

# Manado's Consumptive Lifestyle: A Lived Religion Perspective to Construct Contextual Pastoral Theology



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## ABSTRACT

This article develops a pastoral theology tailored to the lifestyle and context of individuals in Manado, providing a basis for contextual pastoral counseling. Similar to how theology is influenced by its context, pastoral theology in Manado is shaped by its specific consumptive lifestyle context. The commonly repeated statement that is said to support this lifestyle is "*biar kalah nasi mar jang kalah aksi*" (even if you don't eat, you have to be stylish). This extravagant lifestyle has the potential to create issues within the family and give rise to numerous other familial problems, as it is associated with excessive spending or squandering of significant amounts of money. By employing the techniques of participant observation and literary analysis from a lived religion perspective, it was concluded that the pastoral approach developed in Manado originates from the setting of a prominent consumptive lifestyle, which is characteristic of the people in Manado within the larger Indonesian society.

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## Introduction

The consensus among Indonesians is that the Manado (or Minahasa) tribe or region is considered one of the most fashionable in Indonesia. While several tribes in Indonesia engage in consumption, Manado is renowned for having the most prevalent consumptive lifestyle. The famous slogan is "*biar kalah nasi mar jang kalah aksi*" (even if you don't eat, you have to be stylish). This consumer lifestyle is evident in various aspects, including appearance, shopping, social gatherings, dining, and other related activities. The prevalence of these extravagant lifestyle trends is frequently observed in Manado (or among the Manadonese population in other regions of Indonesia), hence, it is unsurprising that the Manadonese lifestyle is often viewed negatively by others.

This lifestyle has a ripple effect on several other elements of life, as a consumptive lifestyle necessitates a significant expenditure. The economy and prosperity of Manado differ from those of major cities in Indonesia, such as the capital Jakarta. Given the Regional Minimum Wage (UMR: *Upah Minimum Regional*) of approximately IDR 3.545 million (Radio Republik Indonesia, 2023), it appears inadequate to support a consumerist lifestyle. An extravagant lifestyle can have a detrimental impact on a family's finances. The funds required to sustain this lifestyle will

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consume your whole income and even result in indebtedness. Financial difficulties within a family can give rise to a multitude of additional issues within the family unit. Pastoral counseling is particularly relevant in addressing these familial issues.

Pastoral counseling is a component of the applied discipline of theological sciences. According to Mesach Krisetya, counseling has historically focused on resolving a range of life issues (Krisetya, 2015:64). One of the objectives of pastoral counseling is to assist individuals in effectively managing and resolving the issues they may encounter. To address this issue in pastoral counseling, the widely adopted method of Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) has been developed. CPE combines psychology and medicine, leading to an emphasis on pastoral counseling as a means of facilitating healing from issues. Sianturi categorizes the paradigm integrating psychology and medical under the CPE method as a clinical pastoral paradigm (Sianturi, 2022:369). This emphasis on resolution allows for pastoral counseling to be consistently regarded as problem-oriented. Nevertheless, Krisetya realized that problem-oriented counseling was inadequate in addressing the multitude of issues present in a diverse environment (Krisetya, 2015:65). In the prevalent environment of Manado, the act of "resolving issues" through consumption is an ongoing endeavor that is ingrained in daily life. According to Krisetya, the purpose of counseling is not to solve the problem (the way out), but to confront the fundamental issue (the way in). The counselee is encouraged to endure the problem and, with the help of the counsellor, work through it. It is essential to accept the problem as an unavoidable reality and resolve it based on one's abilities (Krisetya, 2015:67). To comprehend and engage with the challenges at hand, it is crucial to consider the specific Manado/Minahasa context.

Multiple researchers have conducted studies on contextual pastoral theology. Daniel Susanto emphasized the necessity for Pastoral Theology in Indonesia to align with the specific characteristics and circumstances of the Indonesian context (Susanto, 2014:77-107). The Indonesian context is extensive and diverse; hence, the context of Manado is undoubtedly unique. Several academics have conducted contextual pastoral studies on Manado, but they have not focused on the most prominent aspect of the Manado setting, which is the consumptive lifestyle. Research conducted by Opit and Sumendap (2021:90-115) is normative since it employs religious texts as authoritative criteria for evaluating a given environment. Despite the shared Manadonese background of both authors, their failure to use Minahasan references indicates a lack of proficiency in interpreting the context and significance of the phrase "*biar kalah nasi mar jang kalah aksi*." The research conducted by Raintung and Susanto (2021:1-20) on *si tou tu mou tu mou tou* (Man lives to live others) is considered contextual research. However, it should be noted that the Minahasa people in Manado do not utilize this phrase. Research conducted by Sianturi and Wentuk (2018:17-29) regarding matters related to religion and pastoral care. Tolerance is a fascinating area of study, encompassing the concept of tolerance within the setting of Manado. However, it does not directly address consumer lifestyles.

This article presents a contextual pastoral theology derived from research on the Minahasa setting, utilizing the lens of lived religion, which refers to the religious practices and beliefs experienced and expressed in everyday life. According to Ammerman, religion appears to have a significant cultural impact that extends beyond what can be measured by asking individuals about their beliefs (Ammerman, 2007:220). Contextual pastoral theology is necessary, as Lartey argues, "pastoral theologies by their very nature arise out of particular contexts". Social, economic, and cultural context to a large extent influences what is available, relevant, and necessary for pastoral theology" (Lartey, 2013:42). The daily experiences of the Manado community will serve as the foundation for developing the contextual pastoralism of this community. This article examines the context of conspicuous consumption in the lives of the Manadonese/Minahasan. It explores the perspective of pastoral counseling and lived religion in this lifestyle setting, discussing how the theology of pastoral counseling might be constructed within this context.

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## Research Method

This study employed a qualitative research approach, gathering participant observational data and utilizing existing literature. The study was conducted from February 2023 to November 2024. Participant observation was performed at three Christian Evangelical Churches in Minahasa (GMIM: Gereja Masehi Injili di Minahasa) in Manado, representing both urban and suburban locations. The churches are GMIM Perak Sorong, GMIM Galilea Teling, and GMIM Pinaesaan GPI. The authors observed and participated in the congregation's daily activities associated with a consumptive lifestyle, particularly by attending routine worship services, as well as specific celebrations including birthdays, anniversaries, and Thanksgiving.

The data were examined from the perspective of lived religion. As stated by Ammerman, lived religion is “studying what people do” (Ammerman, 2021:15). This article examined the primary aspect of people's daily lives, which is a lifestyle characterized by consumption. This study aims to analyze the development of the context and setting of pastoral counseling, with a specific focus on its implementation in Manado. Additionally, the study also examined how pastoral counseling is practiced in Manado and studied within the Pastoral Counseling study program at Manado State Christian Institute (IAKN: Institut Agama Kristen Negeri Manado). Finally, a contextual pastoral counseling will be constructed for the people of Manado employing analysis based on contextual pastoral theology.

## Results and Discussion

### *Context of Conspicuous Consumption in Manado/Minahasa*

“Manado” and “Minahasa” are distinct terms with distinct connotations. However, they are frequently employed interchangeably to denote the identical group of individuals. The first phrase refers to the city, namely the capital of the North Sulawesi province. The second term refers to the tribe or tribes, region, and language. These many terms are frequently mistaken for one another, seemingly to facilitate their identification. For instance, individuals belonging to the Minahasan ethnic group may be recognized or associated as Manadonese, regardless of whether they reside in the city of Manado. Similarly, individuals living in Manado are often referred to as Minahasans, although it is not always accurate to assume that all Manadonese are Minahasans. They may be immigrants, given that the bulk of residents in the city of Manado are Minahasan. Although these two concepts are distinct, they are employed to denote identity on both a national and worldwide scale.

The Manadonese/Minahasa people are characterized as a consumerist civilization in Indonesia. Arriving at this decision undoubtedly required a significant amount of time. It took a considerable amount of time for individuals from other parts of Indonesia to engage and familiarize themselves with the Manadonese/Minahasa community in their daily interactions, leading them to recognize that the Manadonese society is characterized by conspicuous consumerism. Inherently possess a proclivity to identify and categorize fellow beings, Jenkins demonstrates that identity is the human capacity – rooted in language – to know ‘who’s who’ and hence ‘what’s what’ (Jenkins, 2014:6). While not every individual can be uniformly identify, we think that there are overall similarities in the characteristics of the Manadonese and the characteristic that distinguishes Manado society as a consumer society is its long-term engagement.

The alleged consumerist nature of the Manadonese people might be attributed to their historical roots in the Minahasa people, who constituted the majority population in the city of Manado. The population of Manado comprises not only the Minahasa ethnic group but also local indigenous tribes and immigrants, and is further influenced by international nations. Nevertheless, the Minahasa tribe's predominant influence extends to the whole lives of the

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people of Manado. Manado is a city predominantly inhabited by the Minahasan ethnic group, who are also predominantly Christian. These statues of Minahasa figures, such as Lumimuut and Toar (the mythological ancestor of the Minahasan people), are prominently displayed at various points throughout the city of Minahasa. In addition, there is a colossal figure of Jesus bestowing blessings, a statue of a cross, and several other decorative objects. Furthermore, the city is renowned for its vast number of churches, earning it the title of the "city of a thousand churches". Thus, to ascertain the origins of conspicuous consumption in Manado, one must examine the early history of the Minahasa people.

The Minahasa tribe is characterized by its emphasis on equality and competitiveness, due to its recognition as an egalitarian society (Renwarin, 2006:7; Schouten, 1998:11; Weichart, 2007). Throughout its history, the region of Minahasa has never been under the sovereignty of a unified monarchy or monarch that governed all its people. The Minahasa people reside in localized communities, organized under the leadership of a *tonaas* (political leader) and a *walian* (religious leader). Due to their equality, every individual in society can engage in competition in their daily lives. Individuals engage in competition for social status, striving for prestige by displaying attributes of intelligence, power, and wealth. This competition often involves vying for leadership positions within their respective groups, known as *tonaas*. Unlike the royal system, the noble class or the commoner class in Minahasa is not determined by familial origin, but rather must be earned through effort and struggle. In Minahasa, individuals can attain elevated social standing through attributes.

The Minahasa people often display their wealth in their daily lives as a means of achieving social prestige. They engage in competition to demonstrate their social rank. This competition in Minahasa became an area of interest for the Netherlands scientists, such as Schoeten in her study. In ancient Minahasa, "beras" (uncooked rice) was used as a symbol of social status. According to Schouten, "In Minahasa, wealth was a necessary condition of prestige. However, it was useless to accumulate goods if they were not shown to others, and were not distributed or even destroyed on certain occasions, such as a status festival." (Schouten, 1998:26) People with a large number of *beras* will display a large number of sacks of rice on their verandas. As a sleeping area for guests, they will lay down a mat on top of sacks of rice. They will also allow the bed bugs to accelerate the decay to demonstrate that they have an abundance of rice. A remarkable form of 'conspicuous consumption' (Schouten, 1998:26).

This performative relationship between food and status is not limited to the passive display of goods, such as rice; it is also enacted in the active consumption and sharing of food, particularly during social gatherings. Food consumption, especially in ceremonial feasts, serves as another vital avenue for asserting prestige. As Weichart observes, Minahasan celebrations involve structured roles—hosts, guests, and workers—each contributing to the social dynamics of the event (Weichart, 2007). When a host organizes a grand dinner that accommodates a large number of guests, it is necessary to prepare a substantial amount of food. In contrast to the present, where food is typically produced by catering services, in the past, food was made by a multitude of workers. An increasing number of workers are indicating that the party host possesses a significant level of social prestige. The occasion to demonstrate the host's capacity to hire a multitude of individuals for culinary purposes arises when organizing a grand feast. The significance and influence of the guest or guests directly elevate the host's status. These notable guests typically receive preferential seating in the front and are acknowledged by the host or guest during the speech or expression of gratitude.

This emphasis on prestige and refinement in food-related practices laid the groundwork for how Minahasan society would later respond to external cultural influences. The presence of foreign nations appears to enhance the extravagant way of life of the Minahasan people. From English, Spanish, Portuguese, to Dutch. The Minahasa people underwent rapid transformations upon the advent of foreign nations, particularly the Dutch, and adapted their customs and

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fashions to align with those of these foreign nations. These foreign nations require a means to assimilate into the local culture as they exploit particular cultures that align with their political goals. According to Pinontoan: "this interaction involves more than just one party's "conversion"; it also involves the other party's response, resistance, negotiation, and dialog" (Pinontoan, 2019:4). The presence of these foreign nations brought modernization to Minahasa, resulting in increased conspicuous consumption and a more elegant lifestyle, even though it might extinguish other Minahasan customs.

The influence of historical factors, including the passive display of goods and the active consumption during communal feasts, alongside the effects of foreign influences, underlay contemporary lifestyles. The Minahasan people's cultural heritage is deeply ingrained in their identity as they migrated and established their community in present-day Manado. Given the prevailing demographic in the city of Manado, this could potentially have an impact on the entire population of Manado. The advent of Industry 4.0, as coined by Schwab (2016), has brought about a significant increase in modernity and technological advancements. This progress increasingly endorses a lifestyle centered around conspicuous consumerism and social status. The convenience of shopping has increased with the proliferation of malls and the widespread availability of online shopping platforms. Social media is an ideal platform for self-promotion. The absence of financial resources does not diminish the aspiration to attain social status through the utilization of conveniences such as credit cards, online loans, and bank credit.

### ***Pastoral Counseling and Lived Religion Perspective in the Context of Manado***

Pastoral is a term used in the church to describe the act of tending to the spiritual needs of God's people. The individual responsible for leading and caring for this community is referred to as a pastor, which is derived from the Latin word translated as shepherd. The term used by the Catholic church and other denominations, or alternatively, as a *gembala* (pastor translation in Indonesia), as used by particular churches. Despite the presence of several peculiarities and discrepancies in the prominent Christian Evangelical Church in Minahasa (GMIM) in Manado, it is worth noting that the leader of the congregation is referred to as a *pendeta* and resides in a dwelling known as a *pastori*. This is an inconsistent use of terms. The *pastori* is the place where the pastor lives, while the leader of the GMIM congregation is called a *pendeta*, from the Sanskrit word *pandita*. In this instance, the Minahasa Protestant Church Assembly (KGPM: Kerapatan Gereja Protestan Minahasa) employs the more fitting terminology, specifically "*gembala*". However, pastoral is a theological term that is commonly recognized by churches as an integral aspect of church service, particularly in the Manado/Minahasa region.

Moreover, the term "pastoral" is closely tied to the perspective or framework of counseling science itself. Firstly, pastoralism is a component of counseling, making it the primary secular discipline within the field of counseling. In this instance, it becomes Christian counseling, which refers to counseling that is specifically affiliated with a particular religion. Furthermore, counseling is an integral component of pastoral care, making it an inherent aspect of theology. This article examines the concept of pastoral understanding within the context of pastoral care and ministry. The term "pastoral" refers to the analogy used in the Old Testament to characterize God's care for His people, as shown in Psalm 23. Jesus Christ later utilizes this comparison in the New Testament to depict Himself as the good shepherd, as mentioned in John 10. Subsequently, the responsibility of shepherding was transferred to the disciples (John 21:15-19), who in turn delegated it to designated servants (1 Peter 5). The phrase "pastoral" in the context of shepherding encompasses a wide range of services, including teaching, mentoring, writing, visits, talks, sermons, prayer, and counseling.

The term "pastoral," which was subsequently incorporated into the phrase "counseling," possesses its distinct context. Suppose the former term is a reference to a concept from the agricultural setting described in the Old Testament. In that case, the latter term is a

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contemporary term used in Western society. This phrase has evolved across multiple domains, including religious institutions. The word was originally employed by Frank Parsons in the realm of vocation guidance, positing that young individuals require counsel in selecting a vocation (Parsons, 2007:5). The name "pastoral" is derived from the Latin word for shepherd, reflecting its origins in the language of early Christianity, which experienced significant growth inside the Roman empire. In Israel, the Old Testament is associated with the occupation of shepherding sheep. In the Indonesian context, cowherds are commonly used for grazing purposes. The counseling setting appears to be less prevalent in Indonesia, resulting in a more limited practice of counseling compared to the Western context. Similarly, when these two concepts are merged, they form pastoral counseling, a practice that is not very prevalent in Indonesian everyday life, including in Manado, except within religious institutions and the realm of theological studies.

In Indonesia, the utilization of counseling and pastoral language and practices, similar to those observed in the Western world, is less prevalent. This can be attributed to the disparities in cultural traditions. Seeking guidance or advice from others, particularly from more experienced or knowledgeable individuals, is a common practice. However, in the Western world, this practice has evolved into a more formal and specialized profession known as counseling, which has gained popularity. In Indonesia, individuals tend to confide in their friends rather than seeking guidance from professionals in their respective fields, such as counselors or psychologists. Several individuals informed the pastor about their issues, although only a small number of people appeared to do so. The low need for professional assistance has resulted in a limited number of practitioners in this domain. Ronda asserts that the quantity of experienced psychologists and psychiatrists in Indonesia falls short of the expectations established by the World Health Organization (Ronda, 2016:6). Information regarding the amount of professional Christian counselors in Indonesia is exceedingly challenging to obtain. Nevertheless, empirical evidence from psychology suggests that the demand for professional assistants is relatively low, since few individuals actively seek their assistance. Particularly those linked to Christianity. Based on our observation in Manado, individuals appear to be shy in sharing their difficulties with others, excluding close friends and family. This is due to the perception that their problems are shameful and should not be disclosed to professionals such as counselors or priests. Another concern is that pastoral counseling often relies on providing advice based on biblical scriptures, which can convey a judgmental tone. This approach is referred to as the classical-clerical paradigm (Sianturi, 2022:368). However, this approach may not always be suitable for addressing the specific issues faced by troubled congregations. This diminishes the appeal of pastoral counseling as a practical discipline for application in everyday situations within congregations and churches.

The phrases "Pastoral" and "Counseling" are commonly used in the academic field of theology. The amalgamation of these two names also constitutes one of the theological disciplines within the practicum branch. Pastoral Counseling is the commonly used term for departments or study programs at several theological colleges in Indonesia, including IAKN Manado, which is the specific study program that we, as researchers, have observed. Due to its initial lack of interest, this study program became the least populated at IAKN Manado during that period. In the present era, when societal advancements occur and familial issues become increasingly complex, the field of pastoral counseling becomes indispensable. Hence, it is essential to understand the contextual complexities of societal problems within a specific social framework.

Varying sociocultural environments give rise to distinct challenges, necessitating diverse approaches to address them. Furthermore, the pastoral counseling approach has shifted its focus from issue-solving to problem understanding to develop a strategic course of action based on context. This approach is referred to as the intercultural paradigm (Sianturi, 2022:370).

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Consequently, the pastoral counseling required in a specific sector of society will vary. Pastoral counseling must be tailored to the particular circumstances of the culture. Given its affiliation with theological research, contextual theology naturally encompasses pastoral counseling. While the phrase "pastoral counseling" is not often used in the Indonesian setting. One factor contributing to the limited popularity of pastoral counseling in Manado is the mismatch between the counseling approach and the local cultural context. This is where the lived religion perspective can be applied as an approach to addressing the everyday context of culture.

The lived religion approach is intriguing for examining the religious practices of the Manadonese people, who are known for their devoutness and rarely go a day without engaging in worship. Lived religion focus on what people do rather than on 'official' religion, its sacred sources, its institutes, and its doctrines (Ganzevoort and Roeland, 2014:93). By using this lens, it becomes evident that the congregation's (namely GMIM, as the majority) expectations diverge from the realities of daily existence. While grassroots consistently promotes the GMIM doctrine, they do not embody the devoted and pious characteristics of frugal Christians. Instead, they continue to embrace the Minahasan culture, which prioritizes prestige and indulges in a consumptive lifestyle. Through the MTPJ (Menjabarkan Trilogi Pembangunan Jemaat/Congregation Building Trilogy), a monthly sermon guidebook issued by GMIM (2022), we may observe that the way the congregation lives their everyday life, particularly the consumptive lifestyle, does not necessarily align with the ideology of the church.

To understand the circumstances of the people of Manado, one must observe their daily lives. In the context of Manado, two primary indicators can be used to observe the daily life of its residents. Firstly, the prevalence of Christianity among the Manado population is evident through the presence of churches. Secondly, the influence of Christianity is also reflected in the policies and actions of the Manado municipal administration. The GMIM is the largest church in the region and has its roots in the Minahasa tribe. However, the church's synod symbol (GMIM, 2022) does not give much consideration to the specific cultural background of the Minahasa people, except for the church's name, which references the Manguni bird (owl), and the fact that the bulk of its members are from the Minahasa community. In this instance, the church disregards the consumerist environment that is specifically associated with the Manadonese and Minahasa communities. Conversely, the Manado city government demonstrates its commitment to the majority of Manado residents and the city's geographical significance by incorporating renowned Minahasa symbols (Government of Manado, 2022), such as the Manguni bird, into the official logo. Additionally, the motto "si tou tu mou tu mou tou" further emphasizes this dedication. Minahasa landmarks can be seen throughout the city, including statues of Toar and Lumimuut, as well as other notable monuments. Nevertheless, the lives of the people from Manado are not shown in the same way as those from Minahasa, whose motto is prominently displayed on the logo of the municipal administration.

The use of the lived religion perspective in this context involves examining not only the institutional understanding but also the manifestation of religion in everyday life. The majority of individuals in Manado adhere to the Christian faith and lead a consumerist lifestyle in their daily lives. The essence of the experience is rooted in Christian principles, specifically gratitude, yet it is manifested through an excessive focus on consumption. The word that is embodied daily is thanksgiving, as everything is conveyed with a sense of gratitude. Therefore, the religion of the Minahasa people centers around the act of expressing gratitude (Dendeng and Wasida, 2022:86-94). Thanksgiving encompasses all celebrations, speech, prayers, and the entirety of life.

The celebration of Thanksgiving in Manado typically involves engaging in activities that involve spending money. A lavish lifestyle necessitates significant expenditures. Ivan R.B. Kaunang asserts that this ritual predated the advent of Christianity in Minahasa. This custom, from a Christian perspective, constitutes an expression of gratitude, yet from an economic

standpoint, it is seen as wasteful (Tribun Manado Wiki News, 2020). Not every individual from Manado has the financial means to sustain this particular way of living. Thanksgiving is typically celebrated in Minahasa, but it has recently started to be observed in Manado as well. Despite the Manado city government's request to conduct Thanksgiving festivities in churches, our observations showed that numerous congregations are still celebrating at home, arguing a need to reciprocate for the hospitality they received in Minahasa. Through careful study, it is evident that individuals with average or even limited financial circumstances continue to adhere to this way of life. This can lead to familial issues as the besar pasak daripada tiang (pegs surpass the size of the poles). Spouses may encounter issues with their spouses concerning matters of celebration. The pressure of conforming to stylistic expectations can induce stress, since consumer norms are established for others to emulate.

### ***Contextual Pastoral Counseling in the Context of Manado***

Contextual pastoral theology is not a novel concept. The initiative has been initiated, as exemplified by Daniel Susanto, as mentioned earlier. Nevertheless, an examination of Pastoral Counseling in Manado, as observed through the works of pastoral counseling scholars, primarily focuses on broad issues such as divorce, gambling, domestic violence, and similar concerns, without delving into specific underlying problems within families that may contribute to these issues, such as the causes of domestic violence. As evidenced by the Program Pengabdian Masyarakat (community service program) in one of the Minahasa areas (Dendeng et al., 2024:24), this specific setting, particularly the lifestyle context, may potentially initiate a range of further family issues. Constructing a pastoral theology refers to a contextual pastoral theology that is specifically centered on the Manado setting.

The pastoral theology formulated in Manado is adapted to the specific living setting. The well-known slogan/motto in Indonesia is "biar kalah aksi mar jang kalah aksi." Incorrectly translated as even if you don't eat, you have to be stylish. According to Ivan R.B. Kaunang, the significance of this translation is different from the original (Kaunang, 2015:14). This philosophy is often misinterpreted and employed as a justification for a consumerist lifestyle in Manado. By adopting a lived religion viewpoint that focuses on the significance of everyday life, we can see that consumer lifestyle conflicts are a common occurrence. Consequently, this can serve as a potential avenue for engaging in pastoral counseling in Manado. Contextual theology is essential for the effective functioning of theology within its specific location. Similar to how theology emerges and is not separated from a certain context (Bevans, 2011:9; Schreiter, 2021:xiii), pastoral counseling should likewise be contextualized. Thus, to be pertinent to the daily lives of the Manadonese/Minahasa people, Pastoral Counseling, as a practical discipline within theology, must address the specific context of their consumptive lifestyle.

In the context of pastoral counseling, the helper must adapt their job to the specific lifestyle of Manado. Helpers, usually referred to as formal counselors or professional personnel, such as psychologists or psychiatrists, in Manado should possess appropriate skills related to their work. In this scenario, the assistant must acquire a multitude of talents, as this also serves as an indirect process of Pastoral Counseling. Mesach Krisetya devised the abbreviation ALERGICCS (Attending, Listening, Empathy, Respect, Genuine, Immediacy, Confrontation, Concreteness, and Self-Disclosure) to represent the essential competencies required to fulfill the role of a helper, as outlined by Gerard Egan (Krisetya, 2019:30). The widely accepted counseling approach is the humanist approach; hence, the pastoral counseling approach can be described as a client-centered approach, using the terminology coined by Rogers (1965). Hence, this form of counseling is specifically focused on addressing relationship issues within the consumeristic environment prevalent in Manado. Due to the absence of an allocated period for counseling, we questioned whether the pastors in the assessed churches possess sufficient counseling abilities.

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The efficacy of pastoral care relies on the presence of requisite abilities. The quantity of these skills varies depending on the context. An Indonesian saying asserts that “tak kenal maka tak sayang” (we can’t love someone that we don’t know). To provide effective assistance, the individual offering help must establish connections by engaging in meaningful communication with those receiving aid. The helper must be physically there and immerse themselves in the individual's reality, meaning they must familiarize themselves with the person seeking assistance and their personal history. Based on our observation, the helpers, who are pastors, were not aware of all the congregations. Due to the extensive number of congregations, it is difficult for a limited number of pastors to be familiar with all of them. The GMIM Pinaesaan GPI Manado congregation comprises more than 4,000 members and is served by merely seven priests. Whereas developing rapport is crucial for establishing trust, it is imperative to familiarize oneself with the key traits of the people from Manado. Through effective communication, relationships can be established, allowing the helper to actively listen, show sympathy, and ultimately empathize with the counselee. Achieving (unconditional) good esteem is impossible without the counselor demonstrating respect towards the counselee's lifestyle. Respect is non-judgmental, unlike “biblical” counselors who often lack an understanding of the context. Additional skills such as probing (a component of active listening) and reframing will not be effective.

The consumer lifestyle of the inhabitants in Manado is not inherently harmful. The issue lies in the fact that this particular type of consumer lifestyle necessitates significant expenses. This pertains to a highly delicate issue, specifically involving finances. This has the potential to create issues inside the family. While money may not be the sole determinant of happiness, maintaining a lavish lifestyle necessitates substantial financial resources. The family income in Manado is relatively low compared to the national capital, which serves as the hub of the Indonesian economy, or in major towns on the islands of Java and Sumatra. Therefore, the earnings from employment in Manado are rather modest. Understanding this information is essential for effectively addressing and resolving issues during the support and assistance process.

Within the realm of pastoral counseling, religious sources are utilized to enhance the process of support and guidance, as it is an integral component of theological science. Whenever a someone endeavors to assist someone who is in distress and need aid, this is a religious declaration, regardless of whether or not religious language or terminology is employed in the action” (Krisetya, 2019:21). Religious sources can be utilized through the inclusion of religious language or terms, such as prayers or Bible verses. A comprehensive theological comprehension is crucial, particularly when approaching the interpretation of the Bible. A normative perspective often evaluates a consumer lifestyle as being contrary to God's intentions and morally wrong, as we can witness in Sunday worship or weekly family worship in Manado. Religious sources are utilized to enhance or reinforce beliefs, rather than the opposite.

The GMIM, as the largest church in Minahasa, is fully aware of this issue. By introducing this subject in MTPJ and assessing this lifestyle as hedonistic, it is concluded that it deviates from the principles taught in the Bible (GMIM, 2017). However, it is crucial to understand the specific context, including the nature, timing, and reasons behind the Minahasan people's consumptive behavior in both their daily lives and at festivals. Engaging in inappropriate self-disclosure can lead to the client experiencing feelings of depression. Hence, a comprehensive examination of the relevant circumstances is essential for the counselor, or in the specific setting of the pastor's congregation, to enable the individual seeking guidance to effectively implement the concluding phase of the pastoral care session, commonly referred to as the action plan. In Holland and Henriot, this is referred to as “pastoral planning”, the fourth step of the Pastoral Circle (Holland and Henriot, 1986:27).

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Recognizing the importance of culturally sensitive pastoral care, institutions like the IAKN Manado have established dedicated programs in pastoral counseling. As a theological education center situated within the very context it seeks to serve, IAKN Manado plays a pivotal role in equipping future pastors and counselors with the tools to understand and respond to the complex social and cultural dynamics of Manado and its surrounding area. Nevertheless, we found that there is no specific course about the Manado/Minahasa context. The curriculum emphasizes Western psychological theories, which are predominantly individualistic, in contrast to the communal orientation of the Minahasa setting. The focus is generally on counseling rather than pastoral care, suggesting that counseling is more closely associated with psychology than with pastoral theology. Even so, numerous students write theses or articles concerning the Manado/Minahasa context, which might benefit from enhanced analysis if they had received lessons in the Manado or Minahasa context.

## Conclusion

A theology refers to a type of theology that is specifically influenced by its context. Thus, pastoral theology, which forms the foundation of Pastoral Counseling, is developed by the specific circumstances in which pastoral counseling is implemented. In the Manado community, known for its tendency to engage in conspicuous consumption, pastoral counseling recognizes this cultural context as an opportunity to effectively support and guide the community. Pastoral counseling is characterized by empathy and support rather than criticism or imposition of norms. Its purpose is to understand the individual's unique circumstances and provide assistance through the development and implementation of a tailored strategic plan. Hence, once the context is comprehended, any pastoral strategies employed will be tailored to suit this specific consumer situation. Further elaboration is required in the field of pastoral counseling to effectively address the situation and incorporate diverse methods into pastoral care. Students pursuing Pastoral Counseling are recommended to study the Manado/Minahasa region to gain a comprehensive understanding of the context. This is because the theories they study primarily originate from Western psychology and may not fully consider the specificities of the Manado setting.

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