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# Christian Religious Education on the Local Culture of the Tiwah Ceremony in Central Kalimantan in Line with Christian Teachings

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#### **Abstract**

The learning process of Christian Religious Education is a systematic activity that involves many components in it. The good planning is needed so all these components can be implemented. This research is motivated by the existence of students who are less actively involved when participating in Christian Religious Education because the class is dominated by educators. This research aims to describe the importance for an educator to plan a learning process that can increase the activeness and involvement of students in learning. The research uses descriptive qualitative research methods with a literature study approach. From this research it is concluded that in planning Christian Religious Education learning, an educator needs to: understand the uniqueness of students both in their intelligence and learning styles, formulate learning objectives that are able to facilitate students to be actively involved in learning, use varied learning methods, use supporting learning facilities and infrastructure, and make learning assessments that focus on student activeness.

Keywords: learning; student activity; teaching planning

#### Introduction

Education is a process that lasts throughout the ages and occurs in societies that are diverse in terms of race, ethnicity, religion, class, and customs (Tatang & Deak, 2022). Christian religious education is also an education that teaches faith in Christ, the Bible is not only a source of educational information, but also has various learning approaches that can be used by believers today. God wants everyone to know and love Him, so He shows Himself to man in various ways (Pakpahan, Sihombing, et al., 2022). The recognition in question is not just intellectual knowledge, but an ongoing personal relationship (Mark 12:30).

In essence, the Ngaju Dayak tribe adheres to the Kaharingan religion, or rather the belief. Kaharingan is the traditional belief of the Dayak tribe of Kalimantan. Kaharingan means to grow or live, as meant by danum kaharingan (water of life). This means tribal religion or belief in God Almighty (Ranying). This tradition has been inherited from the Dayak tribe of Kalimantan until the Indonesian government forced them to adhere to one of the religions recognized by the government of the Republic of Indonesia.

It is important to remember that the involvement of Christians in Hindu kaharingan rituals can vary based on their personal and family beliefs. These rituals may be performed in a more traditional way by some, but elements of Christianity may also be included. This shows how diverse religious beliefs are among the Dayak people who have converted to Christianity (Kearifan et al., 2024). However, in the area of Central Kalimantan where people have embraced Christianity, but they still follow their native culture, perform various Kaharingan rituals, in fact, there are people who continue to do things related to idolatry and black magic, which is contrary to the Christian faith, so Christianity in this area is considered syncretic (Tumbol & Wainarisi, 2023).

God chose the Israelites to live a holy life and to fear Him. Therefore, He gave them many commandments to follow and do, one of which was that they should not defile themselves by asking the soothsayers or spirits. God gave the Israelites a command, as recorded in Leviticus 19:31: "Do not turn to spirits or to the spirits of fortune tellers; do not seek them and thus become unclean because of them; I am the LORD your God." Since the spirit of the seer or the spirit of the dead communicates or seeks guidance (sign) to the spirit, this verse expressly asks the Israelites not to "turn away" and "seek" the spirit of the seer. The Bible commands, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and to Him alone shalt thou serve (Matthew 4:10) (Nidin, Simanjuntak, & Deak, 2022).

In the tiwah ceremony that is carried out, of course, it is contrary to the word of God as explained above that the soul or spirit of the dead person cannot relate to the soul or spirit of the living person, be it in the practice of summoning the spirit of the dead, which is usually done by shamans, not in accordance with the truth of God's words in some cultures. The Bible states that the spirit or soul of a person who dies will go to heaven or hell, and they cannot have any contact with the living (Krisnando, Objantoro, & Darmawan, 2019).

Although there have been many studies that discuss the Tiwah Ceremony as a cultural heritage and religious expression of the Dayak people in Central Kalimantan (Saputra & Sihombing, 2022; Wijaya, 2024), most of the studies are descriptive-anthropological and focus on the ritual, symbolic, and social aspects of Tiwah without empirically examining the influence of Christian Religious Education on the perception and practice of this local culture. Studies on the contextualization of the gospel in Dayak culture have indeed emerged (Nugraha, 2021), but there has not been much research that systematically links the content of the curriculum, teaching methods, and values in Christian Religious Education with changes in Christians' attitudes towards Tiwah, both in the form of rejection, adaptation, and theological reinterpretation. In addition, previous research has tended to ignore the role of Christian Religious Education teachers, pastors, and indigenous leaders as important actors in establishing a dialogue between the Christian faith and local culture. Thus, there is still a research gap in understanding how the process of religious education can be a transformational factor for complex local cultural practices such as Tiwah. The novelty of this article lies in its attempt to integrate theological, pedagogical, and anthropological perspectives to empirically explain the influence of Christian Religious Education on the preservation and reinterpretation of Tiwah local cultural values that are in line with Christian teachings, through a research approach that combines empirical and contextual analysis.

#### Methods

This study uses a library research method to obtain relevant data and information about the influence of Christian Religious Education on the local culture of the Tiwah Ceremony in Central Kalimantan which is in line with Christian teachings. The research process is carried out through several systematic stages. The first stage is the identification of problems and the focus of the study, where the author formulates the research focus to be directed at the relationship between Christian Religious Education and the local culture of Tiwah. The second stage is the collection of literature sources, which is carried out by browsing various literature such as scientific books, national and international journal articles, research reports, and academic writings that discuss Christian Religious Education, Dayak culture, Tiwah Ceremonies, and the contextualization of the Christian faith in local culture. These sources are obtained through various scientific databases such as Google Scholar.

The next stage is the reading and understanding of the content of the literature, where the author critically examines the content of each source to understand the arguments, findings, and its theoretical and practical relevance to the research topic. After that, the analysis and processing of library data was carried out by grouping data based on main themes, such as the values of Christian Religious Education, symbolic meaning in Tiwah, and forms of cultural adaptation and contextualization. Furthermore, the author synthesizes and draws conclusions by compiling the results of the analysis logically and systematically to answer the formulation of the research problem. Through these stages, the research is expected to produce a deep conceptual understanding of how Christian Religious Education can influence Christians' understanding, attitudes, and practices towards the local culture of Tiwah within a framework that is in harmony with the teachings of the Christian faith.

# Findings and Discussion Tiwah Ceremony

Since April 20, 1980, kaharingan beliefs and other tribal religions have been included in the category of Hinduism because of the similarities in the use of means of life and the implementation of sacrificial rituals to attain God Almighty (Usop, 2016). Tjilik Ruwut used kaharingan when he became a Resident of Sampit in Banjarmasin in 1944. After the Japanese occupation in 1945, Kaharingan was referred to as the name of the Dayak religion. Then, at the congress of the Indonesian Kaharingan Dayak union in 1950, the official term was used as a generic term for the Dayak religion.

According to the Hindu religion of Kaharingan, the tiwah ritual is carried out because it is considered to send the spirit to Ranying Hatallalangit, who will purify the spirit to gain new life with Ranying Hatalla, or called the refinement of the spirit of liau balawang panjang (the element of the father). By performing this tiwah ceremony, the two spirits will become more holy, so that they can be united with Allah (Ranying Hatalla). That is, "Tiwah Ceremony" is a term used to refer to the skeleton of the body to the final resting place.

This tradition is only practiced by the Dayak tribe in Central Kalimantan. The Tiwah ceremony involves purifying and transferring the body from the grave to a place called Sandung or balai nyahu to send ancestral spirits to the afterlife. Upaca tiwah, a ritual carried out by the Dayak tribe to escort spirits to their place of origin (lewu tatau, or heaven) with

Ranying Hatala, the highest deity in the Kaharingan belief. Tiwah traditional ceremonies are only carried out by the Dayak tribe of Central Kalimantan.

For the Dayak people in Central Kalimantan, especially the inland Dayaks who adhere to the Kaharingan religion as their ancestral religion, Tiwah is a final ritual death ceremony. The Tiwah ceremony is a ceremonial tradition carried out by the Dayak tribe who adhere to the Hindu religion of Kaharingan. This ritual ceremony is a blessing and honor for the family who performs it for the family members who have died. This is because they did it outside of the Palidan covenant with the spirit of the deceased family.

According to Kaharingan's belief, at the very least, it was a great catastrophe and misery for the family of the deceased who was left behind due to the adverse impact that resulted in death. The family will face disaster if they do not follow the traditional path before the tiwah ceremony is over, because the tiwah ceremony is the last ritual according to Kaharingan beliefs that will release and liberate the family left behind from catastrophe in the real world. The traditional ceremony of Tiwah is carried out with the aim of straightening the spirit or spirit concerned to Lewu Tatau (Heaven-place of Sangiang) so that they can live safely and peacefully in the realm of the Almighty (Dyson & Asharini, 1980). The Dayak Kaharingan, or people who were originally Kaharingan, often change religions, even changing their religion several times depending on who they marry. For them, religion is no more important than the Kaharingan tribe or customs.

#### **Contextual Teachings**

Contextual learning is learning that relates learning materials to the real-world context that a person faces every day, both in the family environment, society, the surrounding environment and the world of work, so that students are able to make a connection between the knowledge they have and its application in daily life, by involving seven main components of learning, namely: constructivism, questioning, inquiry, and social Learning Community, Modeling, Reflection, and Authentic Assessment (Jumadi, 2004).

Contextual learning is one of the learnings that emphasizes that students must know the implementation of the knowledge they gain so that the knowledge will be meaningful for students. The knowledge that students have must be related to the real world or the student's daily life. If students find a lot of connections in learning, then the knowledge they have will be more meaningful (Muhartini, Mansur, & Bakar, 2023). Contextual learning is actually a completely new approach. The basis of contextual learning has been developed by John Dewey since 1916. This approach was then reexplored, redeveloped, and popularized by The Washington State Concorcium for Contextual Teaching and Learning involving 11 colleges, 20 schools, and institutions engaged in the world of education in the United States. Jumadi, "Contextual Learning and Its Implementation." In another sense, contextual learning is an educational process that aims to motivate students to understand the meaning of learning materials by relating them to daily life (personal, social, and cultural contexts) so that students have knowledge/skills that can be flexibly applied from one problem/context to another (Muhartini et al., 2023).

Based on the above explanation, it is concluded that contextual learning theory emphasizes the importance of relating learning materials to real-world contexts faced daily,

such as the family environment, society, the environment, and the world of work. The goal is for students to be able to connect the knowledge they gain with its application in real life, so that the knowledge is more meaningful.

## The Role of Christian Religious Education in a Pluralistic Society

A pluralistic society is an Indonesian society characterized by the diversity of social units based on race, ethnicity, customs, culture and religion. Criteria for classifying races are used based on biological or physical characteristics. In general, the physical signs used are body shape, head shape, face shape, nose shape, skin color and hair shape. Race is characterized by the presence of physical characteristics, four racial groups can be distinguished, namely Papuan Melanesoids, Negroids, Weddoids, and Mongolian Malays (Simatupang, 2024). Furnivall states that a pluralistic society is a society consisting of two or more elements that live alone, without any mixing of each other in a single political unit. Ministry of National Education in 2002, Pluralistic society is a society that is divided into unity groups that often have different cultures (Simatupang, 2024).

Talking about a pluralistic society, Kisten Religious Education has a very important role in guiding everyone to do the truth, because basically some people In other words, it can be called theological apathy means not wanting to know, not careing, and not paying attention to anything related to theology (Mukti, Deak, & Simangunsong, 2023). By Therefore, Christian religious education is a duty and responsibility in the form of an effort to nurture and educate all its citizens to reach a level of maturity in faith, hope and love in order to carry out their mission in this world to await the second coming of God with Christian religious education (Simatupang, 2024).

#### Christian Religious Education is Committed to the Spiritual

The term spiritual comes from Latin, which means "spirituality," and in English it means a state that is not materially manifested. As stated in John 4:24, "God is spirit, and whoever worships Him must worship Him in spirit and truth." Thus, the term spiritual is closely related to the things or sources of God that are an important part of our lives as human beings, because we are His creatures. According to Sijabat (1996) in the Indonesian Journal of Contextual Theology, spirituality is an experience that is lived. When discussing spirituality, it refers to one's relationship with God, which cannot be compared to human knowledge. The essence of this spirituality is God Himself with His presence in believers. In a pluralistic society, true spirituality does not focus on religious activities that cause conflict or chaos. On the contrary, spiritual activities can deepen and feel God's presence in our lives. By applying spirituality in oneself, there will be no chaos between religious people.

#### Christian Religious Education Down to Social

In response to social change in a Christian way, the Role of Christian Religious Education is expected to be able to encourage social change in general through cooperation with people from other religions. This cooperation does not mean that you have to betray your own religious beliefs and beliefs. Respecting the beliefs of others, while still maintaining and respecting one's own beliefs, is a must for Christians. God places His people in this world so

that they are also responsible for the social conditions around them. God gives His people a mission to love, testify, and serve, as exemplified by His disciples. According to Stott, mission is man's response to divine assignment. Mission encompasses the entire Christian lifestyle, including responsibility to spread the gospel and social responsibility, based on the belief that Christ sent us into the world as the Father sent Him. Therefore, we must go into the world to live and work for Him.

Christian Religious Education mission is to bring about change in social life in the midst of a diverse society and to understand and internalize spiritual principles that are believed or believed to be often associated with the development of identity (Deak & Geovani, 2024). This can be achieved if we understand that God's purpose for His people is to bring love and concern to others, as He says: "Love your neighbor as yourself." God wants His chosen people to do what He has done, which is to care for others and play a role in solving social problems, starting from the immediate environment.

Christian Religious Education as a Means of Evangelism

The role of Christian Religious Education in a pluralistic society not only aims to open the hearts of Christians to other faiths and strengthen faith independence, but also to bring evangelism into a diverse society. Homriehausen stated that the church is called to convey God's word to everyone, based on the fact that God sent Jesus Christ into the world to atone for the sins of mankind (John 3:16) (Kezya, 2003). This shows that God does not want anyone to perish, as stated in 2 Peter 3:9b, "For he wills that no one should perish, but that all should turn and repent." Jesus also commanded His disciples in Matthew 28:18-20 to evangelize, with the essence of this Great Commission being "Make disciples of all nations," which means that all people must obey Christ.

In the Epistle of Titus, part 2, verses 1–15, Paul instructs Titus to exhort, preach, and teach adults about all sound doctrines (Santosa, Olyvia, & Deak, 2021). This includes roles, responsibilities, ways of life, and ways to demonstrate an adult's inner attitude through his or her relationship with God and others (Prihanto, Olivya, Deak, & Heavenny, 2022). Therefore, it is also the church not only serves as a container through which God can get to know us, but it also serves as a place where members of the church grow morally, socially, and physically. This helps them become dignified congregations and truly become believers in Jesus Christ (Nidin et al., 2022). Faith can also act as a belief or belief faith can simply be interpreted as a belief in God, or God, as well as everything related to God, including His words (Deak, Haans, Olsin, & Siwalete, 2022).

Evangelism is a task given to the church and believers, which must be carried out on an ongoing basis through the role of the Christian Religious Education (Napitupulu, 2022). Christian Religious Education helps every believer to bring others to become disciples of Christ, as taught by Jesus, because He is the only one who is great and has the power to do anything, God's power cannot be compared to anything (Olyvia, Deak, & Fau, 2022). Therefore, it is important for believers to understand PAK correctly in order to carry out the preaching of God's word to those who have not yet repented, so that Christian Religious Education's goals can be achieved. However, carrying out the role of Christian Religious Education in a pluralistic society is not an easy task. Therefore, the Christian Religious Education must develop comprehensively, both in perfection and in proficiency in preaching the Gospel. It is essential to conduct the analysis stage to know the vision and mission of the church, the needs of the coaching, the goals of the coaching, and the appropriate strategy for the early adult coaching of the church (Pakpahan, Simanjuntak, & Deak, 2022). Christian

Religious Education as a means in a diverse society requires a contextual approach, which includes social, cultural, service, and economic contexts.

Christian Religious Education in general contextual theology

It is very necessary to provide an explanation of the definition of contextualization to be later associated with Christian education. Hesselgrave defines contextualization by saying that it is an attempt to present a supracultural gospel message in culturally relevant terms. Fleming then says that contextualization is how the gospel expressed in Scripture authentically becomes alive in every new cultural, social, religious and historical order. Finally, Moreau's opinion is that contextualization is the process by which Christians adapt the form, content and praxis of the Christian faith to communicate it into the minds and hearts of people from other cultural backgrounds.

The goal is to make Christian culture as a whole. Not only the message but also the way of living our faith in the local environment becomes understandable. Yakob Tomatala said, Contextualization is the ideal reflection of every Christian in the context of his life on the gospel of Jesus Christ. The most important thing here is how the whole gospel should be sown so as to bring about the balance that appears from the theological reflection of the recipient of the gospel (Nainggolan, Nome, & Manggoa, 2021).

# **Cultural Influence in Christianity**

Culture is a pattern or way of life that continues to develop by a group of people and is passed down to the next generation. The cultural environment is all conditions, both in the form of material produced by humans through their activities and creativity. And also includes non-material things such as values, norms, customs, art, political system and so on (Tambing, 2020).

Humans and culture (culture) have a very unique relationship. Humans create culture, but after that culture is formed, it is culture that ultimately regulates and shapes humans (Setiawati & Deak, 2023). This relationship between humans and culture is two directions that are reciprocal and indirect. This mutual relationship is also what ultimately gives rise to the inevitable tensions in human life. Culture is an achievement or the result of creation, taste and karsa in this nature.

The ability to work that can be done by everyone is an essential attitude that only exists and occurs in a person who has been created in the image and likeness of God. This culture itself is also incapable of correcting human sins against God in accordance with the history of Christianity (Agama & Negeri, n.d.). Thus, Christianity must have a correct foundation for God, so that cultural influences that are not in accordance with God's will can be avoided.

# Contextual Teachings of Christianity

A culturally related contextual approach refers to an approach that tailors the delivery of the gospel and the application of Christian teachings by taking into account the local cultural context. It involves integrating local values and practices that do not conflict with basic Christian principles, with the aim of making the message of the Gospel more relevant and acceptable to the community. In contextual teaching, local culture is seen as a means by which

to communicate the truths of the Gospel, while maintaining the essence of Christian teaching. This approach avoids imposing external cultures that could alienate or generate resistance, and instead seeks to understand and appreciate the local culture as part of God's creation.

Examples of contextual teachings may include the use of local languages in liturgy, adaptations of traditional music and art in worship, or the adjustment of moral teachings by taking into account the social norms that prevail in a particular society. This approach aims to make the gospel easier to understand and accept, and to encourage cultural transformation from within, rather than through confrontation or coercion.

# The Contradiction of Christian Teachings and Tiwah Ceremonies

The involvement of Christians in the Hindu rituals of the Dayak tribe (tiwah) does not play too much role in it because some activities are not in accordance with Christian teachings. In this ritual there are several things that are contrary to Christian teachings, one of which is the making of statues that resemble human forms. Exodus 20:4-6 says, "Thou shalt not make unto thee any image that resembles anything that is in the heavens above, or that is on the earth beneath, or that is in the waters under the earth. Do not bow down to him or worship him, for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, who avenges the iniquity of the fathers upon his children, to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but I show loving-kindness to thousands, those who love me and keep my commandments." Because God's Word is the central theme of all His teachings (Lestari & Deak, 2023).

This verse in the book of Exodus is contrary to the activities carried out in the Hindu ritual of kaharingan in the Dayak tribe. However, not all activities carried out in this ritual cannot be followed by Christians such as helping in dismantling graves, helping in cooking for families who come, helping in funds and so on. Some of the involvement of Christians in the Hindu ritual of the Dayak tribe (tiwah) at the time of the recitation of the prayer by the ritual practitioner of Christians who participate in the ritual do not follow the reading but by reading the Christian prayer in the heart (Rukmana Nilam Sari et al., 2024).

Although the rituals performed have strong customary aspects, Christians may choose to bury their family members with Christian teachings. Some of the traditional elements in the kaharingan Hindu ritual may be interpreted or adapted to Christian teachings, thus creating a combination of symbolism between Dayak tribal traditions and Christianity. It is important to remember that the involvement of Christians in the Hindu ritual of kaharingan can vary based on individual and family beliefs. Some people may choose to blend elements of Christianity with these rituals, while others may choose to perform the rituals in a more traditional way. This reflects the diversity in religious practices among the Dayak people who have embraced Christianity (Sari et al., 2024).

#### Christian Religious Education as a Religious and Cultural Liaison

Christian religious education is the duty and responsibility of the link between religion and culture, in the form of an effort to nurture and educate all its citizens to reach a level of maturity in faith, hope and love in order to carry out their mission in this world to await the second coming of God with Christian religious education (Josep, Victor, Chukwu, & Sihombing, 2021). According to Graedorf, Christian Religious Education is a process of learning and teaching that is biblically based and Christ-centered and dependent on the Holy

Spirit, which guides every person at every stage of growth through present teaching toward the knowledge and experience of God's plan and will through Christ in every aspect of life, and equips them for effective ministry centered on Christ the Great Teacher and the commandment that matures the disciple. in Deuteronomy 6:6-9.

What I command you this day you shall pay attention to, you shall teach it again and again to your children and speak of it when you sit in your house, when you are on your way, when you lie down and when you get up. Thou shalt also bind it as a sign on thy hand, and it shall be a symbol on thy forehead, and thou shalt write it on the doorposts of thy house and on thy gates (Simatupang, 2024).

# Implications: The Influence of Christian Religious Education on Religious and Cultural Empowerment

The influence of Christianity and Christian Religious Education on local culture in Central Kalimantan can be seen in various aspects of the life of the local community. Education is a life experience that affects the growth and development of a person's life (Dannari, 2022). Central Kalimantan is a region rich in local traditions and culture, especially as it relates to the Dayak tribe as an indigenous people. Here are some of the key influences:

# Transformation in Traditional Ceremonies and Traditional Beliefs

Syncretism, in some communities, is an integration between Christian teachings and local beliefs. Some elements of the Dayak tradition, such as Tiwah ceremonies (death rituals) and other spiritual practices, have undergone adjustments or reinterpretations in the context of Christian beliefs. With the Abolition of Animist Rituals, in many places, Christianity replaced animist rituals and belief in ancestral spirits. Many Dayak communities have begun to abandon traditional practices that are considered contrary to Christian teachings, such as the worship of ancestral spirits and the use of amulets.

#### Changes in Social and Family Structure

Monogamy and Christian Marriage, Christianity promotes monogamy, which is different from some traditional practices that may be more flexible when it comes to marriage. A family is a group of two or more people who are connected to each other through blood ties, marriage, or adoption. Each family member is always interacting with each other (Deak et al., 2022). This affects the family structure and the way the people of Central Kalimantan view the marriage relationship. Work Ethic and Morality, Christian education teaches values such as honesty, hard work, and service to others. These values began to influence the way people lived their daily lives and interacted with each other (Purnama, Deak, & Siwalette, 2022).

#### Conclusion

Education is an ongoing process that occurs in diverse societies. In the context of Christianity, education involves not only intellectual knowledge, but also an ongoing personal relationship with God. Christian Religious Education has an important role in pluralistic societies, including in efforts to integrate local cultures such as the Tiwah tradition of the Dayak tribe in Central Kalimantan. Tiwah is a traditional Dayak ceremony associated with the Kaharingan religion, a belief that is now classified as part of Hinduism. This ceremony aims

to deliver ancestral spirits to the afterlife. Although there are ceremonial elements that go against Christian teachings, such as the making of statues, Christians in the area are still involved in some aspects of this custom, albeit with adjustments that suit their beliefs. Christian Religious Education plays a role in providing a contextual understanding, linking Christian teachings to everyday life and local culture. This is done with the aim of making the gospel more acceptable without neglecting the essence of Christian teaching. In addition, Christian Religious Education also serves as a means of evangelism and brings a positive impact on social life in diverse communities. Ultimately, the contextual approach in the Christian Religious Education allows for cultural transformation internally, while respecting and maintaining Christian values in the midst of cultural and religious diversity.

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