

HISTORICAL AND THEOLOGICAL DIMENSIONS OF THE GOTILON FEAST IN THE HKBP TRADITION

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DOI:
<https://doi.org/10.31330/penamas.v38i1.871>

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Dates:
Received: February, 26th 2025
Revised: June, 3rd 2
Published: June, 30th 2025



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Abstract

The gotilon feast is an ancient tradition that has been observed both before and after the introduction of Christianity and has undergone a transformation in meaning after being incorporated into the church liturgy in the HKBP Manado. This research aims to analyze the gotilon feast in the context of the Toba Batak diaspora in Manado by examining how this practice is carried out in HKBP Manado as a space for an encounter between religious identity and Toba Batak cultural expression. Using a light qualitative-ethnographic approach, as well as Pierre Bourdieu's theoretical framework - specifically the concepts of habitus, field, and doxa; this research shows that this tradition is the result of symbolic practices that are continuously reproduced, not solely because of theological dogma, but as a result of the social and historical structures that shape it. Within the diasporic social field, the gotilon feast occupies a strategic position as a mechanism for maintaining collective identity. However, it also presents a tension between religious particularism and culture and the demands of multiculturalism within the church. As a spiritual and social glue, this practice makes an important contribution to the conceptualization of contextual theology, the sociology of religion, and the dynamics of Toba Batak diaspora traditional practices.

Keywords: Gotilon Feast, Bourdieu, Contextual Theology

Abstrak

Pesta gotilon merupakan sebuah tradisi tua yang telah dijalankan baik sebelum maupun setelah masuknya kekristenan, dan mengalami transformasi makna setelah terintegrasi dalam liturgi gereja HKBP. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis pesta gotilon dalam konteks diaspora Batak Toba di Manado, dengan menelaah bagaimana praktik ini dijalankan di HKBP Manado sebagai ruang pertemuan antara identitas religius dan ekspresi budaya Batak Toba. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif-etnografis ringan, serta kerangka teori Pierre Bourdieu—khususnya konsep habitus, field, dan doxa; penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa tradisi ini merupakan hasil dari praktik simbolik yang secara terus-menerus direproduksi, bukan semata-mata karena dogma teologis, melainkan sebagai hasil dari struktur sosial dan historis yang membentuknya. Di dalam medan sosial diaspora, pesta gotilon menempati posisi strategis sebagai mekanisme memertahankan identitas kolektif. Namun, ia juga menghadirkan ketegangan antara partikularisme religius dengan budaya dan tuntutan multikulturalisme dalam konteks gereja. Sebagai perekat spiritual dan sosial, praktik ini berkontribusi penting bagi konsep atas teologi kontekstual, sosiologi agama, dan dinamika praktik tradisi diaspora Batak Toba.

Kata Kunci: Pesta Gotilon, Bourdieu, Teologi Kontekstual

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is a country with the ideology of Pancasila and the motto "Bhinneka Tunggal Ika." A historical fact reveals that Indonesia is a diverse nation, encompassing various dimensions of ethnicity, language, religion, race, and intergroup relations (Ambarita et al., 2024). The Batak tribe is one of the largest ethnic groups in Indonesia (Fitriyani & Wijayanto, 2021). The Batak tribe is located in North Sumatra, with several subethnicities, namely Toba, Pakpak-Dairi, Angkola, Karo, Mandailing, and Simalungun. The Toba Batak tribe has many traditional creations and also engages in various traditional ceremonial and ritual activities, one of which is the gotilon feast. Feast means celebration, banquet, and party, while gotilon means harvest, harvest period, reaping season, and harvest (KBB, 2024). The gotilon feast is a cultural activity that reflects the farmers' expression of joy and gratitude to God for the abundant harvest, as well as a hope that similar harvest results can be repeated in the future. In this tradition, the farmers offer "silua" or crops as a form of gratitude to God (Theressa, 2021; Marpaung, 2024). It can be said that the Gotilon feast is a harvest feast, a thanksgiving for the blessings received by His people.

Religious rituals not only reflect spiritual beliefs but also play a crucial role in shaping and maintaining collective identity, particularly within the Toba Batak diaspora community. In the Toba Batak diaspora community in Manado, the gotilon feast is a form of worship and thanksgiving celebration typical of HKBP Manado, as well as an important place where religious and cultural identities are negotiated or dialectic simultaneously. On the one hand, it can be said that the Gotilon feast is a legacy of the German mission, which underwent synthesis when it encountered Batak Toba culture. After the entry of the gospel into Batak land Nommensen, the HKBP was established (Aritonang, 1988). The harvest feast tradition in Germany was brought to Indonesia, especially to the HKBP church. This tradition is still observed by Batak Christians, especially HKBP, in both rural and urban areas.

This research is novel because it combines historical, contextual-theological, and sociological approaches in examining the dynamics of the HKBP gotilon feast, which has undergone a process of contextualization, especially within the HKBP Manado community. This study traces the historical roots of the harvest feast that developed in Germany, was subsequently introduced by missionaries to Indonesia, and underwent subsequent encounters and adaptations within the Toba Batak culture. This cross-geographical and cultural journey has not been thoroughly studied in the context of Indonesian theological studies. The primary focus on the Gotilon feast as a local form of Christian harvest feast presents a new dimension in theological studies, especially in the realm of worship and celebration, which is still practiced as part of the spiritual and cultural identity of Toba Batak Christians. The Gotilon feast is not just a tradition but an expressive space where dialogue between faith and culture takes place, showcasing cultural resilience as well as theological openness in Toba Batak society.

The novelty of this research becomes more apparent through the case study of the implementation of the gotilon feast by the HKBP Manado congregation in 2024. This celebration demonstrates how Batak traditions continue to be observed, even within the context of the Manado Batak diaspora, and remain closely tied to church liturgy and cultural expressions. This demonstrates that the Gotilon feast is not merely a static local celebration but a practice of faith that continues to undergo contextualization in response to the social and geographical realities of the church community. Thus, this research makes a new contribution to the discourse of contextual theology, the sociology of religion, and ritual studies of the Toba Batak diaspora, as well as the preservation of religious traditions amid changing times. This phenomenon is interesting to analyze further because although the geographical and social context has changed, the gotilon feast tradition is still preserved. The main question to be answered in this research is why and how the gotilon feast is interpreted in HKBP Manado. To answer this question, the author utilizes Bourdieu's Theory of Practice.

Research on the relationship between Christianity and Toba Batak culture has a high urgency, given the importance of strengthening the spirituality of church members rooted in local wisdom. In the context of Toba Batak society, Christianity cannot be separated from the cultural dynamics that shape communal identity; therefore, the concept and appreciation of faith need to be contextualized appropriately to remain relevant and down-to-earth. The harmonious relationship between Christian teachings and Toba Batak cultural values presents an opportunity to establish a strong foundation for the development of authentic and contextual spirituality. This means that amid a globalized culture, awareness and discovery of local wisdom values are needed, not least in terms of faith. Faith must also be contextualized, not only inherited from Western culture, but it must also engage in dialogue with local culture (Singgih, 2012).

In particular, research on gotilon parties is crucial as an effort to preserve and revitalize local traditions that are being eroded by the effects of modernization and globalization. The Gotilon feast, as a key religious and cultural expression of the Toba Batak community, is now experiencing a decline in significance and participation, particularly among the younger generation. If it is not immediately examined and revitalized, there is a risk of losing cultural aspects that have become social glue and symbols of communal gratitude (Sianipar & Gunawan, 2024). That is why this research is urgent to conduct as part of the effort to foster a dialogue between the Christian faith and local culture, thereby strengthening the identity, spirituality, and continuity of the Toba Batak cultural heritage.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses a qualitative method with an ethnographic approach, which is intended to examine and understand the meaning of a community or group of people (Russell, 2006). By utilizing Bourdieu's ideas, the author explains how habitus, field, and doxa work in maintaining the gotilon feast as a church tradition in HKBP Manado. The research location is on Manado. This research was conducted in Manado from January to June 2024.

In this research, the author also used triangulation of data collection. The triangulation of data collection techniques in question includes observation, interviews, and document or archival studies (Ravitch, 2016). The intended observation method is participant observation, where the researcher was present during eight Sunday services, especially on June 9, 2024, which was the peak of worship and celebration of the Gotilon feast at HKBP Manado. The type of interview chosen by the author in this research is the semi-structured interview. Documentation refers to important documents owned by HKBP Manado that can be used by researchers in building a theoretical framework regarding the practice and meaning of the gotilon feast for HKBP Manado. In addition to the primary data, the author also utilizes secondary data, including books, journals, government reports.

The informants in this research are Pastors, Elders, prospective Elders, congregation members, and the committee of the HKBP Manado gotilon feast, totaling six people, with the initials A,B,H,L,R, and S. The informants were chosen purposively while adjusting to the needs of the research according to problems, events, and reality (Creswell, 2018); so that readers can get a new understanding. There are three steps in data analysis: reducing data, presenting data, and drawing conclusions. Data analysis was conducted before and after the research process, during which the researcher interpreted the research results in the form of statements. Theological reflection can be applied to local wisdom, enriching the development of contextual theology (Pakpahan, 2020).

RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Historical Genealogy

The harvest feast in Germany is called Erntedankfest, typically held in a church or other public venue. Erntedankfest originates from the words "Ernte," meaning harvest, and "Dank," which translates to "thank you." The word "Fest" is interpreted as a celebration or feast. Based on the results of the German Conference of Church Guardians, the harvest feast is celebrated on the first Sunday of

October every year. This issue has been ongoing since 1972. The harvest and decorations of dried flowers, grains, and fruit adorn the church altar. Erntedankfest aims to remember the harvest that was obtained to fulfill the needs in daily life, which is believed to be God's grace (Oberst, 2020; Faustyna, 2024). The tradition of celebrating the harvest feast is observed by the church in both rural and urban areas. When the church is in a village, the congregation celebrates the harvest feast by praying, holding hands, singing, and other similar activities. In the German Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland church, the harvest feast is celebrated on September 30 or the week closest to September 30 each year (Pakpahan, 2024).

Examining the history of the harvest feast before Christianity reveals that it initially had a secular aspect. European countries have four seasons: winter, spring, summer and fall. The planting season can only occur in two seasons: summer and spring. The harvest in Germany generally ends at the end of October. Farmers then take a break to welcome winter and return to work in the spring of the following year (Indriati, 2011). In ancient times, harvesting was a very difficult task. They realized that at any moment, the harvest could fail. So, every time the harvest was successful, they could offer extraordinary thanks, which was made possible because the challenges they faced were significant. After the harvest, they gathered the produce and offered it to the gods. Previously, it was to the gods, but later, it was offered to God.

Subsequently, the harvest feast tradition was introduced to Indonesia by missionaries. Some of the missionaries who contributed to the birth of HKBP in North Sumatra were Burton, Ward, Lyman, etc. and Nommensen, also known as an apostle to the Batak people, was the first ephorus of HKBP. Nommensen entered the Toba Batak region in 1843 and first baptized converts in 1865 in Silindung (Aritonang, 1988). In Indonesia, harvest is possible at any time, as there are only two seasons: the dry season and the rainy season. Indonesians continue to reap a variety of crops (rambutan, corn, and others). However, in ancient times, the rice harvest season was only once a year. For the Indonesian context, harvest feast worship and celebrations vary in time.

Furthermore, why can the Gotilon feast celebration be held before and after October every year in the Indonesian church? Because Indonesian church members are always grateful, not necessarily in October. That is why the meaning of the Gotilon feast is to give thanks for the produce of the earth, which is believed to be not just the result of human hard work but also a gift of God's grace. Giving thanks by offering the crops to God, with the hope of having abundant crops in the years to come.

The Toba Batak is one of the subethnic groups of the Batak nation, which has an ancestral belief system or native religion known as *Malim*. The term for believers or *Ugamo Malim* is *Parmalim*. The government has categorized Parmalim as one of the "local" religions in Indonesia (Harahap & Irmawati, 2020; Sirait, 2024). *Malim* existed long before Indonesia's independence and continues to exist today, centered in Hutatinggi Village (Asnawati, 2013). The recognition of Batak ancestors in the power of the Creator of the Universe—*Debata Mulajadi na Bolon (DMN)*, is not limited to a holy person but also as a figure who is sovereign over nature, humans, and all aspects of life, including sovereignty over the arts and culture inherent in the community. Before starting farming, the ancestors of the Batak tribe held a ritual to pray for soil fertility, then after the harvest, they held the *Sipaha Lima* tradition for *Parmalim*, to be grateful for the blessings of the harvest blessed by the *DMN* (Angga, 2018).

There are many local traditions in Batak culture, one of which is *Sipaha Lima*. According to followers of the local Batak tribe's religion, specifically the *Malim*, *Sipaha Lima* is part of living out the legacy of their ancestors, which is carried out every year for generations. In the implementation of the *Sipaha Lima* sacred event, they present *tortor*, *gondang*, and *umpasa* (Tambunan & Pilakoannu, 2021). There are three parts of *Sipaha Lima*, namely opening, offerings, and closing (Angga, 2018). After attending the *Pamelean Bolon Sipaha Lima* ceremony at the Partonggoan Parmalim Central Hall in Hutatinggi Village, Purba stated that the *Parmalim* community showed an expression of gratitude to *DMN* for the love and grace throughout the year that He had given (Koran Tapanuli, 2009). *Sipaha Lima* is a ritual of gratitude for *Malim* religious adherents, which has cultural, spiritual, and social dimensions. It can be said that the Batak tribe, especially the Toba, had recognized the tradition of

thanksgiving for a bountiful harvest with the hope of continuing to be abundant long before Christianity was present and developed in Batak land.

The Toba Batak Gotilon feast, observed before the birth and development of Christianity, is a reflection of Gospel values. The concept of God is the Creator, owner, and sustainer of life, so we must give thanks to Him; the concept of social solidarity is reflected in its practice (Deut. 16: 13-15; Lev. 23: 33-36). However, the text that explicitly describes the feast of Gotilon is in Exodus 23:16, which commands the keeping of the feast of reaping and the feast of gathering at the end of the year. It can be argued that the feast of Gotilon has a solid biblical and theological foundation, as it was adopted from the Jewish tradition of the Feast of Tabernacles (Lev 23:33-36; Deut 16:13-15).

The gotilon feast indicates a process of contextualization. The form is the same, but the meaning is transformed. It is clear that pre-Christianity Batak people gave thanks to DMN, believed to be the Creator, owner, and sustainer of life, but when Christianity entered Batak land, thanksgiving for abundant blessings and gifts was directed to the Triune God. Previously, *manortor*, *marumpasa*, *margondang*, and *mangulosi* in the *Sipaha Lima* tradition were used to glorify DMN. Then, *tortor*, *umpasa*, *gondang*, and *ulos* were brought to the church as an appreciation of local wisdom, which corresponds with Christianity as a symbol of joy in demonstrating gratitude to God.

The transformation of the Gotilon feast before and after Christianity, as well as the transformation of the form of offerings in the Gotilon feast, has not altered the congregation's substantive understanding of the meaning of Gotilon. Throughout the history of Christianity, it is believed that God is the Creator, owner, and sustainer of life, which necessitates a response of thanksgiving. Thus, Nommensen not only spread religion but also responded to Toba Batak culture as a means of evangelization; worship and celebration of the gotilon feast emerged as a result of a dialogue between the Protestant worship system and the social structure of Toba Batak culture, not merely blind adoption from the West. The process of adapting the gospel and Toba Batak culture produces a synthesis between Protestant ethics, which emphasize discipline, hard work, service, piety, and Toba Batak cultural values that uphold the system of kinship, togetherness, and cooperation. This integration is proof that Toba Batak culture and Christianity complement each other.

Toba Batak Diaspora in Manado

The driving factors for the migration of the Toba Batak tribe in the city of Manado were identified due to high competition in employment while jobs were lacking in the area of origin, job demands, carrying out the education process outside the region, looking for work, following family or friends, and a culture that states that parents' property does not belong to children so that it demands independence (Siboro, et al. 2022). Similarly, it was stated that the factor influencing the Toba Batak ethnicity to engage in diaspora activities was the desire to develop or seek a better life in terms of education and livelihood (Batee, et al., 2023).

It can be argued that geographical and social conditions affect the form of thanksgiving of HKBP church members in Manado. If HKBP is in a village context, then most of what is offered to God are agricultural and plantation products such as rice, bananas, corn, and others. However, because Manado is an urban area, the offerings brought have been in the form of money. This means that the gotilon feast at HKBP Manado demonstrates local customization.

Furthermore, the majority of HKBP Manado congregation members are native Toba Batak people; however, there are also local Minahasa people and other tribes, such as Chinese, Kalimantan, Javanese, due to intermarriage. The presence, involvement, and participation of church members outside the Toba Batak tribe in worship and celebration of the gotilon feast at HKBP Manado allegedly show an expansion of cultural and liturgical meaning that transcends tribal boundaries, enriching the meaning of the feast as a cross-cultural expression of gratitude. Of course, in practice, there are also elements of local culture (food, language) that are incorporated into the Gotilon feast celebration. Furthermore, the use of visual media in HKBP Manado shows a creative and innovative liturgical style, in contrast to the more symbolic and straightforward gotilon feast celebrations in rural areas. This can be categorized as the uniqueness of the gotilon feast practice in HKBP Manado.

The gotilon feast is a distinctive tradition in the religious calendar of the HKBP, including the HKBP in Manado. The Gotilon feast is not only a cultural celebration but also a place to strengthen relationships with God, others, oneself, and even the whole creation. Within the framework of the Gotilon Feast, HKBP Manado held a Gotilon Feast service and celebration on June 9, 2024. This gotilon feast has been held every year since 1987 (H, 2024; B, 2024).

In the gotilon feast worship, the procession carried out is Preacher, Liturgos, and Elder; the gotilon feast committee entered the church and was welcomed with a typical Toba Batak tribal dance, namely *tortor*, also by wearing traditional clothes, especially *ulos* (Manado, 2024). Furthermore, each member of the congregation brings *silua* according to the blessings he has received from God. There is someone assigned to bring various fruits by walking to the altar or place of offerings that have been provided, followed by the congregation bringing offerings in the form of money in envelopes. In the development of the gotilon feast, there has been a shift from the custom that was once practiced; offerings are no longer oriented towards agricultural products and fields/plantations/yards, but rather towards objects/goods, parcels, or especially money. This has been done since the establishment of HKBP in Manado. This momentum is a manifestation of gratitude to God.

The gotilon feast celebration was held after the worship service. This celebration began with a lunch together, featuring traditional Toba Batak tribal food and national dishes. All members of the congregation rejoice in enjoying God's blessings for His congregation. Next, the procession of the Gotilon feast celebration was carried out successively, namely: first, a typical Toba Batak dance per region or section. HKBP Manado consists of eight regions, each comprising sections for fathers, mothers, youth, and Sunday school. Secondly, giving Batak tribal cloth. Third, giving gratitude envelopes per family. Of course, this celebration begins and ends with prayer (H, 2024; R, 2024).

On the one hand, the gotilon feast at HKBP Manado can be interpreted as a collective effort to preserve our identity as believers and cultured people overseas. In the predominantly Minahasa environment of North Sulawesi, Protestant Christianity has become a tradition that reinforces social cohesion and solidarity. The gotilon feast is a strategic church tradition that introduces the God who is worshipped, as well as a means of cultural inheritance to the younger generation overseas.

The Toba Batak diaspora community, who are members of the HKBP Manado congregation, maintain their personal and communal identity and culture. Wherever the members of the congregation are, they always understand that they are the keepers of faith and preservers of Batak Toba culture (Harahap & Irmawati, 2020). This means that the HKBP Manado church supports the use of traditional musical instruments, traditional clothing, folklore, and others that do not conflict with the Christian faith. Through the Gotilon feast, the Toba Batak people demonstrate their life goals of *hasangapon*, *hagabeon*, and *hamoraon*, with a strong kinship system enshrined in *DNT*, in the context of pluralism in Manado (Simanullang, 2022).

Intersection of Identities

In the context of Manado, the gotilon feast can be understood as a social stage where the Toba Batak diaspora represents, demonstrates, and negotiates their identity through gotilon feast worship and celebrations that integrate HKBP liturgy and Toba Batak local wisdom. In this case, the Gotilon feast serves as an arena to demonstrate the existence of Toba Batak identity amidst religious and cultural diversity in Manado. Informants said that "HKBP Manado does not only carry out worship in the gotilon feast, but also celebrations" (H, 2024; L. 2024). In the Gotilon feast celebration, Toba Batak culture is displayed. This is to demonstrate that the Gotilon feast is their way of integrating faith and culture, so that the HKBP generation understands who and where they come from and the people around them accept and appreciate the culture of the Toba Batak.

The Gotilon feast is not only a religious ritual but also an arena for showcasing local wisdom, particularly in the multicultural setting of Manado. This is an example of "ethnic-religious identity performance," in which Toba Batak cultures, such as traditional clothing/*ulos*, language, *umpasa*/petuah, food, and traditional music/*gondang*, are integrated with HKBP liturgical elements that can be witnessed by the public (Batee et al., 2023). It can be said that the gotilon feast became a

place for dual-religious expression and local wisdom.

The heterogeneous, inclusive, friendly, and highly tolerant city of Manado is a comfortable place for the Toba Batak diaspora to show their existence by their identity. Moreover, the Minahasa tribe's tradition of expressing gratitude to God Almighty (*Opo E.W. Wangko*) for the harvest, which is often done through offerings, reinforces the acceptance of the gotilon feast concept (Nency et al., 2021). In addition, there are similarities between the Toba Batak and Minahasa tribes, both of which are predominantly adherents to Protestant Christianity. This similarity facilitates socialization among the Batak Toba and Minahasa tribes; even Batak Toba people can worship at the Indonesian-speaking GMIM or vice versa. Although it cannot be denied that HKBP always maintains its unique form of worship and fellowship, namely using liturgy in the Batak language. However, to accommodate church members from different ethnic groups and the younger generation, who no longer know the Toba Batak language, they have opened Indonesian-language worship services. Thus, the Toba Batak tribe is strong and solid in private and community spaces, but elastic in public spaces (R, 2024). On the one hand, it preserves the original culture; on the other hand, it accommodates the local culture.

Gotilon Feast, according to Pierre Bourdieu's Theory of Practice

Habitus

The effort to understand the Gotilon of feast in HKBP cannot be separated from its documents, which are the Batak and Indonesian language agenda. Agenda, which is a collection book of worship procedures used by the church (Hutauruk, 2008). In other words, an agenda is a collection of worship procedures. In HKBP's understanding, God is the Creator, Owner, Sustainer, and Source of blessing for the lives of His people. This is evident in the guiding/opening verses of the harvest feast service in HKBP, namely James 1:17, Genesis 8:21b, 22 (Agenda, 2022).

The form of offering as thanksgiving to God is in the form of the first harvest from the work in the fields of His people. This is explicitly outlined in the opening prayer of the Harvest Feast (HKBP Agenda, 2002). God's gift of salvation, providence, and blessings received are interpreted not only vertically but also horizontally. This awareness motivates and inspires His people to be helpers of those in need (Ex 20:1-17; Mt 22:37-39). For Christians, giving offerings is not always understood as an obligation. It is more a manifestation of a heart that wants to thank God for His love, grace, and providence throughout the history of human life. Giving because God in the Lord Jesus has first given to man (Gen 3:15). In general, the Toba Batak people adhere to Christianity with the Lutheran denomination, known as HKBP which is located in almost all regions of Indonesia and even several countries abroad (for example, Singapore, America, Malaysia, the Netherlands). One of the annual agendas of the HKBP church is the thanksgiving for the harvest blessings and grace received by God's people, better known as the gotilon feast (Silitonga, 2022).

Along the way, the gotilon feast is defined as a traditional ceremony or ritual that is protected by national and international law. Protection for TCE is a concern of International Law, the Indonesian State, and even the central government (Theressa, 2021). Gotilon is a ceremony that serves as a form of harvest thanksgiving in the Toba Batak tribe community; it is also a sacred feast event to recognize humans and their communities, acknowledging that the best and perfect gifts come from the Triune God (Sihombing & Rosmaini, 2021). That is why the Gotilon feast is understood as a celebration of gratitude and joy among the Batak people for the success of the planting period, from planting to harvest time.

Thus, the habitus of church members is formed through the internalization of religious values and Toba Batak culture that have taken place historically, forming a collective predisposition in interpreting gotilon as an expression of faith and gratitude (Bourdieu, 1990). Bourdieu's concept of habitus refers to historically embedded dispositions that shape the way social actors think, feel, and act in various contexts. In the Gotilon feast, the religious habitus of Manado's HKBP congregation is formed through a long internalization process of German Protestant values that have interacted with and assimilated Batak customs since the 19th century. The practice of the gotilon feast reflects this habitus: it is not carried out solely because of doctrinal orders, but because of the embedded symbolic

and spiritual patterns that have shaped the faith orientation of the Toba Batak people generationally. Although the Toba Batak diaspora in Manado lives in a different geographical and sociocultural environment from Tapanuli, the gotilon feast continues because of the habitus structure that has made this practice an important part of their lives. One informant argued, "Gotilon parties are a typical way for Toba Batak people to express gratitude to God for His blessings" (R, 2024; S, 2024). This expression shows that the gotilon feast is not just an optional church tradition but is considered an inseparable part of religious existence from HKBP Manado's identity. The Gotilon feast, held by HKBP Manado for generations since 1987, is interpreted as a manifestation of awareness, attitudes, and actions of giving thanks to God. Based on the understanding and belief that God is the source of all blessings and salvation.

Field

The church field functions as a social space where various forms of capital (symbolic, cultural, social, and spiritual) are contested and negotiated, making the gotilon feast part of the strategy of reproducing religious identity (Bourdieu, 1990). In terms of the social field, Bourdieu sees society as an arena of contestation of position and power, where individuals or groups accumulate and convert various forms of capital. The HKBP Manado church can be understood as a religious field that carries the symbolic legacy of the German mission structure as well as the local wisdom values of the Toba Batak. In this field, the gotilon feast functions as a strategic practice to maintain the symbolic position of the Toba Batak people amidst the plurality of religions, ethnicities, races, and church denominations in Manado. HKBP considers it important to carry out worship and celebration of the Gotilon feast because it has a positive impact on the HKBP Manado congregation, strengthening human relations with God, with others, with themselves, and with all creation (L, 2024).

The gotilon feast involves the mobilization of various forms of capital, namely cultural capital-the socialization of the Batak language, rituals, and traditional symbols; social capital-the kinship system/*DNT*; symbolic capital-spiritual piety, liturgical contributions, and cultural acceptance that does not conflict with the Christian faith in the church. In the HKBP Manado field, active involvement in gotilon parties affirms personal and communal positions in the religious and social structure (whether as donors of gotilon parties, liturgical leaders, traditional elders).

In interpreting the gotilon feast, HKBP Manado does not only focus on prayer, reading of God's word, and worship, but a sweet appreciation of fellowship with others accompanies it. Before the peak of worship and celebration of the Gotilon feast, they engage in togetherness and humanitarian activities, such as healthy walks, chess, badminton, Zumba, gymnastics, vocal group competitions, and helping people in need (A, 2024; L, 2024). They see that the momentum of the gotilon feast is not only about bringing the congregation to be healthy in faith/spiritual but also healthy physically or touching the horizontal and vertical dimensions (Ex. 20:1-17; Mat. 22:37-39). The blessings and joy received from God are enjoyed with the people of God in HKBP Manado, even beyond the boundaries of church walls, race, religion, and others, as the call of the church's duties in the fields of *diakonia* and *marturia* (Sihombing & Simbolon, 2024).

The Gotilon feast is a significant moment when HKBP members come together as one family of God to worship and celebrate His blessings and grace. The values of unity, social solidarity, and love are affirmed in the worship and celebration of the Gotilon feast. This motivates and inspires the congregation about the importance of spiritual and social relationships in the church. Through togetherness in worship followed by a gotilon feast celebration, HKBP Manado congregation members experienced the strength and warmth of the fellowship of faith. This was reinforced in the closing prayer of the Gotilon feast, proving that there is hope and action for the hearts of all Christians to be open and moved to help people who are experiencing difficulties in life. "Help the poor and do not leave helpless; do not let die of hunger those who faithfully obey God. Help the afflicted and move people's hearts to help them. Move the hearts of the rich and the well-to-do to help those in need." (HKBP, 2022). This is interpreted as teaching and demonstrating the value of love, generosity, and sacrifice towards others in need, as well as an attitude that is not only concerned with treasures in this world but also eternal treasures in the life to come.

Doxa

Doxa is reflected in the uncritical acceptance of gotilon feast practices as "normal," indicating the continuation of the hegemony of institutionally and culturally legitimized meanings (Bourdieu, 1990). In other words, doxa refers to the structure of values and practices that are considered "given" or taken for granted-unquestioned because they have become part of church life. In the context of the gotilon feast, this is not only understood as an ecclesiastical tradition but as a "faith obligation" that contains deep moral, social, and spiritual meanings. However, in the context of a more multicultural Manado, this Toba Batak doxa experiences tension. Some non-Batak residents of HKBP Manado view the gotilon feast as a tradition of the HKBP church, a tradition rooted in the Toba Batak tribe's Protestant heritage, which is also reflected in the practices of HKBP, GKPI, and similar churches that are not entirely universal within the framework of modern Protestant churches, such as Pentecostal and Charismatic movements. In addition, from a non-Batak perspective in Manado the gotilon feast is a Toba Batak religious and cultural tradition that is not always relevant to their context.

In this context, the Toba Batak diaspora, particularly residents of the Manado HKBP church, tend to adopt two strategies: symbolic adaptation and symbolic resistance. Adaptation is achieved through repackaging the Gotilon feast to make it look inclusive - for example, by adding liturgical elements in Indonesian or inviting the participation of non-Batak congregations. However, there is also symbolic resistance characterized by the intensification of Batak traditional elements as an assertion of identity against the pressure of assimilation. The Toba Batak doxa can be understood as a recognition that faith and culture or Christianity and local wisdom must be integrated into the worship and celebration of the gotilon feast.

Based on the author's analysis, there is indeed a shift in the form of offerings in rural and urban areas, particularly in urban areas, such as HKBP Manado. Where offerings are no longer oriented towards the harvest of rice fields and fields, as was done in ancient times, in an agrarian society. At this time, especially HKBP congregation members who migrate to Manado, big cities, they work not anymore as farmers but as doctors, lawyers, nurses, and so on; therefore, the offerings given to the church are no longer in the form of agricultural products, but already in the form of objects/parcels, especially money. At the peak of the gotilon feast at HKBP Manado, the offerings were tied in bamboo, depicting a tree with money leaves. They offer it while dancing typical Batak. Finally, the Gotilon feast is a momentum where HKBP Manado congregation members celebrate the results of abundant work as a blessing from the Triune God. This value of giving thanks educates His people to understand His presence and grace in their lives (H, 2024; R, 2024). Expressing gratitude to God is rooted in the belief that God is the source of abundant blessings and gifts.

CONCLUSION

The transformation of the gotilon feast ritual as a liturgical practice reflects the synthesis of German Protestant ethics in Toba Batak customs, especially in the context of the Toba Batak diaspora in Manado. According to Bourdieu's ideas, the Gotilon feast can be interpreted as a manifestation of the religious habitus inherited from Nommensen, operating in the social field of HKBP Manado as a space for the production of Toba Batak collective identity through symbolic, cultural, and social capital. Doxa views the gotilon feast as "taken for granted" but negotiates its meaning in the context of church pluralism in Manado.

The Protestant Church in Germany recognized early on that the meaning of the gotilon feast was to give thanks for the crops bestowed by the Creator, sustainer, and owner of life, with the hope that they would remain abundant in the next harvest. They realized that the harvest could fail at any time, so the gotilon feast was truly celebrated and lived. The tradition was brought to Indonesia, practiced, and lived in HKBP. HKBP Manado views the implementation of worship and celebration of the gotilon feast as very important because it affects the concept of human relations with God, humans with each other, humans with themselves, and even humans with all creation. The Gotilon feast is not just an expression of Batak cultural traditions but also encompasses spiritual and social dimensions, it serves

not only as a fundraising forum but also as a platform for thanksgiving to God.

This church tradition needs to be preserved, maintained, and even passed on from one generation to the next, while remembering the true meaning of the Gotilon feast. For this reason, HKBP, especially HKBP Manado, can make the history and meaning of the gotilon feast as one of the materials for the formation of church members, involve young people in worship and celebration of the gotilon feast, digitize worship and celebration of the gotilon feast.

This article is not merely descriptive, but also contributes important insights to the study of the sociology of religion. For future researchers who will conduct similar studies, we hope that this research will serve as a reference for their work, particularly in the areas of Christianity and Toba Batak culture. However, we acknowledge that this research is limited to a small sample and a specific location, so the results may not be entirely representative. Researchers can employ a combination of methods, broader research subjects, and more diverse theories to obtain a more in-depth and comprehensive picture of the history of the Gotilon feast and its development.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to the members of the HKBP Manado church and all parties who helped us during the research and writing process of this article.

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