The Romans Euangelion and Minahasan Identity:
A Bridge from the Past into the Future Traditions

by
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Abstract

The Minahasan in North Sulawesi, Indonesia, is known as a people group with a strong ethnic identification, with Christianity as one of the salient markers. This particular feature is often associated with the ministries of J. F. Riedel and J. G. Schwarz, two missionaries of the Netherlands Missionary Society (Nederlands Zendelingenomootschap, NZG), which brought the majority of Minahasans to Jesus Christ. Nonetheless, the history of Christianity in this region, often referred to as Manado, goes back to Portuguese and Spanish evangelization work and then beyond the NZG’s successful outreach.

Through the era of colonialism to the period of overstated nationalism Minahasans have lost many of their traditional customs which are important to their ethnic identity. This thesis builds upon the Epistle to the Romans as the basis of theological reflection on ethnic identity, exploring what constitutes Minahasan ethnic identity, and suggesting a Minahasan local theology that gives flesh to Christian faith and demonstrates how in return Christian faith transcends, enlarges, and embodies the Minahasan ideals, envisioning the good news for Minahasan people and beyond. For this purpose, this thesis utilizes the Scripture, Tradition, and Context trilogy. While the focus of this thesis is local, it is placed within a larger context, examining the historical context of colonialism from a post-colonial perspective.

Key words: Minahasa, Contextual Theology, Contextualization, Post-colonialism, ethnic identity, Christian identity, faith and culture, Christianity and ethnic traditions, Orientalism, Indonesia, Social Identity Theory.

After this I looked, and there was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, robed in white, with palm branches in their hands. They cried out in a loud voice, saying, ‘Salvation belongs to our God who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb!’ (Revelation 7:9-10)
Acknowledgments

I see myself like a farmer who after toiling, tending, and waiting in hope has arrived to the harvest time. To write this acknowledgment feels like arriving at the harvest time, where I remember my labor and all the support from many people, and give thanks to God who gives the growth. Makapulu’ le’os wia si Opo’ Empung Wa’ilan Wangko’!

It has been my hope to be able to write something about Minahasa and Christianity, and I am thankful that there have been much work done before in this direction, both theological and non-theological. Without these contributions, this work would have no story and history. “It is our past which tells us who we are; without our past we are lost,” as missiologist Andrew Walls puts it. The history of Minahasa is not yet complete. It is a privilege for me to contribute to the growing body of what has been called “Minahasalogy.” May this thesis be a reminder of those who have supported me in my studies.

For the completion of this thesis, first of all, I wish to thank my father Eddy Maleke, my mother Olga Walangitan, and my brother Victor Maleke, whose prayers have been my comfort and source of confidence. Together with them, I remember all my relatives, friends, and family-like acquaintances in Tondano, Sond, Jakarta, and other places. And most especially, I wish to thank my soul-mate, Elizabeth Grace Campbell-Maleke, for all her love, for keeping me on my toes, for being a wise conversational partner, and for the hard work of editing the manuscript of this thesis. Her prayers have made me see beyond the horizons.

I wish to express my deep gratitude to Western Theological Seminary (WTS) for providing the scholarship that helped me to connect to the Reformed tradition in a new way and to appreciate my own ever-growing, ever-changing cultural traditions. Thank you also to the Rev. Jeanette Beagley-Koolhaas, director of the Master of Theology (Th.M) program at WTS together with Mr. Alan Beagley, who helped me a lot during my stay in WTS student housing. And I especially thank my academic advisor, the Rev. Dr. George Hunsberger, whose trust and academic accomplishment I have cherished. It has been a great

1 Thank be to the LORD God of Abundance and Greatness.
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Moore at San Francisco Theological Seminary library, Peter Thayer at Marietta
College library and Susanne Maner at Bibliothek Museum der Kulturen, Basel.

Truly the Lord blessed me with support from so many people that I’d like to
mention, although I won’t be able to name them all one by one. For Drs. Fendy E.
W. Parengkuan, historian, member of the faculty at the University of Sam
Ratulangi Manado, Mr. Boeng Dotulong, Minahasan linguist and cultural expert,
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Jeff) for letting me use their private library at their wonderful West Virginia log
house and for editing some of my manuscripts, together with them I
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Petaluma Indonesian Bible Study and GMIM Alfa-Omega Toulour. For all the
insightful suggestions and corrections I express my deepest gratitude,
underlining that I bear the responsibility for any errors in this thesis. I write with
a hope that this thesis may bear fruit to those who love Si Mapiara and
Minahasa. Pakatu’an wo pakalawiren.

West Virginia, May 7, 2013

3A Minahasan titular for God meaning “The Care-giver of Life.”
4May you be blessed with longevity and well-being.
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## Non-English Terms And Expressions

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<tr>
<th>Term/Expression</th>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>adat-istiadat</td>
<td>Bahasa/Manado Malay</td>
<td>traditions, customs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>alifuru</td>
<td>Moluccas</td>
<td>native, indigenous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Amang Kasuruan Wangko'</em></td>
<td>Minahasa</td>
<td>The Great Father Source of Life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>apar</td>
<td>Minahasa</td>
<td>to tend and cultivate a piece of land</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>apo’ also opo’</em></td>
<td>Minahasa</td>
<td>ancestor; God</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>assa</td>
<td>Minahasa</td>
<td>local plant (<em>saccharum spontaneum</em>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>awahat</td>
<td>Minahasa</td>
<td>west wind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bangsa</td>
<td>Bahasa/Manado Malay</td>
<td>Nation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Bhineka Tunggal Ika</em></td>
<td>Sanskrit</td>
<td>unity in diversity; various yet one; diverse, but united</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>borgo</td>
<td>Manado Malay</td>
<td>multi-ethnic descendants, usually of European and local origin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>conquistador</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>conqueror; conquering (adj.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cultuurstelsel</td>
<td>Dutch</td>
<td>compulsory coffee cultivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dikaiosune</td>
<td>Greek</td>
<td>righteousness and justice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dewa-dewi</td>
<td>Bahasa/Manado Malay</td>
<td>male and female deities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dotu-dotu</td>
<td>Manado Malay</td>
<td>forebears</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>empung</td>
<td>Minahasa</td>
<td>ancestor, lord; Lord</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Empung Renga-rengan</em></td>
<td>Minahasa</td>
<td>the Ever-Present Lord</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Empung Wa’ilan Wangko’</em></td>
<td>Minahasa</td>
<td>the Great and Abundant Lord</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>endo also edo</td>
<td>Minahasa</td>
<td>sun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Esa</td>
<td>Minahasa</td>
<td>One</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eschaton (tou chronou)</td>
<td>Greek</td>
<td>the end of time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ethnlos</td>
<td>Greek</td>
<td>a nation or people associated with common ancestry or descent, shared</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term</td>
<td>Language</td>
<td>Meaning</td>
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<td>----------------------</td>
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<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>euangelion</td>
<td>Greek</td>
<td>homeland, culture, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fetor or petor</td>
<td>Manado Malay</td>
<td>Spanish official</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gereja Masehi Injili di Minahasa (GMIM)</td>
<td>Bahasa/Manado Malay</td>
<td>The Christian Evangelical Church in Minahasa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>guru jemaat</td>
<td>Bahasa/Manado Malay</td>
<td>local church leader and teacher of the congregation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hodegeo</td>
<td>Greek</td>
<td>to guide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hodegesis</td>
<td>(technical term) adopted into Bahasa</td>
<td>cross-cultural, christocentric, hermeneutical approach to the Scripture, utilizing methods of interpretation, but primarily focusing on theological aspects, with technical apparatus in the margin, aimed at connecting the local traditions, the context, and the community of believers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hulptroepen</td>
<td>Dutch</td>
<td>Minahasan personnel in the Dutch army</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>identitas</td>
<td>Bahasa (technical term)</td>
<td>“Idiosyncratic characteristics” that represent one's belonging to a categorical ethnic group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indische Kerk</td>
<td>Dutch</td>
<td>The Protestant Church of the East Indies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Injil</td>
<td>Bahasa/Manado Malay</td>
<td>Gospel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaendoan</td>
<td>Minahasa</td>
<td>the Morning Star; Venus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kalewo’an</td>
<td>Minahasa</td>
<td>evildoing (Bahasa, kejahatan)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karema</td>
<td>Minahasa</td>
<td>A priest figure in Zazanian ni Karema</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kaselokan</td>
<td>Minahasa</td>
<td>wrongdoing (Bahasa, pelanggaran)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kasuat tou</td>
<td>Minahasa</td>
<td>fellow neighbor, fellow human being</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kasuruan</td>
<td>Minahasa</td>
<td>ancestor, lord; Lord</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kawanua</td>
<td>Minahasa</td>
<td>compatriots</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kawengian</td>
<td>Minahasa</td>
<td>the darkness of the night or dark moon; the name of Lumimuut's father</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kenaramen</td>
<td>Minahasa</td>
<td>traditions, customs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>keter</td>
<td>Minahasa</td>
<td>see mawai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kerapatan Gereja Protestan Minahasa (KGPM)</td>
<td>Bahasa</td>
<td>Minahasa Protestant Church Assemblies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kongres Minahasa Raya</td>
<td>Bahasa/Manado Malay</td>
<td>The Pan-Minahasa Congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Koninklijk Nederlands Indisch Leger (KNIL)</td>
<td>Dutch</td>
<td>The Royal Netherlands East Indies Army</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kotulus</td>
<td>Minahasa</td>
<td>traditional doctor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kumuru e Minaesa!</td>
<td>Minahasa</td>
<td>get down Minaesa!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>laïcité</td>
<td>French</td>
<td>French secularism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Levensverzekering Maatschappij Indonesia</td>
<td>Dutch</td>
<td>Indonesia Life Insurance Company (might be the first public use of the word “Indonesia” in the Netherlands East Indies)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lisung</td>
<td>Minahasa</td>
<td>mortar, carved wood/stone to pound rice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lokon Telu</td>
<td>Minahasa</td>
<td>the three peaks of the sacred mountains: Empung, Tatawiran, and Kasehe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>maesa or maasa</td>
<td>Minahasa</td>
<td>to unite, to become one</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maengket</td>
<td>Minahasa</td>
<td>Minahasan traditional dance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malesung</td>
<td>Minahasa</td>
<td>a name for ancient Minahasa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mangasin</td>
<td>Minahasa</td>
<td>making salt; se mangasin: salt maker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mangorai</td>
<td>Minahasa</td>
<td>a posan* associated with land fertility and ancestry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>manguni</td>
<td>Minahasa</td>
<td>owl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Makarua Siouw</td>
<td>Minahasa</td>
<td>the Two Times Nine: 18 ancestors regarded as the children of Toar and Lumimuut, also symbolizing the office of walian*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Makatelu Pitu</td>
<td>Minahasa</td>
<td>the Three Times Seven: 21 ancestors regarded as the grandchildren of Toar and Lumimuut, also symbolizing the office of tona’as*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mapalus</td>
<td>Minahasa</td>
<td>mutual cooperation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mapalus Mesiani</td>
<td>Minahasa/Manado Malay</td>
<td>Messianic Mapalus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term</td>
<td>Language</td>
<td>Meaning</td>
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<td>-------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>mapendang</td>
<td>Minahasa</td>
<td>teacher in the Minahasan traditional education system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>masuat peleng</td>
<td>Minahasa</td>
<td>all are the same, equal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mawai also keter*</td>
<td>Minahasa</td>
<td>physical strength to overcome challenges, also connotes economic strength</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mengelot</td>
<td>Minahasa</td>
<td>traditional doctor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mengundam</td>
<td>Minahasa</td>
<td>traditional doctor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>meniwo</td>
<td>Minahasa</td>
<td>one who uses one's knowledge to impinge others with misfortune such as sickness, failure, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>metetamberan or metetaberan</td>
<td>Minahasa</td>
<td>freely giving to one another</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>minaesa or minaasa</td>
<td>Minahasa</td>
<td>have become one, united</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minawanua</td>
<td>Minahasa</td>
<td>once a dwelling place; the capital of the Tondano people, demolished by the Dutch army and local allies in 1809</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mythos</td>
<td>Greek</td>
<td>(1) a speech, word, saying; (2) a narrative, story: a) a true narrative, b) a fiction, a fable; universally, an invention, falsehood. In this thesis: a fiction or fable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nama Sarani</td>
<td>Manado Malay</td>
<td>Christian name given at baptism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nederlandsch Zendelinggenootschap (NZG)</td>
<td>Dutch Malay</td>
<td>Netherlands Missionary Society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nenek moyang</td>
<td>Bahasa</td>
<td>ancestors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>neumanen</td>
<td>Minahasa</td>
<td>a bed-time story with animal or human characters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ngaasan also sigha*</td>
<td>Minahasa</td>
<td>the capability to take care of the ro’ong*/wanua*; managerial skill/leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>niatean</td>
<td>Minahasa</td>
<td>to have conscience, courage to lead, perseverance and tenacity in dealing with the challenges faced by ro’ong*/wanua*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>opo’ also apo’,*</td>
<td>Minahasa</td>
<td>ancestors; God</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Opo' Mana en Atas</strong> also <strong>Opo' Wana en Atas</strong></td>
<td>Minahasa</td>
<td>God in the Above/Sky/Heaven</td>
</tr>
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<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>pahayoaan</strong></td>
<td>Minahasa</td>
<td>student in the Minahasen traditional school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>pahasaan or paasaan</strong></td>
<td>Minahasa</td>
<td>union; a group of <em>walaks</em> of the same group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>pakasaan</strong></td>
<td>Minahasa</td>
<td>entirety; a group of <em>walaks</em> of the same group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pancasila</strong></td>
<td>Bahasa/Sanskrit</td>
<td>the Five Principles, Nation-state philosophy of the Republic of Indonesia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>papendangan</strong></td>
<td>Minahasa</td>
<td>the traditional school in Minahasen society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>paradosis</strong></td>
<td>Greek</td>
<td>tradition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>paraklete</strong></td>
<td>Greek</td>
<td>comforter (Bahasa, <em>penghibur</em>); a title for the Holy Spirit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>paripurna</strong></td>
<td>Bahasa</td>
<td>complete, perfect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>paopo'on</strong></td>
<td>Minahasa</td>
<td>to revere one as an ancestor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pasiouwan Telu</strong></td>
<td>Minahasa</td>
<td>the Ninth Three: the third order of the offspring of To’ar Lumimuut, symbolizing the people of Minahasa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Patu’usan or potu’usan</strong></td>
<td>Minahasa</td>
<td>the advisory council in the community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>peli’i</strong></td>
<td>Minahasa</td>
<td>rituals; see <em>posan</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>pemanuuaan</strong></td>
<td>Minahasa</td>
<td>traditional school subject pertaining to land/territory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>pemosanan</strong></td>
<td>Minahasa</td>
<td>traditional school subject pertaining to Minahasen ethnic religion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>pengucapan syukur</strong></td>
<td>Bahasa/Manado Malay</td>
<td>festivals of thanksgiving following the harvest time in Minahasa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>pengumaan</strong></td>
<td>Minahasa</td>
<td>traditional school subject pertaining to agriculture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>pengundaman</strong></td>
<td>Minahasa</td>
<td>traditional school subject pertaining to medicine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Permesta (Perjuangan Rakyat Semesta)</strong></td>
<td>Indonesia/Manado Malay</td>
<td>All People Struggle Movement 1958-1961 in East Indonesia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>pinawetengan e nuwu wo</strong></td>
<td>Minahasa</td>
<td>the allotment of languages and rituals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>term</td>
<td>language</td>
<td>description</td>
</tr>
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<td>------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>posan</td>
<td>Minahasa</td>
<td>rituals in Minahasan ethnic religion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>poso also foso</td>
<td>Manado Malay</td>
<td>see posan*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>puyun</td>
<td>Minahasa</td>
<td>grand children; offspring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>puyun im puyun or puyun-makapuyun</td>
<td>Minahasa</td>
<td>children and the children of their children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ra’ar</td>
<td>Minahasa</td>
<td>sunny, solar heat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ro’ong also wanua*</td>
<td>Minahasa</td>
<td>village</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rumaghes</td>
<td>Minahasa</td>
<td>a posan* in Minahasan ethnic religion accompanied with sacrifice such as food, drink, and betel nut.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rumopa</td>
<td>Minahasa</td>
<td>sago maker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sago-sago</td>
<td>Minahasa</td>
<td>a kind of spear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sapientia</td>
<td>Latin</td>
<td>wisdom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>scientia</td>
<td>Latin</td>
<td>science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>si apo’ ninema’ in tana’</td>
<td>Minahasa</td>
<td>the ancestor who made the land (of Minahasa); reference to Lumimuut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Si Empung Wa’ilan</td>
<td>Minahasa</td>
<td>The Almighty; Lord of Abundance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Si Mapiara</td>
<td>Minahasa</td>
<td>The Care-giver of Life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>si tou timou tumou tou</td>
<td>Minahasa</td>
<td>a person lives to give life to others; or a human lives to humanize others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sola Scriptura</td>
<td>Latin</td>
<td>by Scripture alone (one of the basic teachings of the Reformation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sumungkul wo sumampet mauri</td>
<td>Minahasa</td>
<td>a posan* that requires the obtaining of a human head as a symbol of bravery, which later due to colonial government’s prohibition was substituted with an object smeared with animal blood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tamber or taber</td>
<td>Minahasa</td>
<td>to give something without any expectation in return or reciprocity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tanam paksas</td>
<td>Bahasa</td>
<td>see cultuurstelsel*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tasikela</td>
<td>Minahasa</td>
<td>local designation for the Spaniards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>teterusan</td>
<td>Minahasa</td>
<td>commander-in-chief in war</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>teto’uan makatana’</td>
<td>Minahasa</td>
<td>the knowledge of the owner of the land;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indigenous Knowledge</td>
<td>Minahasa</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toar and Lumimuut</td>
<td>Minahasa</td>
<td>two symbolic Minahasian ancestral figures as sung in the <em>Zazanian ni Karema</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tona’as</td>
<td>Minahasa</td>
<td>community leaders and experts (civil or military)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>torang samua basudara</td>
<td>Manado Malay</td>
<td>we all are brothers and sisters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to’tok</td>
<td>Minahasa</td>
<td>cutting something into small pieces</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Tou                 | Minahasa | Noun: a person (sg.); people, ethnic group (pl.)
|                     |          | Verb: grow, live
|                     |          | Adverb: like, similar to |
| tou Minahasa        | Minahasa | people of Minahasa |
| tu’is               | Minahasa | local plant (*amomum album*) |
| ukung               | Minahasa | head of a village |
| ukung wangko’       | Minahasa | *walak* leader, chief |
| Si Urang ni Empung  | Minahasa | The Child of God |
| Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie (V. O. C.) | Dutch | United East India Company |
| wangelei            | Minahasa | ginger |
| wanya               | Minahasa | village; dwelling place |
| walak               | Minahasa | cluster of *ro’ong/wanua* of the same sub-ethnic group |
| waraney             | Minahasa | warriors |
| walian              | Minahasa | priest/priestess |
| Watu Pinawetengan  | Minahasa | Stone of Allotment |
| wa’ilan             | Minahasa | rich, wealthy, abundant |
| wengi               | Minahasa | evening; the name of Lumimuut’s mother |
| Zazanian ni Karema  | Minahasa | the Song of Karema |
The Map of Minahasa

(source: www.minahasa.net and www.worldatlas.com)
Chapter 1: Introduction

Description of Topic

Nusantara, a synonym for the Indonesian archipelago, is characterized by a wide range of religious, ethnic, lingual and cultural diversity, which inspired the adoption of the Sanskrit Bhineka Tunggal Ika (Unity in Diversity) as the nation-state motto.\(^1\) In this context, an ethnic group oftentimes is characterized by a particular religion. Minahasa in North Sulawesi\(^2\) is associated with Christianity, as is Toraja (South Sulawesi) and Batak Karo (North Sumatra), while, for example, Minangkabau (West Sumatra) is associated with Islam and Bali with Hindu-Bali.\(^3\) This mode of association is based on majority representation, for

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\(^1\)Also “various yet one; diverse, but united” (Eka Darmaputra, *Pancasila and the Search for Identity and Modernity in Indonesian Society: A Cultural and Ethical Analysis* [Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1988], 19). The words are part of a fourteenth century poem written by Mpu Tantular of Majapahit Kingdom to nourish the tolerance between the adherents of Sanatana Dharma (Hindus) and Dharma religion (Buddhists). The last two sentences of Sutasoma canto 139, stanza 5: “Mangka ng Jinatwa kalawan Siwatatwa tunggal, Bhinneka tunggal ika tan hana dharma mangrwa (the truth of Jina (Buddha) and the truth of Shiva is one; they are indeed different, but they remain one, as there is no duality in Truth) (Soewito Santoso, *Sutasoma, a Study of Old Javanese Wajrayana* [New Delhi: International Academy of Indian Culture, 1975], 578 as quoted in Anthony Reid, “Introduction: Muslims and power in a plural Asia,” in *Islamic Legitimacy in a Plural Asia*, ed. Michael Gilsenan and Anthony Reid [London [u.a.]: Routledge, 2007], 5).

\(^2\)Previously Sulawesi was known as Celebes.

\(^3\)See Jan Aritonang, “Faith and Ethnic Conflicts in Indonesia: A brief historical Survey and theological Reflection” in *Faith and Ethnicity Vol 1*, ed. Eddy A. J. G. Van der Borght, Dirk van Keulen, Martien E. Brinkman (Zoetermeer: Meinema, 2002), 124-137. In this thesis, I attempt to use the term familiar to the locality or an in-group description for religions in order to avoid using the suffix “-ism,” which may stem from a religio-ethnocentrism in Europe. For aside from Christianity, there are Judaism, Buddhism, and Confucianism, including Mohammedanism, which according to Edward Said, is an insulting European designation toward the Muslims (*Orientalism* [New York: Pantheon Books, 1978], 60). Though many have embraced the religio-ism as a popular term, there is a growing trend among religious adherents to define themselves in
within each of these groups, whether ethnically or territorially speaking, there are those who adhere to different religions.\(^4\)

Present-day Indonesia is comprised of 33 provinces with reportedly about 300 ethnic groups inhabiting about 6,000 of its roughly 13,000 islands;\(^5\) only 15 groups exceed the threshold of one million.\(^6\) In all, Indonesia is ranked fourth in world population after China, India, and the USA with 237,556,363 people in the 2010 census, 58% of which are concentrated in Java, where the capital city, Jakarta, lies.\(^7\)

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\(^4\) There are six legally recognized religions in Indonesia: Islam, Protestant Christianity, Roman Catholic Church, Sanatana Dharma (Hindu Religion), Buddha/Dharma Religion, and the Confucian Tradition. In addition, Kepercayaan Kepada Tuhan Yang Maha Esa (Belief in One Ultimate God), which comprises different ethnic religions, is also legally recognized.

\(^5\) David Levinson, *Ethnic Groups Worldwide: A Ready Reference Handbook* (Phoenix, Ariz: Oryx Press, 1998), 226. The exact number of ethnic and sub-ethnic groups in Indonesia is still not clear. According to Leo Suryadinata, Evi N. Arifin, and Aris Ananta, Statistic Indonesia has provided “the codes for 1072 ethnic and sub-ethnic groups” (*Indonesia’s Population: Ethnicity and Religion in a Changing Political Landscape* [Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2003], 9-10). Apparently the boundaries between ethnic and sub-ethnic groups are not specified; hence there are possibilities for the two to overlap. At the same time, the number of Indonesian islands also has been variously stated, but as reported by Aditia Maruli (*AntaraNews.com*, August 17, 2010), the Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries of Republic of Indonesia verified that the more accurate number is about 13,000.


The Minahasa proper (4786 km²) is a region that today consists of three different municipalities and four regional administrations: Manado, Bitung, Tomohon, and Minahasa, South Minahasa, North Minahasa, and Southeast Minahasa respectively. According to the 2010 census, there are 785,067 people living in Minahasa proper. There are symbols to express the levels of ethnic unity in Minahasa. One of them is the manguni (owl), the sacred bird of the Minahasans. The emblems of the three municipalities and four regencies in Minahasa each included a Manguni, until the Manguni in the Southeastern Minahasa regency’s emblem was replaced with a dove shining down with light. Minahasa has lost many of its traditional customs and so frequently is perceived as “westernized.” In 1958, Hetty Nooy Palm, an anthropologist, wrote: “Nowhere in Indonesia has the old culture so fast and so completely disappeared

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9 This is one example of the unnecessary tension between locality and Christianity. Manguni (owl) is also used as the emblem of the Christian Evangelical Church in Minahasa (see appendix), locally known as Gereja Maseli Injili di Minahasa (GMIM), the largest Protestant denomination in the North Sulawesi Province. Minahasan tradition regards different species of birds, especially the owl, as intermediaries of the opo’ or empung (God or ancestors) to give signs of warning or direction. This concept has been adopted to refer to the church as the sign of good news from the Opo’ Wa’ilan Wangko’ (The Great and Abundant God). Manguni has gotten a negative connotation because its equivalent in Bahasa is “burung hantu” (lit. ghost bird).
as in the Minahasa.”  

This comment recently blazed across Minahasan blogs and social network conversations as a wake-up call; it also has been quoted in several publications by Minahasans. In this vein, there is a cultural revival among the Minahasans in the beginning of the Third Millennium. Indeed, culture is central to one’s ethnic identity, yet there is more to it than that. This recent phenomenon of cultural events and celebrations as well as preservation efforts shows that there are some sensibilities related to ethnic identity that are resistant to change.

Many Minahasan Christians, both within and outside Minahasa, are increasingly searching for their ethnic identity and promoting their cultural heritage while simultaneously bringing this search into conversation with their Christian faith. This conversation in particular brings in subsequent questions concerning what it means to be a Minahasan and Christian, especially in relation to relatively recent developments in the academic field known as post-colonialism (explained below), which in some cases seem to discredit and reduce Christianity into an integral part of the baggage of colonialism.

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11 See, for example, Jessy Wenas, preface to Sejarah dan Kebudayaan Minahasa ([Manado]: Institut Seni Budaya Sulawesi Utara, 2007), [v]; Bert Supit, Minahasa: Dari Amanat Watu Pinawetengan sampai Gelora Minawanuia (Jakarta: Penerbit Sinar Harapan, 1986), 14.
Going back to the tradition of *Sola Scriptura*, I choose to bring the apostle Paul’s Epistle to the Romans and the context of Minahasa into dialogue. The primary reason for choosing this epistle is that Romans, among other reasons, was written to address ethnic group dynamics in Rome, especially given the Judeans’ return to Rome after Emperor Claudius’ death (54 AD). Understanding the dynamic of ethnic identity in Romans and accordingly the approach taken by the apostle Paul in addressing the plausible situation at hand may illumine a way of constructing Minahasan local theology in connection with ethnicity and Christian identity. The apostle Paul’s approach itself I regard as *euangelion eis ethne* (good news to the nations).

I contend, based upon this *euangelion*, that Minahasans may embrace their Christian faith without having to become Judean or Dutch, as Minahan

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12As J. Daniel Hays indicates, there have been many discussions regarding the use of the Greek word *Ioudaioi* (“Paul and the Multi-Ethnic First-Century World: Ethnicity and Christian Identity” in Paul As Missionary: Identity, Activity, Theology, and Practice, ed. Trevor J. Burke and Brian S. Rosner [London: T & T Clark, 2011], 77). This term may represent an ethnic category, or it may also be translated in a certain context as religio-cultural practices, often implied in the word “Jews.” For further discussion on this topic see, for example, Shaye J. D. Cohen, The Beginning of Jewishness [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999]). In this thesis, I use the word “Judeans” to signify an ethnic category, while to represent religio-cultural identity, instead of “Jews,” I utilize the word “Yehudi,” which is closer to the Hebrew root word.

13The term “local theology” is used by Robert J. Schreiter with three suggested advantages: (1) it reinvigorates local church (which may represent institutions or the people/members); (2) it is sensitive to the context; and (3) it avoids undue neologism (Constructing Local Theologies [Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1985], 6).
traditions also enable us to adopt Christianity as ours. In return, Christianity adopts Minahasans into a greater story of the world and enhances the Minahasan highest ideal, expressed in the maxim “si tou timou tumou tou” (a person lives to give life to others). This work expounds a local theology that perceives the possibility for us, Minahasans, to confidently claim: We are Minahasan-Christsians. For this reason I have titled this thesis: “The Romans Euangelion and Minahasan Identity: Building a Bridge from the Past into the Future Traditions.”

Limitation of Topic and Methodology

The purpose of this thesis is not to investigate the impact of the rising mobilization of ethnic identity on the political landscape of Indonesia; nor do I intend to evaluate the role of the Internet, virtual-social media, and mass media in shaping public opinion on this matter, although these are admittedly significant in the aforementioned revival of cultural heritage and reinforcement of ethnic identity in contemporary Minahasa.

This thesis is by no means a nostalgic undertaking to bring the past into the future. It is rather a work that takes seriously the importance of the past and the present sense of ethnic identity as well as the importance of our Christian faith to establish the hope of the reign of God in a given community and in the world at
large. Hence, the goal of this thesis is first to analyze the Epistle to the Romans for the purpose of establishing a biblical understanding for ethnic identity within the Christian tradition, and from there to provide a framework of comprehending Minahasan traditions and Christian practices from a local perspective. This thesis rests on the case that Minahasan ethnic identity, a fusion of essential and instrumental attributes, is real and powerful, and that Christian theology, both in theory and practice, has something to say about this.

I perceive this thesis to be a project of local theology that is different from the conventional theological framework with its rigid categorizations, such as Biblical Studies, Systematic Theology, Practical Theology, and so forth, which in my opinion contributes to a drawback in Church life, and in turn hinders Christian scholarship itself. I see that such an approach tends to compartmentalize the texts, Christian practices, and the community of faith, as if they could stand independently from one another. As a result, the mediatory function of a theological inquiry to bridge the biblical texts and the life of the church is often missing in academic engagement and runs the risk of potentially producing a barren theology, or worse, a self-defeating theology to the Church. In this effort of “constructing local theology,” I maintain that Christian
scholarship has to have a basic foundation in the Scripture according to the Christian tradition, and that it must connect to the life and edification of the community of believers in concrete and life-giving ways.

Hence, the methodology adopted in this thesis is borrowed from the trilogy of Scripture, Tradition, and Context. The basic tenet within this methodology is that the authority of the Scripture overlaps with God's revelation to Israel and its subsequent preservation as traditions documented in the Old Testament. This revelation received its perfection and fulfillment in and through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, which is preserved in the apostolic teaching of the New Testament, in order to be the foundation of Christian life and practices within a particular context at all times. Scripture here is understood as the Old and New Testament in the Protestant tradition. Yet, Tradition, instead of church traditions, is broadly defined as the way of life of the Minahasans, known locally

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15 The singular Scripture in this thesis is used to refer to the Old and New Testaments, while the plural form, Scriptures, is used to refer to passages in either or both the OT and NT (see the use of graphe in Theological Dictionary of the New Testament Vol. I, ed. Gerhard Kittel and Geoffrey W. Bromiley [Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1964], 758. Henceforth TDNT.)
as *kenaramen*\(^{16}\) (Bahasa, *adat-istiadat*) which is an integral part of the worldview, expressed in a wider sense as culture, and understood through their story and history. And then there is Context, which describes the issues, location, and time of a particular church and community in their “glocality,”\(^{17}\) and where a theological reflection may produce what is called “contextual theology” (contextualization).

This study is an information-based research using library and online resources, including interviews with local sources, which is divided into seven steps:

Chapter one is an introduction in which the background of the topic is made, the title is formulated, the goal of this study is stated, and the methodology is set.

Chapter Two consists of seven theoretical and theological orientations that inform the background of this thesis: (1) The Centrality of the Scripture in Christian Tradition; (2) The Gospel as the Hermeneutic of the Scripture; (3) Hodegesis as a Hermeneutical Tool for Christians in Bringing Out the Gospel

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\(^{16}\)From the word *naram* “tame,” “not wild,” meaning “customs,” “habitude,” “tradition” (see A. Wantalangi, et.al., *Kamus Tondano-Indonesia* [Jakarta: Pusat Pembinaan dan Pengembangan Bahasa Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 1985]).

\(^{17}\)Paul G. Hiebert uses this term to point out how societies are influenced by globalization on one hand and the rise of localization on the other (*Transforming Worldviews: An Anthropological Understanding of How People Change* [Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2008], 241-264).
Messages into Real Life; (4) Christianity, Colonialism and Post-colonialism; (5) Ethnicity; (6) Culture, Religion and Ethnic Identity; and (7) Contextual Theology.

Chapter Three is a hodegesical study of the Epistle to the Romans and functions as the scriptural foundation for the place of ethnic identity within Christianity. Hodegesis is a cross-cultural biblical interpretation that takes into account the benefit of pre-critical, historical-critical, and post-historical-critical approaches to the Bible in order to understand the Scripture in connection to the local tradition, the context, and the community of believers (further explained in Chapter Two). This chapter contains a biblical interpretation under the theme of the Romans Debate and ethnic identity.

Chapter Four provides a lens into understanding what, in a greater sense, constitutes a Minahasan sense of identity. Because Minahasa has drawn a good number of Europeans, notwithstanding some Minahasan scholars, to write about its social condition, culture, and history, for this part I employ “emic synthesis,”

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18 Hodegesis parallels the “theological interpretation of Scripture” approach described by J. Todd Billings in his article “How to read the Bible” in Christianity Today, October 2011. Dr. Billings is Associate Professor of Reformed Theology at Western Theological Seminary, who I had the privilege to meet when I enrolled as a Th. M. student 2011-2012.

19 Kenneth Pike, a linguist, uses the word “emic perspective” to describe a “cultural insider’s view” and to differentiate it from that of “an informed outsider’s view,” which is called the “etic perspective” (Charles H. Kraft, Anthropology for Christian Witness [Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1996], 76).
which means analyzing emic and etic perspectives through a cultural insider's view. The goal is to create a dialogue between the outsiders' and the insiders' interpretations of ethno-data embedded in the culture, bridging the gap between these emic and etic perceptions. Hence, along the way we will encounter emic and etic ethnographic description, analysis, and a critical synthesis. This section is particularly important in constructing a way for understanding Minahasan ethnic identity and therein the place of our ethnicity within our Christian identity.20

Chapter Five briefly describes the meeting of Christianity and the people of Minahasa from the background of imperialism/colonialism through the time of the independent Minahasa within Indonesia. This chapter describes how Christianity was embraced and became part of Minahasan ethnic consciousness.

Chapter Six provides a theological reflection on Christian faith and Minahasan tradition, and how they may be reconciled in light of the uniqueness of Jesus Christ as our Opo’/Empung/Kasuruan (terms used for God or ancestors).

This chapter discusses how we Minahasans may understand Jesus Christ, and

20I rely mainly on the present accessible literature about Minahasa written in English, Bahasa Indonesia, and sources in Proto-Minahasan related languages (Tondano, Tombulu, Tonsea, Tontemboan, and Tonsawang), including translated Dutch literature and others. They are supplemented with personal correspondence and consultation with several Minahasan experts on the topic of culture and theology.
what significance He makes for us to be both Minahasan and Christian. It also
demonstrates how Minahasan traditions give flesh to Christian faith, and how in
return Christian faith transcends, enlarges, and embodies the Minahasan ideals,
envisioning the good news for Minahasan people and beyond.

Given the range of complex situations that the people of Minahasa face today,
Chapter Seven discusses some practical problems especially related to the
practice of mapalus (mutual cooperation). This chapter points at the context of
Minahasa and poses the question of how our ethnic and Christian traditions can
play a very important role in living out the Good News and safeguarding the
well-being of the land and the people of Minahasa as an integral part of the
global community. This last chapter provides a final conclusion.

This work is a preliminary study for further research on the topic of
Minahasan Christian identity. It presents the skeleton of a future endeavor to
construct Minahasan local theology. I am indebted to Lesslie Newbigin for the
formulation of words in which I’d like to categorize this work: “No one comes to
any text with a completely vacant mind. Everyone comes with a pre-
understanding; without this no understanding is possible.”

This I acknowledge in agreement with his further statement that an adequate space has to be provided to “allow the text to speak in its own way, and accept the possibility that the pre-understanding will be changed into a new understanding.” I have two texts in my hand, the Bible that I hold as authoritative texts and my cultural texts as venues to understand the Bible. Hence, this work is a double-text hermeneutic and engagement. I maintain that this work is a “hermeneutical circle operating within the believing community.”

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22 Newbigin, L. Foolishness to the Greeks, 51.
23 Newbigin, L. Foolishness to the Greeks, 56 (emphasis author’s).
Chapter 2: Theoretical and Theological Orientation

The Centrality of the Scripture in Christian Tradition

The New Testament writers witness to us that Scripture\(^1\) is central to the early and ever-to-be Church. They set before us this truth that it is impossible to speak of the incarnated Word without the inspired Word, or vice versa,\(^2\) for Christ is “the plerothenai and teleiothenai of Scripture.”\(^3\) This means “[t]he entire...Old Testament is 'fulfilled' and has 'reached perfection' in [H]is life, death, and Resurrection.”\(^4\) At the core of this conviction is that God is One who speaks, uttering words since the beginning (cf. Genesis 1), and was with the Word and the Word was God (John 1:1-12), and who “revealed His\(^5\) secret unto His servants the prophets” (Amos 3:7; cf. 2 Peter 1:19-21).

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\(^1\)The Scripture understood in the New Testament refers to the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament).
\(^3\)TDNT, 758.
\(^5\)I maintain the use of the male pronoun for God in this thesis. This is not in any way to prolong notions of male domination, which are arguably contrary to the message of Christian teaching of obedience, love and self-sacrifice between the two genders, or to make the absurd claim that God is a man by gender. It is rather to put the misplaced critique of the male-pronoun in the right place. Changing the pronoun only produces linguistic disorientation, especially in English, which grammatically prescribes male, female, and neutral pronouns (generally a
Gottlob Schrenk points out that early Christian writers share “the later Jewish view” where Scripture is accepted as sacred, authoritative, and normative. “It is of permanent and unassailable validity.”

Nonetheless, their attitude toward *paradosis* (tradition) is different. In Rabbinic synagogue, according to Schrenk, “The use of Scripture...is determined by the concern to rediscover and prove the *paradosis* which had established itself alongside Scripture.”

The New Testament writers, on the other hand, see the Old Testament in the light of Christ. They point out that Jesus Christ sustains the Old Testament (cf. Matthew 5:17-20; Luke 16:17), while also renewing the tradition to welcome the inauguration of God’s plan attested in the Scripture itself. He proclaims the “favorable year of the LORD” (Luke 4:18-19) beyond the traditional boundaries through His life, death, and resurrection. This message is revealed to the early Church and brought down to the present time because of the Holy Spirit, who speaks through the

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Furthermore, if the male-pronoun for God should be an 'abhorrent' thing, then a good part of the Scriptures with male attributions to God will have to follow suit. This is an absurdity. Hence the better solution is not to co-opt the language, whether it is English, Greek, or Hebrew (moreover the scriptural texts themselves), but to have a right mind, right understanding of who God is and what He is doing in our lives, which is impartial and without gender favoritism. I also follow the tradition of capitalizing the God-pronoun as an expression of theology in writing. Hence, pronouns referring to God, the Christ, and the Holy Spirit are all capitalized.

*TDNT, 755.*

*TDNT, 755.*
prophets of old (cf. Acts 28:25; I Peter 1:11) and who is sent by the Father in the name of Jesus to “teach you everything, and remind you of all that I [Jesus] have said to you” (John 14:26). The Paraklete provides the basis for each book and epistle canonized as the New Testament to be God’s inspired writings, the continuation of the Old Testament.

Scripture is indispensable for Christians. It witnesses to us that it is God the Creator, Maker of heaven and earth – not a human-made-god(s) or any human being of whatever stature, privilege, or origin – who is working and making the invitation for all nations (not only Judeans), to be in covenant with God as God’s people. The Scripture, therefore, is “our story,” whether we realize it or not; no less than how Kwame Bediako, an African theologian, explains it: “[The Scripture] tells us...where we have come from, how we got to where we are, as well as where we are going and how to get there.”\(^8\) It is our road-map, identity, and participation;\(^9\) not only in the history of Israel, but with Israel in the “cosmic story and human history.”\(^10\)

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\(^9\)Bediako, K, “Scripture as the hermeneutic of culture and tradition,” 2-6.
The dismissive remark “medieval” (or Dark Ages) to counteract the centrality of the Scripture in Christian theology sounds more like ideological propaganda than a valid, thoughtful claim. For the fact is that the scriptural tradition surpasses the medieval period.\(^{11}\) In the fifth century AD, Church Father Augustine echoed the New Testament writers, saying “You recall that one and the same Word of God extends throughout Scripture, that it is one and the same Utterance that resounds in the mouths of all the sacred writers, since [H]e who was in the beginning God with God has no need of separate syllables; for [H]e is not subject to time.”\(^{12}\)

Scripture is about God who is unlimited by time and place, speaking to us who are limited in both senses. Human culture is part of the language which God uses to communicate with us, which, as profoundly captured by Scott Hahn, “like the incarnate Son, embodies the merciful condescension of God in a way

\(^{11}\)Hahn points out that, while researchers point to Jesus’ 39 explicit quotations of the Old Testament within the four gospels, it is more appropriate “to say that the mind of Jesus was saturated with the teachings and concerns of the Scriptures” (“For the Sake of Our Salvation,” 23).

that confronts our intellectual pride and calls us to a humility of heart and mind ‘for the sake of our salvation’.”

Clothing styles, technologies, and even languages have changed over human history, but our humanity is still the same and in need of reconciliation with God. To make Scripture as if it were merely ancient documents with no bearing on our human realities today denies our shared humanity with our ancestors and distorts the view of the Scripture which Christian tradition fully embraced in the first place: “All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, so that everyone who belongs to God may be proficient, equipped for every good work” (II Timothy 3:16-17).

Our respective culture is indispensable in understanding God who speaks to us in His prerogative use of cultures not our own. And we are bountifully showered with God’s grace since we are becoming more aware that “God is alive

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13Hahn, “For the Sake of Our Salvation,” 22.
14This point was made by Rabbi David J. Wolpe in an interview on the documentary video Who Wrote the Bible?: Probing the Eternal Mysteries Behind the Origins of the Holy Scriptures by Richard Kiley, Jean Simmons, David M. Frank, and Lionel Friedberg ([S.l.]: A & E Home Video, 1995).
in history through the specificity of language, culture, and custom.”\textsuperscript{15} Robert J. Schreiter draws our attention to this, stating that the Word is already present in cultures before the missionaries arrived.\textsuperscript{16} It is only because God works within every nation that it is possible for all peoples from different languages and cultures to understand what God is doing in the world through Christ, as revealed through the Scripture.\textsuperscript{17}

The Gospel as the Hermeneutic of the Scripture

The New Testament canon, in witnessing to Jesus Christ, established a renewal tradition, the tradition of the Gospel, which stands as a distinct yet integral part of the Scripture as sacred writing. This Gospel is what should permeate the interpretation of the Scripture, including our cultures and our contemporary situations.

What is the Gospel? Honoring our Reformed tradition, we heed what John Calvin, one of the prominent Reformers who upheld the centrality of the Scripture, writes: “The sum of the Gospel is...made to consist in repentance and

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{15}Lamin Sanneh, \textit{Whose Religion is Christianity?: The Gospel Beyond the West} (Grand Rapids, Mich: W.B. Eerdmans Pub, 2003), 72.
\textsuperscript{16}Cf. Schreiter, \textit{Constructing Local Theologies}, 21.
\textsuperscript{17}Sanneh, L, \textit{Whose Religion is Christianity?}, 75.
\end{flushright}
forgiveness of sins.” Speaking of faith in Christ and what it produces in the lives of believers, Calvin appeals to the proclamation of the gospels: the call for repentance (Matthew 3:2; 4:17; Mark 1:15) and the redemptive act of God through the life, death, and resurrection of Christ (cf. Matthew 1:21; Mark 10:45; Luke 24:46-47; John 3:16). In this proclamation lies a profound mystery of the Gospel, that the good news was not only proclaimed by words, but in the totality of the incarnated Word. Christ was there not only as the messenger but also the message itself. It is not only that God sent Christ, but God is in Christ to declare that the time of God’s option for us has come (cf. Luke 4:18-19). The Creator of all ushers in the redemption of the whole creation, the disarming of personal and collective sin, and the defeat of Death (cf. Romans 8:19-21; I Corinthians 15:55-57). This is Euangelion, Good News, for all peoples and the earth.

The consequence of such action on the part of God is not an abstraction on the part of humanity, because in Christ, the God-realm and humanity come together.

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19 See Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion, 386ff. (III.3); Cf. 324ff. (II.16; 17).
20 See also Brian Stone’s discussion on the topic of Christ as the message and messenger of the Gospel in his book Evangelism After Christendom: The Theology and Practice of Christian Witness (Grand Rapids, MI, 2007), 107-110.
This is the new reality that the disciples of Christ grasped in the first place: the kingdom of God is at hand. In the words of Newbigin:

The kingdom, or kingship, of God was no longer a distant hope or a faceless concept. It had now a name and a face - the name and face of the man from Nazareth. In the New Testament we are dealing not just with the proclamation of the kingdom but also the presence of the kingdom.²¹

Hence, the Gospel as the hermeneutic of the Scripture prescribes that the Scripture needs to be interpreted from the good news of God, Euangelion. John Howard Yoder captures the significance of something that is “evangelical” (euangelion-like) in this way:

In the functional sense [it] means first of all that it communicates news. It says something particular that would not be known and could not be believed were it not said. Second, it must mean functionally that this “news” is attested as good; it comes across to those whom it addresses as helping, as saving, as shalom. It must be public, not esoteric, but the way for it to be public is not an a priori logical

²¹Lesslie Newbigin, The Open Secret: An Introduction to the Theology of Mission (Grand Rapids, Mich: Eerdmans, 1995), 40; Stone points to this statement by Newbigin as where the story of Jesus and the story of the kingdom of God become one story, that is the presence of the kingdom in Christ (Evangelism after Christendom, 108).
move that subtracts the particular. It is an a posteriori political practice that tells
the world something it did not know and could not believe before. It tells the
world what is the world’s own calling and destiny, not by announcing either a
utopian or a realistic goal to be imposed on the whole society, but by pioneering
a paradigmatic demonstration of both the power and the practices that define the
shape of restored humanity. The confessing people of God is the new world on
its way.\textsuperscript{22}

At the heart of this statement is that the Gospel is intrinsically good news for
all peoples, for humanity, and that it contains a unique ideological attitude that
represents a particular worldview.\textsuperscript{23} This means that the Gospel cannot be

\textsuperscript{22}John Howard Yoder and Michael G. Cartwright, \textit{The Royal Priesthood: Essays Ecclesiological
and Ecumenical} (Scottdale, Pa: Herald Press, 1998), 373 as quoted in Stone, \textit{Evangelism after
Christendom}, 231.

\textsuperscript{23}Sumanta Banerjee, in his review of \textit{Secularism and Its Critics} by Rejeev Bhargava, brings
attention to Ashis Nandy and his distinction of “religion-as-faith,” explained as a “religious way
of life that is traditionally pluralistic and tolerant,” and “religion-as-ideology,” which in
Banerjee’s words is “where religious loyalties get identified with non-religious, usually political
or social-economic interest, of particular religious communities, and tend to to disrupt the
tolerance and pluralism of the ‘religion-as-faith’ lifestyle” \textit{(Economic and Political Weekly, Vol. 33,
6, 2013). This sharp categorization, however, is overlooking the fact that in order for “religion-as-faith” to be a “way of life,” it has to take forms in “religion-as-ideology,” so defined. They are
two sides of the same coin. Otherwise, by analogy, every sermon will miss its real life application
part. The question here is what kind of ideology people with religious conviction should adhere
to in the spirit of tolerance and multiculturalism, and in a Christian context, how the the good
news of Christ informs our moral and ethical decisions in politics, social-economics, etc.

\textsuperscript{22}}
limited to its 'spiritual' aspect, which would easily make the message of Christ at home with the absence of *dikaiosune* (righteousness and justice). The Gospel prescribes a way of life in all aspects, as the Messiah proclaims, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matthew 4:17b). Its manifestations become a living proclamation “of the new world on its way.”

Hodegesis as a hermeneutical tool for Christians in bringing out the Gospel messages into real life

The word hodegesis signifies the interpretation of the Scripture as a practice of leading or guiding into a certain understanding. I came to use this word by Timothy Brown’s interpretation and application of the Greek *hodegeo* (to guide) used by the Ethiopian eunuch in conversation with one of the seven deacons, Philip, who then interprets Isaiah 53:7, 8 in light of Christ-events (Acts 8:26-40). Therefore, hodegesis is christocentric in its orientation, meaning that the interpretation, proclamation, and implementation of the scriptural teaching is saturated with the meaning of Christ’s life, death, and resurrection.

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24 Dr. Timothy Brown is presently professor of preaching and homiletics as well as president of Western Theological Seminary, Holland, Michigan, USA. I was in his Summer 2012 Ancient and Future Preaching class, where he discussed Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch with particular attention to the word *hodegeo*. 

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Hodegesis embraces methodologies designed to shed light on the biblical texts in order to make them communicative to the present hearers in the light of God’s redeeming act in Christ. It aims to resurrect the purpose behind every interpretation and action in connection to the local tradition, the context, and the community of believers. Hence it affirms Church Father Augustine’s approach to biblical interpretation that all texts have to be interpreted “according to the aim of love, whether it is love of God, or love of one’s neighbors, or both.”

When love for God and our neighbor is upheld, a culture will be impacted for the better.

David C. Steinmetz has argued convincingly for the superiority of the pre-critical over the critical methods of interpreting the Scripture. This has been done not to dismiss historical-critical approaches altogether. In contrast, the effort is a proposal to bring together two approaches, wisdom (sapientia) and knowledge (scientia), to complement each other. Now there is also a post-critical

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27 Shreiter provides some important insights into “theology as wisdom” (sapientia) and “theology as sure knowledge” (scientia) (*Constructing Local Theologies*, 85-91). These two should be taken as complementary rather than competing paradigms and may further inform what he calls
approach where the background of culture, identity, ideology, and moral philosophy of the writer(s) are taken into account. The writers can no longer hide behind the ‘neutrality’ or ‘objectivity’ of science which itself is a social construct. Hence, left on the round-table of academic pursuit is theological and critical engagement, wherein every method, assumption and application is readily scrutinized.

With hodegesis, our interpretation of the Scripture must start and end with Christ’s Gospel that cares about all peoples, and consequently their cultures and sense of ethnic identity; this is the Gospel that respectfully and humbly invites all into repentance and knowledge of God, and empowers each one to work together in an active participation within the Body of Christ to exercise, by the

“theology as praxis,” with its main thrust being that “[t]heology cannot remain only with reflection; nor can it be reduced to practice. Good reflection leads to action, and action is not complete until it has been reflected upon” (92). In addition Shreiter proposes “theology as variations on a sacred text” (80-85), which draws attention to different “cultural conditions” and, therefore, contextualization approaches.


power of the Holy Spirit, the hope of the kingdom of heaven in the world that God has created.

Christianity, Colonialism, and Post-colonialism

To understand the place of Christianity in Minahasa and Minahasa in Christianity, it is necessary to put into perspective the colonial history in the past and the present academic discourse of post-colonialism. This way the road into contextualization may be without distraction from any unresolved historical wound or inappropriate critical application of the post-colonial study.

Sometimes Christianity is regarded as a “colonial religion.” This is especially evidenced in the colonial history of Indonesia. This labeling may imply two different understandings. One suggests that the colonialists were Christians, which can be validated though still is contestable, and the other is that Christianity is ontologically colonial in orientation, which is an unfortunate misunderstanding.

30See, for example, A. A. Yewangoe, “Kerukunan Umat Beragama Sebagai Tantangan dan Persoalan: Menyimak Bingkai Teologi Kerukunan Departemen Agama R.I.” in Agama dalam dialog: pencerahan, pendamaian, dan masa depan; punjung tulis 60 tahun Prof. Dr. Olaf Herbert Schumann, ed. Dr. Soegeng Hardiyanto, et. al. (Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 1999), 78-79.
In the rhetoric of European-imperialism, expansion was seen as “the fulfillment of a universal mission...[and] a contribution to a divine plan for the salvation of the pagan.”\textsuperscript{31} It manifested in a form of colonialism or “modern colonialism” defined by Jürgen Osterhammel as:

A relationship of domination between an indigenous (or forcibly imported) majority and a minority of foreign invaders. The fundamental decisions affecting the lives of the colonized people are made and implemented by the colonial rulers in pursuit of interests that are often defined in a distant metropolis. Rejecting cultural compromises with the colonized population, the colonializers are convinced of their own superiority and of their ordained mandate to rule.\textsuperscript{32}

It is obvious that religious elements played an important role in the history of European colonialism to the extent of legitimizing expansion for larger economic and political control.\textsuperscript{33} But here a critical distinction should be made between faith in Christ and the quest of imperialism. History has proven undeniably that these variables are mutually exclusive; the post-colonial, independent nations


\textsuperscript{32}Osterhammel, \textit{Colonialism}, 16-17.

would have abandoned Christianity if they were of the same root, which is not the case. On the contrary, Christianity grows in an unprecedented rate, credited for playing an important role in national independence movements and in inspiring the development of new nation-states.\textsuperscript{34} Notwithstanding, Christianity is also claimed as part of an ethnic identity. Because of this complex and delicate relationship between Christianity and European colonialism, as well as the role of Christianity in colonial and post-colonial societies, post-colonial scholarship necessitates approaching Christianity in a fair and balanced view, and conscientious scholars should be able to avoid being caught up in the misunderstanding described above.

Edward Said’s book \textit{Orientalism} (1978), in which he exposes the making of the exotic “Others” in the eyes of the European colonial power, became a landmark for post-colonial study.\textsuperscript{35} Said particularly underlines the mode of relation

\textsuperscript{34}This phenomenon is especially obvious in African Christianity. A good discussion and reflection on this topic is given by Keith A. Burton in his book \textit{The Blessing of Africa The Bible and African Christianity} (Downers Grove, Ill: IVP Acad, 2007), 227-243. This book also presents the European Christian imperialism beginning in the Crusade Era and its impact on Africans. It is unfortunate, however, that this book gets carried away with negative sentiments toward the Muslim faith.

\textsuperscript{35}David T. Adamo explains the inception of post[-]colonialism back to Frantz Fanon’s two publications, \textit{Black Skin White Mask} (1952) and later \textit{The Wretched of the Earth} (1961), which made Fanon come to be regarded as the father of post-colonialism. This academic field became
between the so called “East” (Orient) and “West” (Occident). There are two
principal elements in it, he writes:

One was a growing systematic knowledge in Europe about the Orient,
knowledge reinforced by the colonial encounter as well as by the widespread
interest in the alien and unusual, exploited by the developing sciences of
ethnology, comparative anatomy, philology, and history; furthermore, to this
systematic knowledge was added a sizable body of literature produced by
novelists, poets, translators, and gifted travelers. The other feature of Oriental-
European relations was that Europe was always in a position of strength, not to
say domination...the essential relationship, on political, cultural, and even
religious grounds...was seen to be one between a strong and a weak partner.³⁶

He further lists different terms that were used to express the relation: ... “The
Oriental is irrational, depraved (fallen), childlike, 'different'; thus the European is
rational, virtuous, mature, 'normal'.”³⁷ Said's work culminated in the invention of
post-colonialism, an academic term which became popular with the publication

prominent with Said’s Orientalism (1978) (“Christianity and the African traditional religion[s]: The
postcolonial round of engagement,” Verbum et Ecclesia 32[1],
³⁷Said, Orientalism, 40.

Now, if there is a hope within post-colonialism, it is not to demonize the colonializer but to humanize all.

The exact definition or parameters of post-colonialism are still debated,^{39} including whether or not the hyphen (-) in the field’s title should be dropped (post-colonialism or postcolonialism).^{40} In response, Leela Gandhi asserts, “Whatever the controversy surrounding the theory, its value must be judged in terms of its adequacy to conceptualise the complex condition which attends the aftermath of colonial occupation.”^{41} There is more to say about this shortly.

Because a lot of discussions on post-colonialism come from the experience of the European colonial era, there is a tendency to confine it to the “expansion of Europe in the past 400 years.”^{42} However, this conclusion is rather short-handed and overlooks needs for a wider definition among the once-colonized constituents. This is for the reason that colonialism was not exclusive to the

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^{38}Written by Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin (London: Routledge); See Adamo, “Christianity and the African traditional religion(s),” 2.

^{39}Adamo, “Christianity and the African traditional religion(s),” 2.


Europeans. This practice of domination and exploitation is the same whether it takes place for three centuries or only three years, as in the case of the Japanese occupation in Indonesia during the 1940s. Furthermore, making post-colonialism focus only on European expansion is like transferring the practice of colonial trade monopoly into the academic field. Post-colonialism needs to expand its framework so that the people in East Timor, for example, may benefit from post-colonial study. Confining colonialism and post-colonialism to this lens of “Europe-only as colonizer” is a blunder in the name of scholastic uniformity.

Embracing contextual understandings of colonialism, the term post-colonialism (rather than postcolonialism, which is more fixed to the prefix “post,”) offers more advantages. First, taken as a whole, it signifies the struggle to raise up from the post colonial condition (after colonial occupation/independence), where issues such as ethnicity, culture, identity and

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41East Timor was annexed by the Indonesian Government in 1975, which forcibly made the territory one of its provinces. Before Indonesia’s takeover, East Timor was under Portuguese colonization for centuries. In 1999, with strong support from the UN and especially Australia, a referendum was held where the majority of East Timor people opted for independence. Regarded as one of Asia’s poorest countries, the Timor Sea contains vast oil and gas fields (see East Timor profile, BBC, http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-pacific-14919009 [accessed March 28, 2013]).
hybridity\textsuperscript{44} are among the primary concerns after long subjugation to and imposition by different cultures;\textsuperscript{45} second, the hyphen (-) offers space to engage the condition of transition between the impending “post” and the still present colonialism, where the study may then also incorporate analysis, advocacy, and empowerment of the “subaltern;”\textsuperscript{46} and third, in addition to the first and second, post-colonialism may provide a framework to engage any form of present colonialism, or what is often referred to as “neo-colonialism,” which may range from political, to economic, and to cultural domination, including military actions taken to serve metropolitan interests.

\textsuperscript{44} Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin under the entry “hybridity” draw attention to Homi K. Bhabha, who argues that in the experience of colonialism, both the colonizer and colonized participated in the construction of their subjectivities. He calls this the “Third Space of enunciation,” a meeting place that leads to, as Bhabha puts it, “an international culture, based not on the exoticism of multiculturalism or the diversity of cultures, but on the inscription and articulation of culture’s hybridity” (\textit{Post-Colonial Studies: The Key Concepts} ([London: Routledge, 2000], 108-11 [italic's Bhabha's]); Abdennebi Ben Beya suggests Bhabha’s hybridity is not a rhetoric of passivity on the side of the colonized, rather as “a counter narrative, a critique of the canon and its exclusion of other narratives” (in “Mimicry, Ambivalence and Hybridity.” (1998): no pag. Online. Postcolonial Study at Emory Pages. http://postcolonialstudies.emory.edu/mimicry-ambivalence-and-hybridity/ [accessed April 24, 2013]).

\textsuperscript{45} Adamo, “Christianity and the African traditional religion(s),” 2.

\textsuperscript{46} The term “subaltern” (of inferior rank) was specified by Antonio Gramsci to refer to “those groups in society who are subject to the hegemony of the ruling classes” (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin, \textit{Post-Colonial Studies: The Key Concepts}, 209). The term has also been used interchangeably with “the poor,” “exploited” and “oppressed” (I. John Mohan Razu, “Deciphering the Subaltern Terrain: Exploring Alternative Sources for an Emancipatory Mission,” \textit{CTC Bulletin Christian Conference of Asia} Vol. XXVI, No. 1 [June 2010]: 96).
I place this work as a Christian post-colonial engagement. Herein, there are three important points: First, colonialism and Christianity are substantially different. Therefore, it is not only the West that “should get over its Christendom guilt complex about Christianity as colonialism” as Gambian theologian, Lamin Sanneh, writes. The Non-West, too, needs to get over perceiving Christianity as identical with colonialism.

Second, awareness must be raised to the fact that Christianity is not of European origin; it was born in the “Orient,” and therefore is subject to the dangers of Orientalism. With the rise of Aufklärung at the end of the 18th century, which turned the table for Christianity in the western academy, these dangers are often present with systematic efforts to discredit religion, especially Christianity.

Third, post-colonialism appears to be, using the language of D. T. Adamo, “a hopeful discourse.” Post-colonialism provides the academic round-table to

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47 Sanneh, L., Whose Religion is Christianity?, 74.

48 In the context of post-colonial Christian communities, this is often done by dismissing, almost in entirety, the autonomy of the people in their decision making and perceiving them as those who were “acted upon” and who had no say in what they were doing, whether personally or collectively, religiously or culturally.

49 Adamo, “Christianity and the African traditional religion(s),” 2.
engage with issues of our past colonial experiences and how the colonized has been conceptualized, religiously or scientifically.\footnote{There were on one hand, as Walls points out, “earnest men” surging with the new wave of missionary movement, with a special eye to see “not usually a grave, distant, polite people preserving over thousands of years the knowledge of God and pure morality,” but mainly the bad news in the societies, while on the other, “[t]here was a whole new science, with evolution as its basis, of anthropology” that put the other as “animistic peoples who had not reached the appropriate stage;” hence their idea of a supreme God was immediately suspected as a “missionary invention” \textit{(The Missionary Movement in Christian History, 61-63)}. This caricatured, reduced, and imbalanced depiction in the past of the colonized, the bad people or the ‘uncivilized heathen’ and the primitive or the ones that need to be “modernized,” is called the two brushes effect of the colonial experience (cf. Josef Manuel Saruan, “Opo dan Allah Bapa: Suatu Studi Mengenai Perjumpaan Agama Suku dan Kekristenan di Minahasa,” book format [Ph.D. Diss., The South East Asia Graduate School of Theology, 1991], 78-80).} Within it, due respect to the peoples and their religions, long perceived as ‘uncivilized’ and ‘primitive’, may be paid as post-colonialism provides an equal foothold for dialogue between cultures, within it Christianity and, in our case, Minahasan ethnic religion.\footnote{Wenas utilizes the term “ethnic religion,” as sub-title in his book on Minahasa, although in his explanation he uses \textit{agama purba Minahasa} (ancient religion of Minahasa) \textit{(Sejarah Kebudayaan Minahasa, 65)}. In Indonesia, the term \textit{agama suku} (tribal religion) is often used, while others utilize \textit{agama asli} (indigenous religion) or \textit{agama traditional} (traditional religion). The term “ethnic religion,” which is commonly used today, has a better representation as it captures the essential meaning of these other terms: traditional, indigenous, and tribal/ethnic.}

Ethnicity

In order to set the tone in speaking of ethnic religion and Minahasa, we need to understand some terminologies used in this thesis in relation to ethnicity. The word “ethnicity,” according to Philip F. Esler, “appeared for the first time in...
English in 1941, refer[ring] to the condition of belonging to an ethnic group.” In this thesis, it is understood as a conceptual framework which involves such concepts as ethnic group, ethnic identity, and ethnic identification, as well as ethnocentrism.

The term “ethnicity” in English comes from the Greek ethnos, a nation or people associated with a common ancestry or descent. Several publications have associated the word ethnos with the Greek ethō, “custom,” referring to ethnos as “people of the same customs or common culture.” While Thayer’s lexicon is silent on the possible connection between these two terms, Steve Fenton in his book Ethnicity suggests that ethnicity “is about 'descent and culture'

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52Philip F. Esler, Conflict and Identity in Romans: The Social Setting of Paul’s Letter (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003), 40.

53Thayer’s Greek Lexicon defines ethnos as (1) “a multitude (whether of men or of beasts) associated or living together; a company, troop, swarm; (2) a multitude of individuals of the same nature or genus; the human family; (3) a race, nation; (4) in the OT, foreign nations not worshiping the true God, pagan, [g]entiles; (5) Paul uses ta ethne for Gentile Christians (Thayer’s Greek Lexicon, Electronic Database, 2011, under entry “ethnos,” http://concordances.org/greek/1484.htm [accessed September 11, 2012]); Steve Fenton, Ethnicity (Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2003), 13-15.


56“ethnos,” HELPS Word-Studies.
and that ethnic groups can be thought of as 'descent and culture communities.’”

He asserts, however, that this is “a starting point and not a definition.”57

**Ethnic group**

An “ethnic group” is often perceived as a group of people characteristically defined by descent, homeland, story/history, culture and all the physical attributions therein that provide the frame to project the sense of a distinct in- and out-group (“we” and “them”).58 Religion often plays a prominent role in making ethnic distinctions, especially in Indonesia.59 The view that takes these characteristics as the basics of an ethnic group has been labeled as the “essential” (also called “primordial”) view.60 According to Fenton, with this essential

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57 Fenton, *Ethnicity*, 3.
58 There are some characteristics that make an ethnic group distinct from other kinds of human grouping. James C. Miller, quoting John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith, provides six common features of an ethnic group (1) a common proper name to identify and express the “essence” of its community; (2) myth of common ancestry [preferably, a narrative of common ancestry]; (3) a shared history or shared memories of a common past or pasts, including heroes, events, and their commemoration; (4) a common culture, including religion, customs, or language; (5) a link with a homeland, not necessarily its physical occupation by the ethnie, only its symbolic attachment to the ancestral land, as with diaspora peoples; (6) a sense of solidarity on the part of at least some sections of the ethnie’s population (“Paul and His Ethnicity: Reframing the Categories” in *Paul As Missionary*, 39; Esler, *Conflict and Identity in Romans*, 43-44).
approach, “people are seen to be responding to 'blind' group *loyalties.*” On the other hand, some scholars have pointed out that an ethnic group is not an entity defined mechanically by these features of ethnicity; rather it is a manifestation of economic or political interests, in which people “are seen to be calculating their individual or collective interests” and therefore is called “instrumental.”

Attempts to combine these two theories have been made. For example, as Sian Jones demonstrates, J. McKay proposes a “matrix model” where instead one talks about “varying degrees” of essential and instrumental factors that influence one’s sense of ethnicity. McKay makes a good point: “It seems pointless to bifurcate 'theories' into primordial [essential] or mobilization [instrumental] camps, when it is obvious that both dimensions are involved.” In this regard, Minahasa is not an exception.

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62 Fenton, *Ethnicity*, 76.


65 For Minahasan ethnicity see Chapter Four.
Paraphrasing Fredrik Barth, Esler writes, “Ethnic groups were categories of ascription and identification wielded by the actors themselves with a view to organizing interaction between themselves and others.”66 This means that it is in the perception of the members of the group to determine, although this cannot be within a day, whether they in fact should be considered as one group or separated. “Cultural features,” as Esler expounds from Barth’s position, “did not constitute but did signal ethnic identity and boundaries, although always subject to the qualification that the features taken into account were those that the actors themselves regarded as significant.”67

Esler underlines several categories that are prominent for ethnic categorization. First is “the myth of common ancestry” (preferably a narrative of common ancestry). Referring to Max Weber and Barth, he points out that belief in common ancestry or origin, whether real or fictitious (or better symbolic), is important in characterizing an ethnic group.68 Esler puts in the same line Talcott Parson’s “cultural history,” which is “a series of events and symbolic outputs of

67Esler, Conflict and Identity in Romans, 42.
68Esler, Conflict and Identity in Romans, 44.
the past which have contemporary significance because those who experienced them were ‘our’ forebears regardless of biological lineage.  

Second is connection to a homeland. Subsequently religion is mentioned, although not something to be exaggerated. Yet at the end, as Esler concurs, “no one feature can be determinative, or a sine qua non, for ethnicity.” Overall, there are important factors involved in the categorization of a group as ethnic in definition, and this is where the essential aspects play a significant role; although they cannot be absolute. What defines the group and its significance depends on the actors, their perceptions and therefore the worldviews in operation within the group itself.

**Ethnic identity and ethnic identification**

Since not just any group can be categorized as ethnic in definition, ethnic identity is defined by the possession of identitas, or “idiosyncratic characteristics” that represent one’s belonging to a categorical ethnic group, such as a personal name unique to the group signifying descent, link to a homeland, certain cultural practices, or anything acceptable to the group as symbols of one’s membership.

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70 Esler, *Conflict and Identity in Romans*, 44.
into “one of us.” However, possessing *identitas* as symbols to ethnic identity does not necessarily prescribe ethnic identification. For example, those who were born from both Minahasan parents in Minahasa are by themselves Minahasans by *identitas*, but this does not mean that they assign their rise and fall with Minahasa as an ethnic entity.

Based on social identity theory (SIT), Blake E. Ashforth and Fred Mael discuss the antecedents and consequences of social identification in organizations.\(^71\)

Social identification based on SIT is “the perception of oneness with or belongingness to some human aggregate.”\(^72\) Taking Ashforth and Mael’s insight

\(^{71}\)SIT was developed by Henri Tajfel, and later his student John Turner. Jack Barentsen captures the gist of SIT in his book Emerging Leadership in the Pauline Mission: A Social Identity Perspective on Local Leadership Development in Corinth and Ephesus (Or: Pickwick pub, 2011), 34: “[Tajfel] discovered that when people categorized themselves as group members, their behavior changed to favor individuals they now considered as fellow group members and to discriminate against others who were considered to be members of other groups.” Barentsen, quoting S. Alexander Haslam and Naomi Ellemers, points out that based on SIT “[g]roups are not only external features of the world, [but] they are also internalized so that they contribute to a person’s sense of self” (“Social Identity in Industrial and Organizational Psychology: Concepts, Controversies and Contributions,” International Review of Industrial and Organizational Psychology Vol 20, eds G. P. Hodgkinson and J. K. Ford, John Wiley & Sons, Ltd, Chichester, UK, [2005]:39-118 [italics authors] as quoted in Emerging Leadership in the Pauline Mission, 34); Esler’s work, Conflict and Identity in Romans, especially sheds important insights on the social settings of Romans through identity theory.

\(^{72}\)Blake E. Ashforth and Fred Mael apply SIT into organizational theory (Barentsen, Emerging Leadership in the Pauline Mission, 34); In their summary on social identification they point out: (a) social identification is a perception of oneness with a group of persons; (b) social identification stems from the categorization of individuals, the distinctiveness and prestige of the group, the salience of the outgroups, and the factors that traditionally are associated with group

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into the context of ethnicity, ethnic identification is when a person perceives oneself as a member of (an) ethnic group(s), whether by virtue of his or her blood ties to the group(s) or other means, and identifies the loss and gain of the group(s) as his or her own loss and gain.

Ethnocentrism

As SIT suggests, “[p]eople tend to classify themselves and others into various social categories.”73 Hence, the ethnic group category is only one of the available possibilities; for there are religious, professional, nation-state based groups, and so on, including soccer (football) fans as in Egypt who recently clashed and left more than 70 causalities (BBC News, February 1, 2012). Another merit of SIT is its recognition that all types of human groups are subject to “group-centrism” that may lead to conflict. In the context of ethnicity, this phenomenon is called ethnocentrism, a compound noun of the Greek ethnos, as explained above, and

kentron, meaning the “pivoting point of drawing a circle.” William Graham Sumner writes

The sentiment of cohesion, internal comradeship, and devotion to the in-group, which carries with it a sense of superiority to any out-group and readiness to defend the interest of the in-group against the out-group, is technically known as ethnocentrism. It is really the sentiment of patriotism in all its philosophic fullness; that is, both in its rationality and in its extravagant exaggeration.

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75 War and Other Essays (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1911), 12-13. In this essay Sumner demonstrates the phenomenon of ethnocentrism in different ethnic/tribal groups, and also his own. This is in a way making his point that “ethnocentrism has nothing to do with the relative grade of civilization of any people;” For more discussion on the topic of ethnocentrism see Boris Bizumic, “Theories of Ethnocentrism and Their Implication for Peace Building” in Peace Psychology in the Balkans: Dealing with a Violent Past While Building Peace ed. Olivera Simić, Zala Volčič, and Catherine R. Philpot (New York: Springer, 2012), 35-56.
While any group, including an ethnic group, is subject to such inward-focus and superiority complex-attitude, it does not mean that they all by default function in a group-centric attitude. In the case of ethnicity, ethnocentrism is best defined as “negative ethnicity” and may then also be subverted into “positive ethnicity”.

SIT has suggested “intergroup conflict resolution strategies” to anticipate or at least minimize “the potentially dangerous trajectory created by intergroup evaluation, the creation of in-group bias (and out-group derogation) and potentially confrontational identity-maintenance strategies.”


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Paul in his depiction of the new identity in Christ, demonstrated in his epistle to the Romans. ⁷⁹

Culture, Religion and Ethnic Identity

Along the way the word “culture” has been used without further explanation. This is the reason why it receives special attention here. Our respective culture is not only about language, food style, clothing, and stereotypical behaviors. Charles Kraft suggests that culture may be seen as “a complex, integrated coping mechanism, belonging to and operated by a society (social group), consisting of concepts and behavior that are patterned and learned, [including] underlying perspectives (worldview), [and] resulting products, both non-material (customs, rituals) and material (artifacts).” ⁸⁰ Much of our sense of who we are, how we live, and how we perceive realities is informed and shaped by our culture (cultural conditioning). ⁸¹ Yet, we are not just shaped by our culture but we also shape our culture, consciously or unconsciously, by simply living. ⁸²

⁷⁹ See Chapters 2 and 6.
⁸¹ Cultural conditioning may be defined as a process of assigning meaning to realities and experiences that provide for the personal and social identity formation of an individual within a particular society. It is a process where one will learn the language(s) to communicate with others, consciously or unconsciously acquire the worldviews to adhere to, and train oneself on
Culture, as Ju M. Lotman puts it, is “collective non-hereditary memory.”\textsuperscript{83} It is learned. It is also taught. Both learning and teaching happen in a wide range of methods and experiences. As we are subject to change, culture is bound to follow, usually in a very subtle way, but sometimes radically. As in the case of Minahasa: the alteration of economic, socio-religious life, politics, and of course education under colonialism has led to cultural change in a society.\textsuperscript{84} Schouten summarizes it, “There was an intimate link between colonial oppression and cultural transformation.”\textsuperscript{85}

As it has been pointed out before, “cultures...do not neatly coincide with ethnicities.”\textsuperscript{86} Despite the differences and similarities of past cultural practices to how to express oneself in the society. In general, it is a process of absorbing the culture wherein one is found to be a human.

\textsuperscript{82}As Jørgen D. Johansen and Svend E. Larsen assert, the “culture forming process not only develops in directly social situations, but [it] is also active every time we sense, every time we individually localize an object, every time we move our body, every time we act, and every time we react to and affect one another” (\textit{Signs in Use: An Introduction to Semiotics} [London: Routledge, 2002], 168-169).

\textsuperscript{83}Johansen and Larsen, \textit{Signs in Use}, 169.

\textsuperscript{84}See Chapter Four and Chapter Five.

\textsuperscript{85}Schouten, \textit{Leadership and Social Mobility in a Southeast Asian Society}, 105.

\textsuperscript{86}Fenton credits Barth for this point (\textit{Ethnicity}, 100); Barth asserts: “The cultural features that signal the boundary may change, and the cultural characteristics of the members may likewise transform, indeed, even the organizational form of the group may change – yet the fact of the continuing dichotomization between members and outsiders allows us to specify the nature of continuity, and investigate the changing cultural form and content” (Barth, “Introduction,” in \textit{Ethnic Groups and Boundaries}, 14 as quoted in Esler, \textit{Conflict and Identity in Romans}, 43.)
what we have today, Minahasans are still Minahasans. Nonetheless, Wenas, in lamenting the past culture of Minahasa, makes this point: “[Culture] indeed develops according to the demand of time, but if we compare Minahasans' culture today with other sub-ethnic’s in Sulawesi, clearly it has departed far from its origin.”87 This remark is a signal that the dynamics and changeability of cultures should be held together with an understanding that “…cultures largely house human identity and people’s sense of dignity.”88

It is obvious that cultural change should be expected. It is not bad or good in itself, only that its presence has to be measured from the values and virtues it brings for the well-being of the respective people, their sense of identity, and their living environment. The meaning of tradition is derived from this, borrowing Stone’s language, the “proper good or telos” of a practice.89 As practices born out of experiences and passed down from generation to generation, tradition contains the ideals believed to be good for the future generations. Hence

87 Wenas, Sejarah Kebudayaan Minahasa, 170 (translation mine). The term “sub-ethnic” here is used to mean an ethnic group in the context of Indonesia as one nation-(state), hence in Sulawesi there are sub-ethnic groups. While the terms “ethnic” and “sub-ethnic” are differentiated in this thesis, in his book Wenas uses them almost interchangeably.
89 Stone, Evangelism After Christendom, 40-41.
tradition also involves, as Alasdair MacIntyre points out, “an historically extended, socially embodied argument, and an argument precisely in part about the goods which constitute that tradition.”

As an integral part of a culture, tradition “that is alive and 'in good order' is never a static, finished or a once-and-for-all achievement but part of a dynamic process that is responsive to ever-changing historical circumstances.” Behind every tradition there is a yearning to preserve virtuous values. The primary task of responsible cultural beings, therefore, is to conserve and develop the ideals in every tradition and ameliorate those that operate in opposition to human dignity, life, and environmental sustainability. Culture is always in the making. While the push is always there along with human existence, the direction will always invite human intention and participation.

Newbigin asserts that fundamental to any culture is “a set of beliefs, experiences, and practices that seek to grasp and express the ultimate nature of things, that which gives shape and meaning to life, that which claims final

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loyalty (religion).” Religion, or opposition towards it, is part of human culture, yet it is also, in a way, encompassing to a culture.

The connection between religion and ethnic identity is captured in the term “ethnic religion” which represents the overlapping between the category of ethnic religious system and ethnicity itself. The term “ethnic religion,” however, is a later rendition, as many ethnic groups around the world do not have a concept of religion as a separate category amongst others in a society. What is termed as religion is none other than a set of beliefs that underlies a lifestyle, a code of conduct for communal living. This recognition of religion as an integral

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92Newbigin, L., Foolishness to the Greeks, 3.
93Hiebert writes: “In its broadest sense, religion encompasses all specific beliefs about the ultimate nature of reality and the origins, meaning, and destiny of life, as well as the myths [narratives/meta-narrative] and rituals that symbolically express them.” Here, Hiebert also points out that religions do not necessitate belief in supernatural beings (Cultural Anthropology, 2nd ed. [Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1983], 372) as quoted in Kraft, Anthropology for Christian Witness, 198-199); Though religion may not specifically stands for the total worldviews of a society, as Kraft argues (Anthropology for Christian Witness, 198-199), the beliefs and practices in it aspire and inspire a wide range of other aspects of life.
94Kraft, C Anthropology for Christian Witness, 197; See also Kamaara, “Towards Christian National Identity in Africa,” 129.
95In the case of Africa, this notion is best captured by Eunice Kamaara (citing John Mbiti) who writes: Religion and culture were completely integrated into one whole way of life so that there was no distinction between what was sacred and what was secular in traditional African societies. The worldview was also anthropocentric in that the human person was recognised as the center of creation and God’s steward under whom responsible management of the rest of the creation directly lies. There was cultural and religious homogeneity within each autonomous ethnic group having clear socio-political governance, educational, health, ethical, and recreational structures. Besides the general worldview, each of these social structures had clear guiding principles and
part of human life and society poses a strong critique towards secularism, particularly a form of secularism that insists that religion is a “private” matter and bears no weight in public issues such as politics. Richard Mohr and Nadirsyah Hosen recognize that what is adhered to in the “public” sphere is in itself “at least almost a religion.”

In the context of the Republic of Indonesia, religions are given a special place with the first of its nation-state philosophy, Pancasila: Belief in One supreme God. However, Indonesia is not based on one particular religion over the others. It is recognized as a 'secular' state, but as Mohr and Hosen put it, 'secular' in the sense as Rajeev Bhargava proposes in contrast to laïcité (French objectives with a lot of emphasis on human rights for every individual person but only in the context of community ("Towards Christian National Identity in Africa," 129).


The rest are Humanitarianism, National Unity, Democracy, and Social Justice.

In her other book, Nadirsyah Hosen suggests that Indonesia is neither secular nor an Islamic state, but rather following the third alternative – referring to Hollenboch – the Pancasila based-state (Shari’a and Constitutional Reform in Indonesia [Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2007], 193).
secularism), and in line with what Charles Taylor describes in connection to the shibboleth of the French Revolution:

liberty [that is] freedom of religion, equality [that is] no religion has a status of privilege over others, specially as a state religion, and a broad version of 'fraternity': that all 'spiritual families must be heard' and be involved in [the] process of deciding social goals and how they are to be met.  

In this framework (Pancasila framework), the place of our ethnic religion and its validity to exist alongside other ethnic and inter-ethnic religions in Indonesia is affirmed, and the space for dialogue between ethnic religion and Christianity in Minahasa is provided. Ethnic and inter-ethnic religions have their place and importance in the building up of the life and the fulfillment of the aspiration of the Minahasan people in the context of the multicultural and pluralistic society of Indonesia.

Contextual Theology

The above discussions thus far have provided for this thesis many layers of background. In this last item of theoretical and theological orientation, the local
urgency and theological undertaking are laid out in a direct manner in order to grasp the meaning of contextualization in doing local theology.

Walls argues that the southward shift of the center of gravity of the Christian world will place the Third World (or better, Two-Thirds World, as Bediako would say)\textsuperscript{100} theology in the mainstream of Christian theology. This theology, in Walls' reading of Gustavo Gutierrez, is about “testing your actions by Scripture.”\textsuperscript{101} The tasks of this theology in its context, according to Walls, are going to be so basic, so vital, that there will be little time for the barren, sterile, time-wasting by-paths into which so much Western theology and theological research has gone in recent years. [It] will be...about doing things, about things that deeply affect the lives of numbers of people.\textsuperscript{102} Walls further illustrates this with South African Black Theology, citing that it is literally about “life and death.”\textsuperscript{103}

The same issue is at stake in Minahasa and in many other parts of the Two-Thirds World. There is no time for a leisure theology. The more we wait, more

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\textsuperscript{101}Walls, \textit{The Missionary Movement in Christian History}, 10.

\textsuperscript{102}Walls, \textit{The Missionary Movement in Christian History}, 10 (italics author's).

\textsuperscript{103}Walls, \textit{The Missionary Movement in Christian History}, 10.
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women will be trafficked, more men will have no income to feed their family, more children will catch preventable diseases, and more indigenous land will be usurped by a multinational corporation for exploitation. Contextual theology, therefore, is more than liberation theology or cultural identity.¹⁰⁴ It is a theology of reality, “of action and reflection,” and of Christian piety. In other words, it is our Christian identity. Further, contextual theology is the biblical theology that speaks to the people and their needs. In Minahasa it must be a theology that speak to the needs of the Minahasans. As Bediako asserts, “[w]e need to meet God in the Lord Jesus Christ speaking immediately to us in our particular circumstances, in a way that assures us that we can be authentic Africans [here I add Minahasans] and true Christians.”¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁴See Schreiter, Constructing Local Theologies, 12-16.
¹⁰⁵Bediako, Jesus and the Gospel in Africa, 23.
Chapter 3: Romans Euangelion

After establishing the direction adhered to in this thesis, we now come to the first step of the trilogy: Scripture, Tradition, and Context. The Epistle to the Romans\(^1\) has been a theological reservoir from which great Christians across the ages have drawn. Yet at the same time, it has also been a source of debate among scholars, giving birth to what has been called the Romans Debate. According to F. F. Bruce, the Romans Debate signifies “the debate about the character of the letter (including questions about its literary integrity, the possibility of it having circulated in longer and shorter recensions, the destination of chapter 16) and, above all, Paul’s purpose in sending it.”\(^2\)

This chapter is not meant to treat in detail every point in this debate; rather points are addressed in connection to the theme of ethnic and cultural identity in the epistle.

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\(^1\)The term “epistle” and “letter” both mean “surat” in Bahasa. In this thesis, the term “epistle” is understood as a “Lehrbrief” (didactic letter) (Fitzmyer, Romans, 69), written artistically by nature of the writer’s ability to produce such material and sent to a particular recipient, whose relationship with the sender has been made close by their sheer conviction.

The first part of this chapter deals with the background of the city of Rome in terms of ethnic plurality, while the second presents the apostle Paul as the author of this epistle. The third discusses the recipient of the epistle, which is then followed by the fourth part that is a cultural and rhetorical analysis of the letter concerning its purpose(s). The fifth part provides an overview of the content of Romans in connection with ethnic and culture identity.

Rome and Ethnic Diversity

Rome, originally a shepherd’s village, had become cosmopolitan in the first century AD, serving as the capital of the Roman Empire, a vast range of political territory mostly acquired by wars. It developed its military power and by 275 BC had gained control over Italy and even Macedonia in 148 BC. These conquests were followed by political unrest that bewildered Rome, so that in 60 BC it was governed by the first triumvirate of generals: Julius Caesar, Crassus,

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3Joseph A. Fitzmyer writes that after about two hundred years from the time it was founded (c. 753 BC), in which generations of kings had reigned, Rome took up the form of a republic (c. 510 BC) and was ruled by two yearly-elected magistrates called consuls (Romans: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary [London: G. Chapman, 1993], 25).
and Pompey. The last of these three brought calamity to the land of the Judeans earlier in 63 BC and made it part of the reorganized province of Syria.⁴

In 27 BC, Octavius, whose edict later forced Joseph and Mary to go to Bethlehem, received the title Augustus from the Roman Senate, and reigned as Proinceps (Latin for “first one” or “leader”), which meant more or less “a benign dictator.”⁵ Named Gaius Julius Caesar Octavianus, he stabilized Rome and propagated “pax Augusta,” the era of peace in the entire Roman dominion. Octavianus Augustus died in 14 AD and was succeeded by Tiberius Caesar (14-37 AD), Gaius Caligula (37-41 AD), Claudius (41-54 AD), and then Nero (54-68 AD) who burnt the city of Rome in 64 AD and blamed the Christians.⁶ The Epistle to the Romans was written previous to this event, most probably at the time when Nero “had not [yet] become the ambitious and murderous tyrant (before 60 AD).”⁷

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⁴Fitzmyer, Romans, 26.
⁵Fitzmyer, Romans, 26.
⁶Fitzmyer, Romans, 26.
⁷Fitzmyer, Romans, 26; Udo Schnelle makes available the accounts of Tacitus and Suetonius, Roman historians, regarding the persecution of the Christians during this period of time. Traditionally, the apostle Peter’s and Paul’s martyrdom is associated with this persecution as attested in I Clement 6.1 (Apostle Paul: His Life and Theology [Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005], 381-386).
“Early Imperial Rome truly was one of the most ‘multicultural’ cities in antiquity,” Jurgen Zangenberg and Michael Labahn write. “…Syrians, Africans, Gauls, Egyptians, Jews and other groups flocked into the city and formed their communities – as well as Christians.” Although it seems rather peculiar to add Christians in a row of people defined by ethnic/regional origin, such statement points to the fact that later Christians’ opponents in Rome regarded the followers of Christ as “a third race” (genus tertium). Tacitus makes a good case for a multicultural Rome and therein anti-Christian attitude. As Peter Lampe points out, he has the Christians in mind when he writes that in Rome “all detestable and appalling things from all over the world come together” (Annales 15.44.3).

While some scholars testify to the migration into Rome in the way Zangenberg and Labhan imply above, the reality of multiculturalism and ethnic

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8 Jurgen Zangenberg and Michael Labahn (ed.), preface to Christians As a Religious Minority in a Multicultural City, (London [u.a.]: T & T Clark International, 2004), vii; Fitzmyer, Romans, 26-27.
10 “Early Christians in the City of Rome: Topographical and Social Historical Aspects of the First Three Centuries,” in Christians As a Religious Minority in a Multicultural City, 20-32.
11 For example, Fitzmyer refers to the lists of names in Romans 16: ten Latins, eighteen Greeks, and two perhaps Hebrew names. He continues, quoting H. Lietzmann who writes, “everyone streams to Rome” (Romans, 36). In the same line, Claudia Moatti writes, “Migration increased greatly from the end of the republic and the beginning of the principate, chiefly because of peace”
plurality in Rome was to a great extent influenced by the practice of taking war
prisoners as slaves in this era. For example, Julius Caesar reportedly captured
more than one million people during his campaign in Gaul (today France) in 58-
59 BC. Similarly, Pompey transported many Judeans from the eastern
Mediterranean in his campaign in 63 BC. According to Lampe, many of these
Judeans later received Roman citizenship, at the latest, under Augustus. It is

(“Translation, Migration, and Communication in the Roman Empire: Three Aspects of Movement in History,” Classical Antiquity, Vol. 25, Issue 1, [April 2006]:117-118, http://hal-paris1.archives-ouvertes.fr/docs/00/65/86/82/PDF/translation.pdf (accessed September 15, 2012). Moatti further adds: “Ancient societies did not need to identify all their inhabitants: identification could be left to social networks, to indifference, or to uncertainty. In the same way, all people did not need to be identified.” Yet she draws attention to the Christians, who could escape identification, but because of “their desire to affirm their strong personal identities provoked administrative identification” (121).


14Fitzmyer, Romans, 27.

15“Early Christians in the City of Rome,” in Christians As a Religious Minority in a Multicultural City, 20. Before the convoluted relations between Judea and Rome, that is when the Greeks were still strong in the Mediterranean, three times the Hasmoneans sent envoys to the Roman Senate, establishing friendship between the two states. First in c. 161 BC (1 Maccabeus 8:1-32); second c. 150 BC (1 Maccabeus 12:6); and third c. 139 BC (1 Maccabeus 14:24). These friendship agreement may have been followed by the Judeans’ presence in the city of Romulus (Peter Richardson, “Augustan-Era Synagogues in Rome,” in Judaism and Christianity in First Century Rome, ed. Karl Paul Donfried and Peter Richardson [Grand Rapids, Mich. [u.a.]: Eerdmans, 1998], 18).
estimated that by the first century AD, there were about 50,000 Judeans in the
Empire’s capital, organized in several different synagogues.\textsuperscript{16}

When the Romans took hold of the Mediterranean, they found that the
Greeks had established a distinct cultural presence in the area. Quoting Isocrates,
the term Hellene “no longer suggest[s] a race [meaning nation or ethnicity]\textsuperscript{17}
but intelligence, and the title Hellene is applied rather to those who share our culture
than to those who share our blood.”\textsuperscript{18} This statement does not suggest the
adoption of Greek ethnicity by other nations or the inclusion of other nations into

\textsuperscript{16}Fitzmyer, Romans, 27.
\textsuperscript{17}The term “race” shares the meaning of “nation” and “ethnicity,” although they are still used
in different contexts (see Fenton, Ethnicity, 14ff). However, in the second quarter of 19\textsuperscript{th}
century to
the first quarter of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century, “race” became a specific scientific term, especially later during
the Nazi era in Germany. Among the assumptions held in the race-thinking, or “racist theory” as
Esler puts it, is that all of humankind may be classified “into a relatively small number of races,
defined primarily by physical and visible difference” and that the white-race is superior to all
others (Fenton, Ethnicity 19-20). This concept has been largely abandoned in social science and, as
with the term “race,” Esler points out “the concept of ethnicity has become popular as a way of
talking about differences among peoples” (Esler, Conflict and Identity in Romans, 52).
\textsuperscript{18}Hays, “Paul and the Multi-Ethnic First Century World,” in Paul as Missionary, 76 referring to
Blog, this quotation appears in The Panegyricus in 380 BC (“Isocrates on Greek culture and race,”
posted March, 26, 2009, http://hellenicantidote.blogspot.com/2009/03/isocrates-on-greek-culture-
and-race.html [accessed October 13, 2012]).
Greek ethnicity;\textsuperscript{19} it shows how Hellene became an inter-ethnic culture in the Greco-Roman world and underlies Isocrates’ ethnocentrism.\textsuperscript{20}

At the same time, the term \textit{Ioudaioi} also gained a cultural significance as those who were not of Judean origin but embraced the religion of Israel. Hence from this understanding, the expression “\textit{Ioudaious te kai Hellenas}”\textsuperscript{21} may refer to an ethnic category: “Judeans and Greeks” or a religio-cultural category: “the Yehudi and the Hellene.”

The Author of Romans

The Epistle to the Romans has been regarded as the “last will and testament” of the apostle Paul (Saul).\textsuperscript{22} He was one of the most prominent figures in early Christianity, largely because of his evangelization efforts and also his writings.

\textsuperscript{20}Isocrates seeks to unite the Greek sub-ethnic groups under Athens to march against Persia by appealing to the idea of cultural superiority of the Hellene (John Akritas Blog, “Isocrates on Greek culture and race”).
\textsuperscript{21}3:9; Cf. 1:16; 2:9, 10; 10:12.
\textsuperscript{22}Günther Bornkamm, “The Letter to the Romans as Paul’s Last Will and Testament,” in \textit{Romans Debate}, 16-28. While the content of the epistle has been regarded as evidence to the authorship of this epistle by St. Paul, it is also supported by external evidence. As Robert Van Voorst points out, “Marcion, the Muratorian fragment, and second-century writers such as Ignatius, Polycarp, Justin Martyr, and Irenaeus all affirm its Pauline authorship” (\textit{Reading the New Testament Today} [Belmont, Calif: Thomson Wadsworth, 2005], 385); Cf. Fitzmyer, \textit{Romans}, 40-43.
Commonly, he wrote to either the congregations he founded or individuals he knew. Nonetheless, the Epistle to the Romans was a special case. The apostle might have never before stepped his feet in the Empire’s capital city with which the symbol of his citizenship was attached.

The apostle puts his name as the sender of the epistle to the Romans. “[From] Paul, a servant that belongs to Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, and set apart for God’s euangelion (good news, injil).” (1:1). He further explains that this euangelion is what God has promised through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures, regarding His Son, who according to the flesh was a descendant of

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23 In early days the apostle Paul went to Jerusalem to embark in a rabbinic training under a member of the Sanhedrin, Gamaliel. He took the strictest camp of the Judaic religion, the Pharisee, and proved to be a leading figure among his peers. Burning with his zeal for God and the religion of Israel, he undertook a mission with the High Priest’s blessing to punish all ‘apostate’ Judeans who joined the Christ-movement. With this passion, he traveled to Damascus to bring back to Jerusalem the followers of The Way, but his experience of meeting with Christ at the gate of the city, which caused him temporary blindness, turned his course 180 degrees. He was baptized and continued his journey, now proclaiming the news he tried to previously muffle (see The Acts of the Apostles 9ff.)

24 Tarsus became the capital city of the Roman province Cilicia in 66 BC, and it had been a city that enjoyed special treatment by the Roman rulers. Udo Schnelle writes that in this “metropolitan center of Hellenistic culture,” a person with five hundred drachmas could obtain the rights of a citizen. He therefore postulates that the apostle’s family could have purchased it. Without Roman citizenship, “it is difficult to explain the transfer of Paul’s case to Rome” (Apostle Paul: His Life and Theology, 58-62).
David, and according to the Spirit of holiness, declared to be the Son of God with power, by the resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord (1:2-4).25

This epistle, which has been dated between 55 and 58 AD,26 bears the deepest heart and highest mind of the apostle. “He was the right person for the right time,” writes Anthony J. Tambasco, “raised a Jew in [g]entile territory.”27 Fitzmyer highlights the apostle’s own description of himself in this letter: “I am an Israelite myself, a descendant of Abraham, from the tribe of Benjamin” (11:1; cf. 2 Corinthians; Philippians 3:5). He has a strong identification with his people: “For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my own people [Greek, my brothers], my kindred according to the flesh (9:3, NRSV).” At the same time, he considered himself as Christ’s apostle to the Greeks (11:13), yet also “indebted” to the non-Greeks, “the barbarian” (1:14),28 which is the reason why he wanted to go to Rome and beyond.

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25 The structure of the sentences here is similar to the Terjemahan Baru version of the Indoneisan Bible Society (Lembaga Alkitab Indonesia) and Fitzmyer’s translation (Romans, 3).
26 In the revisionist chronology Voorst writes, “51-52 AD” (Reading the New Testament Today, 384-385). Fitzmyer prefers 57-58 AD, arguing that composition of Romans as early as 51/52 or 54/55 AD is “impossible” (see Romans, 86-87).
28 Fitzmyer, Romans, 40-42.
The Recipients

Attempts to define the recipients of Paul’s Epistle to the Romans abound. One example is A. J. M. Wedderburn in his essay “The Purpose and Occasion of Romans Again” wherein he evaluates the arguments of two scholars, W. S. Campbell and W. Schmithals.\textsuperscript{29} As Wedderburn describes, Campbell’s position is that the apostle Paul writes to a mixed church predominantly of gentiles with the Judeans as a minority.\textsuperscript{30} Schmithals, meanwhile, postulates that the recipients were former God-fearers “who have received Christ but have not been weaned from their close connection with, and dependence upon, the synagogue.”\textsuperscript{31} To this, Wedderburn asserts that the recipients are both God-fearers, including a few Judean Christians who maintained their relationship with the synagogue, and gentile Christians, including Judean Christians who have severed their ties with the Judean Synagogue and “embraced a ‘law-free gospel’ like St. Paul’s.”\textsuperscript{32} These positions offers insights into the recipients of the epistle.

\textsuperscript{29}In \textit{Romans Debate}, 195-202.
\textsuperscript{30}Wedderburn, “The Purpose and Occasion of Romans Again” in \textit{Romans Debate}, 195.
\textsuperscript{31}Wedderburn, “The Purpose and Occasion of Romans Again” in \textit{Romans Debate}, 196.
F. F. Bruce asserts that Christianity, or the Christ-movement, as Esler suggests, probably found its way to Rome within a few years of its inception, considering the social mobility at that time. The Lukan account of the “visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes” in the momentous Pentecost described in Acts 2 is significant in postulating the existence of Romans Christians, and more importantly, their connection to the Jerusalem church.

The “visitors from Rome” may be an indication that there are a number of diaspora-Judeans and God-fearers who join the early church movement and take it with them back to Rome after their pilgrimage. They might be joined by some Judean-Christians who escape persecution in Judea by Herod Agrippa I (41 AD). The initial make-up of the Christian community in Rome, therefore, is mainly from a Judean religio-cultural (Yehudi) background. Possibly in this metropolis, members of the Christ-movement are meeting from house to house to break bread together, as was exercised by the community of believers in Jerusalem (Acts 2:46), while keeping their social identity and social support as a

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33 Those who more likely identified with this movement were Hellenistic-Jewish Christians, such as Stephen and Philip (Bruce, “The Romans Debate – Continued” in Romans Debate, 178).
minority in a larger Greco-Roman society which is attached to their synagogues respectively. In other words, they become a group within a group.

However, the nature of the Christ-movement and the Judean religion itself determine this mode of relationship to be short-lived. Frictions as appear between Stephen and some members of the Synagogue of the Freedman (Acts 6:9) is evidence. The "parting of the way" is inevitable and evidently accelerated by the apostle Paul’s evangelistic effort. He engages different synagogues in the Mediterranean, which reportedly receives a good response primarily from those from gentile background, albeit with some backlash from the Yehudi authority.\textsuperscript{35}

In the case of Rome, the clash between the Judean Yehudi and the Christ-movement happens around 49 AD, which results in the expulsion of the Judeans (including the Judean Christian) from Rome by Emperor Claudius on the allegation of the creation of disorder.\textsuperscript{36}

\begin{footnotesize}
\footnote{\textsuperscript{35}Cf. Acts 13:13-41.}
\footnote{\textsuperscript{36}There is a debate concerning the expulsion of the Judeans. Suetonius reports on tumults stirred up by “Chresto.” Scholars disagree on the certainty of this reference. Nonetheless, there is a strong argument that Suetonius is referring to the Christ here. Bruce explains: While Suetonius has the spelling Chresto here, he has Christiani in Nero 16.2. But in Tacitus, Ann, 15.44.3 the MS Mediceus 68.2 had originally (it appears) Chrestanos, which was corrected to Christianos by a later hand. Tacitus himself, however, may have spelled the word Christianos, since he links it closely with Christus (“auctor nominis eisu”). In the NT the first hand in Vaticanus consistently shows the spelling Chrestanos. The apologists exploit the confusion}\
\end{footnotesize}
The edict of expulsion itself, according to Orosius, was issued in 49 AD. Though Orosius’ credibility raises some questions, his dating is supported by the Lucan record in Acts 18:2. There we find information about St. Paul’s meeting with a Judean named Aquila who came from Italy with his wife Priscilla, “because Claudius had commanded all the Judeans to leave Rome.” According to Bruce, the apostle arrives in Corinth in the late summer of A. D. 50; hence it may be that Priscilla and Aquila, perhaps both “foundation-members” of the Christ-movement in Rome, left Rome the previous year.

In this light, given that there were some later converts from gentile background that joined the church in Rome, the Christ-movement there is left predominantly gentile due to Claudius’ edict. As of 54 AD, when Nero became

between the two forms: ‘We are accused of being Christianoi but it is unjust that one should be hated for being chrestos’ (Justin, Apol. 1.4.5) (“The Romans Debate – Continued” in Romans Debate, footnote 16, 178).

Further, according to Bruce, if Suetonius would have been talking about an unknown person named Chresto, he would have said impulsore Chresto quodam (“The Romans Debate – Continued” in Romans Debate, 178).

Writing in 417-418 AD.

Bruce, “The Romans Debate – Continued” in Romans Debate, 179; Orosius quotes Josephus for the information he provides, while Josephus does not mention anything about this incident.

This is based on the following report in Acts 18:12 where Galio is mentioned as proconsul of Achaia during Paul’s stay in Corinth. Bruce suggests that the apostle Paul’s arrival in this city was in the late summer of 50 AD (Bruce, “The Romans Debate – Continued” in Romans Debate, 178); Fitzmyer postulates summer or early autumn of 52 AD (Romans, 86).

Bruce, “The Romans Debate – Continued” in Romans Debate, 178.

Bruce, “The Romans Debate – Continued” in Romans Debate, 179.
the emperor, the Roman Christians must have grown into full-scale gentile communities, with those who probably assumed leadership, as Schmithals rightly points out, “leaning toward Judean practices.”

By the time the apostle Paul writes his epistle to the Roman Christians (c. A.D. 57), there must be interesting ramifications in the dynamic of the Christian community in Rome. Priscilla and Aquila apparently have gone back to Rome and, as in Ephesus, are hosting a house church. It is not redundant to entertain the question of whether or not their house church is primarily Judean or international. Robert Jewett provides a construct of five house church profiles in Rome that are known to the apostle, and the one meeting at Priscilla and Aquila’s is supposed to be of mixed-ethnicity.

In chapter 16, we find the apostle Paul’s commendation of Phoebe, a deacon or a minister from Cenchreae, who apparently is the courier of the epistle, together with twenty-six other individual names with some uniqueness as to

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42 Wedderburn, “The Purpose and Occasion of Romans Again” in Romans Debate, 196.
43 16:3-5; cf. I Corinthians 16:19 (Bruce, “The Romans Debate – Continued” in Romans Debate, 180).
44 According to the profile Reta Halteman Finger provides based on Robert Jewett’s description of the churches in Rome (Paul and the Roman House Churches [Waterloo: Herald Press, 1993], 34.)
45 This is a city in Corinth where the Epistle to the Romans is supposed to be written from (following Fitzmyer, Romans, 85)
Judean, Greek, and Roman names. Bruce postulates that these people are members to at least five groups of house churches in Rome. From here we may perceive that the epistle to the Romans is written not to a single church, but as a circular epistle to different churches, characterized by different ethnic dynamics. And looking from the construction of the setting behind the epistle, the intention is, among others, to address the intra-church dynamics (within each of the congregations), inter-church dynamics (among the churches in Rome) and also outer-church dynamics (the Christian and the Yehudi). Hence, in this conclusion, Campbell’s, Schmithals’ and also Wedderburn’s positions (without including any ties with synagogues) are all incorporated.

The Purpose of the Epistle

Roman is an unusual epistle in the Pauline corpus, for in it the apostle is writing to the churches for whom he had not labored. Roman Christians must have heard of him, but that is also, according to Thomas H. Tobin, part of the problem the apostle is trying to address. Tobin has rightly argued that the apostle is, in a way, trying to ‘make right’ the false impression and allegations of his “anti-nomian” gospel which is blamed for the moral dysfunction of the

46Bruce, “The Romans Debate – Continued” in Romans Debate, 180.
It has to be within the apostle’s intention to clarify this as a strategic step to win the ears of his audience.

The momentum is right for St. Paul to write to the Roman Christians as he intends to preach the gospel farther west, and he wants to use this opportunity for their edification, especially regarding the crucial matter at hand: ethnic diversity and its cultural implication in the church. For this purpose, he presents himself well. A long introduction (1:1-17), about three times longer than the usual, is meant to lay out the basic tenets of his conviction and his call as an apostle of Christ. Here he sets the groundwork wherein Roman Christians may heartily open their ears to what he wants to say further. And his clarification, more than anything, becomes a systematic exposition of his understanding of the Gospel, which deserves to be called his “last will and testament.”

The famous statement – your faith is proclaimed throughout the world – that the apostle uses to start the conversation is a polite way of saying: I heard many wonderful things about you, and also some problems. His further statement adds to this intention. “For I am longing to see you so that I may share with you

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some spiritual gift to strengthen you – or rather so that we may be mutually
couraged by each other’s faith, both yours and mine” (1:12). These words in
actuality are already happening on the part of the apostle by the implication of
the epistle. This requires some sort of authority, and for the Roman Christians,
given the previous discussion, authority means Jerusalem. Therefore, while the
reference to Jerusalem is made towards the end of the epistle, it actually
functions as an entrance to benefit a further conversation, or rather edification.
The apostle Paul makes the effort to show to the Roman Christians that he is not
estranged from the Jerusalem church. In fact, he is even doing this fund-raising
for Jerusalem’s community of saints (15:25ff.). So if he himself is connected to
Jerusalem, as they are, then he is also connected with them. This subject matter is
followed by a prayer request for his journey to deliver the funds to the poor in
Jerusalem. Such a gesture of spiritual humility and connection is perhaps one of
the primary reasons why this epistle is accepted and preserved for us today.

The apostle mentions in chapter one that he wants to come to Rome as he has
been longing to do for so long, and later in chapter 15 he mentions that he
actually wants to go to Spain through Rome. Instead of a contradiction, here St.
Paul tries to communicate his intention without offending the host, whom he would like to meet in due time. In this mode of interaction, it is assumed that the real intention is communicated after talking about some other things. Usually, in this cultural presupposition, the “other things” are those of secondary importance or some small talk. Still in the case of the Epistle to the Romans, the “other things” serve as important words for Christians across the ages. The apostle is saying he wants to come to Rome, and then go on to Spain; better than saying I want to swing by Rome on my way to Spain.

The apostle sets a distinction between preaching the good news as a ministry, where he hopes to win some gentiles in Rome (1:13), and preaching in order to “build a foundation” or to plant a church, as he hopes to do in Spain (15:20). This may well indicate that there might be a competition among the churches in Rome in regards to making converts; hence it becomes important for the apostle to state his intention in coming to preach the gospel also in Rome. We may render this as sub-group dynamics. In SIT, in-group differences tend to be overlooked in comparison with out-group, yet within in-group interaction, these differences may be salient.
Ethnic Identity and Culture in the Epistle to the Romans

The epistle to the Romans is written with the mind that there are no Judean-Yehudi per se as there are no gentiles per se in the audience. All are Christians with their own backgrounds, and in need of understanding, borrowing Hiebert's words, the “truth, beauty, and holiness” of the Gospel. For this purpose the apostle masterfully engages the readers into a deep, challenging, yet loving theological and ecclesiastical epistle.

A. Andrew Das recognizes the “harshness” of the apostle’s language toward the Yehudi “interlocutor,” a fictive addressee propounded by Stanley Stowers. The “harshness,” however, is not new. The “interlocutor” only changes from “they” (the gentiles unbelievers) to “you” (the Judean Yehudi). The apostle’s intention is to shake these two ‘worlds’ in order to bring Roman churches into one bigger world: God’s world. He understands in-group dynamics within Roman Christian circles; hence he uses Judean and gentile stereotypes as a pedagogical tool to communicate the euangelion to Roman Christian communities.

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48 Hiebert, Transforming Worldviews, 275.
49 A. Andrew Das, Solving the Romans Debate (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), 88.
that are struggling with ethnic dynamics wherein some religio-cultural practices come into play.

The logical movement of the apostle’s theological engagement begins with his pronouncement that “faith is the power of God to save” (1:16-17). From here he continues to point out three areas of common ground between Judeans and gentiles. He begins with the sinfulness of the gentiles. Although St. Paul, in a way, is merely stating a Judean’s stereotypical view toward the gentiles, he is saying it from a very different point of view. It is not that the true God is absent among the gentiles, or that God is unknown to them; hence they live in ungodliness. In contrast, this ungodliness is because they know God (“they are without excuse” [1:20]), but do not glorify God as God or give thanks to Him (1:21). They turn to images of mortal human beings, birds, and animals. Therefore, God gave them up to their bodily and spiritually degrading lust and debased mind, which manifested in many different vices (1:18-32). The word used for “gave up” (paredoken)\textsuperscript{50} in 1:24 is charged with theological significance.

\textsuperscript{50}Paradoken, verb aorist indicative active - 3rd person singular from paradidomi “[God] gave [them] up.” In Thayer’s Greek Lexicon paradidomi means (1) properly, to give into the hands (of another); (2) to give over into (one’s) power or use, further explanation shows that in contexts it may mean either for the purpose of judgment, condemnation, punishment, etc. or to be taken
with regards to God's work in Christ. Yet see also another important point in the apostle's statement here: He affirms that God is not only working with the Judeans, but with the gentiles as well (cf. 3:29).

In turn, while the Judean Yehudi may think that they are safe because they are not as ‘miserable’ as the gentiles, so to say in this scenario, the apostle's news for them is the wrath of God. For they indeed rely upon the Law (the Law itself is good),\(^1\) boast in God, know the will of God, etc., but they do still transgress the Law (2:1-24). Hence both sides, or rather all, from the most pious to the most degraded, whether Judeans or gentiles, are set on the same level by the apostle: sinful (cf. 3:9). This is the first common ground.

The second common ground is that the people of God are not defined by ethnicity or religio-cultural practices, but by faith. The Judean take their lineage from Abraham very seriously. It is the claim that separates them from the rest of the nations; the presumption is that God’s people are within the perimeter of

\(^1\)For apostle Paul, the Law is a tutor (\textit{paidagogos}) for the people of Israel, but cannot save, either Israel or non-Israel. “Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law \textit{is} the knowledge of sin” (3:20, \textit{KJV}); Cf. 3:31. The Law is good if one obeys it (cf. 1 Timothy 1:8).
Israel (i.e. Judean) ethnicity and circumcision is a significant sign of membership.
Yet the apostle points out that theologically not all of Israel are children of
Abraham, and that non-Israel may be children of Abraham. The covenant of God
with Abraham is received by faith, before Abraham was circumcised, and “[t]he
purpose was to make him the ancestor of all who believe without being
circumcised and who thus have righteousness reckoned to them…” (4:11, NRSV).

Being Israel, in this sense the Judeans as the remnant of Israel, means
following their traditions, honoring their ancestors and preserving their identity
as Judeans. Circumcision is the symbol of God’s covenant with Abraham and his
offspring (i.e., Israel’s election to be a blessing to the nations), and for the apostle,
this sign of the covenant is nullified for other nations because it is Israel’s. In
other words, it is for the Judeans to have circumcision and not other nations. The
Judeans are free to observe the Mosaic Law and their traditional practices,
although it must be understood that they are not warrants of God’s salvation. For
the apostle this is by no means to eliminate the Law or the covenant, but to usher
God’s work of salvation for all; this is salvation, through grace, accepted by faith
that bears fruit of the Spirit-led life. The Law shows that everyone sins. It is faith
in Jesus Christ that brings God’s grace. Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of the covenant that offers God’s blessing to the rest of the nations. The symbol of Judeans as the people of God opens up a new metaphor that true Judeans may also come from other nations (4:1ff).

The third common ground is justification through faith in Christ Jesus alone, which leads into dikaiosune (righteousness and justice) and holiness, applicable both for Judeans and gentiles. The apostle Paul uses the same word paradidomi to express what God has done through Christ for every human being from every nation. Jesus Who was given up (paredothe) for our trespasses, and was raised again for our justification (4:25; cf. 8:25). Paradidomi contains the idea of being surrendered to another's hand; hence one’s well-being depends on the one who is being surrendered to, whether to be punished or to be saved. In God’s work of salvation, the Messiah is being surrendered for both reasons, to be punished and to be vindicated. Jesus bears the punishment of sins, and here, while the

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52 Against the allegation of his 'anti-nomian' Gospel apostle Paul reminds Roman Christians: “Owe no one anything, except to love one another; for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law...Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law” (13:8,10). Bruce points out that apostle Paul is not only preaching about “righteousness” but also “holiness” (The Romans Debate – Continued in Romans Debate, 183).

53 Verb-aorist indicative passive - 3rd person singular from paradidomi “was delivered.”

54 Bahasa, pelanggaran; Minahasa, kaselokan.
application is for all, it is with a special attention to the sins and salvation of the gentiles. Jesus Christ “whom God hath set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God has passed over the sins that were previously committed, to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just, and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus” (3:25-26, NKJV).

This notion of faith in Christ culminates in chapter six with baptism. Baptism symbolizes a new identity as a member of a new entity beyond ethnic identity; it is still defined by blood, although not in the meaning of blood-tie, but Christ's blood shed for the world that ties every believer into one body. The language of kinship is retained, that they have become the children of God; hence they become the heirs of God (8:14-17) with citizenship in the Kingdom of God (cf. 14:17). Their life is marked by transformation into one inter-national community of believers (12:1ff).

Chapters 9-11 serve as a new episode that bears the weight that is crucial to drive home the apostle Paul's point on why, within their interaction with one another, they should also consider the non-Christian Judeans. The Judean
Yehudi with their strong ethnic and religious identity are still God’s people. It is not out of God’s plan that they are estranged from the salvation of God through Christ. The Church should perceive them as part of the future *eschaton* (cf. 11:11ff.), and if they are part of the future *eschaton*, the Christians and the Yehudi should be able to live together in such a manner that reflects this hope. The implication of this pastoral exercise is that the Judeans, who are starting again in Rome, will not be treated contemptuously by their Christian brothers and sisters.55

By living in faith, led by the Holy Spirit, Judeans and gentile Christians will live a life that reflects God’s grace and salvation (cf. 7:6; 8:4ff). This implied message eventually has some in-group implications to how those who have a different opinion, whether within the context of the individual congregation or in their inter-church relations, will behave. This is especially in regards to things related to (Judean) culture, such as day observation and food or drink prohibition. In effect, this is a call to provide the space for “walking in love” with one another, which is not to cause others to stumble (14:13-15). This admonition is indirectly applicable to the God-fearer group. At the same time, Judean or

gentile Christians, who through faith in Christ have come to believe that in Christ “nothing is unclean in itself” (14:14), may live in that freedom, but they ought also to walk in love in order not to make others stumble, “for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit” (14:17, NKJV); this is to be understood in contrast to the way of living the apostle describes in chapters one and two.

In conclusion the apostle accentuates the importance of understanding the new identity possessed by the Roman Christians and invites them to see it beyond their ethnic identity. This does not dismiss their ethnic identity. As St. Paul maintains, “I myself a Judean,” appointed as an apostle to the gentiles. He recognizes that God is also at work in other nations, and the time has come, the promise has been fulfilled, that all the nations shall be blessed. A good news for all. Saul, the multicultural apostle, became Judean with those who are Judeans and gentile to those who are gentiles. He sees it as a freedom in Christ, the good news of the Gospel, not to despise but to honor the richness of cultural differences among God’s people. This affirms that in Christ it is not Judean
traditions and culture that set the matter, nor any other traditions and cultures,
but it is faith in Christ that leads

into love (13:8,10), righteousness and justice (dikaiosune), peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit (14:17), that is the Spirit-led life (cf. 8:4ff).

Here, the question of whether or not Minahasans may become Christians without having to be Judeans, or European by extension, is answered.

Yes, we can. But now, what may the term Minahasa suggest?
Chapter 4: Minahasa Traditions and Ethnic Identity

This chapter provides insight into different aspects that constitute Minahasan ethnicity by looking at the story, history, and practices of the Minahasan people that form and inform their “tradition of change” to the present stage.¹ It starts with general information about the land of Minahasa, how the name came to be used, including how to understand Minahasan ethnicity. This is followed by a discussion on the story of Toar and Lumimuut, a symbol of Minahasan ethnic identity, which then leads into five topics related to Minahasan traditional society: astronomical knowledge, political organization, social-economic practices, medicine, and ethnic religion.

The Name of Minahasa and Minahasan Ethnicity

The northern tip of Sulawesi Island was known by several different names to the inhabitants, but most notable was Malesung that comes from the word *lisung* (“mortar”).² It is a description of a region with a collection of non-volcanic and

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²The region is embellished with areas that resemble a mortar, along with some big stone-mortars commonly found in the area, such as in Likupang, Sonder, Ratahan, Pontak, and Wulur Mahatus area (H. M. Taulu, *Langkah Sedjarah Malesung-Minahasa: dari purba hingga pendjadjahan Belanda*, djilid 1 [Manado: Badan Budaja Jajasan Membangun, 1969], ii, 1). F. Watuseke also mentions *Taure* and *Makalesung* (*Sejarah Minahasa*, [Manado: Pertjetakan Negara, 1968], 8).
volcanic mountains. Due to this fact, this land that later became Minahasa is a fertile one. The main agricultural products today are coconut, cloves and other spices. Coffee, a well-known cash-crop in the 19th century, is pretty much left behind. Rice is still produced but no longer exported. In addition to being a fertile area, Minahasa also contains different minerals, including gold, which has lured several mining companies to operate in the region.

Being just above the equator, Minahasa, which according to archeological finding has been inhabited back to 6000 BC, shares tropical seasons with an average rainfall between 2,000 to 3,000 millimeters per year. Hui Li et. al. point out that, based on their analysis on paternal genetic affinities between Western Austronesians and Daic population, most likely Minahasan ancestors (as other

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3Coffee plants are grown in some places, like in Langowan, but in general it is still unpopular to grow coffee for a cash crop. Schouten is right in saying that the forced cultivation was internalized in the collective memory of the Minahasans (Schouten, Leadership and Social Mobility in a Southeast Asian Society, 57-64). It could be that the recovery is on the way; See Chapter 5.2.

4Taulu points out that since the 1600s Minahasa had been “exporting” rice to the Philippines and Ternate. Around 1840-1856 there were still approximately 2000 tons of rice export per year. Subsequently, the number decreased significantly due to the forced labor and compulsory coffee plantation. In 1919, for the first time rice was imported into Minahasa (Bunga Rampai: Sejarah dan Antropologi Budaya “Minahasa,” Jilid 1 [Manado: Tunas Harapan, 1981], 25).

5Peter Bellwood, then affiliated with Australian National University, suggests this date following an excavation at the shell-mound archeological site located at Paso village, southwest of Tondano Lake, Minahasa (“Archeological Research in Minahasa and the Talaud Islands, Northeastern Indonesia,” Asian Perspectives, XIX [2] [1976]:245, http://scholarspace.manoa.hawaii.edu/bitstream/handle/10125/19717/AP-v19n2-240-288.pdf?sequence=1 [accessed February 3, 2012]).

western Austronesian groups) have originated from the Gulf of Tonkin, the homeland of the Daic, and migrated to Indonesia through the Vietnam corridor.⁷

The languages spoken in this area are various and classified into Malayopolynesian in the category of Austronesian languages.⁸ The languages of Tombulu, Toudano (or Toulour), Tonsea, Tontemboan, Tonsawang (or Tombatu) are related and categorized as Proto-Minahasan languages.⁹ The language of the Bantik and Pasan-Ratahan (or Bentenan) are related to the Sangir in the northern islands of the Minahasa peninsula, while Ponasakan shares resemblances with the language of Mongondow, an ethnic group at the southern border of Minahasa.¹⁰ Due to these lingual as well as “physiological and cultural differences,” Schouten categorizes the eight groups (supposed to be nine groups)

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⁷Hui Li et al. find that Western Austronesian population has a closer link with the Daic populations compare to any other groups in East Asia. Daic is a linguistic family located mainly in South China, the north of the Island Southeast Asians (“Paternal genetic affinity between western Austronesian and Daic populations,” BMC Evolutionary Biology 2008; 8: 146, http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2408594/pdf/1471-2148-8-146.pdf [accessed August 28, 2012], 7-9); Cf. Watuseke, Sejarah Minahasa, 13.

⁸Wil Lundstrom-Burghoorn, Minahasa Civilization, 19.


as “ethnic groups.” In this thesis, however, the nine groups are regarded as “sub-ethnic groups” and as a whole comprise Minahasa as an “ethnic group.”

The reasons are as follow.

In October 8, 1789, the Resident of Manado J. D. Schierstein wrote to his superior in Ternate about “minhasa,” the meeting of the chiefs at the Dutch fort in Manado to overcome conflicts among the walaks (see definition below). This was the earliest known writing in the Latin script where we find the reference minhasa. Later the name Minahasa was used as a political administration, covering all the walak communities in Malesung and vicinities.

From the linguistic point of view, the spelling minahas comes from the Tombulu, meaning “have become one” or “united.” The concept behind it is

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11 Schouten fails to include the Bobontehu (or Bawontehu) into the Minahasan sub-groups (Leadership and Social Mobility in a Southeast Asian Society, 13).

12 E. C. Godée-Molsbergen, Geschiedenis van de Minahasa tot 1829 (Weltevreden: Landsdrukkerij, 1928), 137; See Supit, Minahasa, 141-142.

13 Watuseke, Sejarah Minahasa, 8. Minaesa or nimaesa suggest the same meaning as minahasa. The basic word is the verb maesa or maasa “to unite,” “to become one,” esa means “one.” While the letter “h” in the word Minahasa shows a Tombulu variant, it may also function as a glottal (stop sound), as it appears in the writings during the colonial times, hence mina’asa. Minahan native speakers sometimes also use “k” in writing to signify a glottal. In this thesis [’] is used, following the literature in Minahasan languages published by Pusat Penerjemahan Alkitab (Bible Translation Center), Tomohon (see, for example, Sirita ni Yusuf: Kejadian 37, 39-50 dalam bahasa Tondano [[S.I]: Pusat Penerjemahan Bahasa UKIT, 2006]). In this thesis, glottal is omitted in Minahasan familiar names and places. The spelling “Toar,” for example, is pronounced “To’ar,” while “Lumimuut” is “Lumimu’ut.” This is not used in suffixes or prefixes, only in the root
related to walak sovereignty in Malesung. Walak is a local term signifying a cluster of ro’ong or wanua (settlement/village/dwelling place) of people with a common kinship and ethno-linguistic character. A group of walaks of the same group is designated as pakasaan, used today in the sense of Minahasan “tribe” or “sub-ethnic group.” While these groups at times engaged in conflict with one

14 According to Watuske, the term walak was unknown to the colonial officials because they perceived the chiefs as dorpsheerden (village heads); hence their territories were villages. When they came to use the local term in the sense of a district, it was assumed to come from the Dutch balk “beam.” As Watuske explains, Adriani, a Dutch linguist, corrected this view saying that walak is “an autochthonous Minahasan word denoting ’relation’, ’family’, ’tribe’.” He compares the word walak to the Sangirese word balagheng and the Talau balaghana both with the meanings “tribe,” “fellow companion,” and “remote relation.” The stem is balage and its old form is balag, which is a cognate of the Minahasan walak. Also, there is the Tontemoan expression tu’ur im walak translated by Schwarz (1908:572) as “capital,” “the first settlement of the tribe, from which different branches later dispersed; “the chief of a district” (F. S. Watuske, “Hukum and other administrative terms in the language of Minahasa” in Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land,- en Volkenkunde 142, no:2/3, [1986]:314-324, http://www.kitlv-journals.nl/index.php/btlv/article/view/3004/3765 [accessed February 2, 2012]); Supit, Minahasa, 52-53. See the names of the Minahasan walaks in the appendix.

15 Yet the terminology pakasaan is again disputed (see Supit, Minahasa, 53). Supit emphasizes how the term pakasaan became prominent when the Dutch colonial government formalized the territorial boundaries among the groups in the 19th century; previously walak was the term widely used. He suggests that the term pakasaan originates from papakasaan, explained as the principle of “tanggungan bersama,” the collective responsibilities concerning the land belonging to the walak (Supit, Minahasa, 53). On the other hand, Taulu argues that pakasaan is a misnomer resulting from J. G. F. Riedel who, when writing the history of ancient Minahasa in 1870, replaced the glottal with the consonant [k]; hence the word pahasaan (or paasaan) “union” became pakasaan (Sebingkah Sedjarah Perang Minahasa Spanyol, 75-76). However, Taulu may have overlooked that in Tondano and Tontemoan the word pakasaan indeed exists. According to Watuske, the term pakasaan is from the root esa “one,” meaning “to do something once,” “to cover the entirety at once,” which refers to the “traditional district,” that is the tribal territories, not the administrative district (Sejarah Minahasa, 46, 74). A pakasaan may consist of one walak (as in the case of Pasan, etc) or more (such as for Toudano/Toulour with three walaks: Tondano, Remboken, Kakas). While it
another, which is not unusual as it happens with other nations, there was a tradition that when their common existence was threatened by outsiders, they would meet together, make an oath, and form a union (maesa). When the threat was overcome, each would go back to their own walak.

Supit points out that the term Minahasa was used formally as a political administration in the 19th century. Along the same lines, Watuseke adds that the recognition of the region as Minahasa began at the end of the 17th century (1693), when the four main groups united (maesa) to repel the onslaught of the king of Manado (Bolaang). Others perceive the precursor of Minahasa even further back in history. In a colloquium conducted in May 1982 to date the anniversary of Minahasa, among the dates cast in the ballots were January 10, 1679, when the conflicts took place primarily because of territorial borders, hunting areas, etc. notwithstanding insignificant issues that were exaggerated, bringing great calamity (Langkah Sedjarah Malesung-Minahasa, djilid 1, 13); Watuseke, Sejarah Minahasa, 30-32. See also Supit, Minahasa, 135-140 about walak conflicts provoked by the Dutch.
walak chiefs signed a treaty with the Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie (V. O. C.) or Dutch East India Company, the year of 1643 when Malesung united against the Spaniards, including the meeting at Watu Pinawetengan “Stone of Allotment,” traditionally understood as the time when the leaders of Malesung designated the territorial boundaries of the four main groups.20

Another event which bears similar importance is the Tondano War 1808-1809 (also known as Minahasa-Dutch war in Tondano) which later gains a prominent place in the history of Minahasa and inevitably reinforces a sense of ethnicity among the children of Toar and Lumimuut.

Earlier in 1799 the V. O. C. was dissolved, and all the walaks were considered to be under the auspices of the Dutch government. At this time, the Netherlands, under France, was at war against the British in the Napoleonic Wars (1799-1815).

20Taulu, quoting J. G. F. Riedel, points out that the meeting took place in the seventh century (Bunga Rampai, 6; see Appendix 3). Another date in the ballot was February 14, 1946, which signified a coup d’ etat in North Sulawesi by a number of Minahasan KNIL (Koninklijk Nederlands Indisch Leger or The Royal Netherlands East Indies Army) in support of the declaration of Indonesia’s independence proclaimed in Java. In this colloquium, the appointed committee decided to celebrate January 10, 1679 as the date for Minahasa’s anniversary. As a result, the majority of the participants walked out of the room. There was no agreement. The 27th Regent of Minahasa, A. L. Lelengboto, then appointed November 5, 1428 as the date and pioneered the celebration of the 555th Minahasa anniversary in November 5, 1982. The reasons behind this date was: November 5 is the birthday of the national hero Dr. Sam Ratulangi, and the year 1428 is uniquely taken from the dates of February 14, 1946 and October 28, 1928, this latter day commemorating the Oath of the Youth for one mother land, one nation, and one unified language of Indonesia. It has been a history of itself (ManadoGo.com, November 8, 2011).
In order to defend Batavia (today Jakarta) from the British fleets, in 1808 Governor General H. W. Dandles requested 2400 soldiers from the Minahasan walaks. This ‘military draft’ was rejected by the Minahasan people and became one of the primary reasons for the Tondano War 1808-1809. On June 2, 1808, the leaders of the walaks that disapproved of the military recruitment met in Tondano-Touliang to establish an oath of loyalty, in the case that the Dutch government insisted with force to make them comply. They called themselves “se minaes” (the united).

After a futile attempt to discourage the movement, Prediger, the Resident of Manado, brought in a Dutch army from Ternate. The walak leaders met again at Watu Pinawetengan to discuss the matter. According to Giroth Wuntu, after a thorough discussion it was decided that the resistance in Tondano must go on, and those who could not continue, especially those who were far from the Minahasan fortresses in Tondano and close to the Dutch posts, could support with supplies and ammunition, while those who no longer wanted to support

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21 Supit, Minahasa, 161; Watuseke, Sejarah Minahasa, 34; Taulu, Bunga Rampai 18-19.
23 Wenas, Sejarah dan Kebudayaan Minahasa, 49.
the war should not cooperate with the Dutch.²⁴ Months after, 13 walaks out of 26 expressed their desire to submit to Prediger; some were even willing to aid him against the Tondano. Nonetheless, Wuntu postulates that there were those among the 13 walaks who secretly supported the Tondano.²⁵

This war became a symbol of Minahasa heroism. The waraney (warriors) at Moraya fort shouted “kumuru e Minaesa!” (get down Minaesa!) when they shot their canons toward the colonial army joined by their co-opted kawanua (compatriots).²⁶ On August 4, 1809, the two fortresses of the Minahasans, including the Tondano settlements, were destroyed. F. Parengkuan points out that the Dutch committed genocide in Tondano, which gave birth to Minawanua (once a dwelling place).²⁷

In 1810, the region fell for the second time to the British, and Resident Thomas Nelson established a contract with the chiefs, among others for the

²⁵ Wuntu, Perang Tondano 1661-1809, 192.
²⁷ Interview, 17 February 2013; Supit writes: “On one hand the fighters of Minawanua showed a fighting spirit that is hard to find, on the other the Dutch performed an atrocity. Children and elderly were slaughtered so that Minawanua was flooded with blood (Minahasa, 194 [translation mine]); Under the British, the surviving Tondano returned to a new settlement at the northern side of Lake Tondano, divided by the teberan (Tondano River).
recognition of Britain’s authority by Minahasan walaks and the banning of punishment by way of to’tok (cutting a person into small pieces), which also has been fought by the V. O.C.\textsuperscript{28} Shortly after, delegations from Britain and the Netherlands met in London and created what is called the Anglo-Dutch Treaty of 1814. Herein, one of the rulings was for Britain to return Dutch-occupied territories to the Netherlands, so that their holdings were the same as before the disastrous Napoleonic Wars.\textsuperscript{29} This was implemented in 1817, and two years later, the Netherlands utilized De Minahassa as a political administration.\textsuperscript{30} This marked a major socio-religious and political change in the land of To’ar and Lumimu’ut.

The success of the Protestant mission became the answer to the question of unity among the Minahasans post the Tondano War of 1808-1809.\textsuperscript{31} Mission schools encouraged a sense of brotherhood among the groups, which was something good not only for the mission work as well as the colonial interests but ultimately for the groups themselves. While writers such as Gabriele

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Watuske, Sejarah Minahasa, 35.
\item This was the second time Britain took over Minahasa. Previously they took over Minahasa from 1801-1802, which was resolved in the same manner as the Anglo-Dutch Treaty of 1814 with the Treaty of Amiens of 1802 (Watuske, Sejarah Minahasa, 33).
\item See Watuske, Sejarah Minahasa, 36.
\item See Chapter Five.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
Weichart emphasize Minahasa as “acted upon” in terms of the communal identification of its people, she does not deny that such identification for “colonial purposes” is only feasible if it is consistent with how the people also identify themselves.32

In the midst of efforts to survive within this colonial reality, Minahasa fell into the categorization of being one of the Dutch collaborators in the archipelago. Down the line, cross sub-ethnic intermarriages, the widespread use of Manado Malay, the fight for independence, and the struggle for autonomy during the post-independence Permesta war (explained below) all contributed to the solidification of Minahasan ethnicity.

Minahasa was conceived in the story and history of its people. It is a symbol of an ethnic consciousness among the walaks, best described as an adoptive ethnicity, where different yet related groups of people perceive their commonality despite their differences; thus, they weave together their shared story and history, feeling that they are one by descent or by death-facing-oath, and therefore make one's burden as everybody's burden, and one's prosperity as the prosperity of the beloved land.

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Minahasa was not a colonial invention. Long before *De Minahassa* was used to represent a regional administration, and long before Resident Schierstein wrote *minhasa* to refer to the council of chiefs which congregated at the Dutch fort in Manado-Wenang, *minaesa* has always been part of the Minahasan people. The Dutch colonial government engineered the unified political administration, but it was *Watu Pinawetengan* that gave birth to Minahasa. The spirit of *minaesa* continues to inspire the people of Minahasa, although politically Minahasa proper is no longer under one administration. Thus, as in the expression: *Sa kita esa, sumerar kita.* *Sa kita sumerar, esa kita* (If we are one, we separate; if we separate, we are one).

**Toar and Lumimuut and Minahasan Traditional Society**

If there is anything in the history of Minahasa that deserves the title of a meta-narrative, it will be the story of Toar and Lumimuut. Most of the time, if not always, when Minahasans give the account of their history or who they are, Toar and Lumimuut will be mentioned. This story permeates the entirety of collective consciousness.

In some instances this grand story has been dubbed as a myth; hence Toar and Lumimuut has been regarded as the “myth of origin” of the Minahasans.
This notion, however, has a deep flaw. The wide range of meaning for the Greek *mythos*\(^{33}\) has confused notions of narrative, tale, and fiction, and in part led only into the practice of mythologizing, which in my estimation treads dangerously into Said’s “Orientalism.” Mythologizing means the myth-making of the Orient’s story(-ies), resulting in the depiction of the Orient as “promiscuous, superstitious, and less capable of rational thought,” in contrast to the “rational, scientific, moral, and universal view of modernism.”\(^{34}\)

In Minahasa, this mythologizing proved to be harmful. The story of Toar and Lumimuut, which in origin is a sacred story sung in the ritual of *Mangorai*,\(^{35}\) contains a wealth of information about Minahasan history, philosophy, religion, astronomical knowledge, language, math, poetry, music, medicine, collective consciousness, and, in general, our meta-narrative. When the story was taught in

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\(^{33}\)Thayer's Greek Lexicon defines *mythos* as: (1) a speech, word, saying; (2) a narrative, story: a) a true narrative. b) a fiction, a fable; universally, an invention, falsehood (http://biblesuite.com/greek/3454.htm [access 11 September 2012]). The unspecific and potential contradiction of these meanings necessitates that the use of the term “myth” in place of other symbols. This is especially true when it comes to the term meta-narrative. It is of no use to take the meaning of “meta-narrative” and then define or pigeon-hole it into the amorphous, ambiguous term “myth.”

\(^{34}\)This view is related to the evolutionary paradigm in early social science, which according to Hiebert, “accounted for both the inherent goodness of humans and the development and superiority of modernity. It led to the belief that whites are superior to blacks, men to women, and the elite to common people” (Transforming Worldview, 202).

\(^{35}\)*Mangorai* is a ritual led by a special priest called a *walian Mangorai*, associated with land fertility and ancestry.
schools to the children of Minahasa since the 19th century however, somehow it became an incestuous story of a mother marrying a son, a despicable notion to the mores of the people.\textsuperscript{36}

The story of Toar and Lumimuut has circulated in many different versions, but the general theme (as it has been taken at face value by many Minahasans for the sake of embracing their identity as Minahasans), Lumimuut, the mother, becomes the wife of her son, Toar, with the blessing of Karema, the priestess. (The Bantik’s version of this story, however, is an exception). The story, however, as J. A. T. Schwarz demonstrates (see below), was not to be understood literally as such.\textsuperscript{37} But the fact that it was widely regarded as so is related to colonial interests in Minahasa.

\textsuperscript{36}This kind of mythologizing, however, cannot be fully blamed on the outsiders who construct and paint the face of Minahasa through this story, because admittedly some of the misunderstanding we have today was borne out of the effort on the side of the local informants to hide local knowledge to some of the inquirers by giving them a partial or even just a plain made-up story. Some informants may also have shared from their own poor knowledge of the topic in question. In the case of J. A. T. Schwarz and J. G. F. Riedel, both are sons of the NZG missionaries in Minahasa, since they grew up in Minahasa and were familiar with the culture and language(s), they can be categorized as well-informed inquirers. This does not rule out that they may be mistaken, however. For example, J. G. F. Ridel’s conclusion regarding the use of the word “walak,” which he associates with the Manado Malay balak “beam,” but then was corrected by J. A. T. Schwarz (see Supit, \textit{Minahasa}, 52 and above discussion on the term).

\textsuperscript{37}Several Minahasan writers have defended the myth-version of the story, arguing that it is common in “mythology” by referring to the Greek story of Oedipus as well as to the story of Sangkuriang and Dayang Sumbi. However, this attempt does nothing more than prolong the
Supit asserts the story (mythologized, as the two versions he presents)\textsuperscript{38} was utilized by the Dutch “as an instrument to exert colonialism in Minahasa” by way of “subverting the election system of the \textit{walak} leader, especially after 1881.”\textsuperscript{39} The colonial government made a rule that “[a]s long as a person is a descendant of Toar and Lumimuut, that person may be elected as \textit{ukung} and placed in any \textit{walak}, and not necessarily one’s own \textit{walak}.”\textsuperscript{40} In effect, not only did the colonial government create “undercover feudalism” and ruin the democratic system of leadership, but it also gained the upper hand by making puppet leaders to serve their colonial interests.\textsuperscript{41}

To understand the story right, there is a need to understand oral tradition in Minahasa. While there are no formal categorizations, Minahasan narratives are distinguishable based on their function and style. Here, in order to avoid confusion with the word “myth,” let us reserve it to mean “tale,” “fiction,” or a sort of Aesop’s fable.\textsuperscript{42} Its equivalence in Minahasan oral tradition is \textit{neumanen} (a misunderstanding of the Minahasan meta-narrative (see Wenas, \textit{Sejarah dan Kebudayaan Minahasa}, 83).

\textsuperscript{38}Supit, \textit{Minahasa}, 18ff.
\textsuperscript{39}Supit, \textit{Minahasa}, 16-17 (translation mine).
\textsuperscript{40}Supit, \textit{Minahasa}, 16-17 (translation mine).
\textsuperscript{41}Supit, \textit{Minahasa}, 16-17.
\textsuperscript{42}Hiebert tries to explain the value of the term “myth,” which has been popular in social science, by connecting the meaning of “meta-narrative” in it. What Hiebert calls the “technical,
bed-time story with animal and human characters to convey moral teaching),
such as *si wo’u wo si woley* (the turtle and the monkey). Another example of a
Minahasan narrative is the Tondano War of 1807-1809, which is a narrative of
history (oral history); there are others, but then there is also sacred narrative, that
is *teto’uan makatana*’ (lit., knowledge of the owner of the land or indigenous),
known especially to the *walian* (priest/priestess), and an example is the sung-
story of *Zazanian ni Karema* (the Song of Karema) from which the story of Toar
and Lumimuut originated. This one particularly is the meta-narrative of
Minahasans. Jessy Wenas, Minahasan cultural expert and music composer,
writes extensively about the history of Minahasa in his book *Sejarah dan
Kebudayaan Minahasa* (History and Culture of Minahasa). He also provides,
quoting J. G. F. Riedel, the lyrics of the Song of Karema in Tombulu. (See the
sung-story in the appendix.) The *walian* (priests/priestesses) would sing this song
with a gong.43

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43 Wenas, *Sejarah dan Kebudayaan Minahasa*, 76.
There are five aspects that I’d like to discuss in relation to the Song of Karema:

Astronomical Knowledge

Astronomy is considered among the highest knowledge in a traditional society, as Wenas points out. It is a way of explaining the natural phenomena that intersect with the life of human beings. J. A. T. Schwarz was the first one who put into writing the symbolic meaning of the Song of Karema. Analyzing different versions of this story from different sources among the Tontemboan, he points out that the story expresses the astronomical knowledge of the Minahasans. The word Toar is connected to the sun. Some have mentioned that it comes from tou arii (main pillar of the house) or tu’ur (trunk of a tree), but the better explanation is to see it as a combination of the word tou and ra’ar. Tou has a different meaning: (1) as a noun “person” (in plural means “people”); (2) as a verb “grow” or “to make alive” and (3) as an adverb “like” or “similar to.” The word ra’ar means “solar heat” or “sunny.” Hence Toar may be interpreted as “person of the sun” or “similar to the sun,” which is then why the Tontemboan

44Sejarah dan Kebudayaan Minahasa, 82-83.
45J. A. T. Schwarz, Tontemboansche Teksten (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1907), 466; See Wenas, Sejarah dan Kebudayaan Minahasa, 82-83.
46Mera’ar means “sunny,” mara’ar means “drying something (e.g. paddy or cloves) under the sun.”
sang when they were making salt (mangasin) at the shore: “Rumuso wo rumangkang, e Toar!” (“Make our salt hard and ample, e To’ar!”)\(^{47}\) Schwarz writes that the salt-makers need dry weather so they speak to Toar as to the giver of sunshine, that is the sun.\(^{48}\)

Lumimuut comes from the word lu’ut (perspire). The meaning is the earth that perspires. The perspired earth is connected to the appearance of the dew in the morning.\(^{49}\) The Tontemboan revered Lumimuut as the great ancestor who gives fertility to the soil and regarded her as \textit{si apo’ nimema’ in tana}\(^{50}\) because, as in the Song of Karema, the soil she had with her became the land. Limumu’ut is associated with the land of Minahasa. And here is the cleverness of the Song of Karema. In the morning, Toar, which is the sun, raises in the east out of the earth. Hence symbolically, Lumimuut gives birth to Toar. In the evening, the sun (Toar) sets in and is perceived to penetrate the earth, hence Toar becomes the husband of Lumimuut. Schwarz writes this in Tontemboan, \textit{si endo makesot a mitjona}


\(^{49}\)Wenas, \textit{Sejarah dan Kebudayaan Minahasa}, 83.

\(^{50}\)Cf. Schwarz, \textit{Tontemboansche Teksten}, 466; Wenas, \textit{Sejarah dan Kebudayaan Minahasa}, 83.
mauntep a makona (the sun rises in the east and sets in the west). At night the sky is embellished by the stars; they are the children of Toar and Lumimuut, the people of Minahasa. This is why the constellations of the stars, which mark the planting and harvesting systems, are also used to symbolize the Minahasan form of political organization, which will be explained shortly.

Lumimuut’s mother is Wengi (evening) and her father is Kawengian (the darkness of the night or dark moon). In the story, Lumimuut is impregnated by the wind called Awahat (from wa’at “west”). It is the west wind that brings the heavy cloud of rain in the rainy season. Karema bears the symbol of the office of the priest in Minahasan ethnic religion. As Wenas explains, the word comes from karerema’ (star); hence it may signify all the stars or a particular star, like Kaendoan, the morning star or Venus. Kaendoan (Venus) is still observable when the sun is already high in the morning. And in the evening, when the western horizon is still bright, this star will appear. Figuratively, Karema witnesses when Toar (the sun) was born out of Lumimuut (earth) in the morning, and when Toar

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51 Schwarz, Tontemboansche Teksten, 466; Wenas, Sejarah dan Kebudayaan Minahasa, 83.
52 Schwarz, Tontemboansche Teksten, 374-375 as quoted in Wenas, Sejarah dan Kebudayaan Minahasa, 82-83.
53 Wenas, Sejarah dan Kebudayaan Minahasa, 83.
54 Wenas, Sejarah dan Kebudayaan Minahasa, 83.
becomes the husband of Lumimuut in the evening.\textsuperscript{55} Karema also has a brother named Lumambot (long), perhaps related to the so-called “star with a long tail” or comet.\textsuperscript{56}

Minahasan traditional knowledge recognizes different celestial bodies that inform the year-round life cycle. This astronomical knowledge is particularly mastered by a person called \textit{tona’as pengumaan}, which is loosely defined as the agricultural expert responsible for designating the season of planting certain crops, the rice harvesting, fishing season, and the season of certain diseases.\textsuperscript{57}

An important note here is that \textit{tou Minahasa} (people of Minahasa) cannot be other than the children of Toar and Lumimuut, but this is different from the way this story has been misunderstood and misused. The story has to be understood in the way the ancestors understood the story, that it is the sun and the earth of Minahasa that symbolically gave birth to the children of Minahasa, and therefore they have the right to live on this land, to tend and cultivate it (\textit{apar}), to take care

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\textsuperscript{55}Wenas, \textit{Sejarah dan Kebudayaan Minahasa}, 83.
\textsuperscript{56}Schwarz, \textit{Tontemboansche Teksten}, 378; Wenas, \textit{Sejarah dan Kebudayaan Minahasa}, 83.
\textsuperscript{57}Wenas provides the division of time of the day, days of the month and months of the year based on the lunar phase, and other Minahasan traditional knowledge, using, among others, resources written by a number of Europeans (\textit{Sejarah dan Kebudayaan Minahasa}, 83). Here we need to acknowledge the role of the missionaries, colonial officials, anthropologists, naturalists, travelers, who made the effort to record the oral traditions, situations and conditions in Minahasa in the past, making it possible for the later generations to have access these traditions, although readers of these writings have to be critical (cf. Supit, \textit{Minahasa}, 13).
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of it generation after generation. This is not a myth as defined above, but a meta-
narrative.

Political Organization

The Minahasan traditional society was divided into three categories. As it is symbolized in the Song of Karema, the offspring of Toar and Lumimuut are:

1) *Makarua Siouw* (the Two Times Nine), the children;

2) *Makatelu Pitu* (the Three Times Seven), the grandchildren; and

3) *Pasiouwan Telu* (the Nine-three), the people.

The three names are connected to the appearances of the stars in the sky. The Nine-three may be the Nine stars group which is divided into 3-3-3. The three brightest stars in this group are called *Kateluan*. This constellation is referred to as *Laker*, meaning “many.” 58

The *Makarua Siouw* are the 18 names of the ancestors who were the first to leave the hills of Wulur Mahatus, the first dwelling place of the early Minahasans. Wenas, quoting J. G. F. Riedel, lists their names as follows:

Mandel[y], Pinontoan, Rumengan, Manarangsang, Kumiwel, Lololing, Makaliwey, Mangalu’un, Manambeka, Manambe’ang, Manawa’ang, Manalea,

Totokai, Tingkulendeng, Soputan, Makawalang, Winowatan, Kumambong.\textsuperscript{59} The Makarua Siouw is also associated with the office of walian (priest/priestess). The term walian comes from wali which means to escort in the sense of the hen escorting and protecting its chicks.\textsuperscript{60}

The Makatelu Pitu are the 21 names of the ancestors when the people had spread throughout Minahasa: Rumoyong Porong, Tumewang, Rimumbu’uk, Siouw Kurur, Roring Se’epang, Pangerapan, Pontoh Mandolang, Talumangkun, Sumendap, Makarawung, Repi, Pangimbatan, Muntu-untu, Marinoya, Pana’aran, Tamantular, Mio-ioh, Mainalo, Mamarimbing, Makara’u, Tumila’ar.\textsuperscript{61} The Makatelu Pitu is also used to represent the office of tona’as (from ta’as “tough,” “hard”),\textsuperscript{62} that is the skillful, knowledgeable persons in the community (the community leaders).

Most of the names above are listed with the names of their wives, children, places where they went to stay, and also their expertise, whether in military, agriculture, ritual, etc. It appears that these were people who became prominent

\textsuperscript{59}J. G. F. Riedel, Das Toumbuluhsche Pantheon (Berlin: Friedlander, 1894), 5-7 as quoted in Wenas, Sejarah dan Kebudayaan Minahasa, 8-10.
\textsuperscript{60}Wenas, Sejarah dan Kebudayaan Minahasa, 69.
\textsuperscript{61}Riedel, Das Toumbuluhsche Pantheon, 4-10 as quoted in Wenas, Sejarah dan Kebudayaan Minahasa, 8-10.
\textsuperscript{62}Wenas, Sejarah dan Kebudayaan Minahasa, 69.
because of their significant contributions to the society, and therefore they were regarded as opo’ or empung or kasuruan (ancestors). As Taulu explains, not all the deceased became ancestors to the Minahasans, but only those who had led exemplary lives for the well-being of their descendants.63

The Makarua Siouw and Makatelu Pitu may be best understood from the zodiac table delineated by J. Ten Hove.64 Before the Kateluan (Nine-three stars), the zodiac symbol of June, there is the six stars of May with the zodiac symbol Lumbaken (a shoe made of a python tail). Since the number nine is perceived as sacred, two times nine may have been used to represent the eighteen names of the Makarua Siouw ancestors, rather than three times six. The number nine demonstrates importance and reverence. In the meanwhile, July counts seven stars with the zodiac symbol Ru’aw (sea water half receding, half moon). With the nine stars (June) enclosed by six (May) and seven (July) stars, the idea might be that the people are protected by the ancestors as well as the walian and tona’as.

63Taulu, Bunga rampai, 33.
64De Alifoersche Dierenriem (Rotterdam: Oegstgeest Zendings Bureau, 1887) as presented by Wenas, Sejarah dan Kebudayaan Minahasa, 86-87.
The Pasiouwan Telu symbolizes the people of Minahasa under the leadership of the walian (priests/priestesses) and the tona’as (community leaders/experts). Supit asserts that the leaders in Minahasa were elected based on the three principles of leadership: ngaasan (also called sigha’) that is the capability to take care of the ro’ong/wanua; niatean (to have conscience, courage to lead, perseverance and tenacity in dealing with the challenges faced by ro’ong/wanua); and mawai (also keter) that is physical strength to overcome challenges and may also include wealth.

When the walian and tona’as grow old, they sit in the patu’usan (from tu’us “to stare at something,” meaning those who the people look up to), the advisory council that provides counsel and advice. This council is influential in the matter of chief election. Ferry R. Mawikere writes that the priests/priestesses (walian), experts (tona’as), members of advisory council (patu’usan), commanders-in-chief (teterusan), including the chiefs of the village or walak (ukung and ukung wangko’) are all categorized as mapendang, that is the teachers at the papendangan, the

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65 Wenas points out that the Pasiouwan Telu are the offspring of the three women called pasiouwan from three ancient pakasaan (sub-ethnic groups): Tombulu, Tontewoh (which he suggests derived Tonsawang, Tondano, and Tonsea), and Tonkimbut (Tontemboan) (Sejarah dan Kebudayaan Minahasa, 12).
66 Supit, Minahasa, 60.
67 Sejarah dan Kebudayaan Minahasa, 70-71. According to Wenas, the word patu’usan (i.e., patu’usan) comes from tu’us “counsel” or “explanation.”
traditional school in Minahasan society. The students were called *pahayoan*, and their common subjects (called *papendeng*) were *pemosanan* (rituals of Minahasan ethnic religion), *pemanuaan* (land/territory), *pengumaan* (agriculture), and *pengundaman* (medicine).  

According to the oral tradition recorded by Taulu, there was a time when a number of *walian*, such as Mahawetik and Meikalalo, imitating the practice of the neighboring kingdoms, behaved in opposition to the *kenaramen* (traditions). Consequently, the oppressed *Pasiouwan Telu* (the people), with Kopero as the leader, overthrew the ill-leadership of the *Makarua Siouw* (the priests/priestesses). Taulu writes that Kopero called a meeting which was held at the place now known as *Watu Pinawetengan* (Stone of Allotment) in order to restore the traditions inherited from Toar and Lumimuut. These included: choosing leaders from the elders who are honest, courageous, commanding, strong, etc; deliberation in all decisions; bad leaders are to be dismissed; *patu’usan* (the board of elders) oversee the leaders; the *kenaramen* (traditions) are good customs and to be conserved; young men must become *waraney* (soldiers/warriors) in the *walak;*

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69 Meaning they were acting as kings in the midst of their people (Taulu, *Bunga Rampai*, 6).
women and men are equal;\textsuperscript{70} the counsel of the elderly should be heeded, parental authority must be upheld; the leadership now is under the \textit{Pasiowan Telu}; democracy is to be guarded in the spirit of \textit{masuat peleng} (all are the same/equal), etc.\textsuperscript{71} What Taulu lists here were the ideals of the Minahasan traditional society.

At \textit{Watu Pinawetengan}, according to Taulu, the leaders of Malesung assigned the languages and rituals to each groups, hence known as \textit{pinawetengan e nuwu wo pinawetengan um posan} (the allotment of languages and rituals),\textsuperscript{72} which refers to the four sub-ethnic territories alluded to in the beginning of the Song of Karema: Tombulu, northwest to \textit{wanua Majesu}; Tonsea, northeast to \textit{wanua Niaranan}; Tontemboan, southwest to \textit{wanua Kaiwasian}; and Tondano, southeast to \textit{wanua Atep}.\textsuperscript{73} After the meeting, the leader made a speech: “...Esa kita peleng!

\textsuperscript{70}In another part of his book \textit{Bunga Rampai}, Taulu writes that according to “an old story” Lumimu’ut was formerly a princess in a palace who left because of the strict customs where the women have to bow down to the men. She does not want to pass this down to her offspring (p. 31). Taulu’s expression “an old story” points that he is making a story (the kind of \textit{neumanen}/myth) to convey a point. Interestingly, today I found different stories about Toar and Lumimuut saying that they came from a Japanese imperial family, or Chinese or Mongol kingdoms.

\textsuperscript{71}Taulu, \textit{Bunga rampai}, 6.

\textsuperscript{72}See the four symbols of \textit{posan} (ritual) in the appendix.

\textsuperscript{73}Taulu, \textit{Bunga rampai}, 6-8; Watuseke only mentions three groups in this meeting: Tombulu, Tonsea, and Tontemboan, suggesting that the Tondano came later to Malesung (\textit{Sejarah Minahasa}, 14-15). Wenas postulates three groups also: Tombulu, Tontewoh, and Tongkimbut (Tontemboan)
Esa woan pawetengan. Kumihit un posan. Ta’an kita peleng esa! Maesa wian untep!

Maesa masaru se kaseke wana ngkesot!” (We are one one! One, we separate according to the ritual of worship. But we are one! One from inside! One in facing the enemies from outside!)\textsuperscript{74}

Social-economic Practices

There are references to the soil, the land, seeds, paddy leaves, and working until “my face filled with sweat” in the Song of Karema,\textsuperscript{75} yet only by understanding the symbolic representation of the song, then one may grasp that this song has its background in an agricultural society: \textit{Awahat} is the west wind that brings the rain, and with the rain the land will yield produce, and there will follow the thanksgiving to the \textit{Empung Wa’ilan Wangko’}, a tradition preserved until today called \textit{Pengucapan Syukur} (festivals of thanksgiving). Speaking about the zodiac previously, Minahasan zodiac are associated with the paddy cultivation. \textit{Lumbaken} (with six stars), for example, means that May is the time to harvest the paddy fields. \textit{Kateluan} (with nine stars) signifies that June is the time

\textsuperscript{74}Taulu, \textit{Bunga rampai}, 8.

\textsuperscript{75}See the song in the appendix.
to separate the paddy from hay, and Ru’aw (with seven stars) is the time to bring the paddy home in July, and so on.76

Egalitarianism is the norm for Minahasan traditional society. Taulu asserts that in Malesung ukung wangko’ (the head of a walak) and a commoner shared the same right to the land that is owned by the walak.77 Being an agricultural society, Minahasans developed a system called mapalus, a socio-cultural and economic institution inspired by the philosophy of si tou timou tumou tou. Its essence, according to Jan Turang, is “a system, procedure, method or technique of cooperation for the interests of the group and its members' in turns.”78 As an organizing method, mapalus combines members’ resources for the purpose of the welfare of each member. The way it functions in the traditional Minahasan society is not solely as a tool for economic survival by way of cultivating one’s field in turn, or tackling heavy labor together, but also in cultivating aspects of

76 See Hove, De Alifoersche Dierenriem; Wenas, Sejarah dan Kebudayaan Minahasa, 86-87.
77 Taulu, Bunga rampai, 31.
78 Saruan, “Profil Etnik Minahasa,” in Etnik Minahasa Dalam Akselerasi Perubahan, 386 (translation mine); Wil Lundstrom-Burghoorn refers to mapalus as “task group” – people who cooperate and exchange in a formalized manner (Minahasa Civilization, 163).
culture such as language, tradition, and familial attitude.\textsuperscript{79} Hence, by definition mapalus is also a socio-cultural preservation.

From the concept of mapalus, Saruan describes Wem Senduk’s analysis of the practice of metetamberan (freely giving to one another), which is not exactly a gift-exchange system, although this is also present in Minahasan traditional society. The root word tamber means to give away something without any expectation of return or reciprocity. The person who exercises tumamber (to do tamber) does that autonomously towards a family or community. Paraphrasing Senduk, Saruan writes that this practice “is a principal of social concern, even an indicator of social cohesion...aimed at the well being of the community (prosperity and security).”\textsuperscript{80}

In places where mapalus took stronger root, Taulu reminisces that well before World War II, especially in the villages, the youngsters were still participating in mapalus. It was the time they socialized with their friends, learned how to cultivate, and heard the call and response songs and proverbs sung by their

\textsuperscript{79} The practice of mapalus incorporated songs, stories, poems, etc. as Graafland observes, “Other than spontaneous proverbs, there are songs, which are passed down orally among the people. Some are from the ancient times and some are from a much later time” (Graafland and Montolalu, Minahasa, 45).

\textsuperscript{80} “Profil Etnik Minahasa,” in Etnik Minahasa Dalam Akselerasi Perubahan, 388.
parents, or the young people. If they had school, they joined it after school.\textsuperscript{81} This obviously has changed, yet \textit{mapalus} today also has been expanded into “agriculture, fishery, money rotation, funds in time of bereavement or wedding celebration, and in different community groups.”\textsuperscript{82} In 2004, the Kawanua Minahasa organization (Kerukunan Keluarga Kawanua, K3) published the “\textit{Manifesto Manusia Kawanua}” (manifesto of the people of Kawanua), which also calls for an economic development in Minahasa based on \textit{mapalus} or “working together as free and autonomous person in togetherness according to the condition of the social-economic and technology today and in the future.”\textsuperscript{83}

Medicine

There are several vocations mentioned in the Song of Karema: the megasin (salt makers), the \textit{rumopa} (sago maker), the \textit{walian} (priestess/priest), and the \textit{kotulus} (traditional doctor).\textsuperscript{84} The song also mentions some medicinal plants, such as ginger (\textit{wangelei} or \textit{lia}) which is common in traditional healing practice, also

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{81}Taulu, \textit{Bunga Rampai}, 36.
\item \textsuperscript{84}Wenas, quoting Riedel’s \textit{Toumbuluhsche Pantheon}, p. 4, points out that \textit{walian tulus} (or \textit{kotulus}) is the expert of spirit-related sickness (\textit{Sejarah dan Kebudayaan Minahasa}, 151).
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
tu´is (amomum album) and assa (saccharum spontaneum) which have medicinal expediency.

Illness in traditional Minahasan society is categorized into two different kinds, one is the natural illness/disease and the other is related to the spiritual realm. The first are treated with different kinds of local herbs, which involves knowledge of different plants and other ingredients, their use and medicinal properties. Certain people also can heal through massage. The second kind of illness may be a reprimand from the ancestors due to one’s transgression of the customs. Otherwise, it may be caused by an ill-intention of a meniwo, or else infuriated evil spirits. The treatment is through communication with ancestral spirits by the mediation of the healer, which usually involves being in trance/spirit possession.

Other terms for medicine practitioners/traditional doctors are mengundam (from undam “to cure”) and mengelot (from elot “to cure”). The contemporary meaning of the two connotes a negative understanding as they have been associated with shamanism (Bahasa, perdukunan) across the board. They are

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85 See Wenas, Sejarah dan Kebudayaan Minahasa, 151-153.
86 Tondano variety, from the word siwo “make.” Meniwo carries the meaning of one who utilizes one’s knowledge to impinge others with misfortune such as sickness, failure, etc.
deemed unchristian; although many Christians still seek their help when their sickness is prolonged, when medicines from the doctors are not helping, or when they do not have money to go to the hospital. Traditionally, the ability to heal among the traditional doctors is considered a gift (karunia) and must be performed not for profit. Otherwise, the ability will be taken away. Today some of the practitioners have also incorporated Christian or Muslim spirituality by using the Bible or Al-Quran and prayers. In addition, there are also religious spiritual healers who use water, ointment, herbs and prayer to heal.\textsuperscript{87}

Minahasan ethnic religion

There is no reference in either oral traditions or recorded ones where the Almighty is addressed in a way that suggests a personal name. The word “Empung,” as it is used in the Song of Karema above, means “Lord.” While the term is also used for Minahasan ancestors, the singular form in this context is understood as “the Almighty.”\textsuperscript{88} Other renditions come with qualifiers, such as

\textsuperscript{87}Christopher K. Drysdale made an attempt to explore the topic of the religious spiritual healer in Minahasa in his thesis \textit{The Effects of the Protestant Church on Identity Formation among the Minahasa of North Sulawes, Indonesia} (MA thesis, Northern Illinois University, 2005).

\textsuperscript{88}Wenas consistently translates the word “Empung” as Tuhan (Bahasa) that is “Lord” (\textit{Sejarah dan Kebudayaan Minahasa}, 79-81).
Empung Renga-rengan (The Ever-Present Lord)⁸⁹ and Empung Wa’ilan Wangko’ (The Great and Abundant Lord); the term Wa’ilan used in the Song of Karema signifies this meaning.

The other term for the Almighty is “Opo’,” which is also used for the ancestors, but this is more in the sense of a reverent address rather than ancestralship, although the Almighty is also considered as the suru in the sense of “source.”⁹⁰ Other titles for the Almighty include “Opo’ Mana en Atas” or “Opo’ Wana en Atas” (God in the Above/Sky/Heaven).

There was a difficulty between the Minahasans and the Christian missionaries in trying to converse about their religious understandings. For instance, N. Graafland, NZG missionary, writes that he heard several Minahasan walian say convincingly that there is only one God, but there are many empung. Yet he also heard others who said that there is only one Empung, the rest are walian.⁹¹ Using the explanation above that both “opo’” and “empung” are used for

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⁸⁹The word rengan means “during,” “of the same age;” karengan “simultaneously;” renga-rengan “spirit” or “spiritual.” A. Wantalangi, et.al. translate Empung Renga-rengan as “God that is a spirit” (Kamus Tondano-Indonesia, 1985).

⁹⁰The Almighty is also addressed as “Kasuruan,” (from suru, “descent,” “offspring;” “ancestor”), meaning God as the Creator, the source from whom human beings and their offspring came into being. In the Tontemboan-speaking community, the Almighty is also addressed as Amang Kasuruan Wangko’, “Great Father Source of Life.”

⁹¹Graafland and Montolalu, Minahasa, 84.
the Almighty and the ancestors, the first statement may be understood that there
is only one God (Opo’), but there are many ancestors (opo’-opo’) who are called se
empung (pl.). The second one may be similar, meaning that there is only one
Empung (that is God) and the rest were walian, as the first order of the ancestors
who are also rendered as empung.\(^2\)

The words “opo’” and “empung” also “kasuruan” (the last is used among the
Tontemboan) are often translated as “dewa/dewi” in Bahasa, connoting a divine
origin, which in English is translated as “male or female gods.” However, the
more accurate translation for these words is “ancestor” (Bahasa., “nenek moyang”).

The names of the so-called “dewa/dewi” (“gods”) in Minahasa are used as family
names, pointing out that they were Minahasan ancestors.\(^3\) Taulu argues that this

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\(^2\) Graafland postulates that this trace of monotheism in Minahasan ethnic religion was due
to Christian influence; he then presses for the notion of polytheism in Minahasan religiosity (see
Graafland and Montolalu, *Minahasa*, 84). Saruan categorizes such argument as Opo’logi
(Opo’logy), an approach based on “Teori Evolusionistis” of the West. In contrast, he proposes
Opo’isme or Empungisme (Opo’ism or Empungism), described as a concept that is born out of
unique cultural expressions of the Minahasan even before the arrival of the missionaries. He
points at the Minahasan prayers to e.g., *Empung Wa’ilan Wangko’* in line with Neundenberg’s
position that “the beginning of human worship of the divine was monotheistic” (“Profil Etnik
Minahasa,” in *Etnik Minahasa Dalam Akselerasi Perubahan*, 392; Neundenberg was NZG secretary
and his statement is quoted from Med. NZG 27 (1883), 172-173).

\(^3\) Graafland and Montolalu, *Minahasa*, 88-89, 93.
misunderstanding of the practice of *paopo’on* (to revere one as an ancestor) has caused some writers to think of Minahasa as a polytheistic society.\(^94\)

As Graafland rightly points out, Minahasans know that they have a spirit (*mukur*) which will not die.\(^95\) In Minahan ethnic religion, death means moving into another world, which is different yet not totally separated from the world that is.\(^96\) Hence, each group (whether in the level of a village or a *walak*) has their own revered ancestors, often founders of the community, who are, as Saruan explains, “honored, respected, and acknowledged as keepers, defenders, and protectors of the people during their lifetime.”\(^97\) Saruan further explains that, on the one hand, these functions are understood to come from the Almighty (*Si Empung Wa’ilan*) but, on the other, they are manifested by the ancestors as the active and concrete presence of the Almighty.\(^98\)

Minahasans observed different *posan* or *peli’i*, rituals aimed to avert diseases or disaster and to secure safety, blessings, success, healing, including honoring

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\(^94\) Taulu, *Bunga Rampai*, 33; Graafland and Montolalu, *Minahasa*, 85; Also obvious on the title of Riedel’s book *Das Toumbuluhsche Pantheon*.

\(^95\) Graafland and Montolalu, *Minahasa*, 324.


the ancestors, invoking courage, and as thanksgiving. They are categorized into two kinds, for family and for the community. Graafland suggests that the many posan, which imply feasts, Minahasans observed in the past began as a simple religious ritual and then developed into extensive and complicated practices. One of the posan that Graafland describes is called sumungkul wo sumampet mauri which is a replication of the practice of obtaining human heads at the territorial borders. This practice may be a ritual of initiation to become a waraney (warrior) in the community. Graafland points out that, with the colonial government’s assertiveness to punish homicide, instead of inflicting a victim, a wooden puppet smeared with animal’s blood was used as a target for their sago-sago (kind of spear) and other weaponry in this posan, which then is followed with a feast where they give thanks and praise the bravery of one another.

In line with Saruan’s explanation regarding the role of the ancestors above, Wenas proposes that there are two ways of praying in Minahasan ethnic religion. He calls these ways “direct” and “indirect,” meaning that a prayer is addressed directly to Empung or through the proxy of the ancestors. If we take the Song of

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99 See Graafland and Montolalu, Minahasa, 92-93, 96, 110.
100 Graafland and Montolalu, Minahasa, 94.
101 Graafland and Montolalu, Minahasa, 92.
102 Graafland and Montolalu, Minahasa, 108ff.
103 Graafland and Montolalu, Minahasa, 108ff.
Karema as a point of reference, assuming that it was the original matrix of
Minahasan ethnic religion, then the “direct” approach will appear as the early
form of Minahasan ethnic religion, wherein Si Empung Wa’ilan is at the center of
religious practice. It may then be assumed that, along with Minahasans’ struggle
to survive and build new communities, their heroes which they then venerated
as ancestors received a high place in their communal consciousness.
Chapter 5: Christianity in Minahasa: From The Era of Colonialism to Independence

“There is probably no other region in Indonesia where so many people emphasise the close relationship between local or ethnic identity and Christianity,” write Christiaan de Jonge, Arnold Parengkuan, and Karel Steenbrink. They subsequently state: “This was the result of drastic changes in social, economic, and religious life during the period of the first inland missionary activities by the German NZG workers, J. G. Schwarz and J. F. Riedel.” While their conclusion is within the perimeter, this chapter shows that there is more to this relationship than just the NZG mission work. This chapter delineates the chronology of Minahasa’s encounter with Christianity in the context of colonialism and in the emergence of a new independent nation-state, Indonesia. We begin by following the time of enmity in the archipelago to the time of religious tolerance in Minahasa.

The Period of the Spanish and Portuguese (1568-1666)

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In April of 1511, the Portuguese led by Afonso de Albuquerque invaded Malacca in Southeast Asia. About six months later, he dispatched an expedition to explore the Moluccas, the source of spices traded in Malacca. Only a decade later (1521), King Manuel of Portugal sent an expedition to build a fortress in the Moluccas. They were welcomed in Ternate, and this became the center for Portugal’s economic and political activities, as well as a Catholic mission post, despite the fact that its king and many of its inhabitants had embraced Islam.

Francis Xavier arrived in the Moluccas in 1546 and worked for about one year and a half. Some have suggested that Xavier preached at Kema, a port village on the northeastern coast of Minahasa, as well as at Manado. However, A. J. Van

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5End, *Ragi Carita*, 52; Jan S. Aritonang provides an important background on the relationship between Islam and Christianity during this period, especially with regards to the series of wars during the Crusade Era that caused enmity towards Islam and confrontation towards Christianity. He also notes that “even though Indonesian Christians and Muslims did not participate [in those wars], the consequences, including the mentality, resulting from those wars were present in Indonesia, even to this time” (“Sejarah Perjumpaan Gereja dan Islam di Indonesia” in *Agama dalam dialog: pencerahan, pendamaian, dan masa depan; punjung tulis 60 tahun Prof. Dr. Olaf Herbert Schumann* [Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 1999], 180-182 [translation mine]).

6This was a time marked by a wide acceptance of the Christian faith among the natives, whether royal or commoner, despite the unchristian practices of his own countrymen (End, *Ragi Carita*, 44).
Aernsbergen points out that these references are more likely an attribution to his legendary pioneering mission effort, which was carried on by his successors.\(^6\)

In 1552, Fr. Juan de Beira wrote from Halmahera in the Moluccas: “We received relentlessly envoys: they want to embrace the faith of Christ...There are those who inhabited a remote region, divided into four kingdoms that speak the same language: good climate, fertile soil, not Muslims.”\(^7\) Aernsbergen suggests that the “four kingdoms” might have been the four “stammen” (tribes) of Minahasa.\(^8\) The region was considered part of the kingdom of Manado, although as Ds. Montanus wrote in 1674, the kings of Manado never had any hold of the people in the interior.\(^9\)

In 1563, Sultan Hairun engineered a plan to attack North Sulawesi. The plot came to the attention of the Society of Jesus in Ternate, and the Portuguese sailed to Manado.\(^10\) On board with the Portuguese fleet was Fr. Diego de Megalhaes,

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\(^8\) Aernsbergen, *Uit en Over the Minahasa*, 8-10.


\(^10\) Today the island is called Manado Tua (Old Manado).
who then baptized the king of Manado together with 1500 of his people.\footnote{Adolf Heuken SJ, “Catholic Converts in the Moluccas, Minahasa, and Sangihe-Talaud, 1512-1680” in \textit{History of Christianity in Indonesia}, 62; Watuseke, \textit{Sejarah Minahasa}, 17; Supit, \textit{Minahasa}, 78-80.) On this expedition de Megalhaes went on to Bolaang, ruled by the son of the king of Manado, where he was welcomed, but he hastily sailed to Toli-toli. From there he sailed back through Kaidipan, where he baptized 2000 adults, and stayed awhile in Manado to give instruction to the new converts.\footnote{Fr. Megalhaes still visited Manado several times from Ternate (Heuken, “Catholic Converts in the Moluccas, Minahasa, and Sangihe-Talaud, 1512-1680” in \textit{History of Christianity in Indonesia}, 62).}

In 1568, Fr. Pero Mascarenhas also visited Manado, along with Siau and the surrounding islands, Kaidipan and Bolaang-Mongondow. Thousands asked for baptism, but he only accepted a few head villages, focusing more on religious instruction for those who had been baptized earlier. He promised to send another worker that would be able to stay and give instruction to the people.\footnote{Heuken, “Catholic Converts in the Moluccas, Minahasa, and Sangihe-Talaud, 1512-1680” in \textit{History of Christianity in Indonesia}, 62.}

According to Molsbergen, mentioned in Fr. Mascarenhas’ letter written on March 1569 in Ternate, the “\textit{Minahassa-bewoners}” (Minahan people) asked for the missionaries to come.\footnote{Molsbergen, \textit{Geschiedenis van de Minahassa tot 1829}, 9-10.} This attempt could have been an effort to maintain
independence from Ternate. Supit, on the other hand, writes that when Fr. Megalhaes was in Manado, people from “southern Minahasa” came asking to be baptized, but this was not granted. He does not speak about Fr. Mascarenhas’ visitation. He suggests that this movement on the part of Malesung to ask for baptism was propelled by the Spaniards’ cruelty in the interior. In contrast to the Tasikela (designation for the Spaniards), the Portuguese were perceived as well-disposed in their interaction with the natives; hence the highlanders, especially in this case from the south, sought to be Christians through Portuguese missionaries, which would mean also becoming friends with Portugal.

Nonetheless, only two years after Fr. Mascarenhas’ visitation in Manado, Sultan Hairun was murdered in the Portuguese fort in Ternate (1570), triggering the 36 year war led by Baabullah, the successor of the Sultan. Portuguese power in the Moluccas wilted at a fast pace so much so that in 1575 they had to evacuate

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15 Aernsbergen, Uit en Over the Minahasa, 12-13; Donald F. Lach, Asia in the Making of Europe Book 2 (Chicago [u.a.]: The Univ. of Chicago Press, 1994), 619.
16 Supit, Minahasa, 81.
17 Supit, Minahasa, 80.
from their fort in Ternate. During this period, mission work in North Sulawesi suffered tremendously, more still after Baabullah conquered the kingdom of Manado in 1580. This same year, Portugal came under the Spanish crown.

The Spaniards maintained their presence in North Sulawesi and even intensified it following the establishment of a fort in Cebu, the Philippines (1565), and Manila’s capture (1571). Going after the rice in this area to support their interests in the Philippines and the Moluccas, the Spaniards ventured into the interior, spreading calamity among the people. Taulu provides some accounts of how the Spanish soldiers treated the Minahasans. They imposed rice taxation, harassed the women, and killed the elderly. Those who stood against their tyranny were killed. A head of the walak (ukung wangko’) by name Mononimbar in Tondano, one who refused to obey the taxation and banned religious activities

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19 Watuseke, Sejarah Minahasa, 18.
20 Supit, Minahasa, 81.
21 Supit, Minahasa, 81; Taulu, Langkah Sedjarah Malesung-Minahasa, djilid II (Manado: Badan Budaja Jajasan Membangun, 1971), 11.
by the Spanish in his region, was treacherously killed by Don Pedro Alkasas, a *fetor* (Spanish official) in Manado.\(^{22}\)

Subsequent to the unification of the two Iberian kingdoms, Spain took measures to help Portugal against Ternate. In 1606 their reinforcements eventually arrived in the Moluccas to fight Ternate, which had itself allied with a newcomer in Nusantara: the V. O. C. The fortune was still with Spain. Ternate was defeated, and its sultan was exiled to Manila, the Philippines. Spain then established alliances with different kingdoms in North Sulawesi who were fighting against Ternate, including the kingdom of Manado, whose king requested missionaries to come in 1617.\(^{23}\) In response, Lucas de Vergara Gaviria, Governor of Ternate, sent Fr. Joannes Baptista Scialamonte and Cosmas Pinto to Manado. Both were received with great joy by the king and his people.\(^{24}\) They baptized the king and, with his help, erected a church with a consistory (house

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\(^{24}\)Based on a letter sent by Fr. Scialamonte to the Provincial (*De Jaarbrief van Malabar ddo.* December 1, 1619) as quoted in Aernsbergen, *Uit en Over the Minahasa*, 19-20).
for the priests). They also established the first Christian school in the northern peninsula; there also a Spanish fort was built.\textsuperscript{25}

Fr. Scialamonte reported that the earlier work of Fr. Mascarenhas had survived in Manado,\textsuperscript{26} and that there were also native inhabitants living outside of it “with whom our work, with God’s help, will be prosperous, because the tribe is so numerous and spread over different villages, while the majority lived at the shore of a lake.”\textsuperscript{27} In his travels to this area, which appears to be Tondano, Fr. Scialamonte was welcomed with a celebration, a big cross was erected at one village and the inhabitants of another village requested the same and openly promised to become Christians.\textsuperscript{28} This all soon turned into wishful thinking, however, as Pinto became very ill and had to be transported back to Ternate. Fr. Scialamonte followed suit and died soon after.

\textsuperscript{25}At this time, the kingdom of Manado had moved its base from the Manado Island to the northern bay of North Sulawesi mainland, at the estuary of the Tondano River, known then as Monango Labo. This place acquired the group identification, Manado (probably from Maadon, see Supit, \textit{Minahasa}, 70-77), which in turn made the Manado Island become Manado Tua (Old Manado).

\textsuperscript{26}In his letter Fr. Scialamonte wrote about two elderly people, one with Mascarenhas as his nick name, and the other who knew the Catechism. It made him aware that they had received baptism; this is in contrast to Heuken, who writes that “the Christians baptised by Fr. Magelhaes in the 1560s had...become pagan again or turned Muslim” (“Catholic Converts in the Moluccas, Minahasa, and Sangihe-Talaud, 1512-1680” in \textit{History of Christianity in Indonesia}, 63).

\textsuperscript{27}Aernsbergen, \textit{Uit en Over the Minahasa}, 19-20 (translation mine); Supit, \textit{Minahasa}, 82-83.

Aernsbergen points out that during this time, Manado received special attention from the Catholic Church. As he writes, when sickness or death took away the missionaries, they were soon replaced by others. In 1620, Fr. A. Simi (or Simus) came to Manado with a number of Minahasans who had received religious education at a seminary in Ternate. A year before, Fr. Blas Palomino and Fr. Diego de Rojas, both from the Franciscan order, arrived in this area. Fr. Palomino made an effort to reach farther into the interior. Accompanied by Wongkar, chief of Kali, and several Spanish soldiers, he went to Kakaskasen, Tomohon, Sarongsong, Tombariri, Tondano, and Kema. However, he was not well received in the region. Even in Tondano, where according to Fr. Scialamonte, people had initially expressed their intention to become Christians. In his report, dated June 8, 1619, where he tended to disparage the Minahasans, Fr. Palomino suggested that the best way to “christianize” the people was to

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29 Aernsbergen, Uit en Over the Minahasa, 22-23.
30 Aernsbergen, Uit en Over the Minahasa, 23; Watuseke, Sejarah Minahasa, 19.
31 The Franciscans called the major city where the king of Manado resided as “Banta” (Félix de Huerta, Estado geográfico, topográfico, ... [Binondo: Imprenta de M. Sanchez y Ca, 1865], 683); Kali (Cale) is a Tombulu village about 10 km from the shore of Manado.
32 The name of the places in Spanish record are Manados, Cale, Cascasen, Tomun, Saransong, Tombariri, Tandano, and Quemas (Huerta, Estado geográfico, topográfico..., 387); Wenas, Sejarah dan Kebudayaan Minahasa, 43.
subdue and govern them under the law and government.\textsuperscript{33} His \textit{conquistador} mentality perhaps was a hindrance for him. In his conversation with the leaders in Tondano, he was told that in case the Tondano were willing to be Christian, the priests should not interfere or ban the rituals and responsibilities according to their ethnic religion. This same concern was expressed in Kali.\textsuperscript{34} To this he responds that he will not force anybody to become Christian or interfere with them; those who by their own accord were willing to become Christians, must be taught first about Christianity and then be baptized.\textsuperscript{35} According to Fr. Petrus, who gave the account of Fr. Palomino’s martyrdom, in 1622, on the way to Ternate from Makassar, the ship Fr. Palomino boarded was carried away, due to heavy winds, to an island. Fr. Petrus identified the island as Manado (Tua). At a visitation with a number of people at the beach, reportedly from villages 14 miles away from Manado (Wenang), Fr. Palomino was murdered.\textsuperscript{36} Meanwhile, in

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\textsuperscript{34}Fr. Palomino was planning to stay with them and find his way back to Manado (Report of Fr. Petrus of the Order of the Immaculate Conception, \textit{Hidup dan Mati Sjahidnya Abdi Tuhan yang
1624, Fr. de Rojas died and was buried with “great veneration at the city square.”

The unstable political situation that led to the conquest of Manado by Makassar in 1634 must have brought Catholic mission to a halt. The mission work was restored in 1640 when Fr. Juan Yranzo, who reportedly was able to baptize 4000 people, settled in the interior (Tomohon). He was joined by Fr. Lorenzo Garralda, who continued the post at Kali, Tombulu. This growing mission work in the interior was abruptly interrupted after Spain appointed a king for Malesung. Ukung wangko’ Lumi of Toumu’ung (today Tomohon) rejected this violation of the custom, who in turn was slapped by a Spanish soldier. Such humiliation was not accepted by his family, who then mobilized

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37Huerta, Estado geográfico, topográfico..., 683.

38Watuseke writes that Makassar took over Manado, Gorontalo, and Tomini (Sejarah Minahasa, 20).

39Huerta, Estado geográfico, topográfico..., 683-684.

40Wenas, Sejarah dan Kebudayaan Minahasa, 43.
what Fr. Yranzo called “the three provinces” (Tombulu, Tondano, and Tonsea).\textsuperscript{41}

In August 10, 1643, Malesung stood up against the Spaniards.\textsuperscript{42}

The people also turned against the Catholic missionaries, accusing them of invoking the anger of \textit{opo’-opo’} (ancestors) and bringing calamity among them. Fr. Lorenzo Garralda was said to have been wounded badly by a spear and was sacrificed in the ritual of \textit{rumaghes}, in which those who participated ate a slice of his flesh.\textsuperscript{43} As the story goes, these people later became the first among their kindred to become followers of Christ. Fr. Juan Yranzo was taken into a hiding place for about eight months and cared for by native friends, until he left for Manila.\textsuperscript{44}

In 1651, the Spaniards appeared again in Malesung. Knowing that the V. O. C. had gained a foothold in Ternate, Minahasa sent envoys to propose an alliance.

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\item \textsuperscript{41}Taulu, \textit{Sebingkah Sedjarah Perang Minahasa-Spanyol}, 23.
\item \textsuperscript{42}Based on the report written by Fr. Juan Yranzo, as translated in Taulu, \textit{Sebingkah Sedjarah Perang Minahasa-Spanyol}, 19; Supit, \textit{Minahasa}, 86; Huerta gives the date of 1644 (\textit{Estado geográfico, topográfico…}, 683-684).
\item \textsuperscript{43}Wenas, \textit{Sejarah dan Kebudayaan Minahasa}, 45; \textit{Rumaghes} is a \textit{posan} in Minahasan ethnic religion that involves the giving of sacrifice such as food, drink, and betel nut (Ferry Koagow, “Poso dalam Kehidupan,” in \textit{Etnik Minahasa Dalam Akselerasi Perubahan}, 333).
\item \textsuperscript{44}Taulu, \textit{Sebingkah Sedjarah Perang Minahasa-Spanyol}, 24. During this time, Fr. Yranzo carved some images on the cliff where he was hiding concerning the war. The site is called today \textit{Watu Pinatik} (Written Stone).
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in 1654. It was a Dutch Governor in Ternate, Simon Cos, who eventually made the move and built a wood fortress at Manado called *De Nederlandsche Vastigheid* or The Netherlands Certainty (1657). Three years later, Spain left Malesung yet the Catholic mission continued with the arrival of Fr. Buenventura in Manado (1656) and Fr. Francisco Midas in Tondano (1666). Nonetheless, this latter year marked the building of the stone fort, the Amsterdam, as well as the banning of the Catholic mission in Minahasa.

During the Malesung-Spain War, Taulu points out that Spain brought in mercenarys from the Philippines: the islands of Pampango, Luzon, etc. The victory of Malesung was also gained with the help of these mercenarys who eventually took the side of the people they perceived to be oppressed. Taulu

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45 This was the second effort to propose an alliance with the Dutch. In 1644 Malesung also sent an envoy to the Dutch in Ternate (Watuseke, *Sejarah Minahasa*, 20-21); Taulu, *Sebingkah Sedjarah Perang Minahasa-Spanyol*, 62-63.


48 *Sebingkah Sedjarah Perang Minahasa-Spanyol*, 63.
adds that many of their descendants today live intermingled in Minahasa and become true Minahasans.\textsuperscript{49}

The Period of the V. O. C. and the Netherlands East Indies (1661-1945)

Not all four sub-ethnic groups in Malesung were open to trade with the V. O. C. The Tondano, then regarded as trade partners with Spain, refused to sell their rice to the V. O. C., threatening the strategic plan of making this region the rice-basket of the Moluccas.\textsuperscript{50} Simon Cos took the repressive route, causing the situation that led to the first Tondano War in 1661, which ended with the burning of the Tondano’s settlements on the lake.\textsuperscript{51}

In the meanwhile, the kingdom of Manado was undergoing a political shift. It was taken over by the king of Bolaang, who then took up the title “king of Manado.” In the year 1670, however, the people of Manado disavowed the king.

\textsuperscript{49} Sebingkah Sedjarah Perang Minahasa-Spanyol, 63-64.
\textsuperscript{50} The expression used by two Dutch governors in the 18\textsuperscript{th} century was broodkamer der Molukken “the bread-basket of the Moluccas” (Molsbergen, Geschiedenis van de Minahassa tot 1829, 105-106 as quoted in Schouten, Leadership and Social Mobility in a Southeast Asian Society, 41. Schouten suggests “rice barn”).
\textsuperscript{51} Watuske, Sejarah Minahasa, 22. Spain still attempted to take over Malesung, utilizing the Tondano in this quest. According to Supit, a priest called Fr. De Miedes later brought in ammunition for the Tondano to fight against the Dutch. This time the Spaniards were again defeated, and left the area. The Tondano were forced to give into the Dutch demands; one of these was to burn their settlement on the Lake of Tondano. Then they moved to the northern side of the lake, which later became the battlefield of the Minahasa-Dutch War 1808-1809 (Minahasa, 89-90).
and it became *walak* Manado, which reportedly in 1674 had one church, one school with 25 students, two teachers and about 600 inhabitants, among which 499 were Christians.\(^{52}\)

Protestant pastors visited some villages in Minahasa and on the island to the North, starting in 1663.\(^{53}\) A minister called Zacharias Kahaeng came to Manado in 1677 to serve the V. O. C. workers in and around the fortress, including the *borgo* (multi-ethnic descendants, usually of European and local origin).\(^{54}\) In 1679, the chiefs of the *walaks* signed a treaty with the V. O. C. Wenas asserts that from that year up to 1819 (140 years), there was no evangelization done by the V. O. C.\(^{55}\) It must come as a surprise then that in 1783 the Toudano leaders (from its three *walaks*: Tondano, Remboken, Kakas) wrote a petition to the V. O. C., asking to be baptized.\(^{56}\) This request was granted, and a pastor by the name of Adams

\(^{53}\)*Catholic Converts in the Moluccas, Minahasa, and Sangihe-Talaud, 1512-1680*’ in *History of Christianity in Indonesia*, 63; Wenas, quoting Molsbergen (*Geschiedenis van de Minahassa tot 1829*, 13), mentions a Protestant Pastor called Burum, who began baptizing around the Dutch Fortress in Manado in the same year (*Sejarah dan Kebudayaan Minahasa*, 123).
\(^{54}\)Wenas, *Sejarah dan Kebudayaan Minahasa*, 123.
\(^{55}\)Wenas, *Sejarah dan Kebudayaan Minahasa*, 123.
\(^{56}\)The petition was included in the Mangindaan article “Oud Tondano,” in *Tijdschrift voor Indische taal-, land- en volkenkunde*, 20, 373-377.
was assigned to lead the Toudano in faith. A year later he was dismissed. It might be because he criticized the way Company officers treated the Tondano.\textsuperscript{57}

Following the liquidation of the V. O. C. in 1799, the Dutch government assumed responsibility over Minahasa. The unstable situation in Europe, as the result of Napoleonic Wars (1799-1815), also pervaded into the so-called Netherlands East Indies. The war came to Minahasa, leaving a place called \textit{Minawanua}. For about seven years, Britain held its position in Minahasa, then complied with the Anglo-Dutch Treaty of 1814, in which one of its rulings was for Britain to return territories to the Netherlands.

Following this British interregnum, there were two crucial developments in Minahasa: One is the colonial \textit{cultuurstelsel} (compulsory coffee cultivation, or \textit{tanam paksa}) and the other was the mission work by the Netherlands Missionary Organization (NZG).\textsuperscript{58}

Coffee had been cultivated in Minahasa since 1796, but from 1822 until 1899 (longer than any other regions in present-day Indonesia), the Minahasans were

\textsuperscript{57}End, \textit{Ragi Carita}, 170.

forced to plant and transport coffee and other products such as cacao.\textsuperscript{59}

According to Schouten, the chiefs were bought into this system, in which they became more and more dependent on the colonial rulers for their living and accumulation of wealth, as they attempted to gain a good deal of the profit over the suffering people they were supposed to protect.\textsuperscript{60}

In 1817 and 1819, Joseph Kam, a missionary sent by the NZG to the East Indies, came to visit Minahasa. With his effort, two missionaries came to attend to the needs of two established congregations, but they died soon after their arrival, unable to make much progress.\textsuperscript{61} This situation was compensated by G. J. Hellendorn, who arrived in Manado in 1828, and established schools. A year before his arrival, Minahasan chiefs signed a contract with the Dutch to form \textit{hulstroepen}, Minahasan personnel to fight along with the Dutch (This group was known as \textit{Tulungan “help”} and also \textit{serdadu Manado “Manado soldier”}).\textsuperscript{62}

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\item \textsuperscript{61}End, \textit{Ragi Carita}, 170.
\item \textsuperscript{62}Wenas, \textit{Sejarah dan Kebudayaan Minahasa}, 51.
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In 1830, upon Hellendorn’s request, two missionaries were sent by the NZG to reach out into the highlands, J. F. Riedel and J. A. Schwarz. After learning native languages, they took their post in Tondano and Langowan respectively. There were a small number of Christians in the highlands of Minahasa when they started their work in 1831, and about 50 years later, about 80 percent of the Minahasans in the highlands had become Christians.\textsuperscript{63} In 1851, the Governor General of the East Indies in Batavia (Jakarta) declared that Catholic church workers were allowed to enter Minahasa again.\textsuperscript{64}

The characteristics of Minahasan Christianity were influenced by change that had been taking place in Europe. The wars that were invested in political and religious interests, and now with their tragic consequences, led some people to reconsider the nature of the relationship between the state and religious institutions, as well as the nature of Christianity. In the heartland of the Reformation movement, Germany, P. J. Spener advocated the practical aspects of what it meant to be a Christian, not just theories (in the mind). Christian life must show fruits, so to say, in daily life; and in order to bear fruits, the seed must first

\textsuperscript{63}End, \textit{Ragi Carita}, 170.
\textsuperscript{64}Wenas, \textit{Sejarah dan Kebudayaan Minahasa}, 128.
be buried in the ground, meaning a true repentance.\textsuperscript{65} Labeled as “Pietism,” (from “piety” or in Bahasa, “kesalehan”), also referred to as “the religion of the heart,” this movement emphasized bringing Christian philosophy (\textit{ratio sapientia})\textsuperscript{66} and idealism back into public life. The missionaries that came to Minahasa shared the tradition of his Christian thought and practices.\textsuperscript{67}

On the other hand, an ideological-philosophy that distanced itself from religious institutions had begun. It is hard to pinpoint the entirety of this movement but, among other things, \textit{Aufklärung} (enlightenment) sought after the separation of church and state, partly because of the abuse of this relationship in the past. However, the radicalized movement went as far as to diminish the role

\textsuperscript{65}For further reading about Phillip Jacob Spener (1635-1705), his life, the movement that grew out from his work, and its excess, see, for example, Marie E. Richard, \textit{Philip Jacob Spener and His Work} (Philadelphia: Lutheran Publication Society, 1897); Cf. Pantouw, “Minahasa Sebelum Tahun 1829 dan Beberapa Perubahan Dalarnnya” in \textit{Etnik Minahasa Dalam Akselerasi Perubahan}, 95.

\textsuperscript{66}This term goes back to the renowned Christian thinker Augustine. Charles Norris Cochrane provides a great help to understand the thoughts of this great Church Father and philosopher. As Cochrane writes, Augustine perceives the limitation of “\textit{scientia}” or what he called “\textit{ratio scientiae};” therefore he proposed the “\textit{ratio sapientiae},” an appeal “from the method of science to that of insight or wisdom.” In this logic, the Christian sages/philosophers are those who have, in Augustine’s words, “the clearest possible knowledge of man himself and of God, together with a mode of life consistent with such knowledge” (\textit{De Util. Cred.} xii, 27). It is a ‘paradigm shift’, or a “departure,” as Cochrane puts it, from “the abstract and theoretical to the concrete and practical” (\textit{De Civ. Dei}, xx) (see \textit{Christianity and Classical Culture: A Study of Thought and Action from Augustus to Augustine} [London: Oxford University Press, 1957], 414-415).

of religion (i.e. Christianity) in the public sphere by creating the dichotomy of natural and supernatural, public and private, and scientific and superstitious.\textsuperscript{68}

The forefront of Christian mission in Minahasa was strongly connected with education, both \textit{papendaan} and the European school system. \textit{Papendaan}, the traditional education in Minahasa, had the students live, work, and study with the \textit{walian} or \textit{tona’as}, who would give them the license to exercise their knowledge in the society. This practice was adopted by the missionaries, and Minahasan children were sent by their parents to live with the missionaries and learn about Christianity, including how to read and write and behave like Europeans. They became the teachers at the schools and the \textit{guru jemaat}, the teachers of the Christian congregations. They were at the forefront of mission work in Minahasa, as they understood the complex situations at hand and how to convey the faith in Christ to their \textit{kawanua} (compatriots). With their participation, the NZG made this land the crown of its evangelization effort.

\textsuperscript{68}This paradigm is more familiar to our contemporary ears as “modernism” (see Hiebert, \textit{Transforming Worldviews}, 141-174). It is important to understand that there are both positive and negative impacts associated with \textit{Aufklärung} and what it entails. One positive contribution of the movement is that the persecution of the Protestants by the Catholic Church became milder due to the influence of this movement (End, \textit{Ragi Carita}, 211). I describe some negative impacts further in this section.
The responsibility of the NZG in Minahasa grew so significantly that in 1873
it had to provide for the salaries of nine European missionaries, 14 native
assistant missionaries, three helpers and 123 guru jemaat.\(^6^9\) The oldest mission
organization in the Netherlands had to come up with 36,000 guilders per year to
pay their workers’ “quite modest” salaries.\(^7^0\) When financial responsibility
became unbearable due to some internal conflict, the NZG took a controversial
decision: They decided to hand over the new church to the *Indische Kerk* (The
Protestant Church of the East Indies), while maintaining their service through the
mission school system.\(^7^1\)

This was not without repercussions. Some of the NZG workers protested this
decision, not only because it had a significant effect on them, but also because
they felt that it showed the impact of the *Aufklärung* in the church. “They felt not
free to preach as they wanted within the framework of the *Indische Kerk*,
considered a bastion of liberal Christianity where even the doctrine of the Trinity

\(^6^9\) Jonge, Parengkuan, and Steenbrink, “How Christianity Obtained A Central Position in
Minahasa Culture and Society,” in *History of Christianity in Indonesia*, 423-424.

\(^7^0\) Jonge, Parengkuan, and Steenbrink, “How Christianity Obtained A Central Position in
Minahasa Culture and Society,” in *History of Christianity in Indonesia*, 424.

\(^7^1\) Jonge, Parengkuan, and Steenbrink, “How Christianity Obtained A Central Position in
Minahasa Culture and Society,” in *History of Christianity in Indonesia*, 424.
and of the divinity of Jesus as Son of God was not maintained." Earlier in 1844, Resident A. J. van Olphen instructed that the Christian religion was no longer to be taught in mission and public schools. A protest from the NZG succeeded in exempting the mission school from this policy. But dirty play was not seen on one side only; a colonial official, Resident Jansen (1854-1860), required that the head of the district, Dutch rendition for *walak*, and that the head of the village become Protestant. Those who refused would be dismissed from their office.

The presumption that Minahasa was as an ally to the Dutch officially came to an end in 1870 with the announcement that Minahasa was a *rechtstreeks bestuurd gebied* (directly controlled area). In 1912 Minahasans who were in diaspora,

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73 According to Watuseke, this policy was still applied to the government schools (*Minahasa*, 40-41). Today, religions are taught in public and private schools, following the idea of holistic education for the children, and the application of the first principle of the Pancasila: Belief in One supreme God.


75 In 1877, the uncultivated lands (forests) customarily belonging to each sub-ethnic group were declared to belong to the colonial state, and in 1881 the chiefs were ‘emancipated’ to be waged-civil servants (Watuseke, *Sejarah Minahasa*, 45).
especially in Java, formed the *Perserikatan Minahasa* (the Minahasa League). In 1927 this organization split into two, one for military memberships retaining the name *Perserikatan Minahasa* and the other for civil memberships called the *Persatuan Minahasa* (both share the same meaning in English); this latter group was initiated by Dr. Sam Ratulangi, a Minahasan intellectual who co-run the *Levensverzekering Maatschappij Indonesia* (Life Insurance Company Indonesia) in the early 1920s. Just a year after its conception, the civil *Persatuan Minahasa* declared the intention of “going toward the independence of Indonesia.”

Ratulangi not only championed the idea of Indonesia but also Minahasa. For him, the idea of “nations as a nation” meant also the place of his nation within the nation-state of Indonesia. This shows in one of his thoughts as expressed in the bulletin *Fikiran* (Thought), May 31, 1930:

> Every self-respecting *bangsa* [nation] receives a sacred heirloom of culture and tradition from its ancestors. We must preserve our Minahasa[n] culture and tradition with all our spirit, because that spirit itself consist[s] of nothing else but culture and tradition. The flower of our culture and tradition may change, and

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certainly we will modernize them, but we will not change the seeds, because those seeds are implanted in the blood and heart of our *bangsa* [nation].

The importance of Minahasa-ness, an ethnic identity, was not exclusive to Ratulangi. Supit mentions M. D. Holleman who, at an *Indisch Genootschap* (Indonesian Society) meeting in 1929, spoke about a head of a *walak*, who had been educated in a western system since childhood. The *ukung wangko’* said to him, “Sir, you are curious that we are still *Alifuru*. I can assure you that I am a good Christian, and with me there are still many others; however, in terms of the provisions outlined by our ancestors, we are still the same...”

In connection to Christianity, Schouten suggests that “Schooling and conversion were not just expressions of submission or compliance, but could also serve as means of approximating the Dutch, much in the spirit of ‘if you can’t

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78 This quotation has been translated into English by Bert Adriaan Supit and quoted in A. J. Sondakh, Richard A. D. Siwu, and Reiner E. Ointoe, *Si tou timou tumou tou = Manusia hidup untuk memanusiakan manusia : refleksi atas evolusi nilai-nilai manusia* (Jakarta: Pustaka Sinar Harapan, 2003), 88.

79 “*Alifuru*” is a Moluccan word meaning “natives” or “indigenous.”

80 The rest of the quotation: “...If I put myself in that situation, I will feel unusual things overwhelm me and automatically out of my mouth words and sounds of ancient *Alifuru*, and I feel like I can predict the future” (F. D. Hollemann, *De verhouding der gemeenschappen [familie, dorp en district] in de Minahasa ['s-Gravenhage: Nijhoff, 1929], n.p.) as quoted in Supit, *Minahasa*, 30 in Bahasa (English translation mine). It is arguable whether the *majoor* was more a good Christian or a good Minahasan, or both. This story is an example of a Minahasan who embraced a Christian identity, or the other way around, a Christian who embraced Minahasan identity.
Following the thread so far, this argument overlooks many important aspects, including our forebears' religious experiences, not to mention the role of the Minahasans in the independence movement of Indonesia. As pointed out by Harry Kawilarang, an international journalist: “For besides speaking Dutch, they also understood the norms, ethics, culture and Dutch laws as a result of their western education, which made it possible for the Minahanan intellectuals to deal with the Dutch in a 'Dutch-way', while preserving the existence of their self-identity and character of Minahasa-ness.”

The Period of Indonesia’s Independence (1945-present)

Before Ir. Sukarno and Mohammad Hatta proclaimed the national independence of Indonesia on August 17, 1945, some members of the Protestant church in Minahasa had sought to be autonomous from the *Indische Kerk* (The Church of the Netherlands Indie). This aspiration materialized with the inauguration of Minahasa Protestant Church Assemblies (Kerapatan Gereja Protestan Minahasa or KGPM) in April 21, 1933, as a “revolutionary institution,

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81Schouten, *Leadership and Social Mobility in a Southeast Asian Society*, 107.
not against missionary organisations but in conflict with a state-dominated Protestant church.”

KGPM is regarded as “the expression of the wish to be Minahasan, Christian, and independent.”

A year later, in September 30, 1934, with the blessing of the Indische Kerk, the Minahasan Protestant Church was established with the name Gereja Masehi Injili di Minahasa (GMIM) or The Christian Evangelical Church in Minahasa.

A historical event within GMIM was in 1942, when Rev. A. Z. R. Wenas, who since 1927 had been the director of the theological college in Tomohon, became the first Minahasan moderator of the GMIM. As a capable leader and ecclesiastical figure, he was able to lead GMIM through the rough time of Japanese occupation (1941-1945), the Perang Kemerdekaan (Independence War 1945-1949) and the Peresta (All people struggle) (1957-1961). These incidents

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85 Today GMIM is the largest church denomination in Minahasa overseeing schools, hospitals, a university, and engaging in ministries in and outside of Minahasa, with membership numbers above 800,000 people divided into more than 800 congregations.

86 A number of Minahasan KNIL (The Royal Netherlands East Indies Army), led by Ch. Taulu, executed a coup d’etat in Minahasa, known as Peristiwa 14 Februari 1946 (The February 14, 1946 Event). Although it lasted less than a month, the attempt sent a clear message about the aspiration of the majority of the Minahasan people to be independent. For this topic see, for
brought tremendous suffering to the people in Minahasa and North Sulawesi in general. A relief in the form of a sudden economic boom hit Minahasa in the early 1980s when the price of cloves rose enormously. However, when the price crashed down, many farmers abandoned their fields or sold them altogether.

In 2000, as reported by Verrianto Madjowa (Tempo.co.id, August 5, 2000), more than a thousand Minahasans from each sub-ethnic group gathered together at Bukit Inspirasi (Inspiration Hill) auditorium, Tomohon, for Kongres Minahasa Raya (The Pan-Minahasa Congress). The matter at hand was crucial because Indonesia was at a crossroads, and Minahasa was ready for any consequence if the Jakarta Charter, which prescribed Shari'a Islam in the Pancasila (five principles), would be adopted as an amendment to the Constitution. At this time,

example, Ben Wowor, Sulawesi Utara bergolak: peristiwa patriotik 14 Februari1946, dalam rangka revolusi bangsa Indonesia (Jakarta: Alda, 1977).

87 Perjuangan Rakyat Semesta or Permesta (All People Struggle) became a dark page in the history of Minahasa post-independence. Seeking regional autonomy, a number of East Indonesia military and civil elites, among which a good number were from Minahasa, declared Permesta. This demand was accompanied with military assaults against targets associated with the “central government.” As a result, full blown military action was taken against Permesta, which then developed into a civil war, especially among Minahasans themselves, the so-called pro-Permesta and pro-central government people, both in the military and civilians. In the midst of this great calamity, the GMIM under the leadership of Rev. A. Z. R. Wenas did not take sides and worked for peaceful resolution between the two sides, while providing spiritual guidance for all (Bodewyn G. Talumewo, “GMIM Masa Pergolakan Permesta,” Inspirator Maret-Mei 2007; for Rev. Wenas’ life and work see also Redaksi Bulletin Dewan Gereja-gereja Sulutteng, Ds. A. Z. R. Wenas (1897-1967): pelayan gereja di Minahasa [Tomohon: Redaksi Bulletin D.G.W. Sulutteng, 1969]).
grotesquely provoked ethnic and religious conflicts were raging in several parts of Indonesia, such as in Ambon (the Moluccas) and Poso (Central Sulawesi).

Indonesia made it through, and within two years, with Pancasila still as one of the four pillars of the Republic, the bill of regional autonomy (UU No. 22) passed the House of Representatives. In this so-called Reformation Era, mending the dark social consequences of violent conflicts and building an open and fair democracy, while fighting corrupt military and civil officials, was not an easy task. Yet there seemed to be more synergy between the people and the government in trying to make a better Indonesia, given that it was not without blemish. Minahasa since then has been divided into different regional and municipal administrations, though not without pros and cons. In this case, the democracy in Minahasa had grown more mature.

Minahasa, which in Indonesia is better known as Manado, prides itself as a compass of religious tolerance in Indonesia, as well as a pocket of Christianity in otherwise the largest Muslim population in the world. In this region, other than churches of different denominations, there are mosques, Mahayana and

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88 The four pillars of the Republic of Indonesia are Pancasila (the Five Principles), the Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia 1945, the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia, and the motto Bhineka Tunggal Ika (Unity in diversity).
Hinayana Temples, Sanatana Dharma Pura (Shrines), Confucian temples, and Yehudi Sinagogues. The *Bukit Kasih* (Hill of Love) in *wanua* Kanonang has been a symbol of the expression: *Torang Samua Basudara* (Manado Malay) “We all are brothers and sisters.” This place features different symbols of the inter-ethnic religions in Indonesia, including a stone called Toar-Lumimuut.

In the celebration of the 177th anniversary of GMIM’s Evangelization and Christian Education in 2008, Elder Dr. Paula Lumentut-Runtuwene, speaking on behalf of the committee, affirmed that the success of the mission work in Minahasa was due to the work of the Holy Spirit through Riedel and Schwarz (*eBAHANA.com*, August 9, 2008). These two NZG missionaries have been regarded as the primary figures in Minahasan mission, yet as we have seen the history of Christian faith in this land goes back to the first Catholic missionaries and forward beyond the NZG, including the mission work within the Adventist, Pentecostal and Charismatic movements, to mention but a few.

Back to the early years, there were many people who gave up being in their own homeland and came to work in Minahasa. This includes the natives of Ambon. As we remember their labor, it is crucial also to remember the
Minahasan sons and daughters who shared the Gospel to their *kawanua* (compatriots) in the villages and schools, notwithstanding the first generation of Minahasan Christians, including the *walian* and *tona’as*, who accepted the faith of Christ when this meant losing their privileges and dignity among their people.

From here it appears that the meeting of Minahasa and Christianity is very much misrepresented by the term “christianization.” The idea behind this term is deterministic, suggesting that the Minahasans were passive recipients (object) of the faith preached by the missionaries. But in our story, we initiated, acted and reacted, for and against Christianity. It is true that some rejected the message in total, some accepted it for practical benefits as it was the religion of the colonial powers, but some upon hearing the message repented and embraced the faith as theirs, totally aware of who they were as Minahasans. “They have,” as Bediako writes, “like the apostle Paul, handed to us the assurance that with our Christian conversion, we are not introduced to a new God unrelated to the traditions of our past, but to One who brings to fulfillment all the highest religious and cultural aspirations of our heritage.”

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Chapter 6: A Minahasan Local Theology

In the opening of this thesis I drew our attention to a phenomenon wherein Minahasan Christians at the beginning of this third Millenium are promoting and conserving their cultural heritage as part of their ethnic identity, while seeking an answer to how this promotion and conservation relates to their Christian faith. This question will continue to be a part of Christian communities across time and place, and Minahasan Christians must have their own answers. That is why posing the question and finding the answer today means taking into account the wisdom of our ancestors and ancestors in faith, all the while being faithful to the unchanging Word of God.

I have demonstrated that from a biblical understanding as the result of my hodegetical work on the Epistle to the Romans, Christ's calling and God's salvation do not reject ethnic particularity; rather they embrace all particularities in the hope of the kingdom of God. Accordingly, the faithful may enter into God's presence as who they are, ethnically speaking. Minahasans may remain Minahasans to respond to God's call. The validity of this claim for the Minahasans is not found outside the Minahasans themselves as the actors of
their ethnic identity and identification. Minahasan ethnicity is a valid human identity which must be understood in the greater story of humanity and cosmic history.

The Minahasans do not have to become Judeans in order to enter into the New Covenant established by God through Christ. What sets the matter is not culture or traditions of the Judeans, and by extension the Europeans; only faith in Christ leading into love (13:8,10), righteousness and justice (dikaiosune), peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit (14:17); it is the Spirit-led life (cf. 8:4ff) that counts. Hence, Minahasan culture and tradition has the same right as that of the Judeans, Dutch, Ghanaians, Koreans and others to be a venue of self expression as well as a vessel to the knowledge of God in Christ. This also means that Minahasan cultures and expressions may be used together with the Judeans', Europeans', Ghanaians', Koreans' and so forth in the worship and ministry of God in Christ. This is to be held with an awareness that human cultures may reflect our imago Dei as well as our fallen nature, and therefore we bear in mind that the Gospel “calls to question all cultures, including the one in which it was originally
embodied.”¹ In this way, as George R. Hunsberger rightly points out, “[G]ospel illumines and transforms a culture, and cultures illumine and incarnate the [G]ospel.”²

Using the Epistle to the Romans as the basic for theological reflection, we may see how the theme of godliness (in the stereotype of the Yehudi) and ungodliness (in the stereotype of the gentiles) in Romans resonates with the experience of many Minahasans, although in different ways. In the past our traditional piety became evident in the many different posan that we observed throughout the year. While they were expressions of dependency to the Divine³ and communal fellowship with the ancestors and the coming generations,⁴ some used them to obtain praise from others, being complimented for how many posan one could perform in a year.⁵ In the meanwhile, some of the walian (priests/priestesses) were using the posan for their own benefit.⁶

¹Newbigin, Foolishness to the Greeks, 4.
³As Graafland rightly points out (Graafland and Montolalu, Minahasa, 110-111).
⁵Graafland and Montolalu, Minahasa, 94.
⁶Graafland and Montolalu, Minahasa, 94.
Minahasan forebears, as the apostle Paul puts it, did “know God” (cf. 1:19-20). Their knowledge of the Almighty, as Saruan points out, is expressed in their traditional prayers, “where the Almighty is understood as the creator, the source of life, longevity, health, blessings, happiness, and richness. God is the generous one, the keeper, defender, protector, who also shows punishment and anger to those who live in rebellion.” Yet their knowledge was not perfect and not without blemish, and so they convinced themselves that they could have God and especially the ancestors bless all their actions through posan, including sumungkul wo sumampet mauri in which they legitimized acts of cruelty; killing others as a religio-cultural practice, to which God indeed gave them up, and yet in due time God gave Jesus Christ up to bear the sins of the world, so that whoever turned to God in repentance may be reconciled to the Creator.

Our forebears (dotu-dotu/opo'-opo’) were not all Christians. It is God, the Creator of all that is and exists, who has the right and abundant mercy to judge them, together with us, and the rest of humankind alike. While for those who came to faith, confessing the Christ as their savior and that God has raised him from the dead, they became the children of Abraham (4:1ff; 10:9-10). The name

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Abraham, the father of the believers, was given as *nama Sarani* (Christian name) to Runtunuwu, a *walian* from Sawangan, who was baptized by J. G. Schwarz in 1840. Our baptism (6:1ff) is a symbol of our new identity and fellowship in the Body of Christ that consists of different nations and tribes. Hence, the idea of *minaesa* receives a new and greater significance in Christian faith that we are united, we are one, in Christ. Our ethnic identity is no longer a distinction for separation, but richness that inspires greater unity.

Those who came to Christ have passed the faith onto their *puyun im puyun* (the children of their children), and hence now it is alive in Minahasa, and has even become a symbol of Minahasan identity. Yet not all Minahasans are Christians. Some choose to follow other faiths, while some stay as the guardian of our ethnic religion. At the end, we all are Minahasans. For Christians, the call to follow our Savior should take into account the trust of our forebears who must have seen that Christ is truly good for us. To follow Christ means to live in such a way that confirms our commitment and the commitment of those who have come before us, that is our ancestors and our ancestors in faith. At the same time,

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we have to be open to the fact that even Christ, with the power and ability that He could perform, never coerced anybody to accept who He was and is. As it always has been, the Gospel is a demonstration of and invitation into God’s shalom. When it is not, it is no longer good news.

With such understanding, I bring to our attention how “Minahasan traditions give flesh to Christian faith, and how in return Christian faith transcends, enlarges, and embodies the Minahasan ideals and envisions the good news for Minahasan people and beyond.”9 This chapter discusses four theological aspects that speak to a Minahasan local theology. It begins with the role of local languages in the transmitting of the Gospel, followed by the role of Christ in Minahasan Christianity, and then what it means that He is the Si Tou Timou Tumou Tou Paripurna. At the end, I discuss how we are to honor Minahasan ancestors, knowing that they were our own and shared our need of God.

The role of local languages to Minahasan Christian traditions

The convergence of different cultural and religious traditions took place in time, space and place, but without communication, there would have been no convergence at all. Sanneh makes this important point about the use of our

9Chapter One: Introduction.
mother tongues as “the indigenous discovery of Christianity.”10 He differentiates this expression from “the Christian discovery of indigenous society,” wherein the missionaries from Europe had sought to convert people into Christianity “often with political incentive and material inducement.”11 On the contrary, the indigenous discovery, according to Sanneh, “describes local people encountering the religion through mother tongue discernment and in the light of the people’s own needs and experiences.”12 This latter form of discovery has “unintended local consequence, leaving the way open for indigenous agency and leadership.”13

One legendary story circulated among the Tondano was about a walian (priest) in wanua Kendis by name Sumanti. J. F. Riedel went to see him, and the following conversation took place:

Ds. Riedel: O patuariku Sumanti koo manakan? (My brother Sumanti are you there?)
Walian: Patuariku, tou wisakoo, koo kulo’? (My brother, where are you from, [why] are you white?)
Ds. Riedel: Penampa’anku waki katerungan ni endo. Ni’itumou ku kulo’. Ku neireomi ni Telu Matuari, si minalar kaoatan ye’i, neiseron si patuarimu

10Sanneh, Whose Religion is Christianity?, 55.
11Sanneh, Whose Religion is Christianity, 55.
12Sanneh, Whose Religion is Christianity?, 55.
13Sanneh, Whose Religion is Christianity?, 55.
Sumanti waki Toudano. (My place is where the sun sets [West]. That’s why I am white. I am commanded by the Three Matuari, creator of the world, go and find your brother Sumanti in Tondano.)

Walian: Em, sa tuana lumongkoti. (If so come up.) He puts down the stairway, and Riedel climbed up.\textsuperscript{14}

Walian: Rumuber, tumenga’. (Take a sit; please, chew betel nut.) Riedel took a seat and accepted the offer to chew betel nut. The conversation that took place led Sumanti, the respected walian in Tondano, to embrace Christian faith, and with him many of the Tondano.\textsuperscript{15}

Understanding that the Gospel was inaugurated in Minahasan “mother tongue idioms,”\textsuperscript{16} its expressions have become an authentic Minahasan expression. The Tombulu song \textit{Opo’ Wana en Atas Ee} (God of the above) is a popular song and sung in worship across sub-ethnic groups in Minahasa. A different version of the song also exists in different sub-ethnic groups such as \textit{Opo’ Mana en Atas} (God of the Above) in Tondano and \textit{Amang Kasuruan (Wangko’)} (Great Father Source of Life) in Tontemboan. The \textit{Maengket Makamberu} and \textit{Maramba’} (traditional dances) have been an expression of thanksgiving to \textit{Opo’ Wa’ilan Wangko’} (Great and Abundant God).

\textsuperscript{14}The traditional Minahasan house has a ladder that can be taken up and down for safety.


\textsuperscript{16}An expression used by Sanneh in his book \textit{Whose Religion is Christianity?}, 73.
The use of our own languages in Christian worship indicates that Minahans have always been in communication with God, no matter how wanting it was. And the reason that Christianity has flourished in Minahasa also points out that, as Bediako asserts, no matter how inadequate the messengers of the Gospel were, God’s Word will never be in vain, because “[t]he Holy Spirit is also present to interpret the Word of God directly to the hearers. The mercy and providence of God override human shortcomings.”¹⁷ As it has been pointed out by other African theologians, ethnic religions “were a vital preparation for the Gospel.”¹⁸ The use of Minahasan traditional titles for the Almighty in Christian worship, as Sanneh affirms, indicates “the indigenous theological advantage.” The understanding is not that “Christianity was completely interchangeable with indigenous religions, but that their theological compatibility allows Christian engagement to produce results that have indigenous credibility rather than just foreign approval.”¹⁹

Minahasan Christology: Jesus Christ as Our Empung

¹⁷Bediako, Jesus and the Gospel in Africa, 20.
¹⁹Sanneh, Whose Religion is Christianity?, 78-79.
The *Lokon Telu* (the three peaks of the sacred mountains: Empung, Tatawiran, and Kasehe) has long been adopted to represent God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. In the trinitarian context, as it is translated into the Apostle's Creed in the Tondano language, the Christ is “*Urang Na Pengesan*” (His Only Child). Jesus as an *urang* (a child) is in a familial relationship with the Father in Minahasan linguistic terms. This represents the closeness of the two, which speaks to Christ’s obedience to the Father and the Father’s love to the Son. This relationship is an ideal in Minahasan society, although it poses a challenge to the Minahasan narrative of bravery. For within this relationship, the Christ exemplified a different kind of bravery, a bravery marked by humility and obedience “to the point of death, even the death of the cross” (Phil 2:8). But for Minahasans, Christ’s suffering has also opened a way that may confer to us courage, bravery and even compassion; this is no longer by way of inflicting anyone with pain and death, because we as Minahasans also laid hand on Him, making Him a sacrifice, yet this was a way to bear our sins (*kaselokan, kalewo’an*). For if we are no sinners, we have no story in Him.

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20 See the *posan* of bravery in Chapter Four, under Minahasan Ethnic Religion.
One more significant expression is *Empung* or *Opo’ Yesus*. The use shows that Jesus Christ has been adopted into our ethnic consciousness, although this should be differentiated from the traditional understanding of ancestorship. It is true that Jesus, as a fellow human being, lived a virtuous and exemplary life in Judea-Palestine when the land was occupied by the Romans, but in this particularity, Jesus was a Judean, and He cannot be regarded as our *opo’* or *empung* or *kasuruan* (ancestor). For the Minahasans, only Minahasans can be regarded in those terms. Yet, Jesus is an *Opo’* or *Empung* or *Kasuruan* to us because He Himself is the incarnated *Opo’ Empung timaliaka en ataran wo lawanan* (LORD God who created the land and the sea). Jesus is He who brought the knowledge *paripurna* 21 of the One we worship from time immemorial, and through the Holy Spirit revealed God’s love and grand plan of salvation to the Minahasans as to the rest of the nations.

Jesus also is our *Empung* who shares our suffering (The One who suffers with us). The Christ experienced the cruelty of Roman imperial/colonial oppression, with a plot made by His own *kawanua* (compatriots). However, this was done not outside of God’s redemptive action. According to the gospels, this was the cup

21 *Bahasa, “complete,” “perfect.”*
that He drank for our salvation. In this history of salvation, we find ourselves sharing the scars of colonial oppression with the Christ, and thus to live in freedom of such oppression, we may behold the freedom offered to us in His resurrection and glorification.

_Empung Yesus as Si Tou Timou Tumou Tou Paripurna_

The maxim _si tou timou tumou tou_ is at the core of Minahasan traditions. _Si tou_ points out that each one is a _tou_ (human being), distinct and endowed with uniqueness to being a _tou_, and therefore in _timou_, meaning not only has one become or grown to be a human being, but furthermore a virtuous human being, and being such a human being then live in such a way that other(s) may live, that is _tumou tou_. The term for young people is “_tare tumou_,” still growing, yet also “is still becoming a _tou_.” This does not mean that young persons are not considered as _tou_; they are. But the term signifies that young persons are going to take the responsibilities in the society; hence they are to seek to be equipped and educated so that they can each become a fully responsible _tou_ (contains singular and plural meaning).
Other significant meaning of the word *tou* is also “to live;” hence this expression *si tou timou tumou tou* popularized by Sam Ratulangie may also be translated “a person lives to give life to others” (Bahasa, *orang hidup untuk menghidupkan orang lain*). Practically, it means that one needs to have life before making other(s) live(s). Theologically speaking, this expression is charged with the core of all Christian thought. Jesus who died on the cross to bear human sins was raised from the dead on the third day so that, through faith in Him, believers receive life everlasting. Jesus lives to make others live. He is *Si Tou Timou Tumou Tou Paripurna*. Jesus’ exemplary life shows that in order for one to be truly *tou*, one has to be willing to die to oneself, and in experiencing the life as a result of dying in Christ, and then one can truly live out this philosophy of *tumou tou*, for oneself, for another, and for others.

In this vein, we remember a national heroine, Maria Walanda-Maramis. A daughter of Minahasa, she founded PIKAT (*Percintaan Ibu terhadap Anak Turunannya*, The Love of the Mother for her Children), an organization that empowered, trained, and worked to improve the lives of Minahasan women and children. Further, we ought not to miss the socio-cultural practice that emerged
out of the philosophy of tumou tou: mapalus. These are examples of how we may participate personally and communally in living the life that reflects not only our ancestral ideals but also the ethics of the Kingdom.

The Honor and Honoring our Ancestors

We love and honor our ancestors, and we know that our opo’ (ancestors) were from among us. They are those, to reiterate Taulu, whose lives brought the well-being of their puyun (lit. grandchildren; offspring). This same tradition we find among the Akkans in Ghana, West Africa. As Bediako puts it, “only those who lived exemplary lives and from whom the community derived some benefits” are considered ancestors.22 Saruan writes, “Minahasans respect and honor the ancestors as when they were alive, because death is understood as moving from this world to another while still bearing continuity, and therefore their roles, functions, responsibilities and authorities, characters and status are deemed operative.”23 This understanding serves a particular function in our traditional society. As Saruan further explains, in the Minahasan tradition, se puyun (the offspring) understand that they live in fellowship with their ancestors in all

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22 Bediako, Jesus and the Gospel in Africa, 30.
aspects of their lives.\textsuperscript{24} Taking Bediako's insight in relation to our experience, since we share the same tradition, the "ancestors cult,” meaning the respecting and honoring of the ancestors, is “ensuring social harmony by strengthening the ties that knit together all sections and generations of the community, the present with the past and those as yet unborn.”\textsuperscript{25} In Minahasa this across-all-time fellowship, as Saruan points out, “produces prototypes that encourage physical and spiritual prosperity, in this world and the one to come.”\textsuperscript{26} Unfortunately, as Saruan acknowledges, oftentimes there is a “penghormatan yang berlebihan” (an excessive reverence) to the ancestor which can lead into idolatry.\textsuperscript{27}

Our ancestors were not demons, as was often suggested in the past, although when we get into this kind of “excessive reverence,” it is rather obvious that we are risking our ancestors to be deemed as such. Because in making them into the objects of worship, which only belongs to God, then indeed they may become a manifestation of other spiritual powers. As it is for the Akkans, it is also for the Minahasans; our ancestors do not originate from the transcendent realm. It is for

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{Bediako-1999} Bediako, Jesus and the Gospel in Africa, 30.
\end{thebibliography}
community harmony and the hope for prosperity and security of the puyun (offspring) that they were remembered, honored, and appeased through different kind of posan. Given their shared humanity with their puyun, Minahasan ancestors would not intend to be worshiped by their puyun. They for sure expected that we would respect our parents, the elderly, and their ideals for the community; we are to remember them as pillars of the community, to imitate them and make their spirits (semangat) as our source of inspiration in building up our place of living and fellow neighbors (wanua wo se kasuat tou). With this understanding, while respect and appreciation for our ancestors, including the desire to imitate their exemplary life, should remain with us, our hope has to be with the One who has proven Himself worthy above any other powers in this world.

Jesus Christ has shown us that He is worthy to serve as our Great Walian for He has ushered one posan for the Minahasans as well as for the rest of the world. This posan did not take a wooden doll, or a pig, or any other animal. It did not take the blood of other fellow human beings. In fact, it is His blood that He offered, and it was His own body that was stricken. He died almost like a
waraney with red-blood clothing all over His body, yet He was risen in a white robe sumeringat tanu si edo (bright like the sun). Empung Yesus si Kelawiranta (The Lord Jesus is our Salvation).\(^{28}\)

Chapter Seven: Context, Reflection And A Proposal For Action

Reiterating the point stated above: “Contextual theology...is the biblical theology that speaks to the people and their needs.” In Minahasa, borrowing Bediako’s words, this must be a theology that speaks to the needs of the Minahasans “in a way that assures us that we can be authentic [Minahasans] and true Christians.”¹ Christianity, first of all, is not a religion of mere theory, for Christ eats and drinks with sinners and call them into repentance. He speaks of the ethics of the Kingdom and washes the feet of His disciples. He heals the sick, raises the dead, opens the eyes of the blind, feeds the hungry, and lays down His life for each and everyone of us. He shows that He is worthy to receive our highest loyalty and our worship as One risen from the dead. Understanding that the Gospel bears significance in our daily lives, contextualization requires theological applications in the life of the community of believers according to their time, space, and contexts.

It is obvious that Minahasa today is no longer the same as Minahasa in the past. This is something every society must expect. Yet Wenas’ alarming

¹Bediako, Jesus and the Gospel in Africa, 23.
statement that Minahasan cultures have gone far away from their original forms must be taken seriously with the concern that we are losing the good traditions that were passed down from generation to generation. This situation is an invitation as well as a challenge for the Church in Minahasa to reflect theologically and culturally, and from there to come up with a proposal for action.

Following Hunsberger’s position on cultures and Gospel, the Church has a task to spell out how “cultures illumine and incarnate the [G]ospel” and at the same time how the “[G]ospel illumines and transforms a culture.” This is to be held with an understanding that culture is not “the proper telos” for theological and cultural reflection, but rather the humanity that bears the image of God (imago Dei) for whom Christ has died and is risen plus the rest of the creation that bears the glory of God. Drawing from the local wisdom of si tou timou tumou tou, the Minahasan Church needs to be the salt in preserving the ideals of the communal traditions, at the same time, the light in bringing forth love, peace, joy, righteousness and justice (dikaiosune) into the life of the community at large.  

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2See Chapter Two on Culture, religion and ethnic identity.  
3See Chapter Three and Six above.
Here I attempt to exemplify how theology and the community of believers are interconnected and how the relationship between Christianity, local culture and ethnic identity may occur. For this purpose, I choose mapalus (discussed in Chapter Four of this thesis) because it is part of the Minahasan sense of ethnicity, yet at the same time it has become a special concern in Minahasan society today. I perceive that this traditional practice has something to offer in our discussion on the topic of ethnicity in the Body of Christ.

In mapalus, individual autonomy as well as collective good are held together. The question of what is just and right when it comes to working together and building each other up is very important in mapalus, where success depends on how all members discipline and prepare themselves to work together in harmony. Another aspect in mapalus is that, with the coming together of different people into one organic group in order to work and strive together, a medium is born where love, peace and joy are to be exercised together with the principles of dikaiosune. From here, it becomes obvious that mapalus features some ideal characteristics compatible with Christian faith. Unfortunately, this traditional practice has been in retreat, which has to be a grave concern for the Minahasan churches.
The practice of mutual cooperation, *mapalus*, was born with the formation of Minahasan agricultural communities. Yet, while this practice has survived to this day, the complex struggle in connection to this practice reaches back into the 19th century. Graafland observed:

The ancestral custom [i.e. *mapalus*] is gradually disappearing . . . because in Minahasa some people began to become egoistic. Also there was instruction to jettison the practice. It may also due to the fact that the organization was handed to the people, whereas it should be the role of the community leaders. Or it may be because people are no longer free to use their time.  

The “colonial oppression,” as Schouten points out, indeed transformed Minahasan cultures. The effect of political and economic dominion, including the presence of Christianity and the schools in Minahasa, altered the centuries old traditions, for better and for worse. Schouten makes a conclusion that with the spiritual integration of Minahasa into the world religion, “[b]eliefs and rituals of the newly accepted religion [i.e., Christianity] continued, linked with those of

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ethnic religion,” extrapolating, sometimes in a “syncretic” way. It is important to consider fully, even in the present day, how our traditional piety has traveled together with our Christian traditions.

In the meanwhile, the social challenge as the result of such radical changes is alarming. As Schouten writes:

Social diversification was one of the results of cultural change. The internal dynamics of Minahasan society before the colonial era involved a flexible, ever-changing hierarchy. Under the colonial administrative system, this principles of ordering was largely dismantled, and social mobility according to the old pattern, based on the display of courage and generosity, was blocked. But the urge to get ahead persisted, not only due to cultural factors, but also as a result of repressive political and economic conditions.

This social transformation that produces “the urge to get ahead” at the expense of others and the environment is at the core of Rambet’s critique towards both the absence and the misuse of mapalus. He laments the reality that self-interest and egoism are becoming more prevalent in Minahasan society, which

7Schouten, Leadership and Social Mobility in a Southeast Asian Society, 124; See Sanneh’s discussion on the topic of Conversion, Syncretism, and Cross-Cultural Horizons in Whose Religion Is Christianity?, 41ff.

8Schouten, Leadership and Social Mobility in a Southeast Asian Society, 124.

then finds its own expression popularized as “si tou tumou tumongko’ tou” (lit. a person lives to prey on others).

The situation seems to be made even more complex with the influence of globalization, economic demands brought about by new social development, and technological advancement, including the revolution in social interaction through online social networking. While these can be seen as an opportunity, they may also pose further threats to local cultures and social values such as mapalus that is now, in a greater sense, endangered because of the prevailing social constructions inherited from colonialism.

To start with, as a social and cultural preservation, mapalus has been replaced by the later European education system in model and essence. The youngsters in general are no longer participating in the communal effort to tend the land or gather the harvest, where songs, proverbs, poems, and stories are shared, containing the wisdom of the old. Now the young go to school, which is good, and the community needs to ensure that the children receive holistic, constructive, and cultural-based education for the sake of the children and their community. But the sad thing is the excess of the model of education in

\[10\] For further discussion on this topic, see Goudzwaard, Vennen, and Heemst, “Globalization,” in Hope in Troubled Times, 139-155.
contemporary Minahasa, so that even working in the fields has been unpopular. Education is often meant to save children from working in the fields in the future. Minahasans have become staunch supporters of education, perhaps unaware that their approach has often estranged them from their own culture and from their own land. In many cases, in order to get a university degree, parents sell their land; with the hope that the son or daughter will get a job that later will pay off. Perhaps this contributes to the high degree of corruption in Minahasa and Indonesia in general.

In Minahasa, mapalus is generally neither taught at school nor are the native languages; if these are taught now, they are still in the margins. In addition, teaching about the history of Minahasa has been almost entirely absent in the local educational curriculum. All this contributes to the setback of mapalus. In terms of mapalus as an economic strategy, the struggle with this traditional institution reveals a deeper problem. The absence of this practice, especially in urbanized areas but no less in remote areas, poses a real threat to the vulnerable. The poor farmers who cannot afford to take care of their fields will eventually lose their land and become landless farmers. This segment of the society is prone to exploitation in the monetarized system of today’s world. The inability to
access services so basic to human needs, like education, health services, and adequate housing, has dire consequences; the crime rate rises alongside the level of alcohol abuse, the spread of human trafficking and HIV/AIDS, including forest encroachment that causes environmental crises (especially around the Lake of Tondano).

In the midst of this bad news, there is good news. In certain places in Minahasa, where mapalus has deeper roots, the traditional institution is still preserved. Also, as Turang has indicated, mapalus today possesses different forms and functions according to the needs. Say that all of these forms of mapalus, including a communal awareness of the importance of this practice, represent a trunk of a tree, where new shoots may grow into many trees. Now, a hand to cultivate (tumou = to grow) these shoots into vigorous trees is needed. The Church has to play its role to bring shalom to the land where it is sent and beyond.

In this thesis, I propose five practical actions regarding mapalus as a strategic socio-cultural preservation in Minahasa:
For the churches to encourage and facilitate training leadership in line with the traditional wisdom (ngaasan/sigha’, nieatean, mawai/keter). This is also what Rambet suggests as an effort to revive mapalus as social capital for Minahasa development.

For the churches to initiate Mapalus Mesiani (Messianic Mapalus), a term coined by Prof. Roeroe, that members of the churches may nourish communal life in the community, to work together for the good of all members of the society, regardless of denominations or religious affiliations.

For the churches to join together in partnership with other religious communities, cultural organizations, and the local government to promote cultural-based education, whether formal or informal, emphasizing local wisdom, local knowledge, and mother-tongue based curriculum (mother tongue

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11 For leadership principles see Chapter Four, political organization.
13 Mapalus Mesiani is the baptism of the traditional practice into Christian [religious] practice. As Prof. Roeroe explains: “Mapalus is a religious event – a form of communal cooperation and struggle to overcome the powers of nature. Human beings cannot survive without the help of Opo’ Wailan, [other title] Opo’ Empung, and the ancestors, therefore it is a Mapalus Messiah which embraces all the members of the society” (W. A. Roeroe, “Hidup ber-Mapalus Messiah,” sermon at the opening of the 61st Synod Assembly in Seretan Lembean, March 28 - 31, 1983, as quoted in Saruan, “Profil Etnik Minahasa,” in Etnik Minahasa Dalam Akselerasi Perubahan, 386). Prof. Roeroe succeeded Rev. A. Z. R. Wenas, the first Minahasan pastor to serve as the chair of the synod, and long served as as the moderator of GMIM.
as the medium language of education), and to facilitate and support *mapalus* groups.

For the youth organizations to take initiative in forming community-based or organization-based *mapalus* groups and to promote different activities such as football (soccer), social and spiritual activities, etc. to nurture the spirit of *mapalus* and creativity among the youth.

Pioneering a media communication among the *mapalus* groups, aimed at peer-training and information exchange; this may also be instrumental as a motivating tool for the preservation of the traditional institutions.

The main goal of these five recommendations is to further contextualize and develop *mapalus* as contemporary practice, not just for the Church community but also for the community at large. At this point, I have to be content in saying that time and further research will be required to speak more on these practical actions. These five recommended actions demand further analysis and strategic implementation. Yet the trace has been made and a hope has been planted. It is my conviction that with the re-invigoration of this traditional institution by all elements of the society, *mapalus* may be a stronghold to curve the negative impact of globalization and to mend the social disorder resulting from
colonialism and upheaval situations that have taken place in Minahasa, and in the wider context of North Sulawesi. *Mapalus* can replenish the ideals of our ancestors and reinforce Christian teaching based on egalitarianism, compassion, and solidarity. There is a hope that with the preservation of *mapalus* as our cultural heritage, *tou* Minahasa may enjoy the blessings of the land and, with it, the sustainability of the environment along with the preservation of our local languages. These proposals may come as good news, but they are not the Gospel itself. The Gospel is once and for all the call into repentance and faith in Jesus Christ who has died, is risen, and will come again. With Him greater is our freedom than any independence from a colonial power.

At the end of this preliminary study on Christianity and ethnicity in Minahasa, I conclude that Minahasans may remain Minahasans to respond to God’s call in Christ Jesus, *Urang ni Opo’ Empung*. He is our *Opo’*/Empung/Kasuruan who has conquered our worst enemy that is death, and set an example, as in the path of the tradition of our ancestors, to live a life-giving life, extending beyond our own kawanua. Hence *Empung Yesus, Si Tou Timou Tumou Tou Paripurna*, is the only Lord, to whom our ancestors’ and our *puyun*’s (offspring) worship is due.
Minahasan Christianity is not an alien concept to the Minahasan Christians, discontinuous from our traditional piety in the form of our ethnic religion. Rather it is a tradition born out of religious experiences through the historical pilgrimage from our ancestors to the present *puyun* of Minahasa to the day when together with all the believers “from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, robed in white, with palm branches in their hands...[all] cry out in a loud voice, saying, ‘Salvation belongs to our God who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb!’” (Revelation 7:9-10)

Following Bediako, our *dotu-dotu* (forebears) who embraced Christ as their ultimate loyalty, “like the apostle Paul, handed to us the assurance that with our Christian conversion, we are not introduced to a new God unrelated to the traditions of our past, but to One who brings to fulfillment all the highest religious and cultural aspirations of our heritage.” Therefore, being Minahasan-Christians, we are to respect and preserve our cultural heritage; we are to respect our ancestors by carrying out their ideals to protect and give life to their *puyun*; to tend, cultivate (*apar*), and to care for the land which *Si Opo’ Empung* gave to the children of Toar and Lumimuut. Through the transformation of our heart
and mind, by the power of the Holy Spirit, in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, this shall be the Good News for all peoples. *Evangelion.*
Appendix 1

ZAZANIAN NI KAREMA (The Song of Karema)

Ooh talingannio un tenge’ minatontonai
Ee Rambi-rambian
Si minatontonai, wanam puru’ u langit
Si zei’kan meilengkar, wo mawiame dungs in tana’
Si karengan nahtoume, meikolote um watu

O hear you all a story that was given
Eh Rambi-rambian¹
It was given from over the sky
She was not born and then existed in this land
But she came out from inside of a splitting stone

Niakumo si mawe’e-na’as e
yah wiamo ang ka’aya’an
Yah werenanku an tana’, a leme’ loyot kampe’
Si suatan mahra’ar sumena-sena’
Ta’an ka’asi’i um pele-peleng rima’i-za’i

I am the one who, at the time I gained consciousness,
I was here in this paradise
I beheld the land, it was still muddy
The sun was shining brightly
While also everything looked delightful

Wo aku sumaru sendangan timu
Yah sinumpak um werenku un akel matutung
Yah tumaraktak an taliwatu maha ragos
Wo ni’ilekku tawi ni’itu, sumo’so’an ne mengasin

And I faced southeast
My eyes befell a sugar palm tree in flame
Rattling, its fruits were falling
And I saw near by the salt pond of the salt-makers

Wo mawiling aku, sumaru sendangan amian
Yah kinapatesanku un assa retik
Yah mahtou karete ni’itu, un tu’is rarawir
Wo rimuru’ mawire-wirei, u lahit im wene’

Then I turned, facing northeast
I saw an assa (saccharum spontaneum) retik
Growing in its row was a tu’is (amomum album) rarawir
And at the corner waving the

¹ Following Wenas, this phrase, which is a sign to sound the gong, is given in the first verse, but omitted afterward (Sejarah dan Kebudayaan Minahasa, 75-76).
**Tumondong aku mapasaru amian talikuran**
Afterward, I faced northwest

Yah kinawerenanku witu un wangelei ne kotulus
I saw there ginger of the medicine men

Yah karuru’ – karete ni’itu, un wawali-kundamah
At the same corner – at its row – betel nut tree

Yah minahlung ni’itu, un tewasen ne rumopa
Underneath the sago palm of the rumopa [the sago makers]

**Kamurian aku mapasaru timu talikuran**
Lastly I faced southwest

Yah kapatesankuma witu, un ayamen-ka’ukur
I saw there the ayamen [water plant weaved for mat]

Yah sanaremong witu un tambelang tumitikak
Clustering there bamboo tumitikak

Ta’an un antang witu un ate si Rahara, menorome niaku
Yet with courage the Young Woman was coming to me

**Liweghanku sia sa apa u ngaranna**
I asked her what her name was

Yah mingkot sia: Lumimu’ut ngaranku
She answered: my name is Lumimuut

Wo totozen kasi’i sia limiwag un ngaranku
And certainly she asked for my name, too

Wo totozenku u ngaranku: Karema ne Rumerages
And I mentioned my name: Karema of the Rumeraghes [the giver of offerings]

**Witu, kai maesaän sanaririezezan, witu le’os wo u lewo’**
There we were of one accord, bound in life, in good or bad times

Ya sanawalimokai, i minange tu mapaweha-wehan
Together we went to a dwelling place

In toro itu, kai timou, minaelu-eluzan mahwatu
At that time, we lived, firmed in comforting each other

Yah witu, kai lawir wo zei’ kazei’an.
There we were safe and sufficient

**Second stanza**

**Pinahaleiku wia nisia, wehane a’asaren aku**
I pleaded her to tell me a story

Sa sei si ama’na, wo sei si ina’na
Who was her mother, and who was her father

Sa kura u lalanna, an ika’ayome wia
Wo kura um pa’arna in tumou wia  And how she came to be in this place And how she would like to live here

Yah ongah u nuwu’na ing kumua  And gracefully she replied
Wewehan un awoan, nahgio-gioan an kenap-sena’na  There is a hill, with various beams radiating
Ni’itu yah tanu lalem-lalemdeinan, wo tanu zuni-zuni’an  That is like misty, also colorful like rainbow
Yah wittuma un arina linengkaran niaku  there at that high place I was born

U ngaran neiketor un puser ni ina’ku en Wengi  At my mother’s birth she was named Wengi [lit. the name with which my mother’s umbilical cord was cut was Wengi (night)]
Yah si ama’ku kahuman, wen Kawengian u ngaran  And my father’s name is Kawengian [darkness of the night]
Nisera se timahu’ niaku witu un wantang2  They were the ones who put me into an ark
Nisera se nimayome niaku witu lour  And sent me away in the sea

Si ina’ si simipsipe witu kikile’ku kakan  My mother put at my right armpit [soil] wrapped, to be dispersed, together with an egg
Un sinaputan, an i pespes, wo un atelu esa  While my father put at my left armpit
Si ama’ku kahuman, si simipsipe witu ung kawihi  Coconut shell filled with seeds that would grow
Un uka’ winutame an watuna tumotou  My ark floats and carried by the water, wandering and buffeted by the waves

Un wantangku ayur wo limbo, limaya wo u malending  Tossed by the water night and day
U limingke-lingkei endo-wengi  I became seasick and fell asleep, lose my consciousness
Ya niagom aku wo ikatekel, zei’mo si genangku  Fortunately, there was a hard sound
Le’os, limengkih um wantang simangkil wurias

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2 Wantang (Manado Malay, gantang) is a wooden box used to measure the quantity of unhusked rice. One wantang is equivalent to 27 litters.
when the ark hit a rock

There I was awakened, and my mind gained consciousness
And the soil that scattered from the cloth-wrapped [thing] in my right had become this land
And the seed for seedling had grown to young beautiful plants
And the egg had become cattle and also the wilds

Wherever the one who was floated of
We are destined to meet each other
This is our life to live, two of us
I [Lumimuut] will work until my face filled with sweat
If it is granted she [referring to Karema] would plead for a well-being [lit. safety/longevity] for both of us

They had lived long, no tiresome, and no unsavory
Karema felt the wariness of not having a man
She (Karema) pleaded her friend (Lumimuut), Truly she was skilled in beseeching
So they went out of the cave and implored to the Empung (Lord/God)
Karema prepared the matters to perform as a priestess
Then she disposed Lumimuut to face southeast
Karema pleaded the blessing [lit. safety, long life], but nothing [happened] It did not hit Lumimuut, then her position was changed

She faced northeast
Karema pleaded for blessing upon Lumimuut
But she was not pregnant [lit. there was no fruit (in the womb)], because Lumimuut did not feel longing
Karema did not stop, and then she changed again the stand of Lumimuut

Lumimuut faced northwest
The priestess pleaded again, but it did not hit
Though it did not give fruit, but she wholeheartedly kept trying
Hence she [Lumimuut] was faced to the other direction, Karema pleaded
And Lumimuut faced the Empung toward southwest
The northwest wind gave what Lumimuut desired
She gave birth to a dashing boy, who gave happiness to both of them
He would make perfect the longevity and well being of the two of them.

Then they named him Toar
Toar grew up incredibly fast
When he was older he was incredibly ingenious and strong
He became a friend to laugh with of his Mother and the priestess

One day Karema made two fine staffs
One was of assa (saccharum spontaneum), but the other was of tu’is (amomum album)
The assa was given to Toar, the tu’is was given to his mother
Karema committed them to the Empung

With a loud voice, she said to them
Go around this land
You Toar go right
You Lumimuut go left

If you meet [each other], measure the length of your staffs
How your staffs have become
Bring them here to receive explanation from me
So that I can tell, to the fulfillment of the will of the Empung

And departed the mother and her son
Not long they met at Tingkolongan
They measured their staffs there
O how, the tu’is is longer than the assa

Then they went back to Karema
To tell her the staffs were no longer of the same length
After their words, Karema said,
In [lit. with] the name of Wa’ilan [the Abundant One] you are no longer mother and son [your relationship as mother and son is waived]

Now on you are husband and wife [lit. sharing one kitchen/of one cooking place]

Live in peace in the love of Empung

I live as your friend, yet I am Karema and the priestess

And do not corrupt our bond of affection

The husband and wife produced offspring:

The Makazua Siouw [two times nine], the children

and Makatelu Pitu [three times seven], the grandchildren

Together the Pasiouwan Telu, the people

They also have many children and grandchildren.

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5 J. G. F. Riedel, [Yai jah un] Aasaren Tuah Puhuna ne Mahasa (Batavia: Landsdrukkerij, 1870), 14 as quoted in Wenas, Sejarah dan Kebudayaan Minahasa, 76-81. Wenas translates the source language of Tombulu into Bahasa Indonesia, from which I based most of this English translation.
Appendix 2

Minahasan Walak ±1679-1817*

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*Watuseke, Sejarah Minahasa, Appendix IXA.
Appendix 3

The allotment of the land at *Watu Pinawetengan* according to the rituals and languages.\(^7\)

\(^7\) This picture is based on the figure provided by H. M. Taulu (*Sejarah dan Antropologi Budaya Minahasa*, 8) and the symbols provided by Ferry Koagouw (“Poso Dalam Kehidupan,” in *Etnik Minahasa Dalam Akselerasi Perubahan: Telaah Historis, Teologis, Antropologis*, 297-299).
Appendix 4

The emblem of the Christian Evangelical Church in Minahasa or Gereja Masehi Injili di Minahasa (GMIM)
Appendix 5

Mapalus in pictures

A mapalus group from Rurukan, East Tomohon, working together to cultivate the field (foto: manadotoday.com)
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