




# Values of local wisdom in *Rambu Solo'* from the perspective of Pentecostal spirituality and character education

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The ceremony of *Rambu Solo'*, a traditional Torajan funeral ritual, is often met with scepticism by Christians, particularly within the Pentecostal community, due to perceived spiritistic elements conflicting with Christian doctrines. Despite this, the deep-rooted cultural significance of *Rambu Solo'* persists among the Torajan people, including Pentecostals. This necessitates exploring aspects of the ceremony that align with Pentecostal values of spirituality and character education. Therefore, studies are needed that show the dimensions of spirituality and character education that Pentecostal believers can accept. The research method used in this article was qualitative ethnography, and the analysis used was the theological triad in Steven Jack Land's Pentecostal spirituality, namely orthodoxy, orthopathy and orthopraxy. Findings revealed a divergence between *Rambu Solo'*'s orthodoxy and Christian tenets. Nonetheless, aspects of orthopathy and orthopraxy within the *Rambu Solo'* ceremony align with Pentecostal spirituality, mainly through its emphasis on character education.

**Contribution:** Using triad theology in assessing local culture in Indonesia provides a more comprehensive meaning of cultural values for constructing spirituality and character education.

**Keywords:** *Rambu Solo'*; orthodoxy; orthopraxy; orthopathy; Pentecostal spirituality; character education.

## Introduction

Culture encompasses human societies' collective knowledge and practices, serving as a lens through which individuals interpret their environment and guide their behaviours (Kim 2020:521). Culture is a way of life developed and shared by a group of people and passed down from generation to generation. Culture guides society in developing and interacting with other societies (Nur & Shi 2022:3). However, foreign cultures influence culture in Indonesia due to globalisation. As a tradition, culture has two functions: regulating and directing life (Thompson 1996:3). Traditions are practical when they function as norms that justify the *status quo*, legitimise the authority of community leaders or secure hierarchical boundaries. Within an exclusive sphere of influence, tradition can be an authoritative and indisputable guide for the present and the future. Traditions provide symbolic material that people use to understand who they are and how they relate to each other. This way, traditions are the building blocks of individual and collective identity.

One area in Indonesia that still maintains its culture is Tana Toraja. The Tana Toraja people are known as a society with unique personality traits. Culture in Toraja is something that is ingrained in the lives of its people. Toraja people uphold the values contained in their culture. Toraja society is also known as a society based on family unity and cooperation. One of the cultures in Toraja that still survives today is the *Rambu Solo'* rite, or the death ceremony of the people in Tana Toraja, based on the ancestral beliefs of the Toraja people called *Aluk Todolo* (religion or beliefs of the ancestors of the Toraja people).

Death is a complicated subject to interpret. Anggraeni and Putri explained that death separates a person from their fellow humans and is regarded as the separation of the soul from the body. Death is also interpreted as an inevitable phenomenon like birth, but the difference is that death is a scourge for many people. Apart from that, death is also inseparable from funeral rituals for dealing with grief. Thus, death is not only about a person's attitude in accepting the fact that he will die but also about how society behaves when someone around them dies. People have different views about death (Anggraeni & Putri 2021).

Death is always individual but has collective social or individual consequences. Death ceremonies always involve the community, with no individual death rituals. These rituals generally have similar characteristics: gathering, praying and eating. One of these rituals is *Rambu Solo'* practised by the Toraja people. This death ceremony is classified into several types according to the deceased person's immediate family's social and economic status (Alfarah et al. 2021). The *Rambu Solo'* ceremony shows behaviour patterns from worldly life and towards the supernatural. As a cultural system, *Rambu Solo'* is a comprehensive system consisting of ways and aspects of giving meaning to teachings and rituals from humans who carry out actions between one human and another.

The *Rambu Solo'* ceremony received fascinating and essential attention from many groups. It has even become a tourist attraction for local and foreign tourists (Randan, Kandowangko & Goni 2019). In our observations in the field, we found that many foreign tourists were celebrating and watching this ceremony. Interest is stimulated by complex events requiring high costs and conditioned by trust symbols. This ceremony is still carried out (Hasbi et al. 2019). We researched to photograph the responses of international tourists after attending this ceremony. A tourist from Germany, Mr. Albrecht, said that the attraction of *Rambu Solo'* was the natural burial procession in the stone caves. Other unique features are seen in the dances, such as how to carry the dead in the yard before taking them to the cemetery, welcoming guests based on the place for deliberation as well as a residence for traditional rulers (in Toraja, it is called *Tongkonan*) group and slaughtering buffalo and pigs. The Regent of North Toraja, Kala' Tiku Paembonan, in an interview on 18 May 2018, stated that buffalo fighting, which is usually held on the wide Sawa embankment near the funeral home before the buffalo is slaughtered, is an attraction in itself.

However, behind the luxury and uniqueness of the *Rambu Solo'* ceremony are the political, social and religious problems associated with this ritual. Several studies have shown that some families perform this ceremony in order to show off their high social class (Handayani, Shri Ahimsa-Putra & Budiman 2020:247). Likewise, the existence of the buffalo fighting (in Toraja, it is called *Tedong*) tradition mixed with gambling has obscured the essential meanings of *Rambu Solo'* (Mangopang & Widiarto 2018). On the political side, because *Rambu Solo'* is attractive to display, its implementation has more political-economic nuances. Yulianus Pongtuluran's dissertation entitled 'Culture in the Vortex of Local Politics in Toraja' describes the Toraja people as having strong ties to old cultural structures that are still believed by the majority of the community, such as *Aluk To Dolo* [rules or way of life in Toraja society], *Tongkonan*, *Rambu Solo'*, and *Rambu Tuka* [ceremonies of joy or thanksgiving for birth, having a new house, and other thanksgivings]. Throughout their development, these various cultural instruments shifted their meaning and were even used by certain groups of

people to fulfil their interests, including political interests (Pungtuluran 2015). From a church perspective, our interviews with pastors from *Gereja Pantekosta di Indonesia*, *Gereja Bethel Tabernakel*, and *Gereja Toraja*, who led churches in Toraja, revealed three perspectives, orthodoxy, ortophaty, and ortopraxy. One view is that, the entire series of the *Rambu Solo'* ceremony must be rejected because the ceremony is contrary to the faith and culture of people who have experienced new birth in Jesus. This view is held by churches such as the Pentecostal Church in Indonesia, Bethel Tabernacle Church and Bethel Church Indonesia. A different view is held by churches such as the *Gereja Toraja* (Toraja Church) and the Catholic Church who think that the *Rambu Solo'* ceremony does not conflict with the Christian faith, and therefore they express their support for it. This difference of viewpoints is not left to be ignored. It needs to be reconciled by exploring the value of spirituality and character education inherent in the ceremony, which can be used as a Christian belief system. In response to the problem above, quite a lot of studies show the positive dimensions of the *Rambu Solo'* ceremony from the perspective of the native religion of the Toraja tribe. But what about the perspective of religions originating from outside Indonesia, such as Christianity, especially the Christian Pentecostal church such as the Indonesian Bethel Church (*Gereja Bethel Indonesia*) which is associated with the dimensions of spirituality and character education?

We analyse the *Rambu Solo'* culture from the perspective of Christianity because most Torajan people are Christians. Based on the population data from the Ministry of Home Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, the number of residents who adhere to Islam is 31 187 (12.11%), Protestant Christians are 182 165 (70.19%), Catholics are 40 258 (15.89%), Hindus are 4 049 (1.67%), Buddhists numbered 225 (0.13%), Confucianists 2, and those who claim to believe in the Almighty God 15 (0.01%) (Kementerian Dalam Negeri 2023). This data reveal that almost all Tana Toraja people have embraced new religions that are different from the religious beliefs of the *Aluk Todolo* tribe. Even so, most Torajan people still adhere to the teachings of their ancestors although they are considered to conflict with the values of their new religion. This fact seriously debates the relationship between religion and culture. This tension is addressed but needs to be reconciled by exploring the value of spirituality and character education, which can be used as a Christian belief system.

This research aims to construct the spirituality and character education of the *Rambu Solo'* ceremony from a Pentecostal perspective. We use the term 'spirituality construction' because in the typology proposed by Richard Niebuhr, *Gereja Bethel Indonesia* (Bethel Church Indonesia) is in the fifth place, namely *Christ Transform Culture*. We do not want to see *Rambu Solo'* as a harsh encounter like the initial arrival of Zending in Toraja (1913); the gospel preachers were dealing with Toraja culture, which was so deeply rooted and had its permanent form in *Aluk Todolo*. The result then was

tension between Zending and the natives in evangelisation. This tension was one of the causes of the murder of Antonie Aris van de Loosdrecht (Kartikasari & Muller 2005). In this way, the congregation of Bethel Church Indonesia can find spirituality and character education from the *Rambu Solo'* ceremony. *Rambu Solo'* provides spirituality and character education that do not conflict with Pentecostal theology regarding culture in Indonesia. However, implementing it must still be critical to avoid falling into syncretism (Lembang 2012).

This study employs a qualitative ethnographic approach, analysing the data through the lens of Steven Jack Land's theological triad – orthodoxy, orthopathy and orthopraxy – to explore the intersection of Pentecostal spirituality and Torajan cultural practices. James Spradley revealed the steps that ethnographic research must begin by determining research sites. According to Spradley, a precise location for ethnographic work is only possible with determination. In this stage, direct observation (participant observation) is work that an ethnographer must do. Next, Spradley proposed 12 steps in conducting ethnography: (1) determining informants; (2) interviewing informants; (3) taking ethnographic notes; (4) asking descriptive questions; (5) analysing the interview results; (6) submitting domain analysis; (7) asking structural questions; (8) making taxonomic analysis; (9) asking contrasting questions; (10) making analysis component; (11) finding cultural themes; (12) writing an ethnographic report (Spradley 1979). In this research, we carried out the 12 steps of ethnography as follows: (1) our informants were academics, pastors from the Toraja Church, Bethel Church of Indonesia, and the Pentecostal Church in Indonesia, and Toraja traditional figures; (2) interviews were conducted for 4 years since 2018 by directly witnessing the *Rambu Solo'* ceremony and asking questions through the group discussion forum; (3) ethnographic notes were made by writing the meaning of *Rambu Solo'* from *Aluk Todolo's* perspective without providing any justification; (4) descriptive questions in the form of: what are the meanings, varieties, and rules of the *Rambu Solo'* ceremony; for example, questions such as how the Christian faith views this ceremony, and what spiritual values and character education can be taken without violating Christian values; (5) the team analysed the interview results; (6) dominant analysis focusing on spirituality and character education. Complex descriptions of the varieties and practices of *Rambu Solo'* were reduced; (7) structural questions were asked with a focus on the perspective of spirituality and character education; (8) taxonomic analysis was carried out by showing prominent keywords from this ceremony; (9) our contrast question is 'how about *Rambu Solo'* which is not doctrinally justified but can be derived from its spirituality and character education value?'; (10) analysis using Steven Jack Land's concept of spirituality and character education; (11) culture as a learning for spirituality and character education; (12) ethnographic report in this study. We are involved in culture because two authors, author one and author two, are native Torajans who live in the Torajan

community and actively witness the *Rambu Solo'* ceremony. According to Land, spirituality integrates inner beliefs and feelings in practice. Land's procedure discusses the relationship between spirituality and theology with three perspectives (Land 2010).

The data collection method involved in-depth interviews with key informants, including academics, traditional leaders and priests. We also made direct observations in Toraja and were actively involved in conversations with the community about the *Rambu Solo'* ceremony. Data sources come from (1) primary interviews and in-depth observation and (2) a literature study on the *Rambu Solo'* ceremony. All interviews and group discussion forum were recorded. Analytical procedures were carried out by: (1) collecting the results of observations and interviews, (2) creating clusters of the received data, (3) focusing on spirituality and character education and (4) interpreting data using Steven Jack Land's theory of spirituality and the concept of character education.

## Theory framework

### Pentecostal spirituality

Pentecostal spirituality is a movement in which 'Truth, Holiness, and the Power of God in conjunction with a distinctive revelatory focus are the integrated core of Pentecostal spirituality. The goal of the Pentecostal life is to be in a deeper relationship with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, manifested by living a life of 'power'. This goal is expressed in the Pentecostal tradition through short phrases such as led by the spirit, empowered by the spirit, filled with the spirit, baptised in the spirit, powered by the spirit, among others. Maturation in the faith of Pentecostals is closely related to the use of the power implanted by the Holy Spirit. We use Steven Jack Land's Pentecostal spirituality model, which proposes the theological triad.

Steven J. Land from the Wesleyan-Pentecostal circles emphasises spirituality as integrating beliefs, practices and feelings. The first perspective of the theological triad is orthodoxy, which means true belief. Land mentioned three things that need to be considered regarding orthodoxy: the correct doctrine will motivate a person to apply correct teaching in their daily life, declare the greatness of God, and provide opportunities for individuals to live out the truth to glorify God's name. The second perspective, namely orthopathy means having the right passion or values. True desires and values are determined based on the individual's response to the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. True desires and values are a disposition factor that is very important for an individual to shape all his actions, decisions and habits. The third perspective is orthopraxy. Land defines orthopraxy as a practice in harmony with God's kingdom that brings value and goodness into the world. Therefore, theology needs to be considered so that it not only explains the significance of who God is and what he has done but also deals with the claims of truths about God for the sake of a way of life (Land 2010:48).



Character education focuses on a person's character. A person's inner character will appear through their thoughts, attitudes, feelings, words and actions based on certain norms. These norms are related to religious norms, law, etiquette, culture and customs. Therefore, character is often associated with traits that characterise a person's moral values or behaviour. Anton Suwito said that character education could be integrated into the learning process inside and outside the classroom. This character education aims to make students able to master the targeted competencies (material), as well as to make students know, fully realise, care, and make it a value that is demonstrated through students' daily behaviour (Suwito 2012).

### Indonesian Bethel Church's perspective on the *Rambu Solo'* ceremony

Gareja Bethel Indonesia (GBI) has conducted an in-depth study of the *Rambu Solo'* ceremony. Several points are presented to confirm the position of the Indonesian Bethel Church on *Rambu Solo'*. The book *Respons Teologi & Pastoral untuk Isu-isu yang Mengemuka (Periode: 2010–2023)* (Theological & Pastoral Responses to Emerging Issues [Period: 2010–2023]) presents six core points, which serve as guidelines for GBI church members. Here is the explanation:

Firstly, death. Death is a certainty that all humans cannot avoid. Humans will return to dust, but their soul will return to God, the owner of all creation (2 Cor 5:1). Therefore, the *Aluk Todolo* adherents' understanding that the fate and future of the dead is determined by the type and festivity of the *Rambu Solo'* ceremony is not in line with the Christian faith. Secondly, the path to salvation. According to the Pentecostal theology, salvation is made possible only by exercising faith in the redemption of Jesus (Jn 3:16; 14:6). Christ is the only way of salvation for all of humanity. Therefore, salvation provided through animal sacrifices is contrary to God's Word. Thirdly, peace and happiness. The principle that makes Christians happy when they die is the certainty of going to a place where God is present, namely heaven (1 Th 4:14). Therefore, the opinion of the Toraja people that happiness and peace of the dead depend on whether the *Rambu Solo'* ceremony is festive or not must be rejected.

Fourthly, the funeral ceremony party. The funeral ceremony must be full of solemnity and praise to Allah because death is a gain. Therefore, Torajan funeral ceremonies must be rejected, as they are full of revelry beyond the family economy. Fifthly, family reunion. A family reunion is a joy in the bond of love. However, burdening or giving debt to the bereaved family is not permissible. Therefore, *Rambu Solo'*, which is full of assistance to help people in debt, is not allowed. Christians may give without expecting anything in return. Sixthly, final dedication to deceased family members. The Christian faith teaches to serve while parents are still alive (Ex 20:12), not when they have died. Therefore, keeping a corpse in the house lasts only four days; it should not be too long. (Departemen Teologi & Ajaran BPP Gereja Bethel Indonesia 2023:316–321).

### Ethical considerations

Ethical clearance to conduct this study was obtained from the Sekolah Tinggi Teologi Bethel Indonesia (No.070/OT/Ka-STTBI/II-2024).

## Results and discussion

### The essence of the *Rambu Solo'* ceremony

According to Luther Balalembang, the meaning of *Rambu Solo'* can be formulated as follows, '*iamo tu sara' umpogau' aluk to mate situru' ada' Toraya diparanduk diongmai bitti'na sae langan kapuanna'*' (Balalembang 2007). It means, '*Rambu Solo'* is a religious activity for the dead according to Toraja custom, starting from the smallest to the largest'. This definition from Balalembang breaks the general notion that *Rambu Solo'* is a party that is only held by wealthy people or the upper class. Thus, *Rambu Solo'* can be carried out according to the family's financial capabilities (Handayani et al. 2020). Implementation depends on the financial capabilities of the nuclear family left behind. There is no imposition of traditional rules regarding the size and scope of the *Rambu Solo'* ceremony. It all depends on deliberation to reach a consensus by the family to determine the level of the ceremony, the number of animals to be sacrificed, and the division of tasks for each family at the *Rambu Solo'* ceremony. Every deliberation must be held in the *Tongkonan*, where the body is kept, and the buffalo is slaughtered after each deliberation. *Tongkonan* is the centre of the social and spiritual life of the Toraja tribe. Therefore, all family members must participate in every ritual at the *Tongkonan* as a symbol of their unified relationship with their family and ancestors.

*Aluk Todolo* is the original religion of the Toraja tribe (Ismail 2019). In understanding *Aluk Todolo*, the religious and sociological motives behind the ceremony of *Rambu Solo'* should be considered. When it comes to the religious motives, the *Alukta* adherents believe that after earthly life (material) in this world, the soul (or spirit) will enter a new realm, the spiritual realm, and live the same as in this world. Therefore, everything sacrificed during the death ceremony will later be used in the spiritual realm. For example, the clothes used to wrap the corpse and the animals slaughtered during the ceremony, all these are taken with them to this spiritual realm called 'Puya'. *Puya* is the world of spirits whose ruler is *Puang La Londong* (Rizal et al. 2022). It can be interpreted that if only a few were sacrificed in the death ceremony, then only a few were brought to *Puya*. Even those not ceremonialised at all cannot enter the gates of the *Puya* world and only remain to wander above this world with its various sufferings. This situation lasted until one of his family members could release him by sacrificing for him (Ada' 2014). This concept requires that ceremonies exist as rituals that cannot be separated from beliefs. Apart from that, families who carry it out seriously will receive abundant blessings from the spirits of the dead people concerned.

With regard to sociological motives, the *Rambu Solo'* ceremony must pay attention to the social status of the person who died. Those in aristocratic groups usually carry out this

ceremony with a festive impression because they must show they come from a high-status social group. In contrast to groups of people who do not belong to or come from noble groups, ordinary enslaved or free people cannot carry out ceremonies like those conducted by noble groups. (Purwanto 2020). Social status is a person's general place in society among other people in terms of their social environment, prestige, and rights and obligations. Those who come from a high social status background are wealthy and own material possessions, whereas those who come from a low social class have relatively few material possessions or none at all.

The *Rambu Solo'* ceremony varies according to the age and social abilities of the deceased person's family. Firstly, a funeral ceremony for children (*Aluk Pia*) who died when they were just born, had not yet started teething, and when they were 5 years old. Secondly, a simple funeral ceremony. The ceremony is held one night (in Toraja, it is called *Dipa Sang Bonggi*). This ceremony is further divided into three sub-levels, namely: (1) *Dibai A'pa'* is a ceremony for the servant class; (2) *Ditedong Tungga'* is a ceremony carried out for servants who have enough money to buy a buffalo and several pigs; (3) *Ma'tangke Patolai* is a ceremony for the slave group where two buffalo are slaughtered. Thirdly, the middle-level funeral ceremony (in Toraja, it is called *Dibatang*) for people whose social status is second to the highest (*Tana' Bassi*). Intermediate burials apply to freedmen. There are three types of middle-level ceremonies, which are differentiated based on the length of time the ceremony is held, namely: (1) *Dipatallung Bonggi* (held for three nights); (2) *Dipalimang Bonggi* (held five nights); (3) *Dipapitung Bonggi* (held seven nights). Fourthly, high-level funeral ceremonies which are carried out by the nobility with grand ceremonies whose implementation involved the wider community. There are three types, namely: (1) *Rapasan Dilayu-lau*, namely a ceremony that involves building a statue for the deceased; (2) *Rapasan Sundun* is a more magnificent ceremony with a more significant number of animals to be slaughtered; and (3) *Rapasan Sapu Randanan* is a ceremony that uses all the wealth of the family to be enjoyed by the whole community (Nooy-Palm 1979).

The purpose of the *Rambu Solo'* ceremony is to ensure the safety of the spirits of the dead on their journey to the afterlife (Puya); all sacrifices during the ceremony become provisions for the welfare of the spirits of the dead in the afterlife. The ceremony is performed to protect and/or preserve the good name and self-esteem of the family (immediate and extended family) of the deceased. It is regarded as an occasion for family reunion, and a manifestation of the family's final devotion to one of the family members who died.

### Triad Theologica Upacara *Rambu Solo'*

The *Rambu Solo'* ceremony is generally not permitted in the Christian faith. The principles of the relationship between Christ and culture place two entities between the Redeemer and the results of human response to his work. Discussing and paying attention to these principles is essential to

prepare and form the proper perspective in believing. The relationship between Christ and culture also influences Christians' thinking regarding their social interactions with cultural society. Therefore, we strike a balance between transcendence and immanence. This balance is achieved so that God's activity in history – both past and future – can move into a realm outside of history. This helps us find the transcendent God in actual events, whether in salvation history or the consummation of history in relation to culture.

### Orthodoxy, orthopathy and orthopraxy of the *Rambu Solo'* ceremony

In the orthodoxy of Pentecostal spirituality, Christianity must adhere firmly to the fundamental faith of Christian beliefs. Christian theology must be in harmony with the Bible because it is the basis of Christian theology. This means that theology does not conflict with the Bible and is not even separated from the Bible as its source (Arrington 2015). Different aspects of *Rambu Solo'* are contrary to the Christian faith, for example, the beliefs around life after death, how to find a way to salvation, the merrymaking associated with the death ceremony, conducting a funeral party that is expensive and that leads to huge debts for the family members, family reunions that burden the family of the deceased. In the Christian faith, Genesis 3:19 explicitly states that when humans die, their bodies undergo the process of decomposition and finally return to the dust. In a sense, humans will return to the land because that is where humans were taken or formed (Heard 2019). In the New Testament, one of the words used to describe death is *Thanatos*. *Thanatos* translates as farewell. In other words, when a human dies, the body is separated from life, making it unable to move by itself (Setyobekti 2017). This condition is called physical death, where the body returns to dust. The question is, what about the souls of the dead? Many theologians believe that when a person dies, the soul is separated from the body. For believers, their souls will experience heavenly peace while waiting for the body to be resurrected (Van De Walle 2014). Therefore, the concept of *Aluk Tandolo* that the *Rambu Solo'* ceremony is carried out as a means for the spirits of the dead to be received at *Puya* cannot be accepted.

However, it is also necessary to understand the worldview of Toraja society itself. For the Toraja people, 'to live is to die'. According to the view of many people – from outside and even within the Toraja community itself – the values and goals of Toraja life today are concentrated in the *Rambu Solo'* tradition so that Toraja life seems oriented towards death, that is living to die. Toraja people work hard to accumulate wealth in preparation to perform the ceremony of *Rambu Solo'*. According to the Toraja people, wealth is a measure of success in life. Those who live in poverty are seen as people who are not blessed.

In the context of Land's orthodoxy, *Rambu Solo'* clearly does not glorify Lord Jesus as the only God who can save humans. Therefore, according to the pastor from the Toraja Church, *Rambu Solo'* should not be understood as a religious belief

but rather as a ceremony reflecting the local wisdom of the Toraja people, which must be preserved. The Toraja Church Pastor further emphasised that 'the presence of Christianity in the land of Toraja did not destroy cultural values, but rather brought culture to glorify the Lord Jesus'. In contrast, the Pastor of Gereja Bethel Indonesia argued that *Rambu Solo'* should not be viewed as culture but as ancestral beliefs that must be abandoned. Therefore, we believe that *Rambu Solo'* must be transformed by the Gospel of Christ to prevent syncretism.

Orthopathically, the ceremony of *Rambu Solo'* evokes a variety of mutually reinforcing feelings. Tatodena or Nek Sando, a Toraja ancestral belief leader, believes that *Rambu Solo'* provides peace for the children and grandchildren of the families left behind. This peace is obtained through the certainty that the corpse carried by *Rambu Solo'* will be taken to its final resting place with its previous ancestors. Even though in our observations, there was much crying from the family, it was only because of the sadness of separation, not because of regret. Pastors, elders, and deacons should continue to accompany the bereaved family not only during the *Rambu Solo'* ceremony but until the family has come to terms with the loss of their loved one. This needs to be emphasised because, according to pastors in Toraja, many servants are only seen during the consolation services.

Another spirituality of Orthopathically the implementation of *Rambu Solo'* is the feeling of pride in the attitude and values of the deceased during their life. That is why the bereaved family wants to affirm all the examples from this ceremony. However, there is prestige surrounding the motivation for implementing *Rambu Solo'*. According to Petrus Pakambanan, as Parange Tongkonan Lebani, the longer this ceremony is carried out, the more and longer people will be given food and enjoy good fortune. Even though prestige and pride are behind it, there is a value in sharing with all people in Toraja.

Ultimately, the feeling gained through implementing *Rambu Solo'* is joy. Yefta Salamba Pabisangan, the *Rambu Solo'* ceremony organiser, said, 'We smile not because we are happy, but because it is a medicine for everything we have done'. It is a combination of sadness and happiness. Pakambanan emphasised that 'perhaps it is extraordinary entertainment in itself because of *Pasundun Malina* (the peak of conveying one's longing for loved ones)'. In responding to this situation, Pentecostal believers can take pastoral action towards the bereaved family as Jesus did. The Bible mentions three different occasions where Jesus resurrected the dead and provided comfort to the bereaved family members: (1) Jesus resurrected the daughter of Jairus (Mt 9:18–26; Mk 5:21–43), (2) Jesus resurrected a young man in Nain (Lk 7:11–17), and (3) Jesus raised Lazarus (Jn 11:1–44). The characters present in the three scriptural accounts describe their psychological states: fear, worry, rejection, regret, despair and sadness. However, with the presence of Jesus, sorrow becomes joy in resurrection. The impact of Jesus' presence in

these three events emphasises the importance of the pastoral actions of Pentecostal believers for families who are grieving, namely presence, care and accompaniment.

Pentecostal people also need to learn from the legacy of local wisdom, traces of which can still be seen today. With these two contexts, Pentecostal believers can understand that their presence means depicting the presence of Christ. In this case, Pentecostal believers in Toraja certainly need to learn from *Aluk Todolo* about how they manage grief due to death. One of the lessons from *Rambu Solo'* is the Toraja people's acceptance of the reality of death as the peak of happiness in the human life cycle. Therefore, the expression of acceptance of death is intricately arranged in *Rambu Solo'*. This spirituality can be adopted by Pentecostals in accepting the reality of death.

They experience the sorrow of death as a shared sorrow. This appreciation encourages the formation of a large mass gathering in *Rambu Solo'*. With this appreciation, *Rambu Solo'* should be an opportunity for Pentecostal believers in Toraja to creatively and effectively manage the grief experienced by the congregation so that the *Rambu Solo'* does not give the impression that it is only being implemented normatively. The Pentecostal Church in Toraja should use *Rambu Solo'* creatively and critically to enrich its stewardship about the grief experienced by the congregation. So far, *Rambu Solo'* has only been understood as a funeral ceremony for the dead. *Rambu Solo'* has not been interpreted as a pastoral action for living people, namely as a form of assistance to bereaved families. The church needs to reinterpret and revive or revitalise the meaning and pastoral aspects so intensely in every stage of the *Aluk Todolo*.

With regard to orthopraxy, the implementation of *Rambu Solo'* is full of solidarity and family values. The whole community pitched in to do this because the family could not hold this huge party. Participating in this ceremony does not violate Pentecostal spirituality. The evangelists were Richard van Klaverens and Cornelis Groesbeeks, two Salvation Army officers, who envisioned planting a congregation in Java. They shared this vision with W.H. Offiler, a pastor of Bethel Temple, an independent Pentecostal church in Seattle, who later agreed to provide financial support for them (Berube 1983). In 1921, they set foot in the archipelago and began preaching the gospel to Bali. However, they failed there because they were suspected of being spies by the Dutch troops colonising Indonesia. However, another fact that cannot be ignored is that the approach of these two American evangelists towards the Balinese people, whose majority religion is Hindu, is seen as unfriendly. They were labelled as disturbing and those that can damage Balinese culture (Saerang 2001). The reasonableness researchers give to the actions of these two American evangelists is due to their lack of understanding of Indonesian culture and still carrying Western cultural patterns of thinking. Pentecostal spirituality can offer a promising direction for theologians who wish to interpret the claims of the faith on a comprehensive scale while also engaging cultural developments such as pluralism,



individualism and contextualism in the light of local culture. This approach allows for investing in Pentecostal culture and faith without having to lose its Pentecostal identity.

### Character education in the *Rambu Solo'* ceremony

The main goal of a believer's life is to glorify God and praise him forever. Thus, whatever we do, everything is only for the glory of God. Toraja Christians are still able to carry out the *Rambu Solo'* tradition as long as this event is not used as a way of salvation, honouring deceased parents, and as a place to highlight one's self-esteem. However, this event must be a means to glorify God. It is said to be a means to glorify God if the elements and functions of the *Rambu Solo'* tradition are no longer oriented towards ancestral beliefs and an attitude of loving oneself but towards the construction of character education.

Local wisdom inherent in the *Rambu Solo'* ceremony can be used as a source of character-building learning because the *Rambu Solo'* ceremony contains several socio-cultural aspects that can shape a person's character, namely the existence of *kasianggaran* [mutual respect], helping each other, the existence of *katongkonan* [presence], and many more as a form of love for others. Moreover, this manifests itself in the lives of Toraja people wherever they are. From these various values, we find three character education values in the *Rambu Solo'* ceremony.

Firstly, cooperation. Even though some people who are cynical about Toraja culture consider it as a waste of material possessions, the value of 'cooperation' contained in aluk *Rambu Solo'* is noteworthy. From preparing the place, *Pa'Katia* dance, and parading the buffalo to carrying the body for the ceremony and burial, it shows the great value of 'togetherness' and 'cooperation'. The people who come to help with the preparations are close family members and neighbours, even those who do not have blood ties to the families who will carry out the *Rambu Solo'* ceremony. [Menurut pendeta Toraja, kebersamaan ini sesuai dengan etika solidaritas dalam iman Kristen. Hal senada disampaikan juga oleh anggota adat. (According to the Toraja priest, this togetherness is in accordance with the ethics of solidarity in the Christian faith. The same thing was also conveyed by traditional members) (author's own translation)].

Secondly, help. This value is still solid in the social life of the Toraja people. In particular, it can be seen in various activities related to mourning rituals or *Rambu Solo'*. In today's world where many people are selfish, Toraja people still uphold the importance of helping one another. For example, there is a culture of sharing animal meat that has been slaughtered at the *Rambu Solo'* event with the local community. Apart from that, buffalo are usually set aside to be handed over as aid to community institutions, the government, and places of worship.

Thirdly, religious values. The values that continue to be instilled through *Rambu Solo'* are religious. This value is closely related to the ancestral beliefs of the Toraja people, who believe there is life after death in this world (Direktorat Jendral

Pendidikan Tinggi Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan 2015). In other words, death is not the end of human existence but rather a phase of life that transitions from life in this world to life in the spirit realm [*Puya*]. Therefore, even though the death of the family is mourned [*bating*], it also brings joy if the entire ceremony is carried out well. In the *Aluk Todolo* belief, performing the ceremony of *Rambu Solo'* will allow the deceased's spirit to move to *Puya*. Apart from that, the provisions brought to *Puya* will be made available.

To internalise these character values, school is the right place to equip Toraja Christians with a correct understanding of the truth of God's Word, namely through Christian education. The church acts as a guide that directs all aspects of the development of Christian education in schools. The development of Christian education must be accompanied by quality teaching. Through this Christian education, the church focuses more on the core of its teaching of knowing Christ. The church is responsible for providing Bible teaching to every church member in connection with the *Rambu Solo'* tradition. The church can provide a new pattern by assessing the various stages of the ceremony of *Rambu Solo'* and testing it with God's Word. The church must not remain neutral towards the *Rambu Solo'* tradition.

## Conclusion

In character education, spirituality is vital in helping humans understand the nature of their creation and formulate their goals and objectives in life. Spiritual education makes people aware that a person's success is not only measured by their ability to think and reason or control their emotions. Humans must also have the ability to realise the meaning of their existence in their relationship with God, with other people, and with the surrounding natural environment. Spiritual education strongly influences a person's personality because everyone has spirituality within themselves. Correct spiritual education will direct people to good actions, develop noble qualities and be happy to help others. A correct spiritual education will give a person a calm and optimistic attitude, enable them to lead life with a positive spirit, and help them view the world as a place to realise the common good. In this way, spirituality will make students grow in good character based on spirituality.

Torajan Christians who are still bound by the customs and beliefs of their ancestors should not maintain these practices, as the Lord Jesus has redeemed us from the futile way of life inherited from our ancestors (1 Pt 1:18–19). Torajan Christians must see customs as something that has transformed; this means God's Word must be the basis of all this. Theoretically, this article emphasises the concept of salvation only obtained in Jesus Christ. There is no other way (Jn 14:6) and no other name (Ac 4:12). We also firmly reject the notion that the animals slaughtered at the *Rambu Solo'* ceremony are essential provisions for the dead to quickly get to Heaven (in Toraja, it is called *Puya*), to carry out orgies by slaughtering dozens of buffalo and pigs, and taking part in rituals related to *Aluk Todolo's* beliefs.

However, instead of just providing doctrinal justification, this research has presented the excellent values of the *Rambu Solo'* ceremony by exploring the spirituality and character education contained in it. Seeing *Rambu Solo'* as a forum for growing the spiritual intelligence of the congregation means making *Rambu Solo'* function to explore the meaning, values and goals of individuals and organisations. With *Rambu Solo'*, Pentecostal churches can instil and build the values of virtue, concern for others, and social responsibility; building a person who has a life foundation, moral foundation, enthusiasm and work ethic; increase deep awareness of the life of the congregation and encourage it towards self-transformation towards the true purpose and direction of life.

For academics, our study helps provide a perspective on spirituality and character education from the *Rambu Solo'* ceremony so that it can be used as multicultural education. Practically, this article educates Pentecostal believers in Toraja in responding to the *Rambu Solo'* ceremony. For the Indonesian Bethel Church synod, this article provides a dimension of tension between the theological stance taken and openness to accept the good values inherent in the *Rambu Solo'* ceremony.

We realise that this research has shortcomings because it displays the tension between 'accepting' and 'rejecting' the *Rambu Solo'* ceremony. However, this tension is an opportunity for further research that will examine *Rambu Solo'* from other perspectives, such as psychology, cultural education, moral education and national education.

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## Authors' contributions

F.P. took part in conceptualisation, methodology, formal analysis, investigation, validation, writing – review and editing, and supervision. G.K.R.P. contributed to conceptualisation, methodology, project administration, software, data curation, resources and funding acquisition. W.W. was involved in investigation, writing – original draft, visualisation, project administration, validation, software and funding acquisition.

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## Data availability

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