



## Reimagining Divine Presence: Interpretation Of Matthew 28:20b And The Song “O Mawu Rendingane” As The Voice Of Sangihe Community

### Membayangkan Ulang Kehadiran Ilahi: Interpretasi Matius 28:20b dan Lagu ‘O Mawu Rendingane’ sebagai Suara Komunitas Sangihe

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#### Abstract

*Living life on earth as a human being is certainly not free from various challenges and problems. In our fragility, humans will always depend on God to prevent collapse when faced with life's challenges. For this reason, God's presence is crucial in human life and faith. Matthew 28:20B presents Jesus' narrative about His promise of presence to his disciples. Therefore, this study aims to highlight this promise of presence in a dialogue with the voices of the local community through the song "O Mawu Rendingane." This research was conducted using a qualitative method with a hermeneutic approach. Historical hermeneutics was chosen to analyze the biblical text, namely Matthew 28:20B. In the dialogue with the song "O Mawu Rendingane," Choan-Seng Song's Story Theology was chosen as the most appropriate theory. This research is expected to uncover new ways to read and understand Jesus' promise of presence contained in Matthew 28:20B. Furthermore, it is hoped that this dialogue will broaden the meaning of Matthew 28:20B.*

**Keywords:** Presence, Promise, Song, Sangihe, Jesus

#### Abstrak

Hidup sebagai manusia di dunia ini tentu tidak terlepas dari berbagai tantangan dan persoalan. Dalam kelemahan kita, manusia akan selalu bergantung kepada Allah agar tidak roboh ketika menghadapi tantangan hidup. Karena itu, kehadiran Allah menjadi hal yang sangat penting dalam kehidupan dan iman manusia. Matius 28:20B menampilkan narasi Yesus tentang janji kehadiran-Nya kepada para murid. Oleh karena itu, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menyoroti janji kehadiran tersebut dalam dialog dengan suara komunitas lokal melalui lagu "O Mawu Rendingane." Penelitian ini dilakukan dengan menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan pendekatan hermeneutik. Hermeneutika historis dipilih untuk menganalisis teks Alkitab, yaitu Matius 28:20B. Dalam dialog dengan lagu "O Mawu Rendingane," Teologi Narasi dari Choan-Seng Song dipilih sebagai teori yang paling sesuai. Penelitian ini diharapkan dapat mengungkap cara-cara baru dalam membaca dan memahami janji kehadiran Yesus yang terdapat dalam Matius 28:20B. Lebih jauh, dialog ini diharapkan dapat memperluas makna dari Matius 28:20B.

**Kata kunci:** Kehadiran, Janji, Lagu, Sangihe, Yesus

## INTRODUCTION

The theme of God's promise of presence is central to the life of faith for Christians.<sup>1</sup> This serves as a strong support for the hope of Christians worldwide. The biblical narrative clearly displays God's presence with His people.<sup>2</sup> In the Old Testament, God both calls and accompanies believers. Isaiah specifically refers to God as “Immanuel” to describe Him as the God who accompanies His people.<sup>3</sup> In the New Testament, especially in the Gospel narratives, this inclusion becomes even more evident through the presence of Jesus Christ.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, it is natural for contemporary Christianity to always hope for the same presence from God.

This longing for God's presence is clearly visible in Christians' efforts to stay connected with God, namely through liturgical worship. The promise of God's presence is always echoed at the end of Christian worship, contained in the blessing formula. The blessing formula is an integral part of the Christian liturgy. The reason for placing the blessing at the end of the liturgy is as an act and a reflection of faith that God has the right to close the Christian worship liturgy.<sup>5</sup> This understanding leads the congregation to realize that in every liturgy there will always be a dimension of God's presence. God, as the all-present One, will be at work in every liturgy of worship and the liturgy of human life.<sup>6</sup> From this explanation, it can be understood that liturgy is not merely a matter of worship in the form of rituals, but rather a way of life for believers who believe that their entire lives are acts of worship. This further strengthens the belief that God's presence is always present in the lives of Christians.

Human hope for God's presence is also driven by an awareness of fragility. People recognize their fragility and, therefore, are always dependent on God.<sup>7</sup> This is reflected in the disciples' fragility and anxiety as they prepare to part with Jesus. This narrative is captured in the final passage of Matthew, specifically in Matthew 28:16-20. Jesus responds to the disciples' anxiety with a promise of companionship, expressed in verse 20B of the same passage. Jesus' response strengthens the disciples' hearts, leading them to persevere and be of one mind. This event is recorded in Acts 1:14.

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<sup>1</sup> Mangiring Sinaga, “Kajian Teologi Berkat Dalam Perspektif Alkitabiah,” *Jurnal Teologi Rahmat* 5, no. 2 (2019): 140–73.

<sup>2</sup> Martus Adinugraha Maleachi and Hendra Yohanes, “Kehadiran Tuhan Di Tengah Umat-Nya: Dari Penciptaan Ke Penciptaan Yang Baru,” *Veritas: Jurnal Teologi Dan Pelayanan* 19, no. 1 (2020): 11–24, <https://doi.org/10.36421/veritas.v19i1.361>.

<sup>3</sup> Zainal Sibagariang and Manogang Simanjuntak, “Identification of Immanuel In The Context of Isaiah 7:14,” *STFT Surya Nusantara*, no. 1 (2020): 70–80.

<sup>4</sup> John Webster, “Becoming Present: An Inquiry into the Christian Sense of the Presence of God,” *Ars Disputandi* 8, no. 1 (2008): 57–59, <https://doi.org/10.1080/15665399.2008.10819975>.

<sup>5</sup> Marcel Mukadi, “Liturgy : God’s Own Work,” no. December 2015 (2025).

<sup>6</sup> Fernando Canale, “Principles of Worship and Liturgy Fernando Canale Seventh-Day Adventist Theological Seminary,” *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 2, no. 1–2 (2009): 89–111.

<sup>7</sup> Simon Rachmadi, “Penyataan Diri Allah Di Tengah Kerapuhan Dunia: Pesan Teologis Tentang Inkarnasi Allah Dalam Tradisi Teologis Yohanes,” *GEMA TEOLOGIKA: Jurnal Teologi Kontekstual Dan Filsafat Keilahian* 7, no. 1 (2022): 123, <https://doi.org/10.21460/gema.2022.71.790>.

Over time, the meaning of God's promise of presence has also shifted. Several previous studies have highlighted how this shift has reduced the meaning of God's presence in Matthew 28:20b. One such shift is the reduction of God's presence from a communal context to an individual one.<sup>8</sup> Today's Christian society tends to understand the promise of God's inclusion in vertical relationships that are closed off from the involvement of others.<sup>9</sup> This has resulted in a narrowing of the understanding of God's presence into something personal and without consequences. Jesus' promise of presence seems to be detached from the missionary task that accompanies it. This view seems to shape the understanding that presence is God's responsibility for humanity, and therefore God is obligated to fulfill it. Furthermore, this same view also seems to shape the image of Jesus as a personal God. This view obscures the recognition of Jesus as a God who loves the church (the community of believers).

In this study, the researcher will attempt to free the narrative of Jesus' promise of companionship from this individualistic prison. The researcher will highlight Jesus' promise of companionship from the perspective of Christianity as a community, not as a personal identity. Therefore, the researcher chose to highlight this issue from the perspective of the Sangihe community, a maritime communal society.<sup>10</sup> As the voice of the community, the researcher chose the song "O Mawu Rendingane" which represents the spirit of the Sangihe people in living out the promise of God's presence in their lives as a coastal community.

## Literature Review

To date, no research has been found that specifically discusses the song "O Mawu Rendingane." Specifically, in the field of theology, the song has also not been specifically highlighted in scientific works. The same is true for the text of Matthew 28:20B. No research has been found that specifically highlights this passage. Most theological studies discuss Jesus' "great commission" or examine this biblical passage as a whole in one pericope. Although not specifically highlighting verse 20 part B, David Gifford in his writing examines the meaning of the phrase "to observe all" in Matthew 20 part A.<sup>11</sup> Therefore, what he discussed in that study differs from what is intended to be discussed in this study.

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<sup>8</sup> Francois P. Viljoen, "The Superior Authority of Jesus in Matthew to Interpret The Torah," *In Die Skriflig/In Luce Verbi* 50, no. 2 (2016): 1–7, <https://doi.org/10.4102/ids.v50i2.2062>.

<sup>9</sup> Roy Damanik et al., "An Explanatory and Confirmatory Study about The Spreading of Jesus' Message Based on Matthew 28:18-20 by Christian Religious Education Teachers in Batam City," *Pharos Journal of Theology* 103, no. 2 (2022): 18–20, <https://doi.org/10.46222/pharosjot.103.2023>.

<sup>10</sup> Abdul Latif Bustami, "Daseng Sangaluhang: Kearifan Komunitas Dalam Pengelolaan Sumberdaya Kelautan Dan Perikanan," *Literasi* 1, no. 1 (2021): 101–16.

<sup>11</sup> David S. Gifford, "The In Situ Meaning of 'To Observe All' In Matthew 28:20 (NASB)," *Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary* 3, no. 1 (2015): 1–15,

Several studies have been conducted that address the promise of God's presence. Ingolf Dalferth, in his writing, discusses God's presence, which is most fully manifested through His presence in the present. He rejects the view that those who lived during the Old and New Testaments felt God's presence and presence most keenly.<sup>12</sup> Another study by Arthur Georges highlights God's presence and presence through His promises. This claim is based on the hermeneutics of the book of Esther.<sup>13</sup> Another study by James Bielo also found that the promise of God's presence is not only contained in the Bible, but can actually be felt and observed through forgotten tourist attractions in the United States of America.<sup>14</sup> These three studies do not address Jesus' promise of companionship in Matthew chapter 20.

In the context of theological research in Indonesia, research on the theme of God's promise of companionship has also been found, although not as numerous. One such study is the work of Janes Sinaga et al., who view the Israelites' journey across the Red Sea as evidence of God's companionship.<sup>15</sup> Then another study by Kosma Manurung looked at the theme of God's presence from the perspective of Pentecostal Theology.<sup>16</sup> Then, research by Awaludin Telaumbanua and Lestan Zebua discussed the presence of God which needs to be accompanied by the responsibility of preaching the Gospel.<sup>17</sup> These three studies highlight the promise of God's presence and Matthew 28:20 as general theological phenomena that do not yet include the voices of local communities in Indonesia. Therefore, this study will analyze how local voices can dialogue with the promise of God's presence in Matthew 28:20B to present an integrated meaning.

## METHOD

This research seeks to explore the deeper and contextual meaning of the biblical text and the social phenomena reflected in the literary works of the community. Based on these considerations, a qualitative research method was chosen and deemed appropriate for this study. Furthermore, because this research involves interpreting the biblical text, historical analysis will be used to understand the

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<sup>12</sup> Ingolf U Dalferth, "Representing God 's Presence 1," *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 3, no. 3 (2001).

<sup>13</sup> Arthur Laurence Georges, "Seeing God'S Presence Through His Promises: A Biblical Theology of God'S Presence in The Book of Esther," *The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary*, 2018, 1–165.

<sup>14</sup> James S. Bielo, "'Where Prayers May Be Whispered': Promises of Presence in Protestant Place-Making," *Ethnos* 85, no. 4 (2020): 730–48, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00141844.2019.1604559>.

<sup>15</sup> Janes Sinaga, Raden Deddy Kurniawan, and Juita Lusiana Sinambela, "Bukti Penyertaan Tuhan Melalui Perjalanan Bangsa Israel Menyeberangi Laut Teberau Berdasarkan Keluaran 13:17 – 14:1-31," *Logos* 19, no. 2 (2022): 143–52, <https://doi.org/10.54367/logos.v19i2.1985>.

<sup>16</sup> Kosma Manurung, "Telaah Memaknai Penyertaan Allah Dalam Bingkai Teologi Pentakosta," *CHARISTHEO: Jurnal Teologi Dan Pendidikan Agama Kristen* 1, no. 1 (2021): 54–69, <https://doi.org/10.54592/jct.v1i1.9>.

<sup>17</sup> Awaludin Telaumbanua and Lestan Iman Zebua, "Kajian Teologis Allah Immanuel Bagi Orang Percaya Dalam Melakuan Amanat Agung Menurut Matius 28:18-20," *Bahtera: Jurnal Teologi, Misi Dan Pendidikan Agama Kristen* 1, no. 2 (2024): 119–41.

text. This analysis was chosen because historical reconstruction will assist researchers in analyzing the context and factors underlying the events depicted in the text.

As discussed previously, in this study, the biblical text is not the sole source of meaning. The chosen biblical text, specifically Matthew 28:20B, will complement the folk narrative of the Sangihe Islands Regency. In this case, the voice of the Sangihe people chosen is their song, expressed in the song "O Mawu Rendingane." Therefore, Matthew 28:20B will enter into an equal dialogue with the song "O Mawu Rendingane." This emphasis on equality is important because for a long time, a textual and formal approach to the Bible was considered the only correct reading pattern. In the Indonesian context, this pattern is dominated by the historical criticism method. Thus, indirectly, formal methods have long been used to silence the voices of local Indonesian communities.<sup>18</sup> This is evident in the understanding of society, which places a formal approach as the standard of truth, especially when compared to the voices of the "grassroots."

Against this background, Choan-Seng Song's "Story Theology" is deemed the most suitable theory to underpin and mediate the dialogue between the biblical text and the voices of the people. As part of Postcolonial Theology, Choan-Seng Song's theory rejects colonial domination over efforts to understand the Bible. Song views God as present and accompanying humans, and His presence is visible and experienced in the life narratives of local communities.<sup>19</sup> Based on this belief, Song believes that the Bible can be viewed alongside the voices of local Asian communities. These voices can be heard through the rituals, symbols, and literary works of Asian communities, including songs. These works, which symbolize the voice of the people, contain the voices of local residents but also their collective experiences. This communal experience can then be considered an alternative text alongside the Bible, capable of dialogue with the Bible.<sup>20</sup>

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Song and Sangihe Christian Community

The Sangihe Christian community is a Christian community residing in the Sangihe Islands regency. This archipelago is located at the northern tip of Indonesia and borders the Philippines. Sangihe is a regency within the province of North Sulawesi. As a maritime region, Sangihe's marine

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<sup>18</sup> R. S. Sugirtharajah, "The Oxford Handbook of Postcolonial Biblical Criticism," *Oxford University Press*, 2023, 129–62, <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt1tm7h1q.7>.

<sup>19</sup> Choan-Seng Song, "Tell Us Our Names : Story Theology from an Asian Perspective," 1984.

<sup>20</sup> Choan-Seng Song, "Theology from the Womb of Asia," *London SCM*, 1988, 2025.

resources are undeniable.<sup>21</sup> Therefore, the majority of the population work as fishermen.<sup>22</sup> Not only the sea, the Sangihe mainland is abundant with natural resources.<sup>23</sup> The richness of forest, agricultural, and marine resources has shaped a society that is close to nature and upholds its culture. The close relationship between the Sangihe people and nature does not merely shape their culture but also their theological worldview. Their dependence on the sea, forests, and land nurtures a spiritual awareness of God's sustaining presence in every aspect of life, reinforcing their belief that God is actively involved in their communal existence. The Sangihe people's closeness to culture is evident in archaeological finds that are still preserved by the community today.<sup>24</sup> Apart from that, the Sangihe people also continue to maintain the noble culture inherited from their ancestors which is reflected through social relations.<sup>25</sup>

The Sangihe people are known for their love of singing. History records that, in the past, singing served as a form of communication for the Sangihe people. To this day, the Sangihe people maintain this tradition and use it for formal occasions, such as engagement ceremonies. This singing culture is also maintained and preserved through a traditional art form called "masamper".<sup>26</sup> The Sangihe community knows masamper as an oral literary work in the form of a reciprocal song sung by two or more groups.<sup>27</sup> Masamper is not only a culture, but also a lifestyle for the Sangihe people. This culture is alive and well, serving as a means of their faith.<sup>28</sup>

From this explanation, it can be seen and understood that the Sangihe people have a special relationship with singing and song. Not only is singing a tradition for the Sangihe people, but more than that, singing is a way for them to express their lives. Singing even serves as a medium for

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<sup>21</sup> Bustami, "Daseng Sanggaluhang: Kearifan Komunitas Dalam Pengelolaan Sumberdaya Kelautan Dan Perikanan."

<sup>22</sup> S Sumolang, S Sampe, and N Kumayas, "Ruang Laut Masyarakat Kepulauan Sangihe-Talaud Di Perbatasan Indonesia-Filipina," *Kepel Press*, 2023, 1–239, [http://repo.unsrat.ac.id/4632/1/Ruang Laut sangihe - buku Steven Final\\_compressed.pdf](http://repo.unsrat.ac.id/4632/1/Ruang%20laut%20sangihe%20-%20buku%20Steven%20Final_compressed.pdf).

<sup>23</sup> Steva Olviyanti Ponto, Anderson Kumenaung, and Patrick Wauran, "Analisis Korelasi Sektor Pertanian Terhadap Tingkat Kemiskinan Di Kabupaten Kepulauan Sangihe," *Jurnal Berkala Ilmiah Efisiensi* 15, no. 04 (2015): 137–47.

<sup>24</sup> Srigawati Hasanudin, Nasrullah Azis, and Hasanuddin, "Social and Religious Functions of Megalithic Culture in Sangihe Island, North Sulawesi," *Conference: Proceedings of the 3rd International Conference on Linguistics and Cultural (ICLC 2022)*, 2011.

<sup>25</sup> Valencia Ozelin Aer, Femmy Tasik, and Nicolaas Kandowangko, "Budaya Palose Masyarakat Petani Di Kelurahan Angges, Kecamatan Tahuna Barat Kabupaten Kepulauan Sangihe," *Jurnal Ilmiah Society* 2, no. 1 (2022): 1–11.

<sup>26</sup> 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>.

<sup>27</sup> Glenie Latuni and Luccyle Takalumang, "Form and Structure of Masamper Music" 383, no. Icsc (2019): 838–40, <https://doi.org/10.2991/icss-19.2019.46>.

<sup>28</sup> 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.

worshipping God, both when Christianity arrived in the Sangihe region and before that, when the Sangihe people still worshipped an entity known as "I Genggona Langi".<sup>29</sup>

Songs and chants form a unique and distinctive relationship with the Sangihe people. Besides being a way of life, they also serve as their response to everything around them. Songs serve as a means for them to connect with God, but also with others. Therefore, it's no exaggeration to say that songs play a central role in the lives of the Sangihe people.

### The Song "O Mawu Rendingane"

This song is one of the songs born from the Sangihe community. As a community that enjoys singing, this song deserves to be called a work of literature. "O Mawu Rendingane" is classified as a religious song, sung at religious events or mourning occasions. The meaning of the song is as follows:

The native language (Sangihe)	Indonesian	English
O Mawu rendingane	Oh Tuhan sertailah	Oh God be with us
I kami manga ellang	Kami hamba-hambaMu	We are Your servants
Su tempong kadentane	Di waktu akan datang	In the future
O Mawu kasellaheng	Dalam kebesaran-Mu	In Your greatness
Bae darodo-matelang	Baik anak-anak maupun orang dewasa	Both children and adults Leaders and followers
Tembonang kawanua	Pemimpin dan umat	Direct us to Your path
Ahako su ralengU	Arahkanlah ke jalan-Mu	According to Your will
Su ikekapuluNu	Menurut kehendak-Mu	

This song narrates a servant's plea to God. The Sangihe language chants a request for God's presence, expressing a total surrender. Uniquely, this song is not an individual plea, but a communal one. The song uses the first-person singular pronoun, emphasizing that this petition is made by a community, not just one person.

This song is even more compelling because it features wordplay that reflects the passage of time. The reference to time in the lyrics reveals a deeper theological dimension, pointing to the community's eschatological hope. By acknowledging God's presence in the past and present while

<sup>29</sup> David Rade, Manat Simanjuntak, and Ryanto Adilang, "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>.

seeking His companionship in the future, the song mirrors the promise in Matthew 28:20b that Christ's presence transcends time and remains constant until the end of the age. While the lyrics clearly depict the future, the present and the past are implied. The Sangihe people have always believed that God has been with them throughout the ages. Through the song "O Mawu Rendingane" (Oh God be with us), they ask for God's presence from the moment it is sung until an indefinite time, later translated as "in the future." Thus, "O Mawu Rendingane" is not merely a song, but a prayer filled with hope, supplication, and faith in the promise of God's presence, sung by the Sangihe people.

### **Exegesis of Matthew 28:20B**

This section is the conclusion and climax of the narrative of the Gospel according to Matthew.<sup>30</sup> Matthew 28:20B contains Jesus' promise of companionship to the disciples who witnessed His ascension into heaven. After completing His instruction and commission to the apostles, Jesus promises them His companionship. According to Lee and Viljoen, Matthew deliberately placed this promise of companionship at the conclusion because it echoes the theme of "Immanuel" that opens the book of Matthew.<sup>31</sup> Simply put, both theologians agree that the Gospel of Matthew opens and closes with the concept of the promise of God's presence.

This section is quite short yet dense with theological reflection. Although not a complete verse, verse 20 of section B is rich in meaning. To understand this section, it is important to break it down into three parts based on keywords and phrases. These three words or phrases are: "I am with you," "always," and "unto the end of the world" (KJV).

The first sentence is "I am with you" - ἐγὼ μεθ' ὑμῶν εἰμι (ego meth hyumon eimi). From a Greek grammatical perspective, this passage signifies Jesus' real and active presence. Therefore, it is inaccurate to view this passage as a metaphorical sentence. Jesus' promise to be with the disciples is actually a promise of presence, not just to comfort and strengthen them. Jesus will be truly present and accompany the disciples in their future journeys and ministries, including in the work of preaching the Gospel.<sup>32</sup>

The second word is "always" - πάσας τὰς ἡμέρας (pasas tas hemeras), which means every day or can even be understood as every moment. The use of this word is not intended to explain time or frequency, but rather emphasizes the continuity of action. In line with the sentence spoken before this

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<sup>30</sup> David C. Sim, "Is Matthew 28:16–20 the Summary of the Gospel?," *HTS Theologies Studies / Theological Studies* 70, no. 1 (2014): 16–20, <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v70i1.2756>.

<sup>31</sup> K. Lee and F. P. Viljoen, "The Ultimate Commission: The Key For The Gospel According to Matthew," *Acta Theologica* 30, no. 1 (2010): 64–83, <https://doi.org/10.4314/actat.v30i1.105811>.

<sup>32</sup> TDNT, "The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology," *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* 4 (1975): 166–74.



word, Jesus' promise to be present in real life with his disciples will take place at all times and continue without a clear end.<sup>33</sup>

The third sentence is “unto the end of the world” – εως της συντελειας αιωνος (eos tes sun teleias aionos) is provides additional information and clarifies the previous sentence. While the previous sentence did not explain the end of Jesus' presence, this sentence provides clear information about this.<sup>34</sup> The end of the world refers to the climax of human history, namely the end of everything. In other words, Jesus' inclusion of the disciples will last forever.<sup>35</sup> So it can be concluded that the promise of Jesus' inclusion in Matthew 28:20B is a promise to remain present and accompany the disciples in real life at all times until the end.

### **Song “O Mawu Rendingane” and Matthew 28:20B in Story Theology**

In this discussion, it is important to first establish that both sides share a common theme: God's presence. Therefore, this discussion will be limited to that theme. As previously mentioned, Matthew 28:20B presents Jesus' promise of presence to his disciples. This presence is real and continues until the end of time. Through Choan-Seng Song's "Story Theology," we will see how this dimension lives, dialogues, and is discussed within the Sangihe Christian community.

From the researcher's perspective, a dialogue is clearly evident between the two texts. In this context, it appears that the Sangihe community has responded to Matthew 28:20B. While the biblical text contains Jesus' promise of presence, through the song "O Mawu Rendingane," the Sangihe Christian community responds and lives out that promise. Although Jesus spoke this promise to his disciples, the implications of this promise extend to the present and touch anyone committed to following Jesus' example.<sup>36</sup> Thus, the Sangihe Christian community also has the right to consider themselves contemporary disciples of Jesus and to claim His promise of companionship.

The song "O Mawu Rendingane" symbolizes the Sangihe Christian community's adherence to the promise of companionship spoken by Christ in Matthew 28:20B. The song expresses their faith in Christ's promise of companionship. Uniquely, the Sangihe community expresses their faith through a language full of humility, namely the language of "pleasure." The song "O Mawu Rendingane" contains the Sangihe community's plea for continued companionship from God. This petition is

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<sup>33</sup> Michael Woodward, *Dictionary of Biblical Criticism and Interpretation, Theological Librarianship*, vol. 2, 2009, <https://doi.org/10.31046/tl.v2i1.74>.

<sup>34</sup> Benjamin Jerome Hubbard, “The Matthean Redaction of a Primitive Apostolic Commissioning: An Exegesis of Matthew 28:16-20,” *The University of Iowa*, 1973, 1–24.

<sup>35</sup> Otto A. Piper, Gerhard Kittel, and Geoffrey W. Bromiley, “Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Vol. II (D-H),” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 84, no. 4 (1965): 452, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3264881>.

<sup>36</sup> Alvary Exan Rerung, “Yesus Mengutus Para Murid Ke Seluruh Dunia Dan Maknanya Dalam Konteks Masyarakat Gereja Masa Kini,” *Teokrasti: Jurnal Teologi Kontekstual Dan Pelayanan Kristiani* 2, no. 1 (2022): 1–15, <https://doi.org/10.38189/jtk.v2i1.232>.

naturally born of faith, and that faith emerges in response to the promise of companionship. Indirectly, a reciprocal dialogue is established here: when Jesus promises companionship, the people respond with faith and a request for continued companionship. Jesus then responds by accompanying them, even though they are invisible to the people. Then, the people express gratitude for this companionship, ultimately expressing this gratitude within a community that shares God's presence. Indirectly, a reciprocal dialogue with one another is also established. The song "O Mawu Rendingane" provides access to see that the dialogue that is built on the theme of "God's promise of inclusion" is not only vertical, but also horizontal, involving one human being with another.

This reciprocal dialogue expands the dimensions of God's promise of companionship. Through the song "O Mawu Rendingane," the Sangihe Christian community believes that the promise of companionship is not actually Jesus' responsibility. When Jesus decided to give the promise of companionship to his disciples, it was a conscious decision from Jesus, born of His willingness, not of coercion. Therefore, the Sangihe Christian community believes in this decision as divine and welcomes it with humility. This humble response is filled with a request to always be accompanied. The next question that arises is, accompanied for what? Wasn't the promise of companionship already uttered by Jesus? In fact, Jesus' promise of companionship at the end of the book of Matthew was not something free. This promise of companionship arose as a result of the Great Commission.

The lyrics of the song "O Mawu Rendingane" demonstrate that the Sangihe people understand this. Therefore, they recognize that having received the promise of Jesus' presence, they must carry out the task of evangelism. They must share Christ's love with others. The song honestly addresses their weaknesses and limitations. Therefore, they humbly refer to themselves as "servants/slaves." In this weakness, they again ask for Jesus' presence in this mission of spreading the gospel.

This song also affirms the promise of Jesus' eternal presence, reflected in the play of time presented in the lyrics. Although not explicitly stated, the expression of the request for God's presence in the future reflects the longing of the Sangihe Christian community to always receive that presence. It implicitly acknowledges that they have received this promise in the past, and they pray for it to come true and continue into the future. This pattern clearly resonates with the narrative of Matthew 28:20B.

Furthermore, the Christian community in Sangihe also reflects its faith in the promise of God's intergenerational presence. This intergenerational perspective strengthens discipleship within the community, as both young and old are encouraged to actively embody and transmit the promise of God's presence in their worship, daily practices, and communal responsibilities. They believe that God's promise of presence applies to all generations. This is evident in the lyrics "Bae darodo-matelang," which means both small (children) and large (adults). Therefore, the promise of God's

presence can be shared by all people, regardless of age. This is further emphasized by the recognition that the same promise is not limited by social status. The lyrics "tembonang kawanua" can be interpreted as meaning both the leader and the led. Leaders in this context represent those with high social status, such as officials, government, and so on. Meanwhile, the people being led represent those with low social status (ordinary people).

The song concludes with a plea for all elements mentioned in the lyrics to be directed toward God's path and will. This language and confession, imbued with humility, demonstrate the unique response of the Sangihe people to God's promise of presence. The promise of constant presence does not make the Sangihe people arrogant. Instead, this promise of presence serves as a lesson for the Sangihe people to continually improve and move forward in humility, as they are accompanied by the Highest.

## CONCLUSION

From the very beginning, Jesus' promise of companionship was communal. For some reason, however, it shifted to the individual. Through the dialogue and song "O Mawu Rendingane", Jesus' promise of companionship in Matthew 28:20B is expanded and enriched. Beyond its communal nature, Jesus' promise of companionship also urges Christians, particularly those in Sangihe, to build relationships with one another and foster a communal response. This humble, communal response is expressed in the lyrics of "O Mawu Rendingane".

The dialogue in Matthew 28:20B and the song "O Mawu Rendingane," as a collective response from the Sangihe Christian community, depicts Jesus as truly present in the lives and faith journeys of the people. His presence and companionship transcend time and touch all generations. This is all the more beautiful when this presence is not limited by social strata. Everyone has the right to receive, enjoy, and live out Jesus' promise of companionship.

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