meditating the rhymes of man creation and the original fall of Adam up to Jesus Christ, the new Adam, who redeemed the world with his death and resurrection, all the people motionlessly admired the solemnity. When the seven part dance-melody was coming to the end, a satisfactory expression was voiced from the part of the participants. Then there was the rite of the sprinkling the hosts, the crowd and the orchestra instruments, as the priest handing over the ceremony to the hosts, to continue the dance celebration and the communal banquet.

The Holy Mass under *Borõtãn*

It is a very precariously endeavour as to how accommodate the religious sense of the Bataks in this rite on the one hand and the highest sacrality of the Eucharist Celebration. Only a very tiny number of the participants were catholic. Due to their highest respect for Catholic rite, and the unique occasion of christianizing mission among an inclining number of people to be catholic, we consented to the proposal of the hosts, that the

⁸Phil 4:8: “Everything that is true, everything that is noble, everything that is good and pure, everything that we love and honor, and everything that can be thought virtuous or worthy of praise” which implies rejecting everything that is source of sin and fruit of sin in the heart of culture, is to be implemented in Christian life.

Holy Mass will be celebrated in the middle of the village square symbolizing it the “centre of the universe.”⁹ That the Eucharist Celebration would be held under the *boròtan*, it means that the Eucharist will be celebrated attached to the “tree of life” or “tree of creation”.¹⁰

The fetching, the felling, the planting and the decorating of a *boròtan*, is truly an expression of the theology of the “tree of life”¹¹, which culminates in the holy cross of Jesus Christ.¹² Therefore, four requirements of consenting the celebration of the Holy Mass in the open square under the *boròtan* were: 1) The hosts are responsible for a full security and sacred milieu for the whole celebration; 2) Only the deign Catholics can receive holy communion; 3) A catholic cross is to be hung on the top of the *boròtan*;

⁹Cfr. JOHN PAUL II, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, (17 April 2003) no. 8.

¹⁰*Boròtan*: “pole where a buffalo bound to be offered” (Warneck 2001). “*Boròtan* is a slaughter-pole, which ceremonially fetched from jungle, prepared and decorated with colorful leaves” (Vergouwen 1986:94). *Boròtan* is the symbol of the first tree of creation, *tùmbur jàti*, where on the mythical bird *Hulambu Jàti* is laid by the Creator *Mulajàdi Nabòlon*, to begin the creation. God provided the food of the bird (symbolized by magic paste) so that it laid three eggs to be the Trimurty (*Batàra Gùru*, *Balasòri* and *Balabùlan*). The daughter of *Batàra Gùru* is the direct former of the world, *Si Bòru Dèang Parùjar*, called the “hornbill of God”, the mother of all humanity. In its ceremony many symbols of the creation myth are recalled: an *ùlos* (cloth) which was sent from heaven to *Dèang Parùjar*, to protect her from heat of seven suns, or it be the symbol of the pure handful earth sent from heaven to form this world; a tortoise, the symbol of the underworld; octagon, the symbol of the middle world. In that sense, the planting of a *boròtan* means to renew the creation of the world, as it is accomplished by the slaughtering of the highest sacrifice, *horbobius*, to *Mulajàdi Nabòlon*, Creator. As a symbol of creation tree or the tree of life, the *boròtan*, called *hariara sùndung di làngit*, “banian tree inclining on heaven”, meaning its roots are in heaven and, as to provide life and providence to all creation, it unites the three cosmic world of the Bataks, the Upperworld (heaven), the Middleworld (ours) and the Underworld (the world of the Demon, *Nàga Padòha*). Here *boròtan* is at the same time the representation of the account of creation and its reactualization.

¹¹The ceremony of preparing a *boròtan*, as one has been prepared in *Salàon*, is described by V.E. Korn, translated by Tobing: “The searching, felling, conveying, decorating and planting of the *boròtan* takes place under careful precautions, while formulae of prayer are said. When a tree of a suitable kind of wood is found, then first the serpents of the upperworld and the deities of the middleworld are invoked, while incense is being formed. Then the highest deities of the upper- and underworld are invited to descend and to ascend respectively. In the village a wheel with four spokes is fastened to the pole, close to the broad top, in which a hole is made, filled with *tambatùu*, a magic paste, mixed with the sticky mass of a hornbill. The wheel is decorated with various kinds of leaves to make it more or less look like a living tree... Sometimes an Achehnese *ùlos* is hung on top of it, or a piece of white material, representing the *tàno sòlam* (the pure country of the *hàlak jàu* or the Malay, through which the tree bores into the upperworld (*sùndung di làngit*). The tree is planted in a hole, so deep that a man will disappear in it up to his waist. A double magic square is drawn on the underside of the pole, or on a metal-plate, which together with a living chicken, serving as a kind of ‘pad’ for the slaughter-pole, is put in the hole, and in the middle octagon a tortoise (is drawn). This is the *nàga hùrma dītàno*. Sometimes such an octagon is drawn in red, white, and black flour in the sacrificial place. In the center of it the slaughter-pole is planted, which means that it penetrates into the underworld” (Tobing 1963:168f.).

¹²HEILER 1961:771, “In the Christian salvation history the world tree becomes the ‘cross tree’... ‘*qui salutem generis humani in ligno crucis constituisti, ut unde mors oriebatur, unde vita resurgeret et qui in ligno vincebat, in ligno quoque vinceretur.*’”

and 4) Only catholic priest is authorized to lead the celebration. To our admiration, these conditions were fully, correctly and adequately accomplished.

In the homily several points were developed and stressed: Celebrating this Most Holy Eucharist, the celebration of the death of Jesus Christ on the cross and his resurrection, is the symbol of celebrating it in the "centre of the universe".¹³ This place of celebrating the most desired of our forefathers and ancestors¹⁴ will be the centre of the whole world adoring the Most High in Jesus Christ. Look at the *boròtan*. It is the symbol of the creative act of the Most High, as it is called the *hariàra sùndung di lāngit*, the mythical tree *Tùmbur Jàti*. It is the arche diagram expressing the description of the creation of our world through *Tùmbur Jàti*, where on the High God has placed the mythical bird *Hulāmbu Jàti*. Through this mythical tree and bird, our world, where we now live has been formed by our first foremother *Si Bòru Dèang Parùjar*. But our forefathers have committed sin and need a salvation appeasing. This reconciliation has been ratified to be the highest sacrifice of the Bataks, namely the *horbobìus*. After this Mass, we will be sacrificing this *horbobìus* bound and united to the "tree of life."

Two points need to be further clarified. First is the theology of the *boròtan*. In the Catholic Church too the unity of the highest sacrifice and the "tree of life" is fully reserved and maintained. Christ has fulfilled the redemption of the world through his "sacrifice on the altar of the cross" (Dz 1740). That is the meaning of hanging the cross on the top of the *boròtan*. The Catholic Church does not come to detrimentally affect nor to destroy our religious goods. On the contrary she purifies, sanctifies and elevates it to its divine fullness.¹⁵ In fact Jesus Christ has brought all noble desire on this point of our ancestors.¹⁶

Further, the point of offering and sacrifice. It is true that the *horbobìus* is the highest and noblest offering of our tribe. For this particular sacrifice unites in itself many symbols and entities. This sacrifice, a buffalo, is the symbol of the whole earth. "Among the Bataks, in no other way, that the earth and its fundament consists of horn animal (buffalo, cow, goat) on *Nàga Padòha*. The horn animal expresses not only the earth bearer but also the earth and world order itself. The whole Batak community is also called the two horns (*Lòntung* and *Sùmba*), governed by the *siòpat pusòran*, namely the

¹³M. ELIADE, *The Sacred and the Profane*, New York 1959, 28.

¹⁴Cfr. KONSILI VATIKAN II, "Gaudium et Spes 41, 6-8", dalam *Dokumen Konsili Vatikan II*, Penerjemah R. Hardawiryana. Untuk selanjutnya, disingkat dengan GS.

¹⁵KONSILI VATIKAN II, "Nostra Aetate 2: 40: 42": "Prudently and lovingly ... in witness of Christian faith and life, acknowledge, preserve, and promote the spiritual and moral goods found among these men, as well as the values in their society and culture", dalam *Dokumen Konsili Vatikan II*, Penerjemah R. Hardawiryana. Untuk selanjutnya, disingkat dengan NA.

¹⁶MÜLLER-KRÜGER 1968:254: "For the Bataks the time of salvation was broken. The mighty nearness of God, the fullness of human well-being, the inversion of all things..."

four crowns of hair, as well as the title of the four kernchiefs". Therefor, the sacrificial buffalo is the symbols, that unite themselves in the sacrifice, of "various individuals and groups of individuals as well as of different levels of being. First of all it is the symbol of the Middleworld and its order (*adat*). The sacrificial animal is also the symbol of the whole people as its two horns represent the two comprehensive moieties *Lòntung* and *Sùmba* of the Batak people.¹⁷ Seen from the social aspect of the whole of people, the buffalo is the symbol of the four comprehensive chieftaincies and of the governmental functionaries and in them of the whole system and content of social life". In this sense, if afterwards we sacrifice the *horbobius*, all the above-mentioned symbolized matters will be offered to God, sacrificed, annihilated and renewed in God.

But what for? The deepest longing of the Batak is called the three *Hs*, namely *hagabèon* (many descendants), *hamoràon* (richness) and *hasangàpon* (honour, fame).¹⁸ Supposed that we received all the merits of that *horbobius* sacrifice from the High God, *Mulajàdi Nabòlon*, and through its blood obtained for us those three benefits, how greater is the merit of Jesus Christ through his blood, death and resurrection? Through his self-sacrifice to his Father, he gained for us, not only the goods of this world, *hagabèon*, *hamoràon* and *hasangàpon*, but infinitely more. In fact, the *horbobius* sacrifice is to be compared with the lamb of God's offering among the Jews.¹⁹ Taken in its original theological meaning, namely for the redemption of sin and imparting of divine life, of the God's lamb that becomes the Lamb of God²⁰, Jesus Christ, the *horbobius* is remaining in the comparison with God's lamb.

And right for that transition from God's lamb into the Lamb of God, many other things should be noted. The redeeming sacrifice has been exalted from the level of creature, *cq.* animal, buffalo, *horbobius*,²¹ up to the sacrifice of the Son of God, God Himself, Jesus Christ, our Saviour. In that sense, all preparations of any redeeming sacrifice of our ancestors are to be respected and to be praised. Any good within our religious tradition is but the seed and the ray of that *Logos* who becomes Jesus Christ, our Redeemer. Therefor, "the Catholic Church reject nothing which is true and holy in these religions... that reflect a ray of that Truth which enlightens all men".²² This is the reason, the Catholics are to be "gladly and reverently laying bare

¹⁷YPES, *Bijdrage* ..., 26.

¹⁸VERGOUWEN, *The Social* ..., 63, 56-71, 95.

¹⁹Ex 12:1-13; Lv 23:5; 28:16; Dt 16:1-2. F. Meinecke, *Symbol des apokalyptischen Christus-Lammes*, Sraßburg 1908.

²⁰Dz 1741: "*Nam celebrato veteri Pascha, quod in memoriam exitus de Aegypto multitudo filiorum Israel immolabat (Ex 12:1ss) novum instituit Pascha, se ipsum ab Ecclesia per sacerdotes sub signis visibilibus immolandum in memoriam transitus reddemit 'eripuitque de postestate tenebrarum et in regnum suum transtulit'* (Col1:13)."

²¹Cfr. ST. JUSTIN MARTYR, Ap. I:11: "You have heard that we long for a kingdom, you could think of this world, but we understand it beyond this world, by God."

²²NA 2: 20-24.

the seeds of the Word, which lie hidden in them".²³ Having carried it out, the Catholics should "profoundly change them"²⁴ into its fullness, that which has been longed for by our ancestors, namely the fullness of our redemption of sin and the sharing in divine life. More precise, this sharing in divine life means the gift of resurrection, the becoming adoptive children of God, and the sharing in the blessed happiness of heaven (1 Co 15:50-53; 1 Th 4:15-17; Ga 4:4-7).

This is now the concrete matter that touches us. Jesus Christ offers and comes to you to fulfil that which has been since ages longed for and prepared by our forefathers. Should we not exclaim once more the dear maxim of our ancestors, "*The nail has been drawn, the wall has been levelled, but the house should be firm on its foundation; the old tradition has been changed and new one is coming in, but the religious file should remain in its essence*". For, that which is sacrificed here is not only cattle or man, but the Son of God, God himself. For if "the blood of goats or bulls [or buffalo] and the ashes of a heifer are sprinkled on those who have incurred defilement, and they restore the holiness of their outward lives; how much more effectively the blood of Christ, who offered himself as the perfect sacrifice to God through the eternal Spirit, can purify our inner self from dead actions so that we do our service to the living God" (Heb 9:13-14).

In this case, we have to be respectful to our ancestors who have prepared everything in sacrificial worship to the Holy Creator, be it called *Mulajàdi Nabòlon*, to the point to be levelled to the lamb of God in the Old Testament. But if the fullness is coming and offered to us, there is no reason to refuse or disregard. Therefore, for our clan, today is the "day of salvation, the day of the mighty nearness of almighty God, the fullness of human and divine well-being".²⁵ Let us exclaim the paschal antiphone of communion: "This is the day of the Lord. Christ our paschal Lamb has been immolated, let us rejoice with unleavened bread, bread of holiness and truth."

Of the same reason we have dared today to celebrate this Holy Mass under the *boròtan*. For symbolically the immolation of the *horbobius* on the *boròtan* is more obviously similar to the cross sacrifice than the immolated lamb of the Old Testament, since the former are keenly related to the tree of life.

In accordance too, let the Catholic priest sprinkle the new tomb menhir and every bone of our ancestors before they are reburied in their new resting place. For our Batak forefathers were famous of their diligence to preserve and to honour their ancestors' bones and tombs. To our conviction, there is no other religion or tradition, nor the Bataks, should more careful and reverent in this respect than the Christians. The reason is very simple:

²³GS 11:13-14.

²⁴GS 11:13-14.

²⁵MÜLLER-KRÜGER, 254.

Even if the Bataks do not believe in resurrection, they devotedly have spent much time and money to preserve the bones of their ancestors, and how much more the Christians who believe in it. These very bones of our fathers, which have been cleaned and neatly preserved, will be risen by the Lord, Jesus Christ, at the end of the world. We all too who are gathering here will be risen by Him to heir His eternal blissful happiness in heaven.

Therefor, we do not fail to proclaim and declare, together with the preface of the Church, as the Church sings: "In death, the life does not end, but begin in a new everlasting life." And this is the day of the Lord, our salvation day, for that treasure of faith of full life, which has been granted to us, is offered to you too, so that all people, including our Batak clan, rejoice in the redemption of the Lord.

Inculturation Theology of Vatican Council II

The urgency of inculturation has been adequately expressed: "The split between the Gospel and culture is without a doubt the drama of our time, just as it was of other times. Therefore every effort must be made to ensure a full evangelization of culture or more correctly of cultures. They have to be regenerated by an encounter with the Gospel" (EN 20).

What matters is to evangelise man's culture and cultures - not in a purely decorative way, as it were, by applying a thin veneer, but in a vital way, in depth and right to their very roots, in the wide and rich sense. "The Gospel, and therefore evangelization, are certainly not identical with culture, and they are independent in regard to all cultures. Nevertheless, the kingdom which the Gospel proclaims is lived by men who are profoundly linked to a culture, and the building up of the kingdom cannot avoid borrowing the elements of human culture or cultures. Though independent of cultures, the Gospel and evangelization are not necessarily incompatible with them; rather they are capable of impermeating them all without becoming subject to any one of them" (EN 18-19). The real urgent problem, "that is strongly felt these days is the demand for the evangelization of cultures and the inculturation of the message of faith" (John Paul II, 1992, 55). "The new evangelization requires a lucid, serious and ordered effort for the evangelization of culture" (*Ecclesia in America*, 70).

In general the Vatican Council II is very accommodative for all religious values and traditions. Its documents, such like *the Church in the Modern World*, *Attitude towards Religions*, *Ecumenism*, *Mission*, are example of Church seriousness in respecting, appreciating and elevating the values and truth in other traditions, religions or moral conducts (NA 2:20-24).

Theology of Religious Dialogue

A new missiological horizon is ratified by the declaration of the document *Mission* of the Vatican Council II, as it notes: "Let them *gladly and*

reverently laying bare the seeds of the Word which lie hidden in their national and religious traditions" (AG 11:13f.). The specific purpose of missionary activities based on the seeds of the Word theology is "evangelisation and the planting of the Church among those peoples and groups where she has not yet taken root. Thus from the seed which is the word of God, particular native Churches can be adequately established and flourish the world over, endowed with their own vitality and maturity" (*Ibid.* 6:26-27). To be effectively endeavoured is to "let them share in [their] cultural and social life... to let them familiar with their national and religious traditions..." (*Ibid.* 11:10-13).

Theology of Seeds of the Word

The meaning and purpose of the theology of the seeds of the Word, *Logos*, are taken from the *Apology* of St. Justin and the Gospel of St. John. The logic developed in this theology could be put, as follows:

The Principle that is *Actus Purus*, Simple Absolute Being,²⁶ implies that God does not subject to the accidentality of time and place. Any accidental being subjects to historical past, present and future.

The salvation history of man embraces both the historical and the trans-historical. Since the eternal, divine, decision of God is to save humanity through the incarnation, death and resurrection of his only Son, Jesus Christ, the mixture of the historical and the trans-historical has to come into reality.²⁷

Already from the time of creation, which was carried out²⁸ by the *Logos*, he spread the "seeds of the *Logos*"²⁹ to all creation. "No wonder that the demons, who have no participation in the *logos spermatikos* (the seeds of the Word), but only live in recognition and vision of the accumulated *Logos*,

¹⁴TA I:3:1:2: "Necesse est id quod est primum ens, esse in actu, et nullo modo in potentia." I:9:1:c: "Deus sit primum ens, omnino simplex, et per essentiam infinitus, est simpliciter immutabilis." Tatianus, *Adversus Graecos Oratio*, 4: "Deus noster non esse coepit in tempore, cum solus sine principio, ipse omnium sit principium."

¹⁵II:5: "Logos who was found united with God before the creation of the world ... according to the will of God the Father has been visibly born for the salvation of the faithful and destruction of the demons." Cf. I:23.

¹⁶"To carry out" should be distinctively further formulated. John 1:3: "Everything is 'made' by the *Logos* and nothing of being which is not made by Him." In "making" creatures, two distinctions would be made, namely *creatio ex nihilo* (creating out of nothing) and *creatio ex materia prima* (creating, or better giving order to, the chaos of *materia prima*). St Justin inclines to understand the creation in the second terms: "For through him [the *Logos*], who was with God, ... God founded the beginning of everything and *ordered*... And through him, who is called Christ, God *ordered* everything ..." (*Apologia*, II:6). Cf. I:10,8,67,59).

¹⁷The most constitutive text of St. Justin for the theology of the seeds of the Word is *Apologia* II:7; I:46.

namely Christ, for their despicement they ever more hate [him]...” (Ap. II:7). “That Christ, as Logos, the only Son of God, in whom the whole humanity persistently participates, is a doctrine we maintain and previously have demonstrated to you. Those who live with reason are Christians, whether they seemed do not believe in God, among the Greeks such as Socrates, Heraclit and the similar, and among not-Greeks are Abraham, Ananias, Azarias, Elias and many others...” (I:46).

“Especially through his self-made theory *Logos spermatikos* St. Justin has laid a bridge between the old philosophy and christianity. The theory is as follows: Every human being bears in his soul a *sperma* (seed) of the Logos, namely the absolute divine reason, and along with it comes to the truth... Such truth elements have been flourishingly developed both by the Greek poets as well as by Judaic writers. For Moses should be the earliest writer of the world.³⁰ But only in Christ the divine Logos is fully revealed; only the Christians and the similar receive the full Truth” (Berdenhewer 1913:8).

St. Justin does not speak exclusively of *logos spermatikos* only in terms of *reason* - this is meant especially for the enlightened platonic philosophers (I:1, 60) - but also in terms of *life*, for many not-Greek logos philosophical background. Particularly to the Judaic Tryphon he talks of life of creatures as created-dependent life. In itself, separated from the principle of life, Logos, life is irrational and can not exist. Only in terms of participation in the absolute Life, Logos, life can endure. “As for the life [of the soul], it requires to be vivified by some other that gives life, not of itself: such like a movement requires some mover rather than self moving. That which participates in is different from that in which something participates. The soul is living, nobody negates. But whether it is living, it does not live as an autonomous life, only as far as it participates in Life. Soul life is a participation in that will of God to vivify” (Rouët 1928:133).

The same principle of *logos spermatikos* applies to Life. There is the absolute principle Life, the full and divine Life, namely Jesus Christ, who from the very beginning found with God, and there are *diffused life*, life of creatures, especially of human being and angles.

St. Justin too speaks of light and fire that is shining in the world to cast out darkness. Explicitly he identifies this absolute divine Light to be the *Logos* Jesus Christ, not God the Father.

Interpreting the burning bush when God of Isaac, Abraham and Jacob revealed himself to Moses to send the latter to lead the Israeli out of Egypt, St. Justin notes: “These words testify that Jesus Christ is the Son and Messenger of God, who was the Logos, suddenly in the form of fire and without physical form, now, according to God’s will, incarnates in human

¹⁸It has been repeatedly said that Bible has been influenced by the Greek philosophy. Otherwise too, as St. Justin holds for, is true: “Moses was the earliest prophet and lived earlier than the Greek writers” (I:59).

being, to accept the suffering of all people" (I:63). Therefore, in the same principle of *logos spermatikos*, under the symbol light and fire, there is always the principle absolute divine Light and there are too in various forms dan states the *scattered seeds of the Light*.

Considering the rationalistic milieu of the Hellenistic world of St. Justin (Syria 100-166) it is no wonder if in his reflected approach for vice-versa influence for platonic and stoic philosophy he adapts a more rationalistic approach. Appropriate to his endeavour has led him to adapt the terminology of *logos spermatikos* as better to communicate the mystery of inherent presence of divine element in every creature. This presence is intimately united with the constitutive creating act of the Holy as to hold every entity in existence.

In religious and teleological purpose of the approach - as far as it is seen to be the preparation for the salvation history of man through the incarnation, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ - this approach is developed in the context of the incarnation of the *Logos* (John 1:1-3). This suits the term *logos spermatikos* in the sense, how tiny and unremarkable it would be, but it is really an absolute and divine element in creation, God's immanence in creation. In that sense it is really a *numinosum* or *theion*,³¹ *Logos*, God's intimate presence within every entity. This is the case when it is alternatively called *the seeds of Life* or *the seeds of Light*.

Some Indicatives of Logos Spermatikos Presence

The most significant and fundamental merit of St. Justin, as it has been said, is his particular theory, in which he has "laid a bridge between the old philosophy and christianity." This is to be developed appropriately in sight of proper application to the theology of inculturation within the Batak culture and religious values.

Principal as well as psychological merit of this inculturation theology is a missionary evolution attitude in adopting a more positive and accommodative approach towards other religions rather than a negative traditional method. "Justin Martyr, in the early Church, attributing all the truths in non-Christian religions to the Word of God, who enlightens every man who enters into this world - a concept found at the beginning of the Gospel according to John. Through the centuries, however, missionaries often adopted the attitude that non-Christian religions were simply the work of Satan, and the missionaries' task was to convert from error to

¹⁹SINAGA 1985:94: "Every single being in the creation has its deepest 'heart' (intimate depth), in its principle of existence, 'life', 'force', and 'energy', something peculiarly different from what perception immediately and at the first sight grasps. It is something 'mysterious' and similar to a divine character. The Toba-Batak call it 'soul' without denying the various kinds of souls. It is experienced as the intimate presence of God in the thing or dept of the thing, the *theion* or *numen* in creation."

knowledge of the truth. This declaration marks an authoritative change in approach" (Abbot 1966: 662).

"For the first time in history, a council speaks of acknowledgement for the search of persons, tribes and peoples for the Absolute; for the first time a council bows with reverence before the truth and holiness of other religions as the work of the one and living God... The Declaration is a form of Church's acknowledgment of grace omnipresence and its fruit bearing in many religions of humanity" (Lexikon II:604).

This grace omnipresence, which is termed by St Justin as *logos spermatikos*, can be understood too in terms of "revelation", which as such is characterized by its historical nature. "Grace, even though it is of course unmerited, can, because of God's universal salvific will, always and everywhere be present, at least in the mode of an offer... This radical ordination and this radicalizing of human transcendentality to the immediacy of God, even though it is not the object of explicit reflection and verbalization, can be quite rightly understood as 'revelation'... This radicalizing of human transcendentality to the immediacy of God can further be understood as revelation because it gives to knowledge and freedom a new, otherwise unattainable formal object. It is a free, personal self-communication, which constitutes the actual essence of grace. This revelation can be quite properly understood as fundamentally historical... because it is obvious that every transcendental human experience is always mediated by a historical experience and form as a unity with it" (Rahner 1988-XXI:156-157).

Although it remains in its analogical meaning, nevertheless so far, we have come to conclusion of identification that *logos spermatikos* can be understood in terms of 'life', 'light' (St. Justin Martyr), 'truth', holiness, even grace and revelation found within religions. Furthermore, the identity of that mysterious *sperma* innerly and most intimately present in the deepest heart of man, in more modern findings, rather seen from the immanent mystery of the Holy, is characterized by "'innerness', 'hiddenness', 'darkness', 'that which roots in life energy', 'secret', 'source and principle', 'man enters into it by reflecting on himself', 'intimate', 'mystery', 'the dynamical energy in every living', 'the ever present mysterious reality', 'the deepest in myself', 'the point to which everything tends to', 'the symbol of the deepest possibilities in man'" (Vergote 1973:317; 1974:53f.). Rather seen from the transcendent mystery of the Holy, that *sperma* is characterized by something "'mighty', 'that which governs', 'numinous', 'overpowering', 'glory', 'majesty', 'ordering principle in the world', 'the supreme all-embracing reality', 'to which everything in the world points', 'the answer to the ultimate life question', 'the ultimate unique and satisfactory world clarification'" (Vergote 1973:320; 1974:56).

Further observation on the character of the *numen* or the *theion* in the

most intimate of every person is that distinctive demarcation between the "rational" and the "real" aspect of the *Mysterium Tremendum et Fascinosum* (Otto 1970, *passim*). It has been often noted (Kristensen 1971:18-23) that the Greek, especially the Aristotelian approach of the Holy is rather "rationalistic" and that of the modern, especially of a *homo religiosus* is rather "realistic" stressing the mystery which is sometimes irrational of the Holy. "The modern occidental experiences a certain uneasiness before many manifestations of the sacred. He finds it difficult to accept the fact that, for many human beings, the sacred can be manifested in stones or trees, for example. But ... what is involved is not a veneration of the stone in itself, a cult of the tree in itself. The sacred tree, the sacred stone are not adored as stone or tree; they are worshipped precisely because they are *hierophanies* [something sacred shows itself to us], because they show something that is no longer stone or tree but the *sacred*, the *ganz andere*...

The man of the archaic societies tends to live as much as possible *in* the sacred or in close proximity to consecrated objects. The tendency is perfectly understandable, because, for primitives as for the man of all premodern societies, the *sacred* is equivalent to a *power*, and, in the last analysis, to *reality*. The sacred is saturated with *being*. Sacred power means reality and the same time enduringness and efficacy. The polarity sacred-profane is often expressed as an opposition between *real* and *unreal* or pseudoreal... Thus it is easy to understand that religious man deeply desires *to be*, to participate in *reality*, to be saturated with power" (Eliade 1959:11f.). In that sense, the omnipresence of the *logos spermatikos* is rightly to be detected as "the sacred", "power" or "overpowering", "enduringness", "efficacy", "reality", "the wholly other". Those attributes are opposed to the unreal profane. An eruption of the Holy, *hierophany*, is a very authentic indication of the intrusion of the Sacred.

Some Methodologies of Inculturation and Interreligious Dialogue

Any time and in a particular milieu, as those above-mentioned divine attributes are found within or as an aspect of the Holy in non-Christian religions, it is the time of recognizing the presence of the numinous *logos spermatikos* or the presence of a grace or the sacred which fundamentally and metaphysically united to the *Logos* in a mysterious continuity. This will certainly occasion a religious appreciation, respect or reverence from the part of Christianity. The degree of the intensity of such *logos spermatikos* presence will determine the quality and the obligation of reverence. Some of them are to be appreciated, some to be respected, others are to be given religious reverence, or even, if the intensity and the quality of the Holy's presence is so outstanding, the Catholic Church does not hesitate to "bow with reverence before the truth and holiness of other religions." By principle, "the Catholic Church rejects nothing which is true and holy in

those religions” (NA 2:20-21). For “whatever goodness or truth is found among peoples is looked upon by the Church as a preparation for the gospel. She regards such qualities as given by Him, who enlightens all men so that they may finally have life” (LG 16:19-21).

Positive Missionary Approaches

This revolutionary *novum* of the theology of inculturation mission of the Vatican Council II should be further considered in detail and ponderosity.

General Positive and Accommodating Approach

Justin attributes that every soul has been imbued by *sperma* so that every one receives *logos spermatikos* deriving from the *Logos*, the only Son of God, Jesus Christ (Ap. 1:7). How tiny and how suffocated it would be by original sin, its divine character and nature, as grace or God’s personal communication, one must not fail to acknowledge, recognize and revere “the *semina Verbi* hidden and sometimes buried in the heart of cultures” (PCC 1999:13). With this positive and accommodating attitude towards the goods, truths and values within our fellows, philosophy, cultures, ethical customs, traditions or morality, *Aha Erlebnis* will not fail to repeat as we with discernment ceaselessly “recognize the best” (Phil 1:10) of those various graces bestowed to every person, group of people or nations.

The phenomenon of increasingly cohesive unity of all peoples, “for all peoples comprise a single community, and have a single origin, since God made the whole race of men dwell over the entire face of the earth” (NA 1:7-9), occasions the Church to give foundation for such a positive and accommodating attitude. “One also is their final goal: God. His providence, his manifestations of goodness, and his saving designs extend to all men (cf. Wis 8:1; Acts 14:17; Rom 2:6-7; 1 Tim 2:4)... Men look to the various religions for answers to those profound mysteries of the human condition which, today even as in olden times, deeply stir the human heart: What is a man? What is the meaning and the purpose of our life?... What is the truth about death, judgment, and retribution beyond the grave? What, finally, is that ultimate and unutterable mystery which engulfs our being, and whence we take our rise, and whither our journey leads us?” (NA 1:9-20).

While considering this favourable condition of humanity, having the same origin, design and goal, though all have to wrestlingly endeavour to gain that common goal in *kairos*, the Church does not fail to admiringly hail the *logos spermatikos* present glittering in its various facets and mysteries of life. As if to welcome them all in respect and reverence, the Church exhorts: “From ancient times down to the present, there has existed among diverse peoples a certain perception of that hidden power which hovers over the course of things and over the events of human life; at times, indeed, recognition can be found of a Supreme Divinity and of Supreme Father too.

Such a perception and such a recognition instil the lives of these peoples with a profound religious sense. Religions bound up with cultural advancement have struggle to reply to these same questions with more refined concepts and in more highly developed language" (NA 2:1-7).

Dogmatical Strategy

It is true that this revolutionary missionary attitude from despising and considering non-Christian religion as work of Satan towards the positive and appreciating one has a strategic as well as dogmatically sound position. In nowadays rather exceeding secularism and erroneous humanism³² that culminates in the "death of God" theology, all religions including Christianity are menaced by some stubborn erosion of religious values and are in many ways put aside. Dogmatically sound doctrine notes that God is the Supreme Good and Truth, and all others are good or true as far as they participate in that Supreme Being (*Dz* 240; *TA* I:6:1:0; I:6:2:0; I:6:1:1). This applies, save the distinction of degree and quality of good and truth within religions and Christianity, whatever good and true derives from and belongs to God, and the "Church regards such qualities as given by Him." This will conclude that those goods and truths found among religions, cultures or traditions as well as within Christianity are real "brothers" stemming from the same Source. For, just like the incarnated *Logos* and Redeemer is "the one Goodness of God, who is in reality communicated diversely to His creatures, so also the unique mediation of the Redeemer does not exclude but rather gives rise among creatures to a manifold cooperation which is but a sharing in this unique source" (*LG* 62:14-17). This cooperation is properly needed in the common task of all religions to maintain and foster their goods and truths against any detriment for humanity. Dogmatically and psychologically, people of interreligious dialogue for this purpose and authentic implementation of interreligious harmony should first "search for that [good and truth] which unites, rather than separates."³³

Task to Lay Bare the Seeds of *Logos*

Justin's terminology *logos spermatikos*, the scattering and impermeating seeds of the Word, is self-made and self-propagated (*Ap.* I:60). Convinced that every good and truth springs from the Creator, God the Father, through

²⁰*GS* 56:19-24: "How is the independence which culture claims for itself to be recognized as legitimate without the promotion of a humanism which is merely earth-bound, and even contrary to religion itself?"

²¹Johannes Paulus II 1990 no. 56. Cf. Justin Martyr, *Ap.* I:67: On the Last Supper, when Jesus took bread and wine to be His body and blood, "this custom has been introduced and taken up in the rite of Mithra mystery... That bread and a glass water are prepared too for the dedication of a new member, while citing some maxim, all of you know it and still can experience."

his only begotten Son, Jesus Christ the *Logos*, and firm in his findings of this divine phenomenon all over religious world (cf. Ap. II:7), St. Justin is not only the discoverer but particularly the persistent activist of its foundation and implementation.

Obviously our religion is nobler than any human teaching and discovering, because for our sake Christ the whole *Logos* in body and soul has appeared, died and risen for the remission of our sins. Of course thinkers and law founders have found applied adequately, which, along with the *Logos* portion they received, they have developed through painful research and contemplation. Not only because of insufficiency but also tiny sharing of the *Logos*, Christ, sometimes they speak of it contradictorily and does not suffice a real salvation" (Ap. II:10).

In line with resolute task to be pursued, and the creative endeavour of its implementation, the Church has concluded, that the believers should go into the same path. Not in a tentative or experimental way, but rather in resolute and happy spirit of the Good Tidings. "Let them gladly and reverently laying bare the seeds of the Word, which lie hidden in them" (AG 11:13-14).

This is however a conclusion of a frame work after a range of considerations along with the context and "the signs of time" of the Vatican Council II. First of all is the very unpleasant relationship of wider world with the Jews. Man recalls of the long range of persecution history brought about on the Jews, especially in Europe. The proposal to adopt the topic of the Document started with the urgency to restore harmonious relationship with the Jews. The culminating stumble block was the imprint of the *decide*, the condemning Jesus to death by the Jews, as it is found in the Holy Script. This will be the major reason of the Jews persecution in the Nazi time (Card. Bea). This biblical antisemitic background is adopted in the Catholic Church especially in the liturgy of Good Friday. The question is as how to propose positive, welcoming and exhorting the believers to "gladly and reverently laying bare the seeds of the Word, which lie hidden in this religion."

Actually the works and sessions during this Council have first to remove liturgical and doctrinal elements detrimenting the Jews. Only afterwards the document speaks of "reconciliation": "The Church repudiates all persecutions against any man. Moreover, mindful of the common patrimony with the Jews, and motivated by the gospel's spiritual love and by no political considerations, she deplores the hatred, persecutions and displays of anti-Semitism directed against the Jews at any time and from any source" (NA 4:41-45). Herewith, even if the Council does not speak of "forgiveness" for the past, nevertheless it fosters and recommends "mutual understanding and respect which is the fruit above all of biblical and theological studies, and of brotherly dialogue" (Abbot 1966:657; Cf. GS 40:4).

As for the relationship with Muslims, the stumble block is the long range of *crusade*, starting at early eight century. "Although in the course of the centuries many quarrels and hostilities have arisen between Christian and Moslems, this most sacred Synod urges all to forget the past and to strive sincerely for mutual understanding. On behalf of all mankind, let them make common cause of safeguarding and fostering social justice, moral values, peace, and freedom" (NA 3: 11-16).

As for Hinduism, Buddhism and all world religions, as well as national and local "traditions", the discussions were of a easier task. The declaration of this Document has occasioned a substantial appeasement for wider world, and it is called to be the most important document for "a new era", from hatred to brotherly dialogue.

Whether it is risky for the safeguarding often small communities of Christians in Asia and many places in Africa, another side of the target is ratified, namely integration of the Christian small communities with their national and local communities. "Let them be joined to those men by esteem and love, and acknowledge themselves to be members of the group of men among whom they live... Let them be familiar with their national and religious traditions" (AG 10:12-13). Collecting that various cultural riches that springing from the *logos spermatikos*, "the Church respects and fosters the spiritual adornments and gifts of the various races and peoples" (SC 37:3-4).

Finally a resolute encouragement is given for an honest and tireless endeavour for gladly laying bare the seeds of the Word and to welcome its fruitful success. "Let them share in cultural and social life by the various exchanges and enterprises of human living" (AG 11:13-14). "Let them reflect attentively on how Christian religious life may be able to assimilate the ascetic and contemplative traditions whose seeds were already planted by God in ancient cultures prior to the preaching of the gospel" (AG 18:9-12).

Recognizing Particular Truths and Values

It is not enough only in general to mention the goodness and the truth in particular religion, culture, tradition or moral system. More over, it is required explicit mention of particular truth and values in a certain religion common to Christianity. "That [according to Christian doctrine] the world came into being through God's word out of primordial matter, so is it also understood by Platon and those of the same opinion. That which we have learnt all of you can firmly hold" (Ap. I:59).

The Church too has shown examples to exhort the believers to do the same. Respect and appreciation is given for the believers of Hindoo. "In Hinduism, men contemplate the divine mystery and express it through an unspent fruitfulness of myth. and through searching philosophical inquiry. They seek release from the anguish of our condition through ascetical

practices or deep meditation or a loving, trusting flight toward God" (NA 2:7-12). As for the Buddhism, "in its multiple forms acknowledges the radical insufficiency of this shifting world. It teaches a path by which men, in a devout and confident spirit, can either reach a state of absolute freedom or attain supreme enlightenment by their own efforts or by higher assistance" (NA 2:12-16).

Higher esteem and appreciation is given for Muslims. Belonging to the same faith father, Abraham, the Church rather praise the truth, faith and morality found within this religion. "Upon the Moslems, too, the Church looks with esteem. They adore one God, living and enduring, merciful and all-powerful, Maker of heaven and earth and Speaker to men. They strive to submit wholeheartedly even to His inscrutable decrees, just as did Abraham, with whom the Islamic faith is pleased to associate itself. ... In addition they await the day of judgment when God will give each man his due after raising him up. Consequently, they prize the moral life, and give worship to God especially through prayer, almsgiving and fasting" (NA 3:1-10).

Furthering the same line as the Church exemplifies above, one should involve himself in a mirific investigation of the concept of God among the Bataks as Creator of the universe and everything in it. This concept is rather pure and adequate to express him, *Mulajadi Nabolon*, as the creator of the universe genesis using the word *manòmpa* and *manjadihon* as the equivalent of *creare ex nihilo*, the absolute nature of eternity, the personal Being with right and almighty in himself, in addition to his merciful and loving character (Sinaga 1985:45-58). Moreover, the concept of priesthood together with celibacy would find much of *logos spermatikos* in the Batak high priest *Si Râja Indaïnda*, who was destined to be the high priest mediating the Creator with men. For that purpose he was chosen not to marry and everything he has, himself, his members, are to be offered for the sake of the world ("redeemer") (Niessen 1985:22-48; Hotman Manalu, *Hidup Tak Menikah dalam Budaya Batak* (Celibacy in Batak Culture). Even the seeds of the Word in preparation of Eucharist in the so called *sipir ni tondi horbobius* (soul shalom of *horbobius*), the highest buffalo sacrifice which is similar to the lamb of God in the Old Testament. Many other things could be investigated to "lay bare the seeds of the Word."

Identifying Prominence

The Church has exemplified the degree of the intensity of the *logos spermatikos* in mentioning, for example, that the Muslims "adore one God, living and enduring, merciful and all-powerful, Maker of heaven and earth and Speaker to men. They strive to submit wholeheartedly even to His inscrutable decrees, just as did Abraham, with whom the Islamic faith is pleased to associate itself. ... (NA 3:1-7).

Similar to it, St. Justin adds the prominent personalities of the intensive *logos spermatikos* while calling them “anonymous Christians”. “That Christ, as Logos, the only Son of God, in whom the whole humanity persistently participates, is a doctrine we maintain and previously have demonstrated to you. Those who live with reason are christians, whether they seemed do not believe in God, among the Greeks such as Socrates, Heraclit and the similar, and among not-Greeks are Abraham, Ananias, Azarias, Elias and many others...” (I:46).³⁴

That St. Justin has dared to identify the christianity of Socrates and Heraclit in the scale of Abraham, Ananias, Azarias and many others indicates the simultaneously the authenticity of the theological and pastoral method in the Catholic Church and also the task to look for other “anonymous Christians” in many religions, notwithstanding in the Batak religion. Together with St. Justin we would conclude: “There are many [of non-Christians], who, with obvious evidences love and strive for truths, not for the sake of false honour nor moved by erroneous emotions, have resulted in conviction and faith” (Ap. II:53).

Of such great “anonymous Christians” personalities, St. Justin selects some. Plato was praised for his honest and persistent search for truths and *logos spermatikos* as well as the very close similarity between his world structure and that of the chosen Israel (Ap. II:60). Socrates is esteemed for the same persecution together with Christ and the Christians: “When Socrates appeared with true reason, and in more adequate evidences things exposed in order to free men from demons, the Satan killed him through people who enjoy carnal pleasures, for he was considered an atheist and religion blasphemer who introduced new gods. Right the same argument and way they have impose on us” (Ap. I:5). We have mentioned also some prominent figure of the stoicism philosophy, such as Heraclit (I:46).

In the Batak theology, to mention only some, in addition tu the rather pure concept on *Mulajadi Nabolon*, the Creator, we would not forget *Si Ràja Indapàti*, whom we have proposed above. He is the “high priest” of the Bataks who is destined to and died for the sake of human well being. We note also the virtue of *Si Ràja Ma Hu* who is ever ready to be sacrificed for the sake of humanity, as did Jesus Christ (Warneck 1915:347).

To what extend the Church would welcome in concrete the truths and personalities who are intensely imbued by the *logos spermatikos* is still an enigmatic questions. Any how, the Church “proclaims the highest destiny of man and champions of divine seeds of the Word, which has been sown in him” (GS 3:16-18). An indicative criteria is given by the Constitution for

²²To develop the logic of the “Christianity” of many personalities before and outside Christianity, St Justin notes: “Therefor, who lived before [Christ] without reason (*logos*), bad men, are enemies of Christ and murder of those who lived according to reason and still alive, is a Christian and can live without fear of anxiety” (Ap. II:46 and 12).

Liturgy. The Church “respects and fosters the spiritual adornment and gifts of the various races and peoples. Anything in their way of life that is not indissolubly bound up with superstition and error she studies with sympathy and, if possible, preserves intact. Sometimes in fact she admit such things into the liturgy itself, as long as they harmonize with its true and authentic spirit” (SC 37:3-8).

How to Sublime Logos Spermatikos

A fundamental question to be first resolved on this endeavour is how to coherently harmonize the two expressions of the Church. On the one hand the Church “proclaims the champions of divine seeds of the Word, which has been sown in him” (GS 3:16-17). She also praises that truths and values found within the Muslim religion, while upon it “the Church looks with esteem. They adore one God, living and enduring, merciful and all-powerful, Maker of heaven and earth and Speaker to men...” (NA 3:1-4). But on the other hand the Church states: “Indeed, she proclaims and must ever proclaim Christ, ‘the way, the truth, and the life’ (John 14:6), in whom men find the fullness of religious life, and in whom God has reconciled all things to Himself (cf. 2 Cor 5:18-19)” (NA 2:24-27). This is as to ask a question, what is the nature and the obligation of missionary activities.

Christ is to Be Proclaimed

There are many fundamental and absolute reasons to exclaim together with St. Paul: “I should be punished if I did not preach the Gospel” (1 Cor 9:16; cf. Ac 4:20; Mk 16:16). For “the whole Church is missionary, and the work of evangelization is a basic duty of the People of God” (AG 35:1-2).

For St. Justin in particular and for the Church in general there are at least four basic reasons for missionary obligation. It is the original sin in the salvation history that has brought sin into the world so that “all men are sinful” (NA 4:46). This is also the reason of the divine decision on the *Logos* incarnation from the time of Messianic promise for the salvation of humanity (Rouët 1928:141). “He was torn away from the land of the living; for our faults struck down in death They gave him a grave with the wicked, a tomb with the rich, thou he had done no wrong and there had been no perjury in his mouth. God has been pleased to crush him with suffering, if he offers his life in atonement, he shall see his heirs... and through him what Yahwe wishes will be done. ... By his sufferings shall my servant justify many, taking their faults on himself” (Ap. I:51).

In that sense, even if there is an omnipresence of *logos spermatikos*, because of the original sin, only the almighty *Logos* is and has been able to save them (Rouët 1928:136, 146).

Nevertheless, there is no negation of the efficacy of the *logos spermatikos*, which is also in unity and at the command of the *Logos*. But in itself, the *logos spermatikos* alone does not suffice (cf. Rouët 1928:144). Therefore, Christ is to be proclaimed and received without fault in order to be saved.

Another reason for the unconditional proclamation of Jesus Christ is the insufficiency of the *logos spermatikos* in front of the almighty saving power of the full *Logos* (Rouët 1928:136), Jesus Christ. "It is obvious that our religion is nobler than any human teaching, because for our sake Christ the whole *Logos* has appeared in body, *Logos* and soul. For, even if thinkers and law founders have found and put it adequately, which, along with the *Logos* portion they received, they have developed through painful research and contemplation. Right because they did not share the whole *Logos*, Christ, sometimes they speak of it contradictorily" (Ap. II:10).

Further reason of the imperative to proclaim Jesus Christ is the efficacy of the demons' power exercised for the detriment of not only the application of the *logos spermatikos* but also directly to the persons who honestly and persistently endeavour to live it. "When Socrates appeared with true reason, and in more adequate evidences things exposed in order to free men from demons, the Satan killed him through people who enjoy carnal pleasures, for he was considered an atheist and religion blasphemer who introduced new gods" (Ap. I:5).

Finally, the reason is the command of the supreme authority of God Creator to man the created. This is also the absolute condition for salvation. "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you..." (Mt 28:18-20).³⁵ "He who believes and is baptised will be saved; he who does not believe will be condemned" (Mk 16:16). (cf. Ap. I:60). "There can be no true evangelization without the explicit proclamation of Jesus as Lord. The Second Vatican Council and the Magisterium ... have repeatedly stressed the primacy of the proclamation of Jesus Christ in all evangelizing work" (EA 19).

Love Commandment

The fundamental and utmost rule of the Lord is the love commandment. "Love God with whole heart and strength, and your neighbour as yourself." The commandment of doing mission is secondary compared with this utmost first commandment.³⁶

²³AG 7: "The Mystical Body of Christ unceasingly gathers and directs its forces toward its own growth (cf. Eph. 4:11-6). The members of the Church are impelled to carry on such missionary activity by reason of the love with which they love God and by which they desire to share with all men in the spiritual goods of both this life and the life to come"

²⁴NA 5: "We cannot in truthfulness call upon that God who is the Father of all if we

To further develop this neighbour love commandment, in Indonesia, it is propagated in other wording together with different underlines, namely "genuine brotherhood" (*persaudaraan sejati*). Fitting the *logos spermatikos* theology, there are five elements in the *genuine brotherhood*. First is *good thinking* as never to think bad of neighbours. Whatever, especially *logos spermatikos* in one's neighbour should be first seen from good edge, never negative. All know that in every person there positive and negative aspects. But the principle *genuine brotherhood* first of all we have to look for positive quality. This principle will stress that one should look for in his neighbour what unites rather than divides. This the most fundamental in the commandment of to love neighbour as oneself.

Further is the principle *good will*. One should will that is good for his neighbours. In the Christian first commandment there is no space for willing bad for his neighbours. This is to anticipate some negative relationship among believers of different religions. There has to be too much mistrust, misunderstanding or rather envy among them. These are to be eliminated and to be replaced with convincing good will.³⁷

In addition there should be *good doing*.³⁸ There are two aspects, namely reflexive and communitary. For oneself, reflexive, one should try to live a good life, if possible exemplary for his neighbours. Among so many chaotic and sometimes terrorist society, from the Catholic part it is expected to be good citizen. As for the communitary *good doing*, along with the principle of religious "dialogue of life", having harmonious relationship with one's neighbours and communitary circle, the principle of *good doing* is developed into further societal relationship principle, namely: In relationship with one's neighbours, the Catholic should not be a *part of problem* but of *solution* of problems.

Another explication of the love commandment is *good collaborating*. The Catholics are called to and should be considered to be a good collaborator for any working together for communitary development, be it in the social project or in field of religious harmonious dialogue. Especially in the latter the Catholic group has to be and should be given credit as a good collaboration bridge among religious denominations. It becomes a society conviction, in order to start an interreligious harmonious dialogue, the Catholic denomination has to be in, because among other religious groups alone it is rather impossible to sit together.

Finally, of the love commandment, it is explicated to be a principle of

refuse to act in brotherly way towards certain men, created though they be to God's image. A man's relationship with God the Father and his relationship with his brother men are so linked together that Scripture says: "He who does not love does not know God" (1 Jn 4:8)."

²⁵Ap. I:14: "We pray for our enemies and we look for ways of reconciliation with them who hate us..." Cf. 15.

²⁶Cfr. Ap. I:16.

good bearing.³⁹ This principle, based on the example of Jesus Christ to suffer and to suffer up to death in the cross (Phil 2:5) for the sake of humanity, is further explicated. The Catholics, even if inadequate to Jesus Christ, to be authentic Christian, has to take part in the suffer of his Lord. Everyone who wishes to follow Him has to carry His cross. Not to suffer up to death, even not to be crucified, but a portion of suffering he has ready to accept, especially in relationship with his co-citizen of different religion. Christ's cross should be seen not as a curse but rather a hope and strength.

Religious Right is the Most Fundamental Human Right

According to human rights 1948, religious right to his conviction and belief in God according to his personal way is to be respected and secured legally. According to the Indonesian *Pancasila* as to expand the principle of "belief in God",⁴⁰ religious right belongs to the most fundamental human right, because this is the command of the Creator to his created.

In the frame of the Indonesian *genuine brotherhood* principles, the decree of the Council Vatican II applies: "In witness of Christian faith and life, acknowledge, preserve, and promote the spiritual and moral goods found among men, as well as the values in their societies" (NA 2). There must be an unrefusable right for witness of one's own religion and its application to societal expressions.

It is right to understand the meaning of "evangelization". "Evangelizing means bringing the Good News into all the strata of humanity, and through its influence transforming humanity from within and making it new... It is a question not only of preaching the Gospel in ever wider geographic areas or to ever greater numbers of people, but also of affecting and as it were upsetting, through the power of the Gospel, mankind's criteria of judgment, determining values, points of interest, lines of thought, sources of inspiration and models of life, which are in contrast with the World of God and the plan of salvation" (*Evangelii Nuntiandi* 18f.).

We agree that "split between the Gospel and culture is without a doubt the drama of our time, just it was of other times. Therefore every effort must be made to ensure a full evangelization of culture, or more correctly of cultures. They have to be regenerated by and encounter with the Gospel. But this encounter will not take place if the Gospel is not proclaimed" (*ibid.*).

But this universal right for mission, depending on the right methods and human fundamental right measure is also to be acknowledged for other religions. Any how the fundamental right to live one's own conviction, to witness and to proclaim his religion is to be guaranteed.

³⁷Cfr. Ap. I:25, 55, 57; II:1.

³⁸Indonesian Human Right Law (No. 39, 1999) § 22: "1) Everyone is free to choose his own religion and live according to his religion or conviction; 2) Public authority is to legally guarantee every one to choose his own religion and to practice his own religion or conviction."

Positive Ecclesial Inculturation

Local Churches are invited and encouraged to study the traditional cultures and religious practices of their own region, to adapt a discernment of values, customs and rites which might help root Christianity more deeply in local cultures (cf. AG 19,22).

“In the process of encountering the world’s different cultures, the Church not only transmits her truths and values and renews cultures from within, but she also takes from the various cultures the positive element already found in them. This is the obligatory path for evangelizes in presenting the Christian faith and making it part of a people’s cultural heritage. Conversely the various cultures, when refined and renewed in the light of the Gospel, can become true expressions of the one Christian faith. ‘Through inculturation the Church, for her part, becomes a more intelligible sign of what she is, and a more effective instrument of mission’ (*Redemptoris Missio* 1991 no. 52). This engagement with cultures has always been part of the Church’s pilgrimage through history. But it has a special urgency today in the multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multi-cultural situation of Asia, where Christianity is still too often seen as foreign” (EA 21).

If local Churches are to touch people’s hearts, proclaiming the Gospel to the young and to adults, and celebrating salvation in the liturgy demand not only profound knowledge of their faith, but also a knowledge of the cultural environment. It is certain that peoples love their own culture, as a special part of their own life, which does not contradict their absolute faith in Christ. It is in that culture that they live and profess their Christian faith. Bishops, priest, religious, all believers need to develop a sensitivity to this culture, in order to protect and to promote culture in the light of Gospel values, above all when it is a minority culture.

It is just in the same path of inculturation that popular piety becomes an evidence of osmoses in the matching of the innovative power of the Gospel and the deepest levels of culture. It is one of the foremost opportunities for people to meet the living Christ just in environment and milieu of their own culture.

“There needs to be a constant pastoral discernment of popular piety as it evolves, in order to discover its genuine spiritual values and bring them to fruition in Christ ‘so that... it might lead to a sincere conversion and a practical exercise of charity’ (cf. *Ecclesia in America* 16). Popular piety is the way a people expresses its faith and its relationship to God and his Providence, to Our Lady and the saints, to one’s neighbour, to those who have died or to creation, and it strengthens its belonging to the Church. Purifying and catechising expressions of popular piety can, in certain regions, be a decisive element for an in-depth evangelization to support and to develop a true community awareness in the sharing of faith, particularly through the demonstration of the religiosity of people of God as in the

celebration of major religious feast (cf. LG 67). This humble measure available to everyone, and allow the faithful to express their faith, be strong in hope and demonstrate their love. Daily life in many lands is coloured by a strong sense of the sacred. A valid pastoral approach should promote and make the most of holy places, sanctuaries and pilgrimages, holy days and holy nights, liturgical vigils and adoration, holy things or sacramentals, remembrances and the sacred season for the liturgy... Popular piety naturally cries out for artistic expression. Those with pastoral responsibility must encourage creativity in all areas: ritual, music, song, decoration etc..." (PTC 1999 28).

The more appropriate and formal places of exercising the imbuing and impermeating *logos spermatikos* are parishes and ecclesial basic communities. Therefore, pastors are urged to form parish assembly led by parish priest and comprising prominent religious, believers, especially women, youth. They develop pastoral planning that comprises within their pastoral mission: religious inculturation, cultural, political, economic, justice. The vitalizing of Christian community, a parish, which is united by the faith, happens in a parish or ecclesial community. It is a normal "schools of faith" as it celebrates Eucharist, bear witness to the living faith and to Christ's love and it constitutes a profoundly human centre of religious education. In a variety of forms, it is parish as communion of communities the fundamental and original 'school of faith' and 'ecclesial formation'. While believers in parish are introduced to faith and enlightened from cultural background in order to give foundation to living faith and profound understanding of the Church, a start of inculturation happens.

Right in that "'participatory Church', a church that is, in which all live their proper vocation and perform their proper role, they build up the 'communion of mission' and the 'mission of communion'. There in parish and ecclesial basic community, every member's unique charisma needs to be acknowledged, developed and effectively utilized" (EA 25). Guided by the all-inspiring Holy Spirit, it is in that Church, "where clergy, consecrated persons and the laity are engaged in a 'dialogue of life and heart'" (*Ibid*), the inculturation of faith and tradition will take place.

Convinced of living faith which is based and centred in Jesus Christ and the Trinity, that has been formed and crystallized in local Church, in the concrete and envisaged environment and milieu of particular Church, this assembly of clergy, religious and believer prominents will consider some area and points of inculturation through a more favourable path along with religious inculturation or popular devotion. Accompanied by their experts and specialists, they will put it in a program according to the principles given by the Church: "That they may be able to give this witness to Christ fruitfully, let them be joined to those men by esteem and love, and acknowledge themselves to be members of the group of men among whom

they live. Let them share in cultural and social life by the various exchanges and enterprises of human living. Let them be familiar with their national and religious traditions, gladly and reverently laying bare the seeds of Word which lie hidden in them" (AG 11).

Helped also by some points of principles in this article as a developed actualization of the endeavours, such a program needs evaluation and reinforcement. Any endeavour or enterprise is certainly subjected to success or obstacle. The evaluation is done not only by experts or prominent persons within the Church, but also by that diocesan or parish assembly, clergy, religious and believers as to exercise their "sense of faith". Only the crystallisation of this "sense of faith" will decide whether that elements of culture and popular devotion to be "cleaned", "purified" or "sublimed" before they are taken into Christian religious treasures or simply to be abandoned. "The Church rather respects and fosters the spiritual adornments and gifts of the various races and peoples. Anything in their way of life that is not indissolubly bound up with superstition and error she studies with sympathy and, if possible, preserves intact. Sometimes in fact she admits such things into the liturgy itself, as long as they harmonize with its true and authentic spirit" (SC 37).

Translocation or Transformation Inculturation

Pattern of inculturation should follow the mystery of Jesus Christ. Along with the principle of incarnation, *Logos* made man, a man in concrete and particular cultural patrimony, the Jew, is not to be denied. The principle of *logos spermatikos* as it is developed by St. Justin Martyr, it is by large developed along with this principle of incarnation. The *Logos* which by and within the eternal Father in creation became *logos spermatikos* and in incarnation became Jesus Christ, the only Son of the Father and the full *Logos*.

But the mystery of Christ is not only found within his incarnation. Not less important is his death⁴¹ in the cross and his most eminent resurrection. Christ's Incarnation, his birth at Christmas, the mystery of his Passion, the Redemption at Easter, an Pentecost, which allows everyone, by the power of the Spirit, to hear marvels of God in his own tongue, is the full redemptive act for the salvation of the world (III Conferencia General del Episcopado Latino-Americano, Puebla, Puebla, no. 405). Therefore, many other things are to be considered and applied in the task of inculturation.

According to this comprehensive consideration of inculturation, every adaptation of Catholic Church into a local inculturation submits three

²⁹ Also in terms of inculturation, the Church urges us to ever proclaim the cross and the death of Christ. "It is the duty of the Church's preaching to proclaim the cross of Christ as the sign of God's all-embracing love and as the fountain from which ever grace flows" (NA 4).

phases of process, each with its principle and criteria.

First is the detection, selection and detachment of a noble cultural element from its context and habitat in the non-Christian cultural tradition. From among many elements within the traditional heritage, we have to select only the noble and the apt one. This element, as it were, has to die from and for the original tradition for Jesus Christ. Take for example the idea of a high priest, *Si Ràja Indapàti*, who was the mediator between the Creator and the creation, From the parti of the Creator, *Mulajàdi Nabòlon*, he is to dispense various gift and benediction. From the part of men, he is to offer sacrifice, praise, petitions and gratitude. It is said that he was divinely elected from among the living to assume this 'cardinal' function. He was pure and holy, did not marry, and when he died all members of his body were transformed to be the benefit of the world ('redeemer').

Even if the suitability is outstanding to be compared with Jesus Christ, but *Si Ràja Indapàti* remains in the figurative function and by no means to be equal, even comparison. He is only a human being, not God. There is no idea of redeemer, of a saviour nor resurrection. Therefore, in order to indicate the idea, there is only a figurative. Among the Jew tradition also, there is a very far comparison of the Old Testament Melchisedech, but the continuity of tradition of the same salvation history affects the similarity. The figure of *Si Ràja Indàinda* is first to be detached from its all background and significance, and put in a state to be transformed.

Secondly it is in the part of the Christian theological suitability to be proved. From this part everything is critically to be sought in how expand and limit the idea of *Si Ràja Indàinda* could be understood if its idea is to be adapted in the explanation of Christ the High Priest. In the Judaic tradition the theology of priesthood is so unique and ramifically developed, so that no identification is possible. By no means is Jesus Christ to be replaced by *Si Ràja Indapati*. What is remarkably prepared in the mind of the Batak on a high priest is to gratefully welcome.

Third is the elaboration of that detached element as to fit the requirement of the new function. The significant role of the *Si Ràja Indàinda* is only a *preparatio evangelica*, the preparation of the Good Tidings. Only for that purpose, the idea of this figure has to be subjected to death for its origin and to be raised totally in a new function. Here in no way may happen a *translocation* inculturation, as if to pick only that part to be inculturated from the old habitat in order to implant in a new function, in Christianity. Instead, it has first to be transformed, as it were died and raised in a new state, before to be inserted in the new Christian meaning. This is the position held on inculturation theology which has been corrected by the Bishops' Synod 1985, no. 6. There is noted that in every inculturation, a similar process with Jesus Christ, died and risen in a new form and significance is required. This could be called to be a *transformative inculturation* as it is opposed to a *translocation inculturation*.

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Daftar Singkatan:

PCC = Pontifical Council for Culture

TA = Thomas Aquino