

Paper Presented By Pastor Sikabiya Ishaya Samson on the Day of Dedication of Margi Open Bible Story

Margi Redemptive Analogy

Redemptive analogy is a practices or understandings which can be used to illustrate the meaning of the Christian Gospel. This is a cultural practices of a people that contextualizing the biblical representation of the incarnation of Jesus.

The Cultural Background of Margi; Certain features in burial rites among the Margi society

Among Margi when old man or woman dies the body is laid on a trestle bed 'gwalang' in the dead man's hut, the corpse will be thoroughly washed with soap and hot water. The head will be shaven with blade call 'pedáhau' friends of the dead man come to salute and deposit a gift of guinea corn and other crops around the dead body. Parts of the corn will be use to prepare beer, but some will be kept around the corpse as food for rats to prevent them from attacking the corpse. A cloths bandage will be tied tightly round the abdomen of the dead man with view of preventing extrusion of the viscera. Sisters to the dead man or woman will be guarding the corpse day and night, fire will be lit in order to keep off flies from deposit worms into the corpse especially if the death occurs in rainy season where there is much flies. This precaution is less necessary in dry season they may not be a need of letting fire, but two old women preferable the sisters to the dead will fan the corpse with leaves or whisk made from a cow tail.

On the evening of the next day body is laid face downward in a rectangular temporary grave, it will be covered with dust until the following morning. The aim of this temporal burial is not to desiccate the body, but rather to hasten decomposition and render easier subsequent removal of the epidermis, for Margi culture does not allowed corpse to be buried with epidermis.

Toward evening of the second day 'tsa təm' will take place that is beating of drum, a drum specially made with the upper part of a put. That is where our name came, 'Margi tiwi nga təm,' meaning, Margi that cry with put. As result this special drum made for funeral services. The style of the beaten of the drum will signal you that there will be a burial tomorrow, just toward the direction of the sound of the drum.

The following morning the corpse will be placed on 'tsəngəm' (four legged bier cut out of solid wood) in front of the dead Man's house, and is washed thoroughly in a sitting position. The set of people which specialized in the removal of the epidermis then proceeds to remove the epidermis with their fingers. The nails on the feet and the fingers are not removed, the viscera also are not removed and orifices are not block. The peeled skin will be kept in a pot which will be buried in the dust been heap permanently.

After removal of the skin the body will be embalm using 'Fəla' red juice of acacia berries which can equally use for tanning of leather skin. This juice will be use for the embalmment and preserve the corpse, it is used with the mixture of the bark of 'Ma'ufu' (*Boswellia dalziellii*) and 'Atəma njala' (gerlic)

applying to the corpse to make it harden. The corpse will be dressed with special gown 'nggamədu or magədi' made traditionally out of cotton, with decorations crowning the corpse as king. Loin of sheep skin called, 'pəzhi' will be tied around the waist of the corpse. The corpse will be placed in front of the house in a setting position on the four legged stool 'tsənggəmə.' A dance is held, there will be a lot of beer drinking and food eating, and there will be a feast until evening where the corpse will be taken for burial.

Immediately before the burial a head of corn will be taken from the granary of the dead man and the cult of 'shafa' will be placed in the dead man's hand. The one that will inherit the property of dead man will take up the grain and the Shafa symbols saying 'from your hand may I receive the corn you possess as you did in your days, note that I did not steal it, so prosper me, may I derive benefits there off. The man will run with it to his house as if someone is pursuing him, someone well-armed men will run after him with pretense of chasing him, the idea is to protect wealth from turning back to the dead man. He will run to his house and put the grain and the symbol into his granary and cover its mouth. This cult is an idea that the man should not be buried with his wealth, if this is not done is assume whatever the left will not be useful and it will also prevent people from quarrel over his property

The body is buried in a tunnel grave with a tiny round mouth under its wider opening of a room size that contain even four people. The corpse is taken by one person at a time is not allowed for two or more to take a corpse. At the grave yard one will enter the grave and squeeze the corpse through the narrow way into the grave then he will prepare a place inside to set the corpse well. The grave will be covered and well dressed with stone.

The burial background illustrates three major redemptive analogies

Removal of the outer layer; Removal of the outer layer of human skin(epidermis) is the concept of purity, that no Margi person will go back to God in his dirty life, to them the sin is the work of flesh which is directly have to do with the skin (outer flesh). Removing them shows that you have dealt away with sin you committed while alive.

Tunnel grave; Tunnel grave with a tiny round mouth under its wider opening of a room size, this symbolizes the coming of the man through birth by a woman, where by man has to be forced from the womb through the vagina of a woman into the earth, there is always a midwife outside there to pull the baby and lay the baby aside. The burial exercises here are a symbol of one going back to God through rebirth. Such exercise of squeezing a corpse through the tiny opening of the mouth of the grave is the symbol of squeezing man through the vagina of the earth, and the man inside of the wide opening of the grave is the symbol of midwife that is waiting for the baby outside to pull the baby and lay it aside.

The Concept of Corn and Cult of shafa; The blessings and the properties of a man or woman should pass to the next generation, and there is always a legal way of transferring of assets / inheritance that is peaceful.