

MAROMAK, YOU ARE THE LIGHTENING CREATION

“THEOLOGICAL EXPLORATION OF CREATION CARE FROM TIMORESE PERSPECTIVE”

1. INTRODUCTION

This article tries to articulate Nicene Creed from the Timorese understanding of God in relation to the creation. Following the theme: Echoes of Nicaea: Enduring the faith and embracing unity, and the second point of the concept paper; Biocentric solidarity: Covenantal Bond for Cosmic Wholeness my response will summarize on the theme *Maromak*, You are the Lightning creation, the “Theological exploration of creation care from Timorese perspective”.

2. ECOLOGICAL DESTRUCTION IN TIMOR-LESTE

Current ecological crisis is seen as an impact of colonialism. During the Portuguese ruling period, we saw very intense exploitation of the natural resources, deforestation and losses of primal component of the ecosystem taking place in Timor-Leste. The main natural resources exploited and taken completely by the Portuguese were sandalwood, marble, and others. Later on, the Portuguese imposed coffee plant policy, where coffee then became the single commodity being planted. The impact of the policy led to de-plantation and massive deforestation. The policy applied within the taxed policy, forcefully and strongly demanded every population to pay taxes, which gave no other choice to people but to plant coffee and worked as slaves.

Since the Indonesian invasion, according to the George Junus Aditjondro, the national companies of foreign governments played a significant role in the de-forestation. Adicontro highlighted the impact of the Indonesian invasion to ecological crises in three parts. First, there have been massive deforestation causing by the Indonesian government through companies exploiting white wood tree (eucalyptus), coffee, marble and others. Second, explorations of oil, which have been exploited illegally by Australia, who later on shamefully shared the profit with Indonesia. Third, the occupation has caused the decreased in the number of animals and human beings in Timor-Leste¹.

Since the independence, the oil exploration has become the major source of income and state budget. In the context of ecological crisis, it is a pity that the government body often

¹ Junus Aditjondro, *Menyongsong Matahari Terbit di Pucak Ramelau*, HAK and FORTILOS, Jakarta 2000, pg 44-50

does not categorize oil exploration as part of the leading factor of ecological crises. Oil and gas have been the main components of the Timor Sea, which contribute greatly to the harmony of the Timorese island. According to Jonathan Goncalves, the researcher from *La'o Hamutuk*, the exploration has been based on greed to live in instant lifestyle². This will lead Timor-Leste to ecological debt, not because of the contribution of consuming oil and gas and its impact on daily life but greatly because exploration has contributed to damage of land and forest, which eventually will leave the island deserted and dry.

3. ENCOUNTERING CHRISTIANITY

3.1. *Maromak*, God of light that liberates and the beginning

In this part, I will describe the interaction between communities of faith in Timor-Leste in adopting to the Nicaea Creed. Nicaea Creed was recognized as a Creed of community of faith within the Apostle Creed and Athanasius. In IPTL, we have two models of liturgy that are used in the service, that is model I and II. Model I adopts the Apostle Creed and model II adopts the Nicaea Creed. Both are used regularly every month in the community service. Specially tracing used of word *Maromak* that applied to God, and how far it has been reflected the core of Christian faith, through the experience of Timorese.

In Timor-Leste the Tetun word for God is *Maromak* (You are Lightening); It is the same word used in translation to the Nicaea Creed: Relates to the affirmation of one God= *Maromak ida deit*, the nature of Jesus: God from God= *Maromak husi Maromak*, and the nature of the Holy Spirit: “..Holy Spirit, The Lord= *Na'i/* has an equal meaning to Lord. The word *Maromak* is developed from the word *Naroman*, means Light/Shine that is used in phrase: Light from Light (Tetun: *Naroman husi Naroman*). According to Martinho Gusmão, the Catholic Theologian from Timor-Leste, the word *Naroman* appears in singular and plural form as follows³:

- Singular form: *Karoma* (I am that shines/lightens), *Maromak* (You are the Lightening) and *Haroma* (She/He is the Light)

² Jonathan Goncalves, Ecological Crisis in Timor-Leste, pg 3. *La'o hamutuk* means walking together is local NGO's that concern on national budget and sectorial issue relate to people's life.

³ Interview: Martinho Gusmão, Dili, 7-10-2024

- Plural form: *Naroman* (We are the lightening, the word we here is an Exclusive form), *Haroman* (We are the lightening: The word we here is inclusive form) and *Raroma* (They are Lightening).

According to Gusmão, missionary took the word *Maromak* and referred to God in liturgical celebrations. Were the word is refers to the higher supreme, that defined as Light “You are the Lightening”. Because for Timorese, Light has played an important role in the way they identify and understand the nature. By observing creation, like the sun and moon, the Timorese are able to understand the way nature works and functions, and derive ethical and moral messages from the deity.

The Light, also has been identified with Jesus Christ, second Person of the Trinity “*God from God, Light from Light*”. According the Athanasius, the formulation is affirming same/equal essence of Son to the Father. Furthermore, I think it also shows the relationship of the God to human history. The prophetic message to prophet Isaiah identifies Messiah as the Light who shines among the oppressed people “*The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned*” (Isaiah 9:2). The gospel John describes incarnation as the Light that shines among us (John 1:5). John then describes that Jesus, introduced Himself as the Light of the world, whoever follows Him will not walk in the darkness, but will have the light of life (John 8:12).

More significantly, the Christological dimension of light in connection with the living being has been described clearly by prominent Asian Theologian Rev. Dr. Wesley Ariarajah as follows⁴:

- *Jesus and his life shed light on who God is and how God dealt with us;*
- *Jesus is the light in which we see in the nature and purpose of lives;*
- *He is the light in which we see the value and goals of the Reign of God;*
- *Jesus is the light in which we are unable to see injustice and wrongs that we should confront;*
- *He is the light that shows us the path to the fullness of life.*

⁴ Ed. Mathews George Chunakara, *Prophetic witness to the truth and light in Asia*, CCA, Chiang Mai 2018, pg 45

In that perspective, light has been very fundamental to describe the Christological correlation to the history of Timor-Leste. Nicolao dos Reis Lobato, the second President of Timor-Leste who organized the resistance for independent, seeing incarnation, born of Jesus, as the beginning of the redemption as parallel to history of resistance. This historical experience is necessary to understand salvation as liberation of Timorese that embrace both restoration of human dignity and the restoration of creation.

The primary relationship of God and community are in the celebration of the Eucharist. Eucharist as momentum where God solidarity to human suffering is visible and enables marginalized people to gain the strength and faith towards the future.

A Christian hymn that is often sung on the Eucharist celebration is “*Hamlaha hamrok: Hungry and thirsty*”.⁵

Hamlaha hamrok ami liman ain kolen (hungry and thirsty, hands and tired feet)
Atu ba hasoru Ita Boot (We walk to meet You)
Ita boot nudar isin no ran mak fo nia kbit mai ami (You are the blood and flesh that gives us strength)

Chorus:

Liu husi rai fuik ema hananu (Through the valley of desert they praise)
Liu husi nakukun sira tanis (Through darkness they cry)
Sira hakarak Ita Boot nia naroman (They want Your Light)
Sira hakarak Ita Boot nia hadomi (They want Your love)

The hymn describes the situation of resistance in period of occupation, the reality of hopelessness and Christ’s presence in body and flesh has become a source of courage, strength and hope. There were moments of sadness and sorrow, but there were also moments when the resistance seemed like a joyful journey. However the journey hungers for the light of the God that will restores the life. The word *naroman* appears to articulate people’s hope for the new beginning, new horizon and freedom.

The Eucharist has become a central point of meeting between Timorese and God of Light, in Jesus Christ. It was not easy, such interaction occurred and (took place) in the heart of

⁵ Sínodo IPTL, *HBM: Hananu ba Na’i*, Hymns of IPTL

oppressed people, where Christianity first arrived in an island under colonial and military occupation. Roque Rodrigues, first diplomat of Timor-Leste to African continent around 1975, before the day of Indonesia's invasion, describes that during the Portuguese time, we often find it boring to go to the church, because what the priest shares about God is very different to what the gospel says. The message of gospel has been polluted with the ideology of colonial. The resistance and affirmation of true gospel that shares God of the oppressed and liberation later on was developed by Dom Martinho da Costa Lopes and Bishop Carlos Filipe X. Bello who defined gospel as the voice of voiceless people. In the other parts, Protestant leaders Rev. Arlindo Marcal and Rev. Francisco de Vasconcelos have been consistently sharing the gospel good news of *Maubere*⁶ people, good news that shines in the darkness of Timorese.

3.2. Maromak: Source of life and the sacredness of creation

According to Tom Therik, theologian and anthropologist from West Timor, Maromak is femenim deity. It is supreme being⁷. Josh Trindade, academic researchers in the field of anthropology of Timor-Leste, explains that the word *Maromak* latter on taking over by Christianity and identifies it with masculine form. According to him, besides the word Maromak, missionary also took the word “*lulik*”. *Lulik (originally means Sacred)* is actually used to refer to the Son of God, a woman that is superior to the *Wehali* (Groups of *Liurai fetu*/woman kings), which missionary then used to Jesus Christ. Later on, the word “*lulik*” was adopted in religious institutions that refers to clergy and etc, which then becomes a source of superiority of Christian faith over the culture. For instance: *Amo lulik*, *Na'i lulik*, and others, referring to Pastor/Clergy as a saint and noble man⁸.

The issue raised by Trindade needs to be taken seriously, because it has become a source of superiority of the Christian tradition over culture, were Christianity came in contact with Timorese within the trade and colonial system. This led to the decline of both political and cultural system. Everything that coming nature tend to consider as negative,

⁶ Word *Maubere* been identified with the oppressed and marginalized, the original meaning is brave man, latter on Portugues used to discriminate and subjugate Timorese, FRETILIN party taking over as strategy of national resistance and used from common identity for those are struggled.

⁷ Tom Therik, *Wehale: The Female Land*, ANU Press, 2023, pg 164-167

⁸ Josh Trindade, *Peskija, Lingua, no Kolonializasaun no Deskolonizasaun Ba Neon iha Timor-Leste*, Dialogos, Vol.7 2022, pg 293-295

in fact in daily life, our life has been sustained by nature. It is soft power approximation to erase fundamental value of religious life and desacralized the nature as source of imagination and life.

Affirmation of the feminine side of Christ, offers a new understanding of the works of Christ related to the whole creation. The salvation of God can only be fully understood in the core love of God towards its creation. Creation becomes a starting point to reflect God's love and how far human responsibility in the Kingdom of God. The affirmation of feminism side of God (*The Lulik*) in relation to creation leads us to recognize the God as Creator and appreciate His creations. In history of Timorese resistance; air, river, mountains, trees, sea, fish have become a symbol of resistance and imagination towards the future. It is often appeared in songs, poems and narratives of liberation. Moreover, nature offers balance, harmony, synergy and mutuality, that is often contrary to the culture of imperialism and patriarchal system that often lies on the hierarchy and superiority of one over another.

Catherine LaCugna in her book *Freeing Theology* made a clear description about the implication of patriarchal ideology in theology and its impact on the religious institutions. She then proposed a new understanding about the maleness of God, in much more complementary and holistic ways where both female and masculine images are embraced.⁹ Suggestion of LaCugna is important to consider when translation and taking over the word contextually decreased the nature of God in the binary category according to the ideologies of colonial and patriarchal. LaCugna offers a new understanding of Three Persons of Trinity with feminist hermeneutics, which is for me, expresses a similar value of who God/*Maromak* is for Timorese. It becomes clearer to me the way LaCugna used Sophia as an image to describe Person of Trinity. Where the nature of God Trinity presented as Creator, sustainer, etc, in which both male and female images, are expressed without neglecting and leaving each other out, yet still offers space beyond. Sophia, according to Timorese culture relates to knowledge which often describes as *Light* that becomes fundamental to the word *Maromak*.

For Timorese, *Maromak*, the light becomes an important principle in creation and its sustainability. Light makes things visible, creation becomes visible. Visibility of creation has become the main point to understand the presence of God in its creation. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, his commentary on the book Genesis, define the light has to do with form. First, in the primeval, light has to do with order of chaos, create and unveil form. Light is

⁹ Ed. Catherine Mowry LaCugna, *Freeing Theology*, HarperColins Press, USA, 1993, pg 103

necessary because there is formless, so the light must create form. Through the light the formless night become form of the morning. Second, light has reference to the passion of Jesus. Where light has to with the Light shines in the darkness. For Bonhoeffer, contribution of the light in creation form is through the Word of Creation. Bonhoeffer conclusion, remind me that the effective and central aspect of Light relates to visibility of creation is the resurrection of Christ¹⁰. According to Moltmann, the risen Christ with is identical to the experience of the light of the day. Where we can see three things as Christophanies: First, prospective seeing crucified Christ. Second, retrospective seeing Jesus of Nazareth. Third, reflective recognition to Christ they experience¹¹.

Moltmann then says central point experience resurrection as light of day is in Eucharist. Eucharist offers possibilities experience of new creation in Christ. The Eucharist celebrations reminds us to recognize sacramental dimension of creation. First, the experience of the body and blood of Christ in through the bread and wine leads to experience sacramental life with other creation. It is Luther that promoted the idea of *consubstantiation* which later on theologians developed in the same pattern as the psalmist where he described that creation reveals the glory and holiness of God. Luther, according to Tom Sverre Tomren, emphasized the *ubiquitas* of Divine and Human nature of Christ, it means that the human nature of Christ is present in sacrament¹². This conclusion creates the path to recognize creation in the new perspective, where new heaven and earth are not mere sociological entities but indeed are eco-centric. Second, in the Trinitarian perspective, creation as living being sustained by the Spirit of God. It is the same Spirit that created humans as living beings. This is also another dimension of concept of *Lulik*, where Timorese recognized that every living being is sustained by the Spirit. Trees, seas, animals, and other living entities are sustained by the Spirit. By recognizing the presence of Spirit in living beings, we recognize the *Pneumatological* dimension in the creation. Where creation is the work of God the father, through the Son and sustained by the Holy Spirit¹³.

¹⁰ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Creation and fall*, Macmillan Company, New York, 1971, pg 24

¹¹ Jurgen Moltmann, *Sun of Righteousness Arise: God's future on human earth*: Chap 5: appearance of risen Christ, SCM Press, London 2010.

¹² Ed. Louk A. Andrianos, etc, *Contemporary ecotheology, climate justice and environmental stewardship in the world religions*, WCC, Livonia Print, 2021, Pg 79-80

¹³ Ed. Hans-George Link, *One God, One Lord, One Spirit*, WCC: Faith and Order, pg 104

Moltmann emphasized *Pneumatological* characteristic in the Trinitarian perspective by referencing to Hildegard and Calvin, where both of them presented the Spirit's works in fresh full, as follows¹⁴:

For Hildegard:

*The Holy Spirit is life-giving life,
mover of the universe and root of all created being.
He purifies the universe from impurity; he takes away guilt and anoints the wounds.
Thus he is shining life, worthy of praise, raising up and reawakening the universe*

In same pattern, Calvin affirms:

For the Spirit is present everywhere and sustains, nourishes, and gives life to all things on heaven and earth.

The fact that he pours his power into everything

And thereby promise being, life, and movement to all things this is clearly divine.

Both Calvin and Hildegard provide rich and fresh full understanding of the nature and works of the Holy Spirit in creation. The presence of Spirit in creation is not only as life giving but also sustaining, healing, caring and nourishing. This perspective amplifies us to recognize the covenant of God Trinity towards its creation, where Father as creator through Christ in Spirit, in more dynamic ways.

4. ETHICAL DIMENSION CARE OF CREATION: LULIK AND PERICHORESIS

In this part I will introduce the concept of *lulik* as the core value of living in harmony of human beings within the creation, by describing cultural celebration of *Tara Bandu* (*Hang the Sacred Prohibition, literal translation*), as one of the common cultural rituals in ecological preservation. Practice of ritual has been pivotal in the life of Timorese in relation to nature and the seas. On the other hand, I will explore *Perichoresis* as a core relationship of living creation.

4.1. *Lulik*: Core value living

Lulik, means Sacred, had been mentioned before it being referred to the divine entity, a feminine character. For Timorese, land, sea, air, and inhabitants (or beyond that) are one ecosystem. The core value of the ecosystem is *lulik* or sacred. In cosmic order, *lulik* is

¹⁴ Jürgen Moltmann, *Hope in this troubled times*, WCC, 2019, pg

first principle, and second is nature (green space including blue space): source or fertility and abundant. Third is a social space of how human beings live and interact with nature (Deity) and one another.

According to Castro, *Lulik* in Timorese concept is considered as something to connect to patterns, and idea or concept of preservation to the oral tradition, social practice, ritual and ceremonies. This shows the importance of *Lulik* as a core to regulate relationship between human beings with God/Divine entities, between human beings and human beings with the creation. Later on *Lulik*, also became important in regulating the social political system (democracy) and gender. In the practice, in Timor-Leste, religious entities or clergies are referred to as *lulik*, green space: Land and sea seen as *lulik*. From the gender perspective, some parts of a human body are considered as “*sasan lulik*/sacred parts).

In relation to creation care, *Tara Bandu* has become a common ritual that Timorese practiced. *Tara Badu*, literally means *Tara: Hang and Bandu: forbidden*. *Tara Bandu* is considered as a customary law that has been recognized by the government as part of the judicial system.

The practice of *Tara Bandu* is by hanging symbols on trees or on the sea side as a warning to not take and destroy. Mostly the purpose of the ritual is to seek/establish peace, justice and reconciliation. Through *Tara Bandu* the harmony and sacredness of life maintained, *Tara Bandu* sets the judicial system to guarantee justice for ecology and those who break the rule must accept the consequences. At the end *Tara Bantu* seeks to establish reconciliation, it has almost similar patterns that were introduced by prophet Isaiah related to the harmony of living beings as core *Messianic* reconciliation.

The ritual has been practiced in several cases¹⁵:

- **For regulating people to people's relationship:** It is applied within the socio-cultural aspect to prohibit people of violating others rights. This includes those who commit sexual abuse and violence, and property destruction in the community. It also prohibits people to commit infractions and wasteful and overspending that may affect people's lives. In a broader sense, it is also applied to regulate political behavior related to public issues.

¹⁵ Asia Foundation, *Tara-Bandu its role and use in community conflict prevention in Timor-Leste*, Dili-2013, pg 13-14

- **Regulating People-Animal relationship:** This part is referred to how people manage their own animals and respond to others livestock and wild animals. Essentially it is about prohibiting people to kill animals in the forest, steal animals, and fish killing and other destructive behaviors that cause death of animals. Animals should be treated in the same manner according to the ethical and moral value that is applied in the society and state.
- **Regulating People-Environment relationship:** In socio-environment level, *Tara Bandu* prohibits people to practice the burning of lands, cutting trees, harvesting, taking sand from the beach, stealing stones for construction and others, and it prohibits the practice of wasting water to reduce water scarcity.

The *Tara Bandu* has great and positive impact on the changing attitude of society towards nature. But it also recognizes its small impact on the state institution.

The practice of *Tara Bandu* is mostly implemented in the community. The instruments that they hang traditionally are palm trees or coconut trees. An important component in the ritual is prayer; we call it *hamulak* (prayer that contains blessings and cursing), animal blood, and buffalo horn. The position of hanging the instruments depends on the necessity. In community level, central areas have played a crucial role in connecting rituals to *lulik*. But it can be practiced by any household to protect their field and lands. Traditionally blood symbolizes the covenant and horn symbolizes the order.

Theologically *Tara Bandu* has been understood as a way of preserving and the pedagogy of sacredness. When a Timorese sees the signs/symbols hung on a tree or somewhere, they automatically know the limit of their behavior towards a living being. It's important to understand the relationship between sacredness and human limits and responsibility. To prohibit is to set the limits, but it also set the paths of our responsibility towards one another. The famous story of Moses and the burning bush has been codified with sacredness of the land (3:1-17), and the story of Prophet Jonah (Jonah 1:1-17b). First, for the story of Moses, the sacred area of the land has been identified with the presence of a Deity in the Mount Horeb. It is similar to how indigenous people believe a mountain is where Deities live and the place where people can offer sacrifice and place their sacred materials. Historically, the Israelites in contact with empire, mount of Horeb/Sinai has been a symbol of national resistance. In Timor-Leste, similarly we find the importance of Mount Ramelau as a symbol of national resistance and sacredness. The earlier and latter resistance poems and spiritual song have placed mount Ramelau as the point of encountering *Lulik*.

Defending the land has been understood as defending the sacredness of mount Ramelau, and ecological degradation and exploration of mountain being lamented as violating the sacredness. Second, the story of Jonah is related to the experience of the community in Atauro Island. For the people of Atauro, the sea has become a place ordering justice. For Atauro people *Tara Bandu* has to with motive that is place in heart of human being. They believe no one can identify and judge your heart in the land side, but you may not escape while you are passing the sea. Accidents in the sea are always understood in accordance to the social behavior, and behavior towards the biodiversity in the sea. What happened to Jonas has a similar understanding related to the motive and participation towards God's vision on the salvation. Later on the story of Jonah has become a pre-understanding to story of dead and resurrection of Jesus for the sake of creation.

We often reflect *Tara Bandu* in three ways of prohibitions:

- **Do not want:** refers to the motive, indicates the ability to manage your desire: Discernment).
- **Do not touch:** refers to the ability to take decision.
- **Do not take (can be other form):** Relate to moral action that has pass the boundary of limits and consider as crime.

The prohibitions are parallel to the responsibility as justice act towards ecology:

- **Planting:** Planting is an act of gratitude for the seed. Seed becomes an important component in the Timorese faith, representing God's assurance to life. When we plant we participate in the creation of God. The act of planting should go with the recognition of the faults and embrace new beginning.
- **Caring:** It is a commitment and responsibility of accompaniment. Caring is not separated to the planting. It is a responsibility to nourish and be joyful to see things grow.
- **Preserving:** Is an act to let others grow. It is a spirituality of diversity and living in harmony, it is also struggled against our greed and tendencies to dominate, it is a commitment to see thins grow to its fullness.

It is important to note that *Tara Bandu*, often works and applied through community. Where help us to recognize our being as a community. Since *Tara Bandu* is for seeking peace, justice and reconciliation in wholeness. The current practice people often hang on trees models the cross. It is the way how contextual understanding of Christian message within the cultural beliefs, where cross being seen as a core to

cosmic salvation. It is important to understand Christ's core of creation or even as Rowan Williams describes Christ as the heart of creation. The history of civilization often put human as the center of history, but recognizes Christ as the heart of creation calling us to affirm Christ as the center, and it will open ways to a new beginning.

4.2. *Perichoresis* as core of relationship

Perichoresis has become a key concept of the Trinity. I am aware that it is not easy to articulate this concept. The importance of the affirmation of concept of Trinity is maintained in unity and plurality of person. Maintaining the balance of unity of essence and plurality person has become important to define the Trinity. While reflecting this, I am focusing on how far to understand the relationship between God and His creation is core ethical care to creation.

Word *Perichoresis* is a Greek term; according to McGrath earlier developed by Irenaeus and Tertullian¹⁶. But Gregory Nazianzus is the one for first time applied this term in articulating and expressing Christian faith. The *Perichoresis* being defined as mutual interpenetration, I prefer "mutual indwelling" that for me much softer but the same time does not neglect the intensity of the communion that is bonded by love. Cathrine Lacugna provided more imaginative and interesting definition, which according to her *Perichoresis* as¹⁷:

Even if the philological warrant for this is scant, the metaphor of dance is effective. Choreography suggests the partnership of movement, symmetrical but not redundant, as each dancer expresses and at the same time fulfills him/herself towards the other. In interaction and inter-course, the dancers (and the observers) experience one fluid motion of encircling, encompassing, permeating, enveloping, outstretching. There are neither leaders nor followers in the divine dance, only an eternal movement of reciprocal giving and receiving, giving again and receiving again. To shift metaphor for a moment, God is eternally begetting and being begotten, spirating and being spirated. The divine dance is fully personal and interpersonal, expressing the essence and unity of God. The image of the dance forbids us to think of God as solitary. The idea of Trinitarian perichōrēsis

¹⁶ Alister E. McGrath, *Christian Theology: An Introduction*, Wiley-Blackwell, Fifth Edition

¹⁷ Catherine M. Lacugna, *God for us: Trinity and Christian life*, HarperCollins, San Francisco, 1991, pg 271-272

provides a marvelous point of entry into contemplating what it means to say that God is alive from all eternity as love.

Catherine LaCugna used the metaphor of dancing to help us understand Trinity in more solid ways, where unity and diversity are maintained. Dance has commonly become cultural heritage of all societies. For Timorese: Understand in several ways:

- **Dance as self-narrating.** Self-narrating, is about being communicative, words and stories and intertwine to discourse ourselves. Where in the dance we found stories that connect us to the past, present and future. In the dance our identity is both revealed and hidden. Dance as a metaphor, we find the unity and communion of three persons of God. But also esthetically brings us to attract the hiddenness of the reality of Trinity that we want to discover. With the similar pattern, dance in every society is about identity of community; we recognize that we are excited to be in relationship with others. Which is also at the same time opens up to the explorations of rich and valuable meaning that are still hidden. In Timor-Leste, we can't imagine dancing without wearing *tais* (custom/traditional attire), which identifies with certain patterns of persona and connectivity of those colors which reflect harmonious unity of cosmic”.
- **Bonds of love:** LaCugna used the word reciprocal giving and receiving¹⁸, which is also important to explore about solidarity; sacrifice and give out life in the core of communion. More clearly LaCugna then refers to Boff defining reciprocal as *“intimate loving relationship, being one for another, by another in another. No divine person exists alone for its own sake; eternally in relationship with another. Father is Father because he has a Son; the Son is Son only because he has father; the Spirit is only because of the love in which the Father begets the Son and the Son gives back to the Father”*¹⁹. Similar words found in the gospel of John, love of the Father and Son, eternally bonds. Reciprocal love requires no limit and criteria; it is mutual commitment being with one another. It sets the foundation for love of creation. Naturally creation was designed to be with one another or coexist, no one exists for themselves. As human beings, the act of giving to one another actually is reciprocal that moved by heart of gratitude. It not a form of cause and

¹⁸ Ibid, Lacugna 172

¹⁹ Ibid, Lacugna 276

effect, but rather as being loving to one another, the intimacy of communion which once Jonathan Edwards called sweet intimate communion.

- **Communion in mutuality:** Communion in the *Perichoresis*, according to Lacugna is the reality of unity divine substance, the principle of unity of three absolutely coequal and reciprocal Persons²⁰. For LaCugna communion of the Trinity criticizes the cultural notions of personhood, community, society, and the church; where individualism, isolationism, and asocial personhood are questioned and criticize. Communion is also characterized by mutuality. Mutuality is opposing the hierarchy, monarchy and superiority over others. Communion in mutuality brings us towards creation openly, being part in creation of God as an experience *koinonia*. This model of relationship demonstrates the essence of *oikos* as household of God, which what Norman Solomon describes as *diversity in creation and diversity of personality* that identifies with universality, non-exclusiveness, and boundaries holy and profane²¹. Spiritual value of communion and mutuality can be explored deeper in relation to how dance is performed. It requires true partnership of movement, symmetrical and synergy in unity..

Another characteristic of *Perichoresis* has been profoundly described by prominent Indonesia theologian Joas Adiprasetya, in his dissertation, that was published and titled “*Toward A Perichoretic Theology of Religions*”. Joas points out that the *Perikhoreis* has been developed related to the nature of Christ (two nature of Christ, Three persons of the Trinity, and reality *Perichoresis* (Cosmic participation in Triune life)²². I am interested in the way he described Moltmann’s concerns in *Perichoresis* where the relationship of God creation and the human creation being articulated²³. This theological articulation is necessary to consider the relationship of God to creation. On other parts, he also points out the important aspect that is often neglected in the contextualization of Christian faith. Joas offers a very fundamental aspect about *Perichoresis* that embraces rather than including. In the very dynamic ways, embracing means to recognize others as our part without neglecting freedom and identity of others. When Nicaea Creed was translated

²⁰ Ibid, Lacugna 276

²¹ Mathew George Chunakara, *Living Together in The HOUSEHOLD OF GOD*, Christava Sahitya Samitha, Tiruwula, India 2015, pg 12

²² Joas Adiprasetya, *Disertation: Toward A Perichoretic Theology of Religions*, Boston 2008, pg 151

²³ Ibid, Joas Adiprasetya, pg 188

and applied in local languages, it affects the understanding of the community regarding faith in God, in interaction within the culture that we live. Culture has played an important role in our understanding in the same manner provides us pattern to develop conceptual core of meaning to our use of language and understanding.

- When the word *Maromak* is applied /referred to God, it is not about ontological meaning, the word is much more understood as an adjective. This come to complicate when we began to raise issue relate to the wholeness of God. Is that word and concept can reflect the idea of wholeness when it comes to interact with the Christian faith or not. According to K.M. George, the wholeness can be perceived as given and on other hand should be experienced. Because the wholeness is absolute subject, in which all subjectivity and objectivity constantly and gradually emerge. To him, Christian believe can provide both because Christian faith is both holistic and *appophatic*²⁴. The ontological meaning of *Maromak* has been sustained by our understanding of communion of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The reason being, the structure of blessing: *Maromak: Aman Oan Jesus Kristu no Ispiritu Santu*, same meaning as God the Father, Son Jesus Christ and Holy Spirit. Therefore, the ontological experience of God is only understood and perceived in the experience of Trinity in relation to the creations. This conclusion opens up a possibility for me to trace how far aspect of *inward* and *out ward* the *Maromak* relation to the creation.
- As it was pointed out earlier that the word *Maromak* has rich full range in the two characteristics singular and plural. But in same place we can trace both exclusivity and inclusivity of *Maromak*:

Characteristics	Exclusive	Inclusive	Affirmative
Singular	<i>Karoma</i>	<i>Maromak</i>	<i>Haroma</i>
Plural	<i>Naroman</i>	<i>Haroman</i>	<i>Raroman</i>

The words *Maromak*, *Naroman* and *Haroman* are most regularly used in liturgies of services. The word *Maromak* used with the word *Naroman* can be understood as

²⁴ Paulos Mar Gregorios, *Philosophy East and West*, Mar Gregorios Foundation and Orthodox Theological Seminary, Kottayam, 2013, pg 21, 23, 26

ontological affirmation of the Trinity. “He” confesses or affirms within the “We” plural (Ex), the word *Naroman* becomes the adjective form of *Maromak*; *Maromak mak Naroman* (God is the Light). When the word *Maromak* is used with *Haroman* “We” in plural form (Inclusive), the word *Haroman* becomes a verb. This shows that both ontological aspect of the essence and Persons of Trinity are embraced in relation to the creation, or we may say the balance of the Unity and diversity in communion is maintained. Of course that the word *Maromak* itself cannot be separated from Father/*Aman/Pai*, Son/*Filho/Oan*/ and Holy Spirit/*Ispiritu Santu*.

It is clear that communion with God cannot be separated from our understanding to realities Persons of Trinity in relation to creation. This opens up a new basic understanding human nature and its responsibility. The book of Genesis affirms that human being is created according to image of God Trinity. Through the lens of Trinity, we acknowledge our self as relational being in creation. This acknowledgement effective when we look up to Christ in the Spirit, which has define and lay down our mission as the light. On Mathews 5:16, Jesus says “*Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your father in heaven*. First, being the light for the others should base on Christ self-sacrifices. Paul on Philippians 2:5-11, define it with *pronesis (joyful willingness) and kenosis (Self emptying)*. Second, being light is be good to the creation by promoting good works. It is ethical and moral action where determine our quality to contribute, sustain and nourish and caring.

5. CONCLUSION

The starting point of this paper, I want to show how far Nicaea Creed has been reflected, and I want to show how far the complexity of interaction of Christian faith, while facing the challenges of ecological crisis.

It is an attempt that may fail but also church in Timor-Leste need to think seriously of the impact of confession to its realities. Starting point Nicaea is Christology to Trinity and Trinity to Christology, with the same frame work I want to contribute how far cultural background of the word *Maromak* can be fully grasped in the Trinitarian perspective through the lens of both historical and cultural interaction, and showing core value as frame work for the creation care.