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Summary

For more than four hundred years Christian mission has put a mark on the culture and church life of the inhabitants of the Central Moluccas. Nevertheless they miss the Moluccan symbols, rites and myths in their Christian life. Until now there was no room within Western Christianity for their ancestors, their *piring natzar* (offer plate) and above all their *Pela's* (blood brotherhood). This research is about Gods covenant with men from a Moluccan perspective. *Pela* is the Master Symbol of Moluccan culture. With this study on Jesus as the *Pela* par excellence we would like to contribute to the development of a Moluccan theology, which will not only move the heart, but challenge the mind (*fides quaerens intellectum*) as well. In this research we use the semiotic concept of culture of the American anthropologist Clifford Geertz, who by using 'thick descriptions' tries to discover the structure and meanings of a cultural phenomenon. Alongside Geertz semiotic concept of culture we apply Berkhofs phenomenological-historical method to see Gods in history and human society. The Christian believer sees Gods presence in a 'cumulative process' of experiences with and revelations of God. The two theoretical approaches show similarities in their processes, but differ in their aims. The anthropologist tries to find out which meaning people themselves give to their actions. Berkhof however is looking for God's hand in history and human history (culture).

Adat, Culture and Gospel will be dealt with in chapter 1. At the beginning of the 19th and 20th century the whole concept of Mission, which was developed in the West, was to bring the Gospel to the far and dark continents of the world. To the less civilized and developed parts of the earth. After World War II the majority of colonies declared their independence. In the fifties of the last century a great number of people from the former colonies including Moluccans found shelter in The Netherlands. Not much later workers from southern Europe and Mediterranean countries came to work in the Dutch industry. Dutch society changed from a monocultural into a multicultural society. Remarkably enough the Moluccans after more than sixty years stay in The Netherlands feel themselves both isolated from society as well as from the main protestant churches. The former KNIL-soldiers took with them the theology from Moluccan Protestant Church, an exact copy of the Dutch Protestant Churches. With the founding of the Moluccan Theological Council at the beginning of the nineties the Moluccan churches put a first step in the development of a theology that is to their cultural identity. Due to changed insight in the relationship between Culture and Gospel as well as the introduction of new theological conceptions as inculturation and double transformation Moluccan Christians were given the opportunity to change thoughts with representatives of Dutch churches in terms of equality and give them more consciousness of their cultural heritage.

In chapter 2 we describe the mythological worldview of the Moluccans. We elaborate on the meaning and function of symbols, myths and metaphors, which play a crucial role in Moluccan culture. An intrinsic part of that worldview is the creation story of Nunusaku, where paradise according to Moluccans was created. In their experience Nunusaku is the umbilicus cord of the world. However misery has also started at Nunusaku. By killing one of them the first human beings were forced to leave Nunusaku and spread all over the Moluccas

in two main groups. One group is composed of a bond of five villages (*Uli-Lima*) and the other of nine (*Uli-Siwa*). Right from the beginning there was animosity between *Uli-Lima* and *Uli-Siwa*. Tension and wars about fertile soil and rich fishing waters were ended by making *Pela*, an intervillage covenant that was sealed with drinking strong alcoholic drink (*sageru*) in which was caught a few drops of blood of both from kings (*radja*'s, village representative) and to which the ancestors were invited as witnesses. For this reason we call the *Pela* a socio-metaphysic covenant. Next to the description of the mythical spreading of the first human beings across the Moluccans we use the collected data of linguistics to reconstruct the migration (of the Australo-Melanesians and Austronesians) and how the native peoples (Alifoers) could have survived. We conclude the chapter with the development of the Moluccan church in The Netherlands.

The title of chapter 3 is titled 'Cloves in Dutch clay'. With this title we would like to express the centuries long military relationship with the Kingdom of The Netherlands and the tragedy of the KNIL-soldiers. Clove and clay do not merge. After the Indonesian declaration of independence the KNIL-soldiers could not return to Ambon and Papua New Guinea as an alternative was considered a thread to the young Indonesian state. That thread was reinforced by the proclamation of an independent Republic of the South Moluccan (RMS). To make matters worse even the Dutch government was not willing to accept the Moluccans in The Netherlands. Several possible scenarios were discussed: participation in the Korean War, joining the foreign legion, etc. Interim measures and a court judgment had left the Dutch government no other option than to transport the Moluccan-soldiers and their families to Holland. At arrival the soldiers were all discharged. However their dream of an independent Republic of the South Moluccan remains untouched and unchanged. Each year on the 25th of April they demonstrate to keep that hope alive. That dream was also shared with by the *soldaat van oranje*. His courageous contribution to the Moluccan resistance unfortunately did not lead to the desired result. The ideal of an independent RMS is still strongly rooted in the minds and hearts of the Moluccans, but the way to achieve that goal may differ. Beside their political ideal they kept their *adat istiadat*, their *Pela* and their love for the church. *Pela* is still important, but in The Netherlands it is no longer recognized as only patrilinear, the mothers *Pela* is taken into account as well. The risk of being *Pela* everybody's is not only imaginative makes it difficult to find a partner who fits in *adat* structures.

While the Dutch government and the churches turned their backs towards the Moluccan community, the Moluccans erected *kumpulans* to strengthen the social ties. The seventies an explosion of violence took place. The younger generation no longer accepted the unfairly treatment of their parents and the discredited policy of successive parliaments. Hostage takings and hijackings marked that period. At the beginning of their stay in Holland the Dutch welcomed the Moluccans as the 'golden boys'. After the hijackings almost nothing of that image was left. In the collective trauma processing the church played an important role. Partly thanks to the contribution of the Moluccan Theological Council to give Moluccan cultural symbols a legitimate place within theology, the Moluccans were able to strengthen their ethnic consciousness and self-esteem.

The focus in chapter 4 is on biblical covenant, the covenant of God with the Israelite. God is the author of the initiative and the loyal Partner in complying the covenant. Covenants in the Old Testament were ratified by blood. Abram wanted to know if Gods promise that he will have many descendants was not an empty promise. He asked God for a token. In the context of his time, amidst other cultures, God understood his request. “And He said unto him. Take Me an heifer of three years old, and a she goat of three years old, and a ram of three years old, and a turtledove and a young pigeon. And He took unto Him all these, and divided them in the midst, and laid each piece one against another: but the birds divided he not”. (Gen. 15: 9-10). Then God and Abram walked together between the divided animals to confirm His promise. While God is the author of the initiative He and Israel are equal in the implementation of the covenant. In spite of the failure of humanity to keep the everlasting covenant God leads His chosen people through history. For this very reason history is salvation history. In a phenomenological-historical approach of history the believer, by a cumulative process of revelations, is able to Gods hand. In the New Testament God ratifies His covenant with humanity to shed His blood on the cross as the second and immaculate Adam. Furthermore we will pay attention to the political role of the covenant. Many protestant countries consider the covenant concept as a basis on which to build a nation. Political leaders see themselves as called and make bilateral alliances with obligations on both partners.

In chapter 5 we deal with the value of *Pela* as a socio-metaphysic covenant between two villages, two communities, two kingdoms. *Pela* is erected after fierce fighting. The representatives of both villages, the *radja's* (kings), make a covenant and confirm it by drinking a strong alcoholic drink mixed with a few drops of blood of the *radja's*. Because all who are present drink, the “same” blood runs through their veins and they are from then on considered brothers and sisters. This form of *Pela* is called harsh *Pela* (*Pela keras*) and is exogamous: members of this covenant are forbidden to marry one another. *Pela's* help each other in difficult (wars and disasters) and better times (weddings, building a church or a mosque). The characteristics of the *Pela* it is bilateral and patrilinear.

Members of a *Pela* always return to their own villages where their *rumah tua* (the ancestral house) is located. Once in a while a *panas Pela* (warming up of the *Pela*) ceremony is held to renew and reaffirm the covenant. The arrival of the great religions divided the centuries old *Pela* in a Muslim and Christian part. For centuries the two *Pela's* lived peacefully together. The world was shocked when the civil war in the Moluccas exploded. The greater was the shock to hear and read the international media that even some *Pela's* were attacking and killing each other. The process to restore stability and peace is progressing slowly but steadily. The restoration could only be effective when *Pela* is reconstructed according to the actual needs and demands and to stimulate *panas Pela*.

God as the second Adam did not only shed His blood at the cross, moreover He give His life to ratify the covenant He had made with humanity. In times of trouble, in the struggle with evil powers, He is near. This God, the author of the initiative, erects a *Pela* with us. He is representative (the *radja*) of the heavenly kingdom and we are the people of the earthly

kingdom represented by the risen Christ who is our heavenly Mediator. He is the *Pela par excellence* because he has returned to His heavenly kingdom where is His *rumah tua*. Each time we celebrate the Lord's Supper we confirm our covenant with God, we keep *panas Pela*. We break bread and drink wine. Double transformation has taken place. *Pela* is renewed in Christ and Christ has become *Pela*. *Pela* is inclusive, which means that anyone can enter into *Pela*. However *Pela* must meet the right ceremonial requirements and compliance with the directives of the covenant. Jesus, the *Pela par excellence* will return and will welcome us to His *rumah tua*, the New Jerusalem coming down from heaven.

It is in this spirit that Jesus plays a key role in Moluccan theology and forms both in the Moluccas as well as in The Netherlands the main pillar (*tiang laki laki*) of a contextual Moluccan Christology.