

PREFIGURATIVE POLITICS OF JOHN 21:12-13 AND TAMO TRADITIONAL CAKE: MANIFESTING FOOD SECURITY IN SANGIHE

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Abstract

This study analyzes how John 21:12-13 and the traditional cake “Tamo” have similarities in theological reflections regarding food. Breakfast with Jesus and the traditional cake “Tamo” became symbols of hope for the future brought into the present for the community to experience. Both become a kind of alternative world that contains protest against less than ideal realities. This study is built on a combination of Prefigurative Politics and Ritual theory by Jonathan Smith. This research is expected to provide a theological-philosophical basis as well as a call to action for the Sangihe community to move towards realizing Food Security in their area. The community no longer sees poverty and hunger as normal, but rather as problems that need to be addressed together.

Keywords: Tamo, Food Security, Prefigurative Politics, Ritual

INTRODUCTION

For a long time, humans have recognized food as a primary need. With the changing times, the meaning of food has shifted and expanded. Now, food can be seen as a representation of social and cultural traditions.¹The image of a community group can be seen and observed in how they process and serve their food.²From here, it can be seen that food has grown from simply satisfying the stomach to forming an

identity.³Food is now considered a primary human need, not only because it satisfies hunger, but also because it provides a sense of identity for a community. This further strengthens the hopes of every community group and even countries around the world to achieve food security. Indonesia is one of the countries striving to achieve this.⁴

Food security has become a key goal for many countries, as they strive to achieve one of the Sustainable Development Goals, specifically the second SDG, “Zero Hunger.” As a United

1 Liana Rochmatul Wachidah et al., “Makanan Sebagai Representasi Tradisi Sosial Dan Budaya,” Entita: Jurnal Pendidikan Ilmu Pengetahuan Sosial Dan Ilmu-Ilmu Sosial 1, no. 1 (2025): 555–78. [Translated title: Food as a Representation of Social and Cultural Traditions].

2 Jean-Jacques Boutaud et al., “Food and Culture: Cultural Patterns and Practices Related to Food in Everyday Life,” International Review of Social Research 6, no. 1 (2016): 1–3, <https://doi.org/10.1515/irsr-2016-0001>.

3 Gina M. Almerico, “Food & Identity: Food Studies, Cultural & Personal Identity,” Journal of International Business and Cultural Studies, no. November (2018): 1–8, <https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.26973.05608>.

4 Kamrussamad et al., “Indonesian Food Policy: The Programs for Strengthening Food Self-Sufficiency in Reformation Era,” Russian Journal of Agricultural and Socio-Economic Sciences 76, no. 4 (2018): 33–39, <https://doi.org/10.18551/rjoas.2018-04.04>.

Nations initiative, the SDGs arose from concerns about the global food crisis. Therefore, this movement aims to achieve global food stability.⁵The global food crisis has had numerous impacts, including hunger, health, and human resources. Hunger, coupled with inadequate nutrition for children, leads to stunted physical and mental growth. Stunting and other health problems caused by food and nutritional deficiencies are a serious concern for governments worldwide.

Considering Indonesia's wealth, achieving food security shouldn't be difficult. Indonesia is rich in natural resources and biodiversity.⁶However, in reality, Indonesia has yet to achieve its goal of food security. This contradiction also occurs at a smaller and more specific level, namely within the communities of the Sangihe Islands Regency. As part of Indonesia, Sangihe is considered an area abundant in natural resources.⁷Sangihe Nature supplies the community's food needs, whether it is staple foods in the form of sago or vegetables from the forest,⁸but also side dishes

in the form of fish and other marine biota.⁹However, the Sangihe Islands Regency has not yet achieved food security. To date, the Sangihe Regency community and government are still working towards achieving this goal.¹⁰

Therefore, this paper will discuss the Sangihe community's strategies for responding to and reflecting theologically on these contradictory conditions. This research seeks to examine how biblical texts can offer theological reflection and application for local communities. Therefore, John 21:12-13 was chosen as a text that can facilitate theological reflection for local communities. This text is considered a manifestation of food security in the Bible.

The discussion of food security in John 21:12-13 will facilitate similar theological reflection on the same theme for the Sangihe community. However, in the Sangihe context, the basis for theological reflection is the traditional Tamo cake. The presence of the Tamo cake here aims to examine how local theology can contribute theologically to realizing food security in Sangihe specifically and in Indonesia generally.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In line with the spirit of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), food issues have become a favorite topic in various scientific

Resources of the Sangihe Tribe].

9 Julius Frans Wuaten et al., "Sasahamia Fishing for Fishermen on Bebalang Island, Manganitu Selatan District, Sangihe Islands," *Jurnal Ilmiah Tatengkorang Politeknik Negeri Nusa Utara* 6 (2022): 76–80.

10 Alin Liana and Muh. Yunus, "Inventarisasi Jenis Pangan Pokok Lokal Di Pulau Sangihe, Sulawesi Utara," *Jurnal Pangan* 30, no. 3 (2022): 217–24, <https://doi.org/10.33964/jp.v30i3.545>.

[Translated title: Inventory of Local Staple Food Types on Sangihe Island, North Sulawesi].

5 Xi Chen et al., "Global Food Stability and Its Socio-Economic Determinants towards Sustainable Development Goal 2 (Zero Hunger)," *Sustainable Development* 31, no. 3 (2023): 1768–80, <https://doi.org/10.1002/sd.2482>.

6 Kristina von Rintelen et al., "A Review of Biodiversity-Related Issues and Challenges in Megadiverse Indonesia and Other Southeast Asian Countries," *Research Ideas and Outcomes* 3 (2017), <https://doi.org/10.3897/rio.3.e20860>.

7 Irza Khurun'in and Joko Purnomo, "Measuring Sustainable Livelihood in The Border Areas: The Case Study of Sangihe Island, North Sulawesi," *Global Focus* 1, no. 2 (2021): 117–30, <https://doi.org/10.21776/ub.jgf.2021.001.02.2>.

8 "Sumber Daya Hidup Suku Sangihe," *Departemen Pendidikan Dan Kebudayaan* 1, no. 1 (2007): 36–80. [Translated title: Living

papers in recent times. Theology has also discussed how the SDGs and food issues have a complex relationship with faith. Here are some previous studies on food issues, examined from a theological perspective. The first paper is by Mulyo Kadarmento and Ike Hepi, which discusses the food security strategies of the Israelites in the Old Testament. They examine how faith communities can participate in food security efforts and how believers recognize that striving for food security is part of obedience to the Torah.¹¹ The next article is by Wawuk Wijaya, whose Agricultural Theology is titled “God the Farmer in the Effort to Achieve Economic Independence and Food Self-Sufficiency for the Community.” In his writing, Wawuk Wijaya explores agricultural strategies and theology that emerged from the Catholic Church in Indonesia.¹²

In addition to these two articles, another article was found discussing the same issue, namely one by Chris Allen, which highlights the theological aspects of food poverty in Britain. This food poverty occurs in line with the social and theological injustices for the poor, which arise from the concept of food banks.¹³ Next, Whitney Sanford’s article

examines how the global food crisis can be caused by issues stemming from religion. Therefore, she argues that religion also has the same power to address the global food crisis.¹⁴

These four studies have established a strong foundation in the discussion of food and theology. However, a gap in previous research is the lack of scholarly work examining how biblical dialogue and local wisdom can contribute to food security efforts. Therefore, this research will be novel. A novel contribution to a food security strategy based on the cultural symbols of the Sangihe community will be the new offering of this research.

METHOD

To obtain in-depth meaning and qualitative data, this study will use a descriptive qualitative research method. The text of John 21:12-13 will be analyzed using the hermeneutic historical study method. This method was chosen because it is considered suitable for gathering information about the history and context of the Johannine community. After obtaining the results of the historical study of John 21:12-13, the next step is to view the text through the lens of a prefigurative politics. This will be an effort that can engage in dialogue with the legends, symbols, and local wisdom of the Sangihe community. In this case, we will examine how the Sangihe community prefigures their orientation towards the future, specifically how they live the future as it unfolds.

Prefigurative Politics was chosen because it can serve as a means of dialogue between John

11 Mulyo Kadarmento and Ike Albert Hepi, “Gereja Dan Ketahanan Pangan: Refleksi Teologis Dari Tradisi Agraris Umat Allah Dalam Pengelolaan Tanah,” *Manna Rafflesia: Jurnal Sekolah Tinggi Teologi Arastamar Bengkulu* Vol. 11, N, no. Oktober (2024): 1–12. [Translated title: The Church and Food Security: Theological Reflections on the Agrarian Tradition of the People of God in Land Management].

12 Wijaya Kristian Wawuk, “Allah Sang Petani, Bertani Sebagai Usaha Berteologi: Belajar Dari YBSB Dan SPTN HPS,” *Gema Teologi* 35, no. 1 (2011): 1–13. [Translated title: God the Farmer: Farming as a Theological Endeavor].

13 Chris Allen, “Food Poverty and Christianity in Britain: A Theological Re-

Assessment,” *Political Theology* 17, no. 4 (2016): 361–77, <https://doi.org/10.1179/1743171914Y.0000000004>.

14 A. Whitney Sanford, “Why We Need Religion to Solve The World Food Crisis,” *Zygon* 49, no. 4 (2014): 977–91, <https://doi.org/10.1111/zygo.12133>.

21:12-13 and the legends, symbols, and local wisdom of the Sangihe community, while simultaneously addressing the theme of food. Prefigurative Politics can be understood as a form of political orientation where a community movement seeks to realize an ideal future society from an early age through current actions. Simply put, this political orientation is an effort to prefigure the future into today.¹⁵ More specifically and more simply, this can be understood as bringing future hopes to be expressed today even if not fully and completely.¹⁶

In this study, John 21:12-13 will be analyzed as a form of prefigurative politics within the John community. Simultaneously, a legend, symbol, and local wisdom from Sangihe will also be analyzed as the voice of the people, but also as a form of prefigurative politics within the Sangihe community. The intersection of these two texts is the issue of food, which impacts people's well-being as a desired future condition.

DISCUSSION

Sangihe

Sangihe is a small island region that is one of the northernmost regions of Indonesia. Sangihe, better known as the Sangihe Islands Regency, borders Southern Mindanao, the southernmost region of the Philippines. The majority of Sangihe's population is the "Sangir" people, the indigenous people of the archipelago.¹⁷ Therefore, local people often

¹⁵ Guilherme Fians, "Prefigurative Politics," Cambridge Encyclopedia of Anthropology, no. Bey 1991 (2022), <https://doi.org/10.29164/22prefigpolitics>.

¹⁶ Peter-Ben Smit, "Prefiguring God's World: Prefigurative Politics and the Early Jesus Movement," in *Trinkt von Dem Wein, Den Ich Mischte!* (2023).

¹⁷ Cahyo Pamungkas, "Nationalism of Border Society: Case Study of Sangir People, Sangihe Regency," *Komunitas: International Journal of Indonesian Society And Culture* 8,

refer to Sangihe by the more commonly known term "Sanger." Many suspect that the name was given by the Dutch during the colonial period in Indonesia. The name is derived from the Dutch word "Zanger," meaning singer. This etymological origin explains that the Sangihe people are known for their lifestyle closely associated with singing.¹⁸ Besides being known as a people who love to sing, the Sangihe community is also known for their efforts to maintain their culture and traditions. This is evident in the various cultural preservation activities that go hand in hand with their community arts and even their lifestyle.¹⁹ More than that, the culture of the Sangihe people is also manifested in their faith and worship activities.²⁰

Traditional cake called "****Tamo****"

no. 1 (2016): 59–72.

¹⁸ Theresia Maria Conny Lasut et al., "Cultural Values in Sangihe Ethnic Song Lyrics 'Masamper': An Anthropological Linguistic Study," *Linguistics and Culture Review* 5, no. S1 (2021): 570–77, <https://doi.org/10.21744/lingcure.v5ns1.1441>.

¹⁹ Yohan Brek, "Budaya Masamper Sebagai Lifestyle Masyarakat Nusa Utara: Strategi Konseling Pastoral Dalam Misi Pendidikan Kristiani Di Gereja Masehi Injili Sangihe Talaud," CV Pena Persada, 2022. [Translated title: *Masamper Culture as a Lifestyle of the North Nusa Community: Pastoral Counseling Strategy in Christian Education Mission at the Sangihe Talaud Evangelical Christian Church*].

²⁰ Alifia Putri Anindita and Sabrina Ilma Sakina, "Ornament Exploration Based on the Beliefs of Sangihe," *Proceedings of the ICON ARCCADE 2021: The 2nd International Conference on Art, Craft, Culture and Design (ICON-ARCCADE 2021)* 625 (2022): 104–13, <https://doi.org/10.2991/assehr.k.211228.013>.

“Tamo” is a traditional cake of the Sangihe people. It’s typically found at sacred traditional ceremonies. It’s most often found at the annual “Tulude” event in Sangihe, celebrated at the beginning of each year. Tulude is an annual traditional ceremony held at the end of January.²¹ This traditional ceremony is held to express gratitude for the past year and ask for the presence of the ruler of heaven and earth, known as “I Genggona Langi”²² for the new year to come.²³ The Tulude traditional ceremony is generally performed collectively by the Sangihe community. It is usually held in Tahuna, the center of the Sangihe Islands regency. However, Tulude is not merely a regency celebration, but a traditional celebration and celebration of the Sangihe people spread across many regions. Therefore, after the collective Tulude, other Tulude events are usually held on a smaller scale, such as by family associations, congregations, villages, sub-districts, and so on.

21 Jane Mangangue, “A Semiotic Analysis Of Tulude: The Traditional Ceremony Of Sangihe People,” *Akrab Juara: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Sosial* 10 (2025): 424–31.

22 David Rade et al., *Kepada Allah Yang Tidak Dikenal : Konsep I Genggona Langi Dalam Sorotan Kisah Para Rasul 17 : 23 Dan Implementasinya Terhadap Ekologi Dan Edukologi Masyarakat Sangihe Pendahuluan*, 0642 (2022): 147–55, <https://doi.org/10.53674/teleios.v2i2.61>. [Translated title: To the Unknown God: The Concept of I Genggona Langi in the Spotlight of Acts 17:23 and Its Implementation to the Ecology and Edukology of the Sangihe Community].

23 Mychael Dimes Antameng, “The Tulude Traditional Ceremony In Christian Perspective,” *A Journal of Creative and Study of Church Music* 1 (2020): 15–20.

One of the important events that is an integral part of Tulude is the cutting of the traditional cake “Tamo.” This cake is considered sacred because it is made with a special ritual and must be cut with traditional words or verses in the Sangihe language.²⁴ This cake is made with ingredients sourced from the Sangihe natural environment, such as sticky rice, brown sugar, coconut oil, papaya and bananas that ripen naturally on the trees, young coconuts, and other ingredients. Once finished, the traditional “Tamo” cake is decorated with a variety of foods also sourced from the Sangihe natural environment and sea, such as eggs, chilies, tomatoes, langsung fruit, snake fruit, and so on.²⁵

This traditional cake is rich in philosophical and theological meaning. One example is that the “Tamo” cake symbolizes the abundant blessings bestowed by “I Genggona Langi” upon the Sangihe people. From “Tamo,” the Sangihe people are taught that they possess abundant natural resources. Sangihe’s natural resources provide food and drink for all Sangihe residents. If cared for and preserved, the Sangihe forests and seas can provide abundant food for the Sangihe people, free of charge, every day.

24 Tony Tampake and Janhard Katampuge, “Sakralitas Kue Adat Tamo Untuk Inklusivitas Keagamaan Masyarakat Di Sanger, Sulawesi Utara,” *Indonesian Journal of Religion and Society* 4, no. 2 (2022): 69–79, <https://doi.org/10.36256/ijrs.v4i2.231>. [Translated title: The Sacredness of Tamo Traditional Cake for Religious Inclusivity in the Sanger Community, North Sulawesi].

25 Femmy Glory Euanggelia Mantantu et al., “Makna Kue Tamo Dalam Upacara Tulude Bagi Masyarakat Sangihe Di Desa Tariang Lama Kecamatan Kendahe,” *Jurnal Ilmiah Society* 3, no. 3 (2023): 1–7. [Translated title: The meaning of Tamo Cake in the Tulude Ceremony for the Sangihe Community in Tariang Lama Village, Kendahe District].

As previously mentioned, the traditional cake “Tamo” is a sacred symbol of Sangihe. Because of its sacredness, there are several rules that must be followed when making or eating this traditional cake. These rules include: “Tamo” traditional cakes cannot be made by just anyone. There are specific requirements that must be met to make this traditional cake. Furthermore, “Tamo” traditional cakes cannot be enjoyed alone. They must be shared by members of the community. Another rule also applies to the act of cutting “Tamo.” This traditional cake cannot be cut casually. It must be cut by a traditional practitioner while reciting the Sangihe traditional words.²⁶

Reading John 21:12-13 as a Prefiguration

The two verses selected for exegesis in this section are part of a single fourteen-verse pericope. The pericope covers chapter 21, verses 1-14 of the Gospel of John. The Indonesian Bible Institute, through its new first edition translation (TB), entitled it “Jesus appears to his disciples by the Sea of Tiberias.” This section records and narrates events after Jesus’ resurrection. After his resurrection, Jesus appeared to his disciples several times, and John 21:1-14 records Jesus’ third appearance to his disciples after his resurrection.

John narrates that Jesus was standing on the shore of Lake Tiberias, while the disciples were busy fishing. It seems the disciples had returned to their old fishing routine. Peter’s decision to go fishing was followed by the other disciples. They had been at sea all night, but had caught no fish. As day approached,

Jesus appeared to them and asked about their food supplies. The disciples replied that they had none. Jesus responded to their response with the command to cast their nets on the right side of the boat. Although it seemed unreasonable and a waste of energy, the disciples did so anyway. Eventually, they caught a large number of fish. The Bible explains that they were unable to pull in the net because so many fish were trapped in it. The constant pulling of the net changed the situation. Where previously the disciples had been desperate for food and felt like failures after fishing all night, they now had more than enough fish for breakfast and were free from the sadness of failure.

The abundance of fish in the net made them realize they had experienced a miracle. This realization led them to the realization that the one standing on the shore and commanding them was Jesus. So, “the disciple whom Jesus loved,” which is most likely John’s way of referring to himself, was the first to realize this. When he told the others, Peter immediately took action by dressing, jumping into the lake, and swimming to shore. The other disciples then followed him in a boat. Upon arriving at the shore, they saw that breakfast was already prepared there. Jesus then instructed Peter to take the fish they had just caught to cook and share. This moment was both a great surprise and a turning point for the disciples.²⁷

The focus of this study is what is contained in verses 12 and 13. I view these two verses as Jesus’ Prefigurative Politics. This invitation to have breakfast with Jesus seems to be more than just an invitation to eat, but also holds profound theological significance. Breakfast with Jesus seems to also contain a pastoral and Eucharistic dimension.²⁸ This invitation was

26 Jefry Kalalo and Christoblless Evryanto Sawotong, “Contextual Theological Review Of The Meaning Of Tamo Cake In The Tulude Tradition And Its Impact On Faith Growth In The GMIM Batu Karang Bualo Congregation, Bunaken Region,” *Eduvest - Journal of Universal Studies* 4, no. 11 (2024): 10087–98, <https://doi.org/10.59188/eduvest.v4i11.40137>.

27 R. Alan Culpepper, “Peter as Exemplary Disciple in John 21 : 15-19,” *Perspectives In Religious Studies* 37, no. 2 (2010): 165–78.

28 Finki Rianto Kantohe, “Pengembangan Sebagai Praktik Ekaristi,” *Diskursus - Jurnal*

delivered amidst unfavorable circumstances for the disciples. They were in the midst of many situations that made them physically and emotionally uncomfortable. It's worth considering that at that time they were still mourning the sad news of Jesus' death. They were also exhausted after fishing all night. Another factor worth considering was that their fishing efforts were not yielding satisfactory results. Furthermore, they were identified as affiliated with Jesus, who had just been executed by the government. Jesus was considered a criminal by the Roman government and Jewish religious leaders at the time. Therefore, the disciples were unable to move freely to find food and survive.²⁹

Since following Jesus, the disciples had left their jobs and since then they have depended on Jesus for many things. Even before they followed Jesus, the disciples were ordinary people in New Testament times who did not have free access to food. Since the intertestament period, the Roman government has dominated food movements throughout its colonies.³⁰ From controlling food sources (wheat fields, fish from fishermen, livestock, and other food sources) to regulating food policy at that time, it can be said that food security was not part of the life of the general public in the context of the New Testament, including the context in which Jesus preached the Gospel.³¹

Filsafat Dan Teologi Stf Driyarkara 18, no. 1 (2022): 94–119, <https://doi.org/10.36383/diskursus.v18i1.55>. [Translated title: shepherding as a eucharistic practice].

29 Ron E. Hassner, "The Trial and Crucifixion Of Jesus: A Modest Proposal," *Theory and Decision* 54, no. 1 (2003): 1–32, <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1025088217300>.

30 Jane Suzzane Webster, "Ingesting Jesus : Eating and Drinking in The Gospel of John" (McMaster University, 2001).

31 Jane S. Webster, "That One Might Not Fall: A New Testament Theology of Food,"

Jesus recognized this and also realized that food security was a shared hope for the people of the New Testament era. Rather than simply promising it, Jesus brought that hope for the future to be experienced directly at that time. Jesus used the moment of breakfast with Him as an experience to feel the future they hoped for. Jesus allowed the disciples to experience food security through that breakfast moment. The disciples could feel the moment when they had enough food, which became a symbol of food security for them. Jesus even showed the availability of food that came from more than one source: from the provisions Jesus had already provided on the beach, and also from the disciples' catch.

Before that moment, especially before Jesus appeared, the disciples could probably only imagine what a wonderful future would be like when they would have enough food. They would no longer have to worry about not getting enough fish when they were hungry. At that moment, food security was still a dream and a hope for the future. However, Jesus brought that hope of the future to be experienced directly by the disciples at that very moment. This is the prefigurative politics Jesus carried out through the moment of breakfast together in the Gospel of John 21:12-13.

Reading "****Tamo****" as a Prefiguration**

The traditional cake "Tamo" is an integral part of traditional and cultural events in Sangihe. It's most often found in Tulude ceremonies, but it also frequently appears at other sacred events. The traditional cake "Tamo" symbolizes the abundant natural resources of Sangihe, even though this same natural environment is currently under threat from human exploitation.³² "Tamo" serves as a

Interpretation (United Kingdom) 67, no. 4 (2013): 363–73, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0020964313495520>.

32 Tony Budi Susetyo et al., "Law Enforcement Against Perpetrators of

reminder that Sangihe once had abundant food, but also as a hope that this abundance will one day return.

The prefigurative politics of the “Tamo” cake can be seen in its symbolism of natural wealth. The cake is made from ingredients sourced from Sangihe’s natural resources, as are the other toppings. All ingredients are sourced from Sangihe’s natural resources. Furthermore, “Tamo” is a cake containing a complete menu for community consumption. One cake contains staple foods (rice, sago, bananas, tubers), side dishes (fish, eggs, and meat), vegetables, and fruit. When enjoyed, “Tamo” must be eaten together. All community members must have a share of the “Tamo.” Because of the diverse food varieties in one cake, the community feels full after eating. From this pattern, the prefigurative politics of “Tamo” emerge. The cake is a manifestation of the future, depicting Sangihe’s abundant natural resources, which ensure food security for the Sangihe community.

Although part of an annual ritual called “Tulude,” the traditional “Tamo” cake can also be considered a ritual. In this position, the traditional “Tamo” cake can be a ritual within a ritual. Reflecting on Jonathan Z. Smith’s ritual theory, ritual can be understood as a human effort to display and regulate “how” something should be done, even though reality does not always go according to expectations and ideal conditions.³³ Thus, this cake is a manifestation of the Sangihe people’s efforts to regulate and display “what should be,” even though the reality that occurs is not always as it should be. This theory strengthens the

prefigurative dimension of the traditional “Tamo” cake. Through this cake and ritual, the Sangihe people attempt to regulate and demonstrate Food Security even though it has not yet fully occurred for them.

The traditional cake “Tamo” not only represents a shadow of the future but also provides a direct experience of that future for the community. The cake not only serves as a promise or a step toward achieving future food security hopes, but also allows the community to “taste” the future through the cake they enjoy. “Tamo” embodies future hopes brought into the present. The Sangihe community can experience Sangihe’s natural riches as a guarantee of food security, albeit not in full.

The Dialogue Between Two Prefigurations

This section will build a dialogue between two prefigurative politics discussed previously: John 21:12-13 and the traditional cake “Tamo.” Through the dialogue of the two texts and their intersection on the issue of Food Security, it can be seen how “Tamo” can be seen as a symbol of the local theology of the Sangihe community. As a local theology, it not only directs the congregation to dogmatic issues, but also to real problems faced by the congregation every day, such as food problems. The “Tamo” cake, which is considered a traditional cake that represents Sangihe’s natural wealth and at the same time a hope for the future of the community’s Food Security, is in fact a theological reflection that is in line with what Jesus did in the New Testament. Jesus’ behavior in John 21:12-13 forms the basis for the theological reflection that the church needs to strive to realize Food Security. The traditional “Tamo” cake is one of the efforts of the Sangihe community (the church in Sangihe) to bring this theological reflection to life based on local theology.

The traditional cake “Tamo” is a contextual representation for the Sangihe community of Jesus’ actions in John 21:12-13. Christians in Sangihe seem to find bread and fish unsuitable as symbols of Prefigurative Politics for their

Unlicensed Gold Mining Crime in Sangihe Islands,” *Journal Of Law Theory And Law Enforcement* 2, no. October (2023): 93–105, <https://doi.org/10.56943/jlte.v2i4.413>.

33 Jonathan Z. Smith, “Bare Facts of Ritual,” in *History of Religion* (University of Chicago, 2008), <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315729671-11>.

community, which is unfamiliar with such cuisine. The traditional cake “Tamo” is a more appropriate and contextual choice because it is made and represents the nature of Sangihe. Jesus’ invitation to his disciples to enjoy the dish together makes this text even more in tune with the meaning of the traditional cake “Tamo”, which should not be enjoyed alone. Therefore, both agree that abundant food should be enjoyed by all members of the community. It would be inappropriate if abundant food only satiates some people while others feel hungry.

Through the lens of Jonathan Z. Smith’s ritual theory, the traditional cake “Tamo” becomes both a ritual and a small world created by the Sangihe people to be enjoyed with other community members. The traditional cake “Tamo” becomes a kind of dimension where the activity of making the cake and enjoying it during a shared meal becomes something sacred and full of meaning. This communal eating activity can still be carried out amidst a world struggling with the problem of the food crisis. This communal eating is certainly not an act of wasting food, but an effort to give meaning to the activity of eating, which is actually an “ordinary” activity, becoming an activity that inspires the community to continue living.³⁴

The dialogue between these two prefigurations not only examines efforts to achieve Food Security but also brings to life the meaning of local theology. This can also serve as a suggestion for local churches in Sangihe to utilize reflections on local theology to help achieve food security for the Sangihe community. “Tamo”, highlighted from a prefigurative perspective, becomes more than just a ritual, but also a communal practice that leads to an alternative world. In this sense, all dimensions of “Tamo”, from its creation to the celebratory meal, can be viewed as ideal conditions. Thus, this alternative world

presents an ideal experience amidst the real conditions of Sangihe society.³⁵

By reading “Tamo” through the lens of Jonathan Smith’s ritual theory, it becomes clear that the cake is not merely an invitation to philosophical thought, but rather a call to action. The traditional “Tamo” cake, presented during the “Tulude” ceremony, represents a form of community protest against reality. The reality of life filled with poverty and hunger is a less-than-ideal condition that needs to be addressed immediately. By providing an abundance of food and a communal meal, even for just one day, “Tamo” becomes a catalyst for the Sangihe community to take action to eradicate hunger and alleviate poverty.

A protest movement against the reality of hunger and poverty will also be a wake-up call for local communities. This wake-up call will “wake them up” and make them aware of their rich natural resources and marine resources. They are not utilizing these resources, but are instead being exploited by external parties. Some examples of cases that seem to warrant attention include illegal fishing and exploitation in the Sangihe Sea by Filipino fishermen,³⁶ the exploitation and destruction of the Sangihe forest ecosystem,³⁷ and illegal gold mining operations that threaten the existence of this small island.³⁸

35 Smith, “Bare Facts of Ritual.”

36 Burhanuddin Robbani, Analisis Kasus Pencurian Ikan Di Laut Sulawesi Oleh Kapal Filipina Dalam Perspektif Hukum Internasional, no. June (2023). [Translated title: Analysis of the Case of Illegal Fishing in the Sulawesi Sea by Philippine Vessels from an International Legal Perspective].

37 Robert W. Martin et al., “On The Edge: Habitat Restoration Priorities For Three Critically Endangered Bird Species on Sangihe, Indonesia,” *Restoration Ecology* 31, no. 1 (2023), <https://doi.org/10.1111/rec.13770>.

34 Smith, “Bare Facts of Ritual.”

Therefore, breakfast with Jesus and the traditional cake “Tamo” is not merely a static theological reflection. This reflection becomes dynamic, taking the form of a call to action to address hunger in the community. This aligns with the message and hopes of the United Nations as outlined in Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2, zero hunger.

CONCLUSION

From the discussion in this article, it can be concluded that the two issues discussed constitute Prefigurative Politics, which have a common ground: the issue of Food Security. John 21:12-13 can be read as a Prefigurative Politics of Jesus Christ, and the traditional cake “Tamo” represents the Prefigurative Politics of the people of the Sangihe Islands Regency. Both depict two communities struggling against a food crisis and holding out hope that the crisis will end and they will achieve Food Security in the future. Through Prefigurative Politics, they are not simply promised a future but invited to experience it firsthand. The dialogue between John 21:12-13 and the traditional cake “Tamo” also presents a local theology that the Sangihe community can use for theological reflection in realizing Food Security in Sangihe.

Through the study and analysis in this research, we discover how John 21:12-13 and the traditional cake “Tamo” can serve as a theological reflection for the community (especially the local Sangihe community) in their efforts to realize SDG 2, namely Zero Hunger through Food Security.

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