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LIPA SONGKE: LAY WOMEN AND INCULTURATION

The author presents the traditional weavings of Manggarai (Indonesia) women as expressions of their cultural heritage and describes the work and the motifs in the weavings. In handing on their weavings, they contribute to the inculturation of the Christian faith, as the meaning of the motifs on their weavings bear deep relationships to central aspects of Christian faith. The second part of the article reflects on the concept of inculturation and new evangelization and studies the particular contribution of women as agents of inculturation.

Introduction

Louis J. Luzbetak states that “the two primary agents of inculturation are the Holy Spirit and the local church (community), particularly the laity.”¹ Bishop Patrick D’Souza named this local church community, particularly the laity, the “ordinary small faith community that needs to be empowered so as to become evangelizers and inculturizers.”² Every baptized Christian is included, men and women alike. This is a call to every Christian to participate in the work of inculturation.

In his encyclical *Redemptoris missio*, John Paul II describes inculturation thus: “the intimate transformation of authentic cultural values through their integration in Christianity and the insertion of

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¹ Louis J. Luzbetak, *The Church and Cultures. New Perspectives in Missiological Anthropology*, Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books 1988, 66.

² Mario Saturnino Dias, SD (ed.), *Evangelisation and Inculturation*, Mumbai: Pauline Publications 2001, 39. Patrick D’Souza, bishop of India and member of the FABC, Keynote Address during the important consultation on evangelisation and inculturation of the Federation of Asian Bishops’ Conferences.

Christianity in the various human cultures.”³ Herein, the Pope avers that the outcome, which is “intimate transformation,” can be achieved through a double movement: first, the insertion of cultural values in Christianity, and second, the insertion of Christianity in culture. As such, two things are required, namely: the initiative of the church and the cooperation of the people. Inculturation, therefore, involves the whole people of God, and not just a few experts, since the people reflect the authentic *sensus fidei*, which must never be lost sight of.⁴

The strong participation of the people of God in inculturation, particularly the laity, is emphasized by John Paul II in his Apostolic Exhortation, *Ecclesia in Asia*, when he says: “since the inculturation of the Gospel involves the entire people of God, the role of the laity is of paramount importance.”⁵ The laity, as “the vast majority of the people of God,”⁶ is given the important role in inculturation, because it is their cultural values that enter into dialogue with the Gospel values. This process, which highlights human experience, signifies the dynamism of inculturation, where three components are inter-related, namely: the Christian message, cultural values, and the agents.

Since the establishment of Ruteng [Flores, Indonesia] as a diocese, the efforts of involving the lay people in the life and duty of the church, especially in inculturation, is seen as an important matter. Bishops who were appointed as heads of this local church contributed to the task of promoting the lay involvement in the process of inculturation, with the focus particularly on liturgy and catechesis.

The lay women of Manggarai are not so much involved in composing and translating songs, but on integrating the traditional dances into liturgical celebrations. The traditional dances were introduced into liturgical worship, with the help of lay women. These traditional dances⁷ are integrated in the Holy Mass, for instance, in the entrance

³ John Paul II, *Redemptoris Missio* (RM), Decree on the Permanent Validity of the Missionary Mandate (December 7, 1990): AAS 83 (1991) 52.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 54.

⁵ John Paul II, *Ecclesia in Asia*, Apostolic Exhortation on Jesus Christ the Savior and His Mission of Love and Service in Asia (November 6, 1999), 22.

⁶ Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, Apostolic Exhortation on the Joy of the Gospel (2013), 102.

⁷ Adi M. Nggoro, *Budaya Manggarai, Budaya Manggarai, Selayang Pandang*, Ende: Nusa Indah 2013, 140-144. There are various traditional dances in Manggarai, but only four are commonly used in liturgical celebrations. First; *Sanda*. It is a dance in a circle and the members are men

procession, *Gloria*, offertory procession, *Sanctus*, and recessional dance. Msgr. van Bekkum narrated that “the lay women of Manggarai help in introducing the traditional dances into liturgical celebrations.”⁸

Seeing the limited participation of the lay women in inculturation in Manggarai, this study tries to find a more suitable way for them in involving themselves in inculturation. They need to be empowered and led to the realization that they too can inculturate the values of the Gospel. Their efforts need to be documented, especially looking at the weaving of the Manggarai traditional cloth called *Lipa Songke*, which this paper posits as their way of participating in the task of inculturation.

Cursorily, *Lipa Songke* is the traditional cloth of Manggarai (see pictures p. 409), which has a black base color and various motifs with very deep meanings. There are six motifs that constitute *Lipa Songke*.⁹ These motifs explicitly symbolize the following themes: unity between God and human being, the relationship among the human

and women. The dancers are singing while dancing. This dance is the dance of unity, calling everyone to participate in a circle, and to praise *Mori Kraeng*. In the Holy Eucharist, especially in a big celebration, this dance is used for Gloria, Alleluia, Holy, and Post Communion. Second is *Mbata*. The dancers are dancing and singing at the same time, and there is a group of women playing traditional music. This dance is used to invoke *Mori Kraeng* to be with them in their gathering. In the Holy Mass, this dance is usually used for the entrance procession dance. Third is *Sae*. This is a dance which the people of Manggarai used to drive out demons and evil spirits, especially when they offer something to *Mori Kraeng* and ancestral spirits. The dancers only dance, without singing. This is used for the offertory dance in the Holy Mass. Fourth is *Ronda*. Ronda is a dance which accompanies the group of people from *Mbaru Gendang* to the middle of the village for some rituals. In the Holy Eucharist celebration, this dance is used to accompany the priest and people as they leave the church.

⁸ Bonefasius Jehandut, *Uskup Wilhelmus van Bekkum dan Dere Serani, Mengintegrasikan Unsur Religiositas Asli Masyarakat Manggarai ke dalam Liturgi* (Bishop Wilhelmus van Bekkum & Dere Serani, Integrating the Elements of Genuine Religiosity of the Manggarai Society into the Liturgy), Jakarta: Nera Pustaka 2012, 23.

⁹ Antony Bagul Dagur, *Kebudayaan Manggarai salah satu Khasanah Kebudayaan Nasional* (The Culture of Manggarai One of the Treasures of National Culture), Surabaya: Ubhara Press 1996, 103-104. See Antony Bagul Dagur, *Prospek dan Strategi Kabupaten Manggarai dalam Perspektif Masa Depan*, Jakarta: Penerbit Indomedia 2004, 23. See Adi M. Nggoro, *Budaya Manggarai Selayang Pandang*, 145.

beings, and the interdependence between humans and creation.¹⁰ The weaving of this cloth, which is done by lay women, is undertaken for economic fulfillment without realizing its possible contribution to evangelization. Hence, this study tries to discuss this possibility, as it will start with the beginning of the Catholic Church in Manggarai, *Lipa Songke* and its motifs, inculturation in the weaving of *Lipa Songke*, and it ends with a conclusion.

1. The Beginning of the Catholic Church in Manggarai

When the Divine Word Missionaries started to introduce Christianity to the Manggaraians in the western part of Flores in the early 20th century, the Catholic Church in Eastern Flores was three centuries old.¹¹ At first, it was the Dominican Portuguese missionaries who introduced Catholicism to the Florenese. They worked there for three centuries (16th–19th). In the 19th century, the Jesuits and the Dutch diocesan priests continued their mission. However, none of them expanded their mission to the Manggaraians. Even so, Catholicism in Manggarai should be understood in the whole context of the Catholicization process in Flores.

The journey of the Catholic faith in this place started when five local people, Katarina Arbero, Henricus, Agnes Mina, Caecilia Weloe, and Helena Loekoe were baptized on May 17, 1912, by a Dutch Jesuit priest by the name of Fr. Henrikus Looijmans, SJ.¹² Before 1912, several Jesuit priests had come to Manggarai to strengthen the faith of Catholics from Larantuka, the eastern part of Flores, who came and lived in Manggarai for pearl diving on the coast of Labuan Bajo.¹³

¹⁰ Alex Lanur, *Pandangan Hidup Orang Manggarai (Manggarai People View of Life)*, in: Martin Chen/Charles Suwendi (eds.), *Iman, Budaya, dan Pergumulan Sosial*, Jakarta: Penerbit Obor 2012, 110-120, 115.

¹¹ Karel Steenbrink, *Dutch Colonialism and Indonesian Islam: Contacts and Conflicts 1596–1950*, Amsterdam: Rodopi 1993, 121.

¹² Max Regus/Kanisius Deki, *Gereja Menyapa Manggarai, Menghirup Keutamaan Tradisi, Menumbuhkan Cinta, Menjaga Harapan; Satu Abad Gereja Manggarai–Flores (The Church Greets Manggarai: Inhaling the Virtue of Tradition, Grow in Love, Keeping Hope)*, Jakarta Selatan: Parhesia Institute 2011, 206. See *Ad Limina*, Diocese of Ruteng, 2018, E-document 12.

¹³ Martin Chen, *Ketika Mentari Terbit di Jengkalang. Yubelum 100 tahun Gereja Katolik Manggarai (When the Sun Rises from Jengkalang, 100 Years Jubilee of the Catholic Church in Manggarai)*: *Pos Kupang*, April 2012.

The Jesuit missionaries were doing evangelization only in the coastal areas of Labuan Bajo and did not reach the hinterland.

Due to lack of membership, the Jesuits handed over the missionary work in Flores to the Society of the Divine Word (SVD). On January 3, 1961 the diocese of Ruteng was officially established, with Msgr. Wilhelmus van Bekkum, SVD, as its first bishop (1961–1972).¹⁴ Many chapels and schools were built and many roads were opened before Ruteng became a diocese. Manggarai, since then, has been no longer isolated from the outside world.

The laity were much involved in the preaching of the Gospel, in teaching catechism, and in baptizing the locals, due to lack of priests.¹⁵ They led the Sunday services, praying the rosary, Bible sharing, teaching catechumens, and preparing the couples for marriage.¹⁶ The presence of SVD priests contributed to the rapid growth of the Catholic Church in Manggarai, which is done through both formal and non-formal education.¹⁷

2. *Lipa Songke and Its Motifs*

*2.1 Historical Overview of Lipa Songke*¹⁸

In the years 1613 up to 1640, the kingdom of Gowa, Makasar, South Sulawesi, ruled almost all of the Manggarai region. They came not only with their political intention, but also with many other interests. The meeting with the culture of Makasar gave birth to something new for the Manggarai people, including *Lipa Songke*.¹⁹ Although the history of *Lipa Songke* has to do with the entry of the kingdom of Gowa in Manggarai, the motifs and selection of colors and threads are very different. The difference between the two will not be discussed in detail here.

¹⁴ M. P. M. Muskens, Pengintegrasian di Alam Indonesia, in: *Sejarah Gereja Katolik Indonesia*, jilid 4 (The Integration in Indonesian Nature, in: The History of the Catholic Church of Indonesia), Ende: Nusa Indah 1973, 146.

¹⁵ Jehandut, *Uskup Wilhelmus van Bekkum*, 43-44.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 44.

¹⁷ John Dami Mukese/Eduard Jebarus, *Indahnya Kaki Mereka* (The Beauty of Their Step), Ende: Percetakan Arnoldus 2004, 10.

¹⁸ Lembaga Pengkajian Kebudayaan Nusantara (LPKN), in: *Encyclopedia Manggarai, Referensi Pendidikan Kearifan Lokal*, Bogor: LPKN 2018, 222.

¹⁹ Doroteus Hemo, *Sejarah Daerah Manggarai, Propinsi Nusa Tenggara Timur*, Ruteng: Hemo Press 1988, 39.

Lipa Songke, as it is now, is somehow influenced also by the outside cultures. It shows how the people of Manggarai relate to the outsiders. Until today, *Lipa Songke* is considered as an important cloth and is used by the people on different occasions.

2.2 The Meaning of the Motifs of *Lipa Songke*²⁰

The values carried out in the philosophy of life of the people of Manggarai are also presented by the lay women of Manggarai through their weaving of *Lipa Songke*. The basic color of *Lipa Songke* is black, which symbolizes the greatness and majesty, elegance and wealth, and admission that all human beings will return to *Mori Kraeng* (Supreme Being).²¹ *Lipa Songke* as a whole has a center, which they call *polo pala/punca*. It symbolizes that there is always a center in the life of the people of Manggarai, and that Center is *Mori Kraeng*.²² The motifs of *Lipa Songke* are:

2.2.1 Jok²³



Jok represents the triangle border in life: God, neighbor, and creation. This motif symbolizes the unity with *Mori Jari Dedek*, God, the Lord of the universe, with the fellow human beings, and with creation. It also shows the values of unity, solidarity, and interdependency. It is placed at both ends of *Lipa Songke* as a reminder that God, the Supreme Being and Lord of the universe, is both the Beginning and the End of their lives, and that fellow human beings and creation are guarding them in their life.²⁴ In relation to the church, this motif

²⁰ LPKN, 221-223.

²¹ Dagur, *Kebudayaan Manggarai*, 103. *Mori Kraeng* is the name of God in Manggarai and it is used also to call God in the church.

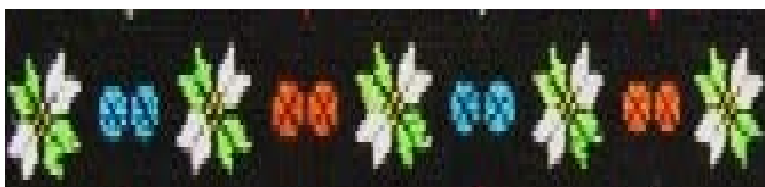
²² Osi Manti (Coordinator, Songke Manggarai), interviewed by Sr. Herlina Hadia, SSpS, Ruteng, December 20, 2018, transcript and translation, personal archives, Ruteng Indonesia.

²³ Dagur, *Kebudayaan Manggarai*, 103. See Nggoro, *Kebudayaan Manggarai Selayang Pandang*, 145. See also LPKN, 221.

²⁴ Dagur, *Kebudayaan Manggarai*, 103.

is being used in the architectural building of the church, and it symbolizes that the life of the people of Manggarai is guarded by the Catholic Church.

2.2.2 Wela Kaweng²⁵



The second motif of Lipa Songke is *Wela Kaweng* or *Lantana Camara* in Latin. It is a kind of flower which consists of various colors. This flower grows everywhere in Manggarai. The leaves and flowers can be used to cure wounds. Including a plant in the motif symbolizes the interdependency between humans and creation. “They cure us when we are sick, so do not hurt them in any way. This was what my mother told me about this motif. It is so simple but it is true. This is what we want our people to always remember, that everything around us is alive and useful.”²⁶ This motif teaches the Manggarai people that the universe supports their life, both as food and housing, as well as medicine.

2.2.3 Ranggong²⁷



The third motif is *Ranggong* or spider web. It shows that the universe is living in interconnectivity—therefore, diligence, hard work, and honesty are important.²⁸ Manggarai people believe that the reali-

²⁵ Ibid., 103. See Nggoro, *Kebudayaan Manggarai*, 146. See also LPKN, 221.

²⁶ Osi Manti. Personal interview.

²⁷ Dagur, *Kebudayaan Manggarai*, 104. See LPKN, 221.

²⁸ Dagur, *Kebudayaan Manggarai*, 103-104.

ty of life is like a spider web, in which all things in creation, both visible and invisible, are related to one another and form an orderly, perfect system, with *Mori Kraeng* (Supreme Being) as the center of everything.²⁹ In this motif, humans are seen as weak creatures, hence they depend so much on God, others, and creation. Therefore, human mistakes and sins can damage the system that has been created. This is the reason why Manggarai people always perform ritual offerings of atonement to *Mori Kraeng*, ancestral spirits, and to nature. To preserve this good value, they weave it for the next generation to remember and to value.

2.2.4 *Su'i*³⁰



The fourth motif is *Su'i* or boundary lines, which reminds the people that everything has a limit—relationships, life, and properties. Everything will end or nothing will last in this world. This motif is also a reminder, that they will die one day, and that *Mori Kraeng* will come at any time as He wills. It is placed in between other motifs, so as to remind the people that everything has its own space.³¹

Mrs. Osi explained that “the motif *su'i* can be in the form of a small crucifix or small eyes. It is influenced by the Catholic faith. The crucifix symbolizes the Cross of Jesus as the salvation for all people, and the eye symbolizes the Eyes of God who looks after all his creation.”³² *Su'i* also means that “the life of Manggarai people as a community is limited by a line in the form of customary rules that must

²⁹ Ino Sutam, *Menjadi Gereja Katolik yang Berakar dalam Kebudayaan Manggarai (Local Church of Manggarai Rooted in Faith, Culture, and Social Issues)*, in: Martin Chen/Charles Suwendi (eds.), *Iman, Budaya, dan Pergumulan Sosial*, Jakarta: Obor 2012, 169.

³⁰ Hemo, *Kebudayaan Manggarai*, 31. See Nggoro, *Kebudayaan Manggarai Selayang Pandang*, 146. See also LPKN, 221.

³¹ Dagur, *Kebudayaan Manggarai*, 104.

³² Osi Manti. Personal interview.

be violated. These rules guide their life in relation to *Mori Kraeng*, to ancestral spirits, to fellow human beings, and to creation.”³³

2.2.5 Ntala³⁴



The fifth motif is *Ntala* (Star). It bears a hope for someone to be the light for the society. This is the hope and prayer of parents and grandparents that their children and grandchildren may become a light and positive influence for others. This motif represents the prayer of the Manggarai people commonly conveyed in *Tudak*³⁵ (prayer) “*Kudut Langkas Haeng Ntala*” (that she/he may grow taller and reach the star). The intention of this prayer is that they may gain health, prosperity, and give hope for others, and that they may influence others with their good conduct.³⁶

This prayer is usually being said on a special occasion, inside and outside the church. Inside the church, it is usually prayed during the prayers of the faithful. In the inculturated Mass, the prayer of the faithful is replaced with *Torok*.³⁷ *Torok* is an expression of the Manggarai people’s prayer addressed to *Mori agu Ngaran-Jari agu Dedek* (God and Owner-Creator and Maker), *wura agu ceki* (ancestral spirits), *ata pa’ang be le* (all who have died). *Torok* as a sacred and great prayer becomes beautiful because of poetic words like incantations

³³ Hemo, *Kebudayaan Manggarai*, 31.

³⁴ Ibid., 31. See Nggoro, *Kebudayaan Manggarai*, 146. See also LPKN, 221.

³⁵ Nggoro, *Kebudayaan Manggarai Selayang Pandang*, 139. The original is as follows: “*Tudak adalah menyampaikan pesan kepada Mori Kraeng, leluhur, dana ta ici tana, berupa permohonan, syukur, pujian hormat, baik yang diucapkan dalam situasi formal, maupun dalam situasi tak formal (pribadi), baik yang bersifat positif maupun yang negative, dengan menggunakan bahasa kiasan.*”

³⁶ Dagur, *Kebudayaan Manggarai*, 104. See LPKN, 221.

³⁷ Nggoro, *Kebudayaan Manggarai Selayang Pandang*, 134. See Kanisius T. Deki, *Belajar Adat Manggarai*. Retrieved August 11, 2019 from <https://kanisiusdeki.blogspot.com/2017/09/belajar-adat-manggarai-bagian-pertama.html>.

that are expressed smoothly, fluctuating intonations and standard rhythms.

2.2.6 Wela Runu³⁸



The sixth motif is *Wela Runu* or *Bunga Runu* in Indonesian. *Wela Runu* is a small flower that grows near the rivers. The leaves of this plant are thorny, but its flower is so beautiful. This motif reminds the people that every creature in this world is meaningful.³⁹ It shows the reality of the people of Manggarai as a small part of the world population, but who share the responsibility in making the world a better place.⁴⁰ Hence, respect toward others is the matter here, for every person has a place in this world and has something to offer to the society, no matter how small it is.

The motifs of *Lipa Songke* mentioned above show how the people of Manggarai relate with God, others, and the rest of creation in their lives. First, the relationship with *Mori Kraeng* (God, the Supreme Being) is shown in motifs *jok* and *ranggong*. God is in the center of their life. He is the Beginning and the End. The God whom they believe in is a living God, who guards them day and night, *Ine Rinding Wie* and *Ame Rinding Mane*. The human beings are called to always go back to the Center, to always connect with Him in the spirit of community. In other words, the God they believe in is the God of all, hence, they are obliged to worship Him in togetherness.

Second, the relationship with fellow human beings is shown in the motifs *jok*, *ranggong*, *su'i*, and *ntala*. They depend on each other and are responsible for each other's life. They belong to one God and they are the members of one body, one family. Therefore, they are obliged to help each other, to bring each other closer to God, to take care of each other, and to respect each other's life.

³⁸ Hemo, *Kebudayaan Manggarai*, 32.

³⁹ Dagur, *Kebudayaan Manggarai*, 104.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 104.

Third, the relationship with creation is seen in the motifs *jok*, *wela kaweng*, *wela runu*, and *ranggong*. The universe is living in interconnectivity. Creation is alive and good, therefore it has to be respected. The creation provides everything they need, hence, they have to take care of it. Above all, God, *Mori Kraeng*, manifests his love and care through creation.



Herlina Hadia SSpS



Vinsensius Adi Gunawan SVD

Traditional dress with *Lipa Songke* motifs

3. *Inculturation in the Weaving of Lipa Songke*

Renewed Integral Evangelization is characterized by four aspects, which can also be achieved through inculturation. The participation of the lay women in inculturation through the weaving of *Lipa Songke* can contribute to these characteristics of renewed integral evangelization. These characteristics are the following: clarity of goal, new method, new fervor, and new expression.⁴¹

3.1 *Clarity of Goal*

The main goal of Renewed Integral Evangelization, according to the Second Plenary Council of the Philippines (PCP II), is: “the formation of Catholics in a properly integrated spirituality.”⁴² This understanding is based on *Lumen Gentium*, which describes integrated spirituality thus: it “seeks the salvation of the total human person, seeks for change not only interior but in ecclesial and societal structures, witnesses through action to the faith she/he professes, and dynamically inter-relates communion and mission in the Church.”⁴³ Integral evangelization, therefore, begins with a total conversion to the Lord and makes the faithful active bearers of God’s love as one body in Christ the Lord.

This integral evangelization is contextualized in the life of the lay women of Manggarai. As weavers of *Lipa Songke*, they are actually already contributing to the goal of evangelization: they profess and share the faith in God, the Creator of all; they bring the people into one as members of one family, with Christ as its head. Through their weaving, they transmit, and therefore, remind every generation of Manggarai of the Christian values enshrined in *Lipa Songke*, such as: communion with God, who alone is all-powerful, Creator of everything, a God who is very close to their lives, is the ultimate goal of all. He was revealed by Jesus as a Father who is kind, loving, and forgiving and provides everything in their lives. He calls each one of them to come into relationship with Him and endows them with the gift of faith.

⁴¹ John Paul II, *Discourse to the XIX Assembly of CELAM* (9 March 1983), 3. See Secretariat of Catholic Bishops’ Conference of the Philippines (PCP II), *Acts and Decrees Second Plenary Council of the Philippines*, Manila: Paulines 1992, 187-201.

⁴² Secretariat of Catholic Bishops’ Conference of the Philippines, *Acts and Decrees*, 69.

⁴³ “One People, One Mission,” Reflection Paper of the Tagaytay Echo Seminar on the 1987 Synod of Bishops, as quoted by PCP II, 188.

3.2 *New Method*

The new method according to PCP II is not entirely new, for it is already known to the people and is only given renewed emphasis.⁴⁴ This refers to acts of witnessing to others the wonderful love of God, which is done in two ways, namely, first: “by living according to the Gospel and inspired by it, and second, by giving testimony to the experience of God’s grace.”⁴⁵ The new method in witnessing the Word of God means that it should be inspired by the Gospel values in order to answer to the needs of the people. Since the call to witness to the Love of God is given to every baptized Christian, everyone is an evangelizer in their own unique way. PCP calls this a “participative approach, where people are led to realize that everyone needs to be evangelized, and is called to be an evangelizer.”⁴⁶

The weaving of *Lipa Songke* existed long before the arrival of the Catholic Church in Manggarai. As explained earlier in this study, the main purpose of the weaving is the preservation and transmission of the values of life of the people of Manggarai. Herein, the weaving is not yet considered as a way of doing evangelization. Hence, to look at *Lipa Songke* as a locus of doing theology can be considered as a new method that can contribute to the goal of renewed integral evangelization in Manggarai. The weavers are Christians themselves and are called to witness to the world the great love of God. Through the weaving of *Lipa Songke*, they can participate in the work of evangelization, where they can be witnesses to the great love of God to the world. The God who never leaves them alone, who sends His only Begotten Son to save the world, who loves them unconditionally, who longs to bring them into one family, and who wants them to have eternal life. This specific love of God binds them as one family where the values of solidarity, brotherhood/sisterhood, self-sacrifice, harmony, and unity are shared.

3.3 *New Fervor*

New fervor in doing evangelization is “a gift of the Holy Spirit but finds support in the brethren.”⁴⁷ This gift of the Holy Spirit rekindles the fire and passion of the people for the Gospel values. This new fervor comes from the intimate encounter with the Lord. Hence,

⁴⁴ PCP II, 193.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 194.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 197.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 199.

prayer life and the Eucharist are important. It also results in “a delightful and comforting joy in evangelizing.”⁴⁸ Evangelizers are meant to bring joy to others and to become joyful persons themselves. The new fervor, according to PCP II, “translates itself in faithful, creative, persevering, and visible commitment.”⁴⁹ It makes the people of God more committed and courageous to their being Christians.

As they proclaim God’s love through the weaving of *Lipa Songke*, the lay women of Manggarai, at the same time, can inspire the people on how to be a committed Christian and on how to witness to the world that they belong to one body, the church with Jesus Christ as its Head, and they are sisters and brothers to one another, they are children of God. As brothers and sisters of one family, they sacrifice themselves for the needs of others. New fervor is exemplified in preserving, transmitting, and witnessing faithfully not just the cultural values of the people of Manggarai but the values of the Gospel which they have embraced through the years. They also can inspire the theologians to find simple ways, attuned to the local culture, in proclaiming the Word of God.

3.4 New Expression

New means of expression in evangelization are needed today. PCP II mentions social communication as offering tremendous possibilities in transmitting the Good News.⁵⁰ The availability of social media in today’s world is a great benefit for sharing the Gospel values to the ends of the world. Furthermore, PCP II mentions also the use of symbols and language understood by the people as means of evangelization.⁵¹ To bring back their commitment to faith, new expressions in preaching the Catholic faith are necessary. It should use the language, art, and symbols understood by the people whom they evangelize. Seeing the changes in the life of the people, the local church of Manggarai is urged to find new paths or new ways in evangelization.

The transmission of the Gospel values in Manggarai is mostly done in homily and catechesis.⁵² The Third Synod of Ruteng calls on all Catholics in Manggarai to witness to the Gospel values in a new

⁴⁸ Paul VI, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (EN) (December 8, 1975), 80.

⁴⁹ PCP II, 199.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 200.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 201.

⁵² Panitia Sinode Keuskupan Ruteng, *Dokumen Sinode III 2013–2015 Keuskupan Ruteng*, Yogyakarta: Penerbit AsdaMEDIA 2017, 40.

way that reaches out into the diverse contexts of their lives.⁵³ The weaving of *Lipa Songke* can be a new expression in transmitting the Good News to the people. Through it, they can remind the people that the universe, created by God, is the place for all, therefore it has to be preserved and protected. As Pope Francis notes, “each community can take from the bounty of the earth whatever it needs for subsistence, but it also has the duty to protect the earth and to ensure its fruitfulness for coming generations.”⁵⁴ The lay women echo in their weaving that “God sees everything is very good” (see Gen 1:31) and that everything he has made should live in harmony. Pope Francis goes on saying, “Nature cannot be regarded as something separate from ourselves or as a mere setting in which we live. We are part of nature, included in it and thus in constant interaction with it. It is essential to seek comprehensive solutions which consider the interactions within natural systems themselves and with social systems.”⁵⁵ The people of Manggarai live in interconnectivity with nature, and this is also carried out by the lay women in their weaving.

4. *Lay Women: The Agents of Inculturation in Manggarai*

There are many ways in which the laity can participate in the work of inculturation, such as art and other forms of human creativity. *Lipa Songke*, as an art, enlightens and enhances the understanding of the people on the Gospel. Lay women of Manggarai through their creativity of weaving *Lipa Songke*, help the people “to go beyond the current culture and the previous ways of understanding and living the Gospel.”⁵⁶ Through the weaving of *Lipa Songke* the lay women of Manggarai carry out their duties as mothers and teachers to the people, following the example of Mary, as mother and teacher to her Son and to the church.

4.1 *Lay Women of Manggarai as Mothers*

The important role of being a mother is a divine mission and is specifically given to a woman. She is given the privilege by God to give life to others. The concept of *ine rinding wie* (the mother who protects when evening comes) given to the lay women of Manggarai

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Francis, *Laudato Si', On Care for Our Common Home* (2015), 67.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 139.

⁵⁶ Peter C. Phan, *In Our Own Tongues. Perspectives from Asia on Mission and Inculturation*, Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books 2003, 6.

shows the reality of being a mother. Weaving *Lipa Songke* is a way of expressing their role as mother. *Lipa Songke* is used mostly to cover the body and to warm it. As mother, they give their best in weaving so as to create beauty in those who wear it. They mothered them into the highest values in life, into becoming more Christian and more Manggarai. They weave the values which they have learned and seen in the heart of the people. As mother, they give birth to a creative expression of faith and give life to others by inviting them to a deeper meaning of the Gospel and of culture. Lay women of Manggarai play their role as mothers in giving their children warmth until the sun goes up, until they see the light offered by God in the Gospel.

4.2 Lay Women of Manggarai as Teachers

In exercising the role of teacher, the lay women of Manggarai are doing both evangelizing and transforming the life of the people.

4.2.1 Evangelizer⁵⁷

Every baptized person must be aware of her/his responsibility in evangelization, particularly through the way they live. Central to the work of evangelization is the Word of God. That is to say that the evangelizers are to witness to the Word of God in word and in deed and influence every aspect of life of the people, by the help of God the Holy Spirit.⁵⁸ Jesus, before his ascension, sends his disciples into the whole world, saying, “Go into the whole world and proclaim the gospel to every creature” (see Mark 16:15). Evangelization aims at all of humanity and it brings all people as a whole into a closer encounter with Christ.

As evangelizers, the lay women bring all people in touch with the living God through the weaving of *Lipa Songke*. They enrich the spiritual, social, and ecological aspects of their journey. First, the spiritual aspect of life of the people of Manggarai is enhanced and enriched by the work of the weavers. Inspired by God himself, the lay women, the weavers make God’s works and His name known to all. The God whom they believe in and they share through *Lipa Songke* is a living and loving God, who provides everything in their lives. Hence, everybody has equal opportunities to come to Him. They echo that the cen-

⁵⁷ Peter Schineller, Inculturation: A Difficult and Delicate Task: *IBMR* 20 (3.1996) 109-112. Retrieved November 15, 2019, from <http://www.internationalbulletin.org/issues/1996-03/1996-03-109-schineller.pdf>, 109.

⁵⁸ EN 75. See RM 30.

ter of everything in their lives is God, and call the people to enter into relationship with Him.

Second, the social aspect. The lay women of Manggarai share the values of togetherness, belongingness, connectivity, collaboration, solidarity, unity, equality, and harmony, that people are to relate in mutual respect, care, and responsibility, for they belong to one big family with different responsibilities. They are living in a circle of participation, a circle of invitation, a circle of inclusion, and a circle of empowerment.

Third, the ecological aspect. The lay women carry out in their weaving of *Lipa Songke* the value of interdependency. The universe is a home for all, a mother, a household of God, and a womb, from which the humans and all creation come and to which all return. Therefore, it has to be respected and preserved.

4.2.2 Transformer⁵⁹

The lay women, the weavers help the people of Manggarai understand anew the meaning of the motifs of *Lipa Songke* in the light of the Gospel. The motifs ingrained in *Lipa Songke* speak about the Gospel values in a language understood by the people. They transform the meaning of the motifs of *Lipa Songke* into deeper values of Christianity. By this, they help the people to be rooted in the Gospel and in their own culture.

The lay women of Manggarai participate in the task of inculturation in the church as Mother and Teacher through the weaving of *Lipa Songke*. In so doing they share the church's role which, as Pope John XXIII says, above all is "to hold the world in an embrace of love, that people, in every age, should find in her their own completeness in a higher order of living, and their ultimate salvation."⁶⁰ The values they convey in their weaving of *Lipa Songke* are their way of doing their duties entrusted to them by Christ, namely "the task of giving life to her children and of teaching them and guiding them with maternal care."⁶¹ Indeed, the role of mother and teacher played by the lay women of Manggarai has its roots in Mary, the Mother and Teacher of Christ her Son and in the Church.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 109.

⁶⁰ John XXIII, *Mater et Magistra*, Encyclical on Christianity and Social Progress (1961), 1.

⁶¹ Ibid.

5. Conclusion

By looking at *Lipa Songke* as an inculturation tool, lay women can participate more actively in the transmission, not just of the values of the Gospel but the cultural values of Manggarai as well. Therefore, the lay women of Manggarai are agents of inculturation through the weaving of *Lipa Songke*. In doing so, they are able to contribute to renewed integral evangelization in Manggarai.

ABSTRACTS

Die Autorin stellt die traditionellen Webarbeiten der Frauen der Manggarai (Indonesien) als Ausdruck ihres kulturellen Erbes vor und beschreibt die Arbeit an und die Motive in diesen Webarbeiten. In der Weitergabe ihrer Webkunst tragen die Frauen zur Inkulturation des christlichen Glaubens bei, weil die Bedeutung der Motive eine tiefe Beziehung zu zentralen Aspekten des christlichen Glaubens aufweist. Der zweite Teil des Artikels arbeitet den Begriff von Inkulturation und Neuevangelisierung heraus und untersucht den spezifischen Beitrag der Frauen als Vorreiterinnen der Inkulturation.

La autora presenta los tejidos tradicionales de las mujeres de Manggarai (Indonesia) como expresiones de su tradición cultural y describe el trabajo y los motivos en estos tejidos. Al pasar la tradición de sus tejidos, ellas contribuyen a la inculturación de la fe cristiana, ya que el significado de los motivos de sus tejidos expresa relaciones profundas con aspectos centrales de la fe cristiana. La segunda parte del artículo reflexiona sobre los conceptos de la inculturación y de la nueva evangelización y estudia el aporte específico de las mujeres como promotoras de la inculturación.

L'auteur présente les tissages traditionnels des femmes de Manggarai (Indonésie) comme des expressions de leur héritage et décrit le travail et les motifs des tissages. En transmettant ces tissages, elles contribuent à l'inculturation de la foi chrétienne car les motifs de ces tissages ont de profondes relations avec des aspects centraux de la foi chrétienne. La deuxième partie de l'article réfléchit au concept d'inculturation et de nouvelle évangélisation et étudie la contribution particulière des femmes comme agents d'inculturation.