

The Cultural Review of Inculturation based on Javanese Decorative Ornaments at Ganjuran Catholic Church

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Abstract: Church of inculturation is the result of mixing between the Catholic tradition with many aspects of local culture without reducing the content of Catholic gospel value itself. One of the inculturation church is the Ganjuran Catholic Church located in Bantul, Yogyakarta. The issue in this research is the extent of inculturation that occurs in this Ganjuran Catholic Church, especially from the decorative ornament because it is one of the most powerful elements within the church. In the analysis process, the church will be divided into three main areas, area for the priest, area for the people, area for the musician. From the analysis , it can be concluded that in the Catholic Church Ganjuran Javanese culture is more influential than the Catholic tradition.

Key words: *Inculturation Culture, Catholic Church, Javanese Culture, Decorative Ornaments.*

1. Introduction

The early Catholic church buildings in Indonesia is used by Dutch people to fulfill their religious needs. Along with the increasing number of local resident that joining the church, The form is adjusted to suit the local culture. Those church are called as inculturation church. Inculturation Church is a church that uses local cultural elements both physical and non-physical as a part of the liturgy. One of the example of Inculturation Church in modern times is the Ganjuran Catholic Church located in Bantul, Yogyakarta. The purpose of this study was to determine the extent of inculturation happened in Ganjuran Catholic Church, especially about the dominance of local aspect applied in the physical building of this church. The research method chosen was descriptive qualitative. The data collecting process is through direct observation, literature review, and interviews with related people such as architect who design the church and priest in the church.

2. Literature

There are three cultural processes. Those are inculturation, acculturation, and modernization. Inculturation is a cultural process that occurs when two cultures meet and one of them adds values to the other. There are two factors involved in the process of inculturation is the main culture and the added culture.

The definition of inculturation in the Catholic church is the expression of faith in the local culture. The definition of culture is the whole of human life and its results were characterized by local, including mindset, language, values, arts, customs, clothing and so on. Inculturation is necessary and upheld by the Church throughout its history[1]. Redemptoris Missio explained that inculturation is a process that must be done in

order to spread the Catholic gospel within different cultures all over the world. It is emphasized in this document, inculturation is a long process, because the purpose of it is to add some culture value into Catholic gospel so it can be easily accepted by the local resident who strongly hold to their local cultural value. But the process should not change any important Catholic value. Process into another culture without having to change Catholic major value that causes inculturation need a very long time and complex stages. In connection with the objects of inculturation, the Church allows the use of local cultural elements in the objects that are not too significant as clothing, language, music, and art.

The concept of traditional architecture in Javanese culture is about showing the level of richness of each family or individual. Because the old society is still lead by a king so it the concept is about palace-centric. The most noble individual is the king so nobody allowed to build a house larger than the king itself. In the Javanese ancient society there is the typical form of the joglo. Joglo house is a specific residence for the rich and royal family because to build joglo house itself needs a lot of money compared to another house form.

Javanese culture itself is very familiar with decorative ornament. Even actually Indonesia itself does not really have an original decoration. Decorative ornament appear with influence of Hindu religion then fused with indigenous Indonesian culture. In Java decorative divided into five main types of decorative such as plant, animal, nature, religion, and woven [2]

3. Object Research

Ganjuran Catholic Church Ganjuran chosen as representative of inculturation in the modern church. The church would be different from many inculturation churches developed in Java in the past time that was mostly built by a priest and also an architect, Father Mangunwijaya. New Ganjuran church built in 2009 to replace the old church which was destroyed by an earthquake. Actually the first Ganjuran church still had a western architectural style despite signs of inculturation of the liturgy that occurs on other aspects.

In the new Ganjuran church, the mix of culture can be seen from the architecture and interior. In this study, the authors focus on discussing inculturation is in the interior of the church is mainly associated with ornaments used there. Ornaments become the focus of research because it is the most dominant element in the interior of the church. By discussing the ornaments, it can cover as well as major elements of the overall interior space such as ceiling, walls, floors, and furniture.



Figure 1. Ganjuran Church

4. Review

In this area, the church is divided into three main area, the priest area, the prayer area, and gamelan area. The priest area, also called as sanctuary, is the most vital area in the church because in this area there is a tabernacle and an altar. The tabernacle is a storage to keep The Holy Bread that believed as the symbol of Jesus existence itself. The prayer area, also called as 'nave', is where the people participate the mass. This area is the most dominant in the church because it must accommodated all people who participate the mass. The last area is gamelan area, where the traditional music instrument 'gamelan' is put together and played during the mass.

The sanctuary is compared to 'dalem ageng' in joglo house. Dalem ageng is a sacred area in joglo to be used as praying area or to put some precious relic such as 'keris' or another kind or heirloom. There area some difference between sanctuary compared to 'dalem ageng'. The ceiling at 'dalem ageng' is usually plain to create solemn atmosphere that are suitable for praying. Meanwhile in sanctuary in Ganjuran church is full of ornament and decoration, such as the glass dome above the priest area with many Catholic symbol equipped with traditional ornament nanasan and wajikan. Glass dome usually used in European Church with Gothic architectural style. The glass dome is intended to put in light as nature element that usually related to God's power or existence. It is suitable for Western church that are usually an enclosed building with a thick wall, but in this case people are not too aware with the glass dome existence because the position is not high enough to be able to be seen from any corner of the church. The church, which is an open building with only one wall in the sanctuary side, has already had excess light, so the light that come through the glass dome are not so special.



Figure 2. Sanctuary Area

Most church usually has a big cross statue on the wall of sanctuary as the center of the building orientation but the Ganjuran church have no big cross statue. As substitute, there is a symbol of pelican and flame. The symbol of pelican is first used by Saint Thomas Aquinas to tell a story about mother pelican who sacrifice their own body to feed their children. So this symbol is actually has the same meaning with the cross, that is about sacrifice. The symbol related to nature are more familiar to the Javanese people because their local culture and everyday life is actually very close to nature and also easier to understand compare to Jesus's cross that is come from punishment of Jewish old tradition.

Flame is exist in both Catholic tradition and Javanese tradition eventhough there are a slight difference in meaning. Both tradition showed that flame is sacred. In Javanese , flame take part as a destructive nature element. But in Catholic tradition , flame is mostly symbolize Holy Spirit (in Pentacoste event), or even to show existence of God itself (as pole of fire in the mid of Jewish trip to the Promise Land). Because of its important meaning in

Catholic tradition , the symbol is still used in the church (even in the important area, the priest area), eventhough in Java it has not a very good meaning.



Figure 3. Pelican and Flame symbol

Black granite stone is used as main material of background wall in the priest area. Actually black is not quite familiar in Catholic modern tradition, but in the old tradition this color is used in mourning situation(now it changed to purple). On the other side, black is have mysterious meaning in Javanese tradition. This meaning is suitable with dalem ageng that related with pray to God. God in Javanese tradition understood as a mysterious thing and believed to stay in the mind of each individual.

The focus of this area is the tabernacle. It has structure looks like a Javanese temple. There is symbol of Alpha and Omega, the first and last Greek alphabet. On the both sides of tabernacle, there are two angel statues worship the tabernacle. The position of worshiping is similar with a position of the 'abdi dalem keraton', maid in the Javanese palace. The appearance of the angel statue is different with the usual image of angel. They wear a full traditional clothes of Keraton guard. The wings also has different shape with the common image of angel. Common angel has wing structure similar with a small bird such as pigeon, that are often used to symbolize the existence of Holy Spirit. This angel statue in Ganjuran church have a pair of wings that its structure more similar to bigger and stronger birds such as eagle and vulture. The stronger structure of wings corresponds with the clothes that are used to create image that angel is similar with a guard from keraton.



Figure 4. Tabernacle



Figure 5. The position of the angel statue similar with the position of ‘abdi dalem keraton’

The ceiling on prayer area using a specific structure called ‘tumpang sari’. This is the identity of all ‘joglo’. The one that is used in Ganjuran church is four section tumpang sari, each with seven level. High ceiling and roof in Javanese tradition is to represent the sky, where they believed their God live. On the other side, in Catholic tradition, the church usually built with a very high ceiling, beyond human scale, to make people feel small and weak so they surrender to God. If the Ganjuran church ceiling is compared to common church ceiling, it is considered as short ceiling, eventhough it’s already categorized as high ceiling among another Javanese traditional building. There are other ornament surrounding the tumpang sari such as ‘usuk peniyung’, that looks like an arrow leads to the center of the room. This ornament symbolize the divine light from God. Then ‘nanasan’, an ornament similar with shape of pineapple fruit, means the sweetness of life. The rest of the ornament in the ‘tumpang sari’ mostly only have a role as decorative element.



Figure 6. Tumpangsari ornament in Ganjuran Church ceiling

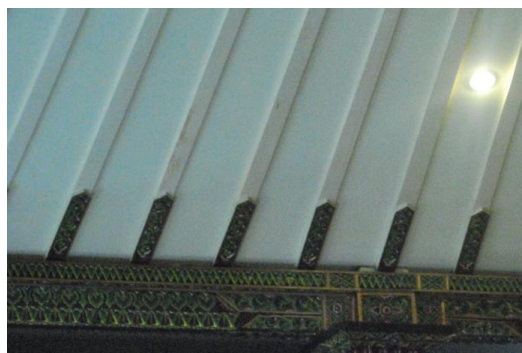


Figure 7. Usuk Peniyung

In common church with Western architectural, there usually no column because they usually already have a very thick wall and column can interfere vision of people to the priest area. Because 'joglo' form is an open building, almost no-wall, so it needs column to support the roof. There are many ornament mixed in the Ganjuran church's column. At the top, Lotus ornament that came from Buddhis teaching, called as Padma in Javanese, means peace. At the center, 'wajikan' is a diamond shape ornament have a similar shape with a traditional food with the same name. Eventhough its diamond shape, this ornament is given a new meaning from The Bible as Triangle of Love. On the both sides of wajikan is 'probo' together with ornament of peacock feather. 'Probo' itself in Javanese means light. In the catholic tradition , usually all symbol that means light often put at the top, but in this column probo is located at the bottom part. The base of this column, called 'umpak', is made of stone temple with a picture of plant that have been simplified.



Figure 8. Ganjuran Church column

The most dominant furniture in nave is the bench. The bench has no specific meaning or ornament. Its made of wood with red-brown color. On the both sides of priest area, there are two statues, Jesus and Maria. Similar with the angel statue, both statue appearance is an adaptance of their image to the Javanese culture. Both of the statue is wearing full Javanese traditional clothes, more specific the clothes is similar to the royal family from Keraton. Jesus statue is wearing king clothes on the old times, including headdress. Jesus statue in sitting position is very rare to find. Most of them is in standing position. According to Keraton tradition, it shows that only the king and his family are allowed to sit on his throne. All his maid are just sitting on the floor. Below the statue, there is a title for Jesus written in Javanese language 'Sang Maha Prabu Jesus Kristus. Pangeraning Para Bangsa' to make point that Jesus is the king who has power and be able to protect all his people. Maria itself has a

role as the king's mother, so she hold a child to emphasize it. The title below the statue is 'Dyah Maria Iboe Ganjuran' have meaning that eventhough she is morelike mother of all people, especially people from Ganjuran.



Figure 9. Nave



Figure 10. Jesus and Maria statue

The last area is gamelan area, where the gamelan player play the instrument during the mass. This area is 30cm higher that prayer area, because the player is always sit during the mass. This area is more functional so there are no special treatment at all such as decoration or ornament.



Figure 11. Gamelan area

5. Conclusion

Overall Javanese culture is stronger than Catholic tradition in the Ganjuran church. Nevertheless Javanese culture are more likely to use as decorative only so they do not change the value of Catholic values. Decorative ornaments that is used is developed in Java and is already mixed with other cultures that have been there before as Islamic culture and Hindu-Buddhist culture. Ornaments used in the Catholic Church Ganjuran have meaning that is consistent with Catholic teaching though his presence is mostly just for decoration. Some symbols of Javanese culture whose common meaning associated with Catholic teaching. The depiction of the many Javanese culture is adapting to the statues of Jesus, Mary, and angels. Sanctuary area is an area that contains most of the Catholic tradition than other areas. At Ganjuran church the mixing of cultures that occurs is a good example, because it does not change the value of Catholicism itself.

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