

Manguni and Christian Nationalism (in) Minahasa

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ABSTRACT

This article describes the process and meaning of the Manguni reconstruction, as the sacred bird in the old Minahasa religion which became a symbol of Gereja Masehi Injili in Minahasa (GMIM) in the context of colonialism. In particular, the discussion is about the reconstruction of meaning, from Manguni as a mythological belief to Manguni as an ecclesiastical symbolic motive that carries a message of nationalism. Since the early of 20th century, the historical context and discourse of the Minahasa Christian intellectuals have been the subject of research to trace the development of Christian nationalism (in) Minahasa. In the context of GMIM, the interested things are constituted as the dialogues and debates in colonial church forums, namely the Indische Kerk delivered by Christian leaders. This article shows that, as a reaction to colonialism which has changed many things predominantly in Christian Minahasa society, nationalism has grown and developed uniquely through discourse of community elites and church leaders. The expression of nationalism is going through political and ecclesiastical path, which both of them used the legacy of religious tradition as tool of negotiation, such as the symbol of the institution with the motive of Manguni bird.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Gereja Masehi Injili in Minahasa (GMIM) was established on September 30, 1934. Since its establishment, GMIM used the symbol that dominant with the motive of Manguni (*Lat. Otus Manadensis*), namely the sacred bird which has been believed since ancient times as the messenger of God. When GMIM was established, the nationalism movement almost reached its peak in the Dutch of East Indies. Meanwhile, since 1870s, Protestant congregations founded by the *Nederlandsch Zendeling Genootschap (NZG)*, a mission agency based in Rotterdam Netherlands, have been handed over to the *Protestantsche Kerk in Nederlandsch-Indie* (or commonly called as *Indische Kerk*), a church that directly affiliated with the colonial government.

The belief in the Manguni bird has been strongly opposed by zendeling (missionaries) since the previous centuries. However, the interested thing of GMIM as a heritage church from the zendeling's evangelism is using the Manguni bird motive when it was established. Another thing that has apparently not been studied a lot is the political meaning of the use of the Manguni bird motive in relation to the negotiation of religious, ethnic, nationalism and colonialism identities. An indication that the idea of nationalism in the selection of the Manguni bird motive on the GMIM symbol in the early days is taken a long debate in the *Kerkbestuur Indische Kerk* regarding the separation of church and state, together with the insistence on the independence of local churches. GMIM, which founded in 1934, is part of this long debate.

Both the Minahasa ancestral religion and Christianity, as well as other religious systems, are closely related to symbols. Social anthropologist, Raymond Firth said that 'the essence of symbolism' was "lied in the recognition that one referred to (represent) another thing and the relationship between the two was essentially a relationship between the concrete and the abstract, the special with the general" (Dillistone, 2002). In other words, symbols relate to a meaning that is sometimes abstract, but it refers to something experienced or concrete in life.

Unfortunately, the meaning of a symbol is not fixed. Vicktor Turner emphasized that, "The meaning of symbols is not completely fixed. Meanings may be added by collective agreement to the old symbolic vehicles" (Dillistone, 2002). That is, the meaning of symbols is the result of an interpretation and reconstruction of the materials, like motive, picture, language, and so on. The symbol reveals the way the people convey their aspirations.

This study discusses the Manguni bird motive symbol in relation to nationalism. Studies on ethnic nationalism have been carried out mainly by Henley (1992) in his dissertation entitled *Nationalism and Regionalism in a Colonial Context: Minahasa in the Dutch East Indies*. By the time, Henley is more specifically researching the development of Minahasa nationalism from the political activism of his intellectuals and ethnic-based organizations but has included Indonesian nationalism as his vision as well.

The study of Christian nationalism was mainly carried out by Ngelow (1996). The main point of Ngelow's study was clearly about Protestant Christianity in Indonesia in the process of its mutual influence with Indonesian nationalism. He pointed out that there was a process of positive development in Christianity that determined, among other things, by the aspirations of nationalism, which then leads to the discovery of its identity as Indonesian Christianity.

A different study on the relationship between Christianity and nationalism was carried out by Van Klinken (2010). The focus of his attention was Christian figures, both Catholic and Protestant, such as Ignatius Joseph Kasimo, Toedoeng Soetan Goenoeng Moelia, G.S.S.J. Ratu Langie, Amir Syarifuddin and Albertus Soegijapranata. Klinken's main concern was the personal experiences of these Christian figures who lived in a transitional period. According to Klinken, the five figures were a kind of sample to understand Christian minority groups in Indonesia.

This article focuses on discussing the Manguni bird motive as an ecclesiastical symbol that reconstructed during the colonial period. The historical context will be a matter in interpreting the meaning of Christian negotiation in Minahasa with nationalism as a response to colonialism. Thus, this article shows that a symbol is a sign of negotiation from people who believe in the religious meaning of the symbol with the context and aspirations that want to be conveyed. Besides, this article also displays that a new method of reading symbols is revealed. By analyzing the time and space context of the symbol construction process, a picture of the meaning of a particular symbol will be obtained.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative method that rests on the perspective of researcher who live in its context. The researcher is considered as the instrumental in exploring data, describing, interpreting and reconstructing it (Tracy, 2013). The subject of this research was Manguni's motive in the GMIM symbol associated with nationalism. Biologically, the Manguni bird was a species of bird that endemic in Minahasa. Mythologically, it was parts of the Minahasa religion. It is presented in old rituals. However, when it was

constructed into a motive as a symbol, 'Manguni' was a text which meant to convey a message responding to a concrete situation. From a historical perspective, the appearance of the Manguni bird motive as a symbol occurred in the colonial period. It became the context for the rise of nationalism.

The data were acquired from the reports during the time context, contemporary phenomenon that were directly related to the subject, and secondary sources in the form of books or study reports. It was then analyzed and interpreted historically and contextually to find the message and meaning of the Manguni bird motive on the church symbol that pictured at the end of the Dutch colonial period.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Manguni in the old religion of Minahasa

One of the oldest documentations regarding the condition of the Minahasa people in the past was written by Robertus Pad-burgge in his report in 1679. Pad-burgge described the social and religious life of the Minahasa people at that time, which among other things mentioned the belief in two types of birds. Each of which had a particular meaning in their religious system. The name of the bird, as he heard it, is called *Barakika*, and the other bird is called as *Kokolebo* (Padt-Brugge, 1866).

The bird called *Barakika*, written by Pad-burgge, was trusted to be the messenger of God. They gave a signal or message by sound of either good and or not. This type of bird was small, had a beard in its mouth, had white and black hair, had small legs, and did not appear during the day. Another type of bird, the *Kokolebo*, on the other hand called a special sign of something bad. It was also a night bird. These two birds were not worshiped as divine but only revered as sacred beings (Padt-Brugge, 1866).

The religious life of the Minahasa people in the past was filled with various rituals. The leading priest of the ritual called a *Walian*. The divine name called *Kasuruan*, *Empung* or also *Wailan*. In the meantime, Ancestors had an important place in every ritual. Their souls were honored as an introduction to worship *Kasuruan*. Offerings of *betel*, *areca nut*, *saguer* (palm tree water), and certain types of animals were parts of almost every ritual (Wilken, 1849).

A mythological figure named *Muntu-untu*, was mentioned as one of the children of *Lumimuut-Toar*, two primordial figures who believed to be the origins of the Minahasa people, had an important position in the Minahasa religious system. Another mythological figure was *Mamarimbing*. In such traditional language, this mythological figure called *opo Mamarimbing* or *opo Manalinga*. It was believed that *opo Mamarimbing* were the ones who kept the Manguni birds (Koagouw, 2002).

Listening to the sound of Manguni birds was absolutely accomplished for many activities in the community. Among other things, when they wanted to go on a trip. If Manguni's voice was interpreted as giving a good message, then the trip would be carried out. But, if the message was not good, then the journey would be postponed until the next day or another day. In hunting, chopping wood, clearing land, building houses, and so on, people must first listen to the messages of the Manguni bird (Riedel, 1868).

Wilken explained that the special ritual of listening to the message of the Manguni bird was called *Tumalinga sikoko*. This ritual carried out especially when a country experienced a big disaster. The priests or *walian* performed the following rituals in huts, set up on the outskirts of the land. They stayed there for days, and at night waiting for the Manguni bird to sound a good sign for the country (Wilken, 1849).

The discussion after this section will show how the mythological belief in the Manguni bird has become a symbol in a different context. This one happened after colonialism that had truly reached its climax which led to criticism, protests and struggles to get out of this torturous system. When Manguni became an ecclesiastical symbolic motive, it also seemed to indicate an attempt at a new interpretation, both on the legacy of tradition and on Christianity itself.



Manguni Bird (Sulawesi Scops Owl, *Otus Manadensis* - Petit-Duc de Manado, 2016)

Source: <https://www.oiseaux.net/birds/sulawesi.scops.owl.html>

3.2 Christianity in Minahasa, Colonialism, and Nationalism

Protestant Christianity from Europe has been introduced since the *Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie (VOC)* era. However, this significant development of religion in Minahasa, especially since 1831, was found by two zendeling representatives from the *Nederlandsch Zendeling Genootschap (NZG)* who were based on Rotterdam the Netherlands. They came to Minahasa with the name as Johann Gottlieb Schwarz and Johann Frederick Riedel. These two-zendeling styles of Christianity were pictured as *pietism* (Graaf, 1950).

It was not until 50 years since Christianity had dominated the religious life of the Minahasa people, and had almost replaced the old religion. Church buildings had already established in almost every country, which together were schools. Minahasa religious priests were increasingly under pressure. The zendeling, both openly and covertly, were a hostile to Minahasa religious practices and beliefs (Pinontoan, 2019).

Besides, in fact that the zendeling focused more on evangelism, and on certain things, it did not agree with the colonial government. For example, in such a language. The zendeling, like the NZG's understanding of Christianity that should be part of the local culture, was also related to a language. The zendeling was active in translating the Bible into the local language. In contrast to the colonial government, which actually promoted the Malay language in schools. Hence, the zendeling who focused on evangelism, their attention was on the acceptance of the indigenous. Different to the colonial government, which was absolutely political, in the form of uniformity, was through the Malay language (Pinontoan, 2019).

However, in general, the Minahasa people seem to accept the presence of the zendeling. Some Minahasa teenagers or youth lived together with the zendeling following the '*foster system*' model of education. In 1854, in Tanawangko zendeling Nicolaus Graafland opened *Kweekschool voor Inlandsche Onderwijzers* (Indigenous Teachers' School) which was a part of the management of the NZG. From this school, it generated the indigenous Minahasa teachers. Nonetheless, when it was moved to Tomohon, this school was managed by the *Indische Kerk* colonial church. It intended to produce indigenous people who could help the work of the zendeling, especially in religious matters (Pinontoan, 2019).

Besides, the forced coffee cultivation system that began in 1822 and later ended in the late 19th century was greatly tormented the Minahasa people. During this period, a number of *kapala* or leaders of Minahasa communities often protested against the colonial government. Until the end of 19th century, major in Sonder, A.L. Waworuntu delivered a petition to the general governor in Batavia. But apparently, the heads and teachers could distinguish between the Christianity which introduced by the zendeling and the colonialism of the Dutch East Indies government.

Until the end of the 19th century, the colonial government structure had been firmly established from the state level to the residency center in Manado. Likewise, with Christianity by the establishment of churches and schools in almost all countries. The schools were the spearhead of zendeling for Christianization, in which the front ranks were Minahasa teachers. The zendeling only reached district centers even though they had authority over the teachers (Pinontoan, 2019).

In 1870, a meeting of Minahasa teachers was held in Eris and Tandengan. This meeting called the "Kerapatan Minahasa". The teachers' discussion, which was also attended by the zendeling, discussed about the existence of Christianity in Minahasa. In 1875-1885, due to the difficulty of funds to finance the number of zendeling who were increasingly serving a wider area, the congregations founded by the NZG were handed over to the *Indische Kerk* colonial church. Yet, the NZG accomplished its best to maintain its schools (Pinontoan, 2019).

In the Minahasa community, there were two indigenous teachers, namely zending teachers who mainly taught in schools, and *inlan dsce leerar*, as gospel teachers who were actually more on ecclesiastical matters helping the zendeling. They were directly under the *Indische Kerk* structure through the zendeling who had also become parts of the colonial church.

In Minahasa, major physical resistance occur in the years of 1908-1809, in later called The Tondano War. After that, there was no more physical resistance to the colonial government. On the other hand, as indicated by Mawikere (1997) in his research, the resistance to colonialism carried out by Minahasa Christians in the 19th and early 20th centuries was mostly intellectual protest movements. Mawikere's study showed at least eight of these things;

- a. the emergence of the protest movement was both an answer and a reaction to changes imposed by the colonial government;
- b. coercion for the change itself carried out systematically, directed and continuously;
- c. the form and characteristics of each protest movement had evolved in variations over time and space;
- d. the changes that occurred, had shifted the two-way radical-conventional protest model into the constitutional ways;
- e. the nature of the movement tended to be local, and will always be suppressed by government authorities;
- f. the protest movement had generated an expansion, and the sympathy that had arisen over. It had become increasingly widespread and profound,
- g. the impact of the protest movement had complemented and completed the ideas of humanism, christianism, and ethicalism;
- h. the added influence of conditional and situational aspects at the moment, had finally prompted the government to change its colonial policy through what would be more accurately described as Ethical 'Colonial' Politics.

The first decade of the 20th century started to emerge conflict among the teachers and the *Indische Kerk*. In 1915, Pangkal Setia was established, an organization for the association of Minahasa teachers whose aims and objectives were supported by the number of Minahasa intellectual elites. Pangkal Setia's demand for *Kerkbestuur*, or the *Indische Kerk* church assembly headquartered in Batavia, was the establishment of an autonomous Minahasa church. In 1933, this group chose to leave the *Indische Kerk* and founded an autonomous church called Kerapatan Gereja Protestan Minahasa (KGPM). However, Minahasa Christians generally did not know about the conflict. By that matter, when GMIM stood alone in the *Indische Kerk* structure, the support of the congregations was more for this church (Burdam, 2001).

The presence of Pangkal Setia with his demands prompted *Kerkbestuur* in Batavia to hold meetings to discuss its existence. At these meetings, the number of Minahasa Christian figures, including Wenas (1933) actively spoke and conveyed his thoughts. In May 1933, Ds. Wenas told at the *Kerkbestuur* (Council or Government for Church Officials) in Batavia.

If the above matters were on the church line, then on the political route, in 1919 the Minahasa-Raad or Council of Minahasa was established. Its members were mostly Minahasa elites and intellectuals elected on a district basis. Minahasa-Raad became a forum for Minahasa elites and intellectuals to negotiate the interests of the Minahasa people with the colonial government system. One member was A.L. Waworuntu that at the end of 19th century protested against the colonial government. DR. G.S.S.J Ratu Langie who became secretary of this council (Tamon et al., 2019).

Brouwer (1936) who conducted leadership studies in the period from ancient times to the establishment of the early 20th century said that Minahasa-Raad was not only an administrative institution, but also the important thing, that the "unity that historically formed and growing, in which life and the life

force was traditionally owned. Unity with a strong sense of belonging among its members". According to Brouwer, Minahasa-Raad was formed due to the existence of Christian education and mission that had been processed for a long time in the Minahasa community. In Minahasa-Raad, there was a solidarity and a sense of kinship as fellow people.

3.3 The message of nationalism from the Manguni bird

According to Brouwer (1936), the historical and cultural background described previously was an important factor that encouraged the emergence of the discourse on the Minahasa Raad symbol which expressed the spirit of Minahasa since 1930. A member of the Minahasa-Raad named A.H.D. Supit proposed the Manguni bird motive as a symbol of this council (Interview with Talumewo, 2021). Hence, a year later, through a government decree (*gouvernementsbesluit*) October 7, 1931 No. 42, Minahasa-Raad officially used the sign with the Manguni motive (1936).

The elements in the Minahasa-Raad symbol were: "The Manguni bird was silver with outstretched wings; Its claws grip the two branches of the 'tawaang' plant with eight leaves each, the tips of which were six fan-shaped spears pointing downward. On top of the "manguni", a gold ribbon written with "Fides Pacta". Then the 16 leaves of "tawaang" were interpreted as the number of indigenous communities, namely walak which later turned into a district, then designated as an electoral district. The spear was the weapon of the Minahasa people. The number six referred to the Minahasa which divided into six administrative districts.

Brouwer (1936) explained the meaning of the Manguni bird motive on the symbol:

"Manguni" or owl is "wara'wengi", a sacred night bird. Its voice expressed the will of the ancestors (opo) or Opo Empung. In the belief of the Minahasa people who were inherited from the time of their ancestors, "manguni" is sacred, it gives a good sign, like to establish a country or building a large house. The reddish tawaang leaves are utilized by the saints at each fosso to find out something or to drive out evil spirits. In general, the plant is also used as a land of boundary mark.

According to Brouwer (1936), regarding the motto, it was originally suggested that "Minaësa" meant the unity of each district. However, the motto that was agreed upon was "Fides Pacta" (Agreement of Loyalty) that referred to the Minahasa relationship with the Netherlands. He also pointed to the status of the Minahasa, that had a better Dutch relations, as the twelfth province. For this reason, there was a great hope that Minahasa-Raad was to serve the interests of all Minahasa and Dutch people (1936). By this phenomenon, it was actually evident that there was a negotiation between *keminahasan* and Dutch colonialism, namely "Minaësa" that clearly had a cultural meaning, while "Fides Pacta" had a political meaning.

It is interested to pay attention to the explanation of the meaning of these symbols. In the meantime, traditions from old religions and the myths that are believed in them are now being brought back, not for rituals but as markers of the existence of political institutions, and also as a tool of expressing unity. Mirce Eliade (1962) emphasized that the image displayed by symbols was an effective tool for unifying humans rather than any analytical language. "Indeed, if the supreme solidarity of all mankind did exist, it can be felt and "activated "only at the image level" (Eliade, 1991).

Hence, referring to Eliade's explanation, Manguni's motive for the institution which is a form of Minahasanity-Christianity negotiations against colonialism is a symbol of solidarity and unity of a people. The context of colonialism at all is the context of the creation of nationalism. In this case, Benedict Anderson's explanation can help us to understand the reconstruction of the Manguni-patterned symbol as a form of negotiation between the will for free and independence in a colonial structure that is still firmly embedded in the lands belonging to that people. Anderson (1999) said, "Perhaps 85% of the nationalist movement started as an anti-state movement against the colonialistic and absolutistic dynastic state structure."

Furthermore, the interested thing in discussing about nationalism in GMIM, a church that until the early 1940s which was still in a colonial church structure, is the Indische Ker. It was the use of the Manguni bird motive as a symbol of this church when it was found. The GMIM symbol has been used since this church founded on September 30, 1934. On the cover of the book "The Book of Remembrance concerning the Establishment of the Protestant Minahasa Church" in 1934, the picture used was the symbol of GMIM as known today.

The form and description of its meaning is known like today and officially used. It has many similarities to the Minahasa-Raad symbol. The comparison is pictured as follows:

Tabel 1 Symbol of Minahasa Raad and Symbol of GMIM

	
The symbol of Minahassa-Raad (Source : Collection of Bodewyn G. Talumewo)	The symbol of GMIM from the book "<i>Kitab Peringatan Perihal Perajaan Pendirian Geredja Protestant Minahasa</i>" (1934)
1. The Manguni bird is silver with outstretched wings; its claws gripped the 'tawaang' branch. "Manguni" or owl is "wara 'wengi", a sacred night bird. His voice expressed the will of the ancestors (opo) or Opo Empung. In the belief of the Minahasa people who were inherited from the time of their ancestors, "manguni" was sacred, it gave a good sign, such as by establishing a country or building a large house. 2. Two branches of the 'tawaang' plant, each of them is counted with eight leaves. The reddish of tawaang leaves are used by the saints at each fosso to know something or to drive out evil spirits. In general, these plants are also used as land boundary markers. The 16 leaves of "tawaang" are defined as the number of indigenous communities, namely walak which later turned into a district. At that time, it was designated as an electoral district. 3. Six fan-shaped spears points downward. "The spear is the weapon of the Minahasa people. The number six refers to the Minahasa is divided into six administrative districts. 4. The words are "Fides Pacta".	1. The Manguni bird symbolizes "the Church in the land of Minahasa". 2. The dark brown color in the Manguni bird symbolizes maturity and independence, which characterizes the life of the congregation in GMIM. 3. The rose placed at the heart of the manguni symbolizes the Reformation. This symbol represents Jesus Christ as the Principal Reform of the Church and has been used in the Reformed Church since the 16th century. 4. The blue circle on the chest symbolizes that as a Church, GMIM is sent into the world, while the black color on the cross in the middle of the red heart symbolizes the sacrifice of Christ that animates GMIM fellowship, testimony and ministry. 5. The blue sea symbolizes that GMIM will continue to face small and big struggles, while the white color represents the holiness and truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ. 6. The month of September in which GMIM stands alone is denoted by the nine outer wings. The date of the 30's inauguration is depicted on the five leaf petals and the tapered tip that circles the heart. Meanwhile, 1934 is the total number of wing strands. 7. In the tail, there are ten branches. Each of them describes the state of the ten GMIM service areas when they are standing alone, which consists of ten classifications and will continue developing. The classics are:

	Manado, Maumbi, Tomohon, Tondano, Langowan, Sonder, Ratahan, Amurang, Motoling, Airmadidi and Manado City. 8. The six spear points pointing downward represent the six districts in Minahasa when GMIM was established, They are : Tonsea, Manado, Toulour, Kawangkoan, Amurang, Ratahan in which GMIM services were carried out. 9. The writing of the Gereja Masehi Injili in Minahasa, states that GMIM is only in the land of Minahasa, even though its ministry reaches the entire world and the black color in the writing expresses solidarity until the end (Church Order 2007 and earlier). <i>"Tulisan Gereja Masehi Injili di Minahasa, menyatakan bahwa GMIM berada di tanah Minahasa, di Negara Kesatuan Republik Indonesia dan di seluruh dunia. Warna hitam pada tulisan itu menyatakan solidaritas sampai akhir. (Tata Gereja 2016).</i>
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The GMIM symbol and its description are usually listed on the last page of the book of Church Order (Church Regulations). In a number of church administration books prior to 2016, the explanation ends by mentioning the source, which is seen as written one, it says: "Sent back from Source: GMIM News Edition No. 4, June 1985, p. 35". Until this article was completed, the researcher did not obtain the source of document. However, from the current official explanation, the nine points as mentioned in the table above are used as the meaning of each element in the GMIM symbol.

By having attention to the comparison of the explanation between the Minahasa-Raad symbol and the GMIM, it seems that there are the similar elements. But, the GMIM symbol especially has been added with the theological explanation and the date of the foundation of this church. In the Minahasa-Raad symbol, the explanation of the Manguni motive pays more attention to the meaning of the tradition, while in the GMIM symbol, the explanation refers more to the identity of this church as 'the church in the Land of Minahasa'. Looking back at Brouwer's explanation of the original plan for the Minahasa-Raad symbol that he proposed was the inscription of 'Minaesa' (later replaced by 'Fides Pacta'). In fact, the word 'Minahasa' appears in the symbol of GMIM following the name of this church.

Until now, there has no document been found, that explaining the reasons of the GMIM founder chose the Manguni motive in his church mark. But, to understand the message or meaning behind these symbolic elements, especially the Manguni bird motive, the writer took the alternative of connecting it with the Minahasa-Raad symbol which was officially used since 1931, 3 years before GMIM was founded. The 1930s can be said to be a time when criticism of colonialism was almost at its peak. In Batavia, for example, in 1926 and 1928 a Youth Congress was held. Youth organizations from Minahasa were also presented at the congress.

In *Kerbestuur Indische Kerk* meetings, especially in 1933, Minahasa Christian figures who received pastoral education in the Netherlands spoke out loudly about Christianity in Minahasa. In the spirit to immediately welcome the church in Minahasa to stand alone, Wenas (1933), among other things, emphasized on the more fundamental importance of the meaning of the "free church". The first is about the importance of increasing numbers of Minahasa people to become church leaders. Second, there is a need to improve the quality of education of prospective church leaders. Third, Christians in Minahasa can understand their cultural duties. Regarding this discussion, Wenas stated that *"orang-orang yang dijiwai dengan kebenaran ini, bahwa mereka harus bertindak sebagai orang-orang yang memiliki kepedulian di bumi, atas kemanusiaan, atas tatanan ciptaan, kepada Tuhan sebagai tujuan suci"*.

Wenas (1933) spoke with a big vision about the Minahasa church. According to him, the task of Christian culture is "management of nature in science, technology, trade, traffic, politics, art as well as mission, care for the soul, religious education, social, internal and external missions". If it is interpreted the

thoughts of Dr. Wenas, it seems that he has imagined a more progressive and transformative form of Christianity that can give Minahasa more meaning, not only to the extent of being spiritual but also intellectual, social, economic and political.

In essence, Ds. Wenas conveyed to the Indische Kerk officials, who were mostly Dutch, that Christians in Minahasa were very ready to build a church independent from the colonial church. By mentioning both leadership of the Minahasa people and the task of Christian culture, it seemed like Ds. Wenas implicitly wanted to say that "Christian nationalism" as theologically and culturally Christianity in Minahasa had found its form as the 'people's church'.

Based on the reality, among the Dutch pastors, especially E.A.A. de Vreede, whom at that time served as a *predicant* or clergy official who led the priests (*prediker*), also had his exceptions to what was developing at that time, namely the spirit of nationalism. On January 5, 1932, de Vreede promoted his dissertation entitled *Het Nationalisme Als Zedelijk Vraagstuk* (Nationalism as an Ethical Problem) at the Theology Faculty of Rijks Universiteit, Groningen.

De Vreede's dissertation discussed the Christian ethically about nationalism. The problem lied that on the one hand, the Christian faith was essentially *supra-national*, but, colonialism and imperialism created to a synthesis of nationalism. De Vreede wanted to answer this tension with a Christian ethical approach as well. At the end of his dissertation, de Vreede finally emphasized that ethically, the church needed to express an attitude towards the phenomenon of nationalism (Vreede, 1932).

For de Vreede, "The colonial problem was the *demonstratio ad oculos* of the destruction of history"; "The colonial problem was *demonstration ad oculos* from the destruction of a reason", by which "the colonial problem was a cross" (1932). Colonialism is a big problem for humanity. Then, theologically, the problem of colonialism is the cross. That is, firstly because colonialism was absolutely painful, so that it takes the church's call of responsibility for *redemption* as the theological meaning of the cross in Christian teaching.

At the end of his dissertation, de Vreede formulated an ethical call for the church to service to freedom: "This was transcendent solidarity, which assumed the burdens of one another and thus fulfills the law of Christ"; "Therefore, our ethics was not only humanistic, but also theologically oriented". It is emphasized again, that "And that was why the last word was for the church which containing the word reconciliation. It was also a church that can alleviate the pain of East and West friction. The church executed in the message of God's love, in the proclamation of the upcoming kingdom of God, in the preaching of love" (Vreede, 1932, p. 163).

Either the description of Wenas (1933), a Minahasa priest, or Vreede (1932), a Dutch pastor, as the people who were in the line of the *Indische Kerk* colonial church, and also the Christians with new thoughts who witnessed closely to the destruction of humanity due to colonialism, should be actually provided information about the historical context and the creation of GMIM. They consciously selected the Manguni motive as an ecclesiastical symbol. The Manguni symbol, which traditionally has a religious mythological meaning, is now an antithesis to colonialism. It has then been reconstructed into a 'message of nationalism' within the cage structure of colonialism itself.

For this reason, it is true by having seen the analysis of Hendrik Kraemer, a missionary who worked at the Dutch Bible Society in Indonesia regarding the dynamics of Christianity in the East, especially in the Dutch East Indies. He said that there were two factors driving the demand for the establishment of an independent church in this colony. First, there had been a shift in understanding or a better missiological paradigm among mission agencies regarding the East. Kraemer's statement pointed to a change in the missiological understanding of the relationship of the Western church which previously considered itself to be a *zendeling* "sender" or missionary so that it felt superior to Christians in the East as recipients of the gospel message. Second, the main thing was the nationalism that had temporarily emerged in the East. At first, it was revealed in politics, but then the spirit spread to all fields. In a context where it had difficulty in developing, said by Kraemer, nationalism manifested as a voice that expressed in mission work, both as a veiled and overt (Kraemer, 1937).

Identically, Kraemer showed to Christians in Minahasa, or also in Ambon and Kupang, especially for their leaders, that had to be a part of the structure of the *Indische Kerk*, the colonial church. Christian nationalism among Christian leaders in these areas is in the form of a 'voice' which is expressed in discourse negotiations in the official *Kerkbestuur* forums. It then later in Minahasa which mainly being presented in the form of an ecclesiastical symbol with the motive of the Manguni bird.

In other words, it can also be said that the demand for the establishment of an autonomous church with nationalism has a close relationship, both nationalism as the driving force, and the demand as a form of nationalism itself. In this case, the notion of nationalism in my opinion does not need to be distinguished or contradicted with *regionalism* as pictured through the concept of Henley (1992). In the case that

associated with the later Indonesian state, the term 'regionalism' is exactly relevant to understanding the development of Indonesian nationalism. The researcher agrees more with the opinion of Grosby (2011), who said that, "The legal and political relations of the state are analytically different from the cultural community on regional kinship relations, the nation". The researcher reflects that the nations which later formed Indonesia has been clear. For example, the Minahasanese must first be understood as a 'nation' whose development of will and desire to unite (nationalism) has its own uniqueness.

Nevertheless, Henley (1992), acknowledged the role of Christianity through zendeling who contributed to the formation of 'unity' in Minahasa. It consist of various indigenous communities. Besides, the interesting thing is the discovery of the will of unity as a nation or nationalism, which not only apart from the political route, namely the Minahasa-Raad, but also through the church route. On the one hand, it manifested itself in the formation of a church which openly opposed to the domination of the *Indische Kerk*, namely KGPM, founded in 1933. On the other hand, Christian nationalism (in) Minahasa manifested in the establishment of GMIM. For the explanations, it is clear in accordance with the discussion, that through the thoughts of Wenas (1933) also Vreede (1932) ideas of nationalism can be traced. Henley (1992) then concluded about these two churches, "Even though the two churches were rival churches, both of them emphasized that *the Minahasa people* were the main focus of the Minahasa identity.

4. CONCLUSION

Colonialism, which changed many things in people's lives, including the effects of the damage it caused, was the context for the emergence of resistance and protests from leaders in Minahasa at the 19th century. However, the presence of zendeling or missionaries (NZG) who have established schools in almost all countries in the Land of Minahasa and as the people who are greeted with knowledgeable welcome from the Minahasa people has contributed to the creation of community and church leaders who have the awareness and intellectual ability to respond critically to colonialism.

Christian nationalism (in) Minahasa, as has been discussed in the previous discussion, emerged with a distinctive strategy through political and church channels. Those two cannot be separated in terms of time and space as well as discourse. Importantly, the most obvious thing about this relationship is the expression of aspirations with symbols, both of which assort the Manguni bird as their motive. The Minahasa Christian nationalism takes the form of symbols as a result of the interpretation and reconstruction of the legacy of the ancestral traditions to express the aspirations of nationalism.

Having seen the symbol with the motive of the Manguni bird, the message of nationalism is conveyed. This identity symbol implicitly wants to express political and theological 'separation' from the domination of colonial politics over land and thought, and in religious matters. It is an ethical-theological reconstruction of the meaning of the gospel which set free. In a substantial sense, the message of nationalism from the Manguni bird motive seems to be a sign of affirmation of Indonesia's Christian identity.

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