CARRYING CULTURE AND RE(CREATING) NATION THROUGH
CHRISTIANITY: MINAHASAN CULTURE AND IDENTITY IN
TRANSNATIONAL INDONESIAN CHURCHES IN NEW ENGLAND

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By
Kelli A. Swazey

Thesis Committee
Geoffrey White, Chairperson
Alex Golub
Jon Goss
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To Mom, Jess and Osvaldo for believing in me no matter what.
This thesis investigates how individuals from Minahasa, a predominantly Christian region in North Sulawesi, use a Christian ideology to transpose the compartmentalization of national, ethnic and religious identities used in Indonesia to manage diversity, making religious identity the transcendent principle of national and ethnic identification in transnational, multi-ethnic Indonesian churches in New England. Minahasans experience their ethnic identity as based in a Christian ontology, a model that exists in tension with the Indonesian national construction of the relationship between ethnicity, national identity and religious affiliation. This work considers how Minahasan identity construction has historically been located in relationships of Christianity that connected the region with the world beyond the Indonesian archipelago. This history enables Minahasans to realize a dream of religious nationalism in the United States, converging the Christian practices and beliefs that transmit pre-colonial forms Minahasan cultural identity with national identity in ways difficult to achieve within Indonesian borders.
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TRANSCRIPTION AND TRANSLATION SYMBOLS

Transcriptions in both Indonesian and English are rendered with limited application of the Jefferson Method (Jefferson 2004) with additions of emotive symbols from Hepburn (2004). These symbols indicate intonation and other meta-communicative aspects of transcribed speech such as speed, emphasis, and pauses. Standard punctuation marks are used to represent these features in lieu of serving as grammatical symbols.

The transcription of original speech is represented in bold text, with accompanying translation in normal text. Original speech recorded in English appears in bold text with no accompanying translation.

Modern Standard Indonesian orthography was used in translating Indonesian speech. All translations, as well as any translation errors, are solely the responsibility of the author.

SYMBOL

[ ] Indicates overlapping speech. Speech within brackets are aligned to show where overlap occurs

*word* Underlined speech indicates emphasis

**WORD** All capitals indicates speech that is notably louder than surrounding speech.

*word* Elongation within speech, increase in colons corresponds to increase in elongation

*word* Words bracketed by degree signs indicates quieter speech

(.5) Numbers in brackets display length of pauses in seconds

(.) Indicates a micropause audible but too short to measure

(() Encloses additional comments from transcriber

, Continuation marker indicating speaker has not finished, often marked by weak rising intonation

? Indicates questioning intonation regardless of grammar

. Marks full stop falling intonation

>word< Indicates faster speech, opposite indicates slower speech
\texttt{word=}  
\texttt{=word}  Equal signs show latching of successive talk with no pause

\texttt{\textasciitilde\textasciitilde word\textasciitilde\textasciitilde}  Double degree signs indicates whispering

\texttt{****}  Marks unintelligible speech

\texttt{heh heh}  Indicates voiced laughter
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

"The freeing of desire occurs not with the relationship of colonial peoples to their masters but with their relation to the world"

- James Seigel, 1997

A Minahasan pastor stands with his head bowed at the lectern in a small town in Southern New Hampshire, preparing to lead the congregation in prayer to close the Sunday afternoon’s service. Through the platitudes of formal Indonesian that are familiar to all of his fellow church members, he invokes God’s protection for specific geographies: the small rural Seacoast New Hampshire towns where Christian Indonesians have found a welcoming home, the United States which protects the Christian faith, the far, abstract shores of the Indonesian national homeland, and the intimately known neighborhoods of Minahasa, a small predominantly Christian region at the tip of North Sulawesi. Bound in the brotherhood of Christ, all of these places converge into a singular landscape that transcends borders. Yet it is through the particularities of place and history, in the boundaries that can be dissolved into a shared moral community, that these practitioners find meaning and define various aspects of their identities. Christianity is meaningful not just as a transcendent religious belief, but as part of a cultural, and national, identity.

This work proposes that Minahasans in transnational churches in Seacoast New Hampshire have transposed the hierarchy of religion, nationalism and ethnicity drawn from the Indonesian national model to realize a dream of religious nationalism from afar. The modern ontology of the national in the Indonesian state posits that ethnic and religious identities are acceptable only as objectified expressions of an underlying
nationalism. Minahasan identity, however, has historical roots in a Protestant "semiotic ideology" that locates the underlying meaning of symbolic expressions and ritual in Christian spiritual meaning (Keane 2007:60). Minahasan cultural rituals, performances and things therefore take their meanings in conversation with Christian logic and relation to Christian texts. Relying on theoretical perspectives from the anthropology of Christianity (Hefner 1993, Scott 2005, Cannell 2005), this thesis investigates how the unique trajectory of Minahasan Christianity has developed, as they like other indigenous peoples have taken up the question of who they are in relation to the complex phenomena that is "Christianity": its texts, varied practices, and the influences of its theories on the modern world. Minahasan's experience of their ethnic identity, and their indigenous history, is mediated and transmitted through a Christian ontology, which engenders very different connections with the world than those made through the terms of the national model. Christianity lends a primordialism to Minahasan identity that tensely transcends the limits of ethnicity within the national model. This work will demonstrate how Minahasans are able to realize and participate in a nationalism which is made meaningful through the bonds of Christianity in multi-ethnic Indonesian churches located in the Christian nation of America.

Minahasans have a long and complex history with Christianity, both as the face of colonial, and later national, institutional power, and as an aspect of local identity. Christianity was a tool for propagating the discourse of modernity and regional nationalism during the colonial period, and the adoption of Christianity facilitated the emergence of Minahasans as a sub-altern colonial elite (Henley 1996, Schouten 1998). At the dawn of Indonesian independence and into the formative years of the New Order,
a Christian identity brought Minahasans into the fold of the national project of development (pembangunan) and the ideology of "Unity in Diversity" where class and ethnic heterogeneity was transected by federally mandated religious identities, and kristenan (Christianness) became an aspect of keindonesiaan (Indonesianness) (Kipp 1993, Aragon 2000, Schouten 1996). However, Minahasan Christianity has also been problematic in the sphere of Indonesian nationalism, continuing to link Minahasans to pasts that are contra to the imagination of Indonesian national history. Identification and collaboration with Dutch colonial masters, memories emblematic of Minahasan ethnic history, exposes tensions between regional and national pasts (White 2000, Cole 2001, Lambek 1996, Hobsbawm 1983). Christianity also involves Minahasans in transnational projects beyond the state, often ones that are oriented towards the West. These activities can be politically and ideologically divisive as the post 9/11 world increases the marginality Indonesian Christians feel in their predominantly Muslim country.

In exploring the historical reverberations of the indigenous encounter with Christianity and colonialism in this project, the literature of Pacific anthropology has been indispensable as it provided insightful and inspiring lines of thought about the continuity of indigenous practices and belief systems through the processes of colonial rule and into the era of nation-states (Sahlins 1992, Robbins 2004, Rutherford 2005), and the various ways that indigenous peoples have taken up Christian questions of meaning (Barker 1993, Scott 2005, Robbins 2006). Although the area focus of this thesis is generally situated in Southeast Asia, Indonesia specifically, the regionally focused literature that has been most resonant with the Minahasan experience shares themes with Pacific anthropology. Ethnographies of post-colonialism, national integration and
identity in marginalized Indonesian groups often look similar to those in Pacific anthropology (Rutherford 2003, Keane 2007, Tsing 1993, Aragon 2000) and perspectives on how “institutional practice both shapes and is subject to interpretive practices” (Rutherford 2005:121) has helped me to conceptualize the dialectic between individual action and the practices of the powerful institutions of church and state.

As Minahasan Christianity engenders long-distance nationalism in the transnational environment, this thesis also makes a contribution to studies of migration. As an argument for the importance of mutli-sited ethnography (Marcus 1989) it takes seriously “the chains, paths, threads, conjunctions, or juxtapositions of relationships” (Marcus 1998:90), linking the way that Minahasans informants frame, express and enact identities in transnational churches to their particular history, their approach to Christian questions of meaning, and the context of the Indonesian nation-state. This approach also insists that studies of transmigrants who participate simultaneously in more than one nation-state must focus on the way that transnational spaces are reconfigured and redefined, not just on observable social relations and interactions (Glick Schiller 2003:5). Flows of local meaning not only influence the way a group of immigrants manage their interactions in a new state environment, but also how these new imaginings are influenced by, and influence, the way spaces and places are imaginatively connected across space and time by those at “home.” This project rests on the argument that to gain any insight into the way that Minahasans structure their relationships in the transnational environment, it is necessary to understand the particularities of how they “rethink difference through connection (Gupta and Ferguson 1992:8).”
By using Christianity as a lens which captures both the transcendent and the particular, we can better conceive of the way that transnationalism zooms back and forth between the global and the local, but never erases identity. In fact, many transnational practices, like Christian ones, may be couched in globalized discourses even as they are a means by which people instantiate identities and reinscribe the territoriality associated with those identities. As this work shows, it is through migration and the transmogrification of tropes of identity through Christian practices in Indonesian churches in the United States that Minahasans construct themselves as empowered and important citizens of Indonesia, challenging their currently marginal position in the Indonesian state. They also simultaneously reassert the significance of their religious identity as a vehicle for national participation. This research then advances a more nuanced and theoretically aware application of the concept of transnationalism, one that addresses the complex connections - both at the origins of transnational groups and in their place of settlement - that people use to advance and assert themselves within, and across, borders.

This work attempts to address how Christianity is a force that connects people to the world by transcending boundaries even as it defines, transforms, and is transformed in particular historical, cultural and political context. Exploring how ethnic Minahasans have taken up the questions presented by Christianity through history, and as an aspect of their identity both within and outside of the boundaries of the Indonesian nation, combines issues relevant to anthropological studies of Christianity and studies of migration to conceptualize how Christian modalities influence the processes of identity in transnational settings. Christian Minahasans engage with doctrinal issues of meaning in
ways that encompass their own particular worldview (Scott 2005, Cannell 2005), but must negotiate those meanings in multi-ethnic churches and engage with alternate interpretations. A Christian identity has served both to incorporate Minahasan Christians in the ideological projects of the Indonesian nation-state and as a refuge against the centrifugal and homogenizing aspects of those projects, or as a force for agency (Rutherford 2005, Aragon 2000, Henley 1993, Keane 2007 and 2002, Kipp 1993). This has allowed a Minahasan identity to flourish through Christian practices outside of the ethnic homeland. Minahasans have tapped into the institutional powers of Christianity for their own projects of “remaking the world” (Hefner 1993:4) and remade Indonesian nationalism in their new settlement in Seacoast New Hampshire. This indicates the ability of people to use Christianity, and perhaps other world religions, to creatively reinscribe identities in the shifting landscapes of a “deterritorialized” world (Appadurai 1996, Basch, Schiller and Szanton Blanc 1993)

This multi-sited research has been performed across continents and across time, taking me from New Hampshire, to North Sulawesi and back again since I was first introduced to Indonesians living in the Seacoast New Hampshire region in 2003. As a researcher my work has been necessarily reflexive, as my presence has become as much a part of the history, and story, of Indonesians in the Seacoast as the observations recorded in this thesis will be. I have not only been an observer but a participant, worshipping, celebrating and mourning within the church communities, traveling with the blessings of kin networks, and sharing a stake in the dreams and concerns of Indonesians whose hometown became my home in the field, and who adopted my hometown as their own. Beyond these bonds of affection, I also served as the embodiment of a special kinship
that Minahasans feel they share with Westerners, particularly Americans, and a source of authority that validated a sense of ethnic pride. Nothing brought this home to me more forcefully than when my invited performance of a Minahasan folk song (in Indonesian and a local dialect) at a multi-congregational church ceremony brought Minahasans in the audience to tears and sealed my notoriety in and beyond the community. People proudly showed me the photos and videos of me singing that were beamed across the internet back to Indonesia, and sent me clippings of interviews printed in an Indonesian language magazine of people’s comments about my “excellent” (hebat) performance. My person and this research have become part of the circuit of images, ideas, and concepts that inform an sense of Minahasan identity.

Discourse analysis has been the main methodological axis of this project, both in public and private settings. Historically, people in North Sulawesi framed communication with Dutch colonial administrators in the language of Christianity, using the logic of their adopted religion to legitimate calls for the colonial metropole to recognize them as equal to other Dutch citizens (Henley 1996). This historical precedent, in which Minahasans creatively subverted a language and an ideology meant to limit their power as citizens of a colonial regime, is significant. It provides insight into why contemporary Minahasans use the language of Christianity to frame discussions about their inclusion in Indonesian nation, and the implications for the use of Christianity as a means of relating to American institutions in the transnational environment. Therefore, this project is centered on discursive analysis in the church, in public meetings, and in private interviews with first generation migrants, where informants reference an Indonesian national imaginary through historically relevant forms. A discourse centered
approach has allowed Indonesian voices to explicate "the imaginative universe within which their acts are signs" (Geertz 1973:13).

Discourse analysis allowed me to document the processes through which Christian Indonesians negotiate the tensions between ethnic, religious and national identity even as they work to "rescript" those identities in a new national environment. Using discourse analysis techniques, such as isolating schemas or models (Quinn 2005, D'Andrade 2005, Strauss and Quinn 1997, Chaudhary 2004) from transcripts helped to theoretically conceptualize the often "messy subjectivities" (Stromberg 1993) of Christian Indonesians and document the "contested, temporal and emergent" (Clifford 1986:19) processes of culture through speech. Focusing on "talk" has engendered a detailed examination of the way that dominant discourses are internalized and expressed or recombined in novel ways, and how unmarked categories such as formal Indonesian speech frame experiences, discussion and activities in the church. By contextualizing examination of speech acts through participant observation in church activities, historical research and the continuum of fieldwork, this project allows an understanding of the interaction between individuals and the social events through which subjectivities are created and maintained (Bourdieu 1977). A discursive focus also highlights the way that Minahasan Christianity is imbued with locally constructed social and cultural meanings, a major concern of this project and a lacunae both in the anthropology of Christianity, and studies of world religions in Indonesia (Bowen 1993).

The organization of chapters represents a flow through time and space, mimicking the trajectories that lead from Minahasa to America and turn again towards Indonesia. Chapter two provides a historical perspective on the development of Minahasan identity
through the colonial period and into Indonesian Independence, focusing on how indigenous constructions and cosmologies were assimilated into frameworks of Christian meaning. This chapter also provides contextual historical background for points of Indonesian history that have signaled shifts in Minahasan identity, as Minahasans moved from sub-altern colonial elites to ethnic and religious minorities in the nation-state of Indonesia.

Chapter three describes the Indonesian community in New Hampshire with a focus on the three churches where the majority of my fieldwork was conducted. This chapter uses theoretical frameworks from the study of transnationalism to frame issues of citizenship, class and nationalism in the transnational environment. It also provides empirical evidence about the parameters of the Indonesian community in New Hampshire and their connections with other Indonesians in the United States and across national borders.

Chapter four addresses the way that Minahasans in Indonesia imagine their relationships with the United States and America, tracing the ways in which political and historical realities in Indonesia lead Minahasans to construct an affective relationship between their province and the “Christian” United States. The analysis of discourses centered on concepts of America takes into account the way that incorporation of foreign elements has been an indication of status and identity through the historical period and into the present in Minahasa, referencing theories of incorporation of the foreign drawn from the anthropology of the Pacific.

Chapter five moves into the transnational environment to examine the way that Minahasan history exists in conversation with Christian logics. Drawing on the
interpretations of Minahasan Christian scholars about the meaning of traditional practices embedded in Christian frameworks, this chapter provides analysis of the origin myth of the Minahasan people as it is retold and re-tooled at a Christian retreat. The re-telling of this myth is one example of how heterogeneous interpretations of the past, and of the signifiers of Minahasan identity, are discursively organized and debated through meanings drawn from Christian theology.

Chapter six serves as an analysis and conclusion of how modalities of Minahasan Christianity have served as a basis for long-distance nationalism in multi-ethnic Indonesian church congregations. By focusing on how Minahasans interpret nationalized performances of ethnic identity and the motivation for maintaining multi-ethnic “Indonesian” churches in conjunction with theories of Christianity, I propose that the transnational environment allows Minahasans to live out a dream of religious nationalism that is impossible within the confines of the Indonesian nation-state. This increases dedication to the nationalist ideology as Christianity, an important aspect of Minahasan identity, is validated as a vehicle of national and ethnic tradition.
CHAPTER 2
MINAHASA THROUGH HISTORY

If the strength of an ethnic identity in the contemporary world is located in resiliency, in the ability to adapt to changing circumstance and maintain itself through the vicissitudes of time, space and political change, than the strength (kekuatan) other Indonesians attribute to the Minahasans holds a grain of empirical truth. The people who trace their lineage to the northern tip of Sulawesi share in a process of identity making that has sustained the idea of Minahasa through periods of paradigmatic historical change and in dialectical relationship to both national and foreign powers. This chapter traces the development of Minahan identity through time and traces the lineages of history that Minahasans have carried with them into transnational Indonesian churches in the United States. Minahasans realign Indonesian nationalism through Christianity in transnational churches precisely because Christianity historically served as an avenue to maintain indigenous identities and advance indigenous desires through a powerful, and politically efficacious, mode of being.

Minahan Christianity is an ideological force that has shaped the struggles the region and its people have faced from the inception of the colonial period to the current program of Indonesian political decentralization. Beginning with a description of the complex of pre-colonial indigenous beliefs and social structure of the region, this historical treatment focuses on how Christianity has served as an organizing logic that has allowed indigenous inhabitants to maintain traditions in new formulations, and to transform themselves into modern citizens who asserted their rights through the terms of the Dutch colonial project. The successful adaptation of a modern ontology to
indigenous forms of leadership facilitated not only the emergence of an educated indigenous elite but also the development of a special relationship between Minahasans and the foreign colonial powers that was unique in comparison to the experiences of other indigenous peoples of the Dutch East Indies. As subaltern colonial elites, Minahasans experienced a sense of themselves in relation to a wider world, and regional nationalism that transcended the bounds of the colonial territory.

The national movement that developed in Java paralleled the peak of Minahasan self-identification as modern, Christian elites whose destiny lay in succeeding through the auspices and in the world of colonial powers. A nascent Indonesian identity emerged during this period, developing into an alternate vision in which modernity was fully realized in the rejection of colonial influences. Disruption of colonial power in the Indies during the Japanese occupation accelerated the solidification of Indonesian national identity, and Minahasans realized the need to recalibrate a vision of their destinies to resonate within the terms of the new Indonesian national imaginary.

Although this process was fraught with the difficulty of meshing two alternate, and in some senses opposed, nationalisms, the inclusion of Christianity in the pantheon of Pancasila-protected religions assured Minahasans that their beliefs, and identity, would have a enough of a place in Indonesia for them to ascribe to the national cause. However, the tension between nation-state and regional nationalism would never be completely erased, and was exacerbated by the marginalization of Minahasans on both ethnic and religious grounds. These tensions would erupt in an armed regional rebellion known as PERMESTA, and would resonate as an aspect of Minahasan identity through to the contemporary period. With the fall of Suharto and the loss of those centrifugal forces
that balanced regionalism and religion against national imperatives, as well as the increasing influence of global politico-religious narratives, Minahasan Christianity is once again central in defining the role of the region in relation to the national and the world. Every assertion of being Minahasan, whether it is in Indonesia or in New Hampshire, carries the weight of these historical concerns.

The apocryphal tale of the origins of Minahasan identity refers to the year 1679, when nineteen of the highland tribal leaders known as Alfurs gathered in Manado to sign their loyalty to the Dutch East India Company (VOC) under the auspice of the Governor of the Moluccas, Robert Padthrugge (Schouten 1998:41). Contemporary residents of the region refer to this act as evidence of the historical unity of the people living at the northern tip of Sulawesi, a unity reflected in their ethnonym “Minahasa” which literally translates¹ as “united, become one.” (Schouten 1998:10). Yet this conception of unity is one projected from the present onto a past that was characterized, in the observations of the foreigners who began to reach the shores of the region as early as 1520, by continual feuds and fights among the Alfurs and their people (Henley 1996:31). At the time of the treaty, the name that would later come to describe both a geographic territory and an identity had not yet been created. The cooperation between the Alfurs was predicated not on a sense of ethnic unity but the VOC’s promise to shield them from the demands of the raja of Bolaang and a promise to bypass his authority to purchase rice directly from them (Henley 1996:32).

¹ Henley and Schouten both identify the root of the name Minahasa in the Tombulu language, which has various forms across the distinct regional tongues, such as Minasa and Masse. A locally printed source confirms this in more detail, breaking the name down from what is identified as its original source in Tombulu: WATA ESA ENE. Wata = all, Esa = one, Ene = agree or “all agree to become one.” (Waroka 2004:30).
The treaty of 1679 may not have entailed cooperation between the Alfurs beyond the expediency of economic and political concerns, but it was symbolic in its designation of a land area the Dutch referred to as the Landstreek Van Manado or Manado territory. Emanating from the fort at Manado, this territory stretched from the northern tip of the island to the Poiger River southwest of Amurang (Henley 1996:25) and displaced the Spaniards in the region. Having originally landed on the shores of Manado in 1608, VOC representatives hoped as the Spanish did to use the Manado highlands as rice-producing lands to support their merantile missions on the eastern side of the archipelago (Schouten 1998:42, Henley 1996:41). In their efforts to control cultivation they instituted a territoriality that was a departure from the existing social organization. The demarcation of the Landstreek Manado into a territorial unit both through social and economic means cannot be underestimated in the history of the region and the ethnic identity of contemporary Minahasans, as this construct was a powerful tool in the promotion of indigenous desires as much as it was a colonial project. In many ways, the history of Minahasa is the story of how regional cultures adopted and adapted a colonially introduced identity, and the consequences of ascribing to that identity through the development of an even more ambitious territorial project: the nation of Indonesia.
Figure 1. Map of Minahasa in 1853 showing approximate location of language groups. P. Baron Melvil Van Carnbee, reprinted with permission of the Library of the Royal Tropical Institute, Amsterdam, The Netherlands.
Pre-Colonial Configurations

In the characterization of most Minahasans I spoke with during fieldwork, Minahasa has always been Christian, and the religion has come to signify not just a framework of meaning behind traditional practices but also evidence of the primordialism of Minahasan ethnic unity. The detailed historical accounts of missionaries and other colonial employees recounting the relatively late and colonially encouraged unity amongst the various tribes who inhabited North Sulawesi does not disturb a coherent and timeless sense of Minahasan identity. Traditional practices and indigenous cosmologies were absorbed into the transformed social and cultural landscape of what came to be known as Minahasa, both through the efforts of missionaries and local people, who sought to understand and utilize the systems of the powerful foreigners in their midst. Foreigners and their markers of status were also adopted into the pre-existing parameters of the competitive and egalitarian nature of societies in the North Sulawesi region. To understand how the Minahasan identity could be both novel and timeless, it’s necessary to examine the societal and cultural changes in the region as something more complex than top-down colonial restructuring. People in North Sulawesi became Minahasans through a series of dialectical transformations, responses to a changing world crafted through the logic of indigenous society.

Knowledge of life in North Sulawesi before the colonial period is in a large measure drawn from the observation of the Europeans who labored to instill a sense of identity in the region’s inhabitants as an aspect of the colonial project. Ethnographic and historical monographs have relied heavily on the works of several colonial-era individuals who wrote extensively of their observations of life in North Sulawesi. These
include the reports of the Governor of Moluccas, Robertus Padtbrugge, from 1677-1682, research on the languages of North Sulawesi by missionaries J.A.T. Schwarz and J.F. Reidel beginning in 1831, and the published volumes of missionary Nicolaas Graafland, who himself was integral to many of the institutional changes that helped to create Minahasa as it is known today. In the context of Suharto’s New Order ideology which encouraged aspects of “traditional” culture to be purified and used as an aspect of national identity, indigenous interest in pre-colonial cultures experienced a resurgence in the 1980s that also depended heavily on these sources to reconstruct a vision of life before the influence of Christianity and the solidification of the Minahasan ethnic identity.

It is therefore that historical records characterizing life in pre-colonial Minahasa as chaotic and marked by violence must be considered in light of their source. However, it is clear that prior to the European contact and the VOC involvement in the region, the numerous groups that inhabited the interior and spoke at least eight distinct languages had limited basis for regional unity. Social organization was centered on villages of 10-12 houses known as a wale (indicating both the settlement and the inhabitants) interacting with a larger ritual unit called a walak that varied in size (Schouten 1996:19). Although some walaks were involved in tributary relationships with the central figures of the Bolaang-Amurang-Manado ruling complex, they were largely endogamous and self-sufficient (Schouten 1998) and a bilateral descent system prevented development of a larger regional network that linked tribes through marriage (Henley 1996:46). Peaceful relations outside of the nearly thirty individual walak were rare (Burghoorn 1981:27), and instances of unified action against a common enemy were contingent in nature.
Even the core tripartite of language/descent groups that was thought to share a common history based their relationship on a mutually opposed cosmology. The Tombulu, Tonsea and Tontemboan groups located common descent from the mythical progenitor Lumimu'ut, who had divided them into three different language groups and provided them with differing, but related rules for their ritual practice or poso (alternatively foso). The watu pinewetengan in nuwu' (stone of the division of languages) where this division took place is still considered a ritually powerful center and a symbol of Minahasan culture. Original recordings of this myth of descent only included three of the eight sub-ethnic groups, with a fourth name indicated that was never traced to any living group. This gap in would later be utilized by missionaries, who inserted groups external to the cosmology into the conveniently empty space in the myth of common descent. Recordings of the division myth including all eight subgroups emerged as early as 1898 (Schouten 1998:15). Related cosmology did little to dampen competition between wolaks, who in the complaint of one Spanish missionary, would not convert to Christianity unless their neighbors did likewise (Henley 1996:35).

Competition characterized life both within and without the walak. Schouten (1998) describes the society of the Alfurs as egalitarian and competitive, a system in which lack of inherited status elevated expression of certain virtues through achievements such as headhunting, ability to sponsor large-scale feasts, and collection of material wealth through clothing and ornamentation. Although opportunity to ascend to power was not determined by birth, some historical sources note that hierarchical systems still existed and individuals whose descent was traced from slaves had less social mobility (Henley 1996:25). Hierarchical systems were fluid, however, and competition, whether
through bravery in warfare or the ability to demonstrate wealth through feasting or ritual accuracy, could elevate an individual to the position of a leader. Personal attributes like courageousness, bravery and eloquence were the most valued, and were evidence of *keter*, the manifestation of supernatural powers in a living being (Schouten 1998:25). The concept of *keter* fit within the religious ritual system as an expression of the personal achievements needed to obtain ritual perfection and become a *wa’ilan*. An individual determined to be a *wa’ilan* could be assured status as a ritually honored ancestor, but achieving this status required the ability to attract to the necessary amount of wealth to hold ritual feasts of merit.

The cultural complex of the *Alfurs* was dependent on the ability to display characteristics that were evidence of *keter* through ritual feasting, warfare and headhunting. The endogamous and competitive nature of the *walaks* in the region facilitated a system in which hierarchy was not ascribed by birth, and was tied to religious beliefs by allowing opportunity for ascendance to the status of venerated ancestor. These activities had their own cadre of ritual specialists called *walian*, a position filled by both sexes that officiated *poso* ceremonies (Burghoorn-Lunstrom 1981:69). These specialists had their own networks under a *walian tua* that stretched beyond individual villages (Henley 1996). *Walian* were responsible for recounting the achievements of renowned ancestors to whom most within the *walak* could claim descent, and whose *keter* benefited the lives of all members (Schouten 1996:37).

Genealogy and group cohesion, religion and social structure were arranged around religious rituals and the competition that was engendered by them. The inception of the colonial period was to fundamentally divert this way of life by changing the
avenues through which status could be achieved and by turning the walaks into territorial units in the colonial bureaucracy. The last report of headhunting occurred in 1862 (Henley 1996:57) and by the early 1900s only six of the original twenty-seven walaks remained in recombined form. Perhaps more telling of the dramatic cultural changes that occurred under VOC auspices was the region’s mass conversion to Christianity by the turn of the century (Henley 1996:53). The reorganization of the walak system into a bounded colonial territory began with a disruption of agricultural practices and leadership roles.
Figure 2. Map of Minahasa in 1921 showing Dutch administrative units. From Berwerkt Door Het Encyclopaedisch Bureau, reprinted with permission from the Library of the Royal Tropical Institute, Amsterdam, The Netherlands.
Interference in Land and Leadership: Cultuurstelsel, Coffee and Cultural Change

The most dramatic socio-economic changes in the VOC's North Sulawesi territory took place in the period after the company's nationalization in 1796 and the fight to regain control of the archipelago from British forces. Dutch financial interests spurred a number of policies aimed at more efficient extraction of natural resources across the Indies, and the introduction of new crops, forced agricultural production and greater political control of indigenous populations. With a strong colonial presence already in effect in the Landstreek Manado, the VOC began a program of aggressive actions to restructure agricultural practices and absorb indigenous leaders into the colonial infrastructure. These new policies had a number of consequences in the lives of indigenous people as the disruption of traditional agricultural practice disrupted the socio-religious complex that governed walak organization and leadership. As the egalitarian and flexible nature of regional society was subject to increased colonial control, indigenous leaders began to look within the colonial system for new avenues of leadership. By using association with colonial institutions as a way of demonstrating keter, indigenous leaders were able to maintain pre-colonial concepts of leadership even as social organization was transformed into a more static, regionally unified system led by hereditary elites.

On the eve of the VOC collapse, the company had made some strides in isolating the region they hoped to create, but their efforts to control those within the borders had met with less success. In 1790 the treaty between the company and the Alfurs was renewed a third time, and it is from this context the first written record of the word
Minahasa is found (Schouten 1998:48), not in reference to a geographical or ethnic identification but as a description of the *landraad* council of chiefs (Henley 1996:36). The limited application of the treaty and VOC rule in the region had become apparent as the company, and the Dutch state, tried to deal with the impending threat of British bids to control the archipelago. When the Dutch attempted to enlist two thousand soldiers from the region to repel British forces in Java in 1808, their actions precipitated resistance from a number of walaks in the Tondano area (Henley 1996:37). The limited ability of the Dutch to either control or unify the walaks was clear as some leaders, in the spirit of competition, joined Dutch forces in an effort to quell the rebellion of Tondano walaks. The result was the Tondano War, which persisted until the British captured Manado in 1810. It was not until the Dutch state reclaimed the region after the British interregnum from 1810-1817 that a new crop, and a new system of control, would dramatically change social and cultural practices in the region and transform it into a place and a people called Minahasa.

This new crop was coffee, and its cultivation would change the structure of indigenous leadership. The Batavian Republic was drained from the Belgian and Java Wars and had a renewed interest in gaining capital from newly christened Dutch East Indies territory. A program of forced cultivation (*Cultuurstelsel*) was introduced North Sulawesi in 1822 that would focus on replacing subsistence foods with valuable commercial crops such as coffee, sugar and indigo. The policy was aimed at forcing cultivation of these crops by integrating indigenous leadership into the bureaucratic system, providing walak leaders with a fixed percentage of total output for their districts in return for their enforcement of the agricultural policy (Henley 1996:39). Similar to the
results of this policy at the center of Dutch rule in Java, local leaders were anxious to maintain their ruling rights by exploiting this new angle of power (Andaya 2005). In North Sulawesi, as avenues for demonstrating keter and holding prestige feasts disappeared, individuals turned to the colonial authority as a new form of proving fitness for leadership. Not only did colonial authorities increasingly seek to restrict traditional practices linked to leadership, but the amount of labor needed to farm coffee required nearly 120 days worth of labor per year from each household (Lundstrom Burghoorn 1981:30). With threat of punishment for reluctance to work, and the decrease in time and resources necessary to support familiar forms of social ritual, leadership became to be defined by colonial backing. Increasing codification of these positions as they were drawn into the colonial system, however, prevented the flexibility that had previously characterized the hierarchical social system. Walak chiefs began to intermarry to maintain power across generations, and a more closed, hereditary elite began to emerge (Henley 1996:50, Schouten 1998).

It was not only patterns of leadership that were transformed by the ramifications of Cultuurstelsel policies. Reconfigurations of the landscape worked in tandem with changes in the political and social system to transform indigenous spatial understandings into a concept of a territoriality aligned with the Dutch vision. The Dutch attempt to “influence or control people, phenomena and relationships by asserting control over geographic area” (Winichakul 1994:16) was partially accomplished through the disturbance of indigenous spatial-temporal organization. Forced cultivation claimed the kalakaren plots that signified the communal relationships within individual walaks (Lundstrom-Burghoorn 1981:30), and corvee labor was used to install road systems that
created new forms of access and control across the region. In 1825, colonial officials restricted movement between individual *walaks*, making them roughly analogous to districts (Henley 1996:39). As *walaks* were territorialized, they were defined through the “prime technology” of the nation state — the map (Winichakul 1994:17).

Redefining North Sulawesi as a codified region with boundaries may have transformed a colonial territory into a fledgling territoriality, but internal reorganization was necessary to absorb the existing conceptions of political and social organization into the realm of colonial control. An earthquake in 1845 accelerated this process, creating an opportunity for the colonial government to rebuild habitations modeled on the spatial uniformity of cities in the West, displacing the natural organization of the *walaks* around the “mother village” at the center (Schouten 1998:19) and replacing the houses raised on bamboo piles containing intergenerational households (Ibid 20) with Dutch style-residences divided into individual plots (Henley 1996:40). These reformulations changed spatial formulations and simplified classification of the population, key to the processes of census that would help to reorganize people into novel identity categories (Anderson 1983:164).

The policies surrounding *Cultuurstelsel* transformed the landscape of North Sulawesi into a “geo-body” in which a territorial definition generates “effects — by classifying, communicating, and enforcement — on people, things and relationships” (Winichakul 1994:17). Enforcement of labor changed the temporal and social fabric of life for the *Alfurs*, and limited their ability to maintain and define relationships through feasting and headhunting. Applying the principles of Western uniformity to habitations further displaced the relationship between land and social organization. As leaders were
pulled more deeply into the colonial bureaucracy and the roles of native officials were standardized (Henley 1996:39), the social and political foundations of pre-colonial society were recast. As standardized positions, the individual identity of walak leaders were inconsequential, and chiefs could be relocated to any of the walaks that were officially recognized as districts of the colonial territory of Minahasa in 1856. The principles of descent and leadership that tied people to particular groups had been made obsolete in the terms of colonial rule, and a new social order stressing unity where division had reigned was needed that would coincide with the reconfigured landscape called Minahasa. This new social and cultural topography would be achieved by re-orienting the past to fit within an application of Christian principles stressing regional unity.

**Reaching out for the Gospel: Christianity in Minahasa**

The pivotal structural changes that began to transform indigenous society in North Sulawesi from a system of autonomous, competitive walaks into a unified population with a recognized hereditary elite were paralleled by the introduction of a new ideological system rooted in the principles of Christianity. Far more than a foreign religion passively accepted under the imposition of colonial missionaries, Christianity provided new logics by which indigenous people could conceptualize their history, their emerging unified identity and their place in the modern world amongst their European counterparts. Christian institutions would also provide opportunities for the exercise of status and leadership in new forms, whether through inclusion in colonial government, educational opportunities or access to languages that facilitated a connection to the
foreign. By introducing Christianity in tandem with programs aimed at encouraging a
unified regional identity that would facilitate colonial governance of the region,
Minahasan identity is intimately tied with ethnotheologies that place pre-colonial history
in relation to Christian texts and provide an unbroken narrative of “Minahasaness” that
overcomes temporal discontinues. These various trajectories through which people
situated themselves and their indigenous history in relation to the transcendent properties
of Christianity have shaped the experience of being Minahasan and are still a vital aspect
of contemporary identity.

Western and Minahasan scholars alike locate the roots of widespread Christian
conversion across Minahasa in the arrival of two missionaries in 1831 (Watuseke 1985:3,
Henley 1996:52). The estimated 4,000 Christians that inhabited the coastal areas of the
region by 1820 were primarily descendent of slaves brought into the area by the VOC
(Henley 1996:50). Until the arrival of J.R. Reidel and J.G. Schwarz from the Dutch
Missionary Society (Nederlandsch Zendeling Genootschap, henceforth NZG), only
nominal effort had been made to convert the Alfurs of the interior to Christianity. The
visits of indigenous missionaries had from Ambon and Maluku had intrigued some in the
highlands with the possibility of ascendance to a higher status within the colonial system.
Early missionaries, however, did not encourage nominal conversion and enforced strict
parameters for the adoption of Christianity. The destruction of ritual objects and the
concomitant loss of status could not have been particularly appealing to indigenous
people, especially the religious practitioners who stood to lose the most if their brethren
converted (Schouten 1998:119).
Missionaries therefore employed various techniques to entice the communities around them to consider the gospel and the possibility of baptism. Although Reidel arrived to a population of two hundred converts in Tondano, he struggled to fill the church on Sundays and made little headway within the first year. Indigenous historian Watuseke (1985:7) reports that Reidel and his wife enticed guests to stay and listen to the gospel by feeding them kue, Dutch pastries still served to guests in Minahasa today. Another missionary in Tomohon would station himself at the walak's sacred space (tempat jaga) and add his story to the nightly exchange of news between village heads that would arrive for their shift to protect the area (Watuseke 1985:8). Missionaries also sought to ease conversion by interpolating aspects of indigenous religious beliefs into Christian teachings, allowing certain life-cycle rituals to be performed as long as they were sacralized through the use of Protestant liturgy (Schouten 1998:110). In tandem with the absorption of indigenous elements into theological pedagogy, missionaries labored to offer a new vision of unity to the Alfurs that utilized the concept of Christian brotherhood as the logic of a social unity that would overcome tribal factions. Nicolaas Graafland is credited with reconfiguring the origin myth of Tu‘ur in Tana‘ where Lumimu’ut divided her people into four quadrants. He inserted the Tondano speaking group into the story as the inhabitants of the fourth quadrant, refuting their external status in the original “ethnic” tripartite of Tonsea, Tombulu and Tontempoan speakers (Henley 1996:55).

Impetus to convert was also increased by the intimate relationship between Christianity and education. With over a hundred schools in the region by 1860 (Schouten 1998:113), the NZG had a strong institutional presence in the region. Complementing
The message of mission schools was the *sistem murid* (also known as *sistem anak piara*), originally practiced by missionaries like Riedel as a means of converting reticent parents via their offspring. Children of the indigenous elite were taken into missionary households for the purpose of “familiarizing them with discipline and rules,” given Western-style clothes and groomed to become either supportive wives for indigenous Christian men or *pembantu* (assistants) to the missionaries (Watuseke 1985:7-8). This process succeeded in familiarizing the next generation with Christianity and the ideals espoused by missionaries. It also advanced the idea that education was an avenue to material gain and increased status in the realm of colonial power and indigenous social hierarchy alike. Male children educated in the *sistem anak piara* would later constitute a mid-level core of religious practitioners in the colonial bureaucracy who mediated the relationship between missionaries and schoolteachers, as well as their wider communities.²

The colonial classroom was an incubator for imagining Minahasa as it was taking shape, molded by the missionaries who imparted their own version of history that stressed a latent regional unity and a primordial monotheism. There was little differentiation between education and religion. Churches and schools shared space (Henley 1996:57) and materials were pointedly Christian; bibles were used as reading material and classrooms adorned with maps of the Holy Land (Schouten 1998:112). Other pedagogical materials were tailored to advancing the goal of a unified indigenous identity. The only geography lesson explicitly taught in NZG primary level schools was

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² The *anak piara* system was discontinued as educational institutions increased in the region. For instance, a training college for teachers was opened in 1851 in Sender by N. Graatland, relocating the next year to Tanawangko, and a college was established in Tomohon for the theological training of indigenous missionary assistants in 1868 (Schouten 1998:115).
the geography of Minahasa, and Graafland provided students with lists enumerating
every village in the region (Henley 1996:59). In this way the school was an instrument of
the quantification and enumeration of incipient “citizens” that is commonly recognized as
a hallmark of colonialism.

Also integral to overcoming the divisions of indigenous society was the use of
Malay as the language of instruction and worship in religious institutions. Already a
language that had an aura of prestige in the region as the lingua franca of trade (Maier
1993:45), it was preferred by indigenous peoples over regional dialects. The later
development of the Indonesian national language from Malay reflected the premise that
its appeal rested in its neutrality; it was not attached to any particular region or identity.
From the European perspective Malay was considered easy to learn, and powers from the
metropole took an interest in preserving it as a language of authority by enforcing a
program of “pure Malay” that was qualitatively different than the more heteroglossic
versions spoken throughout the archipelago (Ibid 52). In this way Malay as an official
language would be distinguished from the regional trading creole spoken in Manado.\(^3\)

These factors – prestige, ability to communicate in an official language of colonial
government, and linguistic neutrality – made fluency in Malay a skill desired by
Minahasa’s indigenous inhabitants. Much to the disappointment of missionaries, it
appeared that the opportunity to learn Malay was the underlying motivation that
compelled many parents to send their children to school, as J.F. Reidel commented in
1840 (Schouten 1998:113).

\(^3\) This may partially explain why Indonesian churches in New Hampshire, where Bahasa Manado (or Malay Manado)
is spoken by a large portion of the congregation, only use Indonesian for those activities seen as official or formal –
such as church services and public meetings.
By 1880 almost 90% of the population of Minahasa had “reached out” for the gospel (Henley 1996:53). Motives for conversion were complex, however, and reflected indigenous concerns with status and power. As colonial penetration had irrevocably changed the social and political structures of the Alfur groups, people attempted to reinterpret cultural and social practices through a new, and dominant, structure. Conversion to Christianity and education were means to exhibit status in both the colonial and the indigenous view of the world. Indigenous cultural ideals began to converge with colonial institutions and practices, such as when the Tonsea region converted to Christianity wholesale in order not to be outdone by the neighboring indigenous group (Henley 1996:53). Although indigenous practices still thrived, embracing Christianity and other colonial practices became a strategy to maintain cultural traditions and indigenous claims to power in a radically changed, and newly re-imagined territory. As the colonial period continued, Minahasans would continue to integrate a new vision of the world into a previous one, and adopt the system of the colonizers to authenticate and bolster demands for equality.

**becoming colonial elites and the “light of day”**

The emergence of a Minahasan elite was central to the development of a regional nationalism and had far-reaching implications for the associations between leadership, status and Christianity. From the 1850s on, as the Netherlands government increased its institutional presence in the region and recruited the chiefly elite and their descendents into bureaucratic positions, two categories were delineated: those of chiefly or aristocratic
descent (hereafter bangsa), and those consisting of teachers and missionary assistants whose status was not based in heredity (Schouten 1998:121). The development of the bangsa was supported by state schools such as the School for Chiefs (Hoofdenschool) that opened in 1865 (Watuseke 1985:26), and the appointment of chiefs to regional bureaucratic positions such as the district head (hukum besar). The NZG continued its policy of training missionary assistants, who often doubled as local teachers, with the establishment of a college in Tomohon in 1868 in addition to the teacher training school established by Graafland in 1851 (Schouten 1996:115).

The goal of the religiously trained elite was in part supported by the ultimate goal of the missionaries themselves, which was to establish a self-sufficient, unified religious community in Minahasa. Much to that end they continued to engineer and propagate a sort of “national culture” that encompassed aspects of what they regarded as the essence of native culture (Henley 1996:62). In 1868, Graafland published the first issue of the Tjahaja Sijang (The Light of Day) a monthly publication “for Minahasa” with material supplied by missionaries and a pool of indigenous writers (Ibid 59). Written in Malay, it was widely subscribed to by the intellectual elite, but also reportedly filtered out into the wider community through translation and public readings (Schouten 1998:113). The publication not only helped to solidify the idea of a Minahasan community, but was a tool used by intellectual elite to communicate to each other, and the colonizers, through shared perceptions and a common language.

The appeal for colonial authorities and the metropole to recognize calls for equality on the basis of the very society they had created also had roots in the urban center of Manado, where the limits of assimilationist policies and precepts of the colonial
era were tested. By the 1930s a cosmopolitan environment had emerged in the city, one characterized by an embrace of Westernization and a mix of peoples – Chinese, Eurasians, and *totok* Europeans from the metropole. As indigenous and assimilated inhabitants adopted the accoutrements and attitudes of Europeans, and the desire to be recognized as such, both the European population and colonial officials began to rescind exhortations of the positive aspects of assimilation, labeling the city anathema to the “pure” culture of greater Minahasa (Henley 1996:76). Furthermore, although miscegenation was common from the inception of the colonial period, rifts emerged when even those of Eurasian descent found more acceptance within the open boundaries of a Minahasan identity than with that of the *totok* population. Missionaries who had worked so diligently to engineer the concept of Minahasa were horrified that the cosmopolitan culture of Manado became a model for the incipient nationalism of the region (Henley 1996:77).5

As a stronger sense of regional pride and the allure of cosmopolitanism pervaded the region, Minahasans outside of the elite strata also became frustrated with their inability to secure the position or status through education and government employment. Educational opportunities provided by the newly erected state schools in 1882 were seen as a way to avoid an agrarian lifestyle and ascend to a white-collar position. School was also a means to learn Dutch, which was quickly becoming the new preferred language of the elite (Schouten 1998:190). Missionary schools fell out of favor and government positions became coveted means for advancement and social status. For those who could not break into the elite strata, a new viable option appeared: enlistment with the Royal

5 Minado identity is still salient today, as immigrants with roots in Manado will identify themselves as “Manadonese.” Manado or Manadonese is considered to fall under the umbrella of Minahasan identity, as is demonstrated in the results of discourse analysis techniques in interviews.
Army of the Netherlands East Indies (hereafter KNIL), which provided opportunity for travel and mid-level positions above other natives of the archipelago. Enlistment with the military also exempted one from taxes and corvee labor on return to Minahasa, an added bonus to the increased status attached someone who had traveled and worked in foreign areas with the Dutch (Schouten 1998:124).

Employment outside of Minahasa became commonplace as the Dutch relied on the educated and literate Minahasans to fill positions in other areas of the Netherlands Indies. Due to the intensity of colonial contact in the region, they were more educated than most other indigenous residents of the archipelago by the twentieth century, and by 1930 it is estimated one out of every eight Minahasans lived outside the homeland, often in positions of relative prestige as agricultural overseers, government clerks, high ranking soldiers, missionary assistants, and teachers (Henley 1996:81). The exposure of Minahasans to their position and education vis-à-vis other native groups in the archipelago, combined with the colonial perception of Minahasans as “civilized”, created a bourgeoning ethnocentrism and sharpened the sense that Minahasans should be considered equal to their European counterparts. Individual elites had long struggled to obtain equal status in both religious and government institutions, even going so far as to find private financiers to support their education in the Netherlands when they were denied these privileges in the colony6 (Watuske 1985:11). In the twentieth century those struggles had been fruitful as Minahasans secured a position as a sub-altern colonial elites and were rewarded with more concrete political privileges.

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6 Here Watuske is referring to Lambertus Mangindaan, the first indigenous missionary in Minahasa. Although he graduated from an NIZG religious college in the Netherlands, NIZG officials refused to recognize him as an equal upon his return to Sulawesi. He eventually deserted his attempt at a religious career and began teaching at the Hofdenschool in 1881.
By the 1920s, the Netherlands began to accede some political power to Minahasans, withdrawing controleurs from the colony and leaving an entirely local staff at government offices. Positions often reserved only for white officials were granted to indigenous elite (Henley 1996:73). Indicative of a keenly developed sense of Minahasan supremacy, a political ideal of expansionism emerged and was championed by Dr. G.S.S.J. (Sam) Ratulangie,7 the son of a Dutch educated teacher. Developed during his educational years in Europe, Ratulangie proposed that Minahasans would be responsible for unifying the remainder of the Celebes under their cultural rule (Ibid 83). Although this sort of incipient Minahasan nationalism had already begun to gel in political organizations in the diaspora and the homeland like the Perserikatan Minahasa (Minahasan Union) (Schouten 1996:194), Ratulangie's claim was the most audacious assertion of the strength of Minahasa as a political cause and a fully realized identity. These political movements resonated in the religious sphere as well. Some local religious leaders and politicians rejected the efforts of the Indische Kerk (Church of the Netherlands) to grant a modulated form of independence to the Protestant Church of Minahasa, forming their own indigenous Protestant church, the Kerapatan Geredja Protestan Minahasa (Union of the Minahasa Protestant Church) in 1933. This was followed by the withdrawal of the NZG and the rebirth of the newly independent regional Protestant church as the Geredja Masehi Indjili Minahasa (Evangelical Church of Minahasa, GMIM), today the region's largest and most successful denomination (Schouten 1998:195).

7 Today, Sam Ratulangie is considered a national and regional hero, famous for his involvement in the nationalist movement and his championing of Indonesian education. A regional slogan often attributed to him is "Si Tumou Tumou Tou" or "A man lives to educate others"
The Minahasan identity solidified and took on new political dimensions in the late colonial period. As Minahasans enjoyed advantages and capitalized on a mobility facilitated by their relationship with the Dutch colonial state, they developed a vision of the destiny of their region precipitated on their continued dominance over other groups in the Netherlands Indies. An experience of modernity and a sort of regional nationalism developed much earlier, and in a different form, than experienced by indigenous populations in other regions. This affected not only the Minahasan perception of colonialism, but also set their reputation across the colonial archipelago, a situation that would greatly affect the Minahasans as the Indies hurtled towards independence and a new national identity. The events of the next twenty years would expose a new reality as to the efficacy of their colonial relationships.

One of Many: Minahasa through the Japanese Occupation and Independence

In the interest of space, little will be outlined here of the development of the nationalist movement emanating from the islands in the western end of the Indonesian archipelago. My purpose here is to place Minahasa as a regional identity within the larger historical narrative of the development of Indonesian nationalism, to better understand how paradigmatic changes across the archipelago required Minahasans to reimagine themselves in a transition from being sub-altern colonial elites to religious and ethnic minority citizens of a new nation-state. Tracing the political concerns of Minahasans through the Japanese occupation and nationalist movement exposes how the concatenations of regional history complicated Minahasan participation in the ideological motivations of Indonesian nationalism. The events spurred by these tensions in the early
national period would strongly affect contemporary Minahasan orientations towards Indonesian nationalism, and have implications for the long-distance nationalism practiced by Minahasans living outside of Indonesia.

By the early 1900s, other areas of the Indies, most notably Java, had benefited from the vast increase in educational opportunities under the Ethical Policy. Combined with the colonial government’s move towards decentralization, these changes had germinated an elite steeped in Western ideals but raised in their native land. Populations in regions like Java became more aware of the possibility of a united, and emancipated, Netherlands East Indies. Youth groups and cadres of intellectuals incubated the first concepts of the archipelago’s nationalism, creating a name and a language that simultaneously transcended colonial associations and regional identities. By the 1930s nationalist political parties were divided into three streams or *aliran* identified through their association with Islam, communism and “secular nationalism” (Andaya 2005). The proliferation of parties and leaders led to competition for support from the general public, and were increasingly monitored by the Dutch secret police as the colonial government sensed the impending threat to their rule. This period of political activity came to a halt as Dutch forces violently snuffed out rebellions associated with the Partai Kommunis Indonesia (Indonesian Communist Party, PKI) in Java in 1925 and in Sumatra in 1927 (Rickleffs 2001:225).

The disillusionment felt by those involved in this first failed attempt to overthrow colonial power helped to define the nationalist cause as one that was inherently anti-Dutch and aimed at the development of an autonomous Indonesia (Rickleffs 2001:227). This would highlight the precarious situation of the Minahasans who began to conceive
of themselves as a minority as their awareness grew of the size and increasing political power of the Javanese, who accounted for 47.1% of the Indonesian population compared to Minahasa’s .5% in 1930. Other results of the early nationalist movement would positively frame Minahasan inclusion in the Indonesian national imaginary. Islam had been marginalized as a valid base for political organization, due to factions within Islamic political movements and differences in Islamic practice across the archipelago (Rickleffs 2001:225, 227). The secular national character of subsequent phases of emancipation politics would remove any doubts about Minahasa’s participation in the project of Indonesian nationalism on the basis of religious identity.

Despite this, the strong nature of Minahasan nationalism, steeped as it was in a close relationship with the colonizers, determined that the region would not fully align with the ideology of the national cause. The most successful political organizations in the region adhered to an ethnic character. Although most in Minahasa recognized that the rising Indonesian nationalism predicated the need to shift loyalties from the Dutch, Minahasa had developed a distinct identity that would not be easily absorbed into an Indonesia devoid of cultural and regional boundaries. There was still a belief that Minahasa could gain its autonomy through the auspices of the Netherlands, especially since prices for exports around the archipelago had begun to slide in relation to the Great Depression and Minahasans were more dependent than ever on salaries from the colonial government (Rickleffs 2001:233).

The 1930s would herald another era of political fragmentation as the arrests of anti-colonial leaders dissolved political parties. With the anti-colonial movement stalled,

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8 From a 1930 Dutch census as presented in Henley (1996:122).
the moderate secular party Parindra was formed to facilitate independence in cooperation with the Dutch. The party’s position was bolstered by the approach of WWII, spurring some leaders to feel pressured to align with the Dutch forces that would protect the archipelago from the threat of fascism (Rickleffs 2001:239). This retooled nationalism was more in tune with the federalist leanings of Minahasan politics; subsequently the Persatuan Minahasa branch in Batavia voted unilaterally to join the Gabungan Politik Indonesia (GAPI), an organization which demanded a full Indonesian parliament and urged the Dutch to grant Indonesia autonomy in the interest of Dutch-Indonesian cooperation against fascism (Rickleffs 2001:242). The Manado branch of PM was quick to ratify the decision of the Batavia branch and it seemed as if the stage was set for an autonomous, federalist Indonesia that would allow Minahasa to participate in a new nationalism that was not anathema to it’s unique history.

The last actions of the colonial government would be to rebuff the efforts of Indonesian political organizations to strike a deal for autonomy. Not only was the GAPI proposal rejected, but Dutch police arrested leaders in the Volksraad who had been identified as troublemakers (Rickleffs 2001:243). Disillusionment in the possibility of autonomy in cooperation with the Dutch had returned. It is perhaps unsurprising that the inception of the Japanese invasion of Indonesia in the early months of 1942 was greeted with applause and celebration in the streets in some parts of the archipelago. Most were not unhappy to see the colonizers expelled and had hope for independence granted “for Asians by Asians.” The realities of occupation would stand in stark comparison to hopes those in Indonesia held for it, but it is widely recognized that this period was essential to the emergence of Indonesia as an independent nation.
The Japanese military utilized symbols of the national movement in their campaign to eradicate Western influence in the archipelago, bringing the concept of a unitary Indonesia to previously disconnected populations. A radio system installed in even the farthest outposts of the region broadcast propaganda in the new national language, Bahasa Indonesia, an alternative to the banned language of the colonizers (Ricklefs 2001:250). Indonesians were promoted to fill the positions of Dutch officials alongside Japanese administrators. In the first year of the occupation the crushed nationalist movement was given new life, albeit under a brutal military regime. Japanese leaders anticipating the eventual approach of Allied forces worked to instill anti-European emotions in the occupied territories. The occupation was successful in proving that Indonesians could be self-governing and survive without the support of the Dutch colonial regime (Andaya 2005).

The experience of Minahasans was in some way similar to their country fellows as they too learned to identify themselves as “Indonesians” in the face of military invasion. Openly expressing association with the Dutch was no longer a valid option. However, there were few positive aspects to the Japanese presence in North Sulawesi, and contemporary Minahasans recall the period as a time of great hardship. The Japanese attempts to mobilize nationalism were more muted across the eastern end of the archipelago under the control of the Japanese navy. The eastern region was strategically viewed as economically essential and was governed repressively. The political focus was located in Java, and Japanese estimation of the eastern regions as politically primitive led to a more brutal enforcement of labor and less attempt to hide strategic military policy under a cloak of emancipatory nationalism (Ricklefs 2001:247). Instead of applause in
the streets, the Japanese landing in Minahasa was soon greeted by acts of armed resistance from former KNIL members, which were quickly and violently put down (Schouten 1998:205). Some attempted cooperation with the Japanese as administrative posts were turned over to locals, hopeful that the Asian occupiers would assist Indonesia on the road to independence. Not all of the population was as quick to believe the promises of Japanese forces, and dedication to the Dutch loyalist cause landed many in jail alongside their European counterparts in internment camps outside of Manado (Schouten 1998:211). Forced labor called *romusha*, widely instituted throughout the archipelago in 1943, was combined with restricted access to food, creating widespread impoverishment. Suffering at the hands of the Japanese would become a narrative in which all Indonesians shared, even if Minahasan resistance to the occupation was spurred by attachment to the Dutch cause. Tales of resistance still flourish in Minahasa today, where Japanese storage caves are a regional tourist attraction.

Although Minahasans had developed a sense of “Indonesianness” by the end of the occupation in 1945, the question of their devotion to a national identity would be thrown into relief with the return of the Dutch and their attempt to reinstall the colonial regime. The polarization between loyalists and nationalists was greater than ever as the new Republic struggled to maintain its recently declared independence. Remnants of the KNIL forces in Manado mutinied against the Dutch administration in 1946 (Schouten 1998:213), but increasing pressure in the Eastern archipelago, uncertain leadership from the newly installed Republican government and the arrest of Ratulangi precipitated the re-emergence of federalist, and loyalist, perspectives (Rickleffs 2001:273). The establishment of the Twapro party (for Twafaalade Province or Twelfth Province) seeking
political inclusion in the Netherlands in March of 1946 became the emblem of the loyalist strain that had survived in Minahasa (Henley 1996:152).

In the end, Minahasans chose to join the forces for unification instead of striking out as an autonomous province. The Dutch had done little to cater to individual regions during the revolutionary period, and the Japanese occupation had done much to empower the ideal of a unified Indonesia across society. Nearby regions in eastern Indonesia that resisted incorporation into a unitary state were crushed by Republican troops (Rickleffs 2001:285), further motivation to respond to the nationalist cause. In North Sulawesi, KNIL officers again rose against Dutch troops and declared themselves part of the Republican army; many of these troops were later integrated into the national military force (Shouten 1998:214). The Minahasaraad voted for integration into the Republic in April of 1950 (Henley 1996:154), and by August 17th 1950 were part of the new Republic of the United States of Indonesia with its capital to the west in Jakarta. Ratulangie, the homeland politician responsible for maintaining the link between Minahasan regionalism and the national movement, was buried in Tondano in 1945. Whether the result of political pragmatism or genuine patriotism, the “nation” of Minahasa now had to reimagine themselves, and their role, in terms of a new reality. They were no longer the privileged elites of a colonial system, but a minority among many peripheral to central powers in Java.
Post-Independence Influences: PERMESTA, Christianity under the New Order, and Decentralization

The remainder of this chapter will focus on three subjects that encapsulate the Minahasan experience post-Independence and affect contemporary configurations of Minahasan identity. The first of these is the involvement of the Minahasan in an armed rebellion originating in outer island regions dissatisfied with the policies of the weak central Republican government. Former KNIL members who had been nominally absorbed into the national force (TNI) were able to maintain autonomous enclaves using resources from deserted Dutch plantations (Andaya 2005). In March of 1957 commander of East Indonesia General Sumual proclaimed martial law over Sulawesi and Maluku, citing the “Universal Struggle Charter” to which his officers’ made a pledge to continue the Indonesian revolution (Rickleffs 2001:310, Harvey 1977:150). North Sulawesi and
West Sumatra followed suit and joined in the “Permesta” (Perjuangan Semesta, the Universal Struggle) movement for decentralization and policy reform at the national level. The central government, under pressure from the Javanese faction of the TNI, declared martial law and the military moved quickly to suppress the movement. Those in Minahasa had manifold motivations to get involved in the struggle, including the economic downturn resultant from the central government’s monopoly over copra (Henley 1996:155) and a general distrust of Javanese dominated politics, as well as the still intact sense of Minahasan nationalism (Harvey 1977:152).

It is perhaps the latter reason that extended the Permesta movement in Minahasa far past the resolution of the rebellion in other regions. The bombing of Manado in June of 1958 by TNI forces only served to drive guerilla fighters into the mountains to continue their armed resistance. Former KNIL militiamen and youth involved in regional pemuda groups were supported by a regional population who had little choice in the matter: the Permesta guerillas were equally ruthless towards their own people who they suspected of supporting the government as they were towards their enemies. Schouten (1984:216) provides evidence that the appeal of the Permesta movement was not in the repudiation of the center’s communist leanings (as it was later claimed) or in Minahasan nationalism but instead the charisma of leaders who once again had an avenue to display prestige through violence. She notes the reemergence of the belief that certain revolutionary leaders possessed supernatural powers and the use of ritual charms imbued with the power of the ancestors as ethnographic proof that pre-colonial beliefs enflamed Permesta fighters to continue their struggle until 1961.
In the memory of many Minahasans, Permesta has been conflated with an act of patriotism, serving as evidence of the region’s rejection of communism and those sympathetic to the Partai Kommunis Indonesia (PKI). This is due to its proximity to the coup d’etat in 1965 in which TNI members led by Sukarno seized power from Suharto and instigated a violent purge of “communists” from the country. October of 1965 marked the beginning of mass slaughters across the country; in the ensuing panic everyone was suspect and killings were not restricted to those overtly associated with the Indonesian Communist Party. People of Chinese ancestry were one scapegoat of what some characterize as an incident of collective madness. Although exact numbers are difficult to pinpoint, most scholars agree the death toll by 1966 was somewhere near half a million (Rickleffs 2001:347). In 1955, PKI had 11% of the vote in Minahasa, but the Permesta struggle had essentially marginalized party support to rural regions (Schouten 1998:215, 219). However, Minahasa was not untouched by violence, and the need to have an obvious religious identity (so as not to appear communist) capitulated people to adopt a religious affiliation if they didn’t already have one. The Pentecostal church experienced an influx of new members, since GMIM institutions were reticent to accept those associated with the left (Schouten 1996:220). Religion would become a tool of Suharto’s New Order government policies, as promotion of the national ideal of development (pembagunan) was promoted through religious institutions and religious identity manipulated to maintain political control (Aragon 2000:275).

Suharto’s interpretation of the Pancasila doctrine as one promoting a multi-religious society was a political strategy to contain Islamic mobilization even as it answered the need to reduce violence in a reconfigured society. As Rickleffs notes,
religious lines that had previously coincided with ethnic and geographical boundaries were redrawn post 1965, and various religious identities occurred within the same neighborhoods, ethnic groups, and even families (2001:355). Since religious institutions served to provide access to government programs and supported dominant values from the center (Lunneman 1994:35), participation in religious organizations was seen as a mark of a group's progress towards development and modernity, instilling a sense of competition between religious groups. This was especially heightened in close quarters, where religious identities were more sharply defined. In an environment of competition, fears about proselytization emerged. *Pancasila* was again invoked as the ideological backbone to legislation preventing proselytizing on the grounds that it impinged on the freedom of others to worship in their chosen monotheistic tradition, much to the dismay of Christians who were a minority by population. Lorraine Aragon characterizes Suharto-era policies as leading individual ethnic groups to "intensify those religious practices that display their efforts toward modern citizenship, and defend themselves against other religious groups aiming to hinder or interfere with those practices" (2001:319). The New Order ensured that religious identity would always have political overtones in Indonesia, and that *Pancasila* could always be interpreted in such a way as to advance one religious group's desires over another's.

The Minahasan's relatively advanced system of religious and educational institutions would ensure that elements of the national ideology would easily be inserted into everyday life. In a fitting example of the way in which an imagined national history supplanted incongruous events in local history, Schouten notes that during fieldwork in the 1980s schoolchildren were regaled with tales of national hero Diponegoro, the
Javanese prince who rebelled against colonial powers, unaware that their forefathers had fought against his cause as Dutch allies (Schouten 1998:222). Other aspects of Minahasan society, such as the traditional reciprocal labor groups known as *mapalus*, were infused with New Order ideological meaning, recast as part of the national development efforts in which all Indonesian citizens shared (Schouten 1998:221). For some, continuity in forms of status and power encouraged the embrace of New Order precepts. Military men again found political advantage, since Suharto populated the top ranks of his military power base with Christians (Rickleffs 2001:346) and soldiers were given bureaucratic positions and control of *pembangunan* funds earmarked for their region (Schouten 1998:221). This may help to explain the popularity of Suharto’s Golkar party, with significantly more support from Minahasa than other regions during the New Order period. A confluence of factors promoted Minahasa’s strong incorporation into the Indonesian nation-state during this period: the protection and promotion of religious activity as an avenue for development; Christianity as a factor in political mobility; and the economic prosperity of the region. Minahasans were still defenders of their unique ethnic group, but that identity was indisputably subsumed within the national confines.

The fall of Suharto’s regime and the loss of centrifugal forces controlling religious and political identities in the country signaled a qualitative change in Minahasan’s sense of security within Indonesia. In the years leading up to the end of the New Order, the intersection of politics and religion became flashpoints for violence; combined with the effects of the 1997 financial crisis, religious and ethnic divisiveness increased (Rickleffs 2001:400). Larger social and political tensions played out in confrontations between Muslims and Christians, with riots in Jakarta in 1998 ending with
mosques and churches destroyed, and later the deaths of thousands in Ambon attributed to inter-religious violence. In 1999 the events in Ambon and Maluku sparked Muslims in Jakarta to request declaration of a “Holy War” against Christians (Rickleffs 2001:419), as much a result of increasing contact with the fundamentalist Islamic ideology of the Middle East as the increasing politicization of Islam in Indonesia.

In Minahasa, awareness of being a small Christian minority within a large country dominated by a Muslim population has led to a sense of precariousness, and local relationships with state government are threatened by political actions in Java. Discussion of reconsidering the implementation of Islamic law for Indonesian Muslims by parliament in 2000 led to calls for secession in Minahasa (Henley, Schouten and Ulaen 2007:322). Although the bill was unsuccessful at the national level, fears still remain of the possibility that the central government will not “keep its promise” to equally protect all the world religions incorporated under the Pancasila ideology.

Regionally, an increase in the Muslim population threatened to overtake the Christian majority in the years after the fall of the New Order (Henley, Schouten and Ulaen 2007:320). This increase is attributed both to the influx of Muslim immigrants, and the inclusion of the predominantly Muslim region of Gorontalo in the Minahasan province. Added to the Dutch territory in 1824, the area was strongly influenced by Bugis and Arab traders and had assumed an Islamic identity by the 1870s (Henley 1996:84,42).

Hope that the central government will continue to recognize its responsibility to protect and care for Minahasa remains; the New Order State party Golkar still receives the highest number of votes in the region (Henley, Schouten and Ulaen 2007:318) and the official pageantry of state-centered activities continues unabated. In the vacuum
created by the loss of strong central leadership, the vast network of GMIM churches has become the main institutional center of civil society (Henley, Schouten and Ulaen 2007:311). The importance of the GMIM network has continued with the re-emergence of ethnic-based politics facilitated by federal decentralization legislation in 2001. Attempting to stem the tide of anti-Jakarta sentiments and deal with a number of emerging secessionist movements, the central government introduced a program of decentralization that culminated with the transfer of power to lower administrative levels in 2001 (Nordholt and Klinken 2007:12). The resulting subdivision of existing districts and provinces into smaller administrative units, called pemekaran (blossoming), was largely a reaction from below allowing regional politicians to mobilize ethnic sentiments and reconfigure political units (Norholdt and Klinken 2007:2, 19). Since the inception of the final phase of decentralization, Minahasa as an administrative territory has ceased to exist: Gorontalo was granted status as a separate province in 2001, and after 2003 the remaining territory of North Sulawesi was divided into three districts with Manado as an autonomous township (Henley, Schouten and Ulaen 2007:312). With the Christian majority restored in the remaining districts, Minahasans have turned once again to promoting the politics of religious harmony based on “primordial” sentiments that unite people in an ethnic identity. Minahasa, although no longer pinned by the physical boundaries that shaped it, is an identity that is perhaps more vital than ever.

Christian Minahasans living in the United States see the emergent era of decentralization in Indonesia as a time of opportunity. In an environment where Christianity is institutionally efficacious and organization under a Christian identity is a powerful political strategy, transmigrant Minahasans emphasize the historical marriage of
Christianity and Minahasan ethnic identity to gain support from American religious institutions for their nationalist projects. They also seek recognition from the Indonesian government of the political viability of long-distance nationalism originating in Christian organizations, something difficult to achieve for those still living within Indonesian borders. In a post 9/11 world where Indonesian officials seek to refute associations with terrorism and maintain friendly relations with Western powers, Christian Indonesians in the United States have political clout as diplomatic representatives and freedom to lobby for the rights of Christian nationals in Indonesia. Not for the first time in history, Minahasans are looking for recognition of a different kind of nationalism that better encompasses the trajectories of their ethnic past.
CHAPTER THREE
ETHNICITY, (TRANS)NATIONALISM AND COMMUNITY IN SOUTHERN NEW HAMPSHIRE INDONESIAN CHURCHES

One thread of the story that has pulled people from the far shores of Java, Sumatra, Kalimantan and Sulawesi to settle in the cold seacoast towns of Eastern New England is woven into the mythology of the growing Indonesian immigrant population one Sunday afternoon at the Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in Newington, New Hampshire. Lotje composes herself at the lectern and gazes at the congregation members. They have come from several area churches, both Indonesian and American, and are swelling beyond the pews into the church narthex, festively decorated in the merah putih (red and white) of the Indonesian flag. They have come to witness the induction of the Imanuel Indonesian Church congregation, and their pastor, into the fold of the New England Lutheran Synod.

For Lotje, this moment is a joyous arrival in a journey familiar to many Minahasans; from her emigration from Minahasa to Jakarta where professional success couldn’t counteract the horror of being attacked on a public bus for wearing a simple symbol of her faith around her neck, to the sadness of struggling to build a Christian community, and worship openly, in the tense streets of her predominantly Muslim neighborhood where government claims of equality for all faiths didn’t translate into law. Sacrifices of pride and status, cleaning rooms in California to support herself and her husband in their new life in the United States, or worshipping in a hotel lobby, didn’t mar the possibility that her dream to live freely as an Indonesian Christian would be realized here on the foreign shores of New Hampshire, far from the Minahasan homeland in distance but recreated in worship and through this new community sitting in the pews in
front of her. Now a leader in the Imanuel church who proudly watches her grandchild learn traditional dances in Sunday school, she realizes that being “at home” is not just a question of geography. The trials and successes of Lotje’s journey elucidate the similar cartographies of desire that have driven many Minahasans to realize their destinies, and the destiny of Minahasa, by traveling beyond its border’s.

This chapter will link transnational desires with Minahasan experiences of nationalism in Indonesia, locating transnational activities and experiences within the context of ethnic and religious Minahasan identity. Minahasans have historically used aspects of religious and regional identity to link themselves with transnational networks both within and outside of Indonesia, yet in the United States, where Indonesian Christians are organized on the basis of national and religious identity, Minahasan and Indonesian transnationalism are aligned in ways difficult to imagine within Indonesia. Facilitated by internet communication technology that connects Indonesian transmigrants across the country and keeps them vitally connected to life in Indonesia and the Minahasan homeland, opportunities emerge for a nationalism that is not defined by legal citizenship, and is strengthened by affiliation with American religious institutions. Neither spaces of liberation or an environment completely situated within the boundaries of the Indonesian national project, transnational Indonesian churches give Minahasans the ability to reorganize the tropes of nationalism, ethnicity and religion to create a religious nationalism that supports both their political desires and the centrality of Christianity in maintaining Minahasan identity.

Standing before Indonesian and American congregations at Imanuel’s induction ceremony, resplendent in her yellow kebaya, Lotje briefly details her experiences
attending a local Methodist church after moving from New Hampshire to California in 1997, switching from Indonesian to English so everyone in the crowd can understand. At the time, she was aware of five other families from Indonesia, all Christians. Although Lotje and her husband attended the English language services, the other Indonesians were reticent to attend church because they couldn’t comprehend the service. She explained to them that it didn’t matter what language they prayed in, as long as they were worshipping, but she understood the desire for a church of their own in which they could worship in a familiar language. They started meeting in people’s living rooms, and as the group grew over the course of a few years, Lotje and her husband helped to rent a room at the Comfort Inn for Sunday fellowship, pooling resources every weekend to pay for the rental. By the year 2000, with numbers continuing to grow, Lotje and her husband, who were also attending English language services at the Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in the mornings, approached Pastor Lynn Opderbecke and asked if they might rent, or share, space in the church in which to hold their services.

Pastor Opderbecke, dressed not in his Lutheran green and white gown but a silk batik shirt that was a gift from Indonesia, prefaced his introduction to the religious ceremony with his tale of meeting Lotje and her husband. They were, he conceded, the first people from Indonesia he had ever met, and certainly the first from North Sulawesi. As he welcomed the Imanuel congregation into the fold of the Lutheran family, he noted that the event was not only an opportunity to come together and worship the same god, but also a chance for members of the New England Lutheran community to learn something of a different culture, an “Indonesian” culture. Around the room the embodied and spectacular display of church members wearing “traditional” costumes from across
the archipelago, and the three twenty-foot long tables laden with sumptuous food certainly invoked a visceral sense of the Indonesian homeland. Pastor Opderbecke’s comment underscored the limited understanding that many in American church institutions have of the diverse histories of the Indonesians in their midst and their equally diverse motivations to come to the United States. Furthermore, it was a testament to the efforts of the Indonesians from the Imanuel Church to present a vision of a unified “Indonesian culture” in the microcosm of their host community. This spectacle of worship, community and culture reaffirmed that the identity of Indonesians in the Seacoast region is centered in the church.

It is difficult to pinpoint the exact number of Indonesians living in the Seacoast region of Southern New Hampshire since the arrival of the first families in the late nineties. Ambiguous legal status leads many to avoid, whether by intention or accident, conventional methods of documentation. However, regional newspapers in Southern New Hampshire have recently published estimates ranging from 1,000-2,000 individuals identifying themselves as Indonesian (Clow 2005, Emmanuel Gospel Center 2007) and this is consonant with the input of Indonesian pastors who also endeavor to document the parameters of the population. These numbers are supported by my observations while attending several Indonesian churches in the region, where the number of congregants can be upwards of 200. There are as many as 13 churches in and around Strafford County (an area of roughly 400 sq. mi) that are identified as "Indonesian" and use Bahasa Indonesia as the primary language of their church activities.
The number of churches does experience some variance through processes of fission and fusion as recently arrived pastors break off to start their own congregations, or ethnic subsets try, and fail, to begin their own separate churches. To my knowledge, as of the summer of 2007, none of the Indonesian individuals in the Seacoast have successfully started ethnically based churches, although there have been some attempts. All of the churches I attended identified themselves as Indonesian, multi-ethnic congregations. Asserting a pan-Indonesian identity was an important strategy for congregation members and church leaders alike, who stressed the need to make members of all ethnic groups at home in the church environment.

Church services, which take place on Sunday afternoons, share a similar liturgical structure across the three churches where the majority of my research was conducted. Church members and clergy have informed me that these services are similar to GMIM (Gereja Masehi Injil Minhasa, Evangelical Church of Minahasa) and GPI (Gereja Protestant Indonesia, Indonesian Protestant Church) services, and this was confirmed by

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See Appendix B for additional documentation of the structure of church services.
my experience attending church services in and around Manado proper in 2006. A Sunday service at any of the three churches typically begins with a prelude or moment for silent contemplation and an opening hymn from the kidung jemaat (hymnal), as the pastor and church elders proceed to their places around the altar. This is followed by the Tabhisam dan Salam (Adoration and Greeting) call and response between pastor and congregants. The opening of the service is completed with a guiding psalm (Nats Pembimbing). A prayer of illumination introduces the week’s scriptural reading, which congregation members volunteer to read on a rotating basis. Central to worship is the Pengakuan Dosa (Confession of Sin) and the Affirmation or Statement of Faith (Pengakuan Iman), and the Assurance of Pardon (Janji Penampunan Dosa). As is common to many Indonesian worship practices, music is central, and structured sections of worship are interspersed with song and musical performances, sometimes in the form of hymns, or special choral pieces, or individual performances from congregation members. Members of Imanuel Church have imported a set of kolintang, a wooden xylophone-style instrument emblematic of Minahasa, which is used to accompany hymns or provide music for special services. Musical performances are also considered as a form of pujian (praise, worship) or special persembahan (offerings).

Sermons are often based on scriptural readings, but pastors vary in personal style and may use the experience of Indonesian immigrants, or culturally resonant folktales from Indonesia, to illustrate biblical interpretations. Pastors in these Indonesian churches are often gifted orators, and their delivery styles share specific linguistic elements such as the use of formal and complex Indonesian. The formal Indonesian used in sermons echoes the grammatical forms of oration heard at official governmental functions (as
noted by Keane 2003). Skillful oration also represents a traditional quality of Minahasan leadership that has been preserved through the church (Schouten 1998). Another linguistic element that indicates the ethnic Minahasan style of these church services is the use of the word “shalom” during the “passing of the peace,” in which church members rise to greet those around them. The use of the greeting shalom references the explicit connection that Minahasans imagine exists between their homeland and the Holy Land of Israel.

Facilitated by similarities in worship style in addition to a shared national identity, the Indonesian population in Southern New Hampshire presents itself as a “community” even as churches are separated by boundaries of denomination or affiliation. People may profess to belong to one church congregation and yet attend services at two or three different churches in a given weekend. Important events like the induction of the Imanuel church into the New England Lutheran Synod was attended by congregation members and religious clergy from several churches as people came together to celebrate their keindonesiaan (Indonesianness) and kristenan (Christianness). Recently a funereal service held for the mother of a popular musician in the community who had passed away in Java drew over a hundred participants from across Indonesian churches in the region. Mirroring the service held in her honor in Java the day before, people stepped forward for hours to present persembahan (offerings) in the form of songs, prayers, or financial support for the grieving family. They shared with the musician and his family not only the pain of losing a loved one, but the particular grief that comes from being physically separate from relations and unable to return to home to participate in the ceremonies that mark life – births, marriages and burials. In a demonstration of lives that truly span
borders, people documented their grief and worship by video to be sent to the musician’s relatives in Java, testament to the community’s continuing link to life in their homeland.
Figure 5. Seacoast New Hampshire Region
Indonesian Churches

- Indonesian Christian Reformed Church
- Dover Indonesian Seventh-Day Adventist Church
- Indonesian International Church
- Indonesian Presbyterian Church
- Maranatha Indonesian UCC
- Imanuel Indonesian Lutheran Church
- Indonesian Assembly of God (Somersworth)
- Indonesian Assembly of God (Rochester)
- Bethel Indonesian Church
- Rochester Seventh Day Adventist Church
- Emanuel Indonesian Assembly of God (Berwick, ME)
- Rochester City Blessing Church
- Somersworth Indonesian Foursquare Church
Although the Indonesian individuals in the Seacoast region seemed relatively “invisible” to the wider community at the time I began my association with them in 2003, they have gradually started to emerge into people’s awareness, as their associations with American church members, participation in community events, and business presence make them more remarkable. In their efforts to be seen as contributing positively to the area, many of my informants eagerly participated in public events where ethnic or national performance was appropriate, arranging dances and musical shows for county fairs, holiday bazaars, and children’s festivals. During the summer of 2007 I helped a member of the Indonesian Christian Reform Church (ICRC) showcase handicrafts at the Somersworth “International Children’s Festival,” in which several Indonesian children performed an ethnic dance from Sumatra on the main stage. These types of performances are common, and do not necessarily fall along ethnic lines; instead, children from a number of ethnic backgrounds are taught dances from across the archipelago during Sunday School and other church-sponsored pedagogical events. Perhaps the most visible testament to the growth and vitality of the Indonesian population in Southern New Hampshire is the success of Dave’s Spicy House, a restaurant in Rochester, New Hampshire that serves Indonesian cuisine, especially that found in Minahasa. Opened in 2004 by mixed-ethnic Christian couple hailing from Java and Manado, the restaurant is thriving by providing food to the burgeoning community. Especially busy on Sunday afternoons after church services when special dishes such as ikan bakar (grilled fish) are prepared, Dave’s Spicy House evokes the feeling of the roadside warungs found throughout Indonesia, and has even begun to build a loyal following of non-Indonesian
customers who regularly return on their lunch hour to partake of what is very exotic fare in a small New England town.

Describing any immigrant population through the language of current literature on dispersed populations is a problematic task. The proliferation of terms used to describe the movement of peoples, and the equally disputed and unclear definitions, is indicative of some of the difficulties social scientists have in categorizing migration patterns. It also exemplifies the persistence of some of the outmoded assumptions about migratory patterns in the era of the nation-state. The dichotomies of assimilation versus cultural and social isolationism aimed at “preserving” culture still haunt theoretical approaches to understanding migration and the complex ties that migrants may have to more than one nation-state and/or socio-ideological system. Some ethnographies of immigrant populations in the United States, for example, tend to focus on how immigrant experiences can be characterized by a theme of displacement, whether from a homeland, ethnic or national culture (Anderson and Lee 2005, Bammer 1994). These studies, although they claim to focus on transformation of culture or an alternative culture (such as Asian-Americanism), still reinstate the idea of the difficulty of living simultaneously within two systems or that transnational experiences might facilitate a reconnection with aspects of home culture from afar.

The concept of “lived simultaneity” (Glick Schiller 2005) is useful both as an appropriate description of some migrant populations and also represents a theoretical turn towards an understanding of migration that is not entangled with the paradigm of assimilation. As Nina Glick Schiller explains “it is urgent that we understand that it is possible to become incorporated with a locality, its economy, its institutions, and its
forms of cultural production and at the same time live within social networks that are intimately tied elsewhere" (2005:159). Through the links that these social networks provide people are also tied to the economy, institutions and cultural processes framed by the political processes of another nation-state even as they experience lives stretched across political and social borders (Ibid). Through this orientation, we are able to avoid characterizing the environment that migrants inhabit either as an emancipatory space free from the influences of the sending and receiving states (Al-Ali and Koser 2002:13), and yet also dispense with the theory that immigrants cannot, like any humans, negotiate multiple identities, allegiances and systems while maintaining a multiplicity of connections that are sometimes contradictory.

Indonesian individuals living in the Seacoast region of Southern New Hampshire where most of my fieldwork was conducted experience this type of simultaneity in their everyday lives. Although they are embedded in institutional, political and social life in their current home in the United States, they are still intimately connected through kinship ties and other social relationships to Indonesia. In addition, they actively participate in Indonesian institutions and political causes, often those connected with their ethnic/regional identity or the status of their co-religionists in Indonesian national politics. “Lived simultaneity” aptly describes the ability of Christian Indonesians in New Hampshire to write letters to local American senators requesting recognition of their contributions to the local community and assistance with immigration concerns, while in the same month entertaining the Indonesian Consulate head at a church event, stressing the need for governmental institutions in Indonesia to be aware that their citizens abroad continue to represent an Indonesian identity to the greater world. It is these types of
activities that lead me to characterize the Indonesian individuals who compose the core of my study as "transnational migrants" or "transmigrants," people who, having migrated from one nation-state to another, live their lives across borders (Glick Schiller 2003:7) and "who claim and are claimed by two or more nation-states, into which they are incorporated as social actors, one of which is widely acknowledged to be their state of origin" (Glick Schiller 1999:104). Although migrants can participate in a number of transnational processes, not all migrants can be classified as transmigrants. Migrants can participate in transnational networks that evoke a homeland without participating in the political system of that homeland, they can travel between nation-states to earn money without becoming embedded in two or more nation-state systems (Ong 1999), or they can become incorporated with more than one nation-state system but only identify with one (Glick Schiller: 2003:9). Transmigration, and its accompanying theme of "long-distance nationalism" in which activities, identity claims and practices are oriented towards a specific territory designated as a homeland (Glick Schiller 2004) can therefore methodologically be considered separately from transnationalism or diasporas.

The status of Indonesians in Southern New Hampshire can be considered through empirical data, such as their economic and political activities that bridge both the United States and Indonesia. This is a methodological position generally supported by the field of transnational studies, and is epitomized by Nina Glick Schiller's statement that "transnational social fields...comprise observable social fields and relationships (2003:9)." This chapter regarding the transnational social field in which Indonesians in New Hampshire participate recognizes the importance of empirical documentation in refining our understanding of the varying experiences of migrants and how they form and
maintain identities. However, it is also necessary to combine these empirically-based studies with investigation of how the re-imagined meanings of space, symbols, identities and localities are affected by the empirical realities of lives lived in simultaneity. Without engaging with the imaginative processes allowing transmigrants to maintain lives that span borders, we risk reducing the complex motivations to engage in such a lifestyle to nothing more than the pressure of structural forces.

**Ethnic Identities**

Much as it is in Indonesia, ethnic identity is a particularly salient concern for members of Indonesian churches in New Hampshire. Although all of the churches in the Seacoast region identify themselves as multi-ethnic or multi-cultural, and there are no ethnically homogenous congregations, awareness and enactment of ethnic identity was a common factor in the social life of the church. This became clear early in my fieldwork while I conducted a fifteen person sample of “frame elicitations” asking people to identify themselves as a “________ person.” This activity exposed the difficulties of managing multiple identities in a transnational environment. Although some people would respond in the terms of an Indonesian national identity, it was much more common to find responses referencing a particular ethnic identity. In fact, these types of questions caused discomfort for some individuals who struggled with the realization that despite the importance of national identification in the multi-ethnic transmigrant community, they felt compelled to identify themselves in relation to their ethnic background. People were uncomfortable identifying themselves solely through the terms of national identity, resulting in answers like this one from a Minahasan informant:
I'm (.3) ok. I'm Indonesian, but I won’t stop there. I will tell you more. But if you just ask who are you? or where do you come from? I will say I am Indonesian, I came from Indonesia, and then I will tell you more. Because you know, I won’t stop there, I will explain more. It's like, it's like (.5) um:::m (.3) it's like (.) what's that ((word)) It's like a spirit or something ((gestures towards breast, sits up straight)) I have to introduce that I came from Indonesia but (.3) from this area.

Identity was not calculated through the terms of birthplace but instead through terms of descent. For instance, Sebastian, a pastor born in Bandung and raised in Java, identified himself through terms of bilateral descent\(^\text{10}\), saying:


I'm a Manadonese person (.). Only I was born in Bandung. My mother and father are Manadonese. My father is of the surname Laplan, and his grandmother, his grandmother is Inkririwan. My mother is Lumano.

Ethnic identity then reflects lines of descent linked with a place. The consideration of Chinese ancestry as a racial category by individuals in these church communities further illustrates that aspects of identity may be only peripherally linked with a territoriality. People with Chinese “blood” in the church are still considered to belong to ethnic groups such as the Dayaks or the Minahassans through lines of descent. In some cases, ties with Chinese ancestry have become part of the mythos of a particular ethnic group.\(^\text{11}\) Since internal migration within Indonesia relocates people away from the region associated with their ethnic identity, they claim ties to that identity through kinship.\(^\text{12}\) The following

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\(^\text{10}\) MIC Schouten mentions that the President of the GMIM (Evangelical Church of Minahasa) Synod recounted his genealogical descent beginning with mythical ancestors Toar and Luminmut in the early 1980s to underscore the continued importance of genealogical ties in contemporary Minahasa (1998:97).

\(^\text{11}\) See Chapter 4.

\(^\text{12}\) Internal migration in Indonesia results from a number of factors. Notably the government policy of *transmigrasi* has led to the resettlement of people from the island of Java to outlying islands. However, ethnic groups such as the Minahassans have a history of internal migration that began with their recruitment with the Royal Army of the Netherlands East Indies (KNIL). Traveling abroad with the military was considered a sign of status (MJC Schouten 1998:122). Other factors encouraging internal migration are the pull of urban regions (such as Jakarta) as centers of
chart outlines patterns of Indonesian regional settlement across members of the Imanuel Indonesian Church in 2004 through a random sample. These patterns can be contrasted with the ethnic designations of church members, where approximately 80% claim to be of Minahasan ancestry.

Figure 6. Responses to Survey 2004 “What area of Indonesia are you from?”

Markers of ethnic identity are found in speech, language, dress, food preferences and ethnic performance. Ethnic performances can range from songs sung in a language other than Indonesian to dances associated with a specific region or ethnic enclave. These performances are reminiscent of Indonesian state-endorsed policies that attempt to manage heterogeneity through ethnic performance as an expression of “national culture” (kebudayaan nasional) (Kipp 74: 1993). In the terms of artistic regional performance, “culture” becomes a specific entity through which ethnic difference is nationalized and integrated into a harmonious whole. As Meis, a pastor’s wife in Dover, New Hampshire, explains:

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economic opportunity. Half of the respondents I interviewed also cited religious reasons such as missionary work or the opportunity to start new churches as factors in their relocation to other regions.
That our church here (.) we want to make it not just comfortable for Manado people. So we are thinking not to reject the culture in the church (.) but to use the cultural things like art or something like that in another way for people (.3) So every tribe from Indonesia will feel welcome in the church.

Ethnic boundaries in the church did not exclusively rely on these discrete artistic representations, however. The traits with which people identified group boundaries outside of symbolic performance were more amorphous, flexible categories like degrees of openness, rudeness, straightforwardness, politeness and pride. In his study of contemporary identity construction in Minahasa, Michael Jacobsen notes that these types of traits allow for highly contingent forms of identity that are adaptable to the current social or political situation and therefore reinforce a sense of timelessness. He also concludes that identities based on these traits more easily encompasses sub-regional variability and lend to ethnic solidarity (2002:40). In the church environment people framed ethnic difference through these more fluid traits outside of the formal and compartmentalized performances that represent ethnicity at the level of national culture. This was demonstrated in interviews and by the results of a domain analysis in which I asked people to list traits that best described identity groups such as Minahasans, Christians, or Americans. The traits documented did not refer to cultural symbols but to more personal attributes that were salient in identifying ethnic difference.

People claiming Minahasan/Manadonese descent were the majority in the three churches that were the focus of this fieldwork. Other churches in the area shared a similar demography. During a visit the Bethany church of Rochester, New Hampshire in 2007, a casual conversation revealed that the congregation had begun using the North Sulawesi regional creole, Bahasa Manado (also known as Bahasa Melayu) as their lingua franca in general conversation. Individuals from Java, Sumatra, and Maluku had picked
up the language through its use in the community, and children born in New Hampshire were learning this dialect instead of Bahasa Indonesia. Visiting another church, the ubiquity of this language use was apparent when the pastor slipped into use of the dialect while preaching in Indonesian, and corrected herself due to my presence, translating what she had said into Indonesian for my benefit. Indonesian remains the “official” language used in sermons, printed church materials and public meetings, reflecting the parameters of state culture within Indonesia.13

Despite the prevalence of ethnic identity within the churches, informants overwhelmingly expressed a desire to maintain multi-cultural and multi-ethnic churches, referring to principles of Indonesian nationalism and Christian unity as doctrines to which congregations should aspire. The Indonesian ideal of ethnic pluralism and the concept of Christian brotherhood transect ethnic identities, and the transnational environment offers powerful motivation to re-inscribe a national culture that mitigates possible tensions between groups. “Multi-culturalism” is a model that can be expanded to encompass religious ideals and allow for integration with American institutions. As Meis said after she promoted the use of national culture in church:

We use the term multi-cultural church, multi-ethnic, we have a hope that this church (.3) we have planted this church and someday it will be a church for everyone, from any background. This looks impossible with our condition now (.3) but this belongs to everybody, and the church belongs to God, who knows everything.

In Andersonian terms (Anderson 1983), universal religions such as Christianity are a powerful tool in propagating modern national cultures (Kipp 1993:75). For Christians in

13 As Webb Keane points out that the Indonesian language was envisioned by nationalists as a transparent form of communication, one devoid of “cultural particularities” (2003:506). It is widely recognized as “the most appropriate idiom for public, official, national, educated, and technological settings and topics, for mass media and the economically higher-ordered marketplaces, a mark of sophistication, and a medium for speaking across social distance” (2003:515).
Indonesia, religion is a means to integration that transcends ethnic identification but is also problematic in a predominantly Muslim country. Living in a country where Christianity is dominant allows national and religious identity to favorably intersect for members of these transnational congregations. The ability to maintain ethnicity within the framework of Indonesian national identity in the church has prevented most congregations from fully integrating with American, English speaking congregations. Most have chosen to align with American denominations and regional Christian institutions but remain separate, Indonesian congregations.

**Socioeconomics and Class Concerns**

A female pastor from Manado that I interviewed made a comment that succinctly expressed the concerns of class that exist for many Indonesians living in New Hampshire. She said that Indonesians in New Hampshire could be characterized as people who “work hard” (*kerja keras*), but then added that this was something that only emerged when they moved to the United States and experienced a change in their socioeconomic status.\(^{14}\) Her statement references both quantitative changes for transmigrants in New Hampshire, who often work two jobs to reach their economic goals. It also conveys the qualitative changes in lifestyle that require adjustment for many of the New Hampshire transmigrants. One example that was often repeated detailed the difficulties people faced adjusting to life without “house helpers” (*pembantu rumah*) to assist with shopping, cooking and cleaning. Many joked that doing their own laundry was a new experience.

\(^{14}\) Specific socioeconomic data such as salary and employment statistics were not gathered in the course of this research for informant’s protection. Change in socioeconomic status was determined through explicit informant statements and inquiries into the type of employment found by informants in New Hampshire compared to their profession or employment in Indonesia.
Although the demographic of the Indonesian transmigrants is rapidly changing as the community grows, those arriving during the period of 1998-2006 were predominantly middle-class professionals, many with college degrees. Over seventy percent of interviewees I spoke with had completed or had some post-secondary education. Access to higher education and economic mobility has some historical precedence for people of Minahasan descent whose region benefited from the infrastructure provided by the long-term involvement of the Dutch East Indies Company and later the Dutch State. By 1930 Minahasa had the highest rates of school attendance compared with any other region in Indonesia, which resulted in migration as individuals sought employment and prestige outside of the region (Henley 1996:80). The perception of the Minahasans as an educated people has come to be classified as an ethnic characteristic.

In the fourteen interviews that I conducted with Indonesian transmigrants, all but two cited economic concerns as impetus to move to the United States. With an unemployment rate that has risen from nine to just under thirteen percent nationally in the last four years, securing employment and upward mobility is a major concern. Even highly educated individuals find that they cannot maintain the kind of lifestyle they desire with white-collar positions. Bartholomew, a 30-year-old informant from Sumatra explained:

I worked as a professional over there and they pay me a few hundred dollars (.6) and this is a hardworking job and they pay me more and more. 1200 dollars, and if you have overtime, and you can get more. That's why many Indonesian people here they have two jobs, because they want to make money (.3) so sometimes if they have 2000 dollars here and for living costs they only pay 300 dollars, that's 1700 dollars, so it's about (1.) I don't know (.5) so it's about

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15 This demographic is changing as the Indonesian population becomes more established and people are able to financially sponsor greater numbers of relatives to come to the United States. The summer of 2007 was the first time that I encountered people discussing class differences in the terms of “urban/rural” dwellers. Lack of education and inability to speak English were class signifiers that were often explained as resultant of someone coming from kampung (rural hamlet) or desa (village), rural areas outside Manado city.

16 From CIA factbook http://www.indexmundi.com/indonesia/unemployment_rate.html
Earning potential was not the only draw for Indonesians to immigrate. Educational opportunities figured heavily into people's perception of the opportunities for advancement that the United States offers. Education was a valued commodity and an indicator of status across the Indonesian population in New Hampshire. One couple that relocated from Java in 2002 cited educational opportunities for their children as main reason they relocated their family to the United States. Not only was the educational system better in the United States in their opinion, but they wanted their children, their young son especially, to be educated in English. International schools in Java and Bali that offered English instruction were beyond the family's economic means. The couple moved directly to New Hampshire because of information they had received about the quality of the nearby University of New Hampshire. Education also facilitated the migration of adults, as religious practitioners who had limited opportunities for advanced education in Indonesia secured financial assistance to religious educational institutions like the Hartford Seminary School in Connecticut.

Class awareness was evident in people's discussions about the type of employment available to them in New Hampshire. Due to language abilities, legal status and the tendency for US institutions not to recognize degrees from universities outside the country, the types of employment available to the New Hampshire transmigrants are limited. Bartholomew's embarrassment over his low-status job in the US is evident even as he describes the frustration of limited economic mobility in Indonesia:
I worked as a supervisor in a multinational company (.5) electronics for four and a half years. And I don’t get a promotion. So I move and work in a money exchange (.3) or as a money trader for one year, and I don’t succeed. So I think why not? and I take the opportunity to go to the United States. Working here (.3) even though I am working in a (.5) I have my own table my own computer like that. And I think that, let’s do it, let’s be a laborer, because when I worked as a supervisor I only got paid $300 (.4) or, wait, 200.00 dollars per month. Here working in a factory (.3) a blue-collar man.

Others see the strain of this new social reality affecting relations across the community.

Meis, the pastor’s wife, is often asked to mediate this emergent set of social issues:

So the problem is that of you tell your story to another person, and it will spread out so fast, and it happens in the factory where they work, and then everybody knows your problems (.3) And everyone says ((about gossiping)) I am not like this, I wasn’t like this before now (.2) They have degrees, they are educated people, but because the life here is so monotone for them, they work double job (.6) people feel silly think they look bad. And in Eastern culture we don’t want to look bad.

Class concerns are mitigated by the earning potential of immigrants in the Indonesian community, and also through the status gained via the ability to send remittances to families and communities in Indonesia. Affiliation with American churches has provided another avenue through which Indonesians in New Hampshire have been able to overcome the stigma attached to their status as immigrants and their blue-collar employment. For instance, the Imanuel Indonesian Church participated in a program with the Holy Trinity Lutheran Church of Newington, New Hampshire called “tables of eight” where adult church members were randomly mixed to meet for dinner parties. Both American and Indonesian church members mentioned this program as key to recognizing the similarities they shared despite cultural differences. Pastor Lynn Opderbecke describes the relationship between these two congregations as having a different character than other affiliations he has brokered between American and immigrant churches, one based on equality rather than a “landlord-tenant” situation. It is
through these relationships that Indonesian congregants find opportunities to be recognized as educated equals to their American peers.

The Broader Social Field

Indonesian transmigrants in New Hampshire also exist within a broader social field of Indonesian Christians that spans the United States, which has a number of institutions of its own centered on the lives of Indonesian Christians living in America. These groups are variously organized on the basis of religious-national identity or ethno-religious identity, with the church serving as the institutional nexus. The organizations serve a dual purpose; legitimizing the activities of Indonesian Christians in regards to religious organizations in the United States with whom they seek to ally and securing political and financial support, as well as bolstering claims made in the Indonesian political field as an organized constituency. These organizations may be used to simultaneously achieve both goals, as many members of the community see the establishment of citizenship within the United States as vital to maintaining ties and gaining political advantage in Indonesia.

One organization that has been instrumental in uniting Indonesian Christians across the United States is the Persekutuan Gereja-Gereja Protestant Indonesia USA (Association of Indonesian Protestant Churches USA, hereafter referred to as PGGPI.) Modeled on the Persekutuan Gereja Indonesia (PGI) an organization that unites Protestant Churches across Indonesia, member congregations of the PGGPI share news and pastors meet regularly to discuss and debate topics ranging from church organization and economic concerns to family issues. Although the PGGPI office is located in
Fullerton California, meetings are held on both coasts in order to facilitate the participation within range of congregations. In 2006 the annual meeting of the PGGPI was held in Dover, New Hampshire at the meeting place of the Indonesian Christian Reformed Church (ICRC), and was attended by eleven Indonesian churches, hailing from California, New York, New Jersey, Virginia and New Hampshire. The two-day meeting was also attended by pastors and scholars from North Sulawesi, and a number of pastors from East Coast American churches who had been invited by members of the PGGPI to speak. The meeting was also attended by the Indonesian Consulate head from the New York Office.

Indicative of the transnational processes through which Indonesians in Seacoast New Hampshire participate simultaneously in more than one nation-state, the goals of the PGGPI reference relationships to institutions in the United States and Indonesia. The 2006 moderator, Robert Waworuntu, focused on the need for Indonesian churches to remain united, but also to remember that isolationism is antithetical to Jesus' teachings, and that Indonesian congregations in the United States should seek opportunities to get involved with "other social institutions" in America. Another pastor at the meeting who had traveled from Manado to participate reminded the attendees of the importance of their actions as representatives of the Indonesian nation, as he expounded their ability to promote religious harmony, share Indonesian art and culture with American audiences, and act as "diplomats" to educate people outside of Indonesia about the place of their Christian churches in the national policy of Pancasila. Observable social and political

17 From the "Sambutan PGGPI di USA" in the Persidangan dan Pembinaan PGGPI meeting materials compiled by the PGGPI Meeting Chairman, Antonius Monareth and his family, members of Immanuel Indonesian Church.
relationships that span borders were evident as members of the PGGPI interacted both with representatives of American churches and representatives of the Indonesian government. Indonesian pastors and church clergy listened to presentations from American pastors about integration or collaboration with US congregations. PGGPI members openly questioned these representatives about their ability to maintain cultural autonomy yet still become integrated within the legal and economic framework of US church institutions. Some members explicitly called on US church representatives to assist them in becoming more integrated in US church institutions in order to alleviate legal problems, engaging the notion of an international Christian brotherhood to hold American Christians responsible for protecting their fellow religious practitioners. In a later section of the meeting, PGGPI members also claimed their rights as Indonesian nationals – asking the Indonesian Consulate Head to relay news of their activities and accomplishments to the Indonesian government, requesting assistance with obtaining visa extensions, and referencing their status as “diplomats” through their relationships within the United States to encourage more political recognition of Christian constituents within the sphere of Indonesian politics. It is clear through these activities that integration with American institutions and maintenance of relationships with Indonesian political apparatus are not mutually exclusive projects.

It is not only within formal organizations such as the PGGPI that these types of transnational processes drawing on the greater community occur. Through print materials and the internet, Indonesian Christians not only organize to present “Indonesian Culture” to American audiences, but also come together under political auspices. In 2005, I attended a Christmas celebration that also served as a fundraiser for Christians in
Ambon who had been attacked in a bout of the ongoing inter-religious violence there. Organized by two Seacoast New Hampshire Indonesian churches, the event drew Indonesian Christians from several neighboring churches and from the greater Boston region. The success of this event, with the participation of over three hundred people, resulted in part from the circulation of a video taken in Ambon during an incident of religious violence. This video was passed around electronically with the invitation to the event, and as is often the case, organizers relied on people's social networking to garner support. During the course of the evening, the video was shown again in conjunction with a speech from a visiting Ambonese pastor who encouraged the congregation to donate money that he would personally deliver to the churches affected by the violence.

Fundraising events that engage the larger community can support specific ethnic projects while simultaneously presenting a pan-Indonesian identity through artistic and musical performances. In 2002 at an Indonesian Advent Church in Loma Linda California, a celebration of the anniversary of the Kawanua Organization (an ethnically Minahasan based group) saw area churches united in an exhibition that included several types of ethnic dance and performance. The monies gathered from an audience comprised both of Indonesians and Americans were used to support the development of a new hospital in Manado. Although this performance was aimed at gathering financial remittance for a specific region and under the auspice of a specific ethnic identity, members still presented themselves as participating in an exhibition of Indonesian culture. As Professor RoeRoe notes while describing a similar performance at a World Mission Lutheran Church rally on the University of Massachusetts campus in 2000, “at

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19 Kawanua is a name that refers to a person of Minahasan origins (Lundstrom-Burghoum 1981:258) said to have originated from the proto-Malay term wawau meaning domain or village (Wenas 2006). It's a moniker commonly used for organizations and buildings in Manado.
that time, our church was evangelizing, and we were also increasing the development of our faith through culture and art, but simultaneously an act of diplomacy serving our Indonesianness.”20 These types of events are widely recognized by congregation members as promoting ethnic interests within a framework of Indonesian national identity, reminiscent of the national policy of Bhinneka Tunggal Ika, or “Unity in Diversity.”

Ethnicity is an organizing principle in the larger community, although often represented in a similar manner as ethnic performance. The Kawanua USA organization is one example, as their website KawanuaUSA21 references Minahasan identity and covers regional news, and yet serves a broader purpose in disseminating news about the activities of Indonesian Christians across the country. Based in California, the home of the first wave of Indonesian Christian immigration to the United States, the population is relatively well-established, numbering around 5,000 and including upwards of 70 churches (H.M. Lapian 2007). As is the case in the New Hampshire population, the majority of the California population claim Northern Sulawesi as their home, and identify themselves as Minahasan or Manadonese. However, the website uses both the national language and the regional dialect, and generally covers news of multi-ethnic congregations in addition to regional and national news in both the United States and Indonesia. The Kawanua USA organization’s website is based on the regional website for Kawanua.org, the regionally based site that covers local North Sulawesi and Indonesian news. It’s interesting to note that the regionally based Kawanua website

21 http://www.kawanuusa.org/default.asp
experiences its heaviest traffic from the United States, indicating that it is employed to keep users in the US connected with regional issues. For the month of December 2007, there were over 136,000 hits from US-based servers as compared to around 30,000 hits from servers located in Indonesia (drawn from Kawanua.org web statistics).

Print media also serves to disseminate information across the US community. The Indonesian Journal, started in the early nineties, covers news of Christian Indonesians in the United States. It is a forum through which Indonesian businesses advertise within the community, with all of the ad content generated by Indonesian businesses, many offering legal council for immigration issues. Although based in California, it was widely read by Indonesians in New Hampshire, and church activities in the area were included in the content on a regular basis. The July 2007 issue included photos and a four page article detailing the induction of the Imanuel Indonesian Church into the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America Synod. It also included stories of a recent visit by the Governor of Northern Sulawesi and the Indonesian Consulate General to a celebration and fundraiser called “Peduli Indonesia” (Care for Indonesia) organized by Indonesian churches in Ontario, California. Although The Indonesia Journal is pointedly national and Christian-centric (all articles are written in Bahasa Indonesia) there is a dominance of regional news focused on the North Sulawesi region, and the surnames of many of the writers and advertisers are recognizably Minahasan. One of the main articles covers a fundraiser in which “Warga Kawanua” (citizens of Kawanua) raised 12,000 USD to build a health clinic in Tonsea, North Sulawesi.

Another North Sulawesi based website, Minahasaraya.net, elucidates how the concept of “Warga Kawanua” is employed in much the same way as other symbolic
national citizenships, in order to assert a continuity between the homeland and dispersed peoples, regardless of their actual legal status. *Warga Kawana* or *Kawanua* has been used as a moniker to indicate ethnic ties with Minahasa, for those Minahasans living outside of the region in other parts of Indonesia (Wenas 2006). Discussing a controversy in 2006 over a proposed visit by the Governor of North Sulawesi to the United States, a commentator said of the *Warga Kawana* residing in the US “we must formulate a plan of action whereby our sons and daughters who are living in the USA are engaged in the social life, economics and politics of North Sulawesi, working to find solutions for its environmental and social issues, and many other areas where outside help is needed. In short, Manadonese in the USA must share the responsibilities of defending and developing the homeland.”

The broader social field in which Indonesians in New Hampshire participate has allowed them to maintain transnational connections with Indonesia and with their ethnic homeland through the strength of organizational networks. Although networks can be organized either on the basis of national or ethnic identity, religious identity is the characteristic through which this particular section of the Indonesian immigrant population in the United States is positioned towards both home and host states. As has been noted in other cases of ethnic Christian migrants, meanings of home and movement away from home are predicated by the meaning of being Christian within a particular nation-state (Armbruster 2002:22). Although Christianity is used in appeals for protection from the United States government, these actions simultaneously reference the parameters of Indonesian national politics by calling for recognition of the rights of

Christians within Indonesia. Fiona B. Adamson notes that the “transformation of home” is effected by various actions in transnational communities, one of which is raising the profile of political situations that are underreported in the home state in the hopes of generating international awareness of their situation within the home state (Adamson 2002:163). In this sense even those actions that seem antithetical to a relationship with Indonesian state apparatus are often calls for political recognition. Christianity can also be used as a means of organization that references the principles of Indonesian national ideology where ethnic affiliation is both acceptable and expected as long as it is subsumed through a greater multi-ethnic organization.

Issues of Legality and Citizenship

Contrary to the assimilationist paradigm, issues of citizenship do not obviously structure the relationships that migrant populations share with their identified home of origin and receiving states. Transmigrant populations may or may not seek to maintain citizenship in their state of origin. This is often dependent on the attitudes that nation-states of origins take towards their dispersed citizens, and the laws governing immigration in receiving states. In some cases, states of origin seek maintain ties with emigrant populations by denoting them as nationals or citizens of their native country, despite their legal status as citizens in another country, such as the case of the Vietnamese Viet Keu. In writing about these “Vietnamese Sojourners” and the efforts of the Vietnamese government to incorporate them and their descendents in the national project regardless of their actual citizenship, Louis-Jacque Dorias comments that in many cases, “political discourses emanating from the homeland invite transmigrants to define
themselves as part of their ancestral country" (2005:178). In the case of Indonesians in New Hampshire, gaining US citizenship serves as a means to facilitate an ability to maintain their ties within Indonesia, as they see obtaining a US passport as allowing freedom of movement between the United States and Indonesia. In the post 9/11 political environment, travel between Indonesia and the United States has been subject to increasingly tightened regulation, and those who had previously been able to move relatively unimpeded between the two countries now find themselves unable to return to Indonesia to visit for fear of not being able to return to their families and jobs in the United States. Studies of immigration and diaspora call for recognition that attitudes toward legal status reflect a new form of relationship between nation-states and dispersed populations, in which individuals are encompassed in a “deteritorialized” body politic capitulated in social instead of geographic terms (Basch, Glick Schiller and Szanton Blanc 1994). Indonesian transmigrants in New Hampshire seek to assert the reality of their continued incorporation within the Indonesian nation-state regardless of their actual legal status.

Religious affiliation provided an avenue through which individuals could settle in New England and yet remain Indonesian citizens. The US R-1 Religious Worker Visa allows religious clergy and key employees of “legitimate religious organizations”\(^{23}\) to remain in the United States for up to five years, and provides R-2 non-work visa status for spouse and children. The R-1 visa can be renewed after the five-year period, but the recipient must leave the country for a full year. Another option for religious clergy is the EB-4 green card that is granted for immigrant religious workers within the United States.

\(^{23}\) [http://www.usimmigrationsupport.org/visa_r1.html](http://www.usimmigrationsupport.org/visa_r1.html)
This is a permanent residence category and requires the support of a non-profit religious organization located in the US and proof of two years of involvement with that association.\textsuperscript{24} Out of thirteen migration histories\textsuperscript{25} I documented, three individuals and their families had R-1 visa status and had been religious clergy in Indonesia before arriving in the United States. No one that I came in contact with through from 2004-2007 had been able to secure permanent residence through the EB-4 green card category, although families of recognized religious practitioners have been encouraged to do so by American church affiliates.

Pursuit of religious asylum in the United States is a contentious topic for Indonesian transmigrants in New England, complicated by the varying experience Christian practitioners have in Indonesia depending on which region they live in. This is compounded by the structure of the US immigration program that designates areas of “religious violence” only if the designation is consonant with current US political policy and diplomatic relations. This results in some regions in Indonesia, such as Aceh, Poso, Ambon/Maluku, being recognized as areas where Christian persecution is common.\textsuperscript{26} The sole individual who I spoke to that had secured asylum status for himself and his family came from Maluku. Urban areas like Jakarta, where Christians often experience difficulty erecting churches and openly worshipping, are usually not officially recognized by US institutions as valid regions for asylum consideration. The lack of knowledge regarding the complexities of religious identity and religious freedom in Indonesia

\textsuperscript{24} \texttt{http://www.uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis/}

\textsuperscript{25} Thirteen migration histories were conducted during the 2005 research period, with male and female church members ranging in age from 28-75, with Minahasan, Javanese and Malukan ethnic backgrounds. As an alternative to what I discovered to be the unproductive “life history” category, migration histories asked informants to describe the processes that led them to re-settle in the United States.

\textsuperscript{26} This assumption reflects the limited understanding that informs INS policy, as violence in some of these areas has been equally attributed to Christians against Muslims.
contributes to tensions surrounding this issue. It is unclear to many in the New Hampshire churches how applicants for religious asylum coming from regions with no historical precedent of religious violence will affect the status of Christian Indonesians in the United States and in Indonesia. How this legal designation affects the relationship between Christian Indonesian transmigrants and the Indonesian government is also a concern, although the increasing difficulty for Indonesian immigrants to negotiate the US legal system influenced by “War on Terror” policies that designate Indonesia as a Muslim country leave people with few options. In 2007 during the last period of my fieldwork, applying for asylum had become a more common strategy for obtaining legal citizenship in the United States, and at least three of my informants had initiated legal proceedings for the application process. American church officials also inquired as to my ability to provide regional and historical documentation for asylum applications, indicating this was a strategy supported through affiliation with American Christian institutions.

By utilizing religious and national identity as an organizational basis, Indonesian transmigrants in the Seacoast New Hampshire region are able maintain ties with the Indonesian state while pursuing citizenship rights and building political ties through the auspices of American religious institutions. Positioning national identity as an aspect of religious tradition allows individual ethnic groups to continue cultural practices through the church, and to pursue various goals under a pan-Indonesian identity that can be used to make political claims and take actions as ideological citizens of Indonesia. However, in using Christianity as the transcendent tie that binds the Indonesian transmigrant population, specific ethnic projects can also transcend the national to claim connections
with Americans on the basis of their specific histories. The relationship that Minahasans construct with their American Christian counterparts is the reflection of a contemporary Minahasan culture that posits a history and tradition that is alternate to the Indonesian national one, as is examined in the next chapter.
CHAPTER 4
MINAHASA AND AMERICA: CONCEPTS OF THE FOREIGN

The first indication that what “America” and being American means to Minahasans referenced local ideologies far outside of my understanding took place on the side of the road in Manado, the cosmopolitan city center of Minahasa. During that summer, US Indonesian relations were questioned through the interpretations of the United States government’s explicit support of Israeli aggression in Palestine, which many Indonesians framed as a general attack on Islam. In Java, people marched in solidarity with Muslims in Palestine and other parts of the world who were suffering from the effects of American imperialism that seemed aimed at Muslims, regardless of the diplomatic denial of this possibility by US officials. Faces of angry protestors burning effigies of President Bush were flashed across the screen on the nightly news, underscoring the assumption of US responsibility in the current incarnation of the Israeli-Palestine conflict.

Things were much quieter in Manado where banners festooning the streets talked of the local government’s plan to become “the tourist city of the world by 2010” and where the symbols of Christianity were ubiquitous across the landscape. As I walked along gutted sidewalks that afternoon in the oppressive heat, a driver of a blue mikrolet, the cheap form of local public transportation, pulled over. He leaned out the window and asked, as the rest of the passengers clearly waited in anticipation for my answer, where I was from. When I replied that I was from America, he beamed and indicated his correctness to the captive crowd in the mikrolet. “Amerika, bagus, bagus!” (America, good, good!) he assured me. He leaned out to shake my hand. “Go Israel!” he said with
a congratulatory tone, as though I was somehow personally involved with the recent political maneuverings of American and Israeli states.

To follow the trail of connections that leads someone on the streets of a province in Eastern Indonesia to assume my endorsement of Israel’s military aggression is to understand something of the way that Minahasans see themselves situated not just in Indonesia, but in the greater world, through their ethnic history and by way of their Christianity. Given an international political climate in which many people understand the relationship between the United States and Israel as an expression of a powerful nation’s perpetual targeting of Islamic nation-states, it isn’t surprising that Indonesians cast the US endorsement of Israel as a rejection of Islam on a global scale. What is surprising is that the Minahasan construction of the role of the West in international relations tweaks this model in a way that references local concerns and themes of local ethnic identity.

This section will attempt to show how Minahasan’s perceptions of the West, and their feelings towards Westerners, particularly Americans, reflects a history imagined through transnational ties, and also constitutes a particular Minahasan expression of modernity. The way that Minahasans use themes from global Christian narratives to emplace themselves as players in the international sphere is both a local expression of modernity and deftly rejects the limited political clout the region holds in Indonesian national politics. The intimacy that Minahasans perceive between themselves and Americans has implications for the way in which they reconstruct the hierarchy of ethnicity, religion and nationalism in Indonesian communities in the United States. The historical development of Minahasan identity and a concomitant regional nationalism was
centered on the unique ties the region had with Christianity and foreign powers, and this
trope is recreated and reinstated through the relationship Minahans posit between
their homeland and the image of America and Americans. Christians in Minahasa posit
a relationship with the United States through their shared Christianity, a tie that
transcends national boundaries and supports an alternative imagination of what it means
to be ethnically Minahasan that doesn’t conform to the Indonesian national model. These
local “theories of relation” provide insight into the motivations that drive the
development of an alternate religious nationalism realized by Minahasans in transmigrant
churches in the United States.

In the exploration of how Minahasans create intimate ties between themselves and
Americans, this chapter also entails a gentle critique of theories of disjunction and
disassociation that have characterized some studies of modernity (Appadurai 1996, Tsing
1993). Instead of focusing on the way that colonialism and migration leads people to
experience a form of alienation, this case shows that influences from afar, or traveling far
from home, engenders the creation of more ties and leads people to see themselves as
belonging in more places. Perhaps modernity is not a story of overcoming the
disjunctions of the past, of disconnectedness, but of maximizing the potential of the
connections facilitated by an increasingly global, and increasingly inter-connected, world.
In other words, how do people make “outside” influences part of their own lives, and
how do they make them work to their advantage? By approaching the particularity of
indigenous interpretations of the West, whether in Minahasa or elsewhere, we better
apprehend the flow of globalization, where unique cultural formulations of the West or
the white American in turn help to reshape the nature of those global influences (Bashkow 2006:14).

**Concepts of the Foreign**

The idea of the foreign as something connected to power or prestige is certainly a theme that has been engaged by anthropology in a number of contexts, and has been of interest in post-colonial studies of Asia and the Pacific. Theorists of Southeast Asia have increasingly linked systems that incorporated foreign influences or objects into regimes of power as an important aspect of pre-state political systems in the region. Archeologists and historians of early Southeast Asia have argued that state-like systems were not imported wholesale into the region from contact with foreign centers of power such as India and China, but instead reflect a longer tradition of mutual cultural influence (Lape 2003:103) in which Southeast Asian societies created their own practices of “modernity” based on long term existence of trade with and awareness of foreign centers (Wolters 1999, Junker 2004, Tambiah 1976, Andaya 1993). The recasting of the development of social complexity in Southeast Asia as an indigenous phenomena as opposed to the import of foreign political modules is resonant in criticism of post-colonial theories of nation development that claim the form of the modern nation-state in Southeast Asia was dependent on people adapting to imported European political models (Anderson 1983). Partha Chatterjee contends that this view of Southeast Asian modernity is nothing but a continuation of Western imperialism that refuses to recognize the distinctive modernities practiced by post-colonial peoples, that may have roots in pre-colonial, pre-modern systems (1993). Scholars of the post-colonial Pacific have also
critiqued the theory of the European roots of modern nationalism, claiming that a separate
and distinct model of nationalism emerged after World War II that was based in the
formation of the United Nations (Kelly and Kaplan 2001).

Most anthropologists see that practices of imagining connections with the foreign
or centers of power from afar is intimately tied with the results of the colonial experience
in many places throughout the world (Dirks 1992, Thomas 1994, Stoler 2002). In
Indonesia, the colonial period both created forms of prestige that were related to an
ability to move in the world of the colonizers (such as the ability to speak Dutch or access
Dutch education through the Ethical Policy)\(^{27}\) and constructed certain areas and ethnic
groups as “marginal” actors opposed to the centrality of Java, the place where colonial
power flourished, which later became the seat of the Indonesian nationalist movement.
Not only is the challenge for anthropologists to recognize indigenous forms or
expressions in which the foreign is imbued with meaning, but to understand how those
interpretations have been shaped by people’s interaction with colonial powers and later
with the processes of the nation-state that support the validity of specific regions or ethnic
groups over others. The modalities of “cultural citizenship” (Monnig Atkinson 2003,
Rosaldo 2003, Tsing 2003) complicate the formulaic descriptions of the desires to adapt
to and imbue the foreign with power as only the indigenous means of minimizing the
incursion of foreign things and influences. As Anna Tsing points out in her ethnography
of the Meratus people of Kalimantan, the discourses of Indonesian governmental
institutions that cast the Meratus as primitive “do not have an unquestioned hegemony”

\(^{27}\) The Ethical Policy, endorsed by Queen Wilhelmina of the Netherlands in 1901, was a policy to increase the welfare
of the people of Java and other parts of the colony, through the improvement of quality of life and greater access to
education. The policy stemmed from a convergence of humanitarian concerns for the people of Java and the growing
interest of private industry in the region that called for the support of a modernized workforce (Riddleffs 2001:193).
in that individuals “respond, reinterpret and challenge even as they accept and are shaped by these forms of knowledge (1993:8).”

Due to the complexity and historical specificity of power relationships in the colonial era, Ira Bashkow highlights the appropriateness of re-examining the post-colonial power relationships from the “moral perspective of the of the people concerned (2006:4). Not only does this help to avoid characterizing post-colonial relationships as recapitulations of the colonial era, but also addresses issues of anthropological reflexivity. If anthropologists in the field minimize the symbolic power that conceptions of “whitemen” (Basso 1979) and Westerners carry in an attempt to be reflexive, they also minimize the resonance that these constructions have in their informant’s lives. Bashkow claims that “the anthropologist’s impulse to deny their power is fundamentally ethnocentric (2006:18)” because it is in accepting the way that they emplace us in their lives that we allow them to structure encounters in the way that they see fit (2006:19). In exploring Minahasan perspectives on America and Americans, I am trying to better understand my relations with Minahasans in churches in New Hampshire without glossing them in the cliché terms of the Indonesian culture of hospitality that implies continual politeness towards foreigners. My informants take seriously my interest in their community and the status that my research lends to their churches and the political project of ethnic Minahasan Christians. In considering this construction of me as a white American with the same seriousness, I gain insight into not only why this construction is so resonant with Minahasans in particular, but also what their characterizations say about the way they see themselves in the world.
**Foreign Roots and Racial Implications**

Before approaching the question of current formations of the foreign through the metaphor of America in Minahasa, it is helpful to draw out some indications that are used to link present Minahasan culture to pre-colonial rituals and modes of relation in order to maintain an aspect of continuity to Minahasan ethnic identity. Historical and ethnographic treatments of Minahasan cultural continuity by non-Minahasan scholars focus almost exclusively on those social practices that have survived intact from the time before widespread conversion to Christianity. Ethnographies of Minahasa written during the early New Order period tend to claim that the basic *adat* structures of Minahasan society remain beneath the veneer of foreign terms, food and clothes, where “current processes are deeply embedded in the structure of tradition and new elements are often translated into existing categories (Lundstrom-Burghorn 1981).” These ethnographies often site the continuation of large scale feasting that is a marker of local status, and the maintenance of *mapalus* or groups of mutual aid that rely on a system of debt, to be evidence that pre-colonial traditions, although decorated with Western items such as fine china and Dutch pastries, are a continuation of previous systems of social meaning (Lundstrom-Burghoorn 1981:24, Lunneman 31:1994). Although it is true that contributions to communal feasting are still used as a social performance of status in Minahasan communities within and without Indonesia (Jacobsen 2002:43), it is difficult to imagine that the introduction of Christianity did not in some ways alter the meaning of these activities, since most communal feasting now takes place within the institution of the church (Henley et al 2007:309), and monetary donations are now made to the church itself instead of to the *mapalus*. In attempting to explain the continued strength of
Minahasan ethnic identity in the face of the rapid social changes that occurred during the colonial period, these investigations claim that the historical attention paid to the way people adapted to Western systems in the region has obscured the way that aspects of pre-colonial culture have been maintained, and constitute the “real” core of what is Minahasan.

What authors like Lundstrom-Burghoorn overlook is the way in which exoticism, and affinity for the foreign, are important aspects of what Minahasans assume to be constitutive of their culture. This is apparently not a new phenomenon, as historical documents from the colonial period indicate that Minahasans has already developed a sense of racial difference from other groups in the archipelago, particularly focused on white or light skin color, as was communicated by locals to missionary Nicolas Graaf who wrote of their “affinity with the Japanese” in 1898 (Lundstrom-Burghoorn 1981:22). Race is often employed as a metaphor for Minahan difference vis-à-vis other Indonesians, one that is reinforced within Indonesia-wide perceptions of Minahasans as an inter-archipelagic exotic other. When I relate to Indonesians outside of Sulawesi that I work with Minahasans, one of the first things they often refer to is their physical “prettiness” or “kulit putih” (white skin).” Informants have sometimes inquired whether I feel more at home in Minahasa because people there look more Western, a question that has implicit racial overtones. Unlike the Orokaiva people in Ira Bashkow’s ethnography, race in Minahasa is not stressed as a boundary between themselves and foreigners, but as a form of connection.

Identities based on “racial” characteristics are sometimes combined with themes in Minahasan creation mythology in order to support the theory that the first Minahasans
came not from North Sulawesi, but from elsewhere. In her review of versions of the creation story of Lumimu’ut, Minahasan historian Bertha Pantouw summarizes that “where Lumimu’ut originally came from is not certain, but it’s clear she was a newcomer to this area.”

The connection between the origins of Lumimu’ut and unique racial features combines a number of theories generated by foreign scholars from the colonial period on, that claim Minahasans are genetically related to the people of Southern China (see Saruan 2002). Some informants have interpreted this as an indication that the unclear origins of Lumimu’ut were actually in China, explaining the racial characteristics of her keturunan (descendants). At a Minahasan ceremony at an Indonesian Church retreat, one of the Minahasan elders who is considered to be an expert on pre-Christian traditional practices corrected me on the origins of Lumimuut when I implied that both she and the opo-opo lesser spirits originated in Minahasa. “Of course she didn’t come from there, you know,” he told me. When I inquired where she came from, he told me that she came from Mongolia. Other versions of this theory of foreign racial origins are set later in Minahasan history, but well before the adoption of Christianity, when a Mongolian princess was “blown off course” and landed in Minahasa to eventually intermarry with local people.

The difficulties of discussing cultural continuity in a society in which most people are aware of the recent formation of the parameters of their ethnic group (Jacobsen 2002:39, Mamengko 2002:xx) can be minimized through the idea that incorporation of foreign elements is one of the constitutive factors of that identity. The attempt to validate contemporary aspects of identity by establishing their continuity with the past and

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28 “Lumi-muut: Asal-usulnya tidak pasti dari mana tetapi jelas dia pendatang yang baru di negeri itu.” (Bertha Pangkouw 2002:72)
circumventing problematic historical conditions, controversially termed the “invention of tradition” (Hobsbawm 1983, Handler and Linnekan 1984, Anderson 1983, Keesing 1989), implies the creative work of re-imagining history to resonate with the present. However, designating cultural appropriation and transformation of external influences as a process of “invention” does posit the authority of scholars to delineate cultural practice and articulations of identity as authentic.\(^\text{29}\) Validity in this sense is not always a concern for ethnic groups like the Minahasans. Much like the Orokaiva, who also acknowledge that aspects of their identity were established through the colonial encounter\(^\text{30}\) problematic historical realities do not have to be interpreted negatively or diminish the meaning of an ethnic identity. In fact, they can lend credence to theories positing the resiliency of a culture that has remained vital through periods of intense change, and through that resiliency establish a very different, but just as valid, form of continuity. Furthermore, as is evident in Minahasa, the incorporation of the foreign in the past can enable informants to approach relationships with foreign entities in the present with a sense of an already established camaraderie and equality.

**Narratives of Safety: America and Americans in Minahasa**

My experiences in the city of Manado in 2006 went a long way towards explaining the ease with which I was accepted into the fold of predominantly Minahasan Indonesian churches in New Hampshire, and also provided evidence of how links

\(^{29}\) Charles Briggs (1996) notes that scholars are often able to gain better access to “different types of metadiscursive practices” that are used to imbue texts with authority (439). Invoking a notion of “invented tradition” allows scholars who can control, reorganize and re-present the discourses of others to silence competing metadiscourses (463). Minahasans circumvent some of this authority by producing their own scholarly texts that provide alternative interpretations of Minahasan history.

\(^{30}\) Both the Orokaiva and Minahasan people are aware that their ethnonym originated in the colonial encounter, and neither seem to interpret this fact negatively (Bushkow 2007 31)
between people in Minahasa and their family members currently residing in the United States were facilitating the emergence of status markers that capitalized on local structures of feeling (Williams 1977) about Americans and life in the United States. I often found that simply the disclosure of my American identity led local people in Manado to expound on theories that claimed an explicit tie between Americans and the people of Minahasa, one that focused on the bond of Christianity that it was assumed that all white Americans share with the church-going Minahasans.

One of the ways that people in Minahasa demonstrated their bond with Americans was through a narrative of safety, specifically the safety of Americans in North Sulawesi compared to traveling in other regions of the country. One of the most common questions I was asked in my travels around the city was whether I thought Minahasa was aman or safe. Although talk about the relative safety or peacefulness of the Minahasan region referenced the lack of inter-religious violence that has characterized nearby regions such as Poso and Maluku, and was also part of a popular slogan that touted that city of Manado’s attributes (aman, damai dan sejathera: safe, peaceful and prosperous), people specifically linked my safety with my American identity, and the Christian identity being American implied. Riding in city public buses where it had been established that I was American, I would often be chastised for not wearing my sabit or cross, or asked what church I attend in the States. Safety is also a major theme in the city government’s tourism development program, which hopes to attract enough Western tourists to become “Kota Parawisata Dunia 2010 (the Tourist City of the World 2010).” One major focus of this advertising campaign is to convince Westerners that they will safe and comfortable in Manado precisely because of the city’s
Western orientation, and implicitly, it's non-Muslim majority. The ejection of Muslim itinerant merchants from the one of Manado’s central markets in 2006 is one indication of the lengths to which the local government will go to minimize Western anxiety about being targets of religiously motivated violence. This is a departure from the government’s attitude in the early part of the decade that protecting the rights of Muslim itinerant traders was a necessary aspect of maintaining religious relations in the region, evidenced by incidents such as the city police's defense of the street traders from a Christian paramilitary group’s intent to "impose order" during the holiday season of 2002 (Henley et al. 2007:313).

Spurred by the current political climate, the assumption that Americans will be safe in Manado is often predicated on religious grounds in conversations with Christian Minahasans despite the fact that the maintenance of religious harmony, and hospitality to Westerners, is seen as a hallmark of Minahasan identity regardless of religious affiliation. People would often relate to me that Minahasa was kept safe by the power of prayer. When I pressed a female GMIM member one day as to whether Muslim prayers lent strength to this effort, she indignantly replied that "of course" they did. It wasn't until a few moments later that she added the possibility that "maybe the Christian prayers were more effective." Theories of safety as interpreted through a Christian logic often leads to broader political implications that are incongruent with local ethnic ideology that stresses religious harmony above religious affiliation. The sense that there is camaraderie shared between Americans and Minahasans through their Christian identity becomes less benign when applied to the political motivations of President Bush, the American government’s

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31 The formation of Christian paramilitary groups in Minahasa, such as the "Brigade Manguni" discussed here, has been described as a response to the threat from _laskar Jihad_ Muslim groups originating in Java who are thought to be responsible for instigating Muslim-Christian violence in other areas of the archipelago (Henley et al., 2007:312)
actions in the sphere of international politics, and the way that these actions are motivated by the same desires that Minahasans have as Christians, such as the defense of the Holy Land of Israel. The strength of these beliefs was made clear to me during one interview in Minahasa with a retired GMIM deacon whose son currently resides in New Hampshire. Despite my efforts to disturb his notions of American support for Bush as the defender of Israel, he completely disregarded my insistence that not that not everyone in the country agrees with the government’s foreign policy. When I continue that many people don’t support Bush’s policies regarding the war in Iraq, he returns to focus on the connection between Christian Minahasans, Israel and the United States:

KS: banyak orang di Amerika Serikat (.3) policy ya (.2) tidak support war di Iraq
   Many people in the United States (.3) policy ya (.2) don’t support the war in Iraq

BL: io
    Yes

KS: then (.2) yeah?

BL: Tapi saya itu sebagai (.1) apa itu (.3) saya itu (.3) pertahankan (.1) tentu dia support Isreal. Makanya, tuhan bless dia (.1) bless America.
    But I as (.1) what is it (.3) I (.3) defend (.1) certainly he supports Israel. Therefore, God blesses him (.1) blesses America.

KS: [aah yeah]

BL: Ah, siapa pun dia President (.5) and dia (.1) apa itu (.3) "bless Israel, support Israel, Tuhan akan support Amerika" WHOEVER (.4) WHOEVER
    Ah, whoever is President (.5) and he (.1) what is it (.3) "blesses Israel, supports Israel, God will support America" WHOEVER (.4) WHOEVER

KS: Yeah?

BL: becomes President

KS: Siapa pun President yeah?
   Whoever is President yeah?

BL: And I think all of you, all of the people in America, realize this "((**)) and till the end the (.1) of this world"
These kind of millenarian descriptions (Trompf 1990, Rutherford 2005) place both Christian Minahasans and Americans in a particular bond, one that is tacitly anti-Muslim. What is particularly interesting is that the presence of a white American blatantly disagreeing with Bush’s support of Christian Israel at the expense of Muslim Palestine does little to displace my informant’s characterization that not only do Americans support the Bush administration’s actions to “support” Israel – but that any President would be the same, because Americans are inherently aware of the nation-state’s importance in a biblical sense.

The bond that is assumed to exist between Minahasans and Americans through Christianity extends past Indonesia to encompass those who have relocated to the United States, as people imagine that Minahasa is not just safe for Americans, but that America is safe and welcoming to Minahasans. As the retired GMIM deacon replied when I asked him if his son planned to remain in the United States:

Siapa Herman? Sangat mau dia lebih sebab (.3) pertama. Saya kira sudah soal sekuritnya (.3) apa? saya kira sudah aman.

Who Herman? He really wants to stay there longer, because (.3) first. I think there is already the matter of his security (.3) I think he is already safe.

Christian Minahasans in New Hampshire also describe their resettlement experiences to confer a feeling of safety through religious terms, in which they are comfortable in a landscape they describe filled with the visible signs of Christianity. As one of the earliest members of the Imanuel Church, a Minahasan woman in her fifties who experienced religious harassment during her time living in Java, describes:
Here the American environment is transformed into one dominated by churches, not just in one area or region as is the case in Minahasa, but across the country, as this informant relocated to a number of areas before eventually settling in New Hampshire. These descriptions of the United States in many ways are read as contiguous with the landscape of Minahasa itself, which is famously dominated by churches and churchgoing people.

In the United States, however, Christian dominance occurs nationwide and this reflects the desire of Christians in North Sulawesi to see their religion granted equal status and political recognition in the Indonesian nation. Currently in Indonesia, despite the public commitments of the central government to the Pancasila precept of equal rights for all recognized *agama*, Minahasans feel policy initiatives emanating from Jakarta since the end of the New Order period have a decidedly anti-Christian tone (Henley et al 310), and Christians are not free to proliferate the symbols of Christianity outside certain areas.32 The effort to make an ideological connection with the United States as a haven of

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32 In what is described as an attempt to alleviate the violent attacks on churches in the greater Jakarta area, the central government recently amended law Surat Keputusan Bersama Menag dan Mendagri 1/1969 that outlines the process necessary to secure paperwork to erect a house of worship. Incomplete paperwork or certifications have been cited as the factor compelling locals in Muslim dominated neighborhoods to attack or otherwise block the construction of churches. The law states that any application for a house of worship must identify 90 people from the proto-congregation, 60 people of other faiths living in the area who have no objection to the development, and the approval of the local inter-faith communication forum. Christians claim that hard-line Islamic leaders encourage Muslims to reject the church proposals, and have been vocal in criticizing the law as counter to the constitutional right of freedoms to worship. The law has undergone 11 revisions in recent years and is still perceived as problematic for Christians in the
safety, then, is also grounded in political realities. John, a member of Maranatha church, explicitly addresses this in his explanation of the why Minahasans feel a connection with the United States via the politics of Israel:

There are movements that are Islamization movements that detail in stages how to stir things up in Christian regions and Christian pockets (.) remember these Christians (.) like (((**))) in this case who will protect us? So it’s not surprising in Manado there is already an idea to build a base for the United States Navy. It’s like that. Maybe two years ago there was this idea (.) Yeah go ahead and just build the American base, welcome (.) where do you want it? It’s like that. So the problem is protection, protection. How this, here, can protect us because we, maybe we if anything we don’t trust the central government. How many Christians are in the army or everywhere? Maybe one method is to invite in a foreign nation. And what nation do we want to invite? Indonesians sometimes like Australians. Yeah, but we like America even though it’s far away. Certainly Australia because it’s our closest neighbor, but sometimes they don’t understand us.

Here, relationships with the United States are a strategic endeavor in order to assure the safety and political abilities of the Minahasan region in the face of increasing Islamic power and distrust of the central government. However, these relationships are still predicated on an ideological basis, as John notes that although many politically disadvantaged Indonesian groups have turned to Australia for assistance, Minahasans feel that the Australians don’t understand them, insinuating by seeking their support that Americans do.

Finally, not only do Minahasans feel safe in America, but they also cast the relationship between the two countries as reciprocal, when Minahasans with family members living in the US, or Minahasans residing in the US, make efforts to alleviate the

country, especially for those who have settled in Java. For a discussion of this issue see: http://www.indusesttimatters.com/195/low-en-church-es-t-f-worship/.

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threat they perceive to the United States from Muslim violence. Here again prayer offers protection from the dangers of targeted religious violence, and its power extends to loved ones in the United States and to the country itself:

BL: I bless America. Because my son

KS: [kenapa?]
    [Why?]

BL: Apa karena sudah ada di sana
    What because he's already there

kenapa saya maksud saya berdoa untuk Amerika juga.
    My meaning is that I pray for America also.

Supaya (.2) di jauhkan dari (.2) di jauhkan dari (.3) mara bahaya (.3) yaitu?
    So that (2) to keep far from (.) far from (.) those who are dangerous (3) you know?

KS: hmm mmm Bayaha.
    Hmm mmm Danger.

BL: "Dari kerjaan kerjaan terrorist."  
    "From the works of terrorist"

Or by countering negative stereotypes they feel are unfairly ascribed to Americans by Indonesian Muslims, as the wife of Minahasan pastor in New Hampshire recounts:

you know something () that Indonesian image about America is formed by Hollywood. That is what many people know. It is too bad because it is not true. Because Americans are very good () many good people here, many good things happen here. Maybe that is why Muslims hate America? because their image is wrong.

Much as Minahasans in the colonial period posited their equality with the Dutch through the terms of Christian morality, here affections for Americans references a religious framework between Christians where the covenant of protection can work in both directions -- Minahasans have equal power to defend Americans much as they choose America to defend them. Dangers from “terrorists” are an intimacy Americans and Christian Indonesians share. By focusing on the similar threats aimed at Americans and
Christian Indonesians, these informants also collapse the difference between being a Christian in a Muslim nation and being a citizen of a nation that is identified as Christian into a shared experience, supporting a notion of the “Christianness” of Americans.

**Seeking Status in a New Land**

The incorporation of foreign elements into Minahasan society as indicators of status has been documented since soon after start of the Dutch intrusion in North Sulawesi, as missionaries recorded their efforts to transform societal practices into forms more acceptable by the standards of 19th century Dutch mores. British naturalist Alfred Russel Wallace has famously written of the beauty of Minahasa and pleasing adoption of Western trappings. From his 1864 stay in the village of Rurukan while dining at the home of a local chief:

>We had good claret and English beer, white china, finger glasses and fine napkins...our host was dressed in black with satin waistcoat and black polished shoes...I staid through the next day and had a little gem of a bedroom with blue and white gauze curtains, white linen, and every convenience of civilization.  

Minahasa today boasts a landscape interpolated with the architecture of the pre-colonial past and columned white-washed houses filled with influences from colonial life, down to the formal receiving rooms filled with European furniture and china cabinets. These houses, as well as the myriad of styles of churches on nearly every street, are increasingly set against more modern, generic building projects connected with the development new mega-shopping centers, like those dotted along Manado Bay where the city hopes to extend the current mall into a mile-long stretch.

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33 On the Progress of Civilization in Northern Celebes [a paper read in Bath at the 19 Sept. 1864 meeting of Section E, Geography and Ethnology, of the BAAS]. abstract printed in *Notices and Abstracts of Miscellaneous Communications to the Sections* portion of the *Report of the British Association for the Advancement of Science* 34 (1864) (John Murray, London, 1865): 149-150.
The transformation of Western things into a uniquely Minhasan way of being is not a new practice, so it was unsurprising when people related to me that in a town outside of Manado called Langowan I would find a number of houses built in American style. Not only were these houses modeled after pictures sent from family members living in the United States, but the funds for their construction were also tied to the financial remittances sent from the United States. Whenever I mentioned that I was American, or worked with Indonesians in America, people would urge me to visit Langowan to see for myself the way that local tukangs (artisan workmen) had reliably reproduced such houses. As an informant in Manado said:


And they send money to their parents. Who build houses. So it looks good in the village. There are many good houses, which resemble like (...) ah (...) what is it, a cottage? No, nicer than a cottage. But now things have changed, there are a lot of nice houses, that imitate American models it is said, maybe because they send photos from the United States, and using the photo craftsmen can make them.

One assumption is that the reproduction of American houses is one way that the affection for America is being filtered through avenues that preserved the continuity of older forms of status. This idea was challenged somewhat by an encounter that occurred during a lecture I gave for the American congregation members of the Lutheran Church of Newington, New Hampshire, who had recently helped to bring the Imanuel Indonesian church into the fold of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America as a mission

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34 Consider this portrait from Wil Lundstrom-Burghoom from her 1974 fieldwork: “The Minhasan is a “man of the world”...in the Rumah Makan (restaurant) London he enjoys his ikan pepes sipping a beer “on the rocks”. For entertainment he drops a coin in the juke box for the Minhasan version of an American song with roots in Africa.” (1981:47).

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congregation. I was presenting a slideshow to a mixed group of Indonesians and Americans that had been commissioned by Pastor Lynn Opderbecke of Holy Trinity Church to encourage congregation members to consider taking a congregational trip to Manado in 2008. As I showed photos of churches and tourists sites in the city and surrounds, I stopped on a photo of a rumah adat, the traditional wooden house raised on stilts with a room for livestock below the main living quarters. This house happened to be abandoned and overgrown, which I contrasted with photos of the new rumah adat being produced in a nearby village that can be disassembled and shipped all over the world for sale. I clicked through photos of the shopping strip in downtown Manado, where the grey facades of buildings erected in the nineteen sixties and seventies are outshined by flashy, colorful logos of the new shops being built in the local government’s effort to overhaul the shore area into a more enticing tourist destination.

Periodically throughout the talk I encouraged Minahasans in the audience to come forward and provide their input, or discuss certain landscapes. No one came forward until the close of the talk when Ibu Bertha, mother of one of the most active families in the Imanuel church who was in New Hampshire for her annual summer break from business in Jakarta, asked for microphone. Her impassioned speech caught me off guard:

Thank you, I’d like to tell you something, about Manado. I just want to tell you, when I went away from Minahasa, going to Jakarta for my study, it was 1950. Because I am now 76 years old. So I went away from Minahasa in 1950. And when I go back to Minahasa now, ahh I will see the building the same like 50, like so many years ago, like 1950. So I’m so ashamed for my country. Yes what I saw, what I saw in 1950 is this building and it’s still there, because I was there in school in Dutch school in Tomohon. So please when if there is anybody to help Minahasa please, to help our Minahasa. Thank you.

35 Pastor Lyn Opderbecke of the Newington Lutheran Congregation explained that the ELCA considers a mission church one that requires a certain amount of financial support to establish an independently functioning congregation. Mission churches must apply for this position and undergo a period of training, and pastors are required to undergo training and testing to be ordained as a Lutheran Minister. The Immanuel Indonesian Church was accepted as an ELCA mission church in 2007. The congregation will receive financial support, and their Pastor will receive a salary and retirement package that decreases over time until the church is self-sustaining.
Later in an interview, I asked her why the photos of the older buildings had embarrassed her. She answered me with a story of her preparation for leaving Jakarta, and the heavy burden she felt from the expectations of family and friends in Indonesia to make something of her connections in the United States. This narrative led her to a memory of returning from visit home to Minahasa in the nineteen-seventies and the embarrassment she felt at finding the same run-down buildings she used to see on her walks to school. At a time when many other regions of Indonesia were experiencing changes and improvements under Suharto’s development-focused regime, her natal village was falling into disrepair. She recalls the shame she felt when a friend in Jakarta who had visited Minahasa asked who inhabited that village, who then expressed her pity when Ibu Bertha informed her friend that was her birthplace. She relayed that when she saw the photo of the abandoned rumah adat in the slide show, she was transported back to the embarrassment she felt at returning to Minahasa and seeing its lack of development. She went on to explain that although many in people perceive Minhasans to be orang kaya (wealthy people)\(^{36}\) that in reality Minahasa is still suffers from a lack of attention from the central government, referencing other issues seen as indicative of the neglect of the their region, such as the continued degradation of coral reefs at the once lucrative diving site Bunaken off the coast of Manado Bay.

Houses modeled in the style of American architecture, the improvement of the physical aspects of Manado supported by American funds, or remmitances from family members are not only a new incarnation of old Minahan avenues of exhibiting status, but are also the material embodiment of the implied promise Minahasans read in their

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\(^{36}\) Minahasans are considered to be wealthy by other Indonesians both as a result of their history as colonial subaltern elites and their success at capitalizing on natural resources such as cengkeh (cloves).
relationship with the United States. Support from the United States elevates them from their marginal status within the nation-state of Indonesia and gives them the capacity for the all-important development that has long been a hallmark of nation-state building and modernity in Indonesia. Now as the New Order period fades and Christian institutions are no longer vitally connected government development programs and government monies in the name of development as they were under Suharto’s rule (Aragon 2000:283) Minahansans are determined to avoid being left behind either developmentally or politically. As the decentralization process that was begun in 2001 has served to further disconnect Minahasa from central powers emanating from Java (a professor at Sam Ratulangi said, “they don’t even send money for disasters anymore”), reaching outward to foreign sources has become one strategy of raising Minahasa’s status within the realm of the nation-state and maintaining the “modern” lifestyle they are famous for. In New Hampshire, church members raise funds to alleviate the pollution of Lake Tondano and to refurbish hospitals, and a few have even started a political group called “Bangkit Minahasa” (Arise Minahasa) in the hopes that building American political connections will put pressure on Indonesia to recognize the political potential of their region and regional leaders.

Perhaps the sense that Minahasan futures are tied to America is underscored by my experience as an American ethnographer working Minahasan populations both within and outside of Indonesia. I have been welcomed and provided for in Minahasa beyond the normal parameters of politeness through which Indonesians routinely deal with foreigners. As a guest in the home of the Manado City Secretary and his family, I was given access to governmental meetings and special ceremonies, and there has been much
interest in my work both around the University where I made a short presentation at the close of a language program in 2007, and with local people I interacted with in day to day life. In New Hampshire, Minahasans have been supportive of my research, and have even sought me out to document activities I wasn’t aware of. Despite their success at building relationships with Americans through their respective churches, I still constitute an important bridge between Minahasa and their new home, because I recognize their history, culture, and their stories with the knowledge of how those stories play out against the backdrop of Indonesia. What Minahasans hope is the end result of their burgeoning relationship with the United States – political power and recognition within the Indonesian nation state both for their ethnic group and for Christians – is embodied in my recognition of their importance in the future of the Indonesia by way of their ability to bridge US-Indonesia relationships. The validation provided by my academic and personal interest further instantiates the truth of their relationships with Americans that have been imagined from afar.

By examining the way in which Minahasans employ their characterizations of Americans discursively, one finds grounds to dispute the claim that appropriation of Western concepts, or an “occidentalism” that places Western culture or Westerners as admirable, imitable and superior to others is a form of internalized domination instilled and carried over from the colonial period. As Xiaomei Chen notes in her analysis of the way that Occidental discourses in China were used to challenge hegemonic constructions of the ruling class, constructions of the Western other have “allowed the orient to participate actively and with indigenous creativity in the process of self-appropriation, even after being appropriated and constructed by Western others (1992:688).”
Furthermore, those constructions must be considered in the way that they exist in dialectic conversation with domestic discourses that they may serve to refute or challenge. Minahasan’s construction of Americans and their relationships with them references their position in Indonesia and their hope to “remodel and rescue their own country and their own selves” in their reading of the Western other (Chen 1992:704). It also cautions us not to label discourses as “intrinsically oppressive or liberating” (Chen 1992:693) because their meaning is derived in the applied social usage, within specific relationships of power, and is not imbedded in the discourse itself. For Minahasan the imagined intimacy between themselves and Americans serves a number of positive purposes; allowing them to mine global Christian discourses to emplace themselves within the sphere of international politics and create ties with powerful international players, while countering the Indonesian government’s tendency to minimize or ignore them.

These discourses also provide a perspective on continuity and identity in Minahasa, disturbing the notion that the existence of similar forms of status or social organization simply transfer the same underlying meaning glossed with a patina of “modernity” or the trappings of the West. Although certain forms of status have remained, they have taken on new facets of importance as indicators of the historically and politically specific moment in which they exist. The one constant that may be most salient is the tendency to privilege relationships with the foreign, in whatever form, as one of the constitutive factors of what it means to be Minahasan. However, the way those relationships are constructed must be contextualized to avoid the essentializing them as either as a means of deflecting foreign intrusions or as the internalization of
dominant outside forces thrust upon them. The way in which Minahasans construe their relationships with Americans is rooted in local logics that are conversant with the global, and has real implications for the efforts of Minahasans hoping to transform their relationships both within and outside of Indonesia.

Christianity in Minahasa has absorbed older forms of status and regional theories that identify the foreign as powerful, admirable and ultimately a primordialized aspect of identity. As a contemporary practice, Christianity serves to facilitate a continued link to foreign powers that inform a regional identity in which Minahasanness is realized in relationships beyond the nation-state, an alternative to the national model in which ethnicity is contained within the boundaries of an Indonesian identity. Within Indonesia, Christianity can only serve to partially organize the experiences and characteristics that identify an individual as Minahasan because religious identities bisect ethnic groups. It is outside of Indonesia that Christianity and Christian practices become the central aspect of Minahan identity, organizing heterglossic experiences into a unifying and timeless narrative of a Minahasa that has always been Christian.
CHAPTER 5
MINAHASAN HISTORIES RETOLD: HISTORY, MEMORY AND CHRISTIAN MEANINGS

The monotone grey of a drizzling and cold New Hampshire spring afternoon belies the cacophonous rush generated by warm bodies, simmering spices and animated chatter inside the rough hewn lakeside cabin. A dozen women are gathered in the kitchen, engaged in the familiar ritual of loading the table with more dishes of sweet beef stews from Java, or eye-wateringly spicy mandalas of sambal and fish, than any Christian army could hope to finish. Sharing food with your neighbors might be a Biblical edict, but making sure there are leftovers after each guest at a special event takes home their weight in food is an inscription of Minahasan tradition in the Christian practice of sharing a common meal. In the center of the room a spirited discussion of the day’s scriptural reading is also a process of translation from the formal Indonesian used in the Alkitab (Bible) to conversations about a psalm’s meaning in the informal regional creole Bahasa Manado, spoken even by those who have never set foot in the cosmopolitan Minahasan city where the language originated.

Although this is an informal weeklong retreat for the members of Maranatha Indonesian Church, the days are punctuated with prayer and the songs from the hymnal book (kidung jemaat), sermons and scriptural interpretation just as is found at Sunday services. The weekly sermon may be held in the surrounding woods beneath the bristle of pine boughs gathering May rain, but this is a time of worship. It is also a time of culture, for the congregation to celebrate their Indonesian heritage together in song and shared space, in food from home and prayers for home. I’ve been asked to lecture on
Minahasan history, to talk about an anthropological knowledge of culture that seems somehow different from the culture that lives in the quotidian activities of Maranatha church members, that breathes in warm corners of conversation within the retreat cabin. As everyone gathers in the basement to listen to my version of one of their histories, Pastor Julia leads us in prayer. It’s a prayer for my success, for appreciating history as part of a divine plan, for being people who celebrate their various ethnic traditions because they share an unshakeable unity in God, and a common nation.

This chapter specifically focuses on the re-telling of the Minahasan origin myth of Toar, Lumimu’ut and Karema, mythical progenitors of the Minahasan people. This myth re-telling incorporates the common assumption that belief systems in pre-colonial Minahasa were in fact linked to Christianity before the arrival of missionaries, or that Minahasans have “always been Christian.” However, re-told in the context of a presentation on the history of Minahasa, the discussion between myself and an audience made up of Indonesian church members from a number of ethnic groups became a forum through which not only were the links between Minahan identity and Christianity made explicit, but a debate over how to understand pre-colonial categories and practices through a Christian framework were also addressed in public and mediated in the church environment. The narrative of Toar and Lumimu’ut as recounted in a transnational environment can be interpreted as a response to my anthropological-historical perspective, in which aspects of Minahasan identity were emplaced in a temporal narrative that described a break between the time before and after Christianity, as this version of Lumimu’ut’s “immaculate conception” both erases a break between the past and the present and helps to explain why conversion is neither interesting or a salient
marker in the Minahasan history of religious identification. It can also be taken as
evidence of the way in which Minahasans in these transnational churches have explicitly
defined Christianity as a primordial and central aspect of their ethnic identity.

In engaging with the particular experiences of Minhasan Christianity through time
and across borders, this ethnographic project necessarily engages theoretical perspectives
that examine Christianity as a complex phenomenon possessing its own internal
trajectories of logic that are in dialectic relation to various political, historical and cultural
contexts. In her introduction to a volume on “conversion studies in anthropology,”
Diane Austin-Broos succinctly outlines why anthropologists have returned their interest
to issues of religion, particularly world religions such as Islam and Christianity. Not only
is religion perhaps more central today to issues of identity than it has ever been, but
people’s own cosmologies and constructions of belief are intimately tied with issues that
are critical in anthropological inquiry: the intersection of religion and the nation-state, the
interplay of global influences with local milieus, and questions of authority and power
(2003:1). Although a number of perspectives have emerged that provide new ways to
theorize religion, and especially Christianity, that move beyond the essentialization of
indigenous adoption of world religions as “artifacts of colonization” (Hefner 1993) or the
outcome of institutional power (Asad 1993), it is still difficult to define people’s beliefs
both as products of particular histories and power relations and yet not frame their
Christianity as less meaningful or authentic than the “real” Christianity we imagine in the
West. As Fanella Cannel points out, this is doubly difficult for anthropologists, because
anthropology has failed to notice how its own history of Christian influenced Western
thought has limited the models anthropologists employ to describe Christianity and Christian believers (2005:341).

The perspectives of Minahasan Christians can be useful in challenging some of the tropes that characterize dominant models of Christianity in anthropology, and in challenging common assumptions uncovers theoretical approaches to Christianity that neither ignore issues of historical specificity nor characterize religious practices as derivative or inauthentic. By exploring the way that Minahasans have come to view Christianity as central to their identity and history, this analysis respects that practicing Christians all over the world “aspire to systematicity” (Scott 2005:102) even as they make sense of Christian doctrine through the filters of their own cultural logic. In other words, Minahasan Christians make sense of their past in conversation with Christian theology, and do not adopt one way of seeing the world over another uncritically. Concomitantly, this analysis also tries to move beyond notions that the adoption of Christianity must entail the erasure or diminishment of “authentic” culture, because not only is tradition never static, but many contemporary Minahasans consider Christianity to be an essential part of “traditional Minahan” life. In many ways, these perspectives are not contrary to the historical record, which recognizes that Minahasa, both as a region and an ethnic identity, was realized in tandem with the introduction of Christianity to the region. What this perspective does run contrary to is historical and anthropological texts that cast the adoption of Christianity by people in North Sulawesi in the terms of an

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37 Here I would agree with Sahlin’s characterization of tradition as a flexible system, one in no way opposed to modernity. In his words, traditional refers to “a mode of cultural change characteristic of the expanding periphery of the capitalist global order” and “precisely the way people always cope with circumstances not of their doing and beyond their control, whether acts of nature or of other peoples” (1992:34-35). However, the binary of traditional/modern has widely been accepted in Indonesia and is often used to describe practices that occurred before conversion to a world religion, even as it simultaneously used to describe contemporary practices, such as adat systems, that adhere more closely to Sahlin’s definition.
irreplaceable loss of traditional cosmologies. Finally, what I hope this case points out is that the model of a "radical break" from the past that is thought to characterize all Christian converts and therefore leads to a focus on conversion, does not describe all experiences of indigenous Christianity. Nor does Christianity have to be experienced as a humiliation (Robbins 2005) or denigration of previous moral orders. For most Minahasans, Christianity is a unifying and positive force, one that organizes and perpetuates their ethnic identity, and is not destructive or discontinous. This is particularly evident in transnational Indonesian churches, where it is possible to portray Christianity as the core of Minahasan ethnicity and culture to a degree impossible in the context of Indonesian politics. Traditional practices are portrayed as regional expressions of a shared Christian culture, allowing Indonesian Christians to operate within the same economy of meaning as their American counterparts and yet maintain the symbols of ethnic, and national, identity. In that sense we can also see the way that Minahasans use Christian texts and institutional practices to their own ends and to support their own political and social desires (Rutherford 2005:221).

**Missing Conversions**

As Fenella Cannel explains in her introduction to the recent anthology on the new Anthropology of Christianity, convert populations have long been a special, and especially problematic domain of the anthropological study of Christianity (Cannel 2006:25). If we adhere to dominant models of Christianity as a religion that posits a

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38 It is important to recognize that the effort to investigate or reclaim aspects of pre-colonial heritage was encouraged by the Indonesian state apparatus, through which the national ideology of "unity in diversity" was realized by the essentialization of ethnic characteristics for each group, which could then be presented and performed at the national level. Practices that had been "lost" through the pressures of colonial influence became important aspects of participation in national culture.
"radical discontinuity" (Cannel 2005:8) then we should expect to find evidence of where

“Christianity fosters a break in a person’s life” (Robbins 2006:214). As I have tried to understand how Minahansans inhabit their Christianity, other anthropologists familiar with the current literature on indigenous Christian perspectives have often asked me how Minahansans frame their conversion, assuming that their narratives will parallel other conversion experiences in which the adoption of Christianity signals a break – a break from the past, a break from old traditions or belief systems, a break from what Minahasans “used to be” that ushers them into the logic and life of the present. For the Minahasans I spoke with, however, conversion was neither salient as a marker in people’s personal histories (since most people were born into Christian families) nor was it characterized by any particular attention in descriptions of the past, other than to note with what “ease” the Minahasans adopted Christianity. Stories of pre-colonial activities and landmarks were often explained through a framework that minimized the idea of a break between the pre and post Christian eras.

Attempts at continuity are central to Minahan disinterest in the drama of conversion, and for many people continuity of Christian traditions are a social reality, as it is experienced as part of their family and social history. The inhabitants of North Sulawesi converted to Christianity early in the colonial period – by 1880 roughly 80,000 Minahasans, or three quarters of the population, were baptized (Graafland 1880 cf Henley 1996: 53) - and so people view their own Christianity as a tradition passed down from their ancestors, instilling some of the same timelessness that characterizes other ethnic attributes. This is not to imply that the transition to Christianity was entirely unproblematic, and some Minahan scholars, encouraged by historical monographs on
the early history of the region, and influenced by recent changes in Indonesian politics,39 have labored to reinstruct the public in the forms of resistance to Christianity at the dawn of the colonial period (Supit 1986, Mamengko 2002). However, these stories are of little interest to people outside of certain scholarly circles, and within the churches I worked within no one ever mentioned stories of resistance, and people often portray the conversion to Christianity in the colonial period as a positive aspect of their ethnic identity. More specific instances of conversion did not stand out in either personal or historical memory in Minahasa, and neither was it central in transnational churches in New Hampshire, as the only conversion I was ever informed of during my fieldwork there was the conversion of a visiting congregation member from Islam to Christianity years earlier in Indonesia.

However, Minahasans do not form their understanding of their religious history in the simplistic terms of a pre-colonial belief system that was given over wholesale with the adoption of Western-imported Christianity. Theological and philosophical debates employ historical evidence — often taken from the scholarly pieces on pre-Minahasan culture recorded by Graafland and other missionaries in the area — to elucidate the ways in which beliefs, practices and religious terms recorded as attributes of animistic or polytheistic systems were misinterpreted by missionary scholars. These histories explicitly draw early traditions into a Christian framework, not only to posit a radical continuity between contemporary Christian practice and the pre-colonial cosmological systems, but also to assert the priority of indigenous interpretations.

One example of the efforts to posit continuity is found in the debate regarding the pre-colonial term Which, according the kinship terminology studies of Wil-Lundstrom

39 I am referring here specifically to the move towards decentralization that began in 2000.
Burghorn, could be understood as referencing a pinnacle ancestor.⁴⁰ *Opo’ Wanatas* (Bahasa Tonsea) is often cited by Minahasans as evidence of the monotheistic qualities of the belief system in existence before Christian influence in North Sulawesi, and is a term that Minahasans now use interchangeably to describe the God of Christianity.⁴¹ In Minahasan theories of local history this explains why people were open to adopting Christianity in North Sulawesi; they were already worshipping one God long before the first missionaries arrived. Yet the recognition that the term *Opo’-opo’* can also indicate ancestors, and remaining traditions, stories and landmarks that reference cosmologies, including forms of ancestor worship, have complicated this assertion by contemporary Minahasans. As the interest of foreign scholars in documenting the changes wrought on “authentic” pre-colonial cultures in North Sulawesi by the politico-economic shifts into and during the colonial period has unearthed evidence of a tribal cosmologies that contradict the assertion of monotheism, how to interpret the meaning of these practices and terms have become an explicit debate for many Minahasan scholars. Mainly this struggle focuses on how place terms that refer to a framework of descent, still an important indicator of inclusion and status in Minahasan society, within religious narratives so that they do not invalidate a connection to Christianity, and yet still maintain some essence of the original meaning.

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⁴⁰ According to Burghorn-Lundstrom’s analysis, the term *opo* describes any ancestor (of either gender) three generations or more above ego (1981:158). MJC Schouten records the meaning of the term *opo* to be “an ancestor with supernatural powers.” (1998:xiii). Neither researcher refers to the term *Opo’ Wanatas* in any form. Schouten does include a story in her appendix recorded in 1981 in which her informant refers to Tuan Wangko (Tuan the Malay term for ‘Lord’ or ‘God’ and Wangko which is the Tontomboan word for ‘great’) Schouten 1998:279.

⁴¹ An example of this usage can be found in Prof. Pastor W.A. Roeroe’s history of culture and gospel in Minahasa: “Konon peristiwa yang terjadi di sekitar sini, ialah pertama-pertama kemakmuran dan kekayaan pemahaman dari para datu kita, nenek-moyang kita, bahwa seluruh bidang kehidupan mereka itu adalah kehidupan yang berpempengapun dengan Dia Di Tinggi (Opo’ wana’ an atas) yang sekarang kita gelar Tuhan Allah (2003:31).”

It is said the event that happened around here, is firstly the affluence and richness of understanding from our ancestors, that throughout all domains their lives were filled with He/She On High (Opo’ wana’ an atas) who now we give the title Tuhan Allah.
One Minahasan scholar and theologian who has written considerably on this topic, Dr. Joseph Saruan, argues that references to ancestral spirits have always been incorporated in a monotheistic belief system, drawing a distinction between *Opo’logi* (Opo-ology) as a “theoretical construction of the West regarding the traditional or conventional religious systems of the Minahasan people” and *Opo’isme* (Opo-ism), the study of phenomena arising in “culture already long-rooted in the life and society of Minahasa long before the Christian faith entered the area (2002: 388).” By applying the methodology of *Opo’isme*, Saruan claims to assess the symbolic, metaphoric and intuitive aspects of the pre-colonial religious systems that are ignored by Western scholars. His assessment of terms commonly ascribed to patterns of ancestral worship by Western scholars and especially in colonial period observations by missionaries references not only a sophisticated knowledge of Western social theory, but is constructed within a with theological theoretical framework. The functional aspect of kinship ties as a continuum where living elders become ancestors who have passed on to another form is to express the reality and presence of God:

Respect, value, and acknowledgement towards the opo-opo as guardians, caretakers, and protectors while they live and function is also recognized as operating even if they have already died, and this function is understood, from one side, as a function of the Highest Power (*Opo’Wana Natas = Allah yang Maha Tinggi/Opo Wailan = Allah yang Kayat*) and from another perspective functions also as the manifestation of ancestors as declaration of their active attendance, (= a vision and expression of power) or “hieropani and kratopani” from the Highest Power (390)

According to Saruan’s analysis, Christianity was not an evolutionary process from polytheism to monotheism, nor was it primarily an adaptation to Christian influences during the colonial period. Instead he emphasizes what he sees as the dialectical nature

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43 Here Saruan equates Indonesian monikers for God with other local expressions now used to reference God in Christian worship. *Opo Wana Natas* “The Opo’/God on High,” *Allah yang Maha Tinggi/ Opo’ Wailan* “God the Highest” *Opo’ Wailan* “Greatest Opo/God” *Allah yang Kayat* “God the merciful.”
of the relationship between the pre-colonial beliefs and advent of organized Christianity in the region, as the "idea and essence of Opo' and Minahasan opo/ancestors" and allowed a smooth acculturation to Christianity and the enrichment of the Western religious system by the spirituality of Minahasa's older belief system (391).

It is narratives of continuity, not stories of conversion, that best describe the way that Minahasans desire to understand their history. This is facilitated not only by the strength of Christianity as both a social and institutional reality in Minahasa, but also in the ways in which Christianity is connected to contemporary permutations of Minahasan ethnic identity. The idea of Minahasa as a boundary containing a unitary ethnic group that supercedes the identities of the various tribal groups that originally inhabited the region was reliant on the incorporation of Christianity as one of the unifying factors, and missionaries explicitly selected portions of tribal cosmologies and traditions into their proselytizing efforts. Christianity, therefore, is in some ways central to the maintenance of a Minahan identity, whether it is unambiguously expressed as the religious tradition that unites all Minahasans, or more subtly referenced through local ideologies of brotherhood that unite all Minahasans regardless of religious orientation.

At the institutional level in Minahasa, the challenge of maintaining or "re-discovering" pre-colonial traditions illustrates the importance of not disturbing the unifying elements of Minahan identity that are entwined with Christianity. Michael Jacobsen, in his attempt encapsulate contemporary Minahan identity, describes the proliferation of new NGOs in the region that aim to investigate or revive cultural aspects

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43 Missionary Nicolaas Graafland, who lived in Minahasa from 1850 until his death in 1898, wrote of his goal to "dissolve all divisions and feuds into one brotherhood" and used the biblical injunction of "love thy neighbor" to promote unity among warring tribal factions in the region (Henley 1996:54). Other techniques used to create a sense of regional unity was the exclusive use of Malay as the language of church and missionary schools; overcoming the reticence that members of tribal factions felt in speaking languages other than their mother tongue (Ibid 55).
from the eight tribal groups inhabiting North Sulawesi before the emergence of the Minahasan identity. He identifies two lines of interpretation that are used by institutional representatives, both in churches and in NGOs, to incorporate traditions within the contemporary Minahasan framework. One, which is representative of scholars such as Sauran, is to use elements from pre-colonial traditions in sermons, and incorporate dances and shamanistic rituals into church activities to exhibit continuity of regional traditions within frameworks of Christian belief and worship (49). These incorporations of "traditional" ritual aspects into the rituals of the contemporary church often occur in GMIM (Minahasan Protestant Church) congregations. However, other Christian institutions see these activities as an unacceptable manipulation of cultural symbols, leading to further obfuscation of two distinct systems that should remain separate and yet harmonious, "inspiring each other" (Jacobsen 50). It is this approach that NGOs such as Minahasa Wangko (Minahasa the Great), and the Christian University in Tomohon ascribe to, although it is difficult to find experts well versed in pre-colonial traditions or languages. Furthermore, some church organizations are against the idea of teaching local languages in schools as the second view on cultural revitalization suggests, likely due to the anxiety of bypassing important markers of Indonesian citizenship such as the national language at a time when Christian organizations are central to political incorporation in local, and national, government.

What is important to recognize in these debates is the desire Minahasans have to reconcile Christianity with pre-colonial traditions, whether as equal systems that are mutually inspiring (and it is assumed mutually acceptable as forms of worship) or as an integrated aspect of Christian belief and ritual practice. Christianity in fact helps to
facilitate the ideologies of community and continuity that maintain Minahasan identity, and as many in the region have discovered, it is difficult if not impossible to reify any sort of pre-colonial traditions without the unifying power of Christianity through which various practices are elevated to the regional level. Despite the emergence of evidence that highlights the pre-colonial disunity of the region, people’s concern lies with orienting themselves towards the past in a way that doesn’t disturb the construction of Minahasan unity or the development of local logics that have evolved in conversation with theological concerns. The institution of the church, and Christianity, serve a number of purposes in local efforts to reclaim various practices as part of the ethnic construction of “Minahasa,” a concept that has long depended on the imagination and dedication of people in the region to remain cohesive. For one, linking legends, practices and landmarks that no longer exist within functioning cosmologies into a story of Christianity establishes a timeless aspect to Minahasan identity and reiterates the unity of people in the region. Christianity also serves to provide a space in which certain practices and stories can be incorporated into a framework that people across Minahasa can understand, as these aspects are reinterpreted through Christian symbols that are recognized across the region. The church itself is also a social site and quasi-political institution where aspects of pre-colonial practice can be performed, discussed, debated and imbued with new meaning as it is transmitted under the auspice of Christian practice. Finally, Christianity itself has become an aspect of ethnic identity through which Minahasans define themselves in their relationship to other ethnic groups in Indonesia, to the central government, and in transnational relationships to other Christians around the globe. All of these factors influence the sincerity in which Minahasans undertake not to examine
their conversion to a new religion but to outline a continuity that validates Minahasan identity.

**Narratives of Continuity in the Transnational Church: The Lumimu'ut Legend**

Indonesian churches in New Hampshire are notably rich in references to ethnicity, expressed in Christian worship practices and through the institutional functions of the church. Since all of these churches, including the three on which I specifically focus, have congregations composed of members from a number of ethnic backgrounds in Indonesia, they are considered "multi-ethnic" from an Indonesian perspective. Much as the Indonesian national ideology *Pancasila* promotes certain codified expressions of ethnicity under the banner of national diversity, the reification of ethnic boundaries through certain performative practices are acceptable and encouraged as long as they are framed within the equalizing terms of supporting the greater Christian community. Sermons, musical performances, prayers, bible studies and lectures can all serve as a platform for expressions of ethnic identity, whether it be the incorporation of music specific to a particular region, the use of linguistic terms from the native language of a group of church members interspersed in an Indonesian sermon, or the inclusion of regional dance/dress in special ceremonies.

The heteroglossic nature (Bakhtin 1982) of these of churches is not confined only as a phenomena of cross-ethnic relationships, but can also be found within the various ethnic groups as members with different class or sub-regional backgrounds find themselves in the position of both defining and presenting their ethnic selves to other Indonesians, and Americans with whom they interact in the church environment. For
Minahasans, who represent the numerically dominant ethnic group in the seacoast New Hampshire community, this means that the question of distilling and displaying “traditional” culture becomes more acute. It also implies, as will be evident in the ethnographic excerpt provided, that Christianity is central in organizing various theories of meaning that are given to pre-colonial terms, legends and performances both to create a unity from the heteroglossic voices describing the past and to reassert the special relationship Minahasans have with Christianity. We can consider the use of certain narratives, practices and performances in the way that they function simultaneously as markers of ethnicity recognizable in an Indonesian context, as an effort to distill heteroglossic constructions of identity into recognizable “texts”, and how these efforts reference Christian practices and relate to theological concerns shared by all Christians, everywhere.

During the period of my fieldwork in New Hampshire in 2007, I was asked to prepare a short lecture on the region of Minahasa and its historical connection with Christianity for the members of the Holy Trinity Lutheran Church of Newington, New Hampshire. Although aimed at introducing these American church members to the sights and sounds of a homeland claimed by many of the members from their sister congregation, Imanuel Indonesian Lutheran Church, it was also attended by Indonesians from Imanuel and other Indonesian churches in the area. This resulted in an invitation to make a similar presentation to the members of Madbury (NH) Maranatha Indonesian Fellowship at their summer retreat program over a weekend in July. Although the Maranatha Fellowship church is also a sister congregation to another local New Hampshire church under the branch of the United Church of Christ (UCC), this retreat
was attended mainly by Indonesian church members, and the activities surrounding the retreat were conducted primarily in Bahasa Indonesia. Julia, pastor of Maranatha church and in charge of organizing the activities, met my surprise at being asked to lecture to people about their own history with the observation that some of the congregation members were not from Minahasa and were interested in learning about the region, and the intriguing statement that many Minahasans do not really know their own history.

In an effort to ameliorate my own unease about the lecture in this context, I brought along digital recorder in the hopes that this lecture could be guided towards an open discussion of the history of Minahasa and of the landmarks included in my slideshow that referenced both pre-colonial history and the advent of Christianity. The lecture, given in Bahasa Indonesia, also referenced many of the ways that Minahasans had described themselves to me over the course of my research, and I was curious to see if these categories of ethnic identification would be resonant in an audience composed of a majority people from, or claiming ancestry in, Minahasa. The lecture was organized temporally, discussing some ideas of cosmological systems of the pre-colonial period, and the arrival of Dutch forces as well as the work of the NZG (Dutch Reform Church) to help create a sense of unity among the various peoples of the area of North Sulawesi, cordoned off by the Dutch as an provisional economic zone, which later became known as Minahasa. I also outlined the timeline by which people in the region converted to Christianity under the tutelage of NZG missionaries. Throughout the lecture, I would stop and ask the audience to comment on photos or historical anecdotes, which led to discussion and debate among audience members. These examples will illustrate how
varying interpretations of the meaning of terms from the pre-colonial period emerge and negotiated within an overtly “Christian” setting.

Due to the historically recent and well-documented emergence of the Minahasan identity as an aspect of the colonial restructuring of Northern Sulawesi, perspectives on the nature of Minahasan identity tend to focus on the flexible and contingent nature of the ethnic category, one that serves as an “umbrella concept” that encompasses various identity markers from the region in one overarching category (Jacobsen 2002:41, Henley 1996). Instead of references to language or specific traditions, people in Minahasa will often list a number of characteristics thought to encapsulate the Minahasan personality, as well as attributes that highlight their unique trajectory within the history of Indonesia, like their high levels of education, their openness to foreign influence and, of course, Christianity. In this view, Minahasan identity is focused on contextual and flexible attributes that are used to establish regional difference contra other ethnic groups in the Indonesian archipelago, but not overly invested in symbols and traditions of the past that could problematize the construction of a regional ethnic unity. Even Minahasan food practices adhere to this pattern, because, according to a recent article, those foods that are considered to be ethnically representative are not necessarily unique to the region, but instead highlight the boundaries of difference between Minahasans vis-à-vis other Indonesians, such as the use of large quantities of chili (a rather ubiquitous ingredient in foods across Indonesia), the use of dog or game meat (dogs considered unclean and/or unappetizing to Muslims) or the predilection for pork that clearly identifies Minahasans as non-Muslim (Wiechart 2004:67). Jacobsen notes that one never sees statues of the Waruga (stone mortuary cases) or of Toar and Lumimu’ut at the local tourist shops in
Minahasa, because their "invented" nature makes them problematic or simply not salient as representations of Minahasan culture (2002:44).

However, I would argue that symbols of the pre-colonial past are still relevant, because they serve as a narrative frame in which these "flexible" traits that aren’t overt ethnic markers or recognizable as being endemic to the North Sulawesi region can be organized and marked as ethnic characteristics. Despite the fact that a number of the "traditional" aspects of Minahasan culture are problematic because of their incorporation in missionary efforts to create a unified, Christian culture that overcame the enmity and violence between tribal factions North Sulawesi, they are still cited by people when they want a way to frame the heterogeneous interpretations of what makes people Minahasan, and still function as a symbol of ethnic identity recognizable to Minahasans of different language group and regional affiliations. In fact, the ambiguity of how these aspects of pre-colonial culture are tied to specific cosmologies or language groups facilitates the use of certain legends, landmarks and dances to symbolize Minahasa as a unified cultural category.

Uses of the story of Toar and Lumimu’ut is an example of the way that general characteristics - Christianity, educational level, openness - can be specified as ethnic ones. The legend, widely recognized in Minahasa although in various incarnations, describes Lumimu’ut as the first human woman to appear in the North Sulawesi region by either emerging from the ocean, from a rock, or arriving by boat. With the help of Karema, who is described as a spirit, a Walian, Imam, or as Opo’Wa’natas in the flesh,

44 See Appendix One for three versions of this story: two from contemporary Minahasan scholars and one as recorded by anthropologist Wil Lundsrom-Burghoorn in 1980. Various interpretations of how Lumimu’ut arrived in Minahasa can be linked to some racial theories that imply Minahasans, with their light skin, have the influence of Chinese ancestry. See Chapter Four for a closer examination of these beliefs in the context of contemporary Minahasa.
Lumimu'ut is able to fulfill her desire to produce descendents. Karema calls the winds from the cardinal directions, and through the West Wind Lumimuut is impregnated and produces an heir, her son Toar. In the last verse of the legend, Toar is given a staff called a *tu'is* by Lumimu'ut on the eve of his departure to travel the world, one that matches hers. She instructs him that should he ever meet a woman on his travels who he wishes to marry, he should compare the length of their *tu'is* to ensure it is not his mother Lumimu'ut, who doesn't age as normal humans. In the course of his travels, Toar wears down his stick, and upon returning to Minahasa discovers the beautiful and ageless Lumimu'ut. Wishing to marry her, he remembers his mother's instructions, compares his worn *tu'is* to hers and finds it shorter, proving, erroneously, that they are not relations. It is from their union that the Minahasan people are produced.

Although most contemporary versions of this story indicate Lumimu'ut and Toar as the originators of the Minhasan people, historian David Henley uses missionary Nicholas Graafland's own documentation of his work in North Sulawesi to underscore that the story was intentionally crafted to incorporate ideals of Christian brotherhood in the region, and furthermore to elevate the status of one of the largest regional subgroups, those settled around Tondano Lake. The Tondano group, as Henley demonstrates through archival research and missionary ethnography, fell outside of a pre-colonial tripartite ethnic core of the Tontemboan, Tonsea and Tombulu subgroups, which shared inter-related cosmologies (Henley 1996:55). Graafland, writing in a book intended for a Dutch audience, explained that the original story of Lumimu'ut and Toar included the division of the land of Minahasa into four quadrants, where the Tontemboan, Tonsea and Tombulu groups were given their own territory and language. The fourth quadrant was
inhabited by a group unidentifiable in any of the tribal divisions at the time of Graafland’s arrival. Graafland used this empty space to include the Tondano population within the parameters of the Lumimu’ut mythos (Henley 1996:56). This reconfigured story was taught in missionary schools through and beyond the colonial period (Supit 1986:19), and today the story serves as a recognizable symbol of Minahasan unity, as is evident at the newly remodeled “Hill of Love” (Bukit Kasih), where several statues of Toar and Lumimu’ut tower over replicas of the five state religions in the village of Kanonang. Their visage decorates tourist maps and dictionaries that translate the local languages into the national language, a symbol that has evolved to index not only the various the traditions included under the term Minahasa, but also as an assertion of unity that establishes a timelessness against the historical parameters through which it developed.
At the Maranatha retreat, the Toar and Lumimu'ut narrative was introduced by Pastor Julia at the close of my lecture. Led by a church member in his fifties who is considered to be especially knowledgeable of Minahasan tradition, three women in kebaya, a costume worn to any official event in Minahasa, came to the center of the room. The women sang in Bahasa Tonsea as he led their dance with a rhythm tapped on a small hand-held drum. At the close of the dance, I was presented with a small stick to which an embroidered handkerchief was attached, a symbol of the tu'is that is centrally featured in the Toar and Lumimu'ut story. Julia then asked me to recount the Lumimu'ut narrative. In brief fashion I described the incestuous union between the mother and son.
pair that resulted in the peopling of Minahasa. However, although agreeing with my version, Julia was much more interested in the first, and according to her more well-known, verse of the story, in which Karema assists Lumimuut in conceiving a child. Since I was unfamiliar with that verse, I asked her to tell the story. She begins by describing Karema:

versi yang paling banyak paling digemari itu bahwa ada orang pertama namanya Karema (.2) <Karema itu orang imam>. Imam Minahasa imam perempuan ituiah sebabnya perempuan di sana biasa (.3) berbeda dengan kelompok...suku bangsa lain...perempuan jadi pemimpin itu ok. Karena tradisi ini. Karema seorang imam tua wakil itu ((speech continues))

The verse which is most popular is the one where the first person is named Karema (.2) <Karema is an imam, an Minahasan imam, a female imam this is because females there can> (.3) differing from groups (.3) from other ethnic group (.3) a woman becoming a leader is ok. Because of this tradition (.3) Karema was an old imam at that time ((speech continues))

Lumimuut appears, although Julia’s version doesn’t specify her origins. But she desires Karema’s help in finding a pasangan, a partner or a mate:

So Karema prays, Karema prays to have descendents first. To have descendents she prays and in the end, through her prayer to Opo Wa’na’tas maybe, so she prays and then, the wind, that wind (.2) we can already see a similarity with the story of Maria. That wind which makes (.3) she invokes the wind from four corners and the wind impregnates her (.5) Lumimuut then called him her child.

Continuing on to discuss my earlier version of the story, she confirms that the child of this “immaculate conception” grows to become Toar, the same Toar that later marries his own mother on his return from traveling the earth. Julia, however, goes on to distinguish a key difference she sees in the symbolic meaning of the two verses:

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45 Here Julia uses the term for religious leader imported from Arabic, imam, instead of the indigenous term for a religious leader, waliun. She may be trying here to focus on the aspects of the story that reflect themes from world religions and therefore chooses not to use the term waliun. However, due to the influence of Malay, many of the Indonesian terms that are used in Christian worship come directly from Arabic, such as berkhotbah (to preach), Al-Kitab (the Bible), and cross (sabli).
J: Dan akhirnya mereka kawin jadi sama ceritanya. Tapi beda dari yang pertama adalah versi kehamilan itu dari spirit yang ada.

K: Dari spirit yang sama dengan cerita gereja?

J: itu (2) itu legenda itu bukan sekedar kawin antara mama dan anak (2) tapi suatu ritual, jadi suatu hal dianggap resmi, karena pertama anak ini lahir dari spirit (.) dan dua mau perkawanin itu karena bedasarkan bis yang (1.) And juga sasadarayang ikuti itu bahwa u::m (2) jadi ada soal teologi perempuan di di Minahasa itu, dari perempuan sama berharganya dengan laki-laki atau perempuan bisa memiliki tempat dalam soal kepemimpinan. Sementara sekali lagi tidak asing bagi orang Minahasa untuk memelihara ada perempuan yang memimpin. Bahkan yang paling dilihat kalo dipendenta enam lima percent perempuan. Jadi itu tradisinya bukan nanti sekarang tapi tahu dari tradisi Toar Lumimu’ut.

K: From the same spirit in the church story?

J: That (.) that legend isn’t only about a marriage between a mother and a child (2) but a ritual, so a thing considered official, because first this child is born from a spirit (.) and the two of them married based on the it’s that (1.) And also for you brothers and sisters in attendance u::m (2) so there is a theological matter of women in Minahasa, women have the same value as men or women can have a place in matters of leadership. So once again, it’s not foreign for Minahasan people to see a woman as leader. Even it is most often seen as pastors are 65 percent female. So the tradition (of Toar and Lumimu’ut) isn’t around anymore, but we know this is in the tradition of Toar and Lumimuut.

In engaging with this text, I take narrative, especially “historical” narrative, to be a generative practice, not just the transmission of information or but the re-framing and creation of connections, and assertions about where one (or one’s group) stands not only in relation to past but also in position to the relationships of the present. Narratives and stories can make connections between existing cultural schemata (White 2000:498) and “transform, amplify, disrupt or erase” the contents of other narratives, as they exist in dialectal relationship to a number of other voices, texts and schemas (White 2000:499). These other voices may be related to large scale institutions, to other individuals, or to the systems of knowledge explicited in canonical texts, but narrativizing practices in social situations are always a site of interaction between “imprecise private understandings and the public objects which and events which are both their source and product” (Strauss and
Quinn 1997:45-46). What kind of connections does this narrative generate, and what sort of other narratives does it align or transform? What does this narrative tell us about the dynamic relationship between Minahasan identity and Christianity?

References to the story of Lumimu’ut and Toar can be identified as a narrative trope across Minahasa, one that may not be salient as part of a schema that describes ethnic traits, but as a metaphoric process that validates those various and contingent traits or experiences as part of the ideological concept of Minahasa. This story is often invoked to indicate a metadiscursive framework in which the heterogenous, competing or general variables can be ascribed a degree of “Minahasanness.” In Julia’s narrative, the high status of women and their ability to ascend to leadership, something relatively common across Indonesia, becomes explicitly Minahasan through its expression in the Lumimu’ut and Toar narrative. Highlighting the leadership abilities of women through this particular trope establishes the authority and validity of women’s contemporary leadership in the terms of a timeless ethnic category, and in religious terms through the story’s reference to canonical themes. Here, two culturally valued and recognizable modes of discourse – canonical language and the trope of the Lumimu’ut narrative – combine to create a powerful assertion and to further reiterate the interdependence of the two forms of identity.

Although a discourse oriented towards the past, this narrative clearly engages in exploring contemporary ethnotheologies, the evaluation of indigenous practices in relation to those of Christianity and the attempt to situate ancestral histories within biblical history (Scott 2005:102). However, as a public speech event, this evaluation of indigenous practices and terms is drawn into a public negotiation of theories surrounding
how indigenous practices should be interpreted in relation to Christianity. As in Minahasa, there is an uncertainty regarding the way to negotiate the influence various pre-colonial cosmologies into a unified ethnic narrative, and although Christianity serves as an organizing principle, there is no one coherent tradition through which these debates can be reconciled. In the course of the lecture given before Julia’s narrative, a debate had erupted about how to correctly characterize the term *opo’opo*. I had asked the audience to explain the meaning of a sign painted on a rock near the *Watu Pinabetengan*, a stone monument associated with traditional culture in the outskirts of Minahasa. The sign bore the image of a skull with the phrase *jangan ganggu opo’opo* or “don’t bother the *opo’opo*” beneath. I asked people to explain what the sign meant, and what the difference was between opo’opo and opa-opa, a Dutch kin term for grandparents that often is used interchangeably with Indonesian terms for ancestors. A few audience members outlined their view:

*Audience member 1:* yang saya tahu betul, kalo saya belum terlalu tua, tapi kalo sungguh itu istilah opo’opo dan opa-opa (.) ini yang baru dijelaskan ya. Istilah opa-opa itu berarti orang tua kami dan cucu kami itu keturunan

Kelli: *opa-opa dan oma-oma?*

*Audience member 1:* Toar dan Lumi mu’ut ini adalah opa-opa dan oma-oma kami. Walaupun sudah raga jauh, [yah?]

*Audience member 2:* [nenek] moyang

*Audience member 1:* ya nenek moyang betul (.) itu lalu kalo sekarang, yang disebut opo’opo jangan kita salah mengerti (.) Banyak yang kira opo’opo itu yang *GR:::RRR* itu salah ya. Kalo opo’opo itu (.) kalo (.) Opo kalo dalam Bahasa daerah itu *Tuhan*

*Audience member 3:* Ya, Wa’na'atas

*Audience member 1:* Opo Wa’na’atas yang berarti Tuhan yang di atas. Itu opo’opo. Kalo opa-opa, opa-opa kita, grandparent.

*Audience member 4:* itu yang di masuk opo that means single, itu opo Tuhan. Kalo Opo’opo that means our forefathers. Tapi kalo opa’opa, torang pi*66* opa that means still *alive* (2) *Masih*

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*66* Here the audience member uses Bahasa Manado (also known as Manado Malay) the creole language that originated in Manado and is now the first language of many people who grow up in the Minahasan region.
hidup. Tapi kita bilang opo'opo so, meninggal. Tapi beda itu Opo dan opo'opo. Opo tuhan, Torang bilang Opo Wa'na'atas itu Tuhan. Tapi kalo opo'opo tuhan bisa so meninggal yang menjadi forefather.

Audience member 1: And I know it's true, I'm not already too old, but actually the terminology opo'opo and opa-opa (.) this is what I'll explain now. The terminology opa-opa means our parents and our grandchildren the descendants.

Kelli: opa-opa dan oma-oma?

Audience member 1: Tear and Lumu mu'ut are our opa-opa and oma-oma. Although already far in the past, [yah?]

Audience member 2: [Ancestors] (Indonesian term).

Audience member 1: Ya ancestors that's right (.3) although now, that which is called opo'opo (.) we can't misunderstand. Many think that opo'opo are like GOD but that's wrong. So the opo'opo (2) if (.) Opo in the local language is God.

Audience member 3: Ya, Wa'na'tas (Tumbulu word for God)

Audience member 1: Opo Wa'na'tas means God above. That's opo'opo. If it's opa-opa, our opa-opa, that's grandparent.

Audience member 4: If you use opo that means singular, that opo is God. If it's opo'opo that means our forefathers. But if its opa'opo, our opa, that means still alive (.) They are still alive if we say opo'opo, that means they've already died. But there is a difference between Opo and opo'opo. Opo is God, when we say Opo Wa'na'atas that's God. But if it's opo'opo we usually mean someone who has already died and become a forefather.

However, the ambiguity of these terms, was apparent as other voices expressed a slightly different take on the matter, one that shows an awareness of pre-Christian interpretations of opo'opo as malevolent spirits:

Audience member 5: Itu kepercayaan dulu menerut saya, itu dulu dulu our grand (.) grandfathers, they believed in magic. That is what the term opo means, the spirit. This spirit can also give you something bad. Mungkin jadi yang maksud jangan ganggu opo'opo di sana.

Audience member 5: According to me, the old belief, long ago our grand (.) grandfathers, they believed in magic. That is what the term opo means, the spirit. This spirit can also give you something bad. Maybe that is the meaning of don't bother the opo'opo there.

Pastor Julia re-orient these narratives in a more religious direction, outlining the “spiritual” qualities indicated by the term opo'opo, forshadowing her Lumimu'ut
narrative which is focused not on issues or questions of descent, but on the spiritual
goodness of the origin story.

J: Saya pikir yang diucapkan oleh Pak B opo'opo jadi orang-orang yang dituhankan, Opo satu itu
benar, itu Tuhan, kan? Opo Wa'na'tas. Tapi opo'opo orang yang (.3) sepertinya punya power,
spirit. Orang orang yang dituhankan orang orang yang diambuk besar, yang diantar punya
kekuatan punya kekuatan magic atau kekuatan spiritual (. ) spirit ya?

J: I think what Mr. B said earlier, that opo'opo is a person that is dituhankan, Opo in the
singular that's true, that's God, right. Opo Wa'na'tas. But opo'opo is a person (.3) like that
has power, spirit. People who have been empowered by God, who have become great, those
who have power or have magic power or spiritual power (. ) spirit ya?

The echoes of these ambiguities are answered in part through Julia's narrative,
one in which the unclear definitions related to descent and to the problematic nature of
relationships with ancestors who have passed is refocused. Here the spiritual
brotherhood of Minahasans is centralized through a story that highlights their unity not
through the details of descent, which focuses on the problematic category of how to
conceptualize the role of ancestors, but through an event that solidifies their tie to
Christianity through the miraculous event of Lumimu'ut's spiritual pregnancy. Further
distancing herself from the literal interpretations of the Lumimu'ut story, she designates
the tale as an "official ritual" but locates its importance in the spiritual and alternative
symbolism, not the official one. She grounds her narrative in the comparisons that are
relative to Christianity and salient in the contemporary community, such as the place of
women. In this way she reconstitutes the Lumimu'ut myth as a symbol that "represents
and constitutes ongoing social life" (Stromberg 1993) in the transnational community
even as it reiterates certain dominant and official forms. By asserting a religious meaning
through this myth that integrates frameworks of descent, ancestry and the ambiguity of
these beliefs across the varied Minahasan community, she transforms heteroglossic
interpretations of the traditions surrounding Opo'isme into a unifying tradition of
Christianity that all Minahasans in the room share. She also aligns heterodox Christian interpretations incorporating the important role played by kin in Minahan society into a more orthodox expression, one that makes a clearer distinction between kinship and spirituality (Cannell 2005:352). Yet the narrative not invalidate attempts to converge relationships with ancestors into a logical Christian system, instead reorients it further into the past, inserting a timeless spiritualism that encompasses variabilities of pre-colonial beliefs in an overarching framework.

Far from being a catalyst of discontinuity, Christianity often becomes the one centrifugal force that smoothes the disjunctions of the past, something that can contain a multiplicity of discourse without obliterating it. And as Christianity becomes a means through which to organize the markers of ethnic identity, the institution of the church itself serves an important role as the center of these processes, a place where cultural negotiation and generation are staged as religious process. As Robert Hefner notes, one of the strengths of world religions over other religions with similar systems of belief is the linkage of specific transcendental imperatives to institutions that propagate both religious knowledge and identity through space and time (1993:19). As Minahasan identity is intertwined with Christian institutions and practices, it too benefits from this institutional power. It is interesting to note that the negotiation in the church is doubly framed; just as the structure of church events is repetitive so is the structure of the Lumimu’ut myth, and yet within those structures that appear to affirm or evoke dominant relations people are able to “shift the way history is told” (Guss 2000:12). As these practices entertain challenges though narrative to stretch dominant forms to address the
needs of the present, they are simultaneously reproducing those same forms and identities ensuring their viability into the future.

Much like a conversion narrative, the moment of meeting Christianity does become a focus in the lives of Minahasans, a precarious instance that dictates not only their present spiritual validity but also the validity of their ethnic identity. The conflicts of a reconfigured identity, whether spiritual or otherwise, don’t disappear in the making, but are formulated in a way that “makes their ongoing resolution possible (Stromberg 1993:31). The Lumimu’ut myth, a symbol whose instability lies in the vagaries of a past that is always present in questions of identity, is strengthened through a connection with Christianity, a codified tradition that exerts its own claim of continuity.47 This reinvigoration of one symbol of Minahasan ethnic history can also be considered a “practical benefit” of the adoption of Christianity, a system that may be perceived as having a “larger and more bountiful political economy” than the sphere of traditional religions (Henley 1993:29). In linking their historical destiny with a biblical one, Minahasans are also able to exploit that more bountiful political economy in issues of identity within the multi-ethnic Indonesian state, where religion becomes both a signal of inclusion and a powerful ideological leverage in claims for resources and political recognition. Returning to Danilyn Rutherford’s (2005) notion of the use of Christian practices to advance political or ideological desires, it is evident that Christianity provides a platform through which disjointed regional affiliations manufactured through the boundary-making process of the colonial period have been solidified into a

47 This is not the only symbol that has been preserved and disseminated through association with the church. The GMIM (Minahasan Evangelical Church) uses the Burung Manguni, an animal thought to be especially connected with Minahasans as its distinctive call warns them of danger, as part of their church logo. Prof. Pendeta RoeRoe explains that the Manguni also takes its place rightfully through theology, in that “even he is considered as the messenger between humans and He on High” (2003:170) and “in the beliefs of Christians, and in issues of theology, we have to say that the Burung Manguni and all of types of creature are the also the creation of God” (2003:172).
particularly strong and dynamic ethnic identity that has so far lent strength to people of North Sulawesi in their attempts to successfully negotiate their claims on the central Indonesian government. Furthermore, the radical continuity Minahasans assert between their identity and Christianity establishes a certain moral authority in relation to other Indonesian ethnic groups, as well as with other actors with whom they inhabit a shared social ecology (White 2000:498) of Christian meaning worldwide. This becomes evident as the link between Christianity and “Minahasanness” extends beyond the Indonesian nation-state and into the transnational environment.

One must be cautious not to neglect the other aspects of meaning that this narrative embodied, because to portray this event as simply a negotiation of identity in relation to an Indonesian macro-political concerns is both incorrect and ignores the way that these church events are by nature polysemous: they reference a number of frameworks of meaning and most importantly are understood as Christian practices by those who participate in them. Although dances from Eastern Indonesia and tales of an incestuous apical ancestral couple will not remind most American Christians of familiar forms of worship, they take place within the normative Christian events such as church services, prayer meetings and religious retreats. Beyond the validation these events receive as being part of Christian worship at the macro-institutional level, the struggle to emplace one’s historical narrative in relation to the Bible — or in other words to undertake “the problem of who one’s people were in relation to God before they became Christians, and where they belong in God’s plan for humanity” (Scott 2005:102) is in itself an indexical reference to struggle many modern Christians face in “incorporating extra-biblical thought, experience, and reality into the one real world detailed and made
accessible by the biblical story” (Frei cf Wolterstorff 2001:203). It is imperative to remember the “transparent political and material” aspirations that in part spur ethno­theologies are not the only dimensions they have; they also are part of concerns of all Christians as they orient their lives towards interpretations of biblical text (Scott 2005:120).

If world religions such as Christianity “have the capacity to remake the world rather than passively accept it” as Weberian influenced theories of anthropology have suggested (Hefner 1993:9) we must see that generative power as something that harnessed by the people whose lives it transforms, not only as a one sided process that must be experienced as a humiliation of the old order in order to facilitate the new, or must obliterate the authority or authenticity of past symbols to create an authentic connection with the cannon of Christianity. Although colonial encounters with Christianity often take place under politically unbalanced circumstances, this should not lead us to automatically assume that the shift to this new way perceiving the world is one sided (Hefner 1993:23), or that aspects of previous cosmologies cannot be included in logical or “authentic” trajectories of Christianity. As anthropological examples have shown, (Rutherford 2003, Keane 2007, Scott 2005, Aragon 2000) this is not only possible, but that it is through the institutional and doctrinal power of Christianity that people are able to maintain and propagate their own unique identities and views in the face of powerful institutions such as the nation-state.

In the case of Minahasa, Christianity has been a generative and positive force, facilitating the renegotiation of identity and meaning through time and becoming a vital aspect of ethnic tradition in its own right, one that is especially powerful for Minahasans
who resettle in the United States, a country where Christian ideology permeates political concerns. Christianity does not always act as a harbinger of the death of "cultural continuity in change" in which people abandon their attempts to align their own cultural categories under the onslaught of new systems of understanding, as Robins has argued (Robbins 2005). The argument that Christianity taps into indigenous forms of humiliation in such a way that people begin to "hold their own existence in contempt" (Sahlins 1992:38) is a characterization that presupposes the way in which indigenous peoples take up the essential questions of Christian belief. This obscures the reality that Christianity is composed of processes in which people continuously select and reinterpret its content, and that there are diverse logical trajectories that constitute the religion today (Scott 2005:118). To assume that all "authentic" encounters with Christianity must unfold in the same manner both exposes certain entrenched tropes in anthropology through which Christianity is understood and defines Christianity so narrowly that as to force questions of whether indigenous religious practices constitute "real" Christianity, and ignores the complexity of the Christian experience that is as apparent in the West as much as anywhere else. As Fenella Cannell succinctly notes, questions of authenticity should not figure into anthropological accounts of Christianity, because a 'real Christian' must mean anyone who seriously describes themselves as so, as operating otherwise assumes the content of a religion based on a specific and historically particular orthodoxy (2004:349). Although Robbins argues coherently for the ability of non-Western peoples to use their encounter with formations of the world capitalist system to develop their culture in its own terms (Robbins 2005:9), he is unable to see the propensity of the encounter with Christianity to function in the same way. It is possible to consider, that
much as in the Minahasan case, Christianity can be experienced in such a way as to become the “tradition” that ensures the continuity of indigenous forms as it simultaneously becomes the platform in which a culture successfully engages, negotiates and maintains itself through the terms of the contemporary world.

Christianity and Christian practices have fused with a contemporary Minahasan identity, becoming both a carrier of culture and a link to the foreign worlds that have informed what it means to be Minahasan through periods of great change. The migration of Minahasans into a transnational, multi-ethnic environment demonstrates how Christian logics and the authority of Christian texts have overcome the ambiguities of history, or of a reconfigured present, which threaten to disturb the variable complex of characteristics, experiences and narratives that are attributed to making one ethnically Minahasan. The resiliency of this ethnic identity under the paradigmatic changes in Indonesian history is also attributable in part to its tie with Christianity; as Minahasans are able to exist within the terms of the national hierarchy of religion, ethnicity and nationalism through their religious affiliation, but can also utilize alternative constructions that ally them with powerful forces outside that system. Especially useful when the promise of equality for all religions is not honored politically or practically in Indonesia, the idea that Christianity underlies both ethnic and national identity is fully realized, and implemented as the organizational and political logic of Minahasans in the transnational environment.
CHAPTER 6
CONCLUSION: CHRISTIANITY, ETHNIC CULTURES AND MINAHASAN LONG-DISTANCE NATIONALISM

This thesis has explored various aspects of what it means to be Minahasan, portraying the centrality of the indigenous engagement with Christianity in maintaining Minahasan identity through history. Christianity is central to contemporary processes of identity for Minahasans, as they locate themselves in the world through Christian frameworks. This analysis and conclusion demonstrates how the relationship between Minahasan identity and Christianity is used to transform the transnational environment in New Hampshire to align with Minahasan desires. Minhasans use a Christian ideology to overcome the compartmentalization of national, ethnic and religious identities used in Indonesia to manage diversity, making religious identity the transcendent principle of national and ethnic identification in transnational churches. In doing this, Minahasans in the transnational environment have interpreted certain Christian theories of meaning in ways that reconnect their ethnic identity with the project of Indonesian nationalism, enabling the continuance of cultural forms and the maintenance of ethnic and national identity within and in fact through Christianity. Cultural forms and expressions present in the pre-colonial period are maintained as references to older forms of authority that are reinterpreted and validated through expressions of religious nationalism.

In transnational church institutions where a number of ethnic Christian constellations are gathered under the principle of one “moral community” (Werbner 2002:129) Minahasan Christian beliefs about the meaning behind rituals and practices are
aligned with the ideological basis of the Indonesian nation-state, where ethnic diversity is subordinate to "a modern and transcendent nationalism" (Kipp 1993:114) and traditional practices are acceptable when viewed as a vehicle for national identity. The way that rituals, practices and indigenous concepts are contextualized by Minahasans in this transnational environment relies on their ability to establish continuity with ethnic pasts using Protestant interpretations of meaning, which parallels the hierarchy of ethnicity as secondary to a modern religious identity in the Indonesian national project.

Minahan conceptions of the relationship between culture and religion have been influenced by Protestant doctrines underlying the development of the modern subject, which have been adapted to the Indonesian state's project to compartmentalize and transect ethnic identities. Aspects of traditional ritual are acceptable in religious praxis when interpreted through a Calvinist view that separates practice from meaning. According to Web Keane's interpretation of Calvinism's "semiotic ideology", the establishment of a hierarchy between the sign and the signified strips ritual of its productiveness; in essence the ritual, like all other material things, is only a signifier for the immaterial world, and can never completely represent it (2007:61-62). Locating this argument in the Calvinist reinterpretation of the Eucharist as purely symbolic instead of a process of transubstantiation, he outlines the influence of the ontological development of the modern subject, one who attempts to be "abstracted from material and social entanglements in the name of greater freedom", on religious thought (2007:76). With the division of the material and abstract world drawn, individual belief becomes the center of religion, and material or objective forms relegated to mediators. Keane sees this as a product of the moral narrative of modernity he refers to as the process of "purification" in
which the world has to policed to ensure the “proper boundaries between agentive subjects and mere objects” (2007:77).

It is from this vantage point that missionaries attempting to convert Christians in the Indies sought to translate local beliefs into those convergent with Christianity by dividing local practices into the categories of “culture” versus “religion”. This work of purification allowed missionaries to objectify certain aspects of local practice as cultural things that could be preserved and used to inculcate new, underlying themes of religious belief (Keane 2007:99). Deciding which local practices and beliefs were part of the traditional “religion” was harder to define, since the cultures in question did not participate in forms of subjectification that drew a line between cultural and religious life, or the spiritual and the material. The attempt to delineate the sphere of the spiritual and the material was often expressed in terms of trying to separate religion from adat, a term used to describe social rules and customary law in particular localities still used today in government discourse to describe the realm of cultural objects and customs outside religion (Keane 2007:105). Although not all missionaries were equally convinced that separating religious life from the sphere of everyday cultural practice was advisable, many attempted to use this process of “inculturation” to translate local culture into a carrier of the Christian message (Keane 2007:91). In Minahasa, missionaries embraced the idea that certain practices of culture could be separated from underlying beliefs and replaced with Christian motivations and meanings – making rituals that were previously generative into symbolic expressions of a shared underlying meaning that not only united disparate groups into a unified ethnic group but also equalized them with all other Christian believers (See Chapter 1).
In the eyes of missionaries, the transformation of cultural practices into vehicles of internal Christian belief would serve to sever people from their previous system of meaning, or in Webb Keane's words, make them immune to history (2007:112). Of course this insulation from the past is easier introduced than achieved, especially when the forms of the past continue to be central to certain forms of identity and must be recalibrated to fit within a new vision of the world. In the case of Minahasa, the reinterpretation and remembering of the past have been central to maintaining an ethnic identity and fitting that identity within the parameters of the nation-state since the introduction of Christianity in the colonial period. One cannot be immune to the past in Indonesia, but must be in conversation with it, and the practices of recasting the past through memory and ritual are “never out of time and never morally or pragmatically neutral” but a means of establishing relationships with the past (Lambek 1996:240) that are the grounds for inclusion. How then does a Christian ideology that delineates culture from religion, and underlying forms of belief from cultural practice, fit into the projects of identity that seek to establish continuity with the past?

The place of religion as a contingency for inclusion with the nation-state has in essence extended the project of purification as a way to measure the fitness of ethnic groups for inclusion in the national project. Under the Department of Culture and Education (Departemen Kebudayaan dan Pendidikan, hereafter DepDikBud), officially sanctioned religions 48 (agama) are separated from other traditional practices and grouped under the category of kepercayaan which translates as a sort of “belief” or “superstition” (Kipp 1993:118). To gain employment in the civil sector, become a teacher or enter the

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48 These religions are: Christianity, Catholicism, Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism. Hinduism was the most recent to be added to the list; many Chinese Indonesians lobby for the inclusion of Confucianism.
military one must prove legitimate membership in an agama. Ethnicity has no formal status in the official rubric of national identity, but a religious identity marks one as a modern Indonesian citizen (Ibid 91). Although the bureaucratization of religion was a strategy of the New Order national government to cross-cut ethnicity and class divisions (Kipp 1993, Aragon 2000) its inevitable association with modernity and “development” (pembangunan) also served as a measure of advancement between groups. Those ethnic groups without an officially sanctioned religion are caught in the marginalizing discourses (Tsing 1993) promoted at the national level; they are portrayed as isolated, primordial and resistant to the forces of modernization.

These marginalizing discourses are not only generated in a top down fashion; they circulate as an invocation of inclusion through religious identities and the dangers of mixing the categories of religion and traditional belief. Religious identity can serve to differentiate minority ethnic groups from marginal ones by asserting their modernity and sincere involvement in the project of nationalism. In Minahasa, where an established history of religious identity exists, Christians apply the concept of purification to judge the content of other Christian groups’ practices in comparison to their own. This is the national ideology expanded through a Protestant logic, a judgment not only about the adoption of an official religion but about the importance of the underlying meaning in Christian practice. Discussing their missionary work in Kalimantan with the Dayak people, Sebastian and his wife exemplified the way in which a theory of religious purification is caught up in the national division of groups into modern citizens and yet to be incorporated primitives. They designate the Dayaks as traditional people in opposition
to the Muslim Madurese in the area, who have been relocated from Java and essentially dominate the local economy:

Sebastian: And then if you talk about agama in Indonesia, not only the Muslim is radical, I think also Christian (.) If not ubuh good Christian.

Kell: You mean Christians can be radical too?

Sebastian’s Wife: yeas.

Sebastian: I mean Christian, not born again Christian like Billy Graham said or Gospel said or like George Bush said.

Sebastian’s Wife: Liberal?

Sebastian: No, I mean like in Kalimantan

Sebastian’s wife: ooh, traditional. Traditional.

Sebastian: You can go there, over in Kalimantan Barat. There is a conflict there because (.3) not religion

Sebastian’s wife: tribe, it’s tribe conflict with Dayak people =

Sebastian: =You know...Dayak and Maduran. You know Maduran, they are Muslim. The minority of Dayak is Christian. They are Christian with animism (.3) They (.2) like another spirit, like spiritism. “They cut of Maduran’s heads” Their dukun that is the religious leader in spiritism. He talks to pastors, he prays with traditional religion, the animism, and he takes the head of the Maduran”, and they give suggestion to the people =

Kell: = w[by]

Sebastian: [They] are Christian, but they are not true Christians. They have belief. They are born from Christian parents but they are not born again Christian. It’s very dangerous. You can use them for evil works.

The authoritative position of Sebastian and his wife show how the compartmentalization of religion and belief have been adopted and adapted to create a hierarchy of Christianity that is predicated on the nature of internal religious belief (what we might call

49 It’s telling here that Sebastian focuses on taking of heads; as Anna Tsing (1993) notes in her ethnography of the Meratus (Dayak) in Kalimantan, headhunting is still strongly symbolic of power relations in Southeast Asia, so much so that just as the Madurese and other ethnic groups portray the Meratus as headhunters, rumors swirled in the Meratus highlands of government officials beheading Meratus villagers. In Minahasa, headhunting was an aspect of status and leadership that was eradicated by colonial officials (Henley 1996, Schouten 1998) and it is regarded as antithetical to Christianity.
sincerity) and the proper delineation of “traditional” or “cultural” versus “religious” practices. Sebastian references authoritative Christian sources and texts to posit the validity of the Minahasan evangelical practice in comparison with the hybridity of Dayak Christianity, referencing religious ideologies that stretch far beyond the borders of Indonesia. However, this is also a cautionary tale of the perils of marginality. The danger of this type of mixing is not just in the generative power of these rituals to do harm as Christian belief gone awry; it is also what has led the Dayaks to suffer at the hands of the Madurese who have fully embraced their religious tradition and the rewards of nationally promoted forms of modernity.

Minahasans also turn the eyes of purification towards themselves, policing the borders of meaning where traditional practices have been incorporated into a framework of Christian belief. Discourses surrounding the incorporation of traditional practices, narratives or terms used in worship focus on how underlying meanings align with Christian beliefs, in essence making these traditional practices into Christian ones and establishing a sense of timelessness to Minahasan Christianity and ethnic identity. The heterogeneity of discourses surrounding indigenous terms that have origins in disparate pasts are aligned in an underlying belief in divine design that guides life: in this way opo 'opo can be understood as ancestors, or spirits, and the cry of the owl (mangum) can be a portent or a message from the dead as long as it is understood that it is the power of God that animates these phenomena.

This view of traditional practices as vehicles or signifiers for a greater transcendental principle is also reminiscent of the way in which the Indonesian government has constructed the proper expression of ethnic identity. Outlined in
successive five-year plans for national development, the use of art (kesenian) and other cultural artifacts as the basis for developing Indonesian national identity (kepribadian nasional or kebudayaan nasional) was explicitly planned and implemented with the support of government institutions throughout the archipelago\textsuperscript{50} (Hellman 2003:25-27). What the government designates as culture echoes the earlier work of missionaries who selected and combined regional practices regardless of their ethnic origins. Dances, musical traditions, handicrafts, houses and ritual costumes (Kipp 1993:111) are separated from context and promoted as purified emblems of regional identity at the national level. The quintessential example of this is Taman Mini Indonesia Indah (Beautiful Indonesia in Miniature) where each region is identified by a “traditional” dwelling with its accompanying handicrafts and dancers, often amalgamations of several ethnic traditions lumped under one symbolic display. The preservation of ethnic traditions is therefore redefined as the creative cultivation of art forms that showcase regional identities on the national stage, epiphenomena of shared national identification.

However, the nationalization of ethnic performance has created a space in which indigenous cultures can thrive and even resist the forces of national purification (Kipp 1993:112), existing in dialectal relationship to other narratives that define ethnic identities. Festivities in New Hampshire Indonesian churches that take the familiar form of representative ethnic performance are “sites of social action where identities and relations are continually being reconfigured” even as they reiterate relationships and identities that already exist (Lambeck 12: 1996). Celebrations of national culture can be

\textsuperscript{50} The Indonesian government’s vision of establishing the historical continuity of the nation-state can be seen in the attempt to link the diverse histories of its citizens with the concept of pembangunan, as Suharto said in an annual Independence speech in 1995, “By development we do not cut off our connection with history, our total national development cannot be separated from the growth of culture, since the growth of culture will form the ground for the growth of values which support the needs of development” (quoted and translated in Hellman 20003:35).
used to critique the Indonesian government for their failure to protect Christian citizens from political violence, or as an expression of solidarity that Indonesian Christians in New Hampshire share with American Christians through the global ecumene. Especially in the transnational environment, ritual and celebration can be a potent space in which to rethink identities and the meaning of symbolic cultural forms.

In the transnational Indonesian churches in New Hampshire, questions about the intersection of national and ethnic identity are mediated through Christianity. Individuals focus on Christian practices and beliefs as the unifying force behind their communities and the locus of meaning for their decisions, actions and activities. Yet these congregations are also self-consciously “Indonesian”, affiliating with American churches without giving up their rights to worship and socialize in distinctly Indonesian ways. If the project of Indonesian nationalism encourages a compartmentalization of national, ethnic and religious identities to manage a heterogenous population (Kipp 1993:75), the organization of an Indonesian identity in New Hampshire confounds these categories by making religious identity the transcendent principle of the national and ethnic identification. A shared Christian heritage, then, organizes the experience of the national and its ethnic counterpart, and Christian practices are recast as the carriers of both national and ethnic culture. When Minahasan Pastor Paulus of Imanuel Indonesian church negotiated the entrance of his congregation into the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (ELCA), he strove to preserve modalities of Christian practice as traditions:

yeah, memang sebelumnya saya bilang saya ke mereka (.4) katakan ke jemaat bahwa (2) wa:laupun kita sudah menjadi bagian dari Lutheran misalnya Amerika, tapi saya juga akan berusaha menjelaskan ke Lutheran bahwa kita juga yang tetap orang Indonesia, ada hal-hal tertentu tetap kita jaga itu bawa itu dalam upacaranya dalam ibadahnya Indonesia. Artinya bukan hanya karena bahasa Indonesia ada tradisi tradisi tertentu dalam upacara upacara itu yang tetap bawa, kita tetap pakai. Iya. Misalnya soal perjamuan kudus itu (.3) Holy Communion. Di Holy Trinity itu tiap minggu, once a week. Di tempat lain, once a month, tiap bulan. Tapi di kita ini, hanya
empat kali, dalam setahun. Yes, four times in a year. Karna itu masih membawa dari Indo, Indonesia.

Yeah, certainly before this I said to them (.4) I said to them that (.2) although we have already become part of the Lutheran church of America, but I also will work to explain to the Lutherans that we also remain Indonesian people, its an important issue that we continue to protect that carry that in ceremony through Indonesian worship. This means not only that Bahasa Indonesia is a certain tradition that is carried in ceremonies/rituals, we maintain its use. Yes. For example the issue of the Eucharist (.3) Holy Communion. At Holy Trinity ((Evangelical Lutheran Church)) its done every week, once a week. In other places, once a month, every month. But for us, only four times in a year. Yes, four times a year. Because that is what we still carry from Indo, Indonesia.

This is not unfamiliar territory for Minahansans, whose history is dependent on Christianity as a form of cultural transmission. Ethnic and national culture pivots on the axis of Christian meaning, a realm that can span the divides of ethnicity and even cross national boundaries, or shrink to specificity in the explication of ethnic tradition. Ritual and celebration simultaneously engages the national, symbolically underlies and unites specific ethnic performance, and reaches out to incorporate the American Christians in an economy of meaning. This is evident in the way Pastor Paulus unfolds the meaning of ethnic performances used in the ceremony to induct the Imanuel Church into the New England Synod of the ELCA:

Bisa kalo itu ada tari cakalele, atau apa di Manado itu tari untuk menyambut, tari peran, tapi itu untuk menyambut, welcoming dance. Nah, tari cakalele itu kalo untuk welcoming dance untuk menyambut itu berarti menyambut tamu agung (.2) special guest. Dan kenapa nanti mereka jadi mereka ini adalah warrior. Tapi yang mereka sambut itu, bukan orang biasa tetap, tapi mungkin bisa seperti nice warrior artinya yang lebih (.1) lebih tinggi (.2) lebih (.2) nah itulah kita coba pakai itu (.3) dan ketika dari batak bisa tari (.3) ulos, tortor (.3) kasih ulos. Kita juga buat mereka tanda kita menjadi satu (.2) one family. Karna itu, khususnya itu (.2) itu for (.2) untuk family yang inti, jadi biasanya untuk suami, istri dan anak sehingga mereka harus satu, harus dibingkus, diwrap, begitu dan itulah menandakan menunjuk satu family satu keluarga. Jadi kita juga mau sampaikan itu, memberikan itu, bahwa kita sebagai satu keluarga. One big family. Yaitu symbol. Dan itu, memang dari kita mau upayakan, berupaya, baik itu dari Manado, dari Batak nanti dua berikut ada dari Jawa, ada dari Ambon, kita akan, karna saya bilang kita ini orang Indonesia, ini gereja Indonesia, kenapa kita tidak? Dan itu mereka bersenang, dan dari Lutherannya mereka mau ngak larang, mereka ngak (.)maia itu akan memperkaya (.) “Enrich our worship.” Oh yeah. Jadi mereka senang semua nya. Baik dari Indonesia maupun lain.
Because they could use the Cakalele dance, which in Manado is a dance for welcoming, a war dance, but also to welcome, a welcoming dance. Now, the Cakalele dance as a welcoming dance it means to welcome a prominent guest, a special guest, the receivers are not regular people, but maybe like nice warriors meaning those who are more exalted, therefore we try and use that and when we use a dance from the Batak ulos, tortor, giving the ulos (Batak textile). We also give them a sign that we become one family. Because that dance, is especially for the core family, usually for the husband, wife and children so that they have to be one, they have to be wrapped, wrapped like that which indicates we intend to be one family. So we also want to convey that, to render us as one family. It's a symbol. One big family. It's a symbol. And that is certainly what we want to attempt, to endeavor to do, from Manado or Batak, in the future there will be one tradition from Java, one from Ambon, we will, because I say we are Indonesian people, this is an Indonesian church, why wouldn't we? And they (the Indonesian congregation) were happy, and the Lutherans said they don't want to forbid that instead these things would enrich, enrich our worship. Oh yeah, so everyone was happy. Both the Indonesians and the others.

Figure 8. The “nice warriors” welcome the Bishop of the New England Synod

Ethnic traditions are retained as symbolic representations, but the meaning of those symbols are interpreted through a logic of religious kinship, which encompasses the Indonesian nation and expands beyond it. In Indonesia, Minahasans have engaged with multiple ideoscapes (Appadurai 1996:36) that influence their processes of self-identification: the realm of the national which casts them as patriots, a colonial history which posits a special relationship to foreign, non-Indonesian forces, and global narratives of Christianity which engage them in transnational projects that transcend national boundaries. By default these multiple projections of identity must remain categorized in order not to threaten political inclusion. In the transnational environment,
free from the centrifugal forces that enforce the proper expressions of ethnic, religious and national identity, Christianity is relativized as a "tradition" and as the political, and moral, underpinnings of an ethnically diverse community. This unites transmigrant Indonesians in a sense of moral co-responsibility for their nation-state home, but also beyond to their co-religionists around the world, and to other transmigrants who seek political recognition and rights of equality in their place of settlement (Werbner 2002:125).

Figure 9. Presenting Ulos textiles to Holy Trinity Lutheran Congregation
It is under these conditions that Minahasans become exemplary Indonesians, able to realize a dream of religious nationalism. Remittances and political projects aimed at the homeland are also Christian projects, as they involve the wider network of Indonesian and American Christian institutions. Migrants from different regions of the archipelago band together to support the cleaning of a polluted lake in Minahasa or to help erect a new church in Java, activities oriented towards the homeland that appeal to both national and Christian morality. With an established institutional history of Christianity, Western savvy and high levels of education, Minahasans are able to successfully negotiate the political and institutional challenges faced by many immigrants. Fighting for the rights of Christian immigrants in the United States, they simultaneously seek recognition from Indonesian powers of the validity of a Christian nationalism. And by engaging in a religious form of nationalism, they continue to strengthen an ethnic identification in which Christianity is a valid tradition. Patterns of Minahan leadership that have long been expressed through Christian practices and institutions are revitalized in the transnational environment; rhetorical flourish in discourses of worship, personal charisma and bravery, and demonstrative shows of material generosity through support of the church. Even the concept of keter has been carried with Minahan migrants, conjoined with a Christian model of equality:

Professor RoeRoe: yang saya dapati di kalangan anggota jemaat kita, termasuk para pendeta, bahwa keternya kurang, tapi ter::hadap bulu-bulu ini heh heh ((scattered talk and laughter from audience members))

Audience member: Keter apa?

Professor RoeRoe: I've experienced in the group of your congregation members, including the pastors, that there is too little keter, it's slight, regarding these white foreigners heh heh ((scattered talk and laughter from audience members))

Audience member: What's keter?

Professor RoeRoe: Self-confidence. And it's not necessary, it's not necessary to feel no good in front of them. Because we are also aware that we are more experienced in the church than them (***) S:::O we don't need to feel like GUESTS here. Or FOREIGN people. We here, in the fellowship of the congregation, in the church are the SAME members in the family of God's household. See Exodus two, verse seventeen, especially verse eleven and twenty-two. Of the same status.

The concept of keter, interpolated with authoritative Christian texts, becomes a radical concept of equality that exceeds ethnic bounds and is extended to incorporate other Christian Indonesians in the transnational environment. In this way Minahasan "nationalism", which has historically asserted an equality between Minahasans and their foreign counterparts, is folded into the project of Indonesian nationalism. Keter becomes a form of action that asserts the equality of Christians — and in this case, Indonesian Christians — in interactions with foreigners. Once again, the ethnic concept is magnified into the national through a framework of Christian meaning and authority. In these transnational churches, Minahasans are able to reconfigure the intersection of local, national and global spheres of meaning through narratives and performance to position their nationalism as the logical extension of ethnic Christian tradition.

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51 This transcript is recorded from a public meeting of the Association of Indonesian Protestant Churches (PGGPI) in Dover, New Hampshire, October of 2006. Pastors from eleven Indonesian churches on the East and West Coast attended this two-day annual meeting. The speaker, Professor RoeRoe, is a pastor, teacher and author from Minahasa who divides his time between Indonesia and the East Coast USA where members of his family have settled.
This thesis has not been an attempt to search for the absence or presence of a certain form of Christian meaning, but how, and in what ways, Christianity is meaningful to people: as an aspect of identity, a source of cultural logic, and a unifying force, something that allows movement across the “landscapes” of ethnic, national and global religious spheres (Appadurai 1996:33). Even when people take up forms of Christian meaning that are familiar to Western scholarship, we cannot determine in advance what ways that meaning may be applied. For Minahasans who strive the overcome the historical disjunctions of an ethnic identity, the “discontinuity” fostered by Protestant doctrine facilitates forms of continuity and unification that are just as radical. As an historically complex phenomena, Christianity carries multivalent messages (Canell 2006). Even as its followers aspire to the ideal of a single transcendent community, the complex ways in which people approach and apply these questions of faith, authority and meaning is a process of selection and reinterpretation of the content of Christianity that creates diverse trajectories (Scott 2005:118). Furthermore, these trajectories are always dialectically related to other narratives in a specific social and historical context. Although conversation about the content of Christianity may lead people to similar and comparable destinations, we cannot determine what specific Christian experiences are simply because they carry a familiar form.

It is by an analogous logic that this work serves to argue against the perspective that the Christianity practiced by indigenous peoples is illegitimate, meaningless (Robbins 2005), partial, or not Christianity at all. If Christianity is itself a unstable and complex phenomena which invites multiple interpretations, then to label indigenous Christianities as partial or unreal is the result of applying a specific, Western exegesis of
Christianity as a theoretical framework. By delineating one version of Christianity as valid, alternative practices and configurations are thereby reduced to forms of resistance, syncretism or otherwise devalued categories. It is true that history sees the adoption of Christianity by indigenous peoples occurring in situations characterized by asymmetrical access to power. However, assuming that this corresponds in an orientation to new systems of meaning that is partial or humiliating to previous cultural forms is to underestimate both the dynamic nature of culture and the ability of people to engage with new regimes of meaning on their own terms, as “creative social agents” (Scott 2005:102).

As my ethnographic and historical examples from the lives of Minahasans has shown, the questions of meaning that Christianity posed were taken up in conversation with local cosmologies interpreted and recombined into new lived realities. Today, Christianity is an aspect of Minahasan tradition that is still in conversation with the past and with other narratives of power, still creating and embarking on diverse trajectories of meaning.

As an act of creating continuity, Christian Minahasan practices in transnational churches “carry a reenvisioned present into the remembered past” (Keane 2007:172) as they redefine ethnic tradition through a prism of religious nationalism. What effect this has on formulations of identity in the Indonesian homeland remains to be seen. The propensity for this formulation of Minahasan identity to be problematic in the homeland rests precisely in its use of Christianity as a central principle. Not all Minahasans are Christian, and the compartmentalizing forces of the central government are fading with the turn towards decentralization since 2001 that has spurred the growth of ethnic regionalism. Christianity is a fruitful means of inclusion in the national identity, but more political power at the regional level could engender a refocus on secular forms of
ethnicity and regional solidarity. In some ways Christian meaning has already permeated exhortations of ethnic solidarity and been divorced from their overtly religious forms; the slogan “torang samua basadara” (we are all brothers) is generally invoked to posit the kinship of Muslim and Christian Minahasans despite its roots in Christian theology. However, in Indonesian transnational churches in New Hampshire, the ability to transpose issues of local concern onto a magnified field of global Christian issues (Werber 1998:17) could threaten to eclipse the authority of these alternative, secularized formulations. The evolving role of religious identity in Indonesia, in the context of a post 9/11 world, will continue to shape Minahasa as a community, a region, and an identity. As they move into the future in conversation with a changing world, Minahasan destinies, and histories, continue to be tied to questions of faith.

Figure 11. Minahasa in a new incarnation
APPENDIX 1
VERSIONS OF BEGINNING VERSES OF LUMIMUUT AND TOAR MYTH


Version of the Lumimu’ut Legend recorded from Bert Supit, as related by Karel Hasinamboan of Tompaso


The story goes like this: At one time, at a beach west of the Wulur Mahatus mountain range, a piece of coral rock with a good shape washed ashore. There wasn’t a creature that paid attention or cared about this coral rock, because that area, that area was certainly not inhabited. One day when the weather was good, and the hot beach air stung, the coral stone began to perspire, and from this perspiration a beautiful woman was created. She stood upright atop the coral stone from which she came and observed what was around her to learn about the place she was in. She then prayed: “O Kasuran opo e walian wangko (Oh God the Great and Mighty, the original source of Minahasan people), if it is true that I am Your descendent, tell me where I am now and give to me a companion.


After the woman prayed, the coral stone upon which she sat spilt open, and from inside the fissure emerged a walian (Imam or religious leader) and that woman said to her: “You are not alone. I was created to accompany and protect you. Because you were created from a rock that sweats, I give you the name Lumimuut (to sweat or perspire). My name is Karema and I am the religious leader in this world.
"Kukatakan kepadamu, bahwa pada suatu saat yang akan ditentukan kemudian, kau akan menikah dengan seorang wailan wangko (pemimpin agama yang besar) dan dari perkawinan kalian itu akan diturunkan manusia-manusia, yang hanya akan dapat hidup terus dan berbiak seperti semut apabila mereka bersedia berkerja keras dan memeras keringat."

I say to you, that at a time which has already been determined, you will marry a wailan wangko (a great religious leader) and from your marriage will human beings will descend, that only will multiply and find continuous life like the ants if the are ready to work hard and extract their sweat.

Pada suatu hari, dalam suatu upacara keagamaan, berkata Karema kepada Lumimuut, "Hai putriku yang cantik, agar kita dapat hidup terus, menghadaplah kau ke selatan." Lumimuut melakukan apa yang diperintahkan dan Karemapun berdoa, "Sumber segala yang hidup, dewa dari semua yang besar dan perkasa, dengarlah hamba-Mu, dan berikan berkat kepadanya! Sumber angin selatan, hamilkannya Lumimuut! Berikanlah keturunan kepadanya."

One day, in a religious ceremony, Karema said to Lumimuut, "My beautiful daughter, so that you can find eternal life, face the to the south." Lumimuut did what she was told and Karema prayed, "Source of all life, god of all that is great and brave, hear Your servant, and bless her!" Source of the south wind, impregnate Lumimuut! Give her desendents."

Setelah upacara dan doa tersebut Karema dan Lumimuut memunggu, namun tidak terjadi sesuatu pun atas diri Lumimuut. Karema kemudian menghadapkan Lumimuut ke seluruh penjuru mata angin dan mengulangi upacara serta doanya, tetapi itu tidak menghasilkan apa-apa. Akhirnya, sekali lagi Karema menghadapkan Lumimuut ke barat dari mana angin sedang berhembus kencang. Setelah upacara dan doa yang sama, timbul kelainan pada diri Lumimuut. Ternyata ia telah dihamilkan angin barat dinamakan awaat (berasal dari kata mawaat yang berarti menjadi hamil.)

After the ceremony and prayer Karema and Lumimuut waited, yet nothing happened to Lumimuuts person. Karema then faced Lumimuut to all the corners of the wind sources and repeated the ceremony and prayer, but there was no result. Finally, Karema once again faced Lumimuut to the west from where the wind blew powerfully. After the same ceremony and prayer, there emerged a difference in Lumimuut’s person. Truly she was already impregnated by the west wind called awaat (from the word mawaat meaning to become pregnant).

Selama mengandung, Lumimuut dirawat dengan telatan dan penuh kasih oleh Karema, dan ia melahirkan seorang anak laki-laki. Karema yang pada saat kelahiran itu berada di sisi Lumimuut, segara menamakan lelaki itu Toar. Nama itu dipilihnya karena anak itu dilahirkan setelah usaha yang keras dan sungguh-sungguh, sehingga mempunyai nilai yang sangat tinggi (Toar berasal dari kata tuar yang artinya harga sangat tinggi).
While pregnant, Lumimuut was treated with patience and love by Karema, and she gave birth to a male child. At the time of the birth Karema was at the side of Lumimuut, and soon named the boy Toar. That name was chosen because the child was born after rigorous and extreme efforts, so he had the highest value (Toar comes from the word *tuar* which means the highest value).


From interview with Laurentis Timpal di Woi, in Ratahan, January 1984. Translated from Ratahan dialect to Indonesian by Julius A. Pontororing.

**Penuturan (Sejarah) Toar dan Lumimuut**


History of Toar and Lumimuut

*It is said, in a place on the peak of a high mountain, there was a woman named Kararema (Karema). Then there was the event of a great flood. Seeing that the ocean water was going to cover her, she then sat atop the place for eating pig found on the edge. Eventually there was more and more water, the land could no longer be seen, it was already flooded with water, and it frightened her and she felt hungry until she fell unconscious. In her faint it was as though she dreamed the water had already receded. Later it was said, she got down from the place she sat upon and a road appeared by her. She followed this road. Not long after she was suddenly in a garden, where she found all crops, all of the kinds of crops there. She then searched for what she could eat — for she was extremely hungry — and she discovered a huge watermelon, the biggest of the fruits. There was a hole in the watermelon, and she ate its contents. Little by little she ate the contents of the watermelon until it was finished completely.*
Tak berapa lama kemudian tibalah si pemilik kebun itu. Buah semangka itu hendak dipotongnya, tapi berteriaklah ia (dari dalam), "Jangan dipotong, saya ada di sini." Maka keluarlah ia lalu ditanyakan oleh pemilik kebun, "Apakah yang kaulakukan, sehingga engkau berada di sini?" Lalu dituturkannya bahwa ia ditutupi oleh air laut, oleh sebab itu ia ada di sini, mencari makan, dan itulah sebabnya kini saya sudah makan. (demikian jawab Kakarema). Kata si pemilik kebun: "Kalau demikian kalian adalah orang-orang dari dunia bawah (tempat tersesat) oleh sebab itu kalain harus kubawa menghadap raja Konoan."

Not long after the owner of the garden arrived. He wished to cut the watermelon in half, but she screamed (from inside) "Don't cut, I'm in here." Then she emerged and the owner of the garden asked her, "what are doing, so that you can exist here?" She recounted that she had been covered by the ocean, and because of that she was there, looking for food, and now she had already eaten. Said the owner of the garden: "If you are all people of the world below (the lost world), I must bring you to face the raja Konoan.


The two of them traveled. When they arrived to meet raja Konoan Karema was interrogated again. She answered the same as before. Agreeing with her statement raja Konoan said: "Certainly this is true, all of you people from the world below (the lost place = pakong) who have already strongly revolted, already defied Montunu (Yang Maha Tinggi), so that he has punished you all, submerged you in the ocean. However it is useless to feel frightened anymore, return, and you shall meet with Timuleng together with his friend Rumuaut. If you meet with the two of them, tell them to be devout, (mutugoi) to Motuntu and also to give offerings (musiwi). After that she was terjagalah and truly there was no more water, it was already dry. Then she searched for a place to live. The hole in the red earth (liar) is where she lived.


Another time she dreamed. In that dream she met with Timuleng and his friend Rumuat. They asked seorang kepada yang lain, then Timuleng said they had already experienced a calamity atop a rock. Because of this they thought that maybe, alright, we always we always remember to be devout and bring offerings. Then Timuleng asked: “If it’s like that, who is the father of the child you are pregnant with?” (Kararema was pregnant at the time). Yet Kararema did not tell them. Timuleng was angry and said, if so, beginning today, your name is no longer Kararema but instead Lumimuut, because you will have to bear difficulties, protect your household with arduous difficult, no longer with Kakarema (clarity). And if that child is born, if it is a boy or a girl, name him or her Toar (wind of the quail). What they said to her was kept well, so that when the child was born she named him Toar. The child was a male. He was raised by Lumimuut, until he became a young man. Lumimuut thought, what I wish to say is in reality it is only the two of us.


When asking Minahasans about their traditional beliefs, they always start by telling about Toar and Lumimuut, a story which is a persisting source of identity for all Minahasans. Lumimuut is seen as the universal mother for all Minahasans. The story told about her is as follows.

At an early age, Lumimuut left her parents and her place of birth. She went with a canoe and took with her a handful of earth, which she threw on the sea. She went ashore and struck a great rock which split in two, and out of this split came Kariema, the priestess. After some days Kariema said to Lumimuut, “turn your face to the south.” Kariema prayed to the deity of the southern wind to fertilize Lumimuut, but she received nothing. On the command of the priestess she then turned to the east, to the north and then to the west. Finally the deity of the west wind, the wind which brings rain and fertilizes the earth, gave Lumimuut procreative powers and she gave birth to Toar.
APPENDIX B
DOCUMENTS FROM NEW HAMPSHIRE INDONESIAN CHURCH SERVICES

I. Sunday Service bulletin from Maranatha Indonesian Church, Sunday July 15th 2007

IF WE CONFESS OUR SINS, HE IS FAITHFUL AND JUST
AND WILL FORGIVE US OUR SINS

I JOHN 1:9
DOA SYAFAT, DOA BAPA KAMI/ PRAYER OF THE PEOPLE & THE LORD'S PRAYER (dinyanyikan)

Choral Response (dinyanyikan)
Hear our prayer, O Lord. Hear our prayer, O Lord;
Incline your ear to us and grant us your peace.
Dengarkan Tuhan, doa kami!
Miringkan c'lingMa dan b'ru sejahtera. Amen.

THE GLORIA PATRI (dinyanyikan)
J : Mulakan Allah Bapa dan Pa-te-ra da-n Rohul Kudus
Superi pada malayna, sekerang dan s'tamanza.
Tuhan yang kudus. Amin, amin.
Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost
As it was in the beginning, it's now and ever shall be
Lord without end. Amen, amen.

PENGUCAPAN SALAM DAMAI/ PASSING OF THE PEACE
P : Selam damai, Saudara-saudaraku (Peace be with you).
J : Selam damai bagi Saudara juga. (And also with you).
P : Manalah kita saling berdama dan membagi syaloom Allah itu satu terhadap yang lainnya (Let's share the peace of God to one another).

PESAN FIRMAN UNTUK ANAK-ANAK/ A MESSAGE FOR THE CHILDREN OF GOD
PENYATAAN IMAN/ STATEMENT OF FAITH OF THE MAJANATHA INDONESIAN UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST (dinyanyikan)
Kami percaya kepada Allah, Peinudung kaum pendatang dan asing, yang menentang umatNya dari belumana ketakutan ke tanah yang damai dan merdeka.
Kami menerima Yesus sebagai Kristus, Tuhan dan Penyelamat, yang mengaspil umatNya dengan cinta, damai dan adil.
Kami mengharapkan Roh Kudus untuk memunut, menolong, menemukan dan memperbarui hidup kami hingga hari.
Kami adalah pereksutaran Kristen, yang memelll!ara umat baru dan yang menjelaskan, kitk kesakuan Kristen, menurut tuntunan Firman Allah dalam Alkitab. Amin.

We believe in God, the Refuge of the foreign, who led the people from the wilderness of fears to the land of peace and freedom. We accept Jesus as the Christ, our Lord and Saviour, who confesses the people with love, peace and justice.
We seek to the Holy Spirit to guide, help, unite and move us day by day.
We are organized for Christian Worship, for the nurture of the Christian community of faith and for the mission of Christiian witness, in accordance with the word of God as we receive it in the scriptures. Amen.

DOA PERSEMBAHAN/ PRAYER OF DEDICATION

DOA PERKOLEHAN & PENGUMUMAN/ WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS (duduk)

PENGUTUSAN DAN BERKAT/ CHARGE AND BLESSING (berdiri)
J : KJ 423:1-3 “Berkatnamang Suara dari Seberang”
J : Amin, amin, amin. (dinyanyikan)
* Doxology:  

* DOA PERSEMBAHAN (PRAYER OF DEDICATION)

WARTA JEMAAT (ANNOUNCEMENTS)

PENGUTUSAN - SENDING

4 Nyanyian Penutup (Closing Hymn)  
J: KJ 426 "Kita Harus Membawa Berita"  
Kita harus membawa berita pada dunia dalam gembira  
Tentang kebenaran dan kasih dan damai yang menyenangkan  
Dan damai yang menyenangkan  
Kita yaitu kalam pujian dan damai yang dianggap  
Karena Kristus kau membawa rahmat dan cemerlang.

PF: ...

J: Amin, amin, amin.

4 Nyanyian Penutup (Postlude):  
J: KJ 426 "We've a story to tell to the nations"  
We've a story to tell to the nations,  
That shall turn their hearts to the right.  
A story of truth and mercy,  
For the darkness shall turn to downing.  
And the downing to morning bright.  
And Christ's great kingdom shall come on earth.  
The kingdom of love and light.

Selamat Hari Minggu

Happy Sunday

Immanuel Indonesian Lutheran Church
(Gereja Lutheran Indonesia Immanuel)

22 Juli 2007
Minggu VIII Sesudah Pentakosta - 8th Sunday After Pentecost

TATA IBADAH (ORDER OF WORSHIP)
(*) Please stand. (Tanda *, jemaat diundang berdiri)

BERKUMPUL - GATHERING

* NYANYIAN MASUK (PRELUDE)
KJ 14:1,2 "Muliakan Tuhan Allah"
Muliakan Tuhan Allah, Muliakan Tuhan Allah
Muliakan pimpinan-Nya dalam kasih suci-Nya

Kami datang kepada-Nu, kami datang kepada-Nu
Bersyukur sedula hati, kar'na kasih-Mu besair

* TAHHISAN-SALAM (SENTENCE OF ADORATION-GREETING)
P: Ibadi hartini ditahtisikan dalam nama Allah Bapa. Putara dan Roh Kudus  
J: Amin
P: Damai sejahtera dalam Kasih Allah Yang Mahakuasa menyerta-  
saudara-saudara.  
J: dan menyertai saudara-saudara.
* NATS PEMBIMBING: Mazmur (Psalm) 73:28  
(Tetapi aku, aku suka dekat pada Allah: aku menaruh tempat  
perlindunganku pada pada Tuhan Allah: supaya dapat menceritakan  
segala pekerja-Nya.)

4 : KJ 352:1 "Batu Penjuru Gereja"  
Batu penjuru Gereja dan dasar yang emas  
Yaitu Yesus Kristus, Pendiri umat-Nya  
Dengan karunia darat-Nya, Gereja ditebus  
Baptisan dan firman-Nya memuat-Nya kudus  
The Church’s one foundation Is Jesus Christ her Lord  
She is his new creation By water and by Word  
From here’n he came and taught her To be his holy bride  
With his own blood he bought her, and for her life he died.
PENGAKUAN DOSA (CONFESSION OF SINS)
PL 1 : Marilah kita bersama-sama mengakui segala dosa-dosa kita kepada Tuhan. Kita berdoa:


NYANYIAN SYIKUR (HYMN)
KJ 30:1 “Dilimpahkan Dosaku”
Dilimpahkan dosaku, hurus oleh darah Yesus
Aku pahit dan sembah, hurus oleh darah Yesus
I, darah Yohanes, sunbuh pembentesan
Suaklah hidupku, hurus oleh darah Yesus

What can wash away sin. nothing but the blood of Jesus
What can make me whole, again, nothing but the blood of Jesus
Oh, precious is the flow that makes me whole as sons
No other flint I know, nothing but the blood of Jesus

* AMANAH HIDUP SARU (GOD'S WAY OF LIVING)
PLF : Ulangan (Dedication) 30: 19, 20
J : Kedaulatan hargai Allah, diumpat yang mahu
ringgi dan doa keluarga di bumi di atasku marwani yang
berdaftar kepadaNya.

PELAYANAN FIRMAN - WORD
PLF : Doa untuk bacaan Alkitab (Prayer of Illumination)
PL : Pembacaan Alkitab (Reading of Scripture):
Rut (Ruth) 1:6-18
* Injil Yohanes (The Gospel of John) 20: 11-18

PF : Khutbah (Sermon)

* PENGAKUAN IMAN (AFFIRMATION OF FAITH)
Aku percaya kepada Allah Bapa, yang Mahakuasa, khalik
langit dan bumi.

Dan kepada Yesus Kristus, anakNya yang Tunggal, Tuhan kita, yang dikandung dari pada Roh Kudus, batu dari anak dan Maria,
yang menderita di bawah pemerintahan Ponitius Pilatus, disabilitan,
mat dan ditangkap, tanpa ke dalam kerajaan maut, pada hari yang
karena bentuk pula dari antara orang maut, mati ia suga, dartuk di
sebelah kamar Allah Bapa. Yang Mahakuasa, dan akan datang dari
sewil untuk menghancur orang yang hidup dan yang mati,
Aku percaya ke pada Roh Kudus, Goreng yang kudus dan em
persekituan orang kudus, pengampunan dosa, kebangkitan daging,
dan hidup yang kekal.

DOA SYAFAAT (Prayers of the People and Lord's Prayer)
PF : Tuhan menyertai semula-semuanya.
J : Dan menyertai semula semuanya.

UCAPAN SYIKUR - MEAL
PERSEMBAHAN SYIKUR (OFFERTORY)
PL 2 : Naseehat persembahan: Malakhi 3: 10
(Diautal seluruh persembahan persepuluh itu kepada umah
persembahan, supaya ada persembahan makam di rumahku
dan tajuk Aku, firman Tuhan semesta alam, supahku akan tidak
membaca kebinaan binaan ingkarny ingkarny langsung dan menunjukkan berken
kepadaum yang berkejailsahaya.

J : KJ 20:21 “Dalamlah Ya Sumber Rohman”
Dalamlah ya sumber rohani, seluaskan hati
Menyemayamkan hidup di dalam yang luas kagum berkeni
Jasak ukh marshahu, gita halal warga Allah
Aku puj you itokuk, sungai perghoritMu

Come thou Favour on me thy blessing.
Turn my heart to sing thy grace
Streams of mercy never ceasing, call for songs of endless praise
While the hope of valued glory, fills my heart with joy and love
Teach me ever to adore thee, say I still thy goodness prove

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MINGGU, 29 JULY 2007

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TAHBISAN DAN SALAM*
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MAHA KASIH YANG ILLAHI K.J. 58
NATS PEMBIMBING: Matius 9:35
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JANJI PENGAMPUNAN DOSA: 1 Yohanes 1:9
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PENGAKUAN IMAN RASULI/ Apostle’s Creed*
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KHOTBAH: Pdt. Harold M Lapian
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Kisah Para Rasul 19:13-20
PERSEMBAHAN:
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DOA PERSEMBAHAN DAN SYAFAAT/Prayer
Pujian Penutup/Closing Song * :
MERCU SUAR KASIH BAPA NKB. 206
BERKAT/BENEDICTION

Tanda * wulan benih
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