

'SHOUTING IN A DESERT'

Dutch missionary encounters with Javanese Islam, 1850-1910

'Roepen in een woestijn'

De Nederlandse zending en missie op Islamitisch Java, 1850-1910

Maryse Kruithof

Colophon

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THESIS

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'Shouting in a desert'

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List of abbreviations

DZV	Doopsgezinde Zendingsvereniging <i>Baptist Mission Association</i>
GZB	Genootschap voor in- en uitwendige Zending te Batavia <i>Society for the internal and external Mission in Batavia</i>
JC	Java-comité <i>Java Committee</i>
KNIL	Koninklijk Nederlandsch-Indisch Leger <i>Royal Netherlands East Indies Army</i>
LMS	London Missionary Society
NBG	Nederlandsch Bijbelgenootschap <i>Dutch Bible Society</i>
NGZV	Nederlandse Gereformeerde Zendingsvereniging <i>Dutch Reformed Mission Association</i>
NZG	Nederlandsch Zendelinggenootschap <i>Dutch Missionary Society</i>
NZV	Nederlandse Zendingsvereniging <i>Dutch Mission Association</i>
RvZ	Raad voor de Zending <i>Mission Council</i>
RZV	Rotterdamsche Zendingsvereniging <i>Rotterdam Mission Association</i>
SZC	Samenwerkende Zendingscorporaties <i>Collaborating Mission Corporations</i>
UZV	Utrechtse Zendingsvereniging <i>Utrecht Mission Association</i>
VOC	Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie <i>Dutch East India Company</i>
VNZ	Vereenigde Nederlandse Zendingscorporaties <i>United Dutch Mission corporations</i>

All translations of non-English citations in this thesis are my own, unless otherwise noted.

Introduction

'If I could meet the apostle Paul I would ask him if he would like to exchange his restless and eventful life with ours. And I strongly believe, that he would answer immediately: 'By no means. I have suffered through hunger and cold, I have been whipped, stoned, beaten; yet notwithstanding, I would not want to trade with you. This long and slow torture is worse than anything I have encountered'".¹

With these words, missionary Christiaan Albers of the *Nederlandse Zendingsvereniging* (Dutch Mission Association, NZV) sought to portray the harshness of missionary life to the Dutch supporters of the Christian mission in Java, the most populous island in the Indonesian archipelago. The lives of the Dutch missionaries, both Protestants and Catholics, were filled with disappointment, failure, and uncertainty. The results so desperately hoped for by everyone in the mission failed to materialize during the first phase of the organized mission in Java which lasted from 1850 to 1910.

Although indigenous Christian communities were present in several parts of Java by the end of the first phase of the organised mission, the numerical growth of Christians in Java had been relatively low. Unfortunately, the available numbers vary significantly. L.F. van Gent claims in his commemorative book *'Gedenkboek voor Nederlands-Indië 1898-1923'* that the number of indigenous Christians was 28.000 in 1923.² A 1930 census, taken twenty years after the researched period, shows that approximately 40.000 Javanese embraced Protestant Christianity and 27.500 embraced Roman Catholicism. While these numbers might sound impressive, the native population of Java and Madura reached almost 42 million in 1930.³ Although the Dutch mission societies may have converted only a very small part of the large population of Java between 1850 and 1910, their activities nevertheless impacted Javanese society. Research on Christian missions in other Muslim areas has shown that while only a small minority chose to convert, the missionary presence still influenced the social landscape

¹ Christiaan Albers, 'Gemengde berichten uit Meester Cornelis', in: *Orgaan* (Rotterdam 1898).

² L.F. van Gent, *Gedenkboek voor Nederlands-Indië 1898-1923, ter gelegenheid van het regeringsjubileum van Hare Majesteit de koningin 1898-1923* (Leiden 1923) 508. Marinus Lindenborn claims there are 2600 indigenous Christians living in West Java in 1914, which had around 7, 5 million inhabitants at the time. M. Lindenborn, 'De zending op West Java, antwoord op den aanval van den heer L. Tiemersma, namens het hoofdbestuur der NZV', in: *De Macedonier* (Rotterdam 1914) 19.

³ John Rauws, Hendrik Kraemer, et al, *The Netherlands Indies*, (London 1935) 97-99.

and the people, including those who resisted and rejected the Christian call.⁴ The conditions in Java may not have been radically different.

The peoples of South East Asia came into contact with Christianity during the European 'Age of Discovery'. The various colonial empires employed remarkably diverse strategies, attempting to either win over indigenous populations for Christianity or to keep the issue of religion out of colonial politics altogether. The Indonesian archipelago that was to become known as the Netherlands' Dutch Indies tells a particularly interesting variation of this story. The history of the Christian mission – and that of conversion to Christianity – on the island of Java in particular, demonstrates the highly complex relations between commercial expansion, colonial governance, and religious order. The Christian mission started in the region with the arrival of the Portuguese in the sixteenth century. In Java, however, the spread of Christianity was prohibited in 1680 because the *Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie* (Dutch East India Company, VOC), which had by then monopolised the trade in the region, feared that missionary efforts would cause social and political disturbances at local and regional levels that would impact negatively on public order and trade. Moreover, the mission in the archipelago was Catholic until the arrival of the Dutch, and the Protestant Dutch tradesmen aimed to prevent the further spread of Catholicism. It was only in the mid-nineteenth century that the Dutch colonial government abolished the general prohibition on missionary work in Java. Towards the end of the 1840's the first Dutch missionary association (the *Nederlandsche Zendelinggenootschap*, NZG) initiated their first mission in the area. However, the government exercised strict control over missionary activities in Java; they introduced a variety of rules and procedures for obtaining permits and government interference remained strong well into the twentieth century.

In 1848, Jelle Jellesma, the first missionary affiliated with a missionary society (NZG), arrived with formal permission to evangelise in Java. From 1850 onward, the Dutch colonial government allowed an increasing number of missionaries to take up activities in Java. Several mission societies developed programmes in this period and the number of missionaries grew steadily. Despite decades of zealous efforts by several Protestant and Catholic mission organisations the number of converts remained insignificant well into the twentieth century; where Christian efforts at conversion floundered, Islam continued to successfully spread across the island.⁵ The mission societies and missionaries adjusted repeatedly their expectations, discourse, and strategies following experiences in the field. By 1910, most mission societies had come to the conclusion that their initial strategies had

⁴ Ku-Wei-Ying, 'Conflict, confusion and control: some observation on missionary cases', in: Koen de Ridder, *Footsteps in deserted valleys, missionary cases, strategies and practice in Qing China* (Leuven 2000).

Avril Ann Powell, *Muslims and missionaries in pre-mutiny India* (London 1993).

Benjamin F. Soares, *Muslim-Christian Encounters in Africa* (Leiden 2006).

⁵ John Rauws, *The Netherlands Indies* (London 1935) 99-101.

not led to any success and that it was necessary to change their approach radically. This decade marked the beginning of a new phase in the organised mission in Java. This study analyses the Dutch mission discourse in the period before this realisation and is focused specifically on the years 1850 to 1910.

In this general introduction, I start with formulating the aims and research questions of this study. Second, I address the theories and concepts that are relevant to this thesis. In this part I define and discuss the overarching themes 'conversion', 'religious hybridity', and 'Othering'. Next, I discuss the body of primary source material that forms the core of this study, followed by some methodological reflections on how I analysed these sources. Last, I explain the structure of the dissertation and main argument.

1. Aims and research questions

This micro-history uses the actions and perceptions of six Dutch missionaries as a lens to study the shifts and developments in the Dutch mission discourse from 1850 to 1910. These six missionaries form the foundation of this project and they will be introduced in paragraph 6 of this chapter. Based on their sources I aim to produce a history of the Dutch missionary encounter with local communities in Java at the individual level. These missionaries found themselves in an exceptional position, namely on the borders between their own, the colonial, and the local culture. This gave them a unique perspective on a wide range of processes in the colony, but it also made their proselytizing task that much harder. They often felt restricted and constantly had to negotiate with all sides involved.

I address the Dutch and Javanese dimensions of this historical exchange and analyse the missionaries' reflections upon this encounter, how they adjusted their proselytizing strategies, and the influence it had on the Dutch mission discourse. The sources allow for a comparison between the views, approaches, and results of Protestant, Catholic and - to lesser extent - indigenous evangelists. The focus is in particular on the interaction and dialogue between the Dutch missionaries and indigenous people with alternative religious beliefs at the micro-level. However, this study is based on missionary sources only because of the lack of indigenous sources in the researched period. Indigenous texts that reflect on the Dutch Christian mission only began to appear after the turn of the century and especially after 1910. I analyse the occurring processes of synchronic inter- and intra-religious contacts. Contrary to what one might expect, Christian missionaries were in continual dialogue with the adherents of traditional Javanese beliefs in the mission field, though rarely with

Muslim leaders.⁶ Neither Christians, nor Muslims saw a substantial need for an inter-religious dialogue, and thus, the Christian community developed primarily its identity independent of Islamic influence.⁷

Mission history is not merely a tale of Christian propagation - it also covers the social, economic, cultural and political lives of individuals and communities. The proselytizing process took different forms and was not imposed by the dominant colonial elite. On the contrary, the religious conversion process was, by and large, a bargaining game between local populations, missionaries and the colonial authorities.⁸ The relationship between Christian missionaries and Javanese Muslims was staged in the imperial setting, and the Dutch missionaries operated under the assumption that God had given the Indian archipelago to the Netherlands as their Christian responsibility.⁹ Even though most missionaries may have had occasional misgivings about colonial governance, they should nevertheless be understood in the context of cultural imperialism.¹⁰ These missionaries may have criticised the negative effects of colonialism, but they never questioned colonialism as a whole.

Between the mid-nineteenth century and the early twentieth century, a period which has often been depicted as the phase of 'high' or 'new' imperialism', a new colonial relationship emerged, where formal conquest, annexation, and administration became the most common connection between the West and other countries. Islam was a high priority in the Dutch Indies, as it was in other parts of the world, at the turn of the century. World-wide, Christian-Muslim relations were developing quickly because Western imperialism vastly intensified contacts between these two worlds, especially after the Ottoman Empire ceased to exist and European powers claimed authority in the Middle East. The colonial powers feared Pan-Islamism would cause resistance in colonies in the Islamic world and aimed their policies at restraining Muslim 'fanaticism'. The evolving relationship between Christian and Muslim societies shaped a world where both considered the other civilization the main Other; an image which still dominates global relations today.¹¹

The 1850's marked the establishment of the organised mission in Java. In the decades that followed, the societies repeatedly changed their aims and strategies to convert the Javanese people and to retain the newly converted Christians from a relapse. The Protestant associations changed their

⁶ Arnila Hevena Santoso, *Protestant Christianity in the Indonesian context; colonial missions, independent churches and indigenous faith* (Wheaton, 2006) 5.

⁷ Th. Sumartana, *Mission at the crossroads, indigenous churches, European missionaries, Islamic association and socio-religious change in Java 1812-1936* (Leiderdorp 1991).

⁸ Rémy Madinier and Michel Picard, *The Politics of Agama in Java and Bali* (London, New York 2011).

⁹ Rita Smith Kipp, *The early years of a Dutch colonial mission: the Karo field* (Michigan 1990) 24-35.

¹⁰ Makdisi, *Artillery of Heaven*, 14.

¹¹ The concept of 'Othering' will be discussed in paragraph 5 of this chapter.

approaches and even merged in an attempt to increase efficiency in the 1920s. This decade is outside the scope of this study because it brought a major change in proselytizing methods, fostered namely by A. C. Kruyt and N. Adriani, both missionaries of the NZG. These men, who devoted as much effort to ethnography as to conversion, started to advocate the importance of Christianity acculturated in the indigenous religious system.¹² The approach of the Catholic mission also altered considerably after the turn of the century. Of the first two Jesuit mission posts, one had ceased to exist and the other became solely focused on education and had more or less given up on all other mission strategies.

The six Dutch missionaries, focused upon in this study worked in different areas of Java and in different periods within 1850-1910. I have selected them based on the richness of their personal archives and their diverse viewpoints and strategies. In the following chapters I will elucidate these missionaries' convictions and strategies and the responses to their efforts. I intend to construct a history of the daily encounters between Dutch Protestant and Catholic missionaries with the Javanese and Sundanese rather than relate an institutional history of the mission organisations.¹³ Nevertheless, in order to understand the individual missionary efforts and their impact, the institutional developments are part and parcel of this story. Moreover, as I mentioned before, I include the approaches and results of indigenous evangelists in the narrative. Even before the start of the Dutch mission *circa* 1850, a number of indigenous Christians travelled around the island to spread the Gospel, and continued their work throughout the century. However, due to a lack of primary source material, these indigenous evangelists will not be as closely studied as the six Dutch missionaries.

In general, the newly arrived missionaries were ill-informed about Java, its inhabitants, their culture and religion. This lack of knowledge influenced their perceptions, expectations, and policies. I will examine the way in which these six missionaries understood the religious traditions practiced in their districts, and how they dealt with the varying responses to missionary presence, and processes of localization of Christianity. Negotiations in the missionary writings show that the boards of the societies and the missionaries were often in disagreement about these kinds of issues. An important aim of this study is to study these negotiations to illuminate how the missionaries justified their choices and results.

¹² Santoso, *Protestant Christianity in the Indonesian context*, 5.

¹³ Sundanese people are the native inhabitants of West Java. They are ethnically and culturally distinguishable from the Javanese. They speak Sundanese, which is closely related to both Javanese and Malay. The Sundanese culture was perceived as more overtly Islamic with less Hindu-Buddhist elements. In general, the Sundanese would follow the Islamic rulings concerning the *salat*, *zakat* and *ramadan* more closely. Lindenborn, Marinus, *De Nederlandsche Zendingsvereeniging gedurende zestig jaren, 1858-1918, rede op de zendingsdag* (Rotterdam 1918) 85.

In short, the core of my research consists of the personal archives of six Dutch missionaries - four Protestants and two Catholics - to analyse religious exchange and reform in the period between 1850 and 1910 in Java from their perspective and to show how they situated themselves in relationship to the dominant discourses of their boards, of the colonial state, and of the local people they were trying to convert, in that particular place and moment of time. Therefore, my leading research question is: *'how did the missionaries negotiate discourses on religion in their goal to proselytize the Javanese Muslim population in the context of Dutch colonial rule between 1850 and 1910?* In order to answer this question I have divided this study in three parts.

The first part of this thesis is focused on the historical, religious, and institutional context in which the Dutch missionaries tried to convert the local population of Java. In the second part, I address the way the missionaries negotiated the dominant Dutch mission discourse on Javanese Islam and on indigenous, Christian mission activities. It becomes clear how the Dutch missionaries defined religion and categorized local religious traditions. The third and final part of this study addresses the three stages in the mission: evangelisation, conversion, and internalisation of Christianity. In this part, I first discuss the strategies the missionaries used to get in contact with the indigenous population and whether and how they adapted these after spending some time in the field. Moreover, I will show how the missionaries justified their methods and somewhat disappointing results in their reports. The following chapter addresses the various responses to the missionaries' presence. These responses ranged from complete rejection to commitment to Christianity and it becomes clear that people had very diverse motives for conversion or for refraining from conversion. Finally, the focus is on the way the missionaries dealt with local expressions of Christianity. I will show how the missionaries negotiated discourses on religion in order to justify their choice whether to allow or prohibit certain traditional practices.

2. *Concepts and Theories*

Traditionally, the focus in studies on Dutch Christian missionary activities has not been scholarly. Virtually all literature on the subject was descriptive and commemorative in nature and published by the mission societies themselves. During the last few decades, however, the discourse has become more scholarly, since scholars from various fields have gained an interest in missionary encounters, cultural exchange, and conversion. In recent years many theoretical works concerning the process of

cultural exchange, interreligious contact, and conversion have been published that are of great importance for this study.¹⁴

I have limited my theoretical framework to three themes: '*conversion*', '*religious hybridity*' and '*Othering*'. These concepts are vital when discussing inter-religious contact in the colonial context, because they are all connected to the unique border position of the missionaries. These missionaries actually lived on the border between their own and other religions, including other Christian denominations, and between the world of the colonizers and the colonised. The colonial border zone was a fluid social space, largely defined by unequal power relations, where various cultures interacted with each other.¹⁵ To study these transcultural interactions, I will use Mary Louise Pratt's concept of the '*contact zone*'. She defines contact zones as 'social spaces where disparate cultures meet, clash and grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination-like colonialism...'¹⁶ Relations among colonizers and colonized are treated in terms of interaction, instead of separateness, and it points out that even though these cross-cultural encounters produced borders, these were continuously contested and negotiated.¹⁷ Different cultures and religions clashed or blended in the colonial contact zone and because both resisted, altered or accepted influences of other parties, all actors involved underwent transformation.

My aim is to describe how the missionaries, who found themselves stuck between the expectations and demands on the one hand of their superiors and on the other of the people they were trying to convert, enacted agency by resisting, negating and negotiating - covert or open - their dominant discourses. With the method of *reading against the grain*, which I will discuss in paragraph 7 of this introduction, I will analyse the negotiations, contradictions and ambiguities that are present in the missionary writings to elucidate the ways in which the missionaries tried to reconcile with the multiple discursive borders. In the following three paragraphs I will discuss the concepts *conversion*, *religious hybridity* and *Othering* that are all directly linked to the concept border zone, and explain why and how I use them in this study.

¹⁴ See Webb Keane, *Christian moderns, freedom and fetish in the mission encounter* (Berkeley 2007), Peter Wick and Volker Rabens, *Religions and trade: religious formation, transformation and cross-cultural exchange between East and West* (Leiden 2014), Volkhard Krech, Marion Steinicke, *Dynamics in the history of religions between Asia and Europe, encounters, notions and comparative perspectives* (Leiden 2012), Christopher Lamb and M. Darrol Bryant, *Religious Conversion, contemporary practices and controversies* (London 1999), or Andrew Buckser and Stephen D. Glazier, *The Anthropology of Religious Conversion* (Oxford 2003).

¹⁵ Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial eyes: travel writing and transculturation* (London and New York 1992) 6.

¹⁶ Pratt, *Imperial eyes*, 4.

¹⁷ Pratt, *Imperial eyes*, 7.

3. Conversion

Religious conversion is directly connected to the notion of the contact zone, because transition to a religion that differs from the convert's previous religion can only occur after encountering other religious ideas. Throughout the twentieth century 'conversion' has mainly been studied from a psychological approach while in recent years the process of conversion has been studied from a more anthropological approach. These studies signify that religious conversion is more than an inner event. With the increase of studies on the subject, the value of the concept as an analytical category has been increasingly contested. Conversion, like religion, is a Western neis not applicable in a non-Western context.¹⁸ Moreover, in the West, conversion assumes exclusivity: one leaves one religious tradition to enter another and between those two religions exists a boundary, real or imagined. In this context, conversion is presented in terms of a 'before and after' dichotomy. The Dutch missionaries presented it as such and insisted the ritual of baptism to mark the transition. In this sense, conversion is an event that differs from the gradual process of adapting religious beliefs and practices from other religious traditions into a personal or communal religious framework. It is understood as a deliberate change with a definite direction and shape.¹⁹ However, many scholars argue that this black and white juxtaposition between believer and unbeliever is a very Christian way to understand conversion.²⁰ For instance, Andrew Buckser and Stephen D. Glazier, authors of '*The Anthropology of Religious Conversion*' claim that conversion should be understood as an enduring process of integrating new ideas and customs.²¹ Moreover, conversion does not necessarily imply a change in fundamental convictions; old convictions and practices can be modified with elements from other traditions. In this sense, conversion is an enduring phase that always includes continuities between old and new faiths.

Although in some cases conversion can radically change one's life from one moment to the next, I have not come across many conversion narratives that present it as such in my study. The sources I analysed show that conversion is often a complex and enduring process. Typically the process of conversion starts with adopting elements from the new religion into one's old religious framework and continues with further adoptions that, in some cases, lead to renouncing the beliefs and practices of the previously held religion. The resulting religious identity has its origins in different belief systems and should therefore be described as hybrid; a concept which will be discussed in the

¹⁸David Lindenfeld, 'Indigenous encounters with Christian missionaries in China and West Africa, 1800-1920: a comparative study', in: *Journal of World History* (Honolulu 2005) 327-369.

¹⁹ Diane Austin Broos, 'The anthropology of conversion, an introduction; in: Andrew Buckser and Stephen D. Glazier, *The Anthropology of Religious Conversion* (Oxford 2003)1-12.

²⁰ Wolfgang Gabbert, 'Social and cultural conditions of religious conversion in colonial southwest Tanzania 1891-1939', in: *Ethnology*, No. 4(2001) 291-308.

²¹ Andrew Buckser and Stephen D. Glazier, *The Anthropology of Religious Conversion* (Oxford 2003).

next paragraph. Yet, gradual as the process may be, changing one's religion is perplexing because religion is believed to be deeply rooted in family connections, cultural traditions, ingrained customs, and ideologies.²² Consequently, conversion affects one's cultural, social, economic, and political identity together with one's position in society.²³ It changes one's relation with the members of the prior religious community and it can even lead to a complete break with one's original community to enter the other.

Meredith McGuire has argued that religion at the individual level is an ever-changing, multifaceted, and sometimes contradictory amalgam of beliefs and practices.²⁴ She argues that one's personal religious framework is always in motion and always evolving, therefore it is impossible to pinpoint where conversion starts and is complete. Although I agree with this assumption, I believe that this explanation of conversion concentrates too much on the individual. Within Protestantism, conversion is understood as a deliberate personal change in religious adherence. Consequently many Western scholars tend to value individual conversions more and have suggested implicitly that communal conversions are less genuine.²⁵ This distinction is less evident within Catholicism and is absent in most Eastern religions. In my definition, individual and communal conversions are of equal status.

Until now, questions of why and how people convert to another religion have remained understudied, especially in the mission discourse. The missionaries have not, despite their limited success, theorized much about the process of conversion. They considered conversion a rational reorganisation of individual beliefs; one simply converts from 'heathendom' to a 'rational' and 'true' religion. However, because of the various consequences of religious conversion, the reasons to convert are usually more diverse than just religious reflections. As Jan-Ake Alvarsson and Rita Laura Segato claim, choosing another religion is also based on selecting companions, making alliances, seeking identity within a group, and creating an opposition to the social identity of those who are not part of it.²⁶ However, some scholars appear to have gone too far in downplaying religious motives for conversion. Peter van de Veer argued that in the past many social scientists have dismissed wrongfully the process merely as adopting modernity, that is, expressing one's adherence to the Western world

²² Lewis R. Rambo, *Anthropology and the study of Conversion*, in: Andrew Buckser and Stephen D. Glazier, *The Anthropology of Religious Conversion* (Oxford 2003) 211-222.

²³ Wolfgang Gabbert, 'Social and cultural conditions of religious conversion in colonial southwest Tanzania 1891-1939', in: *Ethnology* (2001-4) 291-308.

²⁴ Meredith B. McGuire, *Lived religion, faith and practice in everyday life* (New York 2008) 4.

²⁵ See for example: David K. Jordan, 'The glyptomancy factor: observations on Chinese conversion' in Robert Hefner et al., *Conversion to Christianity; historical and anthropological perspectives on a great transformation*. (Berkeley 1993a) 285.

²⁶ Jan-Ake Alvarsson, Rita Laura Segato, *Religions in transition, mobility, merging and globalization in the emergence of contemporary religious adhesions* (Uppsala, 2003) 21.

or yielding to the pressure of the colonial ruler.²⁷ However, this denies all agency to the converting communities.²⁸ This notion of conversion reduces converts to victims of colonial pressure, cultural imperialism or mere missionary persuasion.

Today, conversion is understood generally as more than a re-evaluation of the value of religious ideas. The study of conversion should therefore not be limited to the field of religion, but could benefit from being extended to other situations of transformation in someone's identity. Since the conversion process is so versatile it is difficult to form a useful definition. I have chosen to use the well-known definition of Robert Hefner: conversion is 'an adjustment in self-identification through the at least nominal acceptance of religious actions or beliefs deemed more fitting, useful, or true.'²⁹ Though broad, this definition acknowledges clearly that conversion is not just a religious re-affiliation. He usefully acknowledges the different reasons for conversion, including political, economic, social and religious reasons, because he not only used the word 'true', but also added 'fitting' and 'useful'. In addition, 'self-identification' may be understood in both an individual and communal sense.

Nevertheless, even though my understanding of conversion differs vastly from the understanding of the missionaries, their perspective is very important for this study. Their black and white understanding of religious conversion determined to great extent how they negotiated discourses on religion, proselytizing, and internalizing a new religion.

4. *Religious hybridity*

The outcomes of conversion processes were often not in accordance with what the missionaries had expected. In actual practice the border between Christianity and other systems of belief proved to be much more porous than they had envisioned. Many converts held on to ideas and rituals that had its origin in pre-Christian religious traditions. Javanese religious traditions have often been labelled by Dutch missionaries as 'syncretic'. Syncretism is usually defined as a process that follows religious exchange in which elements from various religious systems come together and form a new, often fluid, whole.³⁰ It is an on-going dynamic process of negotiation between different beliefs whereby conflicting elements from various religions can be incorporated without culminating necessarily into a

²⁷ Peter van de Veer, *Conversion to modernities: The globalization of Christianity* (New York 1996).

²⁸ Wolfgang Gabbert, 'Social and cultural conditions of religious conversion in colonial southwest Tanzania 1891-1939', In: *Ethnology* (2001-4) 291-308.

²⁹ R.W. Hefner et al., *Conversion to Christianity; historical and anthropological perspectives on a great transformation*. (Berkeley 1993a) 17.

³⁰ Ulrich Berner, 'The concept of 'Syncretism': An instrument of historical insight/discovery', in: A.M. Leopold and J.S. Jensing, *Syncretism in religion, a reader* (London 2004) 4.

harmonious whole. Contradictory elements have an equal status and can coexist in the new religious current without forming an internal unity.³¹ In other words, syncretism is commonly understood as the synthesis of different religious forms and most agree it is a universal phenomenon.

Syncretism is, however, not a determinate term with a fixed meaning, but one which has been historically constituted, reconstituted, and has undergone many historical transformations in its meaning.³² It has acquired a rather negative connotation in the West. The term was coined towards the end of the Reformation as a by-product of this 'boundary drawing contest' within Christianity.³³ It was formed in a power discourse which decided what was orthodox and what was syncretic and allowed the syncretic to be marginalized as heterodoxy or heresy. It is still often taken to imply the infiltration of a supposedly 'pure' tradition by beliefs and practices that sprang from incompatible traditions.³⁴ The concept of syncretism assumes that religions have a pure and eternal core and, at least once, existed completely separated from each other. However, all religions are continually changing and it is impossible to identify the 'original' version of any religion. Even religions with fixed scriptures continually change, since scriptures are written in a specific temporal and cultural context that makes understanding them in another context difficult. Therefore 'orthodoxy' is merely an ideal, never a reality.

In the nineteenth century, colonial agents, scholars, and especially missionaries depicted local versions of the standardized 'world religions' as principal examples of syncretism in this pejorative sense. Consequently, the concept is no longer commonly used in scholarly studies because the majority of scholars agree that the term 'syncretism' has become too polemically loaded. Yet, there are other voices in this debate. Charles Stewart and Rosalind Shaw call for the reclamation of the term syncretism to define religious synthesis.³⁵ They argue that it is unnecessary to invent new words simply because the term that already exists was given a negative connotation in the nineteenth century. They opt to reappraise the concept 'syncretism' to describe religious synthesis in any form without any condemnatory undertone.

³¹ Robert D. Baird, 'Syncretism and the history of religions' in: A.M. Leopold and J.S. Jensen, *Syncretism in religion, a reader* (London 2004) 54.

Many however, have said that this is common in all religions even those that are the prominent examples of 'non-syncretic religions'. See: Clifford Geertz, 'Religion as a cultural system' in: *The interpretation of cultures: selected essays* (London 1993) 87-125.

³² Charles Stewart and Rosalind Shaw, *Syncretism/ Anti-Syncretism, the politics of religious synthesis* (London 1994).

³³ Anita Maria Leopold and Jeppe Sinding Jensen, *Syncretism in Religion: A Reader* (London 2004).

³⁴ Stewart and Shaw, *Syncretism/ Anti-Syncretism*.

³⁵ Stewart and Shaw, *Syncretism/ Anti-Syncretism*.

I do not agree with Stewart and Shaw and will not use the concept myself to avoid misunderstandings about its use. However, the missionaries, who are the leading figures in this study, commonly used the concept in their writings to dismiss local expressions of faith and to 'other' the adherents of mixed traditions. They employed 'syncretism' to indicate beliefs and practices that were supposedly not 'pure' or 'orthodox' and therefore subordinate to their own tradition. So the concept will sometimes occur in this thesis, but only in relation to the missionaries' sources.

A possible alternative may be 'creolization', a term that was coined in linguistic studies. There, the term 'creole' is used to refer to vernacular languages, developed in colonial times out of various lexicons available in the Caribbean.³⁶ Later, the term was expanded to include other mixed languages around the world and eventually to refer to the general historical process of cultural blending. The advantage of 'creolization' is that it acknowledges that both dominant and dominated groups and cultures are affected and that this process does not manifest itself in a single way, but rather along a continuum of possible outcomes. However, within linguistic studies it has been contested for the same reasons syncretism has been contested in religious studies. Creolization, too, was linked to impurity and is therefore not more neutral than syncretism.³⁷

I have dismissed another possible concept 'acculturation' because it is based on the premise of inequality between interacting cultures. The concept has a teleological assumption and has been understood generally as the progressive adoption of a dominant culture. The concepts 'inculturation' and 'indigenization' are unfeasible because of their strong connection to Catholicism. Both terms were employed in the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) to describe processes of adapting the Catholic message to the cultural histories of non-Western peoples, in such a way that Catholicism is expressed through elements suitable to the culture in question.³⁸

Ultimately, I have chosen to use the concepts 'localization' and 'hybridity' in this thesis to indicate the process and result of exchange and re-accommodation of ideas, beliefs or practices in contact zones. Like Webb Keane, I define localization as the ability of societies to resist, internalize, and transform external forces.³⁹ Analytically, the term 'hybridity' is used for analysing all kinds of phenomena in which elements, meanings, and forms are shared, combined or mixed.⁴⁰ Alvarsson and

³⁶ Wieke Vink, *Creole Jews, Negotiating community in colonial Suriname* (Leiden 2010).

³⁷ Pauline Turner Strong, 'On theoretical impurity' in: *American Ethnologist*, Vol. 33, No 4 (2006) 585-587.

³⁸ http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/cti_documents/rc_cti_1988_fede-inculturazione_en.html (April 2014).

³⁹ Webb Keane, *Christian moderns, freedom and fetish in the mission encounter* (Berkeley 2007) 91.

⁴⁰ The concept has often been used in biology and genetics to indicate the offspring of resulting from the breeding of two genetically distinct individuals. R. Young, *Colonial desire: Hybridity in theory, culture and race* (London 1996).

Segato explain that it defines the outcome of the conscious or unconscious fusion of two or more sets of religious values and traditions in which individual phenomena may be substituted, interposed, or exist side by side without being labelled as pertaining to one tradition or the other.⁴¹ The mixing of elements can both be intentional and unintentional. Anthias argues that hybridity rejects the notion of homogenous, uniform cultural phenomena or identities, and subscribes instead to notions of heterogeneity and multiplicity.⁴² Processes of cultural exchange usually give rise to a variety of outcomes which are not necessarily problematic or even visible to the actors involved in producing them. Hybridity is a more neutral term than syncretism since it argues against homogeneity, essentialism, and absolutism. Moreover, it allows agency to the subaltern and destabilizes power in dominant discourses on orthodoxy because it assumes a more equal division of power in which ideas and practices are exchanged and its results are labelled.⁴³

5. Othering

This drawing of borders occurred on levels other than religion in the colonial world. Imperial powers produced concepts such as racial and cultural hierarchies and positive versus primitive religions. These concepts continued to dominate theoretical approaches to cultural contacts and clashes in contact zones well into the twentieth century.⁴⁴ I will elucidate these concepts to reach a better understanding of the imperial culture that overshadowed nineteenth century colonial societies and therefore strongly influenced the mission discourse. These concepts are the result of the process of 'Othering'. Othering refers to a process of inclusion and exclusion in which groups label other groups as 'the Other'.⁴⁵ People construct the Other by ascribing alien features in the fields of religion, ethnicity, gender, class et cetera to the other group in order to reinforce their own idea of the Self. Often a negative image of the Other is constructed in order to produce a positive, civilised image of the Self. Scholars such as Michel Foucault and Edward Said have argued that the process of Othering has

⁴¹ Alvarsson and Segato, *Religions in transition*, 240.

⁴² F. Anthias, 'New hybridities, old concepts: The limits of 'culture'' in: *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol. 24 (2001) 619-641.

⁴³ In critical theory and post colonialism, the subaltern is the social group who is socially, politically, and geographically outside of the hegemonic power structure of the colony. The subalterns are those without human agency.

See: Robert Young, *Post-colonialism: A Very Short Introduction* (New York 2003).

⁴⁴ M.L. Pratt, 'Arts of the contact zone.' In: D. Bartholomae & A. Petrosky (Eds.) *Ways of reading* (New York 1999).

⁴⁵ Sara Mills, *Discourse* (New York 1997) 106-118.

everything to do with knowledge, power acting through knowledge and truth-making to create inequality and the subordination of others.⁴⁶

As Edward Said explained in his influential study 'Orientalism', learned scholars, travel authors, novelists, and also missionaries produced a body of knowledge in the nineteenth century that depicted the Orient as the opposite of the Western world.⁴⁷ He showed that texts about colonized countries employed consistently the same arguments and images. The Orient was produced in relation to the West and was therefore described solely in terms of the way it differed from the West. Colonised people were systematically stereotyped or even dehumanized in Western texts. Subjective statements were given the same status as facts. Sara Mills argues that this discourse on the non-Western world had far-reaching effects: 'it informed knowledge and practices; constructed the grounds within debates about race were largely conducted and the typologies within which indigenous people and their descendants were forced to be categorized and to categorize themselves'.⁴⁸ The discourse was empowered by unequal imperialistic power relations. In other words, Othering had the power to actually affect the lives of colonial subjects.

The colonial encounter between people of different ethnic and cultural descent was marked by inequality and disparity. The colonisers, including missionaries, generally portrayed the colonised people in a child-like manner or as existing on a different timescale to the colonisers.⁴⁹ They were presented as backward, primitive, underdeveloped, or immature. Because of the great imbalance in power, the colonisers were able to depict these representations as facts as they produced the 'truth' about these 'primitive' others. Moreover, emphasizing the inferiority of other peoples and cultures provided the West with a noble justification for conquest and empire. By portraying the colonised people as children, who were dependent on patronizing 'mother countries,' the 'civilizing mission', including the Christian mission, of the West could be justified.⁵⁰ These stereotypical conceptions of the non-Western Other influenced heavily colonial policy and therefore the context in which the missionaries fulfilled their task.

The process of Othering produced concepts such as racial and cultural hierarchies. I will address these concepts to explain the missionaries' view on the local 'target' population. Racial hierarchy is defined as a system of stratification that focuses on the belief that some ethnic groups are either superior or inferior to other racial groups. This system was developed in a time where social

⁴⁶ Sara Mills, *Discourse* (New York 1997) 106-118.

⁴⁷ Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York 1978).

⁴⁸ Mills, *Discourse*, 108.

⁴⁹ Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other, how anthropology makes its object* (New York 1983).

⁵⁰ This became known as the 'White man's burden'. Said, *Orientalism*.

Darwinism and eugenics were at the forefront of Western science. In the nineteenth century colonial world, white people were perceived to have the most power and authority; they were at the top of the racial hierarchy, while coloured and black groups were deemed as 'inferior' and at the bottom of the hierarchy. A 'cultural hierarchy' also defines a framework describing social ranking. Western cultures were broadly depicted as 'upper' in respect to 'lower' or non-Western cultures. The Dutch missionaries lived in a context that was dominated by such racist theories and as a result they were biased in their encounters with the Javanese and Sundanese people. However, the process of Othering was of course not unilateral, the Javanese population simultaneously considered the Dutch as the main Other.

Western scholarship of religion in this era was also formed by these dominant discourses and their influence is noticeable in nineteenth century studies on religion. Christianity has strongly influenced the discourse on religion.⁵¹ Our present conception of 'religion' is the product of Western discursive processes and largely shaped by Christian conditions.⁵² For instance; we now generally consider a belief system to be a religion when it includes: creedal affirmation, a fixed scripture, exclusive membership, the religious-secular converse, et cetera.⁵³ However, religions other than the Abrahamic religions usually do not meet these standards. As a result, those traditions have for a long time been considered as lesser religions or even non-religious by Western people. Religions that were polytheistic, had animistic elements, or included ancestral worship, were generally considered primitive. These religions supposedly lacked any real system of ethics and developed their doctrines opportunistically as the needs of the practitioners required.⁵⁴ Such 'primitive' religions were believed to follow a circular process, with the emphasis on the recurrence of ancestral traditions. These religions were considered to be historically degraded and undeveloped, or at best the preceding stage to the higher levels of religion.⁵⁵

'Enlightened' modernists were convinced that all societies evolve intellectually and technically which, in turn, increased the need for a systematic and ethical cosmology. The arrival of Western modernity would predispose people to the higher truth of the world faiths that supposedly included

⁵¹ Talal Asad, *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, modernity* (Stanford 1993).

⁵² Talal Asad, 'The construction of religion as an anthropological category', in: *Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam* (Baltimore 1993) 27-54.

⁵³ Volkhard Krech, 'From Religious Contact to Scientific Comparison and back. Some Methodological Considerations

on Comparative Perspectives in the Science of Religion' (unpublished) (2012).

⁵⁴ Robert W. Hefner et al., *Conversion to Christianity, historical and anthropological perspectives on a great transformation* (Berkeley, 1993) 6.

⁵⁵ David Chidester, *Savage Systems: Colonialism and Comparative Religion in Southern Africa* (Virginia, 1996).

greater intellectual coherence, consistency and moral rigor.⁵⁶ The Abrahamic religions were considered more developed belief systems, because they are monotheistic and with a 'Holy Scripture' based upon revelations. These religions have a linear process of development and progress. Protestantism was, in this view, considered most superior - even when compared to Judaism and Islam - because of its emphasis on text and rationality instead of ritual, the emotional component of religion. The missionaries were deeply influenced by these ideas and this showed in their dealings with the local population. The missionary writings display that the adherents of what were considered 'primitive' religions were continuously Othered and ridiculed. Moreover, missionaries distinguished between 'true' and 'superficial' Muslims and Christians, demonstrating that they also Othered and rejected people with hybrid religious identities. In contrast to other religious traditions present in Java, Islam was not considered heathen. This does not, however, mean Islam was considered equal to Christianity and free of contempt. In fact, Islam constituted the main Other opposed to Christianity. Because Islam formed the main opponent of the Christian mission it was continuously attacked and degraded in the mission discourse.

In line with the then prevailing Western-Christian discourse, the decision to convert to a 'more rational' religion both individually and communally was considered an inevitable part of progress or enlightenment.⁵⁷ Christian missionaries saw themselves as the rightful guides for the colonised peoples on their path to modernity. The 'right path' would be available to everyone because all persons are equal before God. However, in their view, only well-educated people were able to sincerely devote themselves to the true faith. Therefore, the missionaries used education and science as their main tools to raise the supposedly 'uncivilised nations' to a higher level of development.

For this reason, missionaries have often been described as 'tools of imperialism' in postcolonial studies.⁵⁸ Even though the Dutch mission was not an instrument of the Dutch colonial government, the two are not completely unconnected either. Dutch missionaries certainly had colonial agency and were important actors in the imperial process because of their drive to change both the social attitudes and the religious beliefs of the colonised society. Their calling was not only to convert the people to their faith, but often also to change the cultural landscapes of the mission lands. Most mission organisations, including the Dutch organisations active in the Indies, were determined to restructure the societies in which its missionaries were active. For the mission societies, progress towards modernity was not just a matter of improvements in technology or economic wellbeing, but it was above all about intellectual and moral agency; the societies believed their missionaries would

⁵⁶ Hefner, *Conversion to Christianity*, 6.

⁵⁷ Hefner, *Conversion to Christianity*, 6.

⁵⁸ Sharkey, *American Evangelicals in Egypt*, 12.

enlighten the colonised societies. The missionary activities and aims fit well in the philosophy of the ‘*Mission civilisatrice*’ or the ‘white man’s burden’. These were both popular rationales for colonisation, since they assume a responsibility of Westerners to govern and impart their culture to non-Westerners in order to ‘raise’ them to their level.

6. Sources

Because I focus on everyday encounters in the colonial contact zone between missionaries and the people of Java, I chose the perspective from below, namely that of six Dutch missionaries, instead of the perspective of the boards of missionary organizations or the colonial state. I have chosen two missionaries from the *Nederlandsche Zendelinggenootschap* (Dutch Missionary Society, NZG), two from the *Nederlandsche Zendingsvereniging* (Dutch Mission Association, NZV) and two Catholic missionaries, both from the Jesuit Order. I have chosen these societies because the NZG and the NZV are the oldest and largest Dutch mission societies that were active in Java and the Jesuit Order was the only Catholic order active in the Javanese mission field during this period. Although other Dutch mission societies and missions from other European and North American nations are mentioned, they do not constitute the focal point in this narrative.⁵⁹

The NZG was the first missionary society that received a permit to start a mission in Java from the Dutch colonial government. One of the first NZG missionaries who were sent to Java to evangelise in the Javanese community was Samuel Eliza Harthoorn (1831-1883). He was sent to Java in 1854 and after two years of intensive study of the local languages in Modjo Warno he was assigned to his own district: Malang, a city in South-east Java. Seven years later he left Java after a severe conflict with the board. After spending a few years in the Netherlands, the headstrong missionary returned to the Dutch Indies; he set up his own private mission on the island of Madura, so he could apply his own methods there. In 1855, Carel Poensen (1836-1919) joined the NZG and started his missionary training

⁵⁹ In the first half of the nineteenth century British and American missions were active in and around the capital and the German Neukirchener mission was active in North-Java and collaborated here with the autonomous Salatiga mission. Other Dutch organizations that were active in nineteenth and early twentieth century Java were the: the DZV (Doopsgezinde Zendingsvereniging: *Baptist Mission Association*), the NGVZ (Nederlandsche Gereformeerde Zendingsvereniging: *Dutch Reformed Mission Association*), the Java-comité and the Ermelo’sche Zending. In 1859, the year the NZV started missionizing in Java, there were ten missionaries active: five of the NZG, two of the DZV, two of the NGVZ and one of the Ermelo’sche Zending. (Sierk Coolsma, *Twaalf voorlezingen over West Java, het land, de bewoners en de arbeid der Nederlandsche Zendingsvereniging* (Rotterdam 1879) 155.) Around 1920 there were 73 missionaries from various organizations active in Java. The NZG had twelve missionaries working in East Java, the NZV had thirteen missionaries in West Java, the DZV had four missionaries, the Salatiga mission twenty, the JC two, the NGVZ seven and the American Methodists had fifteen missionaries working in Java. (Marinus Lindenborn, *Stukken van Marinus Lindenborn over de Zending in Indië onder Moslims en Animisten*, Utrechts Archief.)

in Rotterdam. Five years later he completed his education and he and his wife left for Java. After spending two years under the supervision of another missionary to improve his Javanese and to assist in the mission work, he was assigned by the NZG to the district of Kediri, a small city in South-East Java. Poensen lived and worked there for more than thirty years. During these years he evolved from a poorly educated missionary into a self-educated ethnologist *avant la lettre*.

The missionary Christiaan Albers (1837-1920) joined the NZV in 1859. The newly founded NZV did not yet have overseas districts when the first students started their education. Nevertheless, Albers completed three years of missionary training in Rotterdam and was sent to Java in the fall of 1862. The mission of the NZV started in Java when the missionaries Albers and Van der Linden arrived in 1863. The NZV became active primarily in West Java or the Preanger where the Sundanese people predominantly live. Albers, a meekly man, started his mission in the district of Ciandur from 1862 until 1886 and then moved to Jatinegara, a small village which is now part of the suburbs of Jakarta, and worked there until his retirement in 1907 without many accomplishments. The NZV missionary Simon Van Eendenburg (1853-1912) headed the mission districts in Sukabumi and Pangharepan in a progressive way with successful results until he was fired in 1900 after being charged with the sexual abuse of local teenage boys.

The Catholics focused solely for a long time on Europeans and people of mixed descent in Java. They were not allowed by the colonial government to seek contact with the Javanese and Sundanese people. The Jesuits were active in Java since 1859, but the Javanese mission did not start until 1896 when Franciscus van Lith and Petrus Hoevenaars arrived. Until the 1920's the Jesuits were the only Catholic order engaged in mission work on the island. The Jesuits were primarily active in Central Java, in districts north of the city of Yogyakarta. Petrus Hoevenaars (1860-1930) started his missionary work in Yogyakarta, however before he received an official permit. The colonial government soon noticed his forbidden activities and sent him back to the convent in Semarang. Nevertheless, in 1899 he received permission to found a new mission post in Mendut in Central Java. The district of Mendut was situated next to the district of Muntilan, where his colleague Van Lith was stationed. After several conflicts with the colonial government, Hoevenaars was withdrawn from Mendut by Governor-General Van Heutz himself and became an assistant to a priest in Cirebon.⁶⁰ Franciscus van Lith (1863-1926) arrived, together with Hoevenaars, in Java in 1896 to start a Jesuit missionary mission in Central Java. A year later, he received permission to work in the district of Muntilan, north of Yogyakarta, where he headed the mission for almost thirty years. His unruly character led him to try a different proselytizing strategy which eventually resulted in great success.

⁶⁰ Karel Steenbrink, *Catholics in Indonesia, 1808-1942, a documented history, Volume 1, A modest recovery 1808-1903* (Leiden 2003) 212.

I have chosen these six missionaries because they all reflected –some more than others- on the mission in Java in letters to the board and in articles for the periodicals of their societies. The six missionaries all worked in different areas in Java in the period 1850-1910. In a variety of ways, they have all made a contribution to the mission discourse. Some reproduced and reinforced the prevailing discourse while others made extraordinary efforts at fostering a shift in the dominant discourse. However, we must keep in mind that these six men were operating in different areas and periods and had different backgrounds; consequently, a clear comparison is sometimes difficult. For example, the Catholic mission began decades later in Java and the Catholic priests were more highly educated than their Protestant colleagues. Moreover, they were under the direct supervision of the Catholic Church while the Protestant mission societies were independent of denominations. Still, a comparison between their methods and results gives us valuable information about the conversion process in Java since the differences between the strategies and effects of the Catholic and the Protestant missions are significant.

The focus is on cultural encounters at the micro level, in particular on the life narratives of these six missionaries who translated and communicated their personal experiences and observations to a more general audience in both the Dutch Indies and the Netherlands. As stated above, these men found themselves in an exceptional position, namely on the border between their own, the colonial, and the local cultures. The missionaries were prolific authors in several genres, such as reports, biographies, diaries, letters, and also scientific works in the fields of linguistics, history, geography, and ethnography. The Protestants were obliged by contract to inform monthly the board about their proceedings, to keep a diary, and to send a summary every six months.⁶¹ The periodicals of the various mission societies are an important set of sources. In these, missionaries published letters and articles about their work, district, and lives to keep board members and contributors at home informed. The NZG published two journals; the *'Mededeelingen vanwege het Nederlandsche Zendelinggenootschap'* (Announcements of the Dutch Missionary Society; *de Mededeelingen*) and the *'Maandberigten'* (Monthly Notices). The NZV published the *'Orgaan der Nederlandsche Zendingsvereeniging'* (Medium of the Dutch Mission Association; *het Orgaan*). In 1918, several Protestant societies and their periodicals merged and their new periodical was called: *'Maandblad der Samenwerkende Zendingscorporaties'* (Monthly magazine of collaborating mission-corporations). The Catholic missionaries contributed to the periodicals *'Brieven van Paters Jesuïeten uit de missie van Nederlandsch Oost-Indie'* (Letters of the Jesuit Fathers from the Dutch East-Indies mission) and

⁶¹ NZV, *Instructies aan zendelingen en agenten, 1859-1913*, Utrechts Archief.

'Claverbond', a journal for the members of the supporting organisation St. Claverbond.⁶² The missionary periodicals are of great value for this research since they contain a large amount of information about the missions, missionaries, strategies, and problems faced. The articles written by these six missionaries are excellent sources to identify shifts in the mission discourse and strategies.

There is a vast body of source material concerning the Dutch mission and the colonial setting available in the Dutch archives. Besides the state colonial collections in The Hague and Jakarta, each missionary association kept their own extensive archives. The archives of the *Nederlandsche Zendelinggenootschap* (Dutch Missionary Society, NZG) and the *Nederlandsche Zendingsvereniging* (Dutch Mission Association, NZV) are both included in the archives of the *Raad voor de Zending* (Mission Council), which can be found in the Utrechts Archief.⁶³ The original archives of the Catholic Church are included in the archives of the Archbishopric of Jakarta (AJAK) and in the Archdiocese of Semarang.⁶⁴ A large part of the collection is copied on microfiches and is available in the Centre for Intercultural Theology, Interreligious Dialogue, Missiology and Ecumenism (IIMO) at the University of Utrecht and at the Catholic Documentation Centre (CDC) at the Radboud University Nijmegen.⁶⁵ The archives of the *Nederlandsche Provincie der Jezuïeten* are also available in Nijmegen.

In addition to the core official documents of the various organisations, these missionary archives contain letters, diaries, and other personal texts of numerous missionaries. I will discuss all six in a semi-biographical way in order to gain an in-depth understanding of their views and strategies.⁶⁶ Their personal accounts will enrich the structural analysis and will provide a more complete picture of mission history. A biographical method is useful because it unites various histories such as colonial, educational, mental, and mission history.⁶⁷ I will investigate their documents such as letters and personal diaries as well as more general descriptive and ethnographic accounts, and their official work reports. The missionaries illustrated their views with examples from their work field, which give us more insight into the day-to-day encounters between the missionaries and the local communities. Some of the missionaries came into conflict with the colonial government or with the boards of their

⁶² Besides the affiliated periodicals there were a few general missionary magazines, such as 'The Opwekker' (1887-1925), 'De Macedonier' (1883-1925) and the 'Bataviaasch Zendingsblad' (1863-1873). These magazines are available at the library of the University of Leiden.

⁶³ http://www.hetutrechtsarchief.nl/collectie/archiefbank/archieftoegangen/zoekresultaat?miview=inv2&micode=1102-1&mizk_alle (July 2010).

⁶⁴ The archives of the Archbishopric of Jakarta can be found in Jakarta, Indonesia.

⁶⁵ http://www.ru.nl/kdc/over_het_kdc/archief/over_de_archieven/kerkelijk_en/archieven_van/archieven_i/aartsbisdom_jakarta/ (July 2010).

⁶⁶ With 'semi-biographical' I indicate that the main point of interest are not the lives of the missionaries – from their childhood until their death – but the focus lies on the missionary work they did in Java and the relations they had with the local people.

⁶⁷ Hilde Nielssen, Inger Marie Okkenhaug, Karina Hestad Skeie, *Protestant missions and local encounters in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries* (Leiden 2011) 19.

societies. These conflicts demarcate especially differences in the discourses and policies of the government, the societies, and the missionaries themselves. Others were more careful and avoided open critique on the discourse of their societies, but they too wrote much on the particulars of their district and on attempts to improve their conversion strategies. They all developed different strategies, ranging from giving material aid to the adoption of Javanese traditions in church. I hope to provide more insight into the query of the 'failed conversion' of Java by examining their reflections on the mission and on their efforts to improve their results.

Many of these sources have been used before, however mainly for 'in memoria' and memorial books by members of the mission societies. The archives have been studied primarily for the publication of bibliographies.⁶⁸ The personal archives of the missionaries have not been used much to study the lives of the missionaries. Only a few doctoral theses have been written on key figures in the Dutch mission, such as Gerrit Noort's study on the life of Albert C. Kruyt.⁶⁹ Merle C. Ricklefs has studied the Protestant archives to write about the changing religious landscape of nineteenth century Java and most important, Dutch missiologist Karel Steenbrink has researched both Protestant and Catholic mission archives which culminated in, among others, an eloquent study on Dutch colonialism and its perception of Javanese Islam and several comprehensive studies on the history of Catholicism in Indonesia.⁷⁰ These studies have all pointed out that the missionaries found themselves in a difficult situation and that the mission did not progress successfully during its initial phase. My aim is to show how these six missionaries dealt with these circumstances and how it affected their choices in the field. I will continue their study of the missionary writings by focusing on the way the missionaries legitimized their approaches and results by negotiating dominant discourses. In order to do that, I need a specific methodology, which I will discuss in the following paragraph.

The primary sources of the missionaries have well-known pitfalls.⁷¹ First and foremost, they are strongly biased, having been written in a colonial context where inequality was the standard.

⁶⁸ For example, Th. van den End, *De Nederlandsche Zendingsvereeniging in West Java, 1858-1963* (Alphen aan den Rijn 1991). Th. van den End, Chr. G. F. de Jong, A. Th. Boone, P.N. Holtrop, *Twee eeuwen Nederlandse zending 1797-1997. Twaalf opstellen.* (Leiden 1997). Chr.G.F. de Jong, *Geschiedenis van de Nederlandse Zending en Overzeese Kerken: Midden-Java 1859-1931* (Zoetermeer 1997). Hommo Reenders, *De Gereformeerde Zending in Midden-Java 1859-1931* (Zoetermeer 2001).

⁶⁹ Gerrit Noort, *De weg van magie tot geloof, Leven en werk van Alb. C. Kruyt (1869-1948), zendeling-leraar in Midden-Celebes, Indonesië* (Zoetermeer 2006).

⁷⁰ Merle Calvin Ricklefs, *Polarizing Javanese Society, Islamic and other visions (c.1830- 1930)* (Leiden 2007). Karel Steenbrink, *Dutch colonialism and Indonesian Islam, contacts and conflicts 1596-1950* (Amsterdam 2006). Karel Steenbrink, *Catholics in Indonesia, a documented history 1808-1942, Volume 1, A modest recovery 1808-1903* (Leiden 2007).

Karel Steenbrink, *Catholics in Indonesia, a documented history 1808-1942, Volume 2, The spectacular growth of a self-confident minority 1903-1942* (Leiden 2007).

⁷¹ David Lindenfeld, 'Indigenous encounters with Christian missionaries in China and West Africa, 327-369.

Moreover, they were all written with a Dutch, or at least European, audience in mind. The articles in the mission journals were not only written to inform the people back home, but also with the purpose to sustain or increase funding for the overseas mission, which will have coloured their articles. In addition, the missionaries tried to portray their results in a favourable light in their private correspondence with their superiors in order to keep their position safe. However, being aware of these pitfalls is an advantage because it enables me to read these letters as the result of the missionaries' negotiations between the expectations on the home front and the actual situation in the field. Their biased and opportunistic remarks allow insight into how they dealt with the dominant discourse back home while being in such a challenging situation. In the next paragraph I explain how I critically evaluated and used this material.

7. *Methodological reflections*

The majority of my sources are ego-documents. In the broadest sense the category ego-documents consist of sources that provide an account of, or reveal privileged information about, the 'self' who produced it.⁷² The term was first used by the Dutch historian Jacques Presser in the 1950's to indicate texts in which the writing subject is constantly present as the descriptive subject.⁷³ In the Anglophone world, the category is therefore also known as 'narratives of the Self'. The most prominent ego-documents are autobiographies and diaries because in these the author writes about his own actions and feelings. I consider the mission reports and letters address ego-documents, although they regularly subjects other than themselves, because all the contained stories are related closely to the author's identity as a missionary. Ego-documents are most often used in cultural history, or history of mentality studies, because the personal documents of a person are not only useful for the study of that particular individual, but also for the study of the social group the author belongs to.⁷⁴ By analysing ego-documents from individuals from a range of backgrounds we can reconstruct wider patterns of subjective experiences of common events.⁷⁵

At first, the letters written to the boards of the mission societies seemed rather straightforward and colourless. They discuss mostly the day to day experiences in the mission school or hospital, travelling to the various churches in the district, and personal problems, such as illnesses in the family or financial deficiencies. In order to find answers to my research questions I needed a

⁷² Mary Fullbrook and Ulinka Rublack, 'In relation: the 'social self' and ego-documents', in: *German History*, vol.28, no 3, (2010) 263-272.

⁷³ Rudolf Dekker, <http://www.egodocument.net/egodocumententot1814.html> (April 2014).

⁷⁴ Rudolf Dekker, <http://www.egodocument.net/egodocumententot1814.html> (April 2014).

⁷⁵ Fullbrook, Rublack, 'In relation: the 'social self'', 263-272.

methodology that would help me expose the multiple layers in these texts and identify the different discourses that are at play in the letters. Therefore I have analysed the ego-documents with several methods of contemporary literary criticism, such as *context analysis*, *discourse analysis*, and *reading against the grain*. These methods helped to represent the narratives of these six men without stereotyping them and to add texture to their narratives on encounters with the Javanese. These methods proved useful in order to acquire a fuller understanding of the missionaries and their personal opinions on the mission and the indigenous population.⁷⁶ *Reading against the grain* especially permitted me to expose the fascinating ways in which each of these missionaries perceived and negotiated dominant discourses on religion and how they developed various literary strategies to cope with both the discourses of the different mission societies, local discourses, and the overarching discourse of the colonial government. It also allowed me to notice contradictions, complexity and ambiguity in the missionary writings.

Key to interpreting this type of sources is contextualization. All texts, including ego-documents are produced in a particular historical and cultural social context. Common-sense explanations, values and norms, the way authors account for their choices and provide meaning to their narratives of the Self, are all determined by their historical and social context.⁷⁷ Cultural and social conventions and dominant discourses regulate the ways people express themselves and how they address certain issues. Moreover, even the concepts authors use or the way they structure their writings is contextually determined because language in itself is a social construct and therefore never neutral. Contextualization involves placing a text in the historical, cultural, and institutional context of the author. Only then is it possible to contrast the argumentation of the author to the dominant discourses that were present in their context to determine his position in these discourses.

Literary critics argue that all authors have rhetorical strategies to encode their own ideologies in their texts. These strategies empower the text to influence the reader. *Discourse analysis* aims at uncovering rhetorical strategies to clarify how authors use their agency in strategic ways in order to present, and often promote, their own convictions to the reader, but also how authors are influenced by the prevailing discourse of the system in which they live. Every author is, consciously or unconsciously, influenced by the prevailing discourse of the system in which he or she lives.⁷⁸ During the analysis of the missionary writings, I identified multiple powerful discourses in their texts. I then tried to extract these and deconstruct the layers of the text in order to analyse it from alternative

⁷⁶ Maaïke Meijer, *In tekst gevat. Inleiding tot een kritiek van representatie* (Amsterdam 1996) 72-78. Mary Orr, *Intertextuality: debates and contexts* (Cambridge 2003).

⁷⁷ Fullbrook, Rublack, 'In relation: the 'social self'', 263-272.

⁷⁸ Brillenburg and Rigney, *Het leven van teksten*, 370.

perspectives. This reading strategy is part of the analytical method of *reading against the grain*. This method aims to overthrow the dominant discourse and to compare the reader's viewpoint with that of the author; the reader resists the dominant discourse in the text. Subsequently, this method is also known as '*resistant reading*' in subaltern studies.⁷⁹

Reading against the grain has its origins in subaltern studies, especially in anthropology, postcolonial, and women studies, because it is a tool to identify alternative voices or identities and perspectives in texts.⁸⁰ It is a very useful method to analyse ego-documents, because these texts contain much more information than just the obvious facts they seem to present. This method allowed me to find subtexts, or 'hidden messages', in the texts I studied.⁸¹ More importantly, it helped me to expose the multi-layeredness of texts, which shows the multiple identities of an author that are at play. Texts can be interpreted from different perspectives and there is not one indisputable way in which a text can be read. By using this analytical strategy the source material is deconstructed and read very accurately in order to extract the different discourses. The text is read against the direction that the text seems to push the reader which allows the reader to speculate why the author wants his text to be read a particular way.⁸² With critical reading the focus is on unexpected shifts in the text or narrative position (focalization) in order to show different perspectives in the story and to locate speakers in the narrative they tell.⁸³ The reader attends to seemingly mundane details, recurring words, metaphors, paradoxes, inconsistencies in style, revisions, and silences in the story. When (hand-) written sources are available, the reader can detect important clues about the author's emotional engagement by paying attention to variation in handwriting, punctuation marks, or underlining. A thorough knowledge of the source and its immediate context is necessary to pick up on omissions and silences. Sometimes the issues that are not explicitly addressed in a text are its very essence. They can be unaddressed for several reasons. For instance, because the matter is self-evident to the author or because its normative framework endorses self-silencing.⁸⁴

Like every other source, an ego-document is produced with a specific purpose and audience in mind that determines the content and character of the text. The relationship between the author and intended audience largely shapes the text. Often this relationship is unequal, as is the case with the letters and reports written to the missionaries' employers. When an author is subordinate to its

⁷⁹ Judith Fetterley, *The resisting reader, a feminist approach to American fiction* (Massachusetts 1978).

⁸⁰ Karin Willemse, *One foot in heaven, Narratives on gender and Islam in Darfur, West-Sudan* (Leiden 2007).

⁸¹ Karin Willemse, *One foot in heaven*.

⁸² Karin Willemse, *One foot in heaven*.

⁸³ Fullbrook, Rublack, 'In relation: the 'social self' and ego-documents', 263-272.

⁸⁴ Willemse, Karin 'Landscapes of Memories: visual and spatial dimensions of Hajja's narrative of self', in: *Narrative works, issues, investigations & interventions*, Vol. 2, No. 1(2012).

reader, it cannot always be fully open about its true opinions, but has to adjust its words to the normative framework of its readers. This was true for the missionaries who had to report back to their employer on their, lack of, results. Samuel Harthoorn of the NZG therefore warned the board that his colleagues often exaggerated their successes: 'Accurate reading will prove that what they (the letters of missionaries, M.K.) contain give the right to presume that the state of affairs is as said above. When one only superficially reads it, one imagines the contrary, because it is in the nature of the unctuous missionary writing style to break the sharp contrast of light and darkness, to hold information back or to belittle it.'⁸⁵ This citation shows perfectly why I needed a solid methodology to analyse these type of sources.

With *reading against the grain* I could reveal and reconstruct the mentalities, opinions, beliefs, values and perceptions of the author. I was able to identify conflicting opinions in the texts when authors struggled to make their point without openly going against the dominant discourse in which the correspondence occurred. Such negotiations and ambiguous standpoints became evident in many letters that were directed to the boards of the mission societies and form the focal point of my analysis. Sara Mills argues that such ambiguous accounts are 'the result of a configuration of discursive structures with which the author negotiates.'⁸⁶ While the missionaries were supposed to follow the dogmas and guidelines of their particular society, they did or could not always comply. They quickly observed that these demands could not be implemented in a context so different from their own. Some missionaries tried to point out their personal views every now and then, but usually in such a covert way that it did not jeopardize their positions. Therefore *reading against the grain* was needed to uncover those subtexts in which the writers did show their agency.

A text acquires its meaning through various means and is open to multiple interpretations. For example, the meaning of a text is largely shaped within the social and historical framework of its reading. This social and historical framework may include particular ideas about the text's history, but is also shaped by competing beliefs and practices in the present.⁸⁷ For example, the Dutch novel 'Max Havelaar' by Multatuli played a key role in modifying Dutch colonial policy in the Dutch Indies in the 1860's. The book was very progressive, at that time, in its anti-colonial statements. However, for modern readers, the book is written from an excessively colonial point of view; it may dare to critique some negative consequences of colonial administration, but it never questions colonialism altogether.

⁸⁵ S. E. Harthoorn, *Diary on 1860* (Malang 1860) Utrechts Archief.

⁸⁶ Mills, *Discourses of Difference*, 9.

⁸⁷ B. Moon, *Literary terms: A practical glossary* (Perth 1992).

In order to grasp its significance, the reader has to reconstruct the historical context in which it was written and take his own perspective and context into account.⁸⁸

Besides the historical context, that is constantly shifting, the nature of the reader is significant as well, because the meaning the reader attributes to a text depends largely on his or her own presuppositions and earlier experiences and readings. A text obtains meaning by referring to other texts, both explicitly or implicitly, in the discourse of which it is part.⁸⁹ This process is known as intertextuality. The theory of intertextuality is based on the premise that a text standing alone has little or no meaning, but that all texts acquire meaning in relation to other texts.⁹⁰ So whenever one reads a text one uses all the previous gathered information to make meaning out of it.⁹¹ Therefore the way someone understands a particular text is determined by a multiplicity of previous experiences and readings and thus highly subjective.

Texts, including ego-documents, are therefore open to a range of potential readings and conflicting interpretations. The analysis process of ego-documents is a continual negotiation between author and reader, and a different reader means a different dialogue, because everyone has a different background, has other assumptions, and is influenced by different discourses. Consequently, readers from different contexts, with other dominant discourses, will come to different conclusions based on the same text. Every analysis will thus consequently lead to a subjective interpretation and conclusion. Nevertheless, these analytic strategies, even though they have their limitations, allowed me to identify the personal views of the missionaries. Trough contextualizing the sources and reading them against the grain, I gained a better understanding of the missionaries' position in the then prevailing discourses and the way they negotiated them.

8. Chapter outline

In order to portray the world in which the missionaries fulfilled their evangelical task, the first two chapters provide a bird's-eye view of political, religious, and institutional history, before delving into a more detailed study of the missionaries' reflections upon religious exchange processes in nineteenth century Java. These two chapters deal with historiographical issues, are mainly descriptive in nature, and based largely on secondary sources. The **first** chapter focuses on the political and religious context

⁸⁸ Brillenburg, Rigney, *Het leven van teksten*, 272-275.

⁸⁹ Julia Kristeva, *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art* (New York 1980).

⁹⁰ Graham Allen, *Intertextuality*, (London 2011).

⁹¹ Kiene Brillenburg and Ann Rigney, *Het leven van teksten, een inleiding tot de literatuurwetenschap* (Amsterdam 2008) 266-270.

of Java up to 1850. The focus is mainly on the origin of a schism between two diverging Javanese Islamic currents, the *Putihan* (a modern, 'orthodox' variant of Javanese Islam) and the *Abangan* (a traditional, hybrid variant of Javanese Islam), and on the relation between the Dutch colonial government and the mission societies. The **second** chapter consists of two parts: the first examines the religious and institutional contexts of the three mission societies to which the six were affiliated. And the second consists of the summaries of the six biographies of the researched missionaries to introduce the men who form the core of this study.

The following chapters are based on the analytical reading of the aforementioned primary sources. Chapters three and four analyse the emergence of various Islamic and Christian currents in nineteenth century Java. The **third** chapter analyses especially the mission discourse on Islam and Islamization processes. It also provides more insight into the emergence of the *Putihan* and the *Abangan* using the primary sources of the missionaries and other primary sources from the Dutch mission discourse. The **fourth** chapter illuminates the development and spread of Christianity in Java through local evangelisers before and during 1850-1910. I focus on the activities of independent lay European and Eurasian mission workers and the so-called Christian *guru ngelmu*; indigenous evangelists who spread the Word and who were the founders of a more localized church. Since the early decades of the nineteenth century, converted Javanese men wandered the island to convert others to Christianity. However, these men were usually not thoroughly educated in the Christian faith and as a result their teachings often differed considerably from the teachings of the missionaries. The missionaries' contacts with the indigenous Christian gurus were ambiguous, but certainly had a substantial influence on the developing strategies within all mission societies. As these gurus lived and worked in an oral tradition, there are no printed primary sources available. The chapter is therefore based on the writings of the Dutch missionaries and as a result is focused on the relationship between the Dutch and the Javanese evangelisers. They both led their own communities of *Kristen Londo* (Javanese Christians who were converted and directed by the Dutch missionaries) and *Kristen Jowo* (Javanese Christians who were converted and directed by Javanese Christian gurus) separately, sometimes in close proximity to each other.

The last three chapters of this thesis deal with the three consecutive stages in a mission: the spreading of the Gospel, the actual conversion, and the internalization of Christianity. Chapter **five** is an examination of the missionizing methods of the six missionaries and asks how they set up their mission, how they reflected on their initial results, and how they adjusted their strategies in the course of their careers. The missionaries and their organisations became quickly aware of the unsuccessful nature of their original call. The missionaries had to adjust their expectations to the

reality of the mission field. Most missionaries developed strategies beyond direct evangelization, such as economic aid, education, and medical care to win over the Javanese people.⁹² As Th. Sumartana argued, the missionaries in fact employed an 'Ethical Policy' long before this became government policy.⁹³ In particular, this chapter focuses on the reflections of the six missionaries on the possible causes of the failure to convert the Javanese Muslims beyond matters of colonial policy and administration, and the way they used these possible causes to justify their results.

Chapter **six** addresses various aspects of the process of conversion in the mission districts. Based on missionary sources, it examines the ways in which missionaries evaluated and explained conversions or the lack of it. In addition, various indigenous reactions to Christianity in the mission districts will be indicated in this chapter. The sixth chapter concludes with an analysis of the consequences of conversion for the identity and social status of the converts and illustrates this with a case study. In this case study, I will focus on the conversion of Kartawidjaja who converted to Christianity in 1899 after having contact with missionaries of the NZV. His story is one of the very few conversion stories that survived from this period in the Sundanese mission.⁹⁴ I will analyse Kartawidjaja's conversion story to provide deeper insight into why and how he converted to Christianity in that particular context.

Chapter **seven** examines how the missionaries evaluated and acted upon the internalization of their teachings in the nascent Christian communities. How were new meanings formed through the mutual incorporation of Christian and non-Christian cultural practices? The Dutch missionaries, researched in this thesis, all experienced expressions of localized Christianity in the communities they directed. Living in this border zone between various cultures and religions, they witnessed how indigenous Christian communities sought to merge the new faith with their existing culture and religious system. Each missionary had to decide upon how to deal with local expressions of Christianity and to what extent they should allow these localized manifestations. I will show how the missionaries justified their decisions in their reports. In addition, I will indicate the differences in approach between the six missionaries, especially in relation with the directing boards and their agents in the field.

In the **conclusion** of this thesis I summarize the findings of this research and relate these findings back to my main research question. I evaluate the long term impact of the missionary encounter as it

⁹² C.V. Lafaber, *Met klewang en knuppel, vierhonderd jaar Nederlands-Indonesische betrekkingen* (Goirle 2000) 324.

⁹³ The Dutch Ethical Policy (*Ethische Politiek*) was the official policy of the Dutch Indies from 1901 until the Japanese occupation of 1942. In this period the Netherlands accepted an ethical responsibility for the welfare of their colonial subjects. This also marked the start of modern development policy. Sumartana, *Mission at the crossroads*, 329.

⁹⁴ West Java is often indicated as part of the Sundaland.

occurred through the convergence of Dutch history, Javanese history, and the history of modern Islam and Christianity. This study elucidates the different factors that contributed to the limited results of the mission during its first sixty years and especially the way the missionaries legitimized their slow progress. Furthermore, a comparison between the results of the indigenous, Protestant and Catholic missions is made. Moreover, this chapter reflects on the mutual 'conversions' and transformations that this encounter entailed and how the developments in the mission fields have been represented in the Dutch mission discourse.

The **epilogue** of this study focuses on the mission in Java after 1910. The impact of the missions' failure to convert large numbers of Javanese Muslims on the three mission organisations and the Dutch mission discourse will be addressed. In the course of the twentieth century the Protestants altered their approach. Moreover, the NZG, NZV, and some smaller Protestant mission societies were forced to merge because of financial deficiencies. The Jesuits decided on a new mission policy around 1905, which changed the character of the Catholic mission considerably. In addition, political developments in this period, like the burgeoning nationalism under the Indonesian people, also had a great impact on the mission. Furthermore, I illustrate how Dutch missionaries have contributed to the institutionalization of knowledge of Islam in the Netherlands. The Protestant societies maintained ties with Dutch universities, especially the University of Leiden. Scholars who were interested in Javanese culture, religion and customs studied the journals of the societies with great interest. Most missionaries were prolific authors and the mission journals consisted, for a large part, of ethnographic accounts on the local communities. Many missionaries thus contributed to the institutionalization of knowledge about non-Western cultures. The full biographies of the six Dutch missionaries who are under study in this dissertation can be found in the appendices.

Chapter 1. Religious and political contexts

*‘They live in ignorance, error and poverty and in fact, they do not know, especially in the eastern and southern parts of the island, much more of Islam than that circumcision of children, fasting, and not consuming pork makes one Muslim’.*⁹⁵

This quotation by NZG missionary Carel Poensen demonstrates the common understanding of the Dutch that the majority of the Javanese and Sundanese were, at best, nominal Muslims. Islam was considered a religion of outward appearance in the Indies, not a religion to which people were truly devoted. Both missionaries and Dutch officials and tradesmen believed generally that Islam was a thin veil or veneer covering Javanese paganism. They believed that at home, people continued their pre-Islamic practices and had not ceased to worship pagan gods. The dominant discourse on Javanese religion stipulated it as syncretistic, and its adherents as insincere and pragmatic. This dominant idea of Javanese religiosity influenced the way the missionaries negotiated discourses on religion and it determined their approach to missionizing. It is therefore important to this study to discover how this view on Javanese religion came into being and how it became dominant. Was this perspective realistic or very prejudiced and orientalist? And was the period after 1850, in which the missionaries entered Java, a specific moment in the process of Islamization and acceptance of religious influences from outside?

To answer these questions I will give a broad overview of the most important developments in the history of the religious landscape of Java before the arrival of the missionaries. This broad description of the Javanese religious landscape is based primarily on secondary literature. Part one especially owes its existence to the work of Merle Calvin Ricklefs, who wrote multiple insightful books on transformations in Java’s religious landscape. The missionaries’ personal observations of religious changes and reforms in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century will be discussed in chapter 3 and 4.

The second part of this chapter discusses the political context of the Christian mission in Java. When the Dutch political climate became more liberal in 1848, freedom of religion was granted in the colony and finally opened the doors to mission organizations. The relationship between the missionaries and the colonial state, however, remained ambivalent. The missionaries demanded

⁹⁵ Carel Poensen, *Brieven over de Islam uit de binnenlanden van Java* (Leiden 1886) 3.

repeatedly more government support and often expressed that they actually regarded the Dutch colonial government opposed to the Christian mission's success. The missionaries were at times very critical of government policies and were surprisingly open on this subject in their writings. The aim of the second part of chapter 1 is to disclose whether the Dutch colonial state did in fact work against the Christian mission as the missionaries claimed and whether a development in the relationship between the colonial state and the mission organizations can be traced between 1850 and 1910.

1.1. Religious traditions of Java

The religious landscape of Java was very diverse and changing rapidly in the nineteenth century. The first missionaries, who arrived in Java in the 1850's, lacked sufficient knowledge of the peoples and cultures there to notice the many different religious variances that were present in the region. Various religions had spread across the archipelago through trading and informal networks of personal contacts. To understand the dynamic and complex religious landscape of the island we have to go back to the earliest religious traditions in the area: animistic or polytheistic traditions. Prominent within these traditions was the emphasis on the worship of ancestors and the belief that there is no separation between the spiritual and physical world.⁹⁶ Java's first contacts with Hinduism and Buddhism probably occurred during the first century AD through the trading network in the South-East Asian region.⁹⁷ Hinduism and Buddhism penetrated deeply into the Javanese society and blended with the indigenous culture. One conduit for this was the ascetics who wandered the island teaching their mystical practices to the people. Both belief systems shared the pantheistic idea that everything is animated with the traditions that were already present in Java. Hinduism in particular exerted a strong influence on traditional Javanese religion and various Hindu elements were incorporated into the existing religious practices. Moreover, Brahmin clerics gained power at the courts and were increasingly able to link Hindu cosmology to their political needs.⁹⁸ Along the eastern coast a large percentage of the population was Hindu while small Hindu enclaves could be found throughout Java.⁹⁹ It is important to note that religion in Java was not institutionalized; there was no centralized

⁹⁶ Animistic traditions include the religious or spiritual idea that spirits not only exist in human beings, but also in animals, plants, rocks and other natural phenomena such as thunder and rain, as well as geographic features such as rivers, mountains or volcanoes. Moreover, the worship of ancestors is a very important element in most animistic religions, including the traditional Javanese religion.

⁹⁷ Merle Calvin Ricklefs, *Polarizing Javanese Society, Islamic and other visions (c.1830- 1930)* (Leiden 2007) 1.

⁹⁸ Brahmin refers to an individual belonging to the Brahmin caste in Hindu society. This caste consisted of priests, teachers and artists.

⁹⁹ Today more than ninety percent of the people of Java are Muslim, on a broad continuum between *Abangan* and *Santri*. Yet Hindu and Buddhist communities still exist, primarily in the major cities among the Chinese-Indonesians.

institution that prescribed rituals or beliefs. Consequently, a rich variety of religious convictions and practices coexisted on the island.

Islamic preachers arrived in the region within the context of expanding trade connections as well. They came from Arabia, but mostly from India and Malaysia, already early in the Islamic era. The earliest Muslim gravestone on the island is found in East Java and dates from 1082 AD.¹⁰⁰ Muslim traders had been present in parts of Indonesia long before Islam was widespread amongst the population. Not much is known, however, about the Islamization process in the archipelago before the seventeenth century. Javanese legends that tell the story of the Islamization of Java are full of mystical insights and powers. Famous are the stories that evolve around the so-called *Wali Sanga* - the nine saints. These 'saints' were Muslim mystics who came allegedly to Java to spread the Islamic faith. These men are still venerated today; their graves are holy sites that continue to attract people from all over Java.

Certainly, the Islamic expansion followed trade and was built upon cultural diasporas that acted by and large beyond the state. There are very few authentic sources on the history of Islam in the Indonesian region, but we do know that from the fourteenth century onwards, an increasing number of Javanese royal houses converted to Islam. East Javanese Islamic gravestones suggest that at least some members of the Javanese elite adopted Islam when the Hindu-Buddhist state of Majapahit was at the height of its glory in the fourteenth century.¹⁰¹ Perhaps they adopted Islam because this made it easier for these harbour kingdoms to participate in the Islamic trade network in the Indian Ocean. It is uncertain what this meant for the religious lives of the population of these kingdoms, but we can assume that the conversion of a ruler at least put the Islamization process in motion. The Islamization process was thus predominantly steered from above, by the influence of kings and the elite, and also in some cases 'by the sword' as a by-product of conquests of Indonesian Islamic rulers in non-Muslim regions.¹⁰²

For centuries, the spread of the Islamic faith went rather slow, until the process suddenly accelerated in the seventeenth and eighteenth century. Unfortunately, sources on this acceleration process are meagre and the literature on this subject is therefore necessarily speculative. The coastal towns witnessed a quick increase in the number of converts and multiple Islamic communities were formed. Beliefs and practices were exchanged between different religious communities and as a result new religious currents came into being. Conversion to Islam continued to take place in close

¹⁰⁰ Merle Calvin Ricklefs, *A history of modern Indonesia, since c. 1200* (New York, 2008) 1-17.

¹⁰¹ Ricklefs, *A history of modern Indonesia*, 1-17.

¹⁰² Ricklefs, *A history of modern Indonesia*, 1-17.

association with mystic and other folk movements that showed a remarkable capability to connect local religiosity to the Islamic call. Sufi teachers were the primary agents of conversion to Islam. Sufism, the inner mystical dimension of Islam, then accepted as part of orthodox Islam, attracted the inhabitants of Java because it connected well with the already existing religious traditions: mysticism had always been at the core of Sundanese and Javanese traditions. Consequently, the dominant current of Islam in Java was strongly impacted by Sufism and this is still noticeable in present day Indonesia.

The Islamization process should not be interpreted as a dominant culture imposing its religion on an inferior culture, but as an intentional and selective inclusion of new beliefs and practices by the receiving culture. Consequently, the incorporation process of new ideas and rituals varied. Islam formed a powerful source for cultural divarication; different social classes absorbed the Islamic impulse in quite different ways.¹⁰³ Assimilation of Islamic beliefs and rituals continued long after the vast majority of Javanese were at least nominally Muslim. It was not uncommon that people adhered to several - sometimes in Western eyes competing - traditions. To the majority of the Javanese animistic traditions, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam were not exclusive belief systems and Islamic traditions were added to the already available religious practices instead of replacing them. People absorbed, integrated, and adapted new religious ideas, which served a number of different purposes, at different levels. Islamic beliefs and practices merged with already present beliefs and practices and together formed a new hybrid religious current which was commonly known as '*Kejawen*' in the nineteenth century.¹⁰⁴

It took several centuries for Islam spread into the interior and for the majority of the Javanese population to confess Islam. Conversion to Islam, or adoption of Islamic elements, was a slow process and there was rarely a clear break between one's old and new faith. Toward the end of the nineteenth century many observed Muslim rituals while still holding on to their faith in indigenous spiritual forces. Martin van Bruinessen explains that for many of the new Muslims, Islam, especially in its Sufi variety, was a welcome additional source of spiritual power and not a substitute for what they already had.¹⁰⁵ Ricklefs therefore concludes in his work that Java achieved, after four hundred years, a 'mystic synthesis' of local traditions and Islam.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰³ Clifford Geertz, *Islam observed, religious development in Morocco and Indonesia* (New Haven 1968) 12.

¹⁰⁴ The term 'Javanism' is coined by NZG missionary Samuel Harthoorn to address the multi-faceted religious tradition of Java. See chapter 3.

¹⁰⁵ Martin van Bruinessen, *Muslims, Minorities and Modernity: The restructuring of heterodoxy in the Middle East and Southeast Asia. Inaugural Lecture* (Utrecht 2000).

¹⁰⁶ Merle Calvin Ricklefs, *Mystic Synthesis in Java: A History of Islamization from the Fourteenth to the Early nineteenth Centuries* (East-Bridge 2006).

The abundant exchange of religious ideas and practices has characterized the Javanese religious landscape for centuries and the hybrid outcomes are still evident today. Scholars in colonial times were aware that Islam had arrived relatively late to the interior of Java and other islands in the archipelago and that this was important for their view of Islam in the Indies. They perceived Islam as merely one among several other, at least equally, dominant religious traditions that together formed the Javanese religious landscape. These Western scholars were inclined to emphasise the hybrid nature of Javanese Islam and actively reduced Islam to a 'thin veneer' that covered superficially the former religions.¹⁰⁷

However, the arrival of Islam, a monotheistic religion, altered Javanese society profoundly and had consequences for ideas of religion. The opposition between 'false' and 'true' religion is a concept which was previously alien to the Javanese. The Abrahamic religions insist on an exclusive religious identity; it excludes the possibility of other gods and religions. Most Eastern religions, however, have a distinct concept of religion which acknowledges the possibility of a multiple religious belonging; different peoples can have different and multiple gods. In many Eastern societies, individuals were therefore not limited to a single religious system per se and because it was accepted that someone could adhere to multiple religions, the concept of 'conversion' had no meaning. The arrival of Islam and Christianity, both monotheistic, dogmatic religions, introduced the idea of a single, true and universal God and thus consequently introduced the concept of 'conversion'.

1.2. Islamization and Santrification

The period in which the missionaries set foot in Java was one of rapid change. Two processes occurred simultaneously which made this a unique period: further Islamization and Santrification. Islam spread further into the interior of Java. More and more people performed the *salat* and attended the Friday prayers, an increasing number of people could afford to perform the *haji*, and more children were educated at *pesantren* which led to a larger number of people that were able to read the *Qur'an*. The increasing presence of the Dutch, the non-Muslim Other, also reinforced the Muslim identity of the Javanese and the Sundanese. Before Dutch arrival, most were Muslims as a matter of circumstance, but by now the Muslim identity had also become a matter of policy. Notwithstanding that most may have tried to obey core rituals of Islam, belief in local spiritual forces was still common in every layer of society and the great majority continued to worship their

¹⁰⁷ Martin van Bruinessen, 'Global and local in Indonesian Islam', in: *Southeast Asian Studies*, Vol. 2 (Kyoto 1999) 46-63.

ancestors.¹⁰⁸ Consequently, Islam was virtually universal in Indonesia as a confession by the end of the nineteenth century, but not as a body of canonical doctrine.¹⁰⁹

Better means of transport (steamships) and communication (telegraph) had made the ties between Java and other Muslim regions stronger in the nineteenth century.¹¹⁰ Before that period, Islam was primarily brought to the archipelago by Muslims from India, Malaysia, and Southern China, but now the Javanese were more and more in direct contact with the Arabian Peninsula. The Islamization process accelerated because of the recent upsurge in Muslims undertaking the *hajj*. Undertaking the *hajj* had become much cheaper since the introduction of the steamship and especially since the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869; from then on traffic between Europe and Asia passed Arabia. The number of *hajjis* increased tremendously in the second half of the century and especially during the 1880's because the years 1880, 1885 and 1888 were years of the '*hajj akbar*', the most prestigious years to perform the pilgrimage.¹¹¹ Many pilgrims tended to reject local forms of Islam after their return in favour of a supposedly 'purer' kind of Islam as they had encountered in Mecca. Islam in Saudi Arabia, however, was of course not static. Movements, such as the *Wahabiyya* and the *Salafiyya* and, more recent, the Muslim Brotherhood, continued to develop and reform Islam. The successive generations of Javanese *hajjis* encountered an ever-changing religion and therefore constantly brought new ideas back to the archipelago.

Hajjis were thought to be 'more pious Muslims' as they were supposed to be more aware of Islamic law and rituals when compared to other Javanese Muslims. New ideas and practices from Arabia were considered 'more orthodox' and superior to local practices. Many *hajjis* opened *Qur'an* schools or *pesantren* which led to more educated students of religion, who were called '*santri*'.¹¹² The number of *pesantren* rose tremendously since the 1860's and so did the number of religious students. There were 94.000 *santri* in Java in 1862 and ten years later, in 1872, the number had increased to 162.000 *santri*. In 1893, the number of students had reached 270.000.¹¹³ But knowledge of Islam was no longer exclusive for *hajjis* and religion students at the *pesantren*.¹¹⁴ Due to the advent of the printing press in Java and to the decreasing level of illiteracy, a much larger group had access to the

¹⁰⁸ The 'Five Pillars of Islam' refer to the five obligations that every Muslim has to satisfy. These are the *shahada*, the *salat*, the *sawm*, the *zakat* and the *hajj*. In: John L. Esposito, *The Oxford history of Islam* (Oxford 1999).

¹⁰⁹ Geertz, *Islam observed*, 66.

¹¹⁰ Sumartana, *Mission at the crossroads*, 32.

¹¹¹ If the ninth day of the *hajj*, the day when the pilgrims spend the afternoon on the plain of Arafat, is on a Friday, then many describe it as *hajj akbar* (Big *hajj*). To go on the pilgrimage in such a year is regarded more prestigious by Muslims. Ricklefs, '*Polarizing Javanese Society*', 60.

¹¹² Geertz, *The religion of Java*.

¹¹³ Ricklefs, *A history of modern Indonesia*, 158.

¹¹⁴ Islamic boarding schools.

Qur'an and other scripture. Moreover, newspapers and magazines began to appear in the local languages and these often included segments of Islamic theology and law.¹¹⁵

Simultaneously, Javanese Islam underwent change due to Dutch presence. Under Dutch rule, Javanese religions became less fluid. This was due to numerous processes of which I will give two examples. Firstly, the colonisers contributed largely to the spread of literacy which decisively changed the way in which religious beliefs were held. In non-literate societies the past is the servant of the present; elements of the past are forgotten and myth is constructed to justify temporary convictions and rituals.¹¹⁶ However in literate societies, religion acquires a rigid base. Religion becomes a system of unchangeable rules and people develop a sense of universal orthodoxy of doctrine, a doctrine which is not limited to a specific age or region. Written religions, such as Christianity and Islam, regard their content as tied to the text (Bible, *Qur'an*) and not to a particular cultural and temporal context. Second, Dutch policymakers and scholars tried to capture, categorize, and preserve all indigenous religious traditions. They classified people into several religious currents, even though previously there had been no clear boundaries between the various religions in the archipelago.¹¹⁷ The majority of Javanese incorporated beliefs and rituals from various doctrines into their personal religion. But now the colonial government enforced more definite boundaries between different religious currents.

This, together with the increasing contact with the Middle East, instigated a reform in Javanese Islam which is now labelled as 'Santrification'.¹¹⁸ A substantial part of the Muslim people, mostly of the urban elite, started to adhere to a more modern kind of Islam. As modern ideas about Islam arrived in Java, the emphasis in religion began to shift slowly from practice to content. Reason and scripture were emphasised at the expense of mystical experiences and ritual. They focused on *Shari'a* Islam and declared many local Islamic practices as non-Islamic and local *adat* fell outside of their limited definition of Islam. Consequently, the teachings in the *pesantren* transformed to anti-Indic; traditional Javanese Islam became heretical in the eyes of the *Santri*.¹¹⁹ Furthermore, Santri-ism

¹¹⁵ Azyumardi Azra, Kees van Dijk, Nico Kaptein, *Varieties of religious authority; changes and challenges in twentieth century Indonesian Islam* (Leiden 2010) 54-57.

¹¹⁶ J.D.Y. Peel, 'For who hath despised the day of small things? Missionary narratives and historical anthropology' in: *Comparative Studies in Society and History* (1995) 581-607.

¹¹⁷ King, 'Imagining religions in India; Colonialism and the mapping of South Asian history and culture'.

¹¹⁸ The term 'Santrification' derives from the word *santri* (student at a *pesantren*; *Qur'an* schools), a term coined by Geertz in his study of religion in Java from 1960. It refers to Indonesian Muslims who are more concerned with 'Islamic doctrine and most especially the moral and social interpretation of it' as opposed to *Abangan* Muslims who engage more with 'ritual detail' and combine elements of Javanese customs with Islam. Thus, Santrification refers to an increase in Islamic piety and stricter adherence to Islamic practices. This process led to a dissolving of boundaries between *Santri* (or *Putihan*, as this group was still commonly called in the nineteenth century) and *Abangan*, as more and more Indonesians appear to fit the more 'pious' *santri* category. Geertz, *The religion of Java*, 126-130.

¹¹⁹ Geertz, *Islam observed*, 67.

also included anti-Dutch sentiments and by 1900 had also become a rebellious political ideology. The Christian missionaries also noticed the growing influence of the Middle East in Javanese Islam and were afraid this would result in increased resistance to the spread of Christianity. Carel Poensen of the NZG wrote in 1889: 'The influence of Islam in Java is indeed increasing. No one will admit quicker than me that the Javanese people are fascinated by various Muslim influences and people, so that Islam indeed is becoming dangerous for our existence in Java'.¹²⁰

A significant number of the population of Java, however, was not aware of this ongoing Santrification process. Many of those that were aware resisted this Islamic intensification by returning to their local practices. These people gave up practising the Five Pillars of Islam and simultaneously re-accepted beliefs and rituals from traditional Javanese religion. They re-focused on Javanese mysticism and as a result a widening gap was constructed between modern and traditional Javanese Muslims. These 'nominal' Muslims were more inclined to follow the local system of beliefs and law, the *adat*, whereas modernist Muslims sought to follow 'pure' *Shari'a*.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, an increasing number of modern, activist Muslims challenged the 'Islamicness' of those Javanese Muslims who were now considered to be 'nominal' Muslims. These 'pious' Muslims distanced themselves from the 'heretics' by addressing themselves as the '*Wong Putihan*' or the white people, while the supposedly nominal Muslims, who they considered to be heterodox were called the '*Wong Abangan*' or the red or brown people.¹²¹ It is uncertain why the religious class addressed themselves as white. Possibly it referred to the white clothes *hajjis* wear during and after the pilgrimage or the colour perhaps symbolized their 'puritanism'. The term '*Putihan*' was already commonly used during the first half of the nineteenth century; however Ricklefs demonstrated that the term *Abangan* was not used until the mid-nineteenth century to indicate a social or religious category.¹²² For the majority, being Javanese meant living according to Javanese *adat*; the traditions and laws of their forefathers, but suddenly this lifestyle became known as *Abangan*.¹²³ *Abangan* was, however, not a term by which these Muslims

¹²⁰ Carel Poensen, *Letter to the Board of the NZG* (Kediri 22 April 1889) Utrechts Archief.

More reactions of the Dutch missionaries to the Santrification process can be found in chapter 3.

¹²¹ The term '*Putihan*' was already used to indicate the professionally religious in the first half of the nineteenth century. According to Ricklefs, Geertz called this current the '*Santris*' by mistake. The term '*Santris*' only indicated religious students and not the entire 'orthodox' current in the nineteenth century. However, Geertz's work was so influential that since the 1950's the group is commonly addressed as the *Santri*.

Ricklefs, *Polarizing Javanese Society*, 84-85.

Merle Calvin Ricklefs, 'The birth of the Abangan', in: *Bijdragen tot de taal-, land- en volkenkunde* (Leiden 2006) 35-55.

¹²² Merle Calvin Ricklefs, 'The birth of the Abangan', in: *Bijdragen tot de taal-, land- en volkenkunde* (Leiden 2006) 35-55.

¹²³ Towards the end of the nineteenth century the term *Abangan* has become common and is by then used by movements who tend to hold on to their *Kejawen* beliefs and try to resist Islamic revivalism.

initially addressed themselves. Many were probably not even aware of the existence of this label. Furthermore, *Putihan* Muslims were not necessarily perceived as 'more pious' or 'better' Muslims by the majority of Javanese society. They were initially perceived as an elitist group which had to some extent removed itself from the Javanese social and cultural environment.¹²⁴

The *Abangan* sought ways to strengthen the connection between their Javanese identity and their Muslim identity and used folk tales and local heroes as 'tools' for cultural legitimization. For example, the popular legend of Aji Saka, which was highly valued by the *Abangan*, explains the arrival of civilisation in the archipelago. The Javanese Aji Saka supposedly introduced the Javanese religious system and several Javanese cultural traits, such as its script and the *wayang*. The story stresses the connection between Islam and Javanese *ngelmu* (mystical knowledge). The oldest accounts we have of the legend are from the nineteenth century. For example, Carel Poensen of the NZG wrote about the legend of Aji Saka as it was told by the people of Kediri in 1869.¹²⁵ There are many versions of the story available, but every story contains at least the following information: Aji Saka was brought up by a magical creature, a serpent named Antaboga, who initiated him in the occult sciences. After the serpent had taught Aji Saka everything he knew, he sent him to Mecca to complete his study under the guidance of Mohammed. There he studied together with Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman, and Ali.¹²⁶ Mohammed taught Aji Saka his mystical knowledge and eventually Aji Saka became his equal. Thereafter Aji Saka met with Satan himself, who also taught him his magic skills. Eventually Aji Saka returned to Java to bring civilisation, which by now included both mystical knowledge: Javanese *ngelmu*, and Islamic knowledge. The legend emphasises that Javanese civilisation included both mystical and Islamic knowledge, taught by the prophet Mohammed himself, from its very beginning.¹²⁷ This formed an argument for the *Abangan* to ascertain that Javanese Islam was equal to, or perhaps even more complete than, Middle Eastern Islam and that it therefore should not be reformed by *hajjis* and Arabs. This story clearly is an apologetic response to the *Putihan's* claim that the Javanized trait of Islam was impure and in need of reform.¹²⁸

Nevertheless, *Abangan* Islam was in the view of many observers, Dutch as well as reformist Muslims, not really Islamic. Many claimed that traditional Javanese Islam differed in essential respects

Hefner, *Conversion to Christianity*, 108.

¹²⁴ Merle Calvin Ricklefs, 'Six centuries of Islamization in Java', in: N. Levtzion (Ed.) *Conversion to Islam* (New York & London, 1979) 127.

¹²⁵ Carel Poensen, 'Bijdragen tot de kennis van den godsdienstigen en zedelijken toestand der Javanen. Eene beschouwing van den inhoud van eenige voorname geschriften der Javaansche literatuur', in: *Mededeelingen* (Rotterdam 1869) 191.

¹²⁶ These four men are the first caliphs.

¹²⁷ Robert W. Hefner, *Hindu Javanese, Tengger tradition and Islam* (New Jersey, 1985) 126-142.

¹²⁸ Van Bruinessen, 'Global and local in Indonesian Islam', 46-63.

from 'orthodox' Middle Eastern Islam and could therefore be considered inferior. However, although *Abangan* Islam differed much from scriptural Islam, we now know it did not vary that much from other living practices in the Muslim world. The distinction between 'high' and scripturalist Islam and 'low' or folk Islam was not restricted to Java, but was common in other Islamic areas too.¹²⁹ In fact, even practices that previously had been regarded as typical 'Javanese' have been found in other Islamic areas.¹³⁰ These practices came to the archipelago as part of Muslim civilisation, even though they did not belong to the core of Islamic faith.¹³¹ Islam was practiced differently everywhere and it was -and still is- impossible to designate a place where 'orthodox' Islam is practiced.

The distinction between the two groups was first seen in predominantly Islamic areas where the differences were most pronounced. But towards the close of the century, Javanese society became more and more polarized. The Dutch colonial government contributed to the growing gap between the popular and elite varieties of Javanese Islam. Although Islam recognises no hierarchy of religious leaders or a formal priesthood, the Dutch colonial government established an elaborate rank order for mosques, *pesantren*, and other Islamic preaching schools which secured the position of *Putihan* Islam. Moreover, the distinction between *adat* and *Shari'a* law was reinforced by the colonial government which further stabilized the distinction between these two emerging religious currents.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century the term *Abangan* had become common and was by then also used by movements who tended to hold on to their *Kejawen* beliefs. These beliefs had an even stronger connection to animism, Hinduism, and Buddhism than *Abangan* Islam. *Abangan* and *Kejawen* groups started to develop and systematize their teachings and rituals, hence offering a 'high' version of *Abangan* religiosity. Such a formalized version of *Abangan* formed a strong and institutionalized alternative to 'high' Islam, which was deliberately rejected. When the anthropologist Clifford Geertz arrived in Java to do his research in the 1950's, the distinction appeared to be final and commonly accepted on the island to the extent that he thought it had been that way for centuries. However, the separation could be traced back, in some areas, to merely fifty years.¹³²

¹²⁹ Van Bruinessen, *Muslims, Minorities and Modernity*.

¹³⁰ For examples of 'Abangan' beliefs and practices with Middle Eastern origins see: Mark Woodward, *Islam in Java: normative piety and mysticism in the sultanate of Yogyakarta* (Tucson 1989).

¹³¹ Van Bruinessen, 'Global and local in Indonesian Islam, 46-63.

¹³² The anthropologist Clifford Geertz made a well-known, though heavily criticized, threefold distinction between the *Santri*, *Abangan* and *Priyayi*. The *Priyayi* were the descendants of the nobility and court members. Geertz noticed that the *Priyayi* played a central role in the teaching of *Kejawen*, or the Hindu-Buddhist art of inner cultivation, to the *Abangan*. Geertz. *The religion of Java*.

1.3. Java's first encounters with Christianity

I take a step back in time again to discuss Java's first encounters with Christianity that took place in the sixteenth century. The coming of Christianity to the region was initially a side effect of the growing trade network of the burgeoning European colonial powers. The first Catholic missionaries arrived in the context of the Portuguese colonial expansion in the sixteenth century. It seems that for the Portuguese, the conversion of the Javanese people was as important as their trade ambitions, since every Portuguese trader was obliged by the Portuguese royal house to spread the Word.¹³³ Several sources indicate that during the period 1584-1599 the first Catholic missionaries were sent to Java by the Portuguese branch of the Franciscan Order.¹³⁴

The Dutch trading company, the VOC, arrived in Java in the seventeenth century and founded Batavia as their main trading post. The growing Dutch presence in the archipelago caused a major setback to the Catholic enterprise because all priests were banned from areas that came under Dutch control.¹³⁵ The ban on the promotion of Catholic faith, which lasted from 1602 until 1799, is best understood within the context of the contemporary rivalry between Catholics and Protestants in Europe.¹³⁶ During this period all Catholics in the Dutch Indies were even registered as members of the Reformed Church.¹³⁷ However, within the colonial context the Dutch showed a general disinclination towards propagation of *any* church. Conversion was not nearly as important as maximizing the profits for the VOC and the board deliberately discouraged proselytizing, mainly because it might have caused unrest that could hamper local trade.

Nevertheless, with the arrival of the Dutch in the Indies, the Protestant faith arrived in the archipelago as well.¹³⁸ Ministers who worked for the VOC generally limited their pastoral care to the Dutch crew and to other European traders who had settled in the region. In some coastal cities so called *handelskerken* (trade churches) were founded. But the VOC board strongly discouraged the clergymen of these churches to seek contact with the local people, as this could undermine

¹³³ Leo Dalhuizen, *Nederland en Indonesië, vier eeuwen contact en beïnvloeding* (Baarn 2000) 5.

¹³⁴ Th. Van den End, Chr.G.F. de Jong, A.Th. Boone and P.N. Holtrop. *Twee eeuwen Nederlandse zending 1797-1997. Twaalf opstellen*. (Leiden 1997) 5.

¹³⁵ Steenbrink, *Catholics in Indonesia*, Vol. 1, 7.

¹³⁶ Steenbrink, *Catholics in Indonesia*, Vol. 1, XVI.

¹³⁷ In 1808 the Catholic Church became an independent church. Catholics living in the Dutch Indies were from then on registered as Catholics instead of members of the Protestant Indische Kerk.

Willem Henri Alting von Geusau, *Neutraliteit der overheid in de Nederlandsche koloniën jegens godsdienstzaken* (Haarlem 1917) 126.

¹³⁸ The VOC was ordered to guarantee 'the promotion and propagation of the true Christian religion' in exchange for their patent. *Encyclopaedie van Nederlandsch Oost-Indië*, 1917, part I, 502.

business.¹³⁹ As a result, missionary activities only took place in areas where the position of the VOC was well established and Christian preaching could not threaten trade relations. The Moluccan island of Ambon is an example of an area which was brought under firm control in an early stage; the conversion process started there early on.¹⁴⁰ It proved, however, difficult for the VOC to gain control over Java and thus the missionary activities were stalled for a long period on this particular island.

However, during an exceptional interlude from 1622 to 1680, the VOC made more efforts to proselytize. In 1622, the VOC had elected a new board which was more in favour of spreading the Christian faith. It instructed their crews to actively spread the 'true faith' in Java, which was according to the board members the Dutch Reformed faith.¹⁴¹ The VOC ministers began to aim their efforts at the local population and founded a few Christian primary schools in the coastal areas. In order to attract pupils they distributed food and clothes at these schools. But this initiative proved ineffective and the schools eventually had to close due to a lack of pupils. Not only the schools, but also the churches failed to attract people. Most ministers lacked sufficient knowledge of the local languages and held their services in Dutch, which -needless to say- failed to attract an indigenous audience. Some tried to train local converts to lead the services in the vernacular languages, but this effort failed as well. The VOC, however, altered its policy again in 1680 and the propagation of the Christian faith became prohibited once more. This time the ban would last over a century. The VOC experienced a severe commercial setback in the eighteenth century and even went bankrupt in 1799. The possessions of the company in the Indies were taken over by the Dutch state. Hence, this bankruptcy marked the beginning of Dutch state interference in the archipelago.

1.4. The Dutch colonial state and religious affairs

The Dutch state shaped the colonial society according to modern Western ideas. In this process, the state changed the way the Javanese and Sundanese perceived religion, culture, and the role of religion in Javanese society. The government stipulated the dominant discourse on religion and defined, to a large extent, religion. As such, the state categorized local convictions and practices by deciding which beliefs and traditions were religious and which were not. Religion was not an independent field in Java prior to the Dutch period; previously, there had been no demarcation lines between religion and other spheres of human activity, such as politics, economics, science, and philosophy. But now the Dutch

¹³⁹ Wouter Smit, *De islam binnen de horizon, een missionaire studie over de benadering van de Islam door vier Nederlandsche Zendingcorporaties (1797-1951)* (Zoetermeer 2003) 8.

¹⁴⁰ August Th. Boone, *Bekering en Beschaving, De agogische activiteiten van het Nederlandsche Zendelinggenootschap in Oost-Java (1840-1865)* (Amsterdam 1997) 12.

¹⁴¹ Linda van Gurp, *Tussen Adat en Christus* (Leiden 2003) 12.

increasingly identified religion as a distinct domain.¹⁴² For example, the Dutch colonial government actively reinforced the distinction between Islamic law, the *Shari'a*, and customary law, the *adat*. The Dutch promoted *adat* law for various reasons, including undermining the threat of pan-Islam through the influence of returning *hajjis*.¹⁴³ The Dutch authorities attempted to compile handbooks of *adat* law to use in the courts. This changed *adat* into a fixed, rigid system, where before it had always been fluid and adaptable. In this way the state constructed a new social reality in the colony. Moreover, this codification made it possible to study contradictions between *adat* and Islamic law more precisely. As a result *adat* and *Shari'a* became competitive systems, even though *adat* had always been a part of Islamic culture and included elements from Middle Eastern *adat* as well.¹⁴⁴

Before the arrival of Islam and Christianity in the Indonesian Archipelago, Eastern religious traditions were fluid and ever-changing in nature; religion was not a fixed system of beliefs and practices. However, religious discourses became colonised as well, and as a result they became static under European influence which changed considerably their characters. The category 'religion' is a product of the European Enlightenment and is characterized by Christian theology and secular modernity in the West.¹⁴⁵ This Christian understanding of the category 'religion' became dominant during the colonial age. Religion was introduced in every part of the world as a universal and ahistorical category that encouraged people to regard all traditions in narrowly exclusionary and separistic terms.¹⁴⁶ However, local religious discourses rarely fit into the newly introduced categories of the religious and the secular. Many local religious traditions were not considered actual religions by European colonials, but rather, as backward superstition. This strengthened the idea that European countries had to fulfil a 'civilizing mission' in their colonies; they were the ones who had to bring rationality to these people. European countries used this idea to legitimize their cultural imperialistic aims. As a result of this categorical way of thinking, both the missionaries and the Javanese people were forced into a fixed position in the constructed dichotomy between religious and secular. Religion in Java became a colonial construction which affected local discourses of the supernatural.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴² Marion Eggert, 'Shrinking world, expanding religion? The dynamics of religious interaction in the times of colonialism and globalization' in: Volkhard Krech, Marion Steinicke, *Dynamics in the history of religions between Asia and Europe, encounters, notions and comparative perspectives* (Leiden 2012) 383.

¹⁴³ The recognition of *adat*-law was one of the main objectives of the Ethical Policy, which was introduced in 1901. *Adat*-law would give more autonomy and security to the indigenous communities, in particular in the field of land tenure. Jan Michiel Otto, *Sharia Incorporated: A Comparative Overview of the Legal Systems of Twelve Muslim Countries in Past and Present* (Leiden 2010) 440.

Peter Burns, *The Leiden Legacy, Concepts of Law in Indonesia* (Leiden 2004).

¹⁴⁴ Van Bruinessen, 'Global and local in Indonesian Islam', 46-63.

¹⁴⁵ Asad, *Formations of the Secular*.

¹⁴⁶ Richard King, 'Imagining religions in India; Colonialism and the mapping of South Asian history and culture' in: Markus Dressler and Arvind-Pal S. Mandair, *Secularism and Religion-making* (Oxford 2011) 49.

¹⁴⁷ King, 'Imagining religions in India', 38.

Moreover, as a consequence of classic divide and rule strategies, the characteristics of the existing religions in Java were changed. The Dutch highlighted and enforced the divisions between various religious traditions through administrative policies and education in order to contain the diversity of supernatural beliefs and practices they encountered. The Dutch classified local traditions in Western categories, such as 'orthodoxy', 'heterodoxy', or 'heresy'. All believers were placed in dominant religious categories such as 'Hindu', 'Buddhist', 'Muslim', or 'heathen', although previously there had been no clear boundaries between these categories or the categories itself did not even exist yet. In the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Western scholars had begun to categorize and name the religious traditions they encountered. For example, the term 'Hinduism' was apparently first used by the British Charles Grant in the 1770's and the term 'Buddhism' appeared in the 1820's.¹⁴⁸ Western scholars, colonial officials, and missionaries alike, have since then portrayed Hindu and Buddhist traditions as if they were wholly separate religious traditions with fixed rather than porous boundaries.¹⁴⁹ By enforcing definite religious boundaries, the colonial government decided what the 'orthodox' religions were, and everything that did not fit in this category was considered syncretic, and thus heretical.¹⁵⁰

The official policy of the Dutch colonial state in the domain of religion was 'neutrality'. 'State neutrality' was first mentioned in an instruction for the Governor-General of the Dutch East Indies in 1803.¹⁵¹ However, neutrality was for a long time interpreted as abstention and the Christian mission was forestalled for a long time because of it. In 1808, the colonial administration in Batavia made an exception and granted permission to two Dutch Protestant clergymen to enter the colony to spread the 'Word'. These two missionaries, however, were not affiliated with a missionary society, since organised mission was still prohibited to keep the efforts limited. A major development was the British take-over of the Dutch Indies. The Netherlands, at that time a puppet state of the French Republic, was at war with England at the turn of the century. The British took over power of Java in 1811 and governed the colony for four years. Although the British were only in charge for a brief period, they introduced some major changes in the administration including the land tax system.¹⁵² Beside administrative reforms, the British implemented changes in the politics of religion. They encouraged the Christian mission and as a result, several small Christian communities emerged throughout the island during the British interlude.

¹⁴⁸ King, 'Imagining religions in India', 45.

¹⁴⁹ King, 'Imagining religions in India', 47.

¹⁵⁰ King, 'Imagining religions in India'.

¹⁵¹ Article 13, Alting von Geusau, *Neutraliteit der overheid*, 6-13.

¹⁵² Dalhuizen, '*Nederland en Indonesië*', 18.

When the Dutch regained control in 1815, they immediately curtailed the missionary activities and refocused their policy on the principle of neutrality. Again, in order to retain '*rust en orde*' (tranquillity and order) they decided on abstention from religious affairs as much as possible. However, in due course the Dutch did develop a purposeful policy towards Islam though most other colonial powers did not have a clear strategy of government on this point.¹⁵³ Toward the end of the nineteenth century it became clear to the colonial government that Javanese Islam was going through a transformation. As discussed previously, more people went on the pilgrimage to Mecca and many stayed a few years in the Middle East to study, sometimes returning to the Indies as reformers.¹⁵⁴ The influence of the modern, outward oriented *Putihan* became more pronounced because of their growing numbers. This was especially true in the coastal areas and towns that also served as the locations of government offices and houses. The state had more dealings with orthodox Islam and 'learnt' Muslims there, which probably influenced their policy towards Islam and Muslims in general. The Dutch feared Islam; it, and especially Pan-Islamic sentiments, fuelled resistance against their rule, causing a change in the governing strategy. Their policy changed from neutrality to a more active strategy to halt the intensification of Islam by restraining the spread of Islamic law and limiting contact between Javanese Muslims and Muslims outside the colony. The state's new approach was a more cautious treatment of Islam and Muslims.

Those who completed the pilgrimage to Mecca were regarded as 'pious Muslims' and enjoyed great respect in Javanese society. Consequently, they had a large influence on the community and were therefore seen by the Dutch as a potential source of unrest and radicalization. The state feared *hajjis* may have had contact with anti-colonial movements through Indian *hajjis* or had become inspired by pan-Islamic ideas and the government sought to place restrictions on the pilgrimage. They issued various laws to limit the annual number of *hajjis*. For example, people who wished to travel to Mecca were obliged to buy a travel permit for the considerable sum of 110 guilders.¹⁵⁵ In 1859, this law was changed; from then on the prospective *hajji* had to prove he had enough money to undertake the pilgrimage and that the family he would leave behind, would be cared for. Moreover, after returning from Mecca, a *hajji* needed a certificate to wear the white *hajji* clothes. In order to obtain this permit he had to take an exam to prove he had really undertaken the pilgrimage.¹⁵⁶ Conversely, there were also a few policies applicable which probably enhanced the annual number of *hajjis*.

¹⁵³ M.J.M. Maussen, *Constructing Mosques: the governing of Islam in France and the Netherlands* (Amsterdam 2009) 91.

¹⁵⁴ Michael Laffan, *The Makings of Indonesian Islam: Orientalism and the Narration of a Sufi Past* (Princeton 2003).

¹⁵⁵ Eric Tagliacozzo, *The longest journey: south-east Asians and the pilgrimage to Mecca* (Princeton 2013) 76.

¹⁵⁶ Altling von Geusau, *Neutraliteit der overheid*, 31-48.

Foremost, *hajjis* remained exempted from feudal duties.¹⁵⁷ Colonial policy on religion often appeared ambivalent.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, the state realised they were in need of more knowledge about Islam. They therefore appointed Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje as *Adviseur voor Inlandsche Zaken* (Advisor for Indigenous Affairs) in 1898. Snouck Hurgronje was a Dutch scholar who specialized in Islam; he had visited Mecca and published a book on the *hajj* in 1888. During his appointment, which lasted only six years, he shaped Dutch policy towards Islam.¹⁵⁸ First of all, he corrected many of the misunderstandings about Islam on which previous policy was based. For example, the Dutch policy was based on the idea that Islam was ruled by a hierarchical clergy. Snouck Hurgronje considered the mission journals essential sources of information on the Javanese religious landscape and even contacted the missionaries to learn more about the local circumstances.¹⁵⁹ His overall advice was to intervene as little as possible in religious affairs and allow optimal freedom of religion. Therefore the laws that aimed to restrict the *hajj* were abolished in 1902 and 1905. However, in order to implement more useful policies, he did try to distinguish between ‘regular’ Muslims from ‘fanatic’ Muslims. That is, between practicing Muslims and those who considered Islam not only a religion but also a political doctrine.

The new colonial policy was aimed at banning Islam from the political sphere.¹⁶⁰ Snouck Hurgronje believed the government should not try to restrict Islam all together, since that would only lead to more fanaticism and hostility towards the Dutch. He therefore suggested allowing the *hajj* and other elements of Islam that coloured social life. To minimize revolt, ‘fanatical’ *Ulama* were restrained and *adat* was reinforced to give more autonomy and security to the indigenous communities. Despite Snouck Hurgronje’s fierce defence of state neutrality in religious matters, he believed the people would have to assimilate to Dutch culture eventually, and that a new Western educated middle class would then arise. He therefore advised to increase Western education and to allow more Indonesians into public administration posts.¹⁶¹ These ideas were reflected in the *Ethische Politiek* (Ethical Policy); the new stance in colonial policy in 1901.

The assumption that this new middle class would become allies of the Dutch proved to be a false premise. In fact, this young and highly educated group became an opponent to Dutch colonial

¹⁵⁷ Alting von Geusau, *Neutraliteit der overheid*, 31-48.

¹⁵⁸ Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje served in this capacity between 1898 and 1905.

¹⁵⁹ Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje showed much interest in the work of Carel Poensen, missionary of the NZG. He probably based his serie ‘*Brieven van een Wedono pensioen*’, published in *De Locomotief* in 1891-1892 on Poensen’s letter collection ‘*Brieven over de Islam, uit den binnenlanden van Java*’ (Leiden 1886).

¹⁶⁰ Maussen, *Constructing Mosques*, 96.

¹⁶¹ Maussen, *Constructing Mosques*, 96.

rule. In the first decades of the twentieth century, Indonesians started to form political parties such as the Sarekat Islam in 1911. Consequently, the Dutch changed their association policy to one which was aimed again at maintaining *rust en orde*. They sought to maintain order by emphasizing local identities and traditions. In policy directives this meant the further reinforcement of *adat* law and new restrictions on the *hajj*.¹⁶² This period is more fully discussed in the epilogue of this thesis.

1.5. The Dutch colonial state and the Christian mission

Clearly the Christian mission and the relationship between the Christian missionaries and the local peoples was determined strongly by the colonial setting. The policy of neutrality not only meant restrictions on the *hajj*, but it also constrained missionary activities. For example, the first Javanese Bible translation was printed in India in 1831, but was confiscated right after its arrival in the port of Semarang because the colonial state considered the Bible dangerous for the peace of the population.¹⁶³ Moreover, not even a handful of independent ministers had received permission to enter Java before the 1850's; these few men were all members of the Dutch Reformed Church as other denominations were still banned from the island.

In 1848, a year which is known in Dutch history as the 'revolution year', a new constitution was adopted in the Netherlands, which, as a by-product, resulted in more religious liberty in the colonies. From then on, the missionaries were able to apply for a *bijzondere toelating* (special admission) to proselytize in the Dutch East Indies. However, the influence of the colonial administration on the church and other religious affairs continued to exist. The government exerted much more control over the church in the Dutch Indies than they did in the Netherlands. In fact, state and church were not officially separated in the colony.¹⁶⁴ The administration in Batavia controlled directly the Protestant Church of the Dutch East Indies known as the *Indische Kerk* (Indian Church).¹⁶⁵ The colonial government employed these Protestant ministers, but they also appointed and paid

¹⁶² Harry J. Benda, *The Crescent and the Rising Sun: Indonesia Islam Under the Japanese Occupation, 1942-1945* (The Hague 1958) 74.

¹⁶³ Van Akkeren, *Sri and Christ*, 55.

¹⁶⁴ Steenbrink, *Catholics in Indonesia*, Vol. 1, 224.

¹⁶⁵ In the Netherlands, there is a difference between the 'hervormde' and 'gereformeerde' church, however both indications are translated with 'reformed' in English. The *Indische kerk* was 'hervormd', and the 'gereformeerde' church was not yet officially recognized. In 1892, the Batavian Church was recognised as a separate association, but not yet as a separate church society. Contrary, the Catholic Church was already recognised as an independent church in 1808.

Catholic ministers and Muslim leaders and counsellors.¹⁶⁶ This gave the government direct power over the clergy.

At long last, the colonial authorities allowed the first mission society, the Dutch Missionary Society (NZG), to enter the colony in 1848. The missionaries of the NZG started their activities immediately with great optimism and enthusiasm. However, they soon realised that the conversion of Java would not be an effortless task. They faced many setbacks that included continuing restrictions by the colonial government. The colonial government sought to maintain strict control over the mission and issued an extensive set of rules. The *Haagsche Commissie* (The Hague Committee) issued special permits which designated the missionaries to live and work on a fixed location, but only if both the regent and other indigenous leaders in the region consented. The NZV, another missionary society that arrived in Java in 1863, protested in vain against this policy; they explained they were not against being monitored by the colonial authorities, but they were convinced that only God should decide where the missionaries should preach and that this choice should not be made by a governmental committee.¹⁶⁷ In addition, mission societies received permits to work in separate areas to avoid 'double mission'. Double mission meant that different societies, especially both Catholic and Protestant, were active in the same area. The government was convinced this would cause rivalry and therefore unrest among the people. The missionaries also had to request permission in Batavia in order to leave their district and had to request separate authorization for each region they travelled through.¹⁶⁸ In other words, the missionaries could not travel freely in Java.

Even though the NZG had been admitted in 1848, most missionaries were still not of the opinion that the government acted neutrally. They considered many laws to be opposed to the Christian mission. There was, for instance, a law that determined that a village chief or officer would lose his job if he converted to Christianity. Article 124 stipulated that there had to be an agreement between the religion of the indigenous leaders and the people they governed.¹⁶⁹ The NZG lobbied unsuccessfully for years to abolish this particular law. On the other hand, there was also a law which

¹⁶⁶ European Protestant ministers received as much as 600-800 guilders a month, Catholic ministers earned between 400 and 500 guilders. The head of a mosque, the *penghulu*, received only 100-150 guilders. However, some received an additional salary as religious advisers to general courts. After 1880 the government slowly reduced the salaries for ministers and *penghulus*. However, from this period on, and especially after 1901, the government spent more and more on education and healthcare. The colonial administration made use of the already existing Christian structures and even strengthened them by enlarging their contribution. Steenbrink, *Catholics in Indonesia*, Vol. 1, 225- 228.

¹⁶⁷ Sutarman Soediman Partonadi, *Sadrach's community and its contextual roots, a nineteenth century Javanese expression of Christianity* (Amsterdam 1988) 37.

¹⁶⁸ Christiaan Albers, *letter to the board of the NZV* (Ciandur 23 May 1863) Utrechts Archief.

¹⁶⁹ Altling von Geusau, *Neutraliteit der overheid*, 57.

insisted that certain prestigious positions in the army and police force could only be held by Christians.¹⁷⁰ This confirms that the colonial state often acted ambivalent in religious matters.

The mission societies declared that they strove for equal rights and support for both Muslims and Christians. All societies stated that they did not wish for the containment of Islam through legislation. The NZG stated that the only way to achieve their goal was to present a stronger alternative to Islam. However, in reality, they did strive for Christian supremacy and substantially more governmental support. They wished, for instance, that the calendar would be replaced with the European calendar and demanded that Sunday would be an official resting day on which the markets would be closed and no feudal duties would be carried out.¹⁷¹ In addition, they wished that Christian holidays, instead of Muslim holidays, would be celebrated nationally. They also pleaded for equal subsidies and fair taxes. Many Christians refused to pay tax for the building of mosques, the wages of *penghulus*, and the celebration of *Idul Fitri*.¹⁷² In addition, Javanese schools that had an Islamic character were granted financial support whereas Christian schools were not. To great displeasure of the missionaries, Christian schools were considered private enterprises and not public services.¹⁷³ Towards the end of the nineteenth century some missionary schools could request financial support, but only if the religious lessons remained optional instead of mandatory.¹⁷⁴

According to the missionaries, the colonial policy undermined traditional Javanese religions and pushed people towards Islam. The Catholic missionary Van Lith gave an example: 'Once an (Dutch, M.K.) inspector demanded that a priest would recite an Islamic prayer at the occasion of an election for a new *desa*-board. The residents would not even have thought of it themselves.'¹⁷⁵ In addition, the colonial state contributed to the celebration of Islamic holidays, the building of mosques, and even remunerated *penghulus*, Islamic judicial advisors, marriage and *zakat* registrars.¹⁷⁶ Moreover, many missionaries were of the opinion that the 'neutrality' policy of the colonial state pushed people towards Islam because it proved the Dutch did not care much about their Christian faith. The

¹⁷⁰ Alting von Geusau, *Neutraliteit der overheid*, 60.

¹⁷¹ Carel Poensen, '*Naar en op den pasar*', manuscript of 1882, Utrechts Archief.

¹⁷² *Id al-Fitr*, or *Idul Fitri* in Indonesian, is the name for the Muslim holiday that marks the end of Ramadan, the Islamic holy month of fasting.

¹⁷³ This changed with the advent of the *Ethische Politiek* (Ethical Policy) in 1901. From then on Christian schools received more financial supports than Muslim schools.

¹⁷⁴ The colonial government decided in 1854 that all elementary schools had to be secular; the missionaries were not allowed to talk about religious matters during school hours. Twenty years later this rule changed, now Islamic schools did receive a grant, because these schools 'suited the character of Java'. Christian schools could apply for a grant after 1890.

¹⁷⁵ Franciscus van Lith and P. Merthens, *Resume conference with the Governor-General* (25 January 1912) Archives of the Jesuit Province of Indonesia (Semarang).

¹⁷⁶ Alting von Geusau, *Neutraliteit der overheid*.

missionaries were certain this would cause Muslims to view with contempt Christians and their faith.¹⁷⁷

The application of *Shari'a* in family and inheritance law also disturbed the missionaries. At the end of the eighteenth century, Governor General Daendels had established the administration and state courts and he required a *penghulu* to attend every court meeting and to give advice to the judges.¹⁷⁸ This meant that Christian Javanese had no choice but to go to a *penghulu* court where they were obliged to take an oath on the *Qur'an*. According to the missionaries, this was not fair, especially in cases that had to do with religion. For example: when Christians did not receive their inheritance, or when their houses had been set on fire by fanatic Muslims, or when their land had been taken from them after their conversion, or when they had been sued because they refused to do their feudal duties on Sundays. According to the missionaries, this had to change because the Christians always had a large disadvantage in these courts. At the Protestant mission conference in Depok in 1883, all attendees signed a petition for the Governor-General to change the law so indigenous Christians could go to the courts for European people. However, the Governor General declined the petition, arguing that the colonial state did not want treat the adherents of different religion differently.¹⁷⁹

In particular, missionaries aimed for a revision of the laws concerning matrimony. For example, the Catholic missionary Van Lith protested against the marital laws in Java for years.¹⁸⁰ He believed colonial government enhanced the Islamization process by introducing new regulations, such as the law that all marriages were to be conducted by a *penghulu*. Previously, a marriage did not necessarily have to take place in a religious (that is, Islamic) context. Moreover, the law decided that the groom had to pronounce the *shahada* in order to complete the ceremony. Although Van Lith himself received permission to marry people after years of lobbying, he did not stop to lobby for a total revision of the laws, because he believed Christians outside of his district deserved the freedom to decide themselves where to get married as well. Eventually the law was revised in 1933, and from then on Christian Javanese were free to get married by a Christian priest or minister anywhere in Java.¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁷ Altling von Geusau, *Neutraliteit der overheid*, 80-90.

¹⁷⁸ H. Westra, 'Custom and Muslim law in the Netherlands East Indies', in: *Transactions of the Grotius Society*, XXV (1939) 151-167.

¹⁷⁹ L. Adriaanse, *De Koninklijke boodschap omtrent wijziging van het Indisch regerings reglement in zake de rechtsbedeling en rechtstoestand der inlandse Christenen* (Utrecht 1903) 28.

¹⁸⁰ Franciscus van Lith, *Autobiographical writings*, Archives of the Jesuit Province of Indonesia (Semarang).

¹⁸¹ Marriage Ordinance for Indonesian Christians in Java, Madura and Ambon (Staatsblad 1933 No. 74).

1.6. The Ethical Policy

A new political policy was introduced after the period of the cultivation system and the liberal period in the Dutch Indies. The article '*Een Eereschuld*' (A Debt of Honour) by C. Th. Van Deventer in the *Gids* of 1899 announced the changing atmosphere in Dutch politics. Two years later, Queen Wilhelmina articulated in a formal speech to her parliament that the Dutch Government had a moral obligation to the native people of the Dutch East Indies and thereby introduced the *Ethische Politiek* (Ethical Policy). This new policy was aimed at enlarging the welfare of colonial subjects. This was in sharp contrast with the former official doctrine that the Dutch Indies were merely a *wingewest*; a region for making profit. The Ethical Policy fit well in a time of nascent socialism, communism, and feminism in Europe.¹⁸² It was no longer considered acceptable to exploit a people; not in Europe, nor overseas. The Ethical Policy was aimed at bringing progress and prosperity to the peoples of the Indies. The relationship between the Netherlands and the Indies was from then on described as the relation between a guardian and a child - the Netherlands would treat the Indies kindly and support them on their road to modernity.

The Dutch Ethical Policy was different from civilizing missions of other colonial powers. The Ethical Policy was more an effort to stimulate economic development than the transfer of European culture. The colonial government started to invest in infrastructure and irrigation programmes, it introduced banking services for the native population, and granted subsidies for native industries and handicrafts. Even its aims in the field of education were mostly focused on technical advance than on anything else. The government also stimulated development in healthcare: between 1900 and 1930 the subsidies to hospitals and other healthcare programmes increased tenfold. Nevertheless, it was a drop in the ocean because in 1930 there was still only one doctor available per 62,500 people.¹⁸³

The turn to the Ethical Policy implied a change in the relation between the Dutch colonial government and the mission societies. In her speech, the queen had also called for the improvement of the legal status of indigenous Christians in the Indies and she had promised more support to the mission.¹⁸⁴ The government now recognised the mission's effort to morally and socially develop the indigenous people in a way similar to their own. After 1901, the Dutch state granted more and larger subsidies for mission schools and hospitals. However, the colonial administration did not promote Christianization directly because that would be in conflict with the prevailing policy of religious freedom and neutrality.

¹⁸² Elsbeth Locher-Scholten, *Ethiek in fragmenten, vijf studies over koloniaal denken en doen van Nederlanders in de Indonesische Archipel, 1877-1942* (Utrecht 1981) 179.

¹⁸³ Ricklefs, *A modern history of Indonesia*, 188.

¹⁸⁴ Locher-Scholten, *Ethiek in fragmenten*, 233.

Although the Ethical Policy aimed at changes in the administration of the colony, emancipation was still out of the question. The government realised that it was time for participation, political empowerment, and decentralization, but increased autonomy under Dutch ruling was considered the most feasible. A more independent position for the Indonesian people could be achieved through the *Associatie Politiek* (Association Policy). This policy was the brainchild of Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje, the advisor for indigenous affairs in the colony. His aim was twofold: to achieve both modernity and equality between Europeans and the indigenous people. A certain degree of unity in culture between the Dutch and the Indonesians would lessen the social and political impact of religious difference.¹⁸⁵ Snouck Hurgronje sought to form a westernized Indonesian elite by offering European style education in the Dutch language at newly founded schools and colleges. In general, only the bureaucratic elite, the *Priyayi*, was able to pay the tuition of these newly founded schools and colleges. As a result the power of this aristocratic group, which was not coincidentally in general opposed to Islam, was reinforced. Snouck Hurgronje was convinced this elite class would in return be grateful and cooperative, which would result in decreasing administration costs, the restriction of Islamic fanaticism and pan-Islam, and he hoped it would create a good example for the lower levels of the Javanese society.¹⁸⁶

Snouck Hurgronje saw an opportunity for the mission in his Association Policy. For many years the mission had worked in education, healthcare, and agriculture to develop the indigenous society according to the Western model. Furthermore, the missionaries' wives and Franciscan nuns had access to the indigenous women and were therefore useful to the state to stimulate the development of this part of society that was otherwise difficult to reach for the government. Therefore the mission received more appreciation and state support after the introduction of the Ethical and Association Policy. The number of missionaries increased significantly and the state guaranteed more subsidies to mission schools and hospitals. Moreover, both Christiaan Albers and Jurrianus Verhoeven of the NZV received a medal from the queen of the Netherlands in 1902 and 1913, respectively; they became knights in the Order of Oranje Nassau.¹⁸⁷ However, the growing number of Christian schools and healthcare institutions also opened the way for similar Islamic associations, such as the

¹⁸⁵ Snouck Hurgronje, *Nederland en de Islam*, 83.

¹⁸⁶ Ricklefs, *A modern history of Indonesia*, 189.

¹⁸⁷ Christiaan Albers, 'Jaarverslag 1901' in: *Orgaan* (Rotterdam 1901).

Marinus Lindenborn, *Een welbesteed leven; Jurrianus Verhoeven, de vader van Tjideres* (Oegstgeest 1923) 28, 29.

Muhammadiyah.¹⁸⁸ Therefore James and Schrauwens argue that the growing role of Islam in civil society was indirectly stimulated by the Christian missions.¹⁸⁹

Although Snouck Hurgronje and the Governor Generals of the colony in the early twentieth century, Alexander Idenburg and Joannes van Heutz, both considered education the correct means to reach modernity and more autonomy, they differed in their opinions on how to implement it. Whereas Snouck Hurgronje insisted on a Europeanized education model for the elite, Idenburg and Van Heutz insisted on basic and practical education in the vernacular languages for the masses. Their goal was to create more welfare in general, not the formation of a noble class that would support the Dutch regime. Their approach was thus more in agreement with the Protestant philosophy on education. In the end, both policies had trouble achieving their goals because the budgets that were allocated to the policies' programmes were never sufficient. Because neither policy was pursued with adequate resources, both failed to become a success.¹⁹⁰

As stated before, the colonial government changed its policy towards Islam near the end of the nineteenth century. Its new aim was to defuse political Islam and to contain Islamization. This turn in colonial policy also improved the relationship between the state and the missionary societies considerably. The Christian missionaries were from then on considered allies in the struggle against 'Islamic fanaticism'. The Dutch state also began to notice that the hierarchical structures within Dutch Christian communities resembled strongly their own policy of dualism or indirect rule. The Dutch missionary, who acted both as the spiritual and secular leader, instructed his indigenous assistants. These assistants formed the middle layer and directed the lay people, who were at the bottom of this three-tiered structure. The Dutch state also tried to establish political control over the area by keeping indigenous leaders under Dutch rule. The Dutch had given administrative power to the *Priyayi*, the indigenous aristocracy. The *Priyayi* stream was strongly driven by hierarchical Hindu-Javanese tradition and were, in general, opposed to Islam. They formed the middle layer in the colonial political structure and continued to govern the masses. Because of this similarity in governing strategies, the Dutch Christian communities were from then on seen as the perfect means to create an indigenous constituency loyal to the Dutch crown.

¹⁸⁸ Muhammadiyah was founded in 1912 by Ahmad Dahlan. Its leaders and members are often actively involved in shaping the politics in Indonesia; however Muhammadiyah is not a political party. It has devoted itself to social and educational activities.

¹⁸⁹ James and Schrauwens, 'An apartheid of souls: Dutch and Afrikaner colonialism and its aftermath in Indonesia and South Africa – an introduction' in: *European journal of social history*, vol. 27 (2003) 49-80.

¹⁹⁰ Ricklefs, *A modern history of Indonesia*, 189.

1.7. Conclusion

This chapter started with a quote from NZG missionary Carel Poensen which expressed the dominant opinion of the Dutch that Islam was nothing but a thin veneer covering Javanese paganism. My aim with this chapter was to disclose whether this perspective was realistic or not. The religious landscape of Java was very dynamic and more complex than the metaphor of a thin veneer suggests. Yet it is true that the oldest animistic traditions, Hindu and Buddhist traditions, were still visible after Islam became the dominant religion in the region. Many Javanese, especially those who lived in the interior, had a hybrid religious identity, which makes the missionaries' views understandable. Even the twentieth century scholarly discourse on Javanese religion was still reminiscent of these ideas. Because of the presence of various religious traditions, Java has often been described as adaptive, absorbent, and pragmatic when it comes to religion; a melting pot of religious currents. Many authors, including the influential Clifford Geertz, have emphasised Java's apparent openness to new religions and the resulting syncretic character of Javanese religion.¹⁹¹ As a consequence, the idea that the Javanese easily allow elements from new religions into their belief system was strengthened.

However, the prominent idea in today's discourse that the Javanese easily accept new religious beliefs is not valid. The process of Islamization took centuries and towards the end of the nineteenth century the majority of the Javanese had still only partly accepted Islamic beliefs and traditions into their belief system while a substantial part had resisted Islam all together. In the second half of the nineteenth century, the period under study, this resulted in a schism in Javanese Islam. A group that aimed at becoming more modern and 'orthodox' by focusing on scripture called themselves the *Putihan*. The remaining group, the *Abangan*, held on to their Javanese mystical traditions which had been influenced by Hinduism and Buddhism for centuries. They focused on ritual and oral traditions. As a result, this group remained more traditional than the *Putihan*. The distinction between these two groups was first seen in predominantly Islamic areas at the coast, where these differences were most pronounced. However, by the end of the nineteenth century, the separation into two groups had become clearly noticeable in every region in Java.

This chapter focused on the religious landscape of nineteenth century Java on the one hand, and colonial politics and the state's policy towards religion and the Christian mission on the other. Javanese society went through profound changes that impacted significantly on religious matters. Forces such as globalization, modernization, and colonialism changed the religious landscape

¹⁹¹ Clifford Geertz, *The religion of Java* (Phoenix, 1976). But also: Philip van Akkeren, *Sri and Christ; A Study of Indigenous Church in East Java* (Cambridge, 1970) and Lee Khoo Choy, *Indonesia, between myth and reality* (Leiden 1976).

considerably. I demonstrated that prior to the Dutch period there had been no demarcation lines between religion and other spheres of human activity, such as politics, economics, science, and philosophy. The Dutch reinforced the idea of religion as a distinct domain by, for example, creating a clear distinction between Islamic law, the *Shari'a*, and customary law, the *adat*. Furthermore, through defining what was religion, the colonial government decided which beliefs and traditions were or were not religious. Consequently, many Javanese religious beliefs and practices were suddenly classified as superstition or heresy. Java's religious discourse became colonised and as a result present religions became static under European influence.

At first, religious politics were not a priority to the Dutch colonial state as the main goal of their presence was the extraction of wealth by setting up a profitable trade network in South East Asia. Since 1803, the official instruction for the Governor General was based on the principle of state neutrality in the domain of religion, which ruled out the Christian mission in Java. The Dutch state also did not develop a purposeful policy towards Islam at first, although this changed around the turn of the century with the appointment of Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje as colonial advisor. The new policy was aimed at restricting the influence of 'fanatical' Muslims and preventing them from entering the political stage and curbing Muslims from adopting 'fanatical' ideas through contact with other Muslims outside the East Indies. After the introduction of the Ethical Policy, the focus shifted to protecting indigenous culture and *adat* law from Islam. The Dutch believed that protecting the hybrid character of Javanese Islam would simultaneously limit the spread of 'fanaticism'.

The rapidly changing religious landscape of Java between 1850 and 1910 clearly influenced mission activities. Because of renewed Islamization processes and reforms, the state changed its policy in the field of religion, which also affected the Christian mission. The relationship between the colonial state and the mission societies was rather ambiguous in the researched period. Missionaries often accused the state of being indifferent and counteracting the mission. Because the state restricted the mission on various points, the missionaries negotiated repeatedly with their discourse in an attempt to stretch its boundaries to attain more freedom and support. When the state changed its policy towards Islam, and especially after the introduction of the Ethical Policy, the relation between the state and the mission societies improved. The government started to think of the missionaries as their allies in their struggle against 'Islamic fanaticism' and they came to appreciate the civilizing aspect of the mission. After the turn of the century, the number of missionaries accelerated and subsidies for mission schools and hospitals were raised. The ties between the state and the mission remained close after that until decolonisation. The next chapter discusses the mission organisations, the other power structure that delimited missionary activities by stipulating the missionaries' course of action.

Chapter 2. Institutional context and biographies

'It may not be in our days, it may not be because of our approach.

But in God's time, there will be light...'¹⁹²

After discussing the religious and political contexts in which the missionaries fulfilled their tasks in the previous chapter, this chapter introduces the six missionaries, who are the main characters in this study, and their institutional contexts. The chapter consists of two parts. Part one discusses the three societies with which the six missionaries to portrayed were affiliated. These societies are the *Nederlandsch Zendelinggenootschap* (NZG, Dutch Missionary Society), the *Nederlandsch Zendingvereeniging* (NZV, Dutch Mission Association), and the Jesuit Order. This part is primarily descriptive in nature and it relies largely on secondary literature. The larger part of the literature about the foundations and histories of the mission societies is written by members of the societies themselves and was often used as propaganda tools to attract new supporters. My aim is to present a more independent overview of the religious foundations of these three societies and to clarify the similarities and differences between them by focussing on several themes. The perspectives, intentions, and approaches of the three mission organizations constituted the direct context for the missionaries' work and are therefore necessary to discuss. This will reveal the dominant discourses of each society within which the missionaries had to negotiate in their everyday work.

Part two briefly addresses the lives and work of six missionaries based on their reports, articles, and ego-documents. Their full biographies can be found in the appendices. These six missionaries, affiliated with the NZG, the NZV, and the Jesuit order, all worked in Java in the researched period, albeit in different areas. In a variety of ways, all six have made a contribution to the mission discourse. Some have reproduced and reinforced the prevailing discourse and others have made extraordinary efforts at fostering a shift in the dominant discourse. By researching their ego-documents, such as letters and diaries, I have obtained key insight into the daily lives of these six men. Different aspects of their lives, both public and private, are addressed to reach a better understanding of who these men were and how they positioned themselves and enacted agency in the discourses at play. These biographies will help one to understand and situate the missionaries' opinions about the Javanese society and religious landscape, their encounters with the indigenous people, and their

¹⁹² Lindenborn, 'De zending op West Java', 19.

methods and results. These topics will be more fully addressed in the following chapters. The summarized biographies in Part 2 are presented in chronological order.

Part one - Institutional contexts

The social, religious, and organisational contexts of the three mission societies under study are described in the following paragraphs in order to portray the world in which the missionaries fulfilled their task. These contexts have to be identified in order to position the activities, opinions, and experiences of the missionaries who are the subject of this thesis. I focus on the following themes: general history, religious basis, training, and the arrival of the societies in Java. I have chosen to focus on these themes because it will clarify the different aims and approaches of these three societies in order to make a comparison between them. The discussion of the religious background of each society is of especial importance to my main research question, because this exposes the discourses that were dominant in the societies within which the missionaries had to negotiate. We have to keep in mind, however, that the religious differences between the different mission societies were quite obvious in the Netherlands, but less pronounced in the colony. Because of this thematic approach, this chapter will not always be chronological. I will start with the general histories, training, and guidelines of each society and last, I will focus on the societies' initial periods in Java.

2.1. Nederlandsch Zendelinggenootschap

The 'Nederlandsch Zendelinggenootschap ter Voortplanting en Bevordering van het Christendom, bijzonder onder de Heidenen' (Dutch Missionary Society for propagating and endorsing Christianity, especially among the Infidels', NZG) is the oldest mission society of the Netherlands. It remained the only society until the second half of the nineteenth century. Before the NZG was founded in 1797, the Christian mission was the government's responsibility. During the Batavian Revolution (1795-1811) the notion of a separation of Church and State was accepted in the Dutch constitution. As a result the state was no longer responsible for the mission and this cleared the way for churches and other religious movements to found private societies. The NZG was founded by Johannes Theodorus van der Kemp (1747-1811). Van der Kemp had joined the London Missionary Society (LMS) in 1795, because of the lack of a Dutch society. This society was nondenominational and membership was open to all

Protestants. After Van der Kemp had worked for two years in South Africa for the LMS, he returned to the Netherlands to start the first Dutch mission society himself.¹⁹³

Van der Kemp copied the principles and organisation structure of the LMS. The NZG would be a nondenominational society like the LMS, hence, accessible for every Protestant. In reality, the majority was member of the Dutch Reformed Church and only a small part was formed by members of Remonstrant, Baptist, Scottish, High-German, or Wallonian churches.¹⁹⁴ During the first meeting of the board, on 19 December 1797 in Rotterdam, a motto was chosen for the NZG; 'Peace through the blood of the Cross'. In addition, the General Principles of the Society were decided upon. The second article stated: 'The Society wants to be a general Christian society, which only aims at planting a simple and sincere, true and efficacious form of Christianity in the hearts of the people, like is written down in the Old and New Testament and the Twelve Articles of the general Christian Creed, without the addition of human notions.'¹⁹⁵ The few people who were present on this first meeting formed the board of the society.

In addition to annual meetings, the members of the Society were kept informed through the periodical 'Notes and Letters', which was published between 1799 and 1827.¹⁹⁶ From 1828 on, the Society published a monthly journal, which included the notes of the monthly meetings and newsletters from members and missionaries. In 1857, the NZG published the first issue of the '*Mededeelingen vanwege het Nederlandsche Zendelinggenootschap*' (Announcements of the Dutch Missionary Society; '*Mededeelingen*'). This journal was less formal in comparison to the monthly journal. It consisted of articles and letters of board members and missionaries. The missionaries wrote about their daily activities and progress, but mostly about the people, religions, cultures, and traditions they encountered. Empirical knowledge of local religious traditions was highly regarded within the NZG. In fact, the periodical bore frequently more resemblance to an ethnological journal than to a mission journal.

During its first years, the NZG did not have its own districts in which to evangelise because the war with England (1804-1815) made all traffic to the colonies impossible. A few Dutch missionaries, however, were allowed to join the missionaries of the LMS in their districts. Until 1813, missionaries of the NZG supported the English missionaries in South Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean. Moreover, the NZG was active in the Netherlands during these first years. The missionaries spread

¹⁹³ Smit, *De islam binnen de horizon*, 7.

¹⁹⁴ Boone, *Bekering en Beschaving*, 15.

¹⁹⁵ S. C. Graaf van Randwijck, *Handelen en denken in dienst der Zending: Oegstgeest 1897-1942* (The Hague 1981) 68-69.

¹⁹⁶ Berichten en brieven, voorgelezen op de maandelijksche bedestonden van het Nederlandsch Zendelinggenootschap, 1799 – 1827.

Christianity among the 'infidels' in their own country: the Jews. This was called the 'internal mission'.¹⁹⁷ But at long last, the NZG received permission of the Dutch colonial government to set up their own mission posts in the Dutch Indies in 1848.

2.2. *The theological base of the Nederlandsch Zendelinggenootschap*

The society was based on a confessional statement, which every member had to respect; 'Labouring for the spread of true Christianity, as is in the faith of the hearts in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Divine Saviour, who carried for us, and instead of us, our sins, with His body on the wood, and in a resulting thankful love for God and each other according to the requirements of the Gospel'.¹⁹⁸ This confession was so general that every Protestant could agree with it. However, a number of theological developments occurred in the 1830's, such as the '*Réveil*', (the Christian Revival) and the founding of the '*Groninger School*'. These processes had a major influence on the NZG. A large part of the members of the NZG supported the beliefs of the *Groninger School*. This school consisted of theologians from the University of Groningen, including Petrus Hofstede de Groot, who tried to resist the 'conservative confessionalism' in the Dutch Reformed Church. They strived to revive Christianity, to dispose redundant tenets, and to place new emphasis on the authority of the Bible. The *Groningers* believed that the Christian creed should be based purely on the Bible rather than ecclesiastical dogmas. The principles of the *Groninger School* fit well with the philosophy of Christian humanism, which placed emphasis on feelings instead of dogmatic rules. The Groninger mission strategy was 'first civilisation, then conversion'. The indigenous peoples had to evolve first before they were ready to become true Christians. These people needed education in order to genuinely understand Christian faith instead of only converting in appearance.¹⁹⁹ In the 1860's the influence of the Groninger School diminished because of the increasing popularity of the Modernists. The Modernist School, which originated during the Enlightenment, was strongly influenced by the emerging sciences. In the Netherlands, the Modernists were based in Leiden and they put emphasis on the autonomy of the human mind, rationalism and inner experience.²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁷ Smit, *De islam binnen de horizon*, 12.

¹⁹⁸ '...arbeiden tot de uitbreiding van het ware christendom, zooals dit gelegen is in het geloof des harten in den Heere Jezus Christus als den Goddelijken verlosser, die voor ons en in onze plaats onze zonden gedragen heeft in Zijn lichaam op het hout, en in eene daaruit vloeiende dankbare Liefde jegens God en elkander naar de voorschriften van het Evangelie.' Marinus Lindenborn, *De Nederlandsche Zendingsvereeniging gedurende zestig jaren*, 8.

¹⁹⁹ Boone, *Bekering en beschaving*, 20.

²⁰⁰ A.J. van den Berg, *Kerkelijke strijd en zendingsorganisatie, de scheuring in het Nederlands Zendelinggenootschap rond het midden van de negentiende eeuw* (Zoetermeer 1997) 19, 20.

Contrary to the Groningers and the Modernists, the Christian Revivalists strived for the revival of the conservative, Reformed theology and were not in favour of rationalism in theology. They put more emphasis on the Holy Trinity and on *Verzoeningsleer* (Classical Atonement) in their teachings.²⁰¹ The revivalists believed that personal experience should be stressed in the Christian faith and that Christians should live their lives consistent with Christian morals. According to the Revivalists, civilisation and conversion were two unconnected processes; civilisation was the result of human effort while conversion could only be achieved through the Holy Spirit.²⁰² A substantial part of the members of the NZG joined the Revivalist movement and strove for a more conservative, confessional basis for the Society. Among these Revivalists in the NZG were famous Dutch politicians and authors such as: Groen van Prinsterer, Mackay, DaCosta, Van Rhijn, and Bilderdijk.²⁰³ As a result of these diverging theological developments a conflict between the members of the NZG arose. Within the NZG there were Revivalists who wished to stress the Reformed dogmas, but there were also the *Groningers* who tried to suppress these ‘old fashioned’ dogmas.

The influential Groen van Prinsterer was most outspoken in his critique, especially of the confessional basis of the NZG. He said the confession was so general that every Christian, even the ones that did not truly believe, could agree to it and could thus join the NZG. The NZG was not tied to any church, and was therefore even blamed for being ‘labadistic’ or ‘darbystic’ – that is, encouraging of assemblies of Christians who refused to join a church.²⁰⁴ Van Prinsterer published a critical brochure in 1848 in which he stated: ‘I do not hide that, in my mind, the NZG does not profess the apostolic motto in the spirit of the Apostle and according to the requirements of the circumstances’.²⁰⁵ The Revivalists aimed at a more conventional confessional statement and wished to place more emphasis on the rebirth of Christians and their new life with Christ. Groen van Prinsterer did not go so far as to leave the NZG to start his own mission society. He sought to reform the NZG from within. However, the NZG held on to its modern, open character and the board did not change its confessional basis.

The conflict reached a climax in the 1850s and 1860s when a considerable number of people left the NZG. Three new missionary associations were founded in rapid succession. All three had a more pronounced inclination to a Christian denomination. In 1858, the *Nederlandsche Zendingsvereniging* (Dutch Mission Association, NZV) was founded, which will be more fully

²⁰¹ Van den Berg, *Kerkelijke strijd en zendingsorganisatie*, 17.

²⁰² Boone, *Bekering en beschaving*, 21.

²⁰³ Lindenborn, *De Nederlandsche Zendingsvereniging gedurende zestig jaren*, 5.

²⁰⁴ Labadists were the followers of Jean de Labadie (1610-1674), a French Jesuit priest who converted to Protestantism, and aimed for reform according to the example of the apostolic church. Darbysts were the followers of John Nelson Darby (1800-1882), this group was not unified in a church order and they expected the return of Jesus to be in the near future.

²⁰⁵ Lindenborn, *De Nederlandsche Zendingsvereniging*, 8.

addressed in paragraph 5 of this chapter. This association was based in Rotterdam as well, but also had many members in Friesland and Groningen. Soon after the first separation, the *Nederlandsche Gereformeerde Zendingsvereniging* (Dutch Reformed Mission Association, NGZV) and the *Utrechtse Zendingsvereniging* (Utrecht Mission Association) were founded. Next to these nationwide associations numerous churches sent individual missionaries to the colonies.²⁰⁶ The year 1864 is now known as the ‘fatal year’ for the NZG. The annual assembly culminated into a heated argument between conservatives and modernists.²⁰⁷ As a result, almost fifty per cent of its members left to join the newly founded societies that had a clearer preference for conservative church denominations. As a consequence, these numerous Protestant societies exported their religious differences to their mission districts. However, the differences between the societies were less pronounced in the colonies than they were in the Netherlands.

2.3. The educational programme of the Nederlandsch Zendelinggenootschap

Men who were admitted to the missionary educational program were mostly uneducated, working class people, whereas the board members were usually highly educated. Pupils were selected for certain qualities, including firm belief, determination, health, and youth.²⁰⁸ In general, the NZG did not admit students over thirty and gave preference to married men, because unmarried men could cause suspicion among the indigenous population.²⁰⁹

The NZG prioritized a profound education for its missionaries. However, during the early years the board believed that education was only necessary for those who were to be sent to Jewish or Islamic areas. According to the board it was more difficult to convert these ‘civilised gentiles’. Missionaries who went to areas with a ‘primitive’ religion could do so without a formal education because they did not need much knowledge to convince those ‘pagans’ of the veracity of the Christian faith. The NZG started already in 1808 to teach their pupils ‘... the axioms of Islam, and the way to the counter these’.²¹⁰ In 1821, the board created a curriculum to make their pupils ‘thoroughly familiar with the spirit of Islam’.²¹¹ Several courses, such as Arabic, *Qur’an* lessons, and the history of Islam, were taught. However, suitable textbooks did not yet exist and the teachers themselves did not have a profound knowledge of the Islam either. The courses were therefore abolished after a few years and

²⁰⁶ Smit, *De islam binnen de horizon*, 11.

²⁰⁷ Van den Berg, *Kerkelijke strijd en zendingsorganisatie*, 51.

²⁰⁸ Carel Poensen, *Writing Assignment Mission School*, Utrechts Archief.

²⁰⁹ J.C. Neurdenburg, ‘De zendeling’, in: *Mededeelingen* (Rotterdam 1882) 324-348.

²¹⁰ Smit, *De Islam binnen de horizon*, 28.

²¹¹ Smit, *De Islam binnen de horizon*, 28.

the first missionaries who were actually sent to Islamic areas of the Indian archipelago decades later did not study Islam much. But the NZG continuously tried, contrary to other Dutch mission societies, to improve its courses on Islam and it eventually offered high level courses in collaboration with the University of Leiden.

2.4. The arrival of the Nederlandsch Zendelinggenootschap in Java

The board of the NZG aimed at setting up a mission post in Java ever since its foundation in 1797. However, the NZG was excluded from the island by the colonial government for a long period of time. The interests of the Gospel were considered subordinate to the colony's political and economic interests. The colonial administration feared the local population would not only rebel against the missionaries, but against all Europeans and European institutions on the island. Until the late 1840's, the Governor-General felt that the risk was too high for the Dutch trade and administration to allow a Christian mission in Java.

In 1846, the Dutch government sent an inspector to Java to study the people, culture, and religion of Java. This inspector had to determine which areas were ready for the encounter with Christian missionaries and thus for which areas permits could be requested. Leonard J. Rhijn was chosen for this task and a missionary of the NZG, Jelle E. Jellesma, accompanied him for two years.²¹² Remarkably, Van Rhijn's report hardly addressed Islam. He argued that the majority of the Javanese were not true Muslims: 'What some say about the Javanese religiosity or even about their fanaticism, after what I saw and heard, I consider this at least exaggerated. It may perhaps apply to some priests and pilgrims who went to Mecca, especially to the Arabs who live in the coastal cities; yet the vast majority finds itself in a stream of external significance without earnestness or contemplation or something which resembles true piety. Their religion exists in appearances without spirit and truth: circumcision, muttering some prayers that are not understood, abstinence from pork and some other uninspired ceremonies, that is all. They are still half Hindu in the interior areas: they show reverence, yes sometimes divine homage to images, trees and other objects, as was customary in Hindu times, albeit opposed to Islam.'²¹³ Van Rhijn concluded that he was quite positive about future missions in Java and after the release of this report the Dutch colonial government finally granted permission to the NZG to set up mission posts on the island. The first missionary that was sent to Java by the NZG

²¹² E.F. Kruyf, *Geschiedenis van het Nederlandsche Zendelinggenootschap en zijne zendingsposten* (Groningen 1894) 283.

²¹³ Leonard J. van Rhijn, *Reis door den Indischen archipel, in het belang der evangelische zending* (Rotterdam 1851) 140.

was Jelle Eeltje Jellesma. He moved in 1851 to the Christian *desa* (village) Modjo Warno. From then on Java was the primary mission area of the NZG.

2.5. *The Nederlandsche Zendingsvereeniging*

Ten years after Groen van Prinsterer's brochure on the NZG's lack of a clear religious identity was published, Jaap Voorhoeve left the NZG and founded a new mission society based on the principles of the orthodox-Protestant *Réveil* (Revival). He founded the Rotterdamsche Zendingsvereeniging (Rotterdam Mission Association, RZV) on 2 December 1858 and changed its name a year later to the Nederlandsche Zendingsvereeniging (Dutch Mission Association, NZV). The NZV was based on a dogmatic, conservative declaration, which every member had to proclaim in order to become a member. The first article of the Association was: 'The association consists of members who acknowledge that the Lord Jesus Christ is *their* infallible Saviour, who demonstrate this in their actions and declare that they will not cooperate with those, who deny His truthful and eternal Deity.'²¹⁴ The word 'their' was emphasised, so the members had to acknowledge the Lord was *their* Saviour, not just 'the' Saviour.²¹⁵ The last part of the creed prevented the Association from cooperating with other mission societies that held other convictions, such as the NZG.

The NZG and NZV grew even further apart in the 1880's and 1890's because of a new schism in the Dutch Protestant church that build upon the ideals of the *Réveil* - the *Doleantie*. The *Doleantie* was guided by the famous minister Abraham Kuyper. After heated arguments about issues of doctrine and ecclesiastical order, Protestants in the Netherlands fractured into several churches during the *Doleantie* in 1886. The *Hervormde Kerk* became the most liberal of the variants, while more theologically conservative Christians formed separate churches. These latter groups united in 1892 as the *Gereformeerde Kerk*. The NZG fit best in the tradition of the *Hervormde Kerk*, but continued its policy of accepting members from all denominational backgrounds. The members of the more conservative NZV were predominantly from the *Gereformeerde Kerk*. The NZV strove to be a democratic association which was accessible to conservatives from all social backgrounds. One's membership therefore depended solely on the declaration of the confessional creed of the

²¹⁴ 'De Vereeniging bestaat uit leden die erkennen, dat de Heere Jezus Christus hun volkomen Zaligmaker is; die dit in hunnen wandel betoonen, en verklaren niet te mogen samenwerken met degenen die Zijne waarachtige en eeuwige Godheid loochenen' (artikel 1, statuten 1858).

Lindenborn, *De Nederlandsche Zendingsvereeniging*, 10.

²¹⁵ Hendrik Jan Rooseboom, *Na vijftig jaren, Gedenkboek van de Nederlandsche Zendingsvereeniging* (Rotterdam 1908) 7.

Association instead of paying contribution.²¹⁶ Contrary to the NZG, a more elitist and patriarchal society, the NZV appealed more to the middle class and was also accessible to women.²¹⁷ The NZV was organised democratically and the board was not primarily formed by ministers, as was common in the other societies.

Ever since its foundation, the board had great difficulties with raising enough money for the mission school and the missions. The NZV was almost constantly in debt, and its debt eventually rose to such an enormous amount in 1918 that the board was forced to consider a fusion with the NZG and UZV.²¹⁸ The Association had many expenses, but only few sources of income.²¹⁹ It depended on gifts from members, the profits of sold magazines and books, and penny collections. In addition, the Association employed agents who travelled through the country to collect money for the mission.²²⁰ The NZV was not affiliated with any church society, and has been, like the NZG, accused of being 'darbystic'. However, closer ties with revivalist churches could guarantee a more stable income through the church collection and so this topic was often discussed by the board.

The NZV published, like the NZG, a few journals to keep the missionaries informed of the progress of their colleagues and to keep the people back home informed. The main journal of the Association was called *Orgaan* (Organ) and was published monthly since September 1860 until 1925.²²¹ The journal consisted of four parts. In the first part, different authors would clarify the principles of the NZV. This was especially necessary during the first years of the Association to explain to their members and those interested why they had left the NZG and on what points they differed. The second part, which addressed the history of the association and of the mission of Java, had a similar purpose. The third part was entitled 'observations', and the articles in this part were written by the missionaries. They provided detailed descriptions of the history, culture, religion, and people of Java, in order to learn from each other and to form conversion strategies. The fourth and final part addressed the financial status of the Association. The number of readers rose quickly from five hundred in 1860 to as many as twelve thousand in 1883.²²² In addition to *Orgaan*, the NZV published the 'Mission paper', which was first published every ten weeks, but soon every month and was read by

²¹⁶ Marinus Lindenborn, *Onze zendingsvelden, West Java* (Bussum 1922) 99.

²¹⁷ Van den Berg, *Kerkelijke strijd en zendingsorganisatie*, 69.

²¹⁸ This particular period in Dutch Protestant mission history is more thoroughly discussed in the epilogue of this study.

²¹⁹ Lindenborn wrote that the Java mission cost two hundred guilders a day in 1914. Lindenborn, *De zending op West Java*, 20.

²²⁰ Lindenborn, *Onze zendingsvelden*, 105.

²²¹ Th. Van den End, *De Nederlandsche Zendingsvereeniging in West Java, 1858-1963* (Alphen aan den Rijn 1991) 13.

²²² Lindenborn, *Onze zendingsvelden*, 104.

approximately fifteen thousand readers. Moreover, the NZV regularly published the 'Monthly Penny Collection Magazine', children's tracts, and other books.

2.6. The educational programme of the Nederlandsche Zendingsvereeniging

In 1859, just a few months after the founding of the NZV, the first three apprentices started their training in Rotterdam. G. J. Grashuis, board member of the NZV, moved into a mansion called 'Schooneberg' on the Westzeedijk in Rotterdam with his family and the missionary apprentices.²²³ Schooneberg not only functioned as a boarding school, but also as the head office where board meetings were held and *Orgaan* and the other NZV magazines were produced.²²⁴

Grashuis, who had been an apprentice himself at the seminary of the NZG for three years, set up the educational programme of the NZV. He taught, together with Dr Schwarz, Malayan, Javanese, historical, and biblical courses. In 1862, on Ascension Day, the first three students, Albers, Van der Linden, and Licht graduated. A service was held in the Laurenskerk in Rotterdam to bless the missionaries, who would leave for Java in a few weeks, together with Grashuis, who was going to study Sundanese, the local language of West Java, in order to translate the Bible in this language. From that year on the NZV celebrated every year on Ascension Day 'Mission Day'. On this holiday the board would send newly graduated missionaries off to Java. The missionary training was soon extended from three to five years, to have more time to study the foreign languages. Eventually, the programme included foreign languages, music, theology, ethnology, and medical courses. Contrary to the programme of the NZG, there was no special attention for the study of Islam.

After the departure of Grashuis in 1862, Dr Schwarz was the only teacher left at the seminary. Unfortunately, Schwarz was not able to properly teach all the courses himself and the seminary lost several students during this period. Lindenborn wrote about this period: 'A regular and rigorous training of the students became impossible and their motivation was significantly threatened because of it'.²²⁵ But Grashuis gave up on his Bible translation project after a few years, because of some harsh critiques, and was reinstalled as a teacher at the NZV seminary. In 1868, director Hoogerzeil of the seminary retreated because he 'could not find a life purpose in teaching a few adolescents'.²²⁶ Soon thereafter, Grashuis left the seminary as well, causing the board a major problem. Luckily, missionary Coolsma repatriated and started teaching in Rotterdam in 1878. He held that position for a long

²²³ Lindenborn, *Onze zendingsvelden*, 101.

²²⁴ Rooseboom, *Na vijftig jaren*, 14.

²²⁵ Lindenborn, *Onze zendingsvelden*, 102.

²²⁶ Lindenborn, *Onze zendingsvelden*, 102.

period of time and reformed the educational program thoroughly. Eventually, courses on Islam and Muslim practices were added to the curriculum, but never became the focus of the programme.

2.7. The arrival of the Nederlandse Zendingsvereniging in Java

Soon after the founding of the NZV a discussion arose where the mission posts should be set up. From the start, the NZV preferred to evangelise in the Dutch Indies, because they believed that that region was: 'in our care by the providence of God'.²²⁷ During the training period of the first three missionaries, Albers, Van der Linden, and Licht, the NZV sought contact with the '*Genootschap voor In- en Uitwendige Zending te Batavia* (Society for the in- and outward Mission in Batavia, GZB)'. The GZB mainly focused on the distribution of Christian literature, but also headed nine churches just outside of Batavia. The members of these churches were mainly Chinese, but the GZB had managed to convert a small number of Sundanese Muslims too. The GZB suggested that the NZV should focus on West Java, the Preanger region or Sunda lands.²²⁸ The NZV had received the same suggestion from other advisers and therefore the board considered it a sign from God that West Java was the right region to set up their mission. Although the Dutch had arrived in West Java in 1596, there had been very little effort to set up a Dutch mission in this region.

The board was very critical of the colonial project when they declared: 'The Sundanese contributed, strongly contributed, to our people's welfare, and a reasonable share of the millions, which came from the Indies to our state treasury, came from their lands, not for the least part from the Preanger. And what has the Netherlands given them in return? Hardly anything has been done for their development, their language has gone unnoticed, and we let them stiffen in the Mohammedan faith. The time has come, that the Netherlands should realise that they should repay their debt to this long neglected people, by proclaiming the Gospel of Salvation'.²²⁹

However, the NZV was not the first to spread the Gospel in West Java. Even before the GZB was active in the region, the missionary doctor Walter Medhurst of the LMS had set up a mission in Batavia. He focused primarily on the Chinese, but was also active among the Javanese and Malay. He stayed in the field for eleven years and was then transferred to Shanghai. However, he left the Dutch Indies without any noticeable success. Besides the LMS and the GZB, there were several churches

²²⁷ Coolsma, *Twaalf voorlezingen over West Java*, 155.

²²⁸ At that time the NZG had five missionaries situated in East Java, the Mennonites (Baptists) and the Reformed both had two missionaries in Middle-Java and one missionary from Ermelo supported the Salatiga churches in Middle-Java. Coolsma, *Twaalf voorlezingen*, 159.

²²⁹ Lindenborn, *Onze zendingsvelden*, 114.

founded by the Dutch lawyer Frederik L. Anthing and his assistants. After Anthing passed away the NZV assumed charge of his churches.²³⁰

The GZB not only assisted the Association with searching for districts in West Java. The GZB also provided books and brochures on the language, people, cultures, and religions of West Java because the board of the NZV had no knowledge of the region whatsoever. The NZV had just one, quite insufficient, Sundanese dictionary and a translation of the Gospel of Matthew.²³¹ The GZB and the NZV both decided that the city of Bandung would be a good place to set up the first mission post. The board meant to send their first missionaries, Albers and Van der Linden, to Bandung, so they could support each other's work. The NZV filed for a permit for this district in March 1861, but it turned out to be a long and difficult process and the board decided eventually that the missionaries had to make the necessary arrangements themselves as soon as they arrived in Batavia.²³² The journey on the 'Wilhelmina Johanna' did not go according to plan and they arrived weeks later than planned in Batavia. After their arrival, they found out that they would not be granted a permit for Bandung, because the residents of the city had protested against the proposal. Eventually, Van der Linden went to Indramaju and Albers received a permit for Ciandur in 1865.

Although the NZV faced many setbacks, its members held on to their faith and described the mission as 'the spreading of the Evangelical seed, which will germinate and flourish in God's time'.²³³ However, in the summer of 1876 a large part of the NZV members were done with waiting for God's time; they had expected more results and were wondering if it was wise to continue the mission in the Preanger. After a meeting that lasted several hours, the board decided to continue the mission, since it would have been a waste of time and money to give up at that point. It declared that it is always difficult to start something from scratch, but that there were already some hopeful results. Years later, director Lindenborn wrote about this initial phase: 'But the worst part was, no one could find an entry, no matter how hard one tried: not through the direct preaching of the Gospel, not through the offering of education, not through care for patients (...) The people did not seem to need the Gospel! This was a bitter disappointment, but our pioneers have insisted and carried on; honour their memory!'²³⁴

In 1907, the Sunda mission consisted of twelve missionaries and since the arrival of the first missionaries many churches and schools had been founded and the number of converts had grown

²³⁰ This is more fully addressed in chapter 4 of this study.

²³¹ *Letter from the NZV to the GZB*, 19 march 1859 (the NZV collection, Utrechts Archief).

²³² *Letter from the NZV to the GZB*, 7 February 1862 (the NZV collection, Utrechts Archief).

²³³ Lindenborn, *De Nederlandsche Zendingsvereeniging*, 43.

²³⁴ Lindenborn, *Onze zendingsvelden*, 129.

gradually. However, the subject of moving to a different Indonesian region continued to be a point of discussion during board and general meetings. Some still thought it was better to set up a mission in a non-Islamic region, because the results under Muslim people had been very disappointing. The board strived to set up a mission on Celebes in 1913. However, many members were against this plan, because the mission in Java had not yet prospered as much as they had hoped, and therefore they did not consider it wise to divide their employees and funds to set up a mission elsewhere.²³⁵

In 1914, L. Tiemersma, a former missionary of the NZV who was fired in 1909, wrote an article about the disappointing situation in the Java mission which initiated a change in the course of the Sunda mission.²³⁶ He wrote: 'The mission has not gained influence; the number of people who got acquainted with Christianity has not risen. Rather, the mission loses ground and is driven back to a handful of remote *desas*.'²³⁷ Lindenborn called this nonsense because the Association had missionaries in Meester Cornelis, Buitenzorg, and Bandung, which were certainly not remote *desas*.²³⁸ Furthermore, Lindenborn admitted that in some *desas* the number of Christians had decreased after a missionary had permanently settled there.²³⁹ He explained: 'Indeed, the opinion that a missionary is an extraordinary man, who perhaps can even perform miracles, then vanishes.'²⁴⁰

Other points of critique by Tiemersma were that the NZV had not opened enough schools, that NZV strategies were old fashioned and did not meet the needs of the Sundanese in the twentieth century, and that the missionaries did not react to what the Sundanese society needed, but instead acted solely from a Dutch perspective.²⁴¹ Tiemersma added: 'We should not impose our Western version of Christianity, but we have to be patient until the Gospel influences the people and they create their own version of the faith... a minister who works with gentiles and Muslims is usually so stubborn and inflexible. Everything has to meet Western standards; the service, the interior of the churches; everything is delineated and strictly dogmatic.'²⁴² Lindenborn did not agree and wrote that the NZV was very much in favour of independent Sundanese churches and that they therefore continuously emphasised the need for indigenous assistants. The NZV had even set up a seminary in Bandung for the education of indigenous assistants. Lindenborn concluded with the following words: 'Though our work may be small and weak, God can achieve large results with small devices! It may not

²³⁵ The first missionary, A. van der Klift, left for Celebes in 1916.

²³⁶ This change in the approach of the NZV is more fully addressed in the epilogue of this study.

²³⁷ M. Lindenborn, 'De zending op West Java, antwoord op den aanval van den heer L. Tiemersma, namens het hoofdbestuur der NZV', in: *De Macedonier* (Rotterdam 1914) 5.

²³⁸ The present name of Meester Cornelis is Jatinegara and Buitenzorg is now known as Bogor.

²³⁹ For example the number of Christians in Djoentikebon had dropped after Vermeer had settled there. Lindenborn, 'De zending op West Java', 8.

²⁴⁰ Lindenborn, 'De zending op West Java', 8.

²⁴¹ Lindenborn, 'De zending op West Java', 7.

²⁴² Lindenborn, 'De zending op West Java', 13.

be in our days, it may not be because of our approach. But in God's time, there will be light, even in the Sunda lands.'²⁴³

2.8. *The Society of Jesus*

The Jesuit Order was founded in the sixteenth century by Ignatius of Loyola. The founding document declared that the aim of the Society was to: 'strive especially for the propagation and defence of the faith and progress of souls in Christian life and doctrine'. Today the Order is known in the fields of higher education, scholarly research, and cultural pursuits. In addition to missionary work, the Order is involved in healthcare, parish ministry, promoting social justice, human rights, and ecumenical dialogue.²⁴⁴ The Society is now active in more than a hundred nations on six continents, and has from their foundation on been engaged in evangelization and apostolic work. Immediately after their foundation, the Society set up a mission in Asia, beginning with the arrival of Francis Xavier in Goa in May 1542. Francis Xavier was one of the founding members of the Society of Jesus, and he was one of the first Europeans who brought the Gospel to the continent of Asia. Ignatius supposedly said to him 'Go, go kindle the fire so everything gets a blaze.'²⁴⁵ Francis Xavier is therefore renowned as the founder of the Jesuit mission in Asia and was proclaimed 'Patron of Catholic Missions' by Pope Pius XI. Francis Xavier's apostolate, however, lasted barely ten years, for he died of a fever in 1552 on the island of Shang Chuan, during his journey to mainland China. Yet, in that decade, he had crossed large parts of Asia, and visited Goa, Ceylon, Malacca, the Moluccan Islands, Japan, and China and did important preparatory work for the Jesuit fathers that would follow.

Jesuit scholars, who worked in foreign missions made an important contribution to the study of languages unknown to the West and they strived to produce Latinized grammars and dictionaries. The Jesuits pioneered the study of Sanskrit in the early eighteenth century and they compiled dictionaries and glossaries of several indigenous American languages. The Order was also keen on establishing high schools, seminaries, and universities outside of Europe. In 1594, they founded the first Western-style academic institution in the Far East, namely the St. Paul Jesuit College in Macau. This institution had a great influence on the study of Eastern languages, religions and cultures by Jesuit missionaries. Unfortunately, the buildings were destroyed in a fire in 1835.

²⁴³ Lindenborn, 'De zending op West Java', 19.

²⁴⁴ <http://www.jesuit.org/> (September 2011).

²⁴⁵ L. De Jonge S.J. *Sint Ignatius' missiecorps* (Nijmegen 1932).

2.9. The educational programme of the Society of Jesus

The most important difference between the Protestant and Catholic missionaries is that the Protestants were laymen and the Catholic missionaries were highly educated. The training of Jesuits, to prepare candidates for the Society of Jesus spiritually, academically, and practically for their ministries, is called the Jesuit Formation. Formation for priesthood normally takes between eight and fourteen years, depending on the man's background and his previous education. The final vows are taken several years after this long period of intensive study, making the Jesuit formation period one of the longest of all Catholic orders. The first stage of the formation is the Novitiate. The novice lives according to the three Jesuit vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience. In this stage he completes the Spiritual Exercises of the founder, Ignatius. The Spiritual Exercises are a set of Christian prayers, meditations, and other mental exercises. He has to perform them during a retreat of twenty-eight days in order to be fully focused on the Exercises. In this stage, he also learns about the history and practice of the Jesuit order. Moreover, the Novice has to carry out several ministerial assignments that test his aptitude for various ministries such as: teaching, working with the sick or poor, leading retreats, or missionary work. The novitiate phase lasts approximately two years. Thereafter, the novice pronounces his First Vows, the earlier mentioned vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience and a vow to persevere to final profession and ordination. After taking the vows the Novice has to choose if he wants to study on to become a priest or a Jesuit brother. The Scholastic continues to study for several more years in order to become a priest. Brothers are then ready to undertake more 'worldly' jobs in the Jesuit community, as cooks, tailors, farmers, secretaries, accountants or librarians.²⁴⁶ However, their education is not finished either, they continue to study but in a less structured form. Brothers can also be sent to mission districts, but they cannot work as missionaries themselves. They are sent to assist the missionaries as teachers or medical assistants.

Since only a priest can become a missionary, the Jesuit missionaries who went to Java had between eight and fourteen years of spiritual training before they started their mission. However, during these many years of study, there was no special attention for missionizing; there were no courses on foreign languages, cultures and religions, or missionizing methodology classes. The missionaries had to study the local cultures, religions, and languages themselves once they arrived in their district. Moreover, there were no guidelines on missionizing methodology whatsoever, so the missionaries had to choose their own path in setting up their mission.

Another very important difference with the Protestant missionaries was that Protestant men registered themselves at the missionary schools. They chose to study there because they dreamt of

²⁴⁶ <http://www.jesuit.org/index.php/main/become-a-jesuit/training-for-mission/> (April 2011).

becoming a missionary. On the contrary, the Catholics did not make the decision of becoming a missionary themselves. The superiors in the Order decided where the priests would carry out their work after they finished their formation. The superiors looked for 'patience, charity, faith in the Lord and abnegation' in a candidate for the mission.²⁴⁷ A missionary also needed to be healthy, sportive, responsible, tough, enterprising and capable of hunting. Moreover, he had to have a university degree and a decent, Catholic background.²⁴⁸

2.10. The arrival of the Society of Jesus in Java

After the Portuguese period the Catholic mission in Java experienced a serious setback for the next two and a half centuries. The Dutch, who arrived on the island in 1596, banned all Catholic priests from the areas that were under Dutch control.²⁴⁹ Eventually, propagation of Christianity became forbidden for both Catholics and Protestants. However, being a Protestant was not forbidden whereas being a Catholic was in the period between 1602 and 1799. During this period indigenous Catholics were officially registered as members of the Reformed Church. When the ban was lifted in 1808, Catholic priests settled in the larger towns, serving solely the European and Eurasian population. They could reach their Catholic flock, which consisted of Dutchmen and Eurasians, with Dutch and some Malay. There was no need to learn Javanese, because they were not authorized to evangelise under the indigenous Javanese. For a long time the Catholics were only present in Batavia, and already in 1841 the capital became an apostolic vicariate. An apostolic vicariate is essentially provisional, though it may last for a century or more. The hope is that the region will generate sufficient numbers of Catholics to form a diocese. Jakarta, Batavia's name after independence, became an archdiocese in 1961.

The Catholics had to wait almost fifty years longer than the Protestants for permission to start their Evangelical mission under the indigenous people. The first Jesuit priests, Martinus Van den Elzen and Johannes Baptista Palinckx, arrived in Batavia in 1859. In 1902, 52 priests and thirteen brothers were stationed in Java. After their arrival, Van den Elzen left to Surabaya and Palinckx, made a tour through the Preanger, and eventually founded a Jesuit centre in Yogyakarta. They did not make any attempt to convert the Javanese, however they did see opportunities for a Catholic mission; Van der Elzen wrote in 1863: '...not even a single Javanese has converted since the founding of the mission in

²⁴⁷ De Jonge, *Sint Ignatius' missiecorps*.

²⁴⁸ J.J. Hoevenaars, *Lezing van de zeer eerwaarde pater J.J. Hoevenaars S.J. gehouden bij gelegenheid van de Rotterdamse missieweek over het gaan van katholieken naar Indië* (Sittard 1925) 22.

²⁴⁹ Steenbrink, *Catholics in Indonesia*, Vol. 1, 7.

1808, but in the hinterland there (is) something that can be done'²⁵⁰. In 1880 Palinckx wrote a paper on the main features that the future Catholic mission would require.²⁵¹ He considered it necessary for success to set up missions in rural areas, far away from the colonial society, where the population was still 'innocent and childlike'.²⁵² He wrote: 'The Javanese are Mohametan, but the majority takes only circumcision and polygamy of this sect', therefore he was convinced Islam would not form an obstacle for the Catholic mission.²⁵³ In addition, he wrote the Jesuits could learn much from the experience of the Protestants and emphasised the need for patience, because rushing matters would do more harm than good. Furthermore, he stressed that proper language training was necessary for the missionaries. He was also positive about giving financial aid to converts, but added: 'to support the conversions that must be offered; not forced'.²⁵⁴

The Jesuits were formally charged with the mission to evangelise under the indigenous population in 1893. Father Gulielmus Hebrans initiated the mission to the local people, although his knowledge of Javanese was limited at best. In 1895, the Protestant missionary Teffer of the NZG converted to Catholicism and his congregation also communally changed its religion to Catholicism.²⁵⁵ This was the first small victory for the Jesuits in Java, mainly because his Javanese catechists started to spread the Catholic faith in the area around Ambarawa, in Central Java.

Even though there were already about sixty Jesuits in the whole archipelago at this time, Franciscus van Lith and Petrus Hoevenaars were sent from the Netherlands to Java to set up the Javanese mission in the 1890's. At the end of 1900, the Jesuits had decided to focus solely in Java and to entrust their mission posts on other islands in the archipelago to other denominations. By 1919, the Jesuits were solely active in Java.

2.11. *Sint-Claverbond*

The *Sint-Claverbond*, a Jesuit congregation, was founded in the Netherlands in March 1889 by F. Heynen S.J., who had visited Java to support the Jesuit mission there. The congregation was named after Saint Petrus Claver, a missionary in the sixteenth and seventeenth century who travelled to

²⁵⁰ Van den Elzen, *Letter to the Provincial* (Surabaya 19 December 1863) Archives of the Jesuit Province of the Netherlands (Nijmegen).

²⁵¹ M.A. Palinckx, *Report on the Catholic mission* (7 June 1880) Archives of the Archdiocese of Jakarta.

²⁵² Palinckx, *Report on the Catholic mission*.

²⁵³ Palinckx, *Report on the Catholic mission*.

²⁵⁴ Palinckx, *Report on the Catholic mission*.

²⁵⁵ L. Van Rijckevorsel S.J., *Pastoor F. Van Lith, S.J., de stichter van de missie in Midden-Java, 1863-1926* (Nijmegen 1952) 21.

Africa and South-America to spread the Word to the slave population. In 1890, the congregation was officially acknowledged by Rome which led to more status and more members. The main goal of the congregation was to collect money for the mission in the Dutch Indies. The congregation would simply send money to Java, or pay for travel tickets, clothes, food, and supplies; a large part was intended for the construction of new churches, schools and hospitals. From their foundation, the congregation published a journal, which was also called the *St. Claverbond*. This journal consisted of announcements, statistics, essays and letters about the mission in the Dutch Indies. The journal was used as a powerful propaganda tool for the mission and the most important source of income for the congregation.²⁵⁶ Every issue of the journal included a blank cheque, addressed to the *St. Claverbond*. The issues were full of positive, adventurous, and heroic stories about the lives of the missionaries, with titles like: 'From North to South, through the land of the Belonesian head-hunters'.²⁵⁷ Only positive and exciting stories which incited piety were included in order to raise more money for the mission and to attract young men to join the Order.

J. M. van de Kimmenade-Beekman showed that several motives can be detected in the stories that were published in the *St. Claverbond*.²⁵⁸ First and foremost the romance of the life as a Catholic missionary is emphasised. A missionary lived the life of an adventurer, who would travel through stunning sceneries and would encounter uncorrupted tribes and wild, dangerous animals. The second motive was the competition with other Catholic orders in the Dutch Indies, and especially with the Protestants, because the Jesuits started their mission relatively late. The competition with the Protestants was a recurrent theme in the articles in order to urge the readers to donate more money to build more schools and hospitals. The third motive was the changing political climate. At the turn of the century the local elite was becoming more active in politics and education. The Jesuits considered the Javanese ready to develop to a modern society, but in order to reach a higher level of development they had to become Catholic first. At first the journal was published just once a year, but from 1894 the *St. Claverbond* was published four times a year.

²⁵⁶ An example of persuasive language in the *Claverbond*: 'The gentiles do not know you, the missionaries do not know who you are; you labor and the world does not know it. Do you realize the beauty of what you do? Do you realize the responsibility of your labor and do you know that soul salvation, perhaps of many, depends on the afternoons or evenings you spend on the mission? Do you know that during going door-to-door with your *Claverbond* and *Javabus* (collecting box, M.K.), your course through the streets is watched with complacency by divine eyes and that in distant countries thankful prayers ascend innocent children's mouths, because you give them the free moments of your often hard working life? You are an apostle and more good is done by you than you suspect; you save souls and one cannot do something better than that. I call it predestination; being chosen to advertise the mission.'

Sint Claverbond, Vol.43, No. 3 (Nijmegen 1931).

²⁵⁷ J.M. van de Kimmenade-Beekman, *De Sint Claverbond* (Bakel 1987) 14.

²⁵⁸ Van de Kimmenade-Beekman, *De Sint Claverbond*.

The *St. Claverbond* also regularly organised so-called 'Java-evenings' in different churches throughout the Netherlands. Such an evening consisted of lectures about the Javanese mission given by Dutch priests, former missionaries or missionaries on leave, and sometimes even by a Javanese novice who studied in the Netherlands. In addition, they would show a small exhibition with pictures and objects from Javanese villages. Sometimes slide images were shown or a choir performed Javanese psalms. The purpose of these evenings was to attract new members and to gain money for the mission. Visitors had to pay a small admission and were strongly urged to make an additional donation. Besides, these evenings were supposed to encourage parents to subscribe their sons to the seminary, because 'the ship of the Catholic church is always insufficiently staffed and goes against the flow. The ship will never perish, but the storms will not spare her.'²⁵⁹ Sometimes these boys were selected at a very young age, because: 'the desire to become a missionary must not be destroyed by the temptations the world has to offer'.²⁶⁰

Other sources of income were annual fundraisers, collections in churches and schools, inheritances, and free donations. Children could collect old stamps, light bulbs, paper, et cetera and sell it in order to donate the money to the mission. Fortunate Catholics could also become a patron of a novice or seminarian. They would pay for his education and would occasionally receive pictures, letters and information about his progressions. The congregation also collected Catholic schoolbooks, Bibles, and Latin and Greek dictionaries for the seminarians and other Catholic books for the schoolchildren in the mission districts. The missionaries were afraid the children would lose their faith during school holidays, when they went back to their Muslim families, so they tried to give a decent, Catholic book to each child to read during the holidays. Churches in Holland also collected little presents to give the schoolchildren at Saint Nicolas. As a result of all of these efforts, the Catholic mission had substantially more funds than the Protestant mission.

Part two - Biographies

The following paragraphs are summaries of the missionaries' full biographies which can be found in the appendices. These brief descriptions will characterize the six men and sum up their lives' main events. Knowledge of their religious backgrounds, education, and characters will help to position them in the dominant discourses that were at play. Moreover, it is necessary to understand their opinions

²⁵⁹ Hoevenaars, *Lezing van de zeer eerwaarde pater*, 22.

²⁶⁰ Hoevenaars, *Lezing van de zeer eerwaarde pater*, 22.

and actions that will be discussed in later chapters. The biographies are discussed per mission society (NZG, NZV, and the Jesuit Order) and in chronological order.

2.12. Samuel Eliza Harthoorn

Samuel Eliza Harthoorn and his wife, Celia Johanna Blankenhardt, travelled to the Dutch Indies to spread Christianity in East Java in 1854. Harthoorn was the third missionary of the NZG who was destined for Java. He spent his first two years in Modjo Warno, a fruitful district led by Jelle Eeltje Jellesma in East Java, in order to study the language and learn to lead a Christian community. Harthoorn moved to Malang in 1856 to start his own mission. He stayed there until he left his position in 1862 to travel to Rotterdam to speak to the board about their differing viewpoints.

After Harthoorn arrived in Malang it took months before he obtained the right permits to travel freely in his district and to missionize. His district was very large and the Christian communities were scattered, so he was used to travel for days to reach them. Shortly after his arrival Harthoorn found out that the process of conversion was slow and challenging. His mood worsened due to his untrustworthy assistants, the weak condition of his wife, his own health problems, and loneliness.²⁶¹ When Jellesma passed away in 1858, it had a great impact on Harthoorn. Not only did he lose his mentor and friend, he also became responsible for a much larger district. He became in charge of the residencies Surabaya, Kediri, Madiun and Pasuran, an area as large as the whole Netherlands.²⁶² That same year Harthoorn and the board had a severe disagreement, because he had given his permission to a Christian couple to circumcise their son.²⁶³ Harthoorn always chose his own path and allowed his followers to continue customs that other missionaries considered heretical. It is important to note that he strongly believed that a missionary had to think pragmatically instead of dogmatically in many cases. He was pragmatic in the case of the circumcision, because he knew he would have lost the entire family if he had not allowed it.

Harthoorn believed that everything grows in natural stadia. He applied this theory to his missionary thinking and argued that the missionaries had to be patient, because the first generation of Christians could not be 'perfect' Christians at once. After all, Europe had not become a Christian society in just one generation either.²⁶⁴ Gradually the Christian communities would evolve and

²⁶¹ He was deceived by one of his assistants, Timotheus, who collected money for him in Surabaya in 1857.

²⁶² C.W. Nortier, *Het leven van Samuel Eliza Harthoorn, zendeling op Oost Java, 1854-1863*, (unpublished manuscript, written in 1944-1945) Utrechts Archief.

²⁶³ This matter is more fully addressed in chapter 7 of this study.

²⁶⁴ S.E. Harthoorn, *letter to director Hiebink* (Malang 12 November 1855) Utrechts Archief.

heretical beliefs and practices would disappear by itself. Harthoorn therefore considered the regulations, and especially the disciplinary measures, of his colleagues too demanding and as a result counterproductive.

In 1859, Harthoorn reflected on his initial results and the results of the Christian mission in Java in general. He believed that the mission had been unsuccessful because the Javanese could not really understand Christianity yet. He was convinced the Javanese were not yet ready and first needed to be civilised and educated properly. Moreover, he believed he and the other missionaries were not ready to bring the Gospel to the Javanese. He believed he did not know enough about the Javanese language, culture, history, and religions, and neither about Western philosophy and Christian theology. He wished to learn more about both Javanese culture and Protestantism because he had trouble finding a compromise between the Javanese culture and Protestant convictions. He was convinced that the only way to succeed was to adapt his message and methods to the Javanese context. Harthoorn came to conclude that he needed more time to study the people and culture of East Java before he continued missionizing. Harthoorn spent years studying the Javanese society and wrote numerous articles on this in the *Mededeelingen*.

Harthoorn resigned from his missionary activities in 1861 to focus on researching the methods and achievements of the new mission. A fierce debate between Harthoorn and the board followed, but the board tried to reach a compromise with Harthoorn. It allowed him to focus his studies on Javanese language, religions, and traditions, while another missionary would take over his district for the time being. However, the board did not think it was necessary for Harthoorn and his family to move to Batavia as Harthoorn requested, to be close to renowned libraries. Harthoorn protested, but the board stood firm. Harthoorn then decided to fire all his assistants and to go to Rotterdam, to talk about his problems and suggestions in person. However, the board had not given its permission for the passage and decided to dismiss him.

As a reaction to his dismissal Harthoorn published the book '*De Evangelische Zending en Oost-Java*' to elucidate his opinions and ideas. The book addresses several issues, such as missionary work in general and a historical recount of the mission in East Java, and especially Malang. Furthermore, he discussed the baptism, the training and test which precedes it, church discipline, education to believers and non-believers, and the mission school in Modjo Warno. His judgement was harsh; he believed the whole system had to be restructured and that the missionaries should stop forming congregations in the first phase of the mission.

2.13. Carel Poensen

Carel Poensen (1836-1919) left for Java in 1860 together with his wife Maria Catharina Westrik (1830-1909). He spent his first two years with the missionary Wessel Hoezoo in Modjo Warno, East Java, for the actual missionary training and to improve his Javanese. The NZG assigned him to the district of Kediri, a small city in South-East Java in 1862. Poensen's contact with other NZG missionaries, including Harthoorn, was limited, because the travel distances between the districts were large. When Poensen began his work in Kediri, there were already four Christian communities in the district and in addition, he had to supervise two communities in Madiun, as no missionary was available for that district. The six Christian communities consisted together of three hundred souls.

Poensen's daily life in Java consisted of teaching, providing medical assistance, traveling, preaching, instructing his assistants, and writing. His life was marked by financial worries, the lack of success in the mission, loneliness, and the illnesses of his wife. Poensen was most happy behind his desk, because writing brought him the most satisfaction; he felt it produced a lasting result; unlike his missionary efforts. The life of a missionary was, according to Poensen, full of disappointments and setbacks; despite all the discouragements, however, the work was dear to him. Poensen believed that missionary work encompassed more than proselytizing. He therefore dedicated himself to the development of the local community; by adopting children, educating the youth, providing healthcare, and by supporting the poor. His missionary approach thus fit well within the ideology of the NZG.

Poensen wrote numerous articles and books during his career. His long-term field knowledge, linguistic and cultural competence, as well as his vast array of contacts with the local population helped him to write detailed articles about the Javanese society. He was convinced the key to success in the mission was to understand the Javanese thoroughly. He therefore considered his studies part of his missionary work. The correspondence between Poensen and the board of the NZG however reveals that Poensen was warned more than once by the board for spending too much time on writing and too little on his actual job. It becomes clear in these discussions that Poensen valued his scholarly identity more than his missionary identity. In 1886, his most famous work was published: *Brieven over de Islam, vanuit de binnenlanden van Java* (Letters on Islam, from the interior of Java).²⁶⁵ The book received quite some attention of Islam scholars, such as Christian Snouck Hurgronje.

Poensen, and especially his wife, suffered regularly from illnesses; neither could withstand the heat and long periods of rain very well. In the fall of 1888 Poensen's wife became seriously ill and her doctor advised them to leave Java as soon as possible. The couple eventually decided to take leave and

²⁶⁵ Carel Poensen, *Brieven over de Islam uit de binnenlanden van Java* (Leiden 1886).

soon left for the Netherlands. The couple returned, in good health and spirit, to Kediri in the spring of 1891. Nevertheless, Poensen decided to leave the mission a year later to accept a job as a professor of Javanese at the *Indische Instelling* in Delft. Poensen has worked in Java for 31 years. He looked back with mixed feelings on his life as a missionary. He had faced many setbacks and often felt frustrated; the Christian community had not grown as much as he had hoped. Nevertheless, the number of baptized Christians in Kediri had increased substantially by the time he left Java.

2.14. Christiaan Albers

Christiaan Albers (1837-1920) arrived in Java with his colleague Van der Linden in January 1863. They were the first two missionaries of the NZV and destined to missionize in the Sunda lands (West Java). During the first two years the missionaries were not allowed to evangelise to the Sundanese because the colonial government had not yet given its permission. Finally, in July 1865, Albers received the necessary permission to proselytize under the Sundanese in the region of Ciandur. However, it took three years before the first two Sundanese decided to be baptized.

In August 1874, Albers took a leave after twelve years and went back to Holland with his wife Christina and their children to recover from illness and depression. His congregation consisted of four Christians at the time. When Albers returned in 1878, the congregation had grown to eight members.²⁶⁶ The years that followed proved more successful than those before his leave, even though he never adjusted his strategies in a significant way. Although the school attracted more pupils and the number of converts slightly increased each year, Albers' overall results cannot be considered impressive.

Albers was transferred to the district Meester Cornelis in 1886. He first bought a house in the *desa* Bidana Tjina, not far from the district's capital, but eventually moved to the capital in 1890. The district of Meester Cornelis was much larger than Ciandur and there were already several Christian communities present.²⁶⁷ The number of Christians together was almost five hundred when he started his appointment, which was a much bigger number than he or any other missionary had converted so far in the region. The years that followed were marked by traveling to attend to all the Christian communities. Albers had more than enough work with guiding these churches and eventually left the actual mission work to his assistants.

²⁶⁶ Coolsma, *'Twaalf voorlezingen'*, 218.

²⁶⁷ Before Albers' arrival several churches were founded in the Meester Cornelis district by the Dutch lawyer Frederik L. Anthing and his assistants. When Anthing passed away the NZV got in charge of the congregations. The work of Anthing is more fully discussed in the next chapter.

In July 1907, after 45 years of mission work, Albers and his family returned to Holland indefinitely due to Albers' deteriorating condition. He had been a leading figure among the other NZV missionaries, because he had been the first of them to arrive in Java. He had taken on several responsibilities, like directing the *Nederlandsche Zendingsbond* (The Dutch-Mission Union) and the *Jacobus Vereeniging*.²⁶⁸ Although he had not been successful in converting large numbers of people, he is remembered as the pioneer of the mission in West Java; as someone who has cleared the way for many other missionaries to come.

2.15. Simon van Eendenburg

Simon van Eendenburg (1853-1912) of the NZV arrived in Batavia on 29 November 1882. Shortly after his arrival he married Niescina Kruyt (1863-1914), daughter of Johannes Kruyt, a NZG missionary from Modjo Warno. Van Eendenburg was appointed to Sukabumi in 1883. At that time the church consisted of 22 members, including children. Already a week after his appointment, he baptized a couple and married them in church a week later. He spent four years in Sukabumi and missionized there according to the usual methods; he taught at an elementary school, provided medical aid and preached in the *desas*. His results were not bad in comparison to those of his colleagues, but Van Eendenburg was very ambitious and wanted more.

Van Eendenburg believed the success of the mission mainly depended on the prosperity of the Christian community. He was convinced that a shared agricultural enterprise would strengthen the Christian community, increase its welfare, and as a result attract new members. In addition, the Christian *desa* would be an asylum for Christians where they would not be subjective to Muslim leaders and where they would not be bullied and harassed by Muslims. Van Eendenburg bought a piece of land to realise his plans and named it Pangharepan (Hope). The Christian community in Pangharepan increased quickly, especially in comparison to other congregations in the Preanger. Van Eendenburg was proud of his initial results. In contrast to most of his colleagues he was always cheerful and optimistic about the future in his letters.

1900 proved to be a difficult year for Pangharepan and also for Van Eendenburg personally. The rice-harvest was not as good as in previous years because of a plague of mice and the coffee prices had dropped considerably. Moreover, everything changed when Van Eendenburg was accused

²⁶⁸ Together with Van der Linden, Albers had founded *De Nederlandse Zendingsbond*, 'The Dutch-Mission Union', in 1881. Albers functioned as chairman for years. Its aim was to diminish rivalry between different mission societies and to work together to enlarge their success. Albers also founded and directed the *Jacobus Vereeniging*, an association that supported widows and orphans of missionaries.

of immoral behaviour by his church council and his colleague missionary H. Müller in the end of February. They accused him of being a drunk and eleven boys accused him of assaulting them. Van Eendenburg denied the accusations and replied that the people were angry because of the low coffee prices and that they had plotted a conspiracy against him. The NZV installed a committee, consisting of Albers, Verhoeven, and De Haan, to investigate the case. Eventually, Van Eendenburg resigned to avoid further questioning. Albers reported to the board: 'This and the fact that he refused to elaborate on what he had done that could have led to these dirty accusations, made a huge impression; Van Eendenburg is guilty. Because I wanted more information from him, I confronted him with one of the many allegations; a boy claimed he was stained with his sperm after caressing him. I asked him if that was true, and I could have died when he calmly answered me; 'I do not know'. This 'I do not know' settled it for us.'²⁶⁹ Pangharepan was taken over by missionary Müller and continued to be the most successful mission post in West Java.

2.16. Petrus Hoevenaars

In the fall of 1896, Petrus Hoevenaars (1860-1930) arrived together with Franciscus van Lith in Java as pioneers of the Jesuit mission. After a few years he received permission to set up a mission in Mendut. The Jesuit superiors intentionally placed Van Lith and Hoevenaars in districts near to each other so the two could assist each other and reinforce each other's approach. However, already in 1899, it became clear that the two did not support the other's approach; their methods were in some matters even opposed to each other. Hoevenaars was conservative in his thinking and methods, while the pragmatic van Lith was willing to go off the beaten path. Furthermore, they continually argued about each other's translations of the prayers and the Catechism and this resulted in an unsolvable conflict between them.

The first years of the Catholic mission in Java did not bring the success for which the Church had hoped. Hoevenaars was searching for the right approach and tried diverse strategies that aimed on the economic wellbeing of the local population. This process was made more difficult by his superiors who put him under continuous pressure to show better results. The slow progress in the mission was one of the reasons why Hoevenaars suffered from depression. Only towards the end of his appointment did he become more hopeful. He wrote that he clearly noticed a progress in the

²⁶⁹Christiaan Albers, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Meester Cornelis, 1 May 1900) Utrechts Archief.

mission. Not only did the converts grow in number, but he also saw progress in their knowledge of Christianity and in their lifestyle.²⁷⁰

An incident took place during the celebration of Easter in 1905 which changed the Java mission, and Hoevenaars' position in it, forever. Supposedly, Hoevenaars lured a group of non-Christian children into his church, sang 'Asperges me' to them and sprinkled water upon the children as the act of baptism.²⁷¹ The children told their parents what had happened and the parents got very upset. The next day only a handful of children showed up for class, which raised the attention of a government school inspector. Hoevenaars was officially charged of preaching the Catholic faith in a 'too aggressive manner' and the Dutch colonial government had him reassigned to another district.²⁷² The Jesuit superiors were actually not too sorry to transfer Hoevenaars since this was the perfect solution to end the ongoing conflict between him and Van Lith.

Even though Hoevenaars had only worked for six years in the Mendut mission, his work was not without success. He managed to convert more than two hundred people in this short period. Nevertheless, Hoevenaars, one of the two pioneers of the Java mission, is not remembered as a saint or as the apostle of Java like his colleague Van Lith. In fact, he is not remembered at all by the present day Catholic community in Java. His work is often reduced to a mere footnote in anniversary books of the mission and the reason for his transfer to Cheribon is attributed to differing viewpoints on the "right" approach of the mission and the 'baptism' incident is never mentioned.²⁷³

2.17. *Franciscus van Lith*

The other pioneer of the Jesuit mission, Franciscus van Lith (1863-1926), arrived in Java in the fall of 1896. A year later he started his own mission with great enthusiasm in the district of Muntilan. Van Lith understood that in order to be successful, he had to overcome the gap between himself and the Javanese. He tried to become 'one of them' to convince the Javanese that Christianity was not just a 'white man's religion', but meant for everyone on earth. He blamed Hoevenaars for having racial

²⁷⁰ Petrus Hoevenaars, *Letter to Monseigneur Hellings*, (Mendut 16 February 1905) Archives of the Archdiocese of Jakarta.

²⁷¹ Steenbrink, *Catholics in Indonesia*, Vol. 1, 212.

²⁷² Article 123: 'leeraars, priesters en zendelingen moeten voorzien zijn van eene of dor namens den gouverneur generaal te verleenen bijzondere toelating om hun dienstwerk in eenig bepaald gedeelte van Nederlands-Indië te mogen verrichten. Wanneer de toelating schadelijk wordt bevonden, of de voorwaarden daarvan niet worden nageleefd, kan zij door den gouveneur generaal worden ingetrokken. (1854).

²⁷³ Panitya Kerja Monumen Romo F.V. Lith S.Y. *Memanggal dengan rakyat dasar mangrasul Romo F. V. Lith. S.Y. Pendi Missi Jawa Tengah, 1863-1926* (Yogyakarta 1979).

pride: 'I sought to become Javanese with the Javanese, and father Hoevenaars continued to be European -the more developed and powerful, victorious race- to make use of the privilege of his Dutch citizenship and act as a benevolent lord, as a superior, who indulgently descends to his inferiors in order to be their teacher and thus remain superior to the Javanese.'²⁷⁴ Van Lith sought to integrate multiple aspects of the Javanese culture so the people, including Muslim leaders, would trust and consult him.²⁷⁵

Van Lith had his first big success at the end of 1904, seven years into the mission. He baptized almost two hundred people at the well of Sendangsono. Van Lith could not explain this sudden success and believed it must have been God's doing. However, these two hundred converts should actually be attributed to the travelling guru Sadrach, an indigenous Christian evangeliser, who will be discussed in chapter 4. Sadrach educated and converted people in this region long before Van Lith paid the area a few visits.²⁷⁶ Nevertheless, Javanese Catholics celebrate this event presently as the first victory of the Java mission and Sendangsono has become a popular Catholic pilgrimage place.²⁷⁷

Even after this success, Van Lith still had to design a clear strategy for the Muntilan mission. He decided to focus on education because he was convinced that the process of conversion would take several generations and that education was necessary to prepare new generations for Christianity. Van Lith is now recognised as a significant figure in the formation of a Javanese schooling system. His *kweekschool*, the Xaverius College, attracted students from all over the region and its graduates were highly valued as teachers and government officials. In 1917, Van Lith founded 'Canisius', an association which focused on the organisation of healthcare and education in Central Java. Eventually, 270 Catholic schools joined Canisius in Central and East Java.

Van Lith's efforts in the field of mission work were less successful. His colleague, missionary Van Kalken, stated: 'One might wonder whether the little success of Van Lith's mission work was caused by his insufficient aptitude for the work' and 'People did come to the church, but this was also because he gave them some change and sometimes a meal at holidays.'²⁷⁸ Van Lith mastered the

²⁷⁴ Van Lith, *Autobiographical writings*.

²⁷⁵ Newspaper articles concerning Van Lith's death, available in the Jesuit Archives in Nijmegen.

²⁷⁶ Van Rijckevorsel, *Pastoor F. Van Lith S.J.*, 65.

²⁷⁷ The well at Sendangsono had formerly been used by Buddhist monks as a resting place during their pilgrimage to Borobudur. By choosing that place with substantial religious significance, Van Lith established a continuity between the Buddhist period and the present period in which Christianity was introduced. He aimed at the acculturation of local religious traditions and Catholicism.

Rémy Madinier, 'The Catholic politics of inclusiveness: A Jesuit epic in Central Java in the early twentieth century and its memory', in: Madinier, Rémy and Picard, Michel, *The Politics of Agama in Java and Bali*, (London, New York 2011).

²⁷⁸ P. Van Kalken, *Kritiek op het handschrift over het leven van F. Van Lith en nadere gegevens van Van Rijckevorsel*, Archives of the Jesuit Province of Indonesia (Semarang).

language well, but he had no talent for preaching. His sermons and catechism classes were often too difficult, both in language and in content, and therefore he did not always grasp the attention of his audience.²⁷⁹ Nevertheless, today Franciscus van Lith is remembered as the founder of the Javanese Catholic Church, as a pioneer with 'intrepid belligerence', as the apostle Paul of Java, and as the father of all Javanese Catholics.²⁸⁰ In present times he is remembered as almost a saint with Muntilan often dubbed as the 'Bethlehem of Java'.²⁸¹

2.18. Conclusion

This chapter introduced the six missionaries under study in this thesis and the societies with which they were affiliated. I addressed the foundation histories of the three mission societies. The differences between the societies were rather obvious in the Netherlands, however the dissimilarities and enmities were less pronounced in the actual mission districts. First, because the districts of different societies were strictly separated by governments' order, in order to avoid problems and competition. Second, because the few converts did not have enough understanding of their new faith yet to grasp the specific theological differences between the different societies.

The three mission organizations differed in many ways from each other. The two Protestant mission societies undoubtedly differed as much from each other as they differed from the Catholic Jesuit Order. The NZG was a liberal society with a modern theology while the NZV was very conservative. These different characters manifested themselves in the missionaries' beliefs and actions. In addition, the variances in the educational programmes of each society, especially on the subject of Islam, indicate the differences in the missionaries' opinions and dealings with its adherents. Out of the three societies, only the NZG prioritized courses on Islam in their curriculum and stimulated its missionaries to research local religious convictions and practices.

Even though all three societies handled the education of their missionaries differently, had different religious identities, and worked in different areas - the NZG and the Jesuits worked among the Javanese and the NZV among the Sundanese - their initial strategies were not so different. The boards of the mission societies all recommended initially the same method to acquire access to the

²⁷⁹ P. Van Kalken, *Kritiek op het handschrift over het leven van F. Van Lith en nadere gegevens van Van Rijckevorsel*, Archives of the Jesuit Province of Indonesia (Semarang).

²⁸⁰ Van Rijckevorsel, *Pastoor F. Van Lith S.J.*, 10.

²⁸¹ A short film entitled 'Bethlehem of Java' portrays Franciscus van Lith's life. The film is produced by Puskat, a Jesuit production centre in Yogyakarta, in 2007. Available at: <http://www.catholicv.tv/index.php/programs/27-bethleemjava.html> (December 2013).

Javanese people - the propagation of the Gospel through preaching. Eventually, all three societies came to the conclusion that this strategy alone did not bring the desired success. Consequently, the boards gave more freedom to the missionaries to form their own policies, which I will discuss in chapter 5. The missionaries then diversified their strategies and kept a close eye on the developments of others by reading the periodicals of their own and other societies.

The second part of this chapter introduced briefly the six Dutch missionaries who are under study in this thesis. I have chosen these six men because they were among the pioneers of the Java mission. In addition, they were active in different regions of Java; the missionaries of the NZV were active in West Java, the missionaries of the NZG in East Java and the Jesuit missionaries founded their mission post in Central-Java. All six had very different personalities and diverging opinions on the local population, culture and religions, and missionizing methods and policies. I addressed different aspects of their lives, both public and private, to give an idea of whom these men were. Their writings about the Javanese society and religious landscape, their encounters with the indigenous people, their methods and results et cetera, form the base of the following chapters. Their full biographies can be found in the appendices.

Chapter 3. The Dutch mission discourse on Javanese Islam

'The devil himself created Mohammedanism'.²⁸²

The religious landscape of late nineteenth century Java has been discussed in the first chapter. That portrayal of Javanese Islam and the discussion of major reforms in this period were primarily based on secondary literature. The previous chapter discussed the religious characters, aims, and training programs of all three societies. This chapter builds on both by illustrating the findings of chapter 1 with the views and observations of the missionaries and board members of the different societies and by analysing the effects the societies' diverse religious identities had on the six missionaries in their conception of Islam. My objective with this chapter is to elucidate how the missionaries negotiated discourses on religion and how they perceived, discussed, and approached Islam, and to interpret the differences between them. How were Islam and Muslims assessed in the mission discourse and did the missionaries have a dialogic attitude towards Muslims or was their approach a unilateral call to conversion? This chapter focusses both on the Dutch mission discourse on Islam in general and as it occurred in Java in particular.

With this chapter I provide insight into the broader Dutch mission discourse on religion and on Islam specifically. Remarkably, the leading figures in the Dutch mission discourse were mostly directors and board members of the societies, since they were higher educated and presumably more aware of international discourses, rather than the missionaries who actually encountered Islam in the field. A number of leading figures in the Dutch mission societies have translated the prevalent opinions of international discourses and conveyed them to the Dutch public. Assumptions about Islam that were prevalent in the wider European orientalist discourse were thus reaffirmed continually in the Dutch mission journals and mission schools' textbooks. However, keep in mind one of the conclusions of the previous chapter was that the attention to Islam in the curricula of the mission schools was sparse or, in case of the Jesuits, non-existent.

The personal observations of the missionaries in the field were frequently not aligning with this prevailing discourse, but it proved difficult for them to refute these dominant assumptions. As a result, both the Dutch mission discourse and the personal writings of the missionaries contained many misunderstandings and contradictions which form the focal point of this chapter. The aim of most

²⁸² Christiaan Albers, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Ciandur 5 April 1869) Utrechts Archief.

articles in the mission journals was to form a conceptual framework to provide the missionaries with strategic information. The Dutch mission discourse on Islam and on Javanese Islam in particular focused primarily on a few themes which I will address in this chapter. Most articles in the mission journals aim to explain Islam's history and core beliefs and the focus is mainly on the prophet Mohammed. Moreover, several authors tried to analyse how Islam managed to 'conquer' Java. Additionally, many articles focus on similarities and differences between Christianity and Islam in order to provide the missionaries with arguments in their debates with Muslims. Some missionaries, however, tried to describe Islam as they perceived it - as a lived tradition. Carel Poensen of the NZG, for example, presented detailed accounts of Javanese Islam as it was practiced both in public and in private life.

The first paragraph of this chapter addresses the reflections on the spread of Islam in Java in the Dutch mission discourse. The second paragraph summarizes the general views of Islam held by the societies' board members, and the third paragraph discusses the missionaries' observations of Javanese Islam. The fourth and fifth paragraphs concentrate, in particular, on the missionaries' observations on the developments and reforms within Javanese Islam that have been discussed in chapter 2. The final paragraph before the conclusion addresses the missionaries' relationship with local Muslim leaders.

3.1. Reflections on the spread of Islam in Java

Although all missionaries agreed that Islam had not really conquered Java -Islam was considered to be only a 'veil' over the prevailing Javanese religion- they did envy the numbers of believers. The mission journals did not only print articles that reflected upon the mission's own strategies and results, but they also included writings that reflected on Islamic proselytizing endeavours in the archipelago. Why had the Islamic mission been much more successful than their own attempts? Marinus Lindenborn, an influential man within the Dutch mission discourse and director of the NZV between 1913 and 1923, reflected on the spread of Islam in the Indonesian archipelago in his book *'Zendingslicht op den Islam'*.²⁸³ First, he stated that Islam was spread by the sword, as it had in other areas of Africa and Asia, and that many people had not converted willingly. In addition, he agreed with the predominant

²⁸³ Marinus Lindenborn, *Zendingslicht op den Islam* (The Hague 1918). The theologian Lindenborn joined the NZV in 1903 and quickly became an influential figure in the association. He was the first within the NZV to systematically address Islam in his writings.

view that Arab traders played the most significant part in the spreading of Islam and he dismissed the legend of the *Wali Sanga* (the nine saints who supposedly brought Islam to Java) as a 'fairy tale'.²⁸⁴

Lindenborn's main argument was that for Muslims, conversion in name was sufficient. He considered Islam a religion with an enormous capacity for assimilation; according to him Muslim missionaries did not have any problems with accepting beliefs and rituals from other religious currents. As Van Lindenborn continued, Islam had much lower moral standards than Christianity and therefore suited the local customs better. Furthermore, he reasoned that for Muslims, the spreading of their faith was obligatory, so every Muslim, soldiers, traders, et cetera, were missionaries simultaneously. Van Lindenborn remarked that the Dutch were the opposite of zealous adherents of their religion. In addition, Arabs impressed the Javanese by overtly testifying their faith by, for example, performing the *salat*, the daily prayer ritual. The *salat* and other rituals attracted the Javanese, according to Lindenborn, because they reacted strongly to ostentation and external affairs. He also claimed that Arabs acted superior towards the Javanese to impress them and to emphasise their superior position as Muslims. Van Lindenborn argued that this made the Javanese eager to convert. Dutch missionaries did not, however, follow this example. In contrast, the sources demonstrate that the missionaries spread their faith mostly to the peasantry and people from lower socio-economic classes. They tried to demonstrate 'Christian love' through providing material aid, healthcare, and education to people in need. I believe this strategy could have led people to think that converting to Christianity was a sign of decline in one's social status and would thus deter people from being baptized.

Carel Poensen argued, like many others at the time, that the Javanese were actually still in transition to becoming Muslim. He explained that Islam was spreading so successfully because it adapted to Javanese religious traditions. He elucidated this with an example of the religious holiday '*Ruwahan*' which had a hybrid character: 'this is really a Javanese religious feast: it is Arabic in name, but Javanese or Polynesian in its origins. (...) It is clear from this example that those who have brought Islam to Java have tried to make the transition easier for the natives by adapting to his thinking and customs.'²⁸⁵ *Ruwahan* was celebrated with a communal feast, a *slametan*, during which food was offered to Adam and Eve, Mohammed and Fatima, but also to Hindu gods and the ancestors. Poensen concluded his description with the depiction 'curiously syncretic'.²⁸⁶ He, like the other missionaries, considered Javanese religions irrational and subordinate to their own faith because of such hybrid elements.

²⁸⁴ See chapter 1. Lindenborn, *Zendingslicht op den Islam*, 125.

²⁸⁵ Poensen, *Brieven uit de binnenlanden van Java*, 8-16.

²⁸⁶ Poensen, *Brieven uit de binnenlanden van Java*, 17.

3.2. *The Dutch mission discourse on Islam*

The cultural encounters of the Dutch missionary enterprise with Javanese Muslims contributed to the image of the Muslim 'Other' in colonial and Dutch society at large. Earlier studies of Islam in the Netherlands had produced a paradoxical mix of fascination with, and contempt for, Islam. The minimal knowledge had little substance and Islam was usually dismissed as 'a lie of Satan'.²⁸⁷ The idea of Islam was constructed by emphasizing 'the deception of Mahomet, to the great detriment of Christianity'.²⁸⁸ Religious scholars have incorrectly drawn direct parallels between the position of Christ in Christianity and Mohammed in Islam, with the result that Muhammad was the central focus of Islam in the West for centuries. He was typified primarily as a symbol of moral perversion and political corruption. Islam used to be commonly known as 'Mohammedanism' and this term is also dominant in the Dutch mission discourse. Likewise, it was common to address Muslims as 'Mohammedans'. This term was originally used in polemic Christian writings to emphasize the status of Mohammed, a common man, in Islam. The prophet was portrayed as the Antichrist, as a fallen or corrupted Christian, as a corrupt political figure or as a sexual deviant. At best he was described as a wise, erudite, yet heretic philosopher.

A NZG report demonstrates clearly that the discourse on Islam constructed this religion as opposed diametrically to Christianity. As it states, 'the doctrine of Muslims is no different than a deeply degraded and devalued version of Christianity'.²⁸⁹ Still, Islam was considered more developed than most other Eastern religions because of its monotheistic character. The NZG made a distinction among 'civilised pagans', namely Jews and Muslims, and 'infidel or uncivilised pagans'; Hindus, Buddhists, and the followers of animistic religions. The advantage of missionizing among 'civilised gentiles', was that they were already familiar with some Bible stories and names. Therefore, it was very useful to spread Bibles in the vernacular languages in these areas, according to the NZG. Muslims would recognise parts and would consequently more easily accept the entire text as the truth. In dealing with Muslims, the NZG argued, the focus should be on similarities between Islam and Christianity. The fact that Muslims believe in Jesus – though as a prophet rather than the son of Allah – could be used to start a discussion. Together with the Bible, a short pamphlet could be distributed wherein Christian regimens were issued. This pamphlet would teach the readers Christian morals in respect to child marriages, polygamy, divorce, et cetera.²⁹⁰

²⁸⁷ Lindenborn, *Zendingslicht op den Islam*, 40.

²⁸⁸ Smit, *De Islam binnen de horizon*, 23.

²⁸⁹ Citation from a NZG report, in: Kruijf, *Geschiedenis van het Nederlandsche Zendelinggenootschap*, 62.

²⁹⁰ Smit, *De Islam binnen de horizon*, 25.

In 1845, three years before the NZG gained permission to enter Java, the NZG founded the 'Committee for the spread of Christianity in Java'. The objective of this committee was to learn more about the religious, social, and political landscapes of Java. Their study on the culture and religion of the Javanese claimed that Javanese people barely had values and that they were not sufficiently developed to understand the Christian message. Moreover, this report made clear that there were substantial differences between Islam, as it had been presented by European scholars, and Islam as it was practiced in Java. The committee argued that Islam in Java was deeply influenced by Eastern religious traditions and that Javanese Muslims were therefore nominal Muslims at best. Their conclusion was that one could not speak of an 'inner experience' of Islam in Java.²⁹¹ Consequently, the missionaries did not believe it was Islam that withheld the people from converting. According to the missionaries, the main reason people did not convert to Christianity was because they feared losing their job or social status.²⁹²

NZG missionary Carel Poensen did not consider the courses on Islam during his missionary training in the 1850's sufficient. He emphasised continuously the need for more practical training on dealing with Muslims in the educational program. He even considered this more useful than theological education. In due course, Islam started to receive more attention within the NZG. The NZG had finally obtained access to Java, resulting in an increase in articles about Islam in the *Mededeelingen*. Eventually, Poensen made an important contribution to the knowledge of Javanese Islam by writing numerous articles and a book on the subject; due to these, attention to Islam not only increased within the NZG, but also in the Netherlands as a whole. During the larger part of the nineteenth century there was somewhat of a lacuna in the Dutch academic discourse, because both Arabists and the Indologists were focused primarily on language, not on Islam.²⁹³ This changed towards the end of the nineteenth century, and especially in the early twentieth century, with the influential work of Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje. He personally placed colonial Islamic studies on the map.²⁹⁴

Lindenborn of the NZV declared in his book '*Zendingslicht op den Islam*' that he had tried to describe Islam 'objectively'. He explained that although more than ninety percent of all Muslims in the world lived under Western rule at the turn of the century, he had not managed to find a single book by a Western author that has correctly discussed the Islamic faith. The prevailing opinion in Europe

²⁹¹ Smit, *De Islam binnen de horizon*, 51-52.

²⁹² The NZG lobbied for years to abolish article 124 that stipulated that there had to be an agreement between the religions of the indigenous leaders and the people they governed. Alting von Geusau, *Neutraliteit der overheid*, 57.

²⁹³ Vrolijk and Van Leeuwen, *Voortreffelijk en waardig*, 100.

²⁹⁴ For example: Pieter Johannes Veth, *Java, Geographisch, Ethnologisch, Historisch* (Haarlem 1875). Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje, *Het Mekkaansche Feest* (Leiden 1880).

was that Islam was a false religion that prevented societies from moral and cultural elevation.²⁹⁵ Lindenborn saw a need to adjust this prevailing opinion because according to him 'Islam is not dead nor weak; Islam is still expanding in the world which confirms, thus in contrast to what we believe, that the religion has elements that serves the religious needs of people.'²⁹⁶ Nevertheless, his description of Islam and Mohammed is, at least in the eyes of the modern reader, neither very objective but very orientalist.

First of all, Lindenborn considered Islam a 'religion of appearance'; a religion of rules and duties, instead of a religion that revolves around a personal relation with God.²⁹⁷ He described Islam as 'a system of meticulous rules, which were primarily based on Mohammed's life instead of on Allah's word.'²⁹⁸ He stated that the bond between Allah and the people was similar to the bond between a master and his slaves; Allah does not love his people and people fear him.²⁹⁹ He argued that Mohammed did not discern right from wrong, that he had 'troubled religious thoughts', 'no moralistic ideals', and that Muslims nevertheless nearly considered him a God. Moreover, Lindenborn assumed that Mohammed formed the religion and law to whatever suited him best. For instance, *Sura* 4 verse 3 states that a man should not have more than four wives. However, in *Sura* 43 verse 36, 37, which is of a later date, this rule is abolished. Lindenborn reasoned that Mohammed changed the law because he wished to marry a fifth wife, Zainab. He continued that the *Qur'an* is a book of error; full of contradictions and that it 'does not contain something essentially authentic, which can count as proof of divine revelation.'³⁰⁰ Lindenborn argued that those passages that did 'make sense' were derived from the Bible, especially from the New Testament. He did believe, however, that missionaries could use the *Qur'an* when they discussed religion with the local people.

The idea that the Sundanese and Javanese should actually not even be addressed as Muslims, because Islam only shallowly covered their former religious system, was commonly accepted by Dutch colonials and scholars during the nineteenth and early twentieth century. For example Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje commented in his influential book *Nederland en de Islam* (The Netherlands and Islam) that of the 35 million Muslims in the Dutch Indies only six million could be considered *true* Muslims.³⁰¹ Lindenborn agreed to this and added that most Sundanese Muslims did not have a real connection with God, because they could not read the *Qur'an*; they learnt to chant the text, but did not understand it. He added that many Sundanese Muslims did not perform the Five Pillars of Islam

²⁹⁵ Van den End, *De Nederlandsche Zendingsvereeniging in West Java*, 55.

²⁹⁶ Marinus Lindenborn, *Zendingslicht op den Islam* (The Hague 1918) 7.

²⁹⁷ Lindenborn, *Onze zendingsvelden*, 81.

²⁹⁸ Lindenborn, *Zendingslicht op den Islam*, 24.

²⁹⁹ Lindenborn, *Zendingslicht op den Islam*, 49.

³⁰⁰ Lindenborn, *Zendingslicht op den Islam*, 32.

³⁰¹ Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje, *Nederland en de Islam* (Leiden 1915)18, 23.

properly; for example hardly anyone performed the daily prayers faithfully. In addition, Lindenborn argued that the majority of the Sundanese Muslims did not obey the Islamic law concerning alcohol.³⁰² Lindenborn, just as his colleagues from other mission societies, accused Islam, as it occurred in Java, of being syncretic and corrupted. He described Sundanese Muslims as ‘as much heathen as they are sincere Muhamedans’.³⁰³ Conversely, Sierk Coolsma, a former missionary, language expert, and director of the NZV between 1878 and 1908, wrote that although most Sundanese were not very pious, it was incorrect to say they were not Islamic at all. Besides, he argued, one could then say the exact same about many Dutch Christians. He explained the Islamic identity was very important for the Sundanese, but that in daily life the elder religions of the area still had a large influence on the people. Coolsma went even so far as to say that the Sundanese were polytheistic.³⁰⁴

Lindenborn’s book contains a separate chapter about mysticism in Islam. According to Lindenborn, mysticism had become uncommon in the Middle East, but had continued to flourish in other areas, including South East Asia.³⁰⁵ Islamic mysticism could be connected to prior existing mystical traditions in the area and was therefore successful.³⁰⁶ Strikingly, Lindenborn connected Sufism to Christianity: ‘The mystical literature of Islam has derived from statements from the New Testament, which present the true relationship between Creator and creation, that satisfies the religious needs, and in which obedience and submission are seen as educators to love and resignation.’³⁰⁷ Lindenborn argued that some mystics went too far in the belief that God is all-inclusive at the risk of turning Islam in a pantheistic religion.³⁰⁸ However, he did see an opportunity for the missionaries to use this conviction as a starting point. Missionaries could stress the similarities between Islamic and Christian mysticism and emphasise the doctrine of the Holy Trinity because this doctrine also teaches that a divine spirit is in every believer.³⁰⁹ In particular, the Gospel of John would attract Javanese mystics and should therefore be translated not only in Javanese, but also in Arabic.

The previous chapter indicated that knowledge of Islam was sparse within the Jesuit Order. During the Formation, the training of the Jesuit priests, novices studied solely Catholicism. There was no attention to other faiths during the curriculum. Therefore, the young priests Hoevenaars and Van

³⁰² Lindenborn, *Onze zendingsvelden*, 86.

³⁰³ Lindenborn, *Onze zendingsvelden*, 86.

³⁰⁴ Coolsma, *Twaalf voorlezingen over West Java*, 59-68.

³⁰⁵ Lindenborn, *Zendingslicht op den Islam*, 100. Lindenborn’s statement is incorrect; during the nineteenth century Sufism was still practiced in the Middle Eastern region. Julia Howell, ‘Sufism in the Modern World’, at: http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/Public/focus/essay1010_surfism_modern_world.html (December 2013).

³⁰⁶ Lindenborn, *Zendingslicht op den Islam*, 100.

³⁰⁷ Lindenborn, *Zendingslicht op den Islam*, 96.

³⁰⁸ Lindenborn, *Zendingslicht op den Islam*, 100.

³⁰⁹ Lindenborn, *Zendingslicht op den Islam*, 108.

Lith only had some general knowledge of Islam when they arrived in Java. For that reason, it is understandable that the Jesuits adopted the prevalent opinion on Javanese Islam. Catholic sources tell us that the Catholics had a similar view on Islam as the Protestants. They too considered Islam in Java just a 'thin veneer' laid over Javanese 'heathendom'.

These rather negative statements about Islam and Muslims were not limited to the Christian mission discourse. They were, in fact, not even uncommon within the leading academic discourse on Islam in the Netherlands. For example, Reinhart Dozy, professor Arabic at Leiden University since 1857, claimed in his influential book *'Het Islamisme'* that Mohammed's revelations were in fact epileptic seizures.³¹⁰ In addition, Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje, the Netherlands' most well-known scholar on Islam, repeatedly wrote that Mohammedans (Muslims) have an emotionally exhausting and fanatical nature.³¹¹

3.3. *The missionaries on Javanese Islam*

The missionaries had difficulties understanding the various hybrid religious traditions present in Java. All six missionaries agreed that the Javanese and Sundanese were not *true* Muslims. All argued that they hardly had knowledge of Islam and did not obey their Islamic duties properly. Some even concluded that the people of Java may call themselves Muslim, while in fact they were heathens.³¹² Samuel Harthoorn wrote in his annual report of 1857: 'to call the Javanese Muslim in a political sense, because Islam is regarded as the state's religion, is acceptable. However, to designate the folk religion, the religion of the people, which controls their conscience, their existence and behaviour, this label is not by any means sufficient. One cannot call them Brahmins, Buddhists, Shaivists etc. either. To be accurate and to prevent a misunderstanding and false representations it may have its use to indicate the folk religion mentioned above with the word 'Javanism'.³¹³ With this comment, Harthoorn was the first one to introduce the concept 'Javanism' to address the hybrid Javanese religious tradition. The term 'Javanism' does not just indicate a religious category, but it refers to an ethic and lifestyle inspired by Javanese thinking.³¹⁴ It is a search for harmony within one's inner self, for a connection with the universe and with the almighty God. Harthoorn's term Javanism is still commonly used today, both by Indonesians to designate their personal belief system, and by scholars; it is therefore a highly

³¹⁰ Arnoud Vrolijk and Richard van Leeuwen, *Voortreffelijk en waardig, 400 jaar Arabische studies in Nederland* (Leiden 2013) 80.

³¹¹ Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje, 'De Islam', in *De Gids* (1886a) 206.

³¹² Lindenborn, Marinus, *De Nederlandsche Zendingsvereeniging gedurende zestig jaren, 1858-1918, rede op de zendingsdag* (Rotterdam 1918) 81-97.

³¹³ S.E. Harthoorn, *Annual report of 1857* (Malang 1856) Utrechts Archief.

³¹⁴ Niels Mulder, *Mysticism in Java, ideology in Java* (Yogyakarta 2005) 17.

valued contribution.³¹⁵ However, I believe Harthoorn minimized the position of Islam in Java by using this label.

Harthoorn argued that acquiring *ilmu* was the most important goal in Javanese religion.³¹⁶ The word '*ilmu*', which derived from the Arabic word '*ilm*' (knowledge), was used to describe a varied collection of *rapals* (spiritual formulas), proverbs, *kawi* sayings, theological expressions, riddles and propositions et cetera from different religions and philosophies.³¹⁷ Many *Kejawen* followers seek spiritual and emotional relief in their own way. These practices, primarily meditation and fasting, are not performed in churches or mosques, but at home or in religiously significant places such as caves or on mountain perches. In Javanese culture, meditation is a search for inner wisdom, but is also used to gain physical strength. This tradition is passed down from generation to generation. Harthoorn described various currents of *ilmu*, such as *ilmu paseq*, which was mostly influenced by Hinduism. *Ilmu santrian* meant knowledge possessed by *santris* (religious students) and this type of *ilmu* was mostly influenced by Islamic teachings.³¹⁸

It is clear that Carel Poensen's ideas about Islam and the Javanese population were inconclusive. He believed that Islam had exercised both a positive and a negative impact on the Javanese society. His statements were often contradictory and it is therefore difficult to determine what he really thought about these matters. Poensen's writings show that he was a product of his time; statements that Islam was a 'thin veneer' which covered Javanese animistic religion were dominant in his work. Furthermore, his statements are quite ethnocentric at times and clearly influenced by nineteenth century orientalist discourses on cultural and religious hierarchies. He consistently Othered the Javanese and deprived them of their agency by describing them as underdeveloped, as children, and by commenting that he simplified his sermons to the most basic level so they would understand him.³¹⁹

Poensen's book '*Brieven over de Islam, vanuit de binnenlanden van Java*' (Letters on Islam from the interior of Java) was, and still is, one of the most important sources on Javanese Islam and, in

³¹⁵ Bruinessen, 'Global and local in Indonesian Islam', 46-63.

³¹⁶ Acquiring '*ilm*' (Arabic for 'knowledge') is also one of the most important assignments to all Muslims, both male and female. '*Ilm*' can refer to both religious as worldly knowledge.

³¹⁷ *Kawi* is a literary and prose language on the islands of Java, Bali, and Lombok. It is based on old Javanese and contains many Sanskrit loanwords. Javanese language is hierarchical and stratified, with strict social conventions for appropriate language subsets to be used for one's superiors or social and cultural functions. *Kawi* is commonly considered the pinnacle language.

³¹⁸ S.E. Harthoorn, 'De zending op Java en meer bepaald die van Malang, uit het jaarverslag 1857', in: *Mededeelingen* (Rotterdam 1860) 105-138, 212-253.

³¹⁹ Carel Poensen, 'Iets over den Javaan als mens' in *Mededeelingen* (Rotterdam 1885). Carel Poensen, *Letter to the board of the NZG* (Kediri 25 March 1883) Utrechts Archief.

particular, on the process of differentiation within nineteenth century Javanese Islam.³²⁰ His verdict on Islam, as he observed it in the area around Kediri, was nuanced. He believed the advent of Islam had stimulated a progress in morals and values among the Javanese. Pious Muslims had, for example, stopped gambling and using opium. The position of women and servants had improved, infant mortality had decreased, institutions to help the poor had been established, and the caste system had almost been abolished. Moreover, the gruesome phenomena of beheadings and widow burnings had ceased to exist after the arrival of Islam. Poensen was convinced that the 'immorality' of the Javanese culture had decreased in general because of Islam.³²¹ Nevertheless, he believed this progress had come to a halt in his age, and that Islam was now the very reason why the population did not make any further progress. Islam, after all, allowed customs such as polygamy, child marriages, and divorce.

Poensen also believed Islam prevented progress in the field of science. He argued that although science and art had flourished in the Islamic world between the eighth and thirteenth century, this was not due to Muslims or Islam.³²² According to Poensen, Arab scholars had been strongly influenced by the Greeks and the Persians.³²³ After 1200, there were virtually no scholars left in the Middle East, only the science of astronomy was still practiced to determine the dates of Islamic holidays. Poensen called Islam 'fatal' for all sciences: 'Muslims have hatred for all sciences! Anyone who wishes development in the Dutch East Indies should avoid the establishment of Islam in the archipelago!'³²⁴ He was not alone in this opinion, Reinhart Dozy, professor Arabic at Leiden University, also claimed in his influential book *'Het Islamisme'*, published in 1863, that Islam formed an obstacle for scientific progress.³²⁵ Poensen concluded this letter with his belief that Christianity would certainly triumph and make progression possible in Java.³²⁶

Poensen was convinced the Javanese would gain much by converting to Christianity. According to him, Christian families had a strong sense of family values which led to an ordered society. Christians were of course not perfect people, but at least they did strive for perfection; they tried to follow the example of Jesus Christ. Contrary, Poensen reasoned, Muslims sought to live like a sinful man - the prophet Mohammed.³²⁷ The prophet had several wives and married Aisha when she

³²⁰ Carel Poensen, *'Brieven over de Islam'*.

³²¹ Steenbrink, *Dutch Colonialism and the Indonesian Islam*, 102.

³²² This too was a common accepted view of Western scholars well into the seventies of the twentieth century.

³²³ Besides the Greeks and Persians, Poensen named the 'Parsis', a people who predominantly lives in India.

³²⁴ Poensen, *'Brieven over den Islam'*, 5.

³²⁵ Vrolijk and Van Leeuwen, *Voortreffelijk en waardig*, 80.

³²⁶ Poensen, *'Brieven over den Islam'*.

³²⁷ During the nineteenth century this was a commonly accepted idea in the dominant discourse on Mohammed in Europe. This notion also repeatedly occurs in the discourse of the NZG and was presumably taught in during Poensen's missionary training.

G.K. Niemann, *'Inleiding tot de kennis van den islam'*, in: *Mededeelingen* (Rotterdam 1871).

was just nine years old. Poensen wrote about Islamic practices: 'Polygamy and harem are like cancer for family life, and in Java we diagnose this every day!'³²⁸

Poensen noticed that public practice differed from private religious acts.³²⁹ He explained that Islam was the official religion of the Javanese and that Allah was worshipped in public, in the mosque. However, at home, people worshipped Hindu gods, local spirits, and their ancestors: 'Everyday one hears prayers that mention the names of all kinds of spirits, but the name of Allah is missing or is mentioned simultaneously with those of many others. Then one notices people sacrificing to the *Dan-hjang-desa* and others to stones, trees, caves, riverbanks and what else? All the while a single sacrifice is never brought to Allah in his own *mesdjid*.'³³⁰ According to Poensen, the Javanese only proclaimed the Islamic creed at major public events like weddings or funerals. Allah was acknowledged in prayers at annual festivals and during food offerings to the ancestors, guardian spirits, and deities of earth, sky, and water, but he was considered a distant and relatively unapproachable divinity.³³¹ These parallel religious identities that are described by Poensen were not uncommon in Java. To both accept Allah and the local gods and to switch between these two traditions was not necessarily considered contradictory. Animism and Islam were probably perceived as ends of a continuum instead of confined areas of discourse and practice.

Poensen believed the spiritual element was missing in the religious lives of the Javanese; there was no real contact between God and men. He argued that Islam could not meet the needs of the human soul. He illustrated this with the Javanese practice of praying; pious Muslims, the *Putihan*, prayed according to fixed rules, they chanted sentences that most of them did not even understand. They did it, according to Poensen, solely out of obligation and had no 'inner experience' during their prayers.³³² The less devout Javanese Muslims, the *Abangan*, he continued, only prayed to God when they were in need of something.³³³ They mumbled Javanese prayers which included Arabic formulas and placed flowers or incense at sacred places. Each wish requested its own prayer in a language the Javanese did not speak. Hence, in Poensen's eyes, a Javanese prayer was just a ritual to propitiate God rather than an intimate dialogue.

Conversely, a Christian prayer was a moment of communication with God, according to Poensen. It was not important to chant the right formulas; the purpose was to have intimate contact

³²⁸ Poensen, *Brieven over de Islam*, 28.

³²⁹ Poensen, *Brieven over de Islam*, 5, 6.

³³⁰ Carel Poensen, *Brieven over de Islam*, 7.

³³¹ Hefner, *Conversion to Christianity*, 107.

³³² Poensen, *Brieven over de Islam*, 4-6, 8, 9.

³³³ Poensen, *Brieven over de Islam*, 65, 66, 68.

with God.³³⁴ Poensen wrote in 1891, proving to be very modern: 'a truthful prayer is like having a telephone conversation with heaven!'³³⁵ He noted that newly converted Javanese Christians had difficulties with praying in a Christian manner because they were afraid that God would not be satisfied with their words and found it inappropriate to address him as 'our Father'. Poensen argued that in Islam, people were mere subjects of God and that the Javanese Christians consequently still had to develop the feeling that they were God's children.

The Protestant missionaries in West Java, Albers and Van Eendenburg, agreed with their colleagues in Central and East Java that Islam was not yet completely integrated in the people's personal religious lives. Albers argued that although Islam had reshaped Java's social landscape, the people did not really practice an altogether different religion before the arrival of Islam in the archipelago. Some words and names had been changed and Mohammed and Allah were added, but the core convictions had remained unchanged. 'The Sundanese have read the *Qur'an*, but did not understand it. They performed their prayers, but did not understand them. They travelled far, but did not understand why.'³³⁶ He added that the Javanese Muslims continued various pagan customs, like burning wood and incense in front of the house when a funeral procession passed by to scare off angry spirits, or to hang food in trees as a sacrifice for wandering spirits. Also, Albers Othered the people in his region by describing them as children and argued that their ideas were inundated with Hindu, Buddhist, Islamic, and now even Christian dogmas and that they made their own doctrine by mixing elements together in a childlike manner.³³⁷ However, both Albers and Van Eendenburg also regularly commented that Islam was more deeply rooted in the Preanger as in Central and East Java. They continuously stressed that the Sundanese were more pious Muslims than the Javanese. Their writings therefore appear contradictory at times.

The Jesuit Franciscus van Lith agreed with the Protestant missionaries that the Javanese were not truly devoted to Islam. At a conference with the Governor General in 1912, Van Lith commented on this hybrid character of Javanese Islam: '*Desas* in the area of Kedoe are by no means strictly Mohammedan because the population is not attached to Islam; in many *desas* one cannot find a mosque, the mosques are poorly attended, the *desa* governance does not interfere with the prayers and no Christians are coerced to participate in *slametans*. In fact, it has happened that Christians complained they were excluded from participation.'³³⁸ Van Lith had noticed that the Javanese preferred to hold on to their traditions and that *adat* formed an essential part of their tradition. Yet,

³³⁴ Carel Poensen, *De Zending en het Leven des Gebeds op Java* (The Hague 1891) 13-15.

³³⁵ Poensen, '*De Zending*', 20.

³³⁶ Christiaan Albers, *Annual report of 1870* (Ciandur 2 January 1871) Utrechts Archief.

³³⁷ Christiaan Albers, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Ciandur 29 August 1864) Utrechts Archief.

³³⁸ Van Lith and Merthens, *Resume conferentie*.

Van Lith regarded *adat* as the main obstacle on the people's road to conversion; 'A large mass of *desa*-Javanese understand nothing of Islam, at least not the ones around here. In addition, they are stupid and superstitious. Their superstition leads them to a great fear of leaving their *adat*, although they do not understand its significance anymore'.³³⁹ He assumed that when the significance of *adat* would diminish, the aversion for Christianity would diminish as well. Therefore, Van Lith lobbied for years for the modernisation of the justice system in Java. Elsewhere he wrote that the *adat* was spoiled by corruption and rigidity, and called it 'the national hypnosis of the people'.³⁴⁰ He disclosed, however, that he did not want the justice system to be 'Westernized', because he considered the Western justice system the product of a completely different tradition and therefore not suitable for Java.³⁴¹

These reactions show that the Dutch missionaries did not understand other ways of experiencing religion than their own. According to the missionaries, many believers never read the *Qur'an*, nor really understood the prayers they chanted five times a day. This led the missionaries to conclude that they were not 'true' Muslims. Statements like these make clear that the Dutch tried to understand other religions through their own understanding of religion. They were, for example, unable to understand that the chanting of prayers may not have been about the meaning of the prayers but perhaps about the transformative effect of this meditative ritual.

3.4. Islamization processes

As I explained in the first chapter, Islam intensified in Java towards the end of the nineteenth century due to various reasons. New means of transportation and communication reinforced the ties between Java and other Islamic regions which resulted in an increase of knowledge about Islam. In addition, more *pesantren* were founded and more people were able to read the *Qur'an* and other scriptures. This upsurge in Islamic knowledge resulted in more people performing the *haji*, which again led to more knowledge of Islam as it occurred in the Middle East in Java. This paragraph discusses the missionaries' observations of Islamization processes in their districts.

NZG inspector Leonard van Rhijn noticed during his stay in the interior of Java in the late forties that Islam was gaining ground. He visited the mountainous region Tengger and wrote about its

³³⁹ Franciscus Van Lith, *Uitwerking 'Plan en werkwijze der Java-missie'* (Muntilan July 1902) Archives of the Jesuit Province of Indonesia (Semarang).

³⁴⁰ Nationale volkshypnose, in: F. Van Lith, *Het geheim van de Javaan* (The original paper can be found in the Jesuit Archive in Rome and a copy is available in the Jesuit Archives in Semarang).

³⁴¹ Van Rijckevorsel, 50.

people that they pretended to be Muslim to keep peace with the neighbouring peoples.³⁴² He noted that it became more common among the Tenggerese to circumcise their sons and that Allah was increasingly forced upon them, but argued that they were in fact still Hindus who worshipped Visnu and Bromo.³⁴³

Although all missionaries studied here considered Islam only marginal in the peoples' personal religious lives, they all reported Islam was growing stronger and gaining more influence.³⁴⁴ They noticed that more and more people performed the *salat* and attended the Friday prayers. Harthoorn wrote in his annual report on 1857 that Islam was growing stronger and was gaining ground: 'It is often said that Islam lies as a thin layer over the Javanese. However, it is similar to what happens to a hiker who walks on a dusty road on a windy day. Only a thin layer of dust falls down on his clothes, but it also penetrates the fabric, blows into his ears, nose and eyes, finds its way into his throat and fills his lungs until it smothers him. Islam has become a strong force in Java.'³⁴⁵

Poensen shared Harthoorn's worries: 'The influence of Islam in Java is indeed increasing. No one will admit quicker than me that the Javanese people are fascinated by various Muslim influences and people, so that Islam indeed is becoming dangerous for our existence in Java'.³⁴⁶ Poensen repeatedly remarked during his lengthy stay in Java that Islam became increasingly influential in public life. He was worried, for instance, because the number of mosques, *pesantren* and other Islamic schools increased vastly. The percentage of devout Muslims like *hajjis* and *santris*, who enjoyed great respect in the Javanese society, also increased significantly. He remarked that Java had no national holidays; only Islamic holidays and that the Dutch colonial government ought to change this in order to diminish the role of Islam in public life.

Christiaan Albers also witnessed that Islam grew stronger in West Java during the 45 years he missionized there. People became more pious and, according to Albers, more resistant to the mission.³⁴⁷ He compared it to the *Réveil* in Christianity. 'The Sundanese have, in comparison to the Javanese, never been known for being bad or indifferent Mohammedans, yet nowadays they seem to endeavour to be praised for being good Mohammedans. (...) In Ciandur the number of mosques, which can be compared to chapels in Roman Catholic countries, has multiplied. Some seem to be more popular than others, perhaps because of certain teachers, and these are flooded with people a

³⁴² For more information about the religious tradition in Tengger I suggest: Robert W. Hefner, *Hindu Javanese, Tengger tradition and Islam* (New Jersey 1985).

³⁴³ Van Rhijn, *Reis door den Indischen archipel*, 197.

³⁴⁴ Harthoorn, 'De zending op Java en meer bepaald die van Malang, 105-138, 212-253.

³⁴⁵ Harthoorn, 'De zending op Java en meer bepaald die van Malang, 105-138, 212-253.

³⁴⁶ Carel Poensen, *Letter to the board of the NZG* (Kediri 22 April 1889) Utrechts Archief.

³⁴⁷ Christiaan Albers, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Ciandur, 18 May 1872) Utrechts Archief.

few times a week, both for performing their religious rituals and for following religious classes. (...) However, this zeal is not inherited to the Sundanese. Perhaps ... there's something else behind their religious endeavours, who knows?'³⁴⁸ Albers wrote to the board in 1888 that an order was issued that every adult had to perform the *salat*; otherwise they would have no right to an Islamic funeral.³⁴⁹ According to him this scared the people to fulfil their obligations. He reasoned that most people did not act out of true dedication, because how could they truly believe, if they only read texts and chanted prayers they did not understand?³⁵⁰

Van Eendenburg worried that this Islamization process diminished the chances for the Christian mission: 'When I look at the mass and the power that stands in front of us, all courage flows away. We have only the slightest influence on that mass. They are ready to fight us and constantly strengthen their ranks. Islam is a power, especially in the Preanger. Muslims here are active and wary. And the presence of missionaries generates new power. Everywhere, even in the most remote *desas*, gurus and *imams* are appointed and people are encouraged to visit the mosque etc. etc. The people evade carefully getting in contact with us; we are known and hated, even loathed. I am sure my name is already known everywhere and the people are warned against me. Even when our assistants enter a house the inhabitants flee it at the same time.'³⁵¹ In October 1885, Van Eendenburg wrote to the board about a newspaper article which was published on 30 September that year. The article was entitled 'Holy war to destroy all *kafirs*' and stated that fanatical Muslims held secret meetings where they had planned a revolt against the Dutch. Dutch troops had found over two hundred arms in various *kampongs* (hamlets).³⁵² The *Pati*, the indigenous leader of a district's capital, had been transferred to another region, but, according to Van Eendenburg, there was 'enough fuel to keep the fire smouldering' in the region.³⁵³ This indicates that Van Eendenburg also felt the increasing threat of Muslims that started to organise themselves against Dutch rule.

All missionaries reported that Islam was growing stronger in the coastal areas and gaining ground in the interior. They all witnessed that public life was more and more coloured by Islam and that large numbers of formerly 'nominal' Muslims had become more pious. Nevertheless, they simultaneously continued to consider Islam in Java as just a thin layer that covered paganism. They persistently designated Javanese and Sundanese Muslims as 'Muslims in name only' and argued that

³⁴⁸ Christiaan Albers, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Ciandur, June 1884) Utrechts Archief.

³⁴⁹ Christiaan Albers, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Bidana Tjina 16 November 1888) Utrechts Archief.

³⁵⁰ Christiaan Albers, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Ciandur 10 January 1864) Utrechts Archief.

³⁵¹ Simon Van Eendenburg, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Sukabumi 8 May 1883) Utrechts Archief.

³⁵² Simon Van Eendenburg, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Sukabumi 17 October 1885) Utrechts Archief.

³⁵³ Simon Van Eendenburg, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Sukabumi 28 October 1885) Utrechts Archief.

Islam had not really penetrated the soul of the people.³⁵⁴ These contradicting statements show that it was difficult for the missionaries to refute dominant discourses that presented Islam as superficial. As mentioned before, the leading figures in the Dutch mission discourse on Islam in the Indies were board members of the societies, who often had not witnessed Islam in Java personally. Their stereotypical descriptions were considered superior to those of the missionaries, because the board members possessed higher education and were familiar with international scholarly literature on Islam and the colonial world.³⁵⁵ The missionary writings had barely any impact on the dominant discourse and consequently it took years for the general assumptions about Javanese Islam to change within the mission discourse. In addition, the missionaries strategically used both contradictory conceptions to negotiate a better position for themselves. This will be explained in chapter 5.

3.5. Reforms in Javanese Islam

Of course the Dutch missionaries did not enter a static world. On the contrary, the second half of the nineteenth century was a very dynamic period in the history of Java. Processes of Islamization and reformation in Javanese Islam occurred simultaneously and reinforced each other. The emergence of two differing streams within Javanese Islam has already been discussed in chapter 1. A substantial part of the Muslim people, mostly of the urban elite, had started to adhere to a more modern, scripture-based form of Islam in the second half of the nineteenth century. This emerging group started to address themselves as the *Putihan*. Simultaneously, the majority of the people resisted this Islamic intensification by clinging or returning to their hybrid *Kejawen* practices. The *Putihan* began to call these now ‘nominal’ Muslims as the *Abangan*. The emergence of a gap between these two religious categories originated mid-nineteenth century, precisely when the missionaries started to proselytize on the island. This paragraph discusses the missionaries’ views on these reforms.

The oldest surviving accounts on the differences between the *Abangan* and *Putihan* are not from Javanese or Dutch officials. The oldest available sources can be found in the missionary archives and are written by the missionaries from the NZG who were situated in East Java. In 1855, Wessel Hoeszoo called the *Abangan* people ‘secular’, because he noticed that they did not observe the Islamic

³⁵⁴ Marinus Lindenborn, *Stukken van Marinus Lindenborn over de Zending in Indië onder Moslims en Animisten*, Utrechts Archief.

³⁵⁵ The international mission discourse must not be overestimated in the nineteenth century. Until the Mission Conference in Edinburgh in 1910 there was not much exchange between the mission societies of different countries.

Graaf van Randwijck, *Handelen en denken in dienst der zending*, 103.

laws.³⁵⁶ In 1856, Samuel Eliza Harthoorn of the NZG pointed out that there was a difference noticeable between followers of the Islamic knowledge (*Ilmu Santrian*) and heretical non-Muslim knowledge (*Ilmu Pasedjian*) in East Java.³⁵⁷ However, Harthoorn pointed out that ‘since no one understands the meaning and intent of one of these two, the real uncorrupted *Ilmu Santrian* is denigrated with *Pasedj* heresy in spite of itself, and the *Ilmu Pasedj* is unintentionally permeated with *Santri* ideas.’³⁵⁸ Harthoorn clearly wrote about the two different religious traditions in this report in 1856, but it was not until 1857 that he used the terms ‘white people’ (*Putihan*) and ‘red people’ (*Abangan*) to indicate the two currents.

In 1857, Harthoorn wrote an article for the *Mededeelingen* about Javanese Islam. The article opened with the statement that Javanese Muslims could be divided in two groups. One group, the *Abangan*, considered themselves Muslim only because they were circumcised. Yet, according to Harthoorn, they were not really concerned with Islam and should therefore not even be addressed as Muslims. The second group, the *Putihan* was much smaller and more concerned about their faith. The *Putihan* tried to observe the Pillars of Islam; they paid *fitrah* and *zakat* to the priest, celebrated *moeloeddan* and offered *rasool* to the prophet.³⁵⁹ In another article he wrote: ‘These *santris* and others who observe the prayer times are called the white people (*Putihan*, M.K.), the holy people, contrary to the majority of the people that do not observe the prayer times, who are called the red people (*Abangan*, M.K.) with defamation. (This distinction is also common around Semarang according to Hoozee).’³⁶⁰

Harthoorn was of the opinion that *Putihan* knowledge about Islam and Mohammed was not significant either: ‘their knowledge usually consists of nothing more than some fuzzy, dark and deceitful notes about details of his (Mohammed’s, M.K.) life.’³⁶¹ He argued that they appeared more pious, but that still many of them were thieves, slept with prostitutes or committed other crimes, just

³⁵⁶ Ricklefs, ‘The birth of the Abangan’, 35-55.

³⁵⁷ ‘*Ilmu Pasedjian*’ means non-Islamic mystical knowledge. Sometimes this knowledge is addressed as ‘*Ilmu gungung*’, which literally means ‘mountain knowledge’, because most spiritual gurus lived in the mountains. Ricklefs, ‘*Polarizing Javanese Society*’.

³⁵⁸ ‘Daar men echter van geen beide den zin en de bedoeling verstaat is de echte onvervalschte leer der ilmoe santrian haars ondanks met heel wat pasedj ketterij beklad; en evenzo is de leer der pasedj dies onbewust met santrische denkbeelden doortrokken.’ Samuel Eliza Harthoorn, *Annual Report 1856* (Malang 1857) Utrechts Archief.

³⁵⁹ *Fitrah* is charity given to the poor at the end of the Ramadan month. *Zakat* is the practice of charitable giving based on accumulated wealth. *Moeloeddan* was similar to a *slametan*, but celebrated in honour of the prophet at New Year’s Day. The first crops of the yield were offered to the prophet, this was called *rasool*. S.E. Harthoorn, ‘Iets over den Javaanschen Mohammedanen en den Javaanschen Christenen’, in: *Mededeelingen* (Rotterdam, 1857) 183-213.

³⁶⁰ S.E. Harthoorn, ‘De zending op Java en meer bepaald die van Malang, uit het jaarverslag 1857’, in: *Mededeelingen* (Rotterdam 1860) 105-138, 212-253.

³⁶¹ S.E. Harthoorn, *Annual report 1856* (Malang 1857) Utrechts Archief.

like any other Javanese. However, they were convinced they would be saved by God because they adhered to the pillars of Islam. Harthoorn explained that the *Putihan* considered the *Abangan* less worthy because they did not pray five times a day. He actually considered both groups to be superficially Muslim. He argued that to both of them, being a good Muslim meant only performing the prescribed duties and that it did not require strong internal belief.³⁶²

Harthoorn did not distinguish between more or less orthodox Muslims in his approach because he did not consider any Javanese Muslim a *true* Muslim: 'they are not true Mohammedans; not because they do not visit the *mesdjid* (mosque, M.K.) diligently, but because the Javanese moral code has its roots in Hinduism'.³⁶³ In his annual report on 1856 he depicted the hybrid religious identities of the Javanese as 'unnatural': '...No one, no matter how much more knowledge he has of Mohammed than the other Javanese, is detached from pantheistic Buddhist beliefs that used to control Java. In particular, the doctrine of transmigration is deeply rooted in the hearts of the people. For some, this unnatural mixture of beliefs is so obvious that they are called '*santri pasedj*'.³⁶⁴

Carel Poensen first mentioned the distinction between the *Putihan* and *Abangan* in the 1860's. However, he did not write extensively about the subject until the 1880's, probably because the categories were still in development and difficult to research. Poensen explained the difference between the *Putihan* and *Abangan* clearly in an article in the *Mededeelingen* in 1885: 'Indeed the ordinary villager passes by the mosque without dropping in or thinking of Allah; he lets the *Bangsa-Putihan* worship Allah and visit the mosque. (...) Praying and going to the mosque and reading the *Qur'an* are religious duties for a particular class of people indicated with the term *Bangsa-Putihan* – *santris*, *hajjis*, those who are attached to services in the mosque – they have to observe all of that! And all other Javanese, that is to say the great majority of the people, are together termed the *Bangsa-Abangan*'.³⁶⁵ He added that while Islam was penetrating increasingly into Java, simultaneously a large part of the population became less pious Muslims and returned to the ways of their forefathers.³⁶⁶

Poensen's book on Javanese Islam '*Brieven over de Islam, vanuit de binnenlanden van Java*' (Letters on Islam from the interior of Java) from 1886 was, and still is, one of the most important

³⁶² Harthoorn, 'Iets over den Javaanschen Mohammedanen en den Javaanschen Christenen', 183-213.

³⁶³ Harthoorn, 'De zending op Java en meer bepaald die van Malang', 105-138, 212-253.

³⁶⁴ *Santri* indicated students of Islam and *pasedj* indicated Javanese religious knowledge that was present in Java prior to Islam. *Santri Pasedj* thus indicates the hybrid mixture of these different traditions.

S.E. Harthoorn, *Annual report 1856* (Malang 1857) Utrechts Archief.

³⁶⁵ Carel Poensen, 'Iets over den Javaan als mensch' in *Mededeelingen* (Rotterdam 1885) 49, 137. Translation of M.C. Ricklefs, *Polarizing Javanese Society*, 98.

³⁶⁶ Carel Poensen, 'Iets over den Javaan als mens'.

sources on this process of differentiation.³⁶⁷ There he writes: 'Then one learns that the people also divide themselves in two classes, the *Bangsa-Putihan* (the white people, M.K.) and the *Bangsa-Abangan* (the red people, M.K.), the first group is formed by a relatively small number of people, and we can call them the pious, or orthodox Muslims, although we may question their orthodoxy, and the other group is formed by the vast majority, who do not think nor live in a Mohammedan-religious fashion, but rather as they have learnt from their ancestors and they can easily do without Allah...'.³⁶⁸ Poensen did not consider the *Abangan* 'true' Muslims, because they held on to pre-Islamic ideas and customs.

Traditional Javanese Muslims, increasingly addressed as *Abangan*, were dominant in the interior of Java; the areas in which the mission societies were most active. The missionaries soon noticed that the *Abangan*, like the Chinese in Java, were easier to approach than the 'more pious' *Putihan*. The *Abangan* people were less familiar with Islamic dogmas and laws and therefore it was easier to talk to them about the Christian faith because they were less likely to start a substantive discussion. Moreover, it was in the hybrid nature of their religion to creolize all kinds of religious elements. Eventually, the missionaries put all their efforts in evangelizing among the *Abangan* and the Chinese and generally ignored the more modern, on scripture focused *Putihan* Muslims.³⁶⁹

Remarkably, neither Albers nor Van Eendenburg mentioned a distinction between a more orthodox and a more traditional group in Javanese Islam. They did not use the terms *Putihan* or *Abangan* in their writings. Perhaps the NZV missionaries did not notice the distinction because they did not study the Javanese culture and religion nearly as much as the missionaries of the NZG, or the bifurcation was not yet conspicuous in their districts in West Java. However, one should keep in mind that the observations of these two missionaries were limited and that their writings cannot be used as solid evidence of what kind of processes did, or did not, occur in West Java at the time.

3.6. Contact between the missionaries and Muslim leaders

There are no records of an interreligious dialogue between the missionaries under study and Muslim leaders. An official relationship or dialogue between the mission societies and Islamic instances has never been established. The relationships in the mission districts between Christian missionaries and Muslim leaders were friendly in general, but reserved. There are, however, some exceptions. Poensen wrote in a letter from 1884: 'I'm with some *pesantren*-people and *hajjis* (women as well!) on good

³⁶⁷ Poensen, *Brieven over de Islam*.

³⁶⁸ Poensen, *Brieven over de Islam*, 7.

³⁶⁹ Steenbrink, *Dutch colonialism and Indonesian Islam*, 98-123.

terms around here. I sometimes talk with them, but never to interrogate them: it is a confidential, both religious and worldly conversation, just as it occurs. If they would notice that I tried to interrogate them, the friendship would not last long. I inserted a list of one of their "leaders" of their school, a *kyai*, with the titles of his books, which he uses (at school, M.K.).³⁷⁰ This indicated that Poensen maintained relations with Muslim leading figures in Kediri and that he tried to learn more about Javanese Islam through talking to these men and women. He even received a list from a *kyai* which encompassed the literature used at a local *pesantren*. The fact that he was interested in what they read shows as well that Poensen sought to learn more about Islam as it was practiced in East Java.

The famous Dutch scholar and political advisor Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje had noticed that the missionaries were in an excellent position to study the local religious traditions. He was aware that they had a different position in the Javanese society than other Dutchmen because they often lived in one place for decades. Over the years, they were able to build relationships of trust with the local people and to observe their habits. He requested Poensen to send additional information about the teachers and curricula of the *pesantren* around Kediri. Poensen, however, responded negatively and minimized his knowledge by complaining to Neurdenburg: 'Dr S. H. is, as I believe, in the wrong place if he wants to learn from the missionaries about the *pesantren*. More than what is already recounted in the government reports and by different authors; so which is already well-known, can no missionary communicate to him.'³⁷¹

The other missionaries mentioned only sporadically having conversations about faith with Muslim leaders and did not explicitly recounted those discussions in their writings. They wrote mainly about *penghulus*, *santris*, and *hajjis* in negative terms; they were deceitful, fanatic, or focused on self-interest.³⁷² Again, this attitude was not unique in the mission discourse. Scholars Johannes Petrus Veth and Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje also agreed that *hajjis* were the most dangerous enemies of the Dutch authority. In general, it seemed that the missionaries avoided direct contact with more educated Muslims. Hoevenaars, however, did mention in his letters that he was on good terms with the religious leaders in the Mendut area and that sometimes a *penghulu* or *kyai* even visited a service in his church. Hoevenaars invited the religious teachers from the area to special services on Christian

³⁷⁰ 'Kyai' is Javanese for 'sage'.

Carel Poensen, *Letter to J.C. Neurdenburg* (Kediri 16 April 1884) Utrechts Archief.

³⁷¹ Carel Poensen, *Letter to J.C. Neurdenburg* (Kediri 16 April 1884) Utrechts Archief.

³⁷² For example: Simon Van Eendenburg, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Sukabumi 17 October 1885) Utrechts Archief.

holidays and to share a meal afterwards with his congregation. He even wrote that he adjusted his sermons so it would not offend his Muslim audience.³⁷³

3.7. Conclusion

This chapter focused on the Dutch mission discourse on Islam in general, and as it occurred in Java in particular. Directors, board members, and the missionaries all contributed in varying amounts to this discourse. The discourse was predominantly formed by board members and not by the missionaries who actually encountered Islam in their work. Islam and Muslims were differently assessed by the three mission societies, meaning that each society had its own discourse. There was, however, no special attention for Islam in the discourse of the Jesuit Order; there the subject was silenced. One of the main conclusions of this chapter is that the NZV, which was strongly influenced by the *Réveil*, showed a harsher attitude towards Islam than the NZG. The NZV recurrently constructed Islam as the main Other in their writings. As became clear in the previous chapter as well, the NZG invested much more in the study of Islam. The *Mededeelingen* contained more informing articles, from both board members and missionaries, than the *Orgaan* and *Claverbond*. This explains why NZG missionaries Samuel Harthoorn and Carel Poensen were more influential in the Dutch discourse on Islam than their colleagues from the NZV and Jesuit Order. The situation changed, however, after the retirement of NZV's director Coolsma in 1908. His successors Schröder and Lindenborn had a more open attitude to Islam and increased the attention to this subject in the educational programme and mission journal of the NZV. The differences between the attitudes towards Islam of the NZG and NZV thus decreased in the course of time.

Only a few missionaries have studied thoroughly Islam out of personal interest; most learned through observations in the field. Out of the six missionaries who are central in this study NZG missionaries Harthoorn and Poensen have contributed most to the Dutch discourse on Islam. Their work is still considered to be among the most important sources on the major transformations Indonesian Islam underwent in the nineteenth century. Samuel Harthoorn contributed to the institutionalization of Islamic knowledge with his lengthy reports on local beliefs and practices around Malang. Furthermore, the term 'Javanism', which he coined to indicate the folk religious tradition in Java, is still frequently used by both believers and scholars today. Carel Poensen was the first to write extensively about the emerging schism in Javanese Islam between the *Putihan* and *Abangan*. His

³⁷³ Petrus Hoevenaars, *Letter to Monseigneur Hellings* (Bandung 22 March 1906) Jesuit Archives Jakarta.

detailed descriptions of *Abangan* practices were not only valued by esteemed scholars in his own time, but they are still among the most valuable sources on nineteenth century Javanese Islam.

Despite the population of Java and the missionary's target group being Muslim, most missionaries, however, did not spend much of their time studying Islam. Van Eendenburg and Hoevenaars hardly addressed the matter at all in their writings and Albers and Van Lith wrote only a few articles specifically on Islam. Still, the missionary reports show that they were attentive to religious differences and developments for the purpose of their mission. It is therefore no surprise that it was Dutch missionaries who first noticed the emerging distinction between *Putihan* and *Abangan* Islam. They actively negotiated the dominant Dutch discourse on religion by categorizing local traditions. I showed that they persistently distinguished between *real* Islam and hybrid, or in their words, 'superstitious' and 'syncretic' beliefs and concluded that the majority of Java's population was not really Muslim. All mission societies decided to focus mainly on the conversion of 'nominal' (*Abangan*) Muslims. They avoided what they defined as *true* Muslims, like *santris* and *hajjis*, and therefore moved away from the Islamic religious centres in the coastal areas. Instead, they were primarily active in rural areas where the majority adhered to a *pesantren*-based, Javanese Islam.

In addition, the mission discourse focused on similarities and differences between Islam and Christianity in order to form useful arguments in the missionaries' discussions with the Javanese and Sundanese. The fact that Muslims were already acquainted with many Biblical stories and names could be used to the missionaries' advantage. They decided that they could make use of Jesus' status in Islam as an acknowledged prophet, to introduce him in their Christian narrative. All missionaries agreed that Islam differed most from Christianity in its morality and that they should start with teaching their 'elevated' Christian morals in respect to family life.

Most interesting in this chapter, it shows that the personal observations of the missionaries were usually not in agreement with the assumptions that were dominant back home, but that it was difficult for the missionaries to refute the dominant assumptions about Javanese Islam. Consequently, both the Dutch mission discourse and the personal writings of the missionaries often contained inconsistencies. For example, I showed that all six missionaries make mention of Islam gaining ground towards the end of the century. They reported frequently that Islam was growing stronger in public life and that formerly nominal Muslims became more and more pious Muslims. Yet, the mission discourse also shows that all missionaries continually minimized, or even denied, the prominence of Islam in Javanese society and even in the personal lives of the Javanese. I will explain in chapter 5 that both conceptions of Javanese Islam were of strategic value to the missionaries.

The missionaries did not consider the Sundanese and Javanese 'true' Muslims and continually emphasised the difference between the peoples' personal and public religious lives to confirm the common notion that Islam was nothing but a thin veneer that covered an entirely different religious system. Even Harthoorn and Poensen, who studied the Javanese people thoroughly and wrote much about Javanese Islam, held the conviction that, in general, the Javanese were 'superficial' Muslims. Harthoorn focused above all on 'Javanism' in his writings and thus consequently diminished the importance of Islam in the Javanese society while Poensen, who dealt explicitly with Islam in his work, also continually Othered Javanese Muslims from 'true' Muslims. The next chapter will focus on indigenous Christian movements that had a hybrid character, similar to the *Abangan*.

Chapter 4. Independent missionary activities

'Tunggul Wulung and his followers connected the Gospel again and again to their ngelmu. They have obviously gone too far with this and they made mistakes often, but it was not wrong in essence. It certainly was the right way to find an entry for Christianity'.³⁷⁴

This quotation from the Jesuit Franciscus van Lith shows his ambivalent attitude towards a so-called Christian *guru ngelmu* (religious teacher), Tunggul Wulung, whom he had encountered in his district. Before the colonial administration allowed Dutch mission organisations to evangelise in Java, other forces were already active propagating Christianity on a small scale. This chapter analyses the rise of various indigenous Christian movements in Java in the nineteenth century and the way Dutch missionaries responded to these movements and reflected on their results. First, there were European and Eurasian lay people who were engaged in spreading the Christian faith, independently of any organisation. I will discuss a couple of these men and women in the first part of this chapter. Secondly, indigenous Christian proselytizers, or *guru ngelmu*, had an important role in the early stage of Christianization in Java. Therefore I will discuss a few gurus whose activities impacted the mission discourse in more detail in part two.

The pioneers of the Dutch mission thus started their work in a very dynamic situation, where both Muslim and indigenous Christian teachers propagated their teachings. Christian indigenous gurus were mainly active in Central and East Java and had contact primarily with the missionaries who were active there. Harthoorn, Poensen, and Van Lith wrote especially about the teachings, methods and results of these evangelists. They reflected on their methods and discussed whether the mission could learn something from their approach. In addition, they discussed the ways in which a missionary should deal with such indigenous Christian communities within their districts.

The second part of this chapter analyses primarily the missionaries' writings on the indigenous Christian gurus. Questions that will be addressed are: How definite were the lines between the *Kristen Londo* (Christians who were converted and led by the Dutch missionaries) and *Kristen Jowo* (Christians who were converted and led by the indigenous gurus)? To what extent was there interaction between the two groups? What did the missionaries think of their approaches and were their own methods

³⁷⁴ Van Lith, *Kjahi Sadrach*.

influenced by the indigenous evangelists? The chapter ends with a paragraph that answers the question of why the indigenous evangelists were more successful than Dutch missionaries between 1850 and 1910.

This chapter is largely indebted to the work of Philip van Akkeren, Claude Guillot, Rémy Madinier, and Sutarman Soediman Partonadi. Van Akkeren, a former evangelical missionary, who worked in East Java from 1934 until 1962, published his enlightening book *'Sri and Christ; A Study of Indigenous Church in East Java'* in 1970. Claude Guillot, a French scholar who studies the history of Islam in the Malayan region, published an insightful book on the Christian guru Sadrach in 1981: *'L'affaire Sadrach: un essai de Christianisation à Java au XIXe siècle'*.³⁷⁵ Madinier wrote a detailed chapter on the Catholics' relationship with indigenous Christian gurus in the book *'The Politics of Agama in Java and Bali'*, which he wrote with Michel Picard. Sutarman Soediman Partonadi wrote a comprehensive study on Sadrach in 1988: *'Sadrach's community and its contextual roots, a nineteenth century Javanese expression of Christianity'*, which is still, in my opinion, the most detailed and well-written book on Sadrach. In addition to their findings, I will focus on the relationships between these gurus and the missionaries under study. Harthoorn, Poensen, Albers, and Van Lith have written multiple articles about these men, in which they reflect on their approaches, teachings and results. The writings of Van Eendenburg and Hoevenaars, however, do not mention the indigenous Christian gurus or communities.

4.1. The founding of indigenous churches

Because both the VOC and the Dutch colonial government attempted, for a long time, to minimize Christian proliferation in Java, the Christian community barely increased in the period between the departure of the Portuguese and the middle of the nineteenth century. The Christian community in Java mainly consisted of Europeans and people of mixed descent. The few indigenous Christians were predominantly auxiliary Dutch troops and mostly from Moluccan origin.³⁷⁶ Therefore, the pioneering NZG missionaries were surprised to learn of the existence of a few small local proselytizing movements in the interiors of Java. In response to restrictions imposed by the state, people who wished to do something for the conversion of the Javanese had sought subversive ways to carry out 'mission work'. Indigenous and Eurasian evangelists were not as closely monitored by the Dutch

³⁷⁵ Guillot studied the social character of Sadrach's community. His aim was to investigate and understand the motives of the Javanese who followed Sadrach to convert to Christianity. His conclusion is that many people converted to Christianity in a struggle for social equality. Sadrach was seen as a mediator between the colonised and the colonisers.

³⁷⁶ Madinier, 'The Catholic politics of inclusiveness'.

colonial state and as a result these two kinds of proselytizing groups could make an effort to spread Christianity since the early decades of the nineteenth century. Lay people of mixed descent, mainly women, sought to convert the Javanese who worked on their plantations and in their houses. Indigenous gurus, who combined their knowledge of Sundanese and Javanese spiritualism, Islam, and Christianity, travelled around the island to educate interested people in Christianity.

4.2. Lay people of mixed descent

There were some pious Europeans and people of mixed descent -usually women- who set up catechism classes to convert the Javanese who worked on their estates. These attempts usually won over only a few dozen of people. The most successful example of a private mission by European lay people was the Protestant Salatiga mission. The Salatiga mission owed its origins to the hard work of Elisa Johanna Van Vollenhoven- de Wildt (1824-1906).³⁷⁷ Her husband was the administrator of a plantation in Salatiga and De Wildt soon came in contact with the local residents. She was very committed to her faith and had spread Christianity among the workers on the plantation and all the residents in the surrounding *desas* since 1854. Eventually she came in contact with Jelle Eeltje Jellesma, a missionary from the NZG. He sent two of his Javanese assistants to support her in her mission.

After a while, the first Javanese converts in the Salatiga region were prepared to be baptized. The NZG missionary Wessel Hoezoo baptized them and during the following years the Christian community started to flourish. De Wildt bought a piece of land to be cultivated by the community. This led to the foundation of a Christian *desa*, named Wonoredjo, in 1857. After De Wildt repatriated, she sought support for Wonoredjo. A church in the Dutch town Ermelo agreed to send out a young man, Reijer de Boer, to lead the Salatiga church in 1860. After De Boers' death, the Salatiga mission was saved by the Neukirchener mission.³⁷⁸ This joint cooperation, founded in 1888, between Dutch and German churches continued to strive for the Christian mission around Salatiga. The evangelical Salatiga churches eventually formed the *Gereja Kristen Jawah Tengah Utara* (Christian Church of North Central Java, GKJTU) in 1937. Although the church in Wonoredjo was eventually led by Europeans, it stayed true to its original aim to stay close to Javanese customs. For instance, before and after the harvest, there would be a special service in church to pray for a good harvest. Some of the

³⁷⁷ In some sources E.J. Van Vollenhoven-de Wildt is addressed as Mrs Le Jolle.

³⁷⁸ The Neukirchener mission was active in North-Central Java from 1884 until 1949. After the death of the Dutch missionary De Boer, a German couple took charge over Salatiga and extended the mission to a wider region. <http://images.neukirchenermission.multiply.multiplycontent.com/attachment/0/Tfh@lwooCsQAADeMDP81/Java%20Geschichte.pdf?key=neukirchenermission:journal:316&nmid=459467300> (July 2011).

names in the prayers had been changed, but the ritual itself hardly differed from a Javanese harvest *slametan*.³⁷⁹

Two other European lay-evangelists were the sisters Philips-Stevens and Philips-Van Oostrom. Both lived close together in the interior of northern Java and made an effort to Christianize the local population. Philips-Stevens corresponded frequently with Mr Frederik Anthing, a Dutch lawyer who took great interest in the indigenous mission, and also with the NZG missionaries Wessel Hoeszoo and Carel Poensen. In 1869, she met with the famous Christian guru Sadrach, who will be discussed in the eighth paragraph of this chapter. He lived a few years in Tuksanga and assisted Philips-Stevens in leading the local congregation which flourished under their joint leadership. Philips- Van Oostrom worked closely together with the Javanese guru Johannes Vreede, a former student of Mr Anthing, who would later become an assistant of the Jesuit missionary Van Lith. However, there were no missionaries appointed in the region where these sisters lived and the converts had to travel to the nearby districts of Hoeszoo of the NZG and Aart Vermeer of the NGZV in order to be baptized.

Ma Christina was a Javanese woman converted by Tunggul Wulung and baptized by the NZG missionary Hoeszoo in March 1853. She moved to Batavia after her baptism and filled her days with proselytizing the Christian faith to the women in her area. She was not associated to any specific mission organisation or church, but had friendships with several ministers and missionaries. When the women she taught gained sufficient knowledge of Christianity, Ma Christina had them baptized by these ministers or missionaries. When she died at the age of sixty-seven, her community of converts consisted of sixty-five women.³⁸⁰

Johannes Emde (1774-1859) was a German watchmaker who lived in Surabaya, East Java and married a royal Javanese woman from Solo. Emde, together with his Javanese wife and daughter, decided to dedicate all of his spare time to the Christian mission in 1815. As such, he became one of the founders of the churches in East Java and he and his pietistic companions were nicknamed the 'Saints of Surabaya'. The term 'Saints of Surabaya' was based on the *Wali Sanga*, the nine 'saints' who were famous for their contribution to the spread of Islam in Java. Emde's approach to missionizing was spreading Christian literature and translations of the Gospel of Mark. His aim was to keep his converts away from both Islam and Javanese culture. For instance, he strictly forbade circumcision, *wayang*, *gamelan*, Javanese clothing, and hairstyles. Mrs Emde even tried to introduce a sort of

³⁷⁹ Van Akkeren, *Sri and Christ*, 166.

³⁸⁰ Sumartana, *Mission at the crossroads*, (1994) 64.

uniform for Javanese Christians to wear as a signifier for their Christian identity.³⁸¹ It would consist of shoes, white pants, a long black *kebaja*, and a hat.³⁸² Because his followers had left their *adat* and practiced Dutch culture they were nicknamed the *Kristen Londo*, the Dutch Christians. Missionary Harthoorn of the NZG did not agree with Emde's approach and they came into a severe conflict.³⁸³

4.3. *Guru ngelmu*

The second type of proselytizing movement was led by indigenous Christian *guru ngelmu*, who employed Javanese concepts in their understanding of the Christian faith. The source material on these gurus and their work is rather limited because they continued the tradition of oral transmission of religious knowledge. Therefore, the only available sources are secondary and written by missionaries and Dutch officials. The missionaries, however, had a problematic relationship with the indigenous gurus; on the one hand these gurus shared the same goal, but on the other hand they considered these gurus their competitors. The Dutch officials were also suspicious of these gurus because some of them had many followers and the Dutch were afraid these men would use their influence for political purposes. As a consequence, these particular sources have to be read in a careful and critical manner.

Java has a long tradition of influential *gurus* or *kyais* (teachers), who travelled through the country teaching people their *ngelmu* (knowledge).³⁸⁴ With the Islamization of Java there emerged a loosely structured society of religious leadership revolving around *kyais*, religious teachers who possessed proficiency in pre-Islamic (Hindu and Buddhist) and Islamic beliefs and practices. These *kyais* formed the principal intermediaries between the *desa* people and the realm of the supernatural. These gurus taught spiritual knowledge to their followers. It was thought that anyone who could control *ngelmu* perfectly could master both nature and evil spirits. Therefore, a *guru ngelmu* was also often asked to help people to solve all sorts of problems they encountered in life. Someone who possessed *ngelmu* was believed to be able to manipulate spiritual forces and to influence people's lives through fortune or misfortune with his divine powers. A guru usually charged for his services and some managed to become very wealthy.

³⁸¹ Explicit rules with regard to clothing in order to be identifiable as a member of a certain religious group has been a common phenomenon. For example, *dhimmi* laws in the Ottoman Empire denied non-Muslims the right to wear the color green.

³⁸² C.W. Nortier, *Een horlogemaker en een landheer, de eerste Christus getuigen in Oost-Java* (The Hague 1954).

³⁸³ The conflict between Emde and Harthoorn is discussed in chapter 7.

³⁸⁴ '*Ngelmu*' arrives from the Arabic word '*ilm*' which means 'knowledge' and usually refers to knowledge of Islam. *Nga* is a syllable in Javanese script that is often used to start a word.

Originally, the concept of *ngelmu* was inseparably connected to *Kejawen*; the hybrid tradition which combined animistic beliefs and practices with elements from Hinduism, Buddhism, and eventually Islam.³⁸⁵ However, from the 1820s onward, there were also a few Christian gurus active in the interior of Java who had learned about Christianity from European traders and colonists and had integrated these ideas in their teachings. These were by far the most important Christian proselytizers throughout the nineteenth century on the island as they converted far larger numbers of people than the Dutch. The indigenous Christian communities were, however, not as well defined as the communities led by the missionaries, therefore there are different sources that point out varying numbers and are thus not very reliable.³⁸⁶ However, they all show that the number of Christians rose substantially higher in areas where indigenous gurus were active in contrast to mission areas. The Javanese guru Sadrach, who will be discussed in paragraph 8 of this chapter, supposedly converted 2500 people in the short time span of 1870 to 1873. Carel Poensen wrote in 1883 that 4400 Javanese were already converted to Christianity, of which 3500 lived in Bagelen, the region where Sadrach was active.³⁸⁷ Various sources claim that his community in 1890 consisted of more than seven thousand members spread over 371 villages.³⁸⁸

The indigenous gurus continued their work even after the Dutch societies entered the stage in 1848 and started the institutionalized phase of the Christian mission. For more than fifty years the indigenous churches and Dutch churches existed side by side without much contact between them. The relationship between the Dutch missionaries and the indigenous Christian gurus was complicated. On the one hand missionaries admired, or even envied, gurus' large numbers of converts. Some missionaries, including Harthoorn and Albers, admitted in their writings that the indigenous evangelists achieved results that they never could. Albers wrote in 1873 about the indigenous guru Johannes Vreede - who would become Van Lith's assistant in 1898 - that he worked without the supervision of a missionary and that he managed to convert an impressive number of people. Albers remarked: 'I do not think this would have been the case if there had been a missionary present.'³⁸⁹ Some, including NZG inspector Van Rhijn, praised the indigenous Christian communities for their knowledge and commitment, while others critiqued their 'inadequate understanding' of Christianity.³⁹⁰ Many did not consider the followers of these gurus *real* Christians. Most missionaries

³⁸⁵ Ricklefs, *Mystical Synthesis in Java*.

³⁸⁶ There are no clear records of what happened to these communities after the gurus left or passed away. It is imaginable that in many cases the people fell back into old habits in the absence of a strong, charismatic, Christian leader.

³⁸⁷ Ricklefs, *Polarizing Javanese society*, 116.

³⁸⁸ Ricklefs, *A history of modern Indonesia*, 154.

³⁸⁹ Christiaan Albers, *Letter to the Board of the NZV* (Ciandur 15 September 1873) Utrechts Archief.

³⁹⁰ Van Rhijn, *Reis door den Indischen archipel*, 160-163.

were convinced mixing traditional Javanese mystical knowledge with Christian dogmas only evoked superstition, not true belief.

There was normally little contact between the Christian communities that were formed by indigenous evangelists and the Dutch missionaries. The indigenous Christian communities sought to avoid Dutch influence in general. For example, Albers once reported that three indigenous Christian men had come to visit him. They told him that there were 450 Christians living near Driederfas who were converted by Javanese proselytizers. These three men came to Albers, because they believed the community was in need of European guidance.³⁹¹ Despite this hopeful message for the NZV, Albers never mentioned the Christians of Driederfas again in his letters or reports, which suggests that the majority of that community did not seek *rapprochement*.

4.4. *The missionaries and Christian gurus*

The Dutch missionaries were desperate to find methods to convert the Javanese people. However, most Javanese were determined to hold on to their ancestral traditions that had defined Javanese culture long before Christianity arrived. In addition, Christianity was seen as a 'Dutch' religion, hence the religion of their oppressors.³⁹² The social order in Java was very hierarchical; there were strict hierarchical boundaries between classes and between ethnic groups. Different groups were not supposed to interfere in each other's affairs; therefore each group had its own hospitals, schools, courts et cetera. It was very difficult for the Dutch missionaries to cross these boundaries. On this point they faced severe competition with indigenous Christian gurus who did not have this disadvantage. In most cases the Dutch missionaries opposed the Christian gurus and their hybrid teachings. The missionaries considered all forms of creating an indigenous theology syncretic and unacceptable. Nevertheless, the spreading of Christian *ngelmu* was the most successful method for the establishment of Christianity in Java at a time when the Dutch approach was failing.

As a consequence of the Dutch missionaries' attitude, the two Christian currents existed side by side with barely any contact between them for quite some time. On one side were the Europeanized Christians who were converted by the missionaries. Often they dressed like Europeans, renamed themselves, and abandoned most of their Javanese traditions. Some missionaries insisted their followers cut their hair short, stay away from *gamelan* music, *wayang* performances, and *slametan* ceremonies. Traditions such as reading Javanese poetry and the decoration of family graves

³⁹¹ Christiaan Albers, *Letter to the Board of the NZV* (Ciandur 4 November 1878) Utrechts Archief.

³⁹² Sumartana, *Mission at the crossroads*, 22.

were also banned. The Jesuit missionary Hoevenaars wrote, for example, about the Javanese arts; ‘...last year there was the *wayang* play, but if we would want to see heathendom, we can just as well visit the bars...’³⁹³ Through time, there were several confrontations between the two groups. The only exception was Modjo Warno, a *desa* lead by the Dutch missionary Jellesma and the native charismatic leader Paulus Tosari, who will be discussed in paragraph 6.

The NZG missionary Wessel Hoeszoo was one of the first to write about these emerging separate Christian currents in 1882. He wrote that the Europeanized group was known as ‘*Kristin Londo*’ (Dutch Christians) and that the Christians who were converted by Javanese gurus, called themselves ‘*Kristen Jowo*’ (Javanese Christians).³⁹⁴ This group considered their Christian faith as one of many elements in an inclusive Javanese spirituality.³⁹⁵ They accepted some beliefs and practices of Christianity into their belief system, but rejected others. For example, Conrad Coolen, whose life is addressed in the next paragraph, refused the baptism to his followers. This group held on to the Javanese culture and traditions and did not alter their lifestyle. Another difference between the two currents was that the *Kristin Londo* community was more structured around the church: the church was an institution and the missionary was the leader of the church. In *Kristen Jowo* communities, there was no distinction between a worldly and spiritual community as was common in other non-Christian *desas* in Java.³⁹⁶

Even though the indigenous gurus converted larger numbers than the European missionaries, their results were less definite in general. Most gurus travelled around, from village to village, and the converted Christians formed some sort of loose network. In areas without a strong, charismatic leader, or after the death of the guru, converts sometimes fell back into old habits after some time and reverted to their former religion. Some indigenous Christian communities managed nevertheless to endure after the death of their leader; for example the Christian community of Tunggul Wulung addressed in paragraph 7. At the time of Tunggul Wulung’s death, his community consisted of 1058 people; five years later, in 1890, this number had risen to 1427.³⁹⁷

³⁹³ Petrus Hoevenaars, *Letter to Monseigneur Hellings* (Mendut 23 September 1900).

³⁹⁴ Franciscus Van Lith, *Kjahi Sadrach, eene les voor ons uit de Protestantse zending van midden Java*, (unpublished) Archives of the Jesuit Province of Indonesia (Semarang).

³⁹⁵ Madinier, *The Catholic politics of inclusiveness*.

³⁹⁶ Van Akkeren, *Sri and Christ*, 149.

³⁹⁷ Van Lith, *Kjahi Sadrach*.

4.5. Conrad Laurens Coolen

A well-known example of such an indigenous guru is Conrad Laurens Coolen (1775-1873). Coolen was of mixed descent; his father was Russian and his mother Javanese. He was born and brought up in a European community in Semarang. Coolen converted to Christianity at the age of 43. In the 1820s Coolen moved to Ngoro, by then an abandoned piece of land of 142 hectares south of Majagung, where he worked the land and built a church.³⁹⁸ Soon the land proved to be fruitful, which attracted other people to Ngoro, and in 1844 the number of habitants had already risen to 986.³⁹⁹ The *desa* was well-known in the area for accepting poor, sick, and even those convicted of crimes. Coolen governed the village in a strict manner and did not tolerate any form of indecent or criminal behaviour. He did not require conversion to Christianity before allowing Javanese to move to Ngoro; in fact he even installed an imam to serve the Muslim community.

He managed to convert a large number of people, partly due to his status as a *guru ngelmu*; someone who supposedly has supernatural powers.⁴⁰⁰ He owed this status to several events. In 1848, the volcano Kelut erupted near Ngoro. Coolen called everyone inside the church and the community prayed together that Ngoro would stay unharmed. The stream of lava passed by the village and left it undamaged. In addition, when a famine struck the area in 1852, the fields of Ngoro were the only ones that continued to enjoy abundance. Moreover, Coolen always took the side of his tenants in conflicts with the colonial government and was therefore deeply respected by the people. Consequently, Coolen was known in the region as a wise and spiritual teacher with extraordinary powers.⁴⁰¹ Nonetheless, a conflict with the colonial administration concerning his refusal to allow his tenants to perform forced labour in the cultivation system led to the withdrawal of his lease and ultimately this stripped him of his standing in the community. Protestant missionaries then seized the chance to gain influence in this indigenous Christian community.

Since Coolen was raised by his Javanese mother, he spoke Javanese fluently and was able to link pre-existing Hindu knowledge to Christianity. He led the Sunday morning services in Ngoro himself where he spoke passionately about the Christian faith. He embraced popular Javanese traditions in the services, such as *wayang* and *gamelan* and read the Bible in the *Kawi* tradition, in ancient, holy Javanese. This appealed to the Javanese people and large numbers of Christians -and non-Christians- attended his services. As was common for gurus at the time, he often debated with other gurus, *kyais* or *santris* in public, to win the sympathy of the listeners. Famous is Coolen's metaphor for the Holy

³⁹⁸ Van Akkeren, *Sri and Christ*, 56.

³⁹⁹ Ricklefs, *Polarizing Javanese society*, 110.

⁴⁰⁰ Madinier, *The Catholic politics of inclusiveness*.

⁴⁰¹ Van Akkeren, *Sri and Christ*, 56.

Trinity, which he expressed during one of these debates. He explained that the sun is more than just the sun, it is also warmth and light; those are three different things, yet all three are one and the same.⁴⁰² With this metaphor Coolen won the debate and convinced his opponents and the audience to convert.

Coolen had strong personal opinions on how Christianity should be practiced. For example, he denied his followers baptism. He considered the baptism a heretical, European invention that meant assimilation or 'going Dutch'. Or, as some authors claim, he rejected baptism because his own children could not be baptized, since they were not born into a legal marriage.⁴⁰³ Nevertheless, some of his followers went to Surabaya, where a European minister was stationed, to be baptized. When Coolen found out about this, he expelled these people from Ngoro. Eventually Coolen had to give in on this point and in 1854 he and two hundred of his people were baptized. His followers, however, did not cut off their long hair and they did not change their names to Christian names, which was at the time common for Javanese who were baptized in the mission lands.

Coolen had a problematic relationship with the European missionaries. On the one hand they were excited by his success to convert so many Javanese to Christianity. There were at least a thousand Christians living in the area where he was active.⁴⁰⁴ Moreover, Coolen not only converted a large number of people, he also translated several doctrinal accounts into Javanese and Christianized Javanese and Islamic prayers and narratives. However, his success also led to jealousy in some missionaries. Harthoorn wrote that Emde and his companions actively tried to 'steal' Coolen's assistants around Surabaya. They offered them money, clothes and more status to leave Coolen and to come and work for them.⁴⁰⁵ On the other hand, the missionaries did not approve of his polygamous lifestyle.⁴⁰⁶ They also did not approve of his hybrid version of Christianity which included both ancient Javanese traditions and Islamic elements. Coolen even introduced a 'Christian *shahada*' in Ngoro:

⁴⁰² Claude Guillot, *L'affaire Sadrach, un essai de christianisation à Java au XIX^e siècle* (Paris 1981) 84.

⁴⁰³ Coolen had a family before he moved to Ngoro, but they did not move to the uncultivated land with him. Coolen remarried after a few years in Ngoro, but since he had never divorced his first wife, this second marriage, and the children that were born in this marriage, were never acknowledged by the church. Van Akkeren, *Sri and Christ*, 72.

⁴⁰⁴ The number of Christians differs in different sources. Harthoorn noted that there were 1158 Christians living in the region of Ngoro. (S.E. Harthoorn, *Diary on 1860* (Malang 1861) Utrechts Archief).

⁴⁰⁵ S.E. Harthoorn, *Diary on 1860* (Malang 1861) Utrechts Archief.

⁴⁰⁶ Coolen had at least two wives, but some sources claim he had even more wives. Ricklefs, *Polarizing Javanese Society*, 109.

'La ilaha illa Allah, Yesus Kristus iyo roh Allah'

'There is no God but Allah, Jesus is the spirit of Allah'.⁴⁰⁷

In this sentence Coolen tried to capture the essence of the concept of the Holy Trinity and make it sound as the Muslim *shahada*, so the people would easily familiarize with it. He even used this *shahada* in rituals that resembled Sufi *dhikr*.⁴⁰⁸ However, the missionaries judged this as syncretic and thus heretical. The missionaries aimed at conversion to the European version of Christianity which was the only truthful version in their eyes. Therefore, they encouraged their converts to abandon their past life; their traditions, their appearance, even their name and to replace it with the Western alternative.

Coolen was active in Central-Java, including the region around Malang that later became Harthoorn's district. Harthoorn admitted that most Christians in the region had been converted by Coolen and that his only successes were based on Coolen's preparatory work. Contrary, Carel Poensen of the NZG, who was also active in East Java, did not acknowledge Coolen's eminent role in the conversion of many in Central-Java. Poensen wrote that the origin of Javanese Christian communities in the region was unknown. In a different letter, however, Poensen does refer to Coolen as a 'pioneer' in the Javanese mission.⁴⁰⁹ Poensen was ambiguous in his writing on Coolen. He did appreciate the large number of people Coolen had converted, but was convinced that Coolen's teachings were ill-informed and that his version of Christianity was consequently corrupted. He argued that Pak Dasimah, one of his assistants who was converted by Coolen, only learnt the truth meaning of Christianity when he met with the evangelisers of Surabaya. Emde, not Coolen, had been the one who taught him the importance of the baptism and the Eucharist.⁴¹⁰ Nevertheless, Poensen admitted that Coolen at least did not demand his followers to change their names, stop wearing Javanese clothes, scarves and a *kris*, like the much more conservative Emde did. Harthoorn, who had visited many of Coolen's sermons, also admired that his followers remained 'truly Javanese' after their conversion; they did not alter their lifestyles greatly. Both Poensen and Harthoorn were much more liberal than Emde and disapproved of the strict rules the 'saints of Surabaya' implemented on the Javanese Christians because they believed the Christian Javanese should remain 'Javanese' after their conversion.

⁴⁰⁷ Partonadi, *Sadrach's community and its contextual roots*, 135.

Guillot, *L'affaire Sadrach*, 82.

⁴⁰⁸ Carel Poensen, 'Matheus Aniep', in: *Mededeelingen* (Rotterdam 1879). *Dhikr* is an Islamic devotional act, which involves the repetition of a certain word or creed. *Dhikr* is usually done individually, but in some Sufi orders it is instituted as a ceremonial activity. The repetition of prayers is also known in Catholicism as the Rosary.

⁴⁰⁹ Poensen, 'Matheus Aniep'.

⁴¹⁰ Poensen, 'Matheus Aniep'.

The reason of Coolen's success was, according to Harthoorn, that he combined Hindu and Christian teachings. He linked Christian stories to Brahma and Visnu and underlined the similarities between the incarnations of Krishna to that of Christ. Harthoorn explained that arguing in the Javanese tradition is based on sound rather than on content. Javanese would, for example, argue that a foal is not a horse because it sounds different. The resemblance between the words 'Krishna' and 'Christ' therefore made a strong argument that they are one and the same.⁴¹¹ Another reason for success was that Coolen did not treat his faith as merchandise like the missionaries in Surabaya did with their pamphlets, according to Harthoorn. Studying Coolen's methods pointed out another difference for Harthoorn. Influential Javanese gurus, like Coolen and his assistants, were all of a more mature age than his own assistants. Yet, the missionaries always trained young men, because they still had the ability to absorb new knowledge. However, young men did not have any authority in religious matters in the Javanese culture, so it was difficult to find a suitable position for his pupils after they graduated. Coolen's success made Harthoorn realise he needed to find older men with a natural ability to evangelise and stop training young men.⁴¹²

4.6. Paulus Tosari

The Javanese evangeliser Paulus Tosari was described as 'an excellent Christian and an honour for the Javanese church' by Harthoorn.⁴¹³ Paulus Tosari was a famous Javanese church leader, like the other charismatic indigenous preachers that are discussed here, but he had chosen a slightly different path than the other gurus. He decided to work together with Dutch missionaries in the Christian *desa* Modjo Warno. Consequently, he functioned as a border figure between the *Kristen Jowo* and *Kristen Londo*.

Paulus Tosari was born in East Java in 1813 as Kasan Jariyo. His father followed the tradition of Javanese *ngelmu* and his mother was Muslim, therefore he knew much about both religious traditions. His mother sent him to study at a *pesantren* to study Arabic in order to become a *santri*. After his education he came in contact with the Christian guru Coolen. He was very much impressed by Coolen's teachings and soon stopped performing his Muslim duties. He replaced the five obligatory Islamic prayers with Christian prayers and apparently repeated the Christian confession in a way which

⁴¹¹ S.E. Harthoorn, *De Evangelische Zending en Oost-Java, een kritische bijdrage* (Haarlem 1863) 157.

⁴¹² In the period 1849-1857 37 men had completed the assistant training by a NZG missionary and 25 men had left the programme as soon as they could read and write to work in a European office. Of these 37 men 16 were still employed by the NZG in 1860. S.E. Harthoorn, *Diary on 1860* (Malang 1861) Utrechts Archief.

⁴¹³ S.E. Harthoorn, *Diary on 1855* (Malang 1856) Utrechts Archief.

resembled a *dhikr* ritual; a ritual which he would later introduce in his own Christian community. He moved to Kertoredjo and became one of Coolen's students.

After Tosari had learned enough about Christian *ngelmu*, he officially converted, was baptized in Surabaya in 1844, and changed his name to Paulus Tosari. His baptism brought him into conflict with Coolen, who was at the time still against the practice. Tosari then left Coolen's land and became a traveling Christian guru. However, this lifestyle did not suit him and he settled down in the newly founded *desa* Modjo Warno. Modjo Warno was founded by Abisai, Pak Dasimah, and Matheus Aniep, all former students of Coolen, and funded by Gunsch, an associate of Emde. Eventually Tosari became the leader of this Christian village. In 1851, this *desa* became part of the district of Jelle Jellesma, the first missionary of the NZG. Tosari and Jellesma worked closely together for years. Tosari learned much about the Bible and theology from Jellesma while simultaneously, Jellesma learned much about the Javanese culture and understanding of religion. Poensen argued in his writings that Tosari was not subordinate to Jellesma, but rather that it was the other way around. Tosari informed and advised the missionary, but remained the spiritual leader of the congregation. Jellesma focused on the education of teachers and evangelisers and travelled around the district to serve other Christian communities. He did not interfere much with the leadership of Modjo Warno.⁴¹⁴

After Jellesma's death in 1858, Tosari led Modjo Warno alone for two years, and performed the sacraments himself. Until Hoeszoo settled in the *desa* to support him in 1860, Harthoorn occasionally visited him to support him. In this period Tosari's community formed a bridge between the Dutch and the Javanese Christian communities. However, Hoeszoo was much more critical of Tosari's results than Jellesma. He wrote that Modjo Warno only attracted people because of material profit and that opium usage, theft, polygamy, adultery, and circumcision all occurred in the *desa*.⁴¹⁵ Nevertheless, they continued to direct the congregation together until Tosari's death 1881 after being ill for quite some time.

Tosari functioned as the organiser, pastor, and catechist in the Modjo Warno congregation.⁴¹⁶ In addition, he translated Bible stories and wrote essays and articles on Christianity for the Javanese. His most well-known work is *Rasa Sedjati* (True Innerlife) in which he used the terminology and poetic style, namely *tembang*, that was common in Javanese Islamic *ngelmu* to explain Christianity. He also wrote Christian lyrics to the melodies of famous Javanese hymns. Tosari did not choose a radically different path from the Dutch missionaries as some of the other Christian gurus did. He acted as a border figure while working together with Jellesma, and later Hoeszoo. Both Tosari and these

⁴¹⁴ Van Akkeren, *Sri and Christ*, 100.

⁴¹⁵ Van Akkeren, *Sri and Christ*, 101.

⁴¹⁶ Gerald H. Anderson, *Biographical dictionary of Christian missions* (New York 1998).

missionaries functioned as leaders of the church.⁴¹⁷ He tried to associate his teachings with the pre-existing Javanese and Muslim traditions as much as possible without crossing the inflicted borders of 'heresy'. His church had a different liturgy than other missionary churches and he used to pray at several fixed times during the day, similar to the Muslim tradition.⁴¹⁸ Paulus Tosari's teachings are thus a good example of a Javanese version of Christianity which was not syncretized too much in the eyes of the Dutch missionaries, but stayed close enough to the Javanese mystical traditions to attract large numbers of people. The missionaries have praised him substantially more than the other Christian gurus, but were not always enthusiastic about his work. Hoezoo argued that his sermons were sometimes illogical and disappointing. According to Hoezoo, Tosari's sermons clearly showed that he knew much more about Javanese *ngelmu* than about Christianity.

4.7. *Tunggul Wulung*

In 1855 the Protestant missionary Van Ganswijk wrote about Tunggul Wulung: 'In the area of Malang, hé caused the conversion of many.' NZG missionary Harthoorn wrote: 'This man is remarkable among his people. Even his appearance is exceptional. He is tall and lean, with an astonishing appearance for a Javanese, with piercing eyes and a sharp nose, and he is very courageous and brave. He has always been energetic in preaching the Gospel and taught with success in Dimoro, Djenggri and Djoenggo, where he became the founder of the indigenous Christian church.'⁴¹⁹

Before Tunggul Wulung became 'the founder of the indigenous Christian church' he allegedly was a spiritual hermit living on Mount Kelut in East Java. The story of his conversion tells that one day he discovered a scrap of paper, with the Ten Commandments written on it, under his sleeping mat, and that he heard a voice from heaven commanding him to go to the forests of Modjopahit to meet with a Dutch missionary who would show him the road to eternal bliss.⁴²⁰ He had heard of the Christian faith before and he saw this as a marvellous sign from God that he should convert to Christianity. However, the NZG missionary Harthoorn was not convinced of the miraculous character of the event. Harthoorn simply stated that traveling evangelists must have placed the paper under Tunggul Wulung's mat. Moreover, Jellesma told Harthoorn he was the one who taught Tunggul Wulung how to read, so he could not have read the Ten Commandments before they had met.⁴²¹ After Tunggul Wulung's initial encounter with Jellesma, he travelled to West Java. There he found a teacher

⁴¹⁷ Van Akkeren, *Sri and Christ*, 100.

⁴¹⁸ Van Akkeren, *Sri and Christ*, 65.

⁴¹⁹ S.E. Harthoorn, *Letter to the board of the NZG* (Modjo Warno 21 March 1855) Utrechts Archief.

⁴²⁰ Van Lith, *Kjahi Sadrach*.

⁴²¹ S.E. Harthoorn, *Letter to the board of the NZG* (Modjo Warno 21 March 1855) Utrechts Archief.

and supporter in the Dutch lawyer Mr Anthing. The pietist Anthing did not missionize himself, but focused solely on the training of indigenous Christians. Anthing had always been in favour of a Javanese Church with its own local traditions. He became a mentor to Tunggul Wulung, educated him in Christianity, and supported him and his mission financially.

Tunggul Wulung also maintained close contact with the NZG missionary Jellesma. Jellesma did not succeed in finding an entry into the Javanese society and was therefore quite unsuccessful in converting people. Tunggul Wulung, however, did find an entry and converted a large number of people. Jellesma was delighted over his success and joined him on a victory tour through East Java to baptize his converts. Thereafter Tunggul Wulung met the Mennonite missionary Pieter Jansz (1820-1904) from the *Doopsgezinde Zendingsvereniging* (Baptist Missionary society, DZV) in Jepara and he wished to work together with Jansz in his mission to convert the Javanese.⁴²² However, the terms Jansz set for this partnership were too domineering and conceited for Tunggul Wulung.

He was disappointed in the European mission societies and therefore started his own indigenous Christian movement, converting people in remote villages, independent of any mission. He travelled through different regions of Java and tried to set up Christian villages, where his converts and other disappointed members of mission congregations could live together. He founded his first Christian village, Ujung Watu, nearby present day Margokerto in the Muria area in 1856, and two others would soon follow.⁴²³ This all took place before Tunggul Wulung was even baptized. He had asked Jansz to baptize him, but Jansz refused this because he believed Tunggul Wulung did not yet have enough knowledge of Christianity to be baptized. Despite his assumed lack of knowledge, Tunggul Wulung already had a large number of followers at that time.⁴²⁴ Eventually, Jellesma baptized him on 6 July 1857, and Tunggul Wulung changed his name to Ibrahim. In some missionary accounts he is therefore addressed as *Kyai Ibrahim*.

Like Coolen, Tunggul Wulung also had a complicated relationship with Dutch missionaries. Not only did they condemn of his level of knowledge, the missionaries also disapproved of his polygamous lifestyle. Moreover, he was rudely criticised by Dutch missionaries for his allegedly syncretic teachings

⁴²² The Mennonites are a group of Christian Anabaptist denominations named after the Frisian Menno Simons. The teachings of the Mennonites were founded on their belief in adult baptism. Pieter Jansz was a missionary of the *Doopsgezinde Zendingsvereniging*. This society was active in the northernmost part of Central Java from 1851 onward, but did not last long. Jansz arrived in Java in 1851 and had only converted six people during his first six years as a missionary. In 1874 he wrote an influential book on Christian agricultural *desas*: '*Landontginning en evangelisatie op Java: een voorstel aan de vrienden van het Godsrijk*'. Later in his career he was assisted by two other missionaries, Schuurmans and Jansz, his son. Together they converted 102 persons in 25 years.

⁴²³ Van Akkeren, *Sri and Christ*.

⁴²⁴ Sierk Coolsma, *De Zendingseeuw voor Nederlandsch Oost-Indië* (Utrecht 1901).

and practices. Ganswijk wrote that he seriously lacked knowledge and that he and his followers suffered of severe superstition, but that he was sincere and that his work was essentially good.⁴²⁵ Harthoorn wrote that there was no demarcation line between the truth and error in Tunggul Wulung's thinking. He added that the latter's sermons were full of error and that he had even proclaimed to his followers that he had risen from death himself. Harthoorn reassured the board that he had talked to Tunggul Wulung about this statement and that he had promised to never proclaim that again. With this remark, Harthoorn suggests to the board that he was capable of controlling Tunggul Wulung.⁴²⁶

There were quite a number of people in the Malang region, Harthoorn's district, who were converted by Tunggul Wulung. They often joined Harthoorn's church after Tunggul Wulung travelled on and left them without strong leadership. Harthoorn considered their faith weak, because it was not based on the Bible, but on their leader, who was not a very good Christian, according to Harthoorn. He wrote that Tunggul Wulung knew too little of the Bible; his knowledge was limited to some crumbled sayings, the law, the Lord's Prayer and the Twelve Articles of Faith. Apart from his lack of knowledge, his hybrid *ngelmu* consisted of Christianized Javanese, Hindu, and Buddhist beliefs that together formed, in Harthoorn's eyes, an inconsistent whole. His way of thinking and arguing showed, according to Harthoorn, that he was *guru paseq* and that he had not let go of his old beliefs entirely.⁴²⁷

Harthoorn sent an anecdote about one of his followers to the board of the NZG to show them that the people realised Tunggul Wulung's version of Christianity was distorted after they were properly educated by himself: 'Elias interrupted him: 'For some time I was in (...) to preach the Gospel.'⁴²⁸ I found a guru and listened. What I heard resembled Christian knowledge and I asked, 'who are you?' 'Ibrahim Tunggul Wulung of Pelas' was his reply. 'So, I said, and I am Singa Durma of Bulu Suwang. I am also Christian and have received education from the teacher in Malang'. After we had a discussion, Ibrahim went on teaching, but I rebuked him. I said 'What is it that you preach there? I knew all of this before I became Christian. You preach withered seed, which is planted each year and grows, flowers, withers, dies and grows back again. That is not Christian. That is quite different from what I have heard from my teacher. He taught me about eternal seed that never dies; that gives eternal life in heaven''.⁴²⁹ Harthoorn was pleased to learn that his followers dismissed Tunggul Wulung's words as erroneous. This anecdote shows that there was some rivalry between Harthoorn and Tunggul Wulung, at least from Harthoorn's side.

⁴²⁵ Van Lith, *Kjahi Sadrach*.

⁴²⁶ S.E. Harthoorn, *Letter to the board of the NZG* (Malang 26 March 1856) Utrechts Archief.

⁴²⁷ *Paseq ngelmu* was mystic knowledge that consisted mainly of Hindu and Buddhist wisdom. Partonadi, *Sadrach's Community and its contextual roots*, 229.

S.E. Harthoorn, *Letter to the board of the NZG* (Malang 25-27 October 1856) Utrechts Archief.

⁴²⁸ Unfortunately, the name of the location was unreadable in the handwritten letter.

⁴²⁹ S.E. Harthoorn, *Diary on 1858* (Malang 1858) Utrechts Archief.

Missionary Smeding of the NZG, who accompanied Harthoorn on his travels occasionally, wrote his account on their meeting with Tunggul Wulung: 'Who, who does not know it by a trustworthy source, could believe that this same man, whose principles are observed closely and contested by the missionary, precisely is the one who as a Javanese Christian has inflicted many of his countrymen to convert to the Gospel. The leader of the church uses many labourers, who we would not have chosen with our often imagined wisdom and insight. It is a reminder, that we should not look down on the weak elements in knowledge and godliness in the youthful congregations, and, at the same time, that we should see Ibrahim (Tunggul Wulung, M.K.) as an example of a Christian, who so easily misleads the missionary or a friend of the mission and causes them to error in their reflections and messages.'⁴³⁰ This quote shows that the missionaries did study the guru's approaches and results to perhaps copy him.

Other letters show that Harthoorn was occasionally in direct contact with Tunggul Wulung. Harthoorn travelled around his district to visit the different Christian communities, some of which were founded by Tunggul Wulung. Smeding, who once again accompanied Harthoorn on such a tour, wrote that Tunggul Wulung used to avoid them during these visits, perhaps because Harthoorn tried to direct and influence him.⁴³¹ For example, Harthoorn was told that Tunggul Wulung sometimes demonstrated how a baptism is performed for those who were interested. However, the missionary considered this blasphemous and told him that he was allowed to explain the ritual, but not to actually demonstrate it. Harthoorn tried to make clear to the board with statements like these that he was in the position to influence Tunggul Wulung. Smeding's account of their visit to Pelar made even clearer that the missionaries considered themselves superior to the guru. Smeding wrote that when they discussed and refuted Tunggul Wulung's ideas in his presence, he did not interfere in the discussion. Moreover, Smeding added that when they left Pelar, he offered them fruits as a sign of respect and submission, to underline the asymmetrical power relation between them.⁴³²

Missionaries Coolsma and Albers of the NZV met with Tunggul Wulung at 24 July 1865. They asked him who had instructed him to spread the Gospel and he answered with Matthew 28-19: 'Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost'. Albers invited him and his wife to join his congregation to learn more of the Gospel, but he declined. Coolsma wrote in his report that he pitied Tunggul Wulung, because he could only gibber Islamic knowledge in which he changed the name Mohammed to Jesus.⁴³³ He concluded his report on

⁴³⁰ Smeding, 'Over een reis aan Kediri en Madioen door Harthoorn en Smeding', in: *Mededeelingen* (Rotterdam 1861) 120-150, 245-286.

⁴³¹ Smeding, 'Over een reis aan Kediri en Madioen', 245-286.

⁴³² Smeding, 'Over een reis aan Kediri en Madioen', 245-286.

⁴³³ Van den End, *De Nederlandsche Zendingsvereeniging in West Java*.

Tunggul Wulung with the remark: 'Lord save us from such monstrosities. What a sorrow do these people cause the missionaries in East Java.'⁴³⁴

Despite all the critiques from the Dutch missionaries, Tunggul Wulung undoubtedly had a stronger appeal among the Javanese people than the missionaries. In less than thirty years, he had gathered 1058 converts in three villages.⁴³⁵ More important, a survey from five years after his death indicates that the number had even risen.⁴³⁶ This proves that his followers were not just idolizing him as a *guru ngelmu*, but that they were truly dedicated to their new religion. He was able, just as the other Javanese Christian gurus, to associate the Gospel with the perception of the world that already existed among the Javanese people. He used the Bible as a source of esoteric knowledge; the text was, according to him, not meant literally but it consisted of mystical metaphors.⁴³⁷ He understood the Javanese belief in spirits and demons and used this knowledge to explicate his Christian message. He was seen by his people as a Christian *guru ngelmu* and he regularly challenged the evil spiritual powers the Javanese believed to be dominating their lives. The only difference with other gurus was, however, that he exorcised the spirits in the name of Jesus Christ.⁴³⁸ He created, among other prayers, the following short prayer, which shows a deep consciousness of evil spirits in Java:

<i>'Bapa Allah, Putra Allah, Roh Suci Allah,</i>	Father God, Son of God, Holy Spirit of God,
<i>Telu-telune tunggal dadi sawiji.</i>	The three are one in essence.
<i>Lemah sangar, kayu angker,</i>	Dangerous places, evil infested woods,
<i>upas racun Pada tawa.</i>	all poisons become harmless.
<i>Idi Gusti manggih slamet salaminya.'</i>	May God grant us safety forever. ⁴³⁹

⁴³⁴ Van den End, *De Nederlandsche Zendingsvereeniging in West Java*.

⁴³⁵ In comparison: the missionary Jansz only converted 150 people in the same period in the same area. Van Lith, *Kjahi Sadrach*.

⁴³⁶ The congregation of Tunggul Wulung consisted of 1058 people on the day he passed away (29 February 1885). Five years later the congregation consisted of 1427 *Kristen Jowo*. (De Opwekker, 1890)(Van Akkeren, *Sri and Christ*, 156).

⁴³⁷ Guillot, *L'affaire Sadrach*, 93.

⁴³⁸ Ricklefs, *Polarizing Javanese society*, 112.

⁴³⁹ Translated by: Lawrence Yoder, in: Lawrence Yoder, *The introduction and expression of Islam and Christianity in the cultural context of North Central Java* (Pasadena 1987) 339.

Moreover, he encouraged the hope of his followers that the Christian philosophy about the coming of God's kingdom corresponded to the release of the oppressive Dutch rule. He was the one who popularized the idea that Jesus was the *Ratu Adil*. In Java, the millenarian myth about *Ratu Adil* (just king), a messianic figure who would come to Java to overthrow the authorities and bring wealth and prosperity was well-known. This *Ratu Adil* would be born in a poor and unknown family, but would eventually found a universal kingdom of peace and justice. Several political leaders, for example Diponegoro, had tried to claim the title of *Ratu Adil*. Tunggul Wulung apparently was the first who linked this myth to the figure of Jesus. Because of this, not only the missionaries, but also the colonial authorities saw him as a threat and strove to restrict his influence.

Tunggul Wulung sought to plant a Javanese version of Christianity in Java, just as the other Javanese Christian gurus did. This attracted many local people and he supposedly had nearly ten times as many followers in the Muria area by the end of his career than Dutch missionaries in the region.⁴⁴⁰ Some missionaries even accused him of 'stealing' converts from their communities.⁴⁴¹ In any case, Tunggul Wulung converted an impressive number of people and his influence was noticeable in a large area. One of his many accomplishments was the conversion of Sadrach, the most famous leader of the South Central Javanese indigenous Christian movement.

4.8. Sadrach

Kyai Sadrach was probably the most successful indigenous evangelist and was the charismatic leader of the Sadrach Church. The issue of Sadrach's position as either a syncretic folk leader or pioneer of the indigenous Javanese Church is still a contested one. Writings from multiple missionaries at the time, both Protestant and Catholic, accused him of syncretic beliefs and worldly motives. However, descendants of Christians who were converted by Sadrach continue, even today, to defend him as an authentic Christian who founded the Javanese Church and gave the Javanese their own Christian identity.

Sadrach lived in Karangjoso, a remote village in southern Bagelen, in Central Java. Under Sadrach's influence Karangjoso had become the centre of Javanese Christianity. However, since the second half of the nineteenth century, Karangjoso was situated in a mission district of the Dutch Reformed churches. The Dutch missionaries and Dutch colonial government were both worried about Sadrach's influence on the community. He had many followers and the government considered him a

⁴⁴⁰ Van Akkeren, *Sri and Christ*.

⁴⁴¹ Van Lith, *Kjahi Sadrach*.

rebel leader who threatened stability and public order. The missionaries were not content with his form of Christianity either; they thought he placed himself, instead of God, in the centre of attention. Moreover, they considered his version of Christianity contrary to the principles of Calvinism and saw his teachings as a mixture between Christian and non-Christian thoughts that would lead the Javanese people astray. Therefore, the Dutch congregations considered his followers false Christians. These Christians remained independent of the *Indische Kerk* and of the mission societies until 1939. They referred to themselves as: '*Golongane wong Kristen kang mardika*' - the group of free Christians.

There are not many details known about *Kyai Sadrach*'s background; he was supposedly born around the year 1835 to a poor, peasant family near Jepara, north-east from Semarang, with the Javanese name Radin. Radin was adopted as a child by a wealthy Muslim family and they gave him the name Abas. This family raised him according to Islamic traditions. He went to the *Qur'an* School where he learnt to read Arabic and to read and write Javanese. During these years he was also introduced to *ngelmu*, spiritual Javanese knowledge by traveling religious *gurus*. After this primary education, he entered several *pesantren* or religious boarding schools, in East Java. By coincidence he then met an assistant of the Protestant missionary Hoeszoo. They discussed religious matters and Radin Abas became interested in this new religion. He moved to a *desa* not far from Modjo Warno where Hoeszoo was situated and for a period of time he visited Hoeszoo's services every Sunday.⁴⁴² After a while he visited his former *guru ngelmu* Kurmen and Radin learnt that Kurmen had converted to Christianity after he lost a public dispute with the Javanese evangelist Tunggul Wulung.⁴⁴³ Kurmen introduced Radin to his teacher and he was very much impressed by Tunggul Wulung. He taught Radin that Christian Javanese did not have to abandon their original culture, but that Christianity could be combined with Javanese traditions. In 1866, Radin Abas accompanied Tunggul Wulung to Batavia to meet Mr Anthing. Anthing accepted him as an apprentice and taught him how to read and write in Latin script. During his stay, he was baptized by the Dutch reverend Ader of the *Indische Kerk* in April 1867 and there he received his new Biblical name: Sadrach.⁴⁴⁴

After several years Sadrach went back to the northern part of Central Java. In 1868, he joined Tunggul Wulung and Kurmen in their attempt to establish Christian villages near Bondo, a Christian *desa* founded by Tunggul Wulung. In Bondo, Sadrach gained power because Tunggul Wulung was often absent. Eventually, Sadrach left Bondo, but the reason behind this is not clear. The missionary inspector Lionel Cachet stated that he left because of a power struggle with Tunggul Wulung. Missionary Adriaanse wrote that Sadrach and Tunggul Wulung quarrelled about the content of their

⁴⁴² Van Lith, *Kjahi Sadrach*.

⁴⁴³ Van Lith, *Kjahi Sadrach*.

⁴⁴⁴ Sadrach is a biblical name which means 'God is merciful'.

religious teachings and that Sadrach disapproved of Tunggul Wulung taking a second wife. However, Yotham, Sadrach's adopted son and successor, explained that God had instructed Sadrach to spread the Gospel further.⁴⁴⁵ After Sadrach left Bondo, he settled down in Tuksanga, on the land of Madame Stevens-Philips, a Eurasian woman who was married to a Dutch planter, which is situated in the region Purwareja. She had built a small church in her courtyard and tried to convert the workers of the plantation. Sadrach supported her with the sermons on Sundays and with catechism classes. She did not interfere with the content of his teachings and so he became the actual religious leader of the community. Together they put prayers in traditional Javanese *tembang* verse. She provided him with food and clothing but did not pay him a salary.

Finally, Sadrach moved to Karangjoso where he bought a piece of land what was known to be haunted. Notwithstanding the legends, he managed a good harvest and this convinced the people that he was a real *guru ngelmu*. Some also believed he could cure people. He combined traditional healing procedures he had learnt from *dukun* (witch-doctors) with Christian prayers he had learned from an assistant of Hoesoo. In Karangjoso his popularity started to rise and his congregation started to grow. On 6 February 1871, Sadrach's first 21 followers were baptized. In October 1872 around four hundred people were baptized and in April 1873 another 310 people followed. Sadrach was not working alone anymore, he had formed a group of assistants who travelled through Central Java and consequently Christianity started to spread with a snowball-effect. Missionary Vermeer of the NGZV travelled around to baptize the converts.⁴⁴⁶ He wrote about this period that Sadrach led him from *desa* to *desa*, announced his arrival and summoned all candidates in the local church. In just seventeen days Vermeer took 505 confessions and baptized more than seven hundred people.⁴⁴⁷ This short period of time and the fact that Vermeer did not master the Javanese language both indicate that it was Sadrach, not the missionary, who converted these people.

However, after some time, tensions started to rise between Sadrach and Vermeer. Vermeer was irritated that the people he baptized did not join his congregation, but solely followed Sadrach's instructions. Eventually, Vermeer wrote a letter to Mrs Phillips in which he accused Sadrach of working in his district and 'stealing his converts'.⁴⁴⁸ Sadrach was informed about this letter and sent his faithful assistant Marcus to Vermeer to talk about it. However, this conversation evolved into a fight that resulted in Vermeer refusing to baptize Sadrach's converts in the future. Sadrach continued to work together with Mrs Stevens-Philips after the move. She functioned as a bridge between his congregation and the *Indische Kerk*. She could arrange for a European minister when Sadrach's

⁴⁴⁵Partonadi, *Sadrach's community and its contextual roots*, 58.

⁴⁴⁶ Aart Vermeer was the first missionary of the NGZV who went to Java in 1861. He was positioned in Tegal.

⁴⁴⁷ Van Lith, *Kjahi Sadrach*.

⁴⁴⁸ Van Lith, *Kjahi Sadrach*.

converts were ready to be baptized. However, after Mrs Stevens-Philips' death, the congregation became isolated from the European-led churches. As a consequence, Sadrach's followers could not be baptized for a couple of years.⁴⁴⁹ This did not stop him from spreading the Word and his success continued.

Sadrach's method to spread the Gospel was similar to the method of Tunggul Wulung. He loved public debates and argued with other gurus and Muslim leaders in intense public debates that sometimes went on for days. Sadrach often won these debates and sometimes converted people from the audience, or even the other gurus, as a result. However, he also attracted a large number of people because of his excellent leadership. Karangjoso flourished under his guidance; it was known to be very safe, everyone could work on the communal lands, all children went to school, and everyone was reasonably wealthy. The Sunday morning services in the Sadrach church were quite different from European services. Sadrach led the services in the Javanese language in such an easy manner that the people, who had never before heard of Jesus Christ, could understand his message. The church itself was called a '*mesdjid*' (mosque) instead of '*gereja*' (church) and church meetings were held using Java's calendar calculations. He used Javanese music in the ceremony and people sat cross-legged on the floor with men and women separated; both with the intention to stay close to Javanese and Muslim traditions. The people were dressed in Javanese clothes and the women usually wore headscarves in church.⁴⁵⁰

Sadrach sometimes concluded the sermons with a Christian creed, which derived from Coolen's Christian *shahada*;

<i>'Sun angandel Allah sawiji.</i>	'I believe that God is one.
<i>Iha Allah iha illolah.</i>	There is no God but God.
<i>Yesus Kristus ya roh Allah.</i>	Jesus Christ is the spirit of God.
<i>Kang nglangkungi kwasaniput.</i>	Whose power is over everything.
<i>Iha Allah iha illolah.</i>	There is no God but God.
<i>Jesus Kristus ya roh Allah'.</i>	Jesus Christ is the spirit of God'. ⁴⁵¹

⁴⁴⁹ Partonadi, *Sadrach's community and its contextual roots*, 68-72.

⁴⁵⁰ Partonadi, *Sadrach's community and its contextual roots*, 130-135.

⁴⁵¹ Translated by Sutarman Soediman Partonadi, in: Partonadi, *Sadrach's community and its contextual roots*, 135.

Sometimes this creed was used for repetition in a ceremony that resembled Islamic *dhikr*, until the participants fell into a trance.⁴⁵² Javanese and Muslim customs, such as rituals for weddings, circumcisions, harvest, and healings were still prevalent in Sadrach's community as well, he only changed the prayers into Christian prayers. The Jesuit Van Lith wrote down a prayer Sadrach had used to heal a man who was very ill:

'God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit.

The poison of plants and the poison made by men become harmless,

the soil that is infected and trees that are haunted will lose their power to damage;

*the blessings of the lord Jesus Christ will provide a lifetime of welfare. Amen.*⁴⁵³

Sadrach's hybrid *ngelmu* was a combination between traditional spiritual knowledge, Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim, and Christian beliefs. Because the differences between Muslims and Christians were seemingly small in this region, the Christians were not excluded from the predominant Muslim communities. Many Muslims considered Sadrach's teachings to be a new current of *ngelmu*, influenced slightly by Christianity.⁴⁵⁴ He too focused, like his guru Tunggal Wulung, on the millenarian legend of *Ratu Adil*; the fair king who would liberate Java one day from injustice and suppression. He explained that this messianic figure was in fact Jesus Christ and that the people had to convert to Christianity before his return. The millenarian characteristics of Christianity fit well with Javanese society, since it was reminiscent of the anticipated advent of Buddhist saviour figures. Both Tunggal Wulung and Sadrach's message focused on the apocalypse and on the arrival of new and better times thereafter; a message that was well received in the colonial society.

Karangjoso soon became a gathering place for Christians from different regions. The number of Sadrach's followers increased rapidly, reaching nearly 2,500 in just three years (1870-1873).⁴⁵⁵ During that time, five churches were established in remote places as Karangsaja, Karangpucung, Kedungpring, and Karangjambu. Sadrach appointed local leaders in every *desa*; usually the elder men of the churches. Every once in a while all the imams (Sadrach held on to the Islamic titles) came together for an assembly in Karangjoso. So it was clear that Sadrach continued to be the leader of the entire community. As was usual in Javanese tradition, Sadrach adopted an additional name to show his

⁴⁵² Partonadi, *Sadrach's community and its contextual roots*, 130-135.

⁴⁵³ Van Lith, *Kjahi Sadrach*.

⁴⁵⁴ Partonadi, *Sadrach's community and its contextual roots*, 111.

⁴⁵⁵ Lionel Cachet, *Een jaar in dienst der zending* (Amsterdam 1896).

superior position: *Surapranata*. *Surapranata* means 'he who dares to regulate or govern' in Javanese. Some people, namely the Dutch Protestant missionaries, misunderstood the meaning, and thought it meant 'God's rule' and considered this heretical.⁴⁵⁶

Sadrach was accused of heretical and inappropriate behaviour by various Protestant missionaries and colonial officials. The Catholic missionary Franciscus van Lith wrote in his book on Sadrach what he had read about this man in governmental and Protestant missionary reports. According to these sources Sadrach was everything but a humble church leader. These sources argued that Sadrach's followers had to touch and kiss his hands and feet, like the disciples of Jesus, and that he called himself the 'Apostle of Jesus for the people of Java'.⁴⁵⁷ He would also sell blessed *krises* (knives) and some people believed he showed signs of stigmata, could make himself invisible, and even told people he was Jesus himself. However, Van Lith weakened these statements by ascribing them to the Protestant missionary Bieger who was supposedly jealous of Sadrach's success.⁴⁵⁸ In Van Lith's book we read that Bieger said about Sadrach: 'He fuelled criminal plans, but knew how to avoid a police arrest'.⁴⁵⁹ Furthermore; 'Sadrach started to behave as a noble man and married several wives. At the same time, he behaved and looked like a European landlord; he sat on chairs, walked under a white parasol and wore shoes.'⁴⁶⁰ Sadrach was also known as a *guru ngelmu* among the Javanese, which meant that he had insight into the spirit world and could help people with their troubles. He was known for his ability to control evil spirits and demons. He was famous for giving aid to people, casting out demons, and performing rituals that would avoid various plagues.

The increasing number of Sadrach churches aroused suspicion of the local government and Sadrach became considered a potential anti-colonial threat. W. Ligtoet, the resident of Bagelen, felt threatened by Sadrach's power and sought to eliminate his influence. Some Javanese village chiefs and Muslim leaders supposedly also disliked Sadrach, because he did not allow his followers to perform their service on Sundays and pay the religious tax. The NZG and the *Nederlandse Gereformeerde Zendingsvereniging* (Dutch Reformed Mission Association, NGZV) as well, tried to diminish his role in the Christian community. In 1878, the resident sent the reformed missionary Bieger to Bagelen to inform Sadrach that he would lead his congregation from then on and that Sadrach could become his assistant. Unsurprisingly, Bieger wrote to the board of his association that Sadrach and the indigenous Christians reacted hostile to his announcement.⁴⁶¹ Bieger repeatedly

⁴⁵⁶ Van Lith, *Kjahi Sadrach*.

⁴⁵⁷ Madinier, *The Catholic politics of inclusiveness*.

⁴⁵⁸ Franciscus van Lith, *Kjahi Sadrach*.

⁴⁵⁹ Franciscus van Lith, *Kjahi Sadrach*.

⁴⁶⁰ Franciscus van Lith, *Kjahi Sadrach*.

⁴⁶¹ Van Lith, *Kjahi Sadrach*.

asked Sadrach to entrust his flock to him. However, Bieger failed and decided to seek support from the colonial government.

The colonial government did not react at first, because they did not perceive Sadrach as a danger to the colonial society. However, after they received complaints from various Javanese leaders they decided to intervene. Resident Ligtoet arrested Sadrach and placed him under house arrest for three months. The official reason for his detention was his prohibition of his followers to be vaccinated against smallpox.⁴⁶² During these three months Sadrach's assistant, Marcus, was forced to guide Bieger to all the Sadrach congregations in the interior. Bieger baptized Sadrach's followers and made them members of his missionary congregation.⁴⁶³ Lionel Cachet, who was sent by the NGZV to inspect the mission a few years later, wrote that Bieger baptized 650 people in just fourteen days and that at the end of his journey more than 1600 people had been baptized by him.⁴⁶⁴

During his house arrest Sadrach befriended missionary Wilhelm of the NGZV.⁴⁶⁵ J. Wilhelm was a young missionary sent to Poerworedjo in 1880. Wilhelm did not agree with the approach of his colleague Bieger. According to Van Lith, he wrote in his diary: 'I believe Sadrach and his Christians are right and Ligtoet, Bieger and Heyting are in the wrong.'⁴⁶⁶ Eventually, due to a lack of evidence, Sadrach was released by a decision of the Governor-General. Surprisingly, after his release, Sadrach's authority and popularity continued to increase. Sadrach had proven that he could withstand the government's suppression, which made him a hero in the eyes of the colonized people. Sadrach immediately visited his churches and told his followers to refrain from further contact with Bieger and other Dutch missionaries except for Wilhelm. From then on, Wilhelm functioned as a border figure between the two groups and even decided to join Sadrach's movement in April 1883. From then on he could perform the sacraments in the community, which already consisted of approximately three thousand people.⁴⁶⁷ Wilhelm promised at his appointment to defend the rights and freedom of the

⁴⁶² Ironically, the Colonial Report of 1881 shows that not only Sadrach was against vaccination, but that Bieger prohibited the vaccination for his congregation as well.

Colonial Report 1881: 'in Bagelen bleek de prediking van een zendelingen der NGZV te Amsterdam bij de bevolking gemoedsbezwaren op te wekken tegen de vaccinatie ten gevolge waarvan, toen de pokziekte zich in Bagelen vertoonde, het bestuur belemmering ondervond in zijn poging om de uitbreiding van de ziekte tegen te gaan. De Indische regering vond hier in aanleiding om onder de aandacht van bedoelden zendeling te brengen, dat de hem verleende toelating tot uitoefening van zijne dienstwerk zou worden ingetrokken, indien hij niet ophield de regering te bemoeilijken in haar weldadig streven om de vaccine onder de inlandse bevolking te bevorderen.'

⁴⁶³ Van Lith, *Kjahi Sadrach*.

⁴⁶⁴ Cachet, *Een jaar in dienst van de zending*.

⁴⁶⁵ Of the three corporations which had separated from the NZG in 1858-1859, the NGZV was the smallest. The members of the NGZV were mostly proponents of the Revival. The ideal of the NGZV was to collaborate closely with churches.

⁴⁶⁶ Van Lith, *Kjahi Sadrach*.

⁴⁶⁷ Partonadi, *Sadrach's community and its contextual roots*, 78.

congregation, and in this way Sadrach's church preserved its independence from the state-led *Indische Kerk*.

However, Wilhelm did not always agree with Sadrach's teachings. He once wrote that he was startled by Sadrach's lack of knowledge of the Bible. He would constantly confuse persons, stories, and concepts, and his followers even exceeded him in their ignorance.⁴⁶⁸ Sadrach was of course only educated by Anthing and Mrs Phillips for a short period of time, and was therefore basically an autodidact in the Christian faith. He was, however, trained for years in Islam and traditional *ngelmu*, so it was no wonder he combined this knowledge and formed his own *ngelmu*. Wilhelm pragmatically decided to accept the 'errors' in his teachings and to slowly reform the movement from inside.

In 1883 Sadrach's followers called themselves the '*Golongane wong Kristen kang mardika*'; the group of free Christians.⁴⁶⁹ The distance between the Free Christians and the Dutch Christian communities increased continuously. The NGZV grew more and more suspicious of Sadrach and the work their missionary Wilhelm was doing. Therefore they sent inspector Lionel Cachet to inspect the congregation in 1891. He researched the area for nine months, but only spoke an hour with Sadrach himself.⁴⁷⁰ He wrote a destructive report in which he accused Sadrach of all sorts of things, but his main accusation was that Sadrach spread false beliefs. This caused a complete break between the Sadrach churches and the mission. Sadrach's relationship with the Protestant missionaries never really recovered from this episode. Of Sadrach's 6374 followers only a 150 Christians chose to side with the missionary congregations.⁴⁷¹

Wilhelm, however, had chosen to continue working together with Sadrach. The collaboration between Sadrach and Wilhelm went very well; there was never a power struggle between the two men. Sadrach was the actual leader of the community and Wilhelm was there to support him and to perform the sacraments. The organisation of the church became more structured when Wilhelm introduced church councils. When Wilhelm died in 1891, Sadrach faced the difficulty of having no one to perform the sacraments once more. He was never appointed himself as a pastor by the church, so he had no rights to perform the sacraments. Some of his followers, however, did want to be baptized and went to the missionaries of the Reformed Churches. Ultimately this led to another clash with the Reformed Church, because Sadrach felt this undermined his authority. Sadrach then moved to West

⁴⁶⁸ Van Lith, *Kjahi Sadrach*.

⁴⁶⁹ Madinier, *The Catholic politics of inclusiveness*.

⁴⁷⁰ This meeting did not go very well. When Sadrach entered the room, his followers performed the *Sembah*; they bowed their heads and kissed his feet in order to show their respect, which students commonly did for their gurus. This made Cachet furious, since he saw it as a sign of worship. An addition, Cachet rejected the tea that was offered to him, which was regarded highly inappropriate. Both sides started the difficult conversation thus already irritated.

⁴⁷¹ Sumartana, *Mission at the crossroads*, 65.

Java and was appointed as an apostle by the Irvingian Apostolic Church, the church of his former mentor Frederik L. Anthing. He held this position until his death in 1924.⁴⁷² This appointment gave him the right to perform the sacraments, so his churches were finally completely independent of Europeans.

The Catholic missionary Van Lith has written an article on Sadrach and it focused especially on what the Catholic missionaries could learn from the way the Protestants had dealt with Sadrach's community. He blamed the Protestants for wanting to abolish Javanese religious elements 'too fast, too brutal and too radical'.⁴⁷³ 'They have often been too strict in their judgement and should have tolerated, where they acted.'⁴⁷⁴ The Protestant missionaries had tried to take away the power from the Javanese leaders of these communities, which was not a good idea, according to Van Lith. Van Lith believed that the transition of power had to be friendly and gradual. He agreed that indigenous Christian leaders such as Tunggul Wulung and Sadrach were too extreme in their 'syncretic' teachings, but that the Christian *ngelmu*, influenced by traditional and Muslim beliefs, was not a wrong point of departure per se. 'It certainly was the right way to find an entry for Christianity.'⁴⁷⁵ Furthermore, the example of Sadrach's success strengthened Van Lith's idea that the conversion of Java should be accomplished by the Javanese themselves and not by European missionaries; he therefore focused on educating Javanese catechists and soon even priests.

Van Lith was very much impressed by Sadrach and his community and he tried to learn more about him and his approach. He described Sadrach as 'taller than all the other Javanese, powerful and calm in his presentation, not conceited, and impressive because of his prudent judgement and being one hundred per cent Javanese at the same time'.⁴⁷⁶ Van Lith met Sadrach himself in 1900 and for a long period of time he regularly attended the services in Bintaro on Sundays, led by *Kyai* Elia Sedjomigoena, a follower of Sadrach. After studying Sadrach and his followers, Van Lith took over some of his strategies in the Muntilan mission. Van Lith knew that Sadrach linked the legend of *Ratu Adil* to Jesus Christ and that he merged the two into one person. Van Lith realised that *Ratu Adil* was very much different from Jesus Christ, but nevertheless he admitted; 'The prophecy of *Ratu Adil* forms an undeniable practical starting point for the announcement of the Gospel and the advent of Jesus Christ'.⁴⁷⁷

⁴⁷² Partonadi, *Sadrach's community and its contextual roots*, 94.

⁴⁷³ Van Rijckevorsel, *Pastoor F. Van Lith S.J.*, 82.

⁴⁷⁴ Van Lith, *Kjahi Sadrach*.

⁴⁷⁵ Van Lith, *Kjahi Sadrach*.

⁴⁷⁶ Van Lith, *Kjahi Sadrach*.

⁴⁷⁷ '...nu vormt die voorspelling van den *Ratu Adil* ontegenzeggelijk een prachtig aanknopingspunt van de verkondiging van de blijde boodschap der komst van Christus Jezus.'

Van Lith bragged in his reports that he was on good terms with Sadrach and his followers, in contrast to the Protestant missionaries. He wrote that he was once sitting in a train with Sadrach, when suddenly a Protestant missionary tried to start a conversation with Sadrach. However, Sadrach turned his back to the missionary and made clear he wanted nothing to do with the Protestants. Van Lith stated that the Sadrach congregation was for ever lost for the Protestants and that the Catholics should learn from their foolish decisions.⁴⁷⁸

At the time of Sadrach's death in 1924 the community had grown to an immense twenty thousand people. After his passing his adopted son, Yotham, took over. However, Yotham was not as talented as his father to lead the congregation. Moreover, he was educated at the missionary school of Adriaanse and Zuidema of the NGZV and was therefore not sufficiently trained in Javanese spirituality. He was more in favour of a 'Dutch' style of Christianity. He sought support of the missionaries and eventually a large part of Sadrach's church entered the union of the Dutch Reformed Churches in 1939.⁴⁷⁹ They then had to acknowledge the basic principles of the Dutch Reformed Church which altered the unique Javanese character of the Sadrach Church.

Sadrach's success was due to several different reasons. First of all, Sadrach mastered the various cultural and religious components of the Javanese spiritual landscape, he mastered three languages (Malay, Javanese, and Arabic), and he knew much about Islam, Christianity, and Javanese *ngelmu*.⁴⁸⁰ He was able to combine these religious strands in a coherent Javanese form of Christianity. In addition, the Javanese were in need of a strong, charismatic leader in times of oppression and poverty. His messianic and millenarian message was one of a future where the Javanese would be free and wealthy. Sadrach held on to Javanese customs which strengthened the nativist character of the movement. The nativist and independent character of the church coincided with the anti-colonial feelings of the Javanese. Sadrach's movement was not only focused on religious matters, but also on their struggle against the discriminating indigenous colonial society and for social equality.⁴⁸¹

4.9. Anthing's assistants

The former lawyer Mr Frederik L. Anthing had supported indigenous evangelists since 1851. He trained them to missionize and to establish and lead Christian communities. This proved to be a

Van Lith, *Kjahi Sadrach*.

⁴⁷⁸ Franciscus van Lith, *De Besnijdenis*' (unpublished) Archives of the Jesuit Province of Indonesia (Semarang).

⁴⁷⁹ 7552 members and 86 *desas* were inserted in the Dutch Reformed Church, Partonadi, *Sadrach's community and its contextual roots*, 127-129.

⁴⁸⁰ F. Van Lith, *Kjahi Sadrach*.

⁴⁸¹ Guillot, *L'affaire Sadrach*.

fruitful method, because the 'Anthing churches' grew steadily. The reason for this success is explained in the following citation of missionary Bliek of the NZV: 'Mr Anthing regarded the Javanese more as Hindu Javanese. Also, the indigenous evangelists presented themselves as such, but they also proclaimed Christ. Anthing himself explained that this was the cause of their success.'⁴⁸² So these evangelisers presented themselves as traditional Javanese gurus who mixed Javanese mystical knowledge with Christian beliefs. Anthing taught his students to make use of existing Javanese traditions, such as the millenarian legend of *Ratu Adil* and Javanese *ngelmu*, to connect Christianity to the available traditions.⁴⁸³ He also taught them *rapal* with a Christian character. *Rapal* are spiritual formulas that resemble prayers and are used in all sorts of situations. The following Christian *rapal* was used by Anthing's assistants and their followers to implore a safe journey;

'God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit; these three are one.

You shall step on serpents; along holy places you shall go,

holy wood you shall cut down; it will not damage you.

Our Lord will bless us indefinitely'.⁴⁸⁴

Anthing's work unfortunately came to an end when he was hit by a tram in 1883 and died. After his death, the NZV tried to take control over the churches that were led by his indigenous evangelists. This turned out to be a difficult process; the relationship between the indigenous assistants and the missionaries was troubled from the start. The missionaries were of the opinion that Anthing's assistants were unqualified, lacked knowledge, and acted haughty. In addition, the evangelists were used to leading their congregations independently; Anthing supported the Christian communities financially, but did not interfere with its administration. His former assistants were not keen on surrendering their power and did not want to be controlled by the NZV missionaries.

After Anthing had passed away, Leonard, one of Anthing's indigenous assistants, became very influential. He placed himself above all assistants and directed the congregations from then on. He had recently received the title 'apostle' from Anthing and was therefore allowed to perform the sacraments. The NZV missionaries did not agree with this decision, but Leonard refused to surrender his power and become an assistant of a NZV missionary. Christiaan Albers and the other missionaries tried to talk to him and win him over by offering a salary that was much higher than what the other

⁴⁸² J. Bliek, 'Mr L. Anthing', in: *Lichtstralen op den akker der wereld* (Hoenderloo 1938) 1-40.

⁴⁸³ J. Bliek, 'Mr L. Anthing', 1-40.

⁴⁸⁴ J. Bliek, 'Mr L. Anthing', 1-40.

assistants in the region received. In the end, Leonard accepted the monthly allowance, but still remained difficult to control for the missionaries. They visited him every three months to check on him and his work. Leonard agreed to the demand that he could not travel around to evangelise by himself, but did not, however, stop performing the sacraments. Unlike Van Eendenburg, Albers was not against this, he argued: 'I hold the opposite opinion since a long time, and think that the missionary should work in such a manner that the churches can do without him as soon as possible'.⁴⁸⁵

Eventually, NZV missionary Van der Linden succeeded to win Leonard's trust, because he presented himself as a friend and not as his master. He convinced Leonard to renounce his apostle title and to discontinue performing the sacraments in 1884. Unfortunately, Van der Linden passed away a year later. Albers was then transferred to Meester Cornelis to take over his work, including the supervision of Leonard and the former Anthing churches. Albers was grateful that he was given the chance to lead more than five hundred Christians, spread over eleven *desas*, but he was also disappointed by the low level of knowledge of these Christians.⁴⁸⁶ The incorporation of these five hundred Christians saved the NZV mission. The board of the NZV had almost given up and abolished the mission in West Java because the Dutch missionaries had not succeeded in converting a sufficient number of people themselves. After the take-over, the NZV missionaries began to focus on the training of indigenous assistants to let them missionize in Muslim *desas*.

The eleven Christian congregations that were founded by Anthing's assistants managed to hold on to their own identity after they were incorporated into the NZV mission. They never fully surrendered their autonomy and were always governed indirectly. Eventually they broke away from the Dutch mission in 1934 and founded the independent *Gereja Kristen Pasundan*. After their independence the number of members increased vastly.

4.10. Approaches and results compared

The Christian gurus were more successful than the Dutch missionaries in making proselytes in the period under study. There are several reasons why the indigenous evangelists were more successful, besides the obvious reasons that they were more fluent in the local languages and that the people of Java were easier accessible for natives. First and foremost, the success of the *guru ngelmu* was predominantly based on their personal charismatic appeal, whereas the institutionalized character of the Dutch mission did not suit Javanese traditions in spreading religious ideas. A serious complication

⁴⁸⁵ Christiaan Albers, *Letter to the Board of the NZV* (Ciandur 12 August 1885) Utrechts Archief.

⁴⁸⁶ Blik, 'Mr L. Anthing', 30-33.

for the Dutch missionaries was that they had to take the governmental restrictions into account. They had to have a permit to evangelise and could not work outside of their appointed districts. The government kept a close eye on them and monitored their activities through *controleurs* (auditors). The indigenous evangelists, however, could travel around freely and spread the Word as they pleased and were not restricted by any law. Moreover, they were indigenous and thus their relationship with the Javanese was not coloured by suspicion or hampered by racial hierarchical boundaries.

Javanese gurus and Arab missionaries had travelled around the island for centuries to enlarge their flocks. In the Javanese tradition the public debate was the most important tool to win people over to a certain conviction. Different gurus would come together in public to start a theological debate and it was tradition that the ones who had lost the argument would become students of the superior debater. The indigenous evangelists were, according to the surviving sources, respectable debaters and they converted large numbers of people by winning such arguments. Most Dutch missionaries did not participate in this tradition, but tried to win over the people with other conversion strategies. However, indigenous and Arabic gurus were eager to argue with the Dutch missionaries and sometimes they –unwillingly– ended up in a public debate. The Dutch hardly ever won these debates, since they lacked sufficient knowledge of the vernacular languages, culture, traditions, and local debating rules. This minimized considerably their chances to win over the public for Christianity. The indigenous Christian gurus were brought up with the local languages and traditions. They were trained in Javanese *ngelmu*, had sufficient knowledge of Islam, and were therefore better equipped to enter these public arguments. They knew that in Javanese debates the focus was more on the formulation of the argument than on the content of the statements.

The Javanese society was very much focused on the community. The Christian gurus understood this and used methods that were aimed primarily at the conversion of whole communities, such as public debates and land clearing for communal agricultural enterprises. The Protestant missionaries, however, refused to permit mass conversions and insisted on individual conversion.⁴⁸⁷ The Protestants required that their candidates had an individual relationship with God before they baptized them. The Catholics seemed more open to the idea of mass conversions. Van Lith tried to follow Sadrach's approach and concentrated on the community as a whole. His efforts proved effective, with the mass communal conversion in Kalibawang as his greatest accomplishment.⁴⁸⁸ In addition, the indigenous evangelisers had a better understanding than the Dutch of how Javanese communities were organised. The gurus directed the Christian *desas* through similar hierarchical patterns as were common in traditional Javanese *desas*. The missionaries,

⁴⁸⁷ Jan Aritonang and Karel Steenbrink, *A History of Christianity in Indonesia* (Leiden 2008) 9-12.

⁴⁸⁸ The mass conversion of the Kalibawang people at Sedang Sono is discussed in chapter 6.

however, sought to establish more egalitarian Christian communities, with themselves as the only leader. Furthermore, their often youthful assistants obtained their position because of their completed education, not because of their natural charisma, experience or age, as was common in Javanese society.

Ultimately, the Christian gurus managed to attract more people because they presented Christianity as a local religious option whereas the missionaries presented a foreign set of beliefs.⁴⁸⁹ Consequently, adopting Christianity as it was presented by the gurus did not lead to such a radical break in one's identity. These Christians called themselves '*Kristen Jowo*', or Javanese Christians, because they had successfully managed to intersect their Javanese identity with a Christian identity. More Javanese were inclined to this hybrid version of Christianity, because within the *Kristen Jowo* community they could continue Javanese traditions and hold on to their *adat*. The gurus successfully managed to localize Christianity and their followers were therefore still considered 'true' Javanese by the majority of Java's population.⁴⁹⁰ But, even though the *Kristen Jowo* communities differed less from their Muslim neighbours than the *Kristen Londo*, they were not always accepted without difficulties either. For example Sadrach's congregation had been the victim of harassment repeatedly. His church was even burned down.⁴⁹¹

According to the missionary reports, the *Kristen Londo* or the Dutch Christians, stopped being 'true Javanese' when they gave up their *adat* and became 'Dutch' in the eyes of their Muslim neighbours.⁴⁹² Like Dutch Christians, these Christians were from then on depicted as the Other, although those who joined the Dutch Christian communities did not accept 'Dutch Christianity' in its entirety. Since the earliest conversions, all Javanese Christians took small steps toward formulating an indigenous Christian faith, despite intentions of the missionaries to form a Javanese Christian church which fully resembled the Dutch Christian church.

The *Kristen Jowo* extended the Javanese religious tradition with Christian dogmas and practices. However, in the nineteenth century, the Javanese religious tradition included Muslim beliefs and rituals. So consequently, these new emerging, indigenous Christian congregations also held on to traditions that had its roots originally in Islam, and especially in Sufism. As mentioned earlier, some indigenous Christian communities accepted Muslim traditions, such as performing daily prayers on fixed times as the famous indigenous evangeliser Paulus Tosari did. Tosari also wrote 'mystical, Christian poetry', full of Sufi terminology. The Christian guru Coolen introduced in his church, which he

⁴⁸⁹ Alvarsson and Segato, *Religions in transition*, 21.

⁴⁹⁰ Franciscus van Lith, *Kjahi Sadrach*.

⁴⁹¹ Ricklefs, *Polarising Javanese society*, 118.

⁴⁹² Franciscus van Lith, *Kjahi Sadrach*.

called the *mesdjid*, a 'Christian *shahada*'.⁴⁹³ In addition, many Javanese Christians would have prayer meetings during the week, which were called *kumpulan*, where they performed rituals, or 'mystical exercises', that resembled strongly *dhikr*, to reach '*slamet*' or peace of mind. The Dutch missionaries considered these traditions heretical and consequently did not think of the *Kristen Jowo* as 'true Christians'. Many therefore, did not accept that the indigenous gurus were more successful in making proselytes. The missionaries were of the opinion that the Christian gurus admitted people too easily into their flock. Most Dutch missionaries expected their converts to take numerous catechism classes before they considered baptizing them.

Numerous indigenous evangelists, including Coolen, Tunggul Wulung, and Sadrach, linked the predictions in the New Testament to '*Ratu Adil*' (Just King).⁴⁹⁴ This prophecy was very popular during the colonial age because many Javanese believed that *Ratu Adil* would free them from the Dutch oppressor. Various indigenous Christian gurus linked this popular belief to their Christian message. They managed to popularize the Christian faith with this strategy and attracted many believers. This Javanese understanding of Christ as the *Ratu Adil* shows that the Christian gurus made use of indigenous categories to frame Christianity. These gurus laid down the foundation for an indigenous Christian theology. The Dutch missionaries did not link Christianity to this folklore belief, although Van Lith admitted it could be a good starting point. Most, however, considered the idea heretical and this widened the gap between their Christian communities and the Christian communities of the indigenous Christian gurus.

While there were some examples of a good relationship between *Kristen Jowo* communities and Dutch missionaries, in most cases, however, the relationship between them was poor. In general, the *Kristen Jowo* and *Kristen Londo* lived secluded lives and constructed a clear distinction between themselves and the Other. The *Kristen Jowo* chose to live secluded so they could interpret Christianity according to their own convictions and did not have to follow rules that were set out by the Dutch. Most indigenous gurus, however, refrained from performing the sacraments themselves, thus their communities were forced to maintain a minimal connection with the Dutch missionaries or the *Indische Kerk*.

Some missionaries complained in their reports that the Christian gurus or their followers tried to 'steal' their converts away from the European Christian communities. Contrary, other sources reveal that some Dutch missionaries followed the traveling gurus, so they could baptize the new

⁴⁹³ Poensen, 'Mattheus Aniep'.

⁴⁹⁴ The legend of *Ratu Adil* has been discussed in chapter 5.

converts and take credit for their astonishing number of converts.⁴⁹⁵ For instance, the missionary Vermeer used to follow Sadrach through Central Java and forced Sadrach's assistants to bring his converts to him to be baptized. In a few years Vermeer had baptized approximately two thousand people this way.⁴⁹⁶ Furthermore, during Sadrach's imprisonment, missionary Bieger visited his congregations, baptized his followers and made them members of the Baptist congregation. Hence, it is fair to state that there was a fierce competition going on between the two currents.

4.11. Conclusion

Because the Christian mission had been forbidden for a long time, the first mission societies that arrived on the island with an official permit were surprised to find several indigenous Christian communities. These communities were founded by either Dutch lay people or by indigenous Christian gurus. The missionaries' initial joy soon disappeared because these indigenous Christian communities often had an aberrant understanding of Christianity. The missionaries did not approve of their 'heretical' beliefs and practices and a division arose between the 'orthodox' European Christian communities and the Javanese Christian communities with a hybrid religious identity. Nevertheless, the indigenous Christian communities were more successful in numbers of converts than the Dutch missionary communities. I have given several reasons to explain this. First, the gurus were charismatic leaders; some people even believed they had supernatural powers. In addition, the indigenous evangelisers were not hampered by the racial hierarchical boundaries that dominated the colonial society, nor did they experience communication problems since they were native speakers of the vernacular languages.

The main reason is, however, that the Javanese gurus were better able to connect Christianity to local customs. They combined Christianity with traditional mystical knowledge. This mystical element attracted especially the Javanese, just as the mystical aspects in Islam had attracted the Javanese and Sundanese centuries earlier. The gurus' version of Christianity differed less from local religious traditions than the global version the Dutch missionaries presented. Converting to this hybrid form of Christianity therefore required a less radical adjustment in self-identification.

The religious landscape of Java was rather complex and shifting in the second half of the nineteenth century, not only because of reforms in Islam, but also because two separate Christian currents emerged. There were the *Kristen Jowo*, the Javanese Christians led by indigenous Christian

⁴⁹⁵ Van Lith, *Kjahi Sadrach*.

⁴⁹⁶ Van Lith, *Kjahi Sadrach*.

gurus. Most Dutch missionaries did not approve of the 'syncretic' and 'heretical' beliefs and practices of the *Kristen Jowo* and led their own communities of *Kristen Londo* in isolation from these indigenous Christians. Both parties Othered the opposite party by constructing a division between the two communities. There were, however, several exceptions; the Dutch missionary Wilhelm, who chose to join Sadrach's movement, Paulus Tosari, who led Modjo Warno together with missionaries of the NZG and the indigenous leaders of the so-called 'Anthing Churches'. These were founded and led by indigenous evangelists, but were supported by the Dutch lawyer Anthing. After he died the NZV took on these congregations that consisted of a mere five hundred people in total. The process was difficult, but ultimately the addition of these Christians saved the NZV mission on West Java. Wilhelm, Paulus Tosari, and Leonard acted as cultural brokers between mission and indigenous congregations in the contact zone. These exceptions point out that the constructed opposition between both groups was not always clear-cut and, perhaps, exaggerated by some missionaries in their accounts in order to accentuate the competitive and difficult circumstances in which they had to operate.

Poensen and Albers have criticised especially the methods and results of Christian gurus in their writings. They did not accept that the indigenous Christian gurus were more successful than the Dutch missionaries since they did not consider their converts *true* Christians. The discussions of these hybrid Christian communities are thus an essential part in the discourse on religion and on Christianity specifically. Their attitudes show what was considered truly religious and Christian and what not. Harthoorn and Van Lith have criticised the gurus too in their writings, but their perspective was more moderate and so was their idea of what constitutes *real* religiosity. Both admitted that they had learned much from the gurus' approaches. They even adopted some strategies of the indigenous gurus as we will read in the next chapter. They realised that the people more easily accepted a message that was brought to them by their own people and that indigenous evangelisers were better able to explain the Gospel because they knew how to link it to Javanese thought. In addition, they recognised that the success of the indigenous evangelists was based on their collective approach, whereas most missionaries, especially the Protestants, focused mainly on individual conviction and knowledge. These changes and developments in missionizing methods will be discussed in the following chapter.

Chapter 5. Missionizing methods: reflections, adjustments and negotiations

*'A missionary who only worries about spiritual needs, so to speak, and has no regard for material interest, or has no concern for the sick, for financial investments, for water pipes, for the planting of rice and corn, and all of those worldly affairs, is but a poor missionary.'*⁴⁹⁷

This chapter compares the diverse strategies and methods the missionaries developed to get in contact with the Javanese and Sundanese to create circumstances to talk about religious matters and, ultimately, to convert them to Christianity. Based on the sources of the six Dutch missionaries I will point out the most common mission strategies applied in Java between 1850 and 1910, and also the more inventive approaches initiated by some of these men. Because this chapter will indicate differences and similarities between the various missionaries and their mission societies it builds on chapter 2. Furthermore, I will research the effects of the methods applied to answer the following question: what were the responses to the missionaries' proselytizing strategies and what were their results? Because the period under study covers sixty years it is possible to indicate a development in the mission strategies. Some missionaries reflected extensively on the methods that were used and tried to design new strategies. These missionaries, some successful and some not, tried to improve the outcome of the mission. Other missionaries, however, spent years in the mission without reflecting much upon their methods and results. They simply followed the approach suggested by their teachers at the mission schools and by their colleagues in the monthly journals of the societies.

The first paragraph of this chapter addresses the methods which the boards of the three societies recommended to the missionaries. The second paragraph discusses the location of the mission posts, since all missionaries considered a strategic position key to the success of their mission. The following paragraphs focus on different types of commonly applied direct and indirect missionizing methods: direct and indirect evangelization, education, healthcare and material aid. These methods were considered standard in both Protestant and Catholic missions all over the world and most missionaries employed a combination of these. Special attention goes to the role of indigenous assistants in the Dutch mission in the seventh paragraph.

Because the boards of the mission societies and Catholic superiors demanded regular updates about the mission's results, the missionaries were encouraged to reflect on their approach and its

⁴⁹⁷ Carel Poenen, 'Welke beteekenis heeft de genees- en heilkunde in en voor onze zendingen?', in: *Mededeelingen* (Rotterdam 1893) 282.

effect. However, not all six were prone to self-reflection. In the last part of this chapter I analyse the initial results of the six missionaries, the way the missionaries reflected upon their results in their writings, and how some missionaries adjusted radically their strategies in the course of their careers. An important aim of this chapter is to show how very able some missionaries were in negotiating the diverse dominant discourses that were at play in order to claim a position as proper missionaries despite lacking major results. In the final paragraph I will therefore show in which ways the missionaries justified their methods, legitimized its results, and show how they positioned themselves as good missionaries who deserved trust, respect, and above all, funding from their societies' boards.

5.1. Strategies recommended by the boards of the mission societies

There was never a specific course on proselytizing methods and strategies in the training of the NZG, NZV, or Jesuits. The missionaries of the NZG did not receive any guidelines from the board as for how to do missionary work apart from the urge for one-on-one contacts. Johannes C. Neurdenburg, who was a board member of the NZG since 1847 and its director between 1865 and 1894, stated that each missionary and each district needed its own method in order to be fully adapted to the local circumstances and needs. Consequently, the NZG urged their missionaries to develop their own methods. Through the '*Mededeelingen*' the missionaries kept each other informed about their strategies and exchanged ideas.

Despite there being hardly any directives, the boards of the Protestant societies emphasized the need for personal contact with the local population. The missionaries had to start with proclaiming the Word, in both the public and private sphere. That is why there has always been much attention to language teaching in the NZG training. Moreover, newly arrived missionaries first had to do an internship of one or two years in the district of another missionary in order to acquire a deeper understanding of the language and culture. Missionaries of the NZG commonly employed a practical method with little attention for theological dogmas and were thus fully in line with the *Groninger School*.⁴⁹⁸ The missionaries were convinced that simply having a chat with the *desa* people was the best way to establish contacts with the Javanese.

The NZV put especial emphasis on the spreading of Christian literature in Sundanese. When its first missionaries arrived in the 1860's, only a translation of the Gospel of Matthew was available in Sundanese. Albers and Coolsma, primarily, translated a great number of Christian texts. Coolsma

⁴⁹⁸ The ideas and aims of the *Groninger School* and the relationship between the NZG and the *Groninger School* are addressed in chapter 2.

translated the New Testament in 1876 and finished a complete Bible translation in 1891. In addition, he wrote several books on Bible history, the Christian faith, and church history. Albers translated study books and songbooks for his schools and churches. The missionaries tried to encourage indigenous Christians to write about their faith because that would better reflect the Sundanese way of thinking and thus be more appealing for the Sundanese to read. More and more Sundanese were able to read and the newspaper industry was on the rise at the end of the nineteenth century. The NZV considered papers 'one of the best opportunities to scatter the seed and pass all waters' since they were widely available and relatively cheap.⁴⁹⁹

5.2. *The missionary's location*

Similar to the indigenous Christian gurus, most missionaries were active in Java's periphery. They had various reasons for this. Primarily because the *Putihan*, who were better represented in the coastal and urban areas, were considered unconvertible. The missionaries therefore diverted to the interior where *Abangan* Muslims formed the majority. Moreover, the contrast in power between the European and indigenous class that hampered their relations was weaker in the interior. The second decision the boards and the missionaries had to take was from where the missionary would lead his district. The missionaries agreed that it was better to live outside the cities; history had shown that churches in remote *desas* grew faster than churches in the capitals. For example, Poensen's mission only became fruitful after he moved away from his district's capital Kediri, to Semampir, a small village nearby. He felt that missionaries had to live among the Javanese in the *desas*, in order to have a better connection with the population. A missionary would have too much contact with other Europeans in the city, which would create a distance from the local people. Moreover, Albers explained, the indigenous nobility and religious leaders, who are naturally turned against the Dutch, were more influential in the capitals than in the countryside.⁵⁰⁰

Harthoorn and Albers lived for many years in the capitals of their districts, Malang and Meester Cornelis, and both blamed their meagre results on their location.⁵⁰¹ The missionaries believed it was better to live away from other Europeans because the Javanese and Sundanese had to understand that the missionaries were not like other Europeans; the missionaries were there to help them, not to benefit from them. They agreed that most Europeans in the Indies did not act like good

⁴⁹⁹ Lindenborn, *Onze zendingsvelden*, 183.

⁵⁰⁰ Christian Albers, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Ciandur 2 January 1879) Utrechts Archief.

⁵⁰¹ For example: Christian Albers, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Meester Cornelis 8 July 1899) Utrechts Archief.

Christians and that their behaviour could put the mission in jeopardy. Moreover, they thought it was important to live with the indigenous people to learn from them and earn their trust.

Harthoorn believed that a missionary should live amongst the people so his ideas and acts could be formed by the people. Moreover, he believed the people, in the early stages of Javanese Christianity, needed the continual presence of a missionary. However, the enormous size of his district did not allow him to spend enough time in one place. He, like most other missionaries, was constantly traveling between his home and the scattered Christian communities. As a result he only managed to visit the most remotely living Christians twice a year. Harthoorn did not consider this sufficient to properly lead these churches, let alone to evangelise in the surrounding *desas*. He therefore came up with the idea to sell his house in Malang and build four cheap bamboo houses in different corners of his district. He, his family, and assistants would live for three months in one place and then move on to the next one.⁵⁰² This way he could stay for a longer period at one place and really build up the Christian communities, instead of just paying them a short visit to baptize and marry people. He would acquire a deeper insight into the Javanese Christian community and their beliefs and practices and at the same time they would be stimulated to enlarge their knowledge and improve their way of life. Nevertheless, the board of the NZG did not agree with his plans. It considered the building of three or four houses and the travel costs too expensive and believed it was too risky to leave these houses unattended for months. Moreover, they believed it would be too stressful for Harthoorn's family and especially too much of a burden for his frail wife to pack and move every three months.⁵⁰³

Initially, the Catholic Van Lith chose to live outside the capital of his district Muntilan because he wished to live far from other Europeans. He bought a house in a small *desa*, close to Muntilan, which was named Semampir.⁵⁰⁴ According to Van Lith, the Dutch who lived there undermined the mission because they did not represent true Christianity and gave a bad image to the Catholic faith. He called them 'rough seadogs and drunks'.⁵⁰⁵ Moreover, he believed it was best to live among the Javanese and to live in the same manner as them in order to become 'one of them' and to earn their trust. He aimed at winning the trust of the people; 'Preferably, I entered the houses of the Javanese and chatted with them about all sorts of things, such as their families, their houses and their business...I let them teach me more than I taught them. I strived to get to know them thoroughly and to earn their trust'.⁵⁰⁶ In an attempt to be 'one of the Javanese', Van Lith moved into an indigenous

⁵⁰² S.E. Harthoorn, *Letter to the board of the NZG* (Malang 25 June 1856) Utrechts Archief.

⁵⁰³ Missionary De Vries did execute Harthoorn's plan in the district of Malang in the thirties of the twentieth century. He built five temporary huts in different *desas*. Nortier, *Het leven van Samuel Eliza Harthoorn*.

⁵⁰⁴ Van Lith was not stationed in the same *desa* as Poensen, the name 'Semampir' was a common village name.

⁵⁰⁵ Van Lith, *Autobiographical writings*.

⁵⁰⁶ Van Lith, *Autobiographical writings*.

house, made of bamboo and wood, in the desa. According to Van Lith, a European house would form an 'insuperable barrier' between him and the Javanese. A Javanese would never feel comfortable in a stone house and the people would be too ashamed to invite him into their homes, because they could not offer him the comfort to which he was accustomed.⁵⁰⁷ Therefore, Van Lith tried to live according to Javanese habits; he filled his house with Javanese furniture, sat on mats with his guests, and did not sleep under a mosquito net. Nevertheless, Van Lith eventually did change his mind about his accommodation. After a couple of years he moved from Semampir to the capital of the district of Muntilan. There he moved into a European stone house. He explained his decision by stating that his life should not differ too much from the lives of the other Dutch clergymen because that would only confuse people.

Harthoorn, Poensen, and Van Eendenburg were all assigned to a district where small Christian congregations already existed. They immediately had to combine evangelizing with attending to these existing congregations. All three understood that this not only meant more work, but that it was also a large advantage. The conversion process had already been put on track, since most people converted after being introduced to Christianity by a family member or friend. It proved much more difficult to win over people in regions where no indigenous Christian communities were yet formed, since this reaffirmed the assumption that Christianity was just something for Europeans. Albers, Hoevenaars, and Van Lith were assigned to a region where no missionary had laboured before them. Although this gave them the chance to decide on the course of action, it also demanded patience. For instance, it took three years of missionizing before Albers could baptize the first two Sundanese in Ciandur, Ismail, and Moerti.

5.3. Direct methods: public preaching and colportage

Samuel Harthoorn of the NZG was one of the first missionaries in the Java mission. Although he was one of the pioneers, there was already a clear idea what 'tools' a missionary should use in order to familiarize the people with the Gospel. Establishing personal contact with the Javanese without scaring them of was of paramount importance according to the NZG board. The most obvious method to achieve this was simply to go door to door, or to crowded places like the market, to talk to people about Christianity. Harthoorn, like the other pioneers, began his mission by practising this strategy. All missionaries had, at first, great expectations and were very enthusiastic. They were convinced that it would not be difficult to convince the people of the magnificence and veracity of the Christian religion.

⁵⁰⁷ Van Lith, *Autobiographical writings*.

However, the conversion process soon proved to be more complicated. Harthoorn and the missionaries found that no one really cared for their message. The larger part of the population was not curious at all about what these Dutch men had to say; in fact most tried to avoid contact completely. All six have reported incidents such as people fleeing inside their homes when the missionary entered their *desa*.⁵⁰⁸ Harthoorn noted that people in remote areas were afraid to meet Europeans and that women and children hid themselves when he crossed their *desa*.⁵⁰⁹ Some wrote that people left through their backdoor when the missionary knocked on their door.⁵¹⁰ Poensen even admitted that he had been scared away from a *desa* with actual violence.⁵¹¹ Albers explained it was almost impossible to speak to the people, because the men were not in the *desas* during the day and the women hid themselves, because they were not supposed to talk to strange men, let alone to a Dutch missionary. It proved difficult for the missionaries to implement the boards' instructions while also being attentive to local customs. Albers came up with the idea of illustrating Bible stories with a 'magic lantern' that showed pictures in the dark on the street at night. The show that accompanied the stories attracted the curious Javanese. Albers explained that he used the lantern because 'darkness gives courage to those who fear being noticed'.⁵¹²

The missionaries experiences during their first encounters with the Javanese that many tried to steer the conversation into the direction of a discussion. A recurrent topic of debate with *penghulus* and *hajjis* was the Holy Trinity. The missionaries had to explain time and again that Christianity was not a polytheistic religion. Van Eendenburg wrote that people asked him to literally demonstrate that his religion was superior to theirs; they expected spiritual formulas or magic tricks.⁵¹³ Poensen wrote that he was often lured into endless discussions, however he emphasised that a missionary should refrain from debating, since it would never lead to worthy results. He compared the mission to a young girl who had to stay quiet or otherwise no one would want to marry her.⁵¹⁴ Albers loved to debate with his colleagues and he was known to argue sharp and clear. However, he did not like to participate in religious debates with *penghulus* and *gurus* as was common in Java. He even believed the board should forbid their missionaries to participate in such debates, because he felt it could not lead to any

⁵⁰⁸ Rooseboom, *Na vijftig jaren*, 53.

⁵⁰⁹ S.E. Harthoorn, *Letter to the board of the NZG* (Malang 2 March 1857) Utrechts Archief.

⁵¹⁰ Simon Van Eendenburg, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Sukabumi 8 May 1883) Utrechts Archief.

⁵¹¹ Carel Poensen, 'Een en ander over den godsdienstigen toestand van de Javaan; Vervolg', in: *Mededeelingen* (Rotterdam 1865).

⁵¹² Rooseboom, *Na vijftig jaren*, 118.

⁵¹³ Simon van Eendenburg, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Pangharepan 27 July 1892) Utrechts Archief.

⁵¹⁴ Carel Poensen, *Letter to the board of the NZG* (Kediri 9 May 1885) Utrechts Archief.

positive results.⁵¹⁵ However, he did admit that his indigenous assistants sometimes had success with this method because they were more proficient in debating in the local language.

The Catholic missionaries Hoevenaars and Van Lith also initially visited the *desas* in their district to preach. They too experienced that the people were very reserved or even scared. Like Albers, Van Lith tried to attract people with a 'magic lantern' which showed pictures from Bible stories. He also usually brought gifts, like tea, sugar, tobacco, and kernels with him to present to the *loerah*.⁵¹⁶ Both initially focused on the leaders of the *desa*, with the idea that if they managed to establish good relationships with the *loerah*, the rest would follow the example of their leaders. For most missionaries their Dutch identity formed a problem for making contact with the Javanese and Sundanese. However, both Hoevenaars and Van Lith knew how to use their Dutch identity to act as interpreters or cultural brokers. They did not focus solely on religious topics during their visits, but also discussed governmental issues, the need for a good education system and other matters that were thought to be interesting for the people.⁵¹⁷ Although the Catholic missionaries did not find it too difficult to establish contact with the *desa* leaders, they did not manage to interest them in Christianity during these visits. Van Lith admitted to his superiors: 'What is achieved in Mendut and Muntilan by direct contact with the population is very, very little. Some very old men and some poor people who are paid with alms go to church.'⁵¹⁸

Van Lith admitted in his first reports that it was hard for him to discuss religion with the Javanese, since they had a very different way of reasoning. He explained he was frequently told that all religions were equally true, but that Christianity was the right religion for Europeans and not for the Javanese. Van Lith then tried to reason with them that Christianity was the only true religion for everyone, but hardly ever succeeded in convincing people.⁵¹⁹ This anecdote indicates that many Javanese believed that the Christian religion, and thus the Christian god, was true, yet that it was not meant for the Javanese. This shows that 'belief' was not at the core of their religious adherence and that they accepted the belief in what the missionaries considered 'contradictory' ideas. Yet the missionaries, and especially the Protestant missionaries, focused on one's individual belief, which probably contributed to the mission's failure.

⁵¹⁵ Christiaan Albers, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Ciandur 15 February 1878) Utrechts Archief.

⁵¹⁶ The magic lantern is an early type of image projector developed in the seventeenth century. *Loerah* is the Javanese term for village chief.

⁵¹⁷ Van Rijckevorsel, 53.

⁵¹⁸ Franciscus van Lith, *Letter to the Pater Provincial* (Muntilan 13 December 1908) Archives of the Jesuit Province of Indonesia (Semarang)

⁵¹⁹ Franciscus Van Lith, 'De godsdienst der Javanen', in *Claverbond* (1922).

All six missionaries indicated in their sources that the method of direct evangelization was rarely successful. Most people who came to visit a service or contacted the missionary for catechism classes were introduced to the church by a friend or family member who was already converted. Because converting often meant the transition from one to another community, it made the decision easier if someone already knew someone in the Christian community. The missionaries were well aware of this and understood that occasions like weddings, funerals, and baptisms were excellent opportunities to impress their audience because at those days the church would be filled with Muslim family members and friends. Van Eendenburg, for example, reported in 1894 to the board that after he had baptized sixteen Chinese in the church of Sukabumi, a few visitors came to him after the service to ask for catechism classes.⁵²⁰ The missionaries also learned from experience that people who lived in a *desa* with a thriving Christian community were easier to convert than people who lived in a *desa* where no Christians lived yet. This led Poensen to the idea to build a church in a *desa* without any Christian residents - Sambiroto. Every Sunday, Christians from surrounding *desas* would come to this church and Poensen hoped this would bring them in contact with the local community and that it would raise people's curiosity.⁵²¹

A method that did not involve extended conversations with the Dutch missionaries, and was therefore both attractive to the missionary, who was not yet fluent in the vernacular languages and to the bashful indigenous people, was the spreading of Bible translations, Christian pamphlets, and other literature. However, during the process of translating the Bible in the vernacular languages and preaching the Gospel, the missionaries encountered various problems. One problem was that the Javanese and Sundanese languages are spoken in different registers, depending to the social context. Each register, from humble to honorific, employs its own vocabulary and grammatical rules. Missionaries were often unsure which register to choose whilst translating Biblical texts. For example, the story that Satan tried to tempt Jesus in the dessert, did he then talk to him in a humble, equal, or honorific register?

Another recurrent problem was that not every expression, concept, or word that is common in Christianity had an adequate equivalent in the indigenous languages. How do you explain that Jesus is the Good Shepard or the Lamb of God to people in New Guinea where there were no sheep yet? Or how do you translate words like vineyard, mule or Pharisee that were unknown in the region? Abstract concepts proved even more difficult to translate. The missionaries had to introduce abstract concepts like 'trinity', 'baptism', 'rebirth', 'repentance' or 'salvation', or they had to Christianize the meaning of

⁵²⁰ Simon van Eendenburg, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Pangharepan 16 October 1894) Utrechts Archief.

⁵²¹ Poensen's idea worked, in reports of later years he regularly mentioned a small Christian community in Sambiroto. Carel Poensen, *Annual report 1873* (Kediri 1874) Utrechts Archief.

available words with a somewhat corresponding meaning. There was, for example, a literal translation available for the word 'sin', but to the Javanese this word meant breaking with the *adat*. It did not have the same connotation as it had in the Biblical sense. Translating 'the Holy Spirit' literally was not satisfying either, therefore metaphors like 'Shadow of God' or 'Breath of God' were preferred. Board member Brouwer of the NZG advised the missionaries to avoid abstractions as much as possible. He suggested describing certain concepts with concrete examples, metaphors or parallels, because he believed the indigenous people should form new words themselves.⁵²² He instructed the missionaries to read the available folktales closely in order to learn the local way of expressing abstract matters. The process of learning the languages thoroughly and creating new expressions and words was, of course, lengthy. For example, the translation of the Bible into Javanese had taken thirty years.⁵²³

Pamphlets were spread for free and Bible translations were sold for a small amount. Nevertheless, the missionaries learnt that the people were not interested in Christian books - not even the Christians.⁵²⁴ All missionaries complained that colportage was a useless method, since most Javanese and Sundanese were unable to read and otherwise disliked reading. According to Albers, they would not even read the Christian booklets if he offered them for free and Van Eendenburg even reported that Bibles were used to kindle fires.⁵²⁵ Harthoorn wrote that colportage was a waste of money since only two out of a hundred Javanese could read. He added that there was no desire among the Javanese to read and that even if they were able to read, they would not be able to understand abstract Christian concepts. He believed the missionaries should wait until the Javanese Christians had reached a certain level of knowledge before introducing the Bible. He argued that no one would think of giving a science book to a child, who was still learning how to read, either.⁵²⁶

5.4. Indirect methods: education and healthcare

All six missionaries complained throughout their careers that the most difficult aspect of missionary work was to establish contacts with people. Although the societies did not prescribe any rules, it was more or less expected that a missionary started with the foundation of a school, as was common in all mission districts around the world. The missionaries hoped to find an entrance into the community through providing education. The aim of these primary schools was not just to educate children and

⁵²² A.M. Brouwer, 'Hoe te prediken voor heiden en mohammedaan? De Taal der Prediking' in: *Mededeelingen* (Rotterdam 1914) 25-64.

⁵²³ Sierk Coolsma, *De Bijbel en de evangelische zending* (Amsterdam 1878) 7.

⁵²⁴ Christiaan Albers, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Ciandur 9 February 1880) Utrechts Archief.

⁵²⁵ Simon Van Eendenburg, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Sukabumi 17 December 1884) Utrechts Archief.

⁵²⁶ Harthoorn, *De Evangelische Zending en Oost-Java*.

prepare the new generation for the introduction of Christianity, but also to establish contacts with their parents. Albers argued: 'The school must do the same for the Mohammedans as the alternation between sunshine and rain does for the soil; the school must cause a process of weathering in that society, so that...the Mohammedans will become receptive for the Gospel.'⁵²⁷

The foundation of a school was, however, not an easy process. The missionaries had to negotiate the aims of multiple parties, which proved quite difficult. First, they had to satisfy their employers, who considered establishing contact with the local people in order to proselytize - the main aim of the mission school. Secondly, the missionaries had to take the government's aims for education into account because they needed a governmental permit for setting up schools. The colonial government aimed at the civilization of indigenous people with primary education. Conversion was not one of its goals. On the contrary, the colonial state aimed at neutrality in religious matters and did not support religious education. Most missionaries chose to abide by the rules set out by the government in order to receive subsidy. This meant that the missionaries were not allowed to talk about religious matters during school hours. They were allowed to teach religious subjects after school hours, but this hardly attracted pupils. Only after 1890 could Christian schools apply for government support.

At first, the missionaries were glad that the education laws had changed in 1890 and that they could teach Bible lessons during school hours and still receive a subsidy. However, this soon changed, as they realised more subsidies also meant more rules. School was limited to four hours a day so the children had time enough to help their parents on the fields. The government required three hours to be spent on writing, reading, and mathematics. Half an hour had to be spent on a break, so only thirty minutes were left for courses such as geography, history, crafts, singing, or Bible study.⁵²⁸ Still, all Protestant missionaries opened a primary school as soon as they received state's permission to start their mission. The boards assumed that even though religious education was not an option, the school was still a means to get in contact with parents. Both Hoevenaars and Van Lith did not establish a primary school until several years after their appointment.

The missionaries also had to take the wishes and aims of a third party into account - the parents. Even though the provided education was free of tuition, or sometimes for a very small amount, it proved difficult for all missionaries to recruit enough pupils. According to the missionaries, most parents did not see why their sons needed to learn to read and write since they would grow up to be farmers just like their fathers. Albers commented that the Sundanese did not have an

⁵²⁷ Lindenborn, *'Onze zendingsvelden'*, 162.

⁵²⁸ Jurrianus Verhoeven in: Lindenborn, *Onze zendingsvelden*, 166.

'intellectual need'.⁵²⁹ Moreover, children had to assist their parents in the fields or herd the cattle from a very young age and their effort could not be missed by most families. Poensen had founded an elementary school in his hometown Semampir near the city of Kediri. Initially it was hard for him to find pupils, because most Javanese considered school a waste of time and money, according to Poensen. After a few years the number rose slowly, but steadily. Still, only thirty pupils were enrolled in his school a decade after its foundation. Van Lith experienced the same problem in his first years as a missionary. He often found his school desks empty, especially during the rice harvest. In order to attract pupils, some missionaries, including Van Lith, provided clothes and food.⁵³⁰

The missionaries found it difficult to achieve the boards' objective to make contact with the parents of the children. They all reported that they only rarely managed to convince Muslim parents to visit their churches, let alone convincing them to convert. They therefore considered education especially useful for preparing the new generation for Christianity in Java and not necessarily a means to convert people. In due course, all missionaries prioritized civilization over conversion as the mission school's objective. This is evident in the curricula of the mission schools. For example, Hoevenaars based the curriculum of his primary schools on developing the material well-being of the Javanese. He hired a Javanese woman who taught sewing, knitting, and batik to his school children in 1902. Hoevenaars proposed the idea that children who showed the most progress should teach their skills to younger children at their school or perhaps even at schools in other *desas*. He hoped that the next generation would use these new practical skills to start their own crafts shops, so that the local economy would grow and diverge. The wives of the Protestant missionaries usually attempted to find girls in their community to educate. Their aim was to prepare little girls for their future as wives and mothers. They taught reading, writing, singing, and handicrafts at their own girls' schools. However, it proved even more difficult to find parents who agreed to let their daughters go to school, so these projects were often short-lived.

The missionaries usually started out with just a handful of pupils of different ages. Many of them, however, left after only a couple of months or after they had learnt to read and write at a basic level.⁵³¹ This was considered sufficient by most parents, because it was usually enough to find a reliable job as a civil officer. The number of pupils therefore varied month to month. Harthoorn even had to close his school just several months after its opening because of a lack of pupils. Albers wrote that the number of pupils at his school dropped vastly after the baptism of his first convert. Parents were scared Albers would secretly baptize their children too and therefore decided to keep their

⁵²⁹ Christiaan Albers, *Annual report 1868* (Ciandur 26 January 1869) Utrechts Archief.

⁵³⁰ Petrus Hoevenaars, *Letter to Monseigneur Duffels* (Mendut 15 December 1900) Archives of the Jesuit Province of the Netherlands (Nijmegen).

⁵³¹ Christiaan Albers, *Annual report 1868* (Ciandur 4 June 1871) Utrechts Archief.

children home.⁵³² Eventually, he too, was forced to close the school and during the years that followed he re-opened and closed the school several times. Yet, the demand for education increased, especially in the early decades of the twentieth century. The NZV led, for example, 26 primary and secondary schools in the Preanger in 1908, where missionaries and their assistants provided classes for 1767 pupils. In 1920, these numbers had risen to 33 schools and 2226 pupils.⁵³³

Another method all six missionaries tried is providing free medical aid to the people. Traditionally, Catholic monastic orders cared for the sick, both in Europe and in mission lands. Following the Reformation, Protestant churches also slowly began sending physicians and others to serve as medical missionaries in places such as India and various parts of Africa.⁵³⁴ Toward the end of the nineteenth century most Protestant denominations provided training in basic medical care for missionaries before entering the field. Traveling to distant places, these missionaries were often the only 'doctor' available for many of the indigenous people. Although they had little training, it was not so difficult for the missionaries to receive permits to distribute medicines from the colonial government. With limited knowledge and medical supplies, they served as the only source of medical care for most of the indigenous people living in remote villages.

The NZG missionaries received government permission to distribute Western drugs already in an early stage, and during the consultations with patients the missionaries tried to talk about more serious topics, such as one's faith. The board of the NZV believed healthcare 'opened the hearts of the Sundanese people', and that there was much need for medical care in the Preanger⁵³⁵. The missionaries were very critical of the methods the local people used to treat their patients. They considered medical science in the Islamic world to be inferior to the level of knowledge in Europe.⁵³⁶ Moreover, traditional healthcare was considered even more inferior. In Java many diseases were considered to be the consequence of a demon and were therefore treated with a ritual instead of medicines. Even though the missionaries usually only had two hours of medical training per week during their education, they could do much good for the local population. They were capable of providing medicines, bandaging wounds, and performing minor surgery. Most services were provided for free, but often a voluntary contribution was asked of the patients. However, the missionaries of

⁵³² Lindenborn, *Onze zendingsvelden*, 164.

⁵³³ However, the majority of these pupils was Muslim, not Christian. Lindenborn, *Onze zendingsvelden*, 165.

⁵³⁴ Edward M. Dodd, *The Gift of the Healer: The Story of Men and Medicine in the Overseas Mission of the Church* (New York 1964) 14.

⁵³⁵ Preanger is the name of the region of West Java.

⁵³⁶ Lindenborn, *Onze zendingsvelden*, 171.

the NZV charged between two and five guilders for treatment of syphilis, to 'punish' the people for their 'indecent behaviour'.⁵³⁷

Providing medical aid was seen as the best method missionaries had to make contact with people, because 'the showing of mercy is a sermon in itself in a world where sacrificial love is as an extremely rare plant, because Islam has cut off the roots from which it grows; namely the love of God' and because 'in days of sickness the soul is more sensitive and more susceptible for eternal affairs'.⁵³⁸ Missionary Van der Linden of the NZV also explained to the board why this was a fruitful method: 'It is love what should attract the poor, shy natives, so he can experience the consequences of this love, and learns to question the source of it.'⁵³⁹ Poensen of the NZG even suggested that the contact he had with the Javanese was, for the largest part, due to his medical aid. Van Eendenburg also provided medicines and other medical aid in his region. Moreover, he regularly visited the military hospital for European and indigenous soldiers to pray with the patients there. The Catholic fathers received permission to provide medicines in 1900. Soon after that, Hoevenaars opened a free clinic where he distributed medicines and performed simple procedures. Hoevenaars spent most of his days in the clinic, he bandaged the injured himself and aided approximately twenty to thirty persons per day. According to Hoevenaars, the medical mission was undoubtedly the most important strategy in the mission. Yet, he emphasised continually that the medical mission was not the goal, but just a means in the mission.⁵⁴⁰

Albers, however, did not agree that providing healthcare was the best method to win over the Sundanese Muslims: 'The people here would rather die than go to us for medicines, because they believe our medicines help making them more accessible to the so detested Christian faith'.⁵⁴¹ Furthermore, the missionaries soon faced so much work in their clinics, that they did not have enough time to discuss anything else than the disease or injury of their patients; they barely had time to hand over a biblical tract. Consequently, the idea to send specialized doctors to the mission districts arose. The NZV sought to attract real doctors to work for the NZV and to support their missionaries. With actual doctors around, the missionaries could focus entirely on proselytizing. However, the first missionary-doctor of the NZV was not installed until 1914. Poensen also opted to train doctors within the NZG who had affection for the Christian mission to become missionary assistants.⁵⁴² With actual

⁵³⁷ The missionaries only sporadically mention patients with syphilis in their reports. Lindenborn, *Onze zendingsvelden*, 177.

⁵³⁸ Rooseboom, *na vijftig jaren*, 134. Lindenborn, *Onze zendingsvelden*, 174.

⁵³⁹ Lindenborn, *Onze zendingsvelden*, 131.

⁵⁴⁰ Petrus Hoevenaars, *Letter to Monseigneur Hellings* (Mendut 24 January 1903) Archives of the Archdiocese of Jakarta.

⁵⁴¹ Christiaan Albers, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Meester Cornelis 9 December 1896) Utrechts Archief.

⁵⁴² Carel Poensen, *Letter to J.C. Neurdenburg* (Kediri 31 August 1888) Utrechts Archief.

doctors around, the missionaries could focus entirely on proselytizing. However, the NZG did not install a missionary-doctor until 1896, since it proved difficult to find suitable candidates and funding.⁵⁴³

Poensen was positive about his results in his medical clinic, but he warned his colleagues that most locals had superstitious ideas about Western medicines. He insisted they needed to explain clearly the efficacy of the drugs. He had experienced that people considered a pill an empty object: a vessel that could carry a spirit. Consequently, many took his medicines to the shaman of the *desa* to have the pills charmed before swallowing them.⁵⁴⁴ Although the missionaries agreed that providing medical aid proved helpful to establish contact, it seldom led to conversions. Numerous reports show that patients and their families lost interest in Christianity as soon as they got better. There were, however, exceptions. According to stories about missionary Van Lith, he had managed to baptize almost two hundred persons in Kalibawang after he had cured Sarikrama, who used to be a cripple. Sarikrama converted to Christianity after he was cured, changed his name to Barnabas and became the first catechist of Kalibawang.⁵⁴⁵

5.5. *Indirect methods: material aid*

The focus on education and healthcare indicates that all missionaries believed they needed to help the indigenous population in order to establish a relationship of trust with them. While this did not really form a point of discussion in the mission discourse, providing material aid did. Providing material aid stirred up a discussion among the Protestant missionaries, board members, and supporters of the mission about the aims of the mission. Was the mission's objective only to convert or also to bring 'civilization and development'? Material aid does not seem to have been a point of discussion in the Catholic discourse. Despite varying opinions, all six gave material aid to the local people. Harthoorn, for example, lent money to plant tobacco and rice, though he later reported that he had lost all the money without converting a single person.⁵⁴⁶ Van Eendenburg, too, was of the opinion that the mission should support the local economy: 'One thing is certain to me, we will not reach success with the preaching of Christianity by words alone here. Christianity, the excellence of Christ's teaching,

⁵⁴³ The NZG sent a qualified doctor, Hubertus Bervoets, to Modjo Warno in 1896 to lead the medical mission in East Java.

⁵⁴⁴ Carel Poensen, *Letter to the board of the NZG* (Kediri 26 December 1880) Utrechts Archief.

⁵⁴⁵ Panitya Kerja Monumen Romo F. v. Lith S.Y., *Memanunggal dengan rakyat dasar mangrasul room F.V. Lith S.Y.*, 23.

⁵⁴⁶ S.E. Harthoorn, *Letter to the Bible Society in Batavia* (Malang 6 July 1861) Utrechts Archief.

must be shown here in acts of self-denial and love.⁵⁴⁷ In other words, Van Eendenburg argued that all missionaries needed to work for the increase of the people's welfare.

Poensen tried to stay on good terms with the local population by giving them material support. According to him this was the most successful way to interest the 'unbelievers' to his faith. The population would see that Christians tried to help them, without wanting something in return. Poensen and his wife distributed clothes to the pupils of their elementary schools once a year. In some villages within the district, namely Wono Hasri, Adi Tojo, and Maron, Poensen built rice barns to help the poor.⁵⁴⁸ According to Poensen every society revolved around money, thus around agriculture, trade, and industry. He tried to use this to gain access to the population. He had learned that in other missions, such as the Minahassa mission, mission societies had handed out agricultural machinery and tools to the people and that this had resulted in a thriving Christian community. Poensen believed that neighbouring Muslims would see that the Christians became more prosperous than they, and that this would encourage them to convert as well. Poensen had tried this on a small scale in Kediri, but it had not led to substantial results because he did not have adequate resources to really make a difference. The board argued that the mission should not bribe people to convert. Poensen replied: 'The Christian truth should not always hesitate to ride a horse as humble as material interest.'⁵⁴⁹ Nevertheless, he added that every missionary had to be careful that those who wanted to be baptized were truly devoted to the Christian faith and did not convert in the hope of enlarging their income.⁵⁵⁰

Sometimes, material aid was only meant for members of the church. Poensen, Van Eendenburg and Albers reported that they tried to think of jobs, such as gardener, cook, cemetery or church supervisor, et cetera, that they could offer to the poorest Christians in their region, in order to support them and their families.⁵⁵¹ Albers, Van Eendenburg, Harthoorn, and Van Lith all bought land for poor Christian families to cultivate and lent out money to buy land or sowing seed. Hoevenaars was convinced that the improvement of the economic well-being of the Javanese would lead to more conversions. He believed that economic development would first lead to cultural and then to spiritual development. However, he did not believe in giving or lending money to the people, but aimed at

⁵⁴⁷ Simon Van Eendenburg, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Pangharepan 22 June 1891) Utrechts Archief. Words are underlined in the original source.

⁵⁴⁸ Carel Poensen, 'Jaarverslag 1878', in: *Mededeelingen* (Rotterdam 1879).

⁵⁴⁹ Steenbrink, *Dutch colonialism and Indonesian Islam*, 104.

⁵⁵⁰ Poensen did not explain how the missionary should check this. In a different letter he wrote about some sort of exam, which the converted Javanese had to take, before he would baptize them. It is possible he was thinking in the same line on this matter.

⁵⁵¹ Christiaan Albers, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Ciandur 22 March 1877) Utrechts Archief.

restructuring the Javanese economy. Hoevenaars also opened a small factory with a peanut mill in 1898 and bought a rice huller a few years later, both to stimulate the local economy.⁵⁵²

Hoevenaars continued to focus on the economic wellbeing of the people. He was of the opinion that the mission would have more success when its influence was present in all aspects of social life. Therefore, he founded the association 'Retnogoena' in 1904.⁵⁵³ Retnogoena was a credit union, primarily focused on the agricultural sector. People could lend money to buy land, materials, and sowing seed, and its loans were without interest. The union was only intended for the Catholic community, which led critics in the Order to believe this would result in '*kristen beras*' (rice Christians), who only converted to gain money.⁵⁵⁴ Hoevenaars was forced to close the organisation down after a few years because it had not led to new conversions and was too costly. He later founded another association that focused on education and healthcare called 'Soekadharma'.⁵⁵⁵ This association was dissolved when Hoevenaars was re-appointed to Batavia.

Van Lith came up with many different ideas that evolved around material aid too, such as renting out *sawahs*, opening a cotton mill, and he even planned to set up a bamboo industry to create coloured mats. He argued: 'I am now so advanced in my teaching that I hope to persuade the entire *desa* to join (...) However, everything is ineffective if I cannot provide work to the people. Until the weaving industry can be launched, I shall start with a Javanese industry of the braiding of hats and cigar cases, and then batik as in Pekalongan.'⁵⁵⁶ He explained that the majority of his ideas were focused on the economic welfare of the people, because; 'First a *desa* man asks for food, secondly for clothes and only after this he'll start to philosophize'.⁵⁵⁷ Furthermore, he believed that '...in this place the mission will not make any progress unless we spread some prosperity'.⁵⁵⁸ Another of his initial strategies was to lend money to men from the higher classes in order to make them dependent to the Church.⁵⁵⁹ Although this initiative did not lead to any conversions, Van Lith did manage to achieve good relations with some *desa* leaders, which made his dealings with the lower classes easier. He therefore continued this strategy until his budget was cut and he was forced to reclaim all the

⁵⁵² G. Vriens, *Sejarah Gereja Katolik Indonesia*, Vol. 3 (Jakarta 1974).

⁵⁵³ Retnogoena literally means: 'jewel of ingenuity'.

⁵⁵⁴ Vriens, *Sejarah Gereja Katolik Indonesia*.

⁵⁵⁵ Soekadharma literally means 'a love for beneficence'.

⁵⁵⁶ Van Rijckevorsel S.J., *Pastoor F. van Lith S.J.*, 65.

⁵⁵⁷ Floribertus Hasto Rosariyanto, *Father Franciscus van Lith S.J. (1863-1926): turning point of the Catholic Church's approach in the pluralistic Indonesian Society* (Rome 1997).

⁵⁵⁸ Steenbrink, *Catholics in Indonesia*, Vol. 1, 215.

⁵⁵⁹ A.I. van Aernsbergen S.J., *Chronologisch Overzicht van de werkzaamheden der Jezuiten in de missie van Nederlandsch Oost-Indië, 1859-1934* (Amsterdam 1934) 193.

borrowed money. He managed to recover only a small part of the total sum and after that a number of people stopped attending his services.⁵⁶⁰

5.6. Additional methods

Hoevenaars was of the opinion that ostentation could be used as a strategy in the Catholic mission. Therefore he built an enormous church and hoped that it would impress and attract the Javanese. Even though the building had taken many years and had cost a huge amount of money, he was sure it would repay itself in the future; 'Every Javanese who passes by notices the sky pointer and stands still for a while to look at the skies. The only thing that remains is to teach them that God lives there and that He rewards the virtuous and reprimands the bad. Then we have reached our goal.'⁵⁶¹ Van Eendenburg, too, defended the building of an expensive church in Sukabumi with the argument that a prestigious building would certainly attract more visitors.⁵⁶²

Van Lith was also convinced that the Javanese cared much for 'superficial lustre'.⁵⁶³ He therefore tried to decorate the church and classrooms with beautiful paintings, candleholders, and statues. He also made use of drawings and made projections with his 'magic lantern' to attract the people to his sermons: 'It all comes down to present Catholicism in all its beauty and opulence, so people will be drawn to it.'⁵⁶⁴ Remarkably, it was decided in 1913, that paintings and statues that display Jesus with a crown of thorns hanging on the cross were to be avoided because it frightened the people.⁵⁶⁵ Statues and pictures of Jesus where he resembled a saint, hence fully dressed and praying was deemed more fitting for the Javanese. Perhaps also because a saintly Jesus, a strong man who can offer blessings and power, could more easily occupy a central part in the Javanese worship. Moreover, Jesus as a powerful king could be linked to the imagination of *Ratu Adil*.⁵⁶⁶ Even though Van Lith personally disliked devotions, which are external practices of piety, he had to admit that many converts loved them. The devotions fitted well in the Javanese tradition where gods and spirits were worshipped and asked for help with short prayers, small sacrifices, and other rituals. Van Lith thought

⁵⁶⁰ Van Rijckevorsel, *Pastoor F. Van Lith S.J.*, 48.

⁵⁶¹ Hoevenaars, *Letter to Monseigneur Hellings*, (13 June 1903 Mendut).

⁵⁶² Simon van Eendenburg, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Sukabumi 19 September 1887) Utrechts Archief.

⁵⁶³ F. Van Lith, *Algemeene richtlijnen voor de missiemethode in Nederlandsch Oost-Indië*, Archives of the Jesuit Province of Indonesia (Semarang).

⁵⁶⁴ F. Van Lith, *Algemeene richtlijnen voor de missiemethode in Nederlandsch Oost-Indië*, Archives of the Jesuit Province of Indonesia (Semarang).

⁵⁶⁵ Timmers, 'Uit de Javanenmissie', in: *Claverbond* (1913).

⁵⁶⁶ See chapter 5 for a discussion of *Ratu Adil*.

that these 'pagan' rituals could be easily replaced with a devotion to a particular saint. The use of devotions therefore fit well in Van Lith's adaptation strategy.

A common 'missionary tool' around the world was setting up an orphanage, especially in the Catholic mission. This 'tool' was, however, not commonly used in the Protestant mission. Most Protestant missionaries had a family of their own, and did not have enough time and money to take in orphans. Nonetheless, Poensen, Albers, and Van Eendenburg adopted Javanese children, whereas Hoevenaars and Van Lith did not. Poensen and his wife could not have children of their own and took in several orphans and other children who could not be raised by their parents.⁵⁶⁷ Yet, Poensen wrote very little about the children he and his wife had adopted. It is not clear how many they adopted, but we do know there were both boys and girls. Some stayed for just a few months and others for years, or until they were old enough to get married and live on their own. Albers and his wife took their first child, a boy named Wangsa, in 1864. Wangsa continued to visit the mosque every Friday and Albers explained that he did not forbid it because it would only be counterproductive.⁵⁶⁸ Like Poensen, Albers only sporadically mentioned Wangsa and the other children that lived under his roof through the years in his letters.

5.7. Indigenous assistants in the mission

All missionaries were in need of trustworthy assistants because their districts were too large to attend sufficiently alone. Moreover, most were not yet fluent in the local language shortly after their arrival, so they were depended upon indigenous assistants to travel with them to communicate with the people. Furthermore, some missionaries, including Harthoorn and Van Lith, were of the opinion that the Gospel should be brought to the Javanese by their own people. Harthoorn therefore called the training of indigenous teachers, ministers, and evangelists the most important task of the missionary.

Missionary-assistants were trained to become teachers at the mission schools and ministers in the churches, but because of the high costs, most functioned as both. The missionaries travelled around their district and visited the different Christian communities to guide and support their assistants. Usually once a month, all assistants travelled to the missionary's residence for a general meeting where everyone's problems and results were addressed. Harthoorn soon realised that the indigenous assistant was the key to a successful mission; not only to assist him in the churches and schools, but also to travel around to preach independently and do preparatory work. Harthoorn

⁵⁶⁷ Carel Poensen, 'Karakterschetsen uit het desaleven op Java', in: *Mededeelingen* (Rotterdam 1879).

⁵⁶⁸ Christiaan Albers, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Ciandur 28 September 1864) Utrechts Archief.

realized they had an easier access to the Javanese people than he ever would. He had learned from Coolen and other indigenous evangelists that the Javanese loved to debate about religious matters and that this was the best method to win over people. Harthoorn understood, however, that Dutch missionaries would never have sufficient expertise in the language and in the Javanese way of thinking to successfully partake in these debates; exactly why Poensen and Albers advised to avoid public debates. Harthoorn, however, chose not to avoid these debates but to train his assistants to dispute with the other gurus. He pointed out that his assistant Zacharias, for example, was good in pointing out discrepancies in Javanese folk tales and often won debates because of this talent.⁵⁶⁹

Furthermore, Harthoorn came up with the idea to form three types of assistants. The first type would be 'pioneers', who would travel around to evangelise to people who had never before heard of Jesus Christ. He believed the skills that were needed for this could not be taught; one just had to be naturally talented. The second type was 'evangelists', they would travel to the places where the pioneers had found interested people to educate them up to the stage where they were ready to be baptized. The missionary would then travel to those *desas* to investigate the motives and knowledge of the new converts and baptize them if they proved worthy. Subsequently, the third type of 'advanced evangelists' would regularly visit the young congregations to lead the Sunday's services, educate, and support them.

Harthoorn was not sure, however, where the education of the assistants of the third type should take place - in the mission field itself or would it perhaps be better to send them to the mission school in Rotterdam? He believed an education in the Netherlands would be good because the Javanese could then experience living in a Christian society. However, he believed it would also have a negative influence on them as he was certain they would behave superior to other Javanese after their return. Moreover, Harthoorn was not sure what status these evangelists would have. It was still unthinkable that, although they had the same training, they would have the same authority as a Dutch missionary or receive the same wage.⁵⁷⁰

The board of the NZG responded well to Harthoorn's suggested approach. They agreed the indigenous assistant should have a more prominent position in the mission since even uneducated Christian gurus like Coolen, Tunggul Wulung, and Sadrach managed to successfully win over people.⁵⁷¹ Albers of the NZV shared this opinion: 'I wish that under all circumstances the missionary is preceded by an indigenous helper in a new area, who can pave the way for the coming missionaries. It is

⁵⁶⁹ S.E. Harthoorn, *Letter to the board of the NZG* (Malang 2 March 1857) Utrechts Archief.

⁵⁷⁰ S.E. Harthoorn, *Letter to director Hiebink* (Malang 12 November 1855) Utrechts Archief.

⁵⁷¹ Harthoorn, *De Evangelische Zending en Oost-Java*, 124.

perhaps less effective when the missionary appears out of the blue'.⁵⁷² The Catholic missionaries also valued their assistants or 'catechists'. Van Lith confessed to his superior in 1908 that he had hardly achieved anything with evangelizing and that only his Javanese catechists had managed to convert a small number of people. 'Therefore', he explained, 'we have started to train Javanese boys to become Catholic teachers. First they will work in government services and then, when they are matured, they can become religious gurus'.⁵⁷³

It is clear that the indigenous assistants were important for the success of the mission. The training of these assistants was therefore considered one of the main tasks of the missionary. Albers, for example, was very active in training pupils; between 1886 and 1896 he trained forty men in Meester Cornelis.⁵⁷⁴ Most missionaries even took young pupils into their homes. They went to school in the morning, both to assist the missionary in teaching younger children and to attend advanced classes in theology and Bible history themselves. They travelled in the afternoons with the missionary through the districts to learn how to direct existing Christian communities and how to missionize in Muslim areas.

The training of the assistants was intense and a heavy burden for the missionaries. Therefore both the Protestants and the Catholics founded boarding schools to train these young men to take some of the burden of the missionaries. Jellesma established the first seminary of the NZG in Modjo Warno. Harthoorn, however, closed down this school after Jellesma died, since a surplus of assistants had emerged. In 1878, an independent Protestant mission school was founded in Depok, where indigenous boys would be educated to become assistants in the mission districts. This seminary was not affiliated to a single missionary society, but open for boys from every Protestant mission post. Poensen was asked to become director of the seminary in Depok. Eventually Poensen and the board of the seminary did not reach an agreement on the nature of the education programme. Poensen had other dogmatic ideas that disagreed with the majority of the board members. Furthermore, the majority of the board members wished to educate these men to become independent preachers who would work without supervision of the missionaries. Poensen was of the opinion that the graduates should remain under the leadership of the missionaries. He argued that the Javanese were 'too inconsistent' to independently lead a church society.⁵⁷⁵ Another point of discussion was whether the students should spend part of their programme in the Netherlands. This would be expensive, but the

⁵⁷² Christiaan Albers, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Meester Cornelis 20 July 1894) Utrechts Archief.

⁵⁷³ Franciscus van Lith, *Letter to the Pater Provincial* (Muntilan 13 December 1908) Archives of the Jesuit Province of Indonesia (Semarang).

⁵⁷⁴ However, most of them never completed the training or did not become a missionary-assistant after their training.

⁵⁷⁵ Carel Poensen, *Letter to the board of the NZG* (Kediri 6 March 1877) Utrechts Archief.

student would benefit from a more complete training. The NZV opened its own seminary in Bandung in 1902. It was founded by missionary B. Alkema. The first year almost thirty students enrolled for the course that lasted five years. The seminary taught didactic and theological classes so that the graduates could direct a church and a school in the *desas*.

Harthoorn, Albers, and Van Eendenburg agreed with Poensen that the Javanese assistants were not yet capable of leading a church or mission district without Dutch supervision. Harthoorn and Van Eendenburg believed the Javanese assistants needed continuous guidance. Harthoorn noted: 'A young Christian congregation can miss the missionary like an infant can miss his mother'.⁵⁷⁶ Albers wrote that an independent Javanese church was the ultimate goal for the Javanese mission, but that the assistants' level of knowledge first had to improve significantly. The Catholics were more open to the idea of a fully native clergy; the first Javanese were accepted into the novitiate in 1911, only thirteen years after the start of the Jesuit mission. These two novices were sent to the Netherlands in 1919 to complete their education.⁵⁷⁷ They returned to Java as Jesuit priests with the same status as Dutch priests.

When Harthoorn reflected on his work and on the NZG mission in general, he came to the conclusion that all missionaries were completely dependent on their assistants. Hardly any European missionary missionized directly; almost all passed this difficult task to their assistants.⁵⁷⁸ For instance Van Eendenburg mentioned: 'Petroes is constantly traveling to bring the Gospel to the surrounding *kampungs* (hamlets, M.K.), while Sarioen assists me in taking care of the congregation'.⁵⁷⁹ Poensen justified leaving most communication with unconverted Javanese to his assistants by stating that they understood the Javanese Muslims better than he did and that they could therefore achieve better results.⁵⁸⁰ Poensen needed their effort because he realized conversions rarely took place through direct evangelism by the missionary.⁵⁸¹ According to Poensen, the disadvantage of proselytizing by indigenous assistants was, however, that there was a fair chance that 'syncretic forms of Christianity' would emerge, as the new converts themselves knew too little of the Christian faith to explain it well.⁵⁸²

⁵⁷⁶ S.E. Harthoorn, *Diary on April and May 1858* (Malang 26 May 1858) Utrechts Archief.

⁵⁷⁷ Satiman, *Pastoor van Lith volgens een Javaanse leerling en vereerder* (Maastricht January 1926) Archives of the Jesuit Province of the Netherlands (Nijmegen).

⁵⁷⁸ Harthoorn, *De Evangelische Zending en Oost-Java*, 124.

⁵⁷⁹ Simon Van Eendenburg, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Pangharepan 25 May 1894) Utrechts Archief.

⁵⁸⁰ Poensen's assistants were Javanese, Christian men, trained by Poensen to function as ministers, church leaders and teachers.

⁵⁸¹ Carel Poensen, 'De zending in Kediri in 1883', in: *Mededeelingen* (Rotterdam 1884).

⁵⁸² Carel Poensen, 'De zending in Kediri in 1883', in: *Mededeelingen* (Rotterdam 1884).

Although the indigenous assistants could not be missed, the missionaries were, in general, not too positive about the work of their assistants. The mission reports recount that most assistants were not advanced enough in the Christian teachings, not eager enough to missionize, and that they led the schools and Sunday's services with the least effort. The missionaries repeatedly commented that their sermons were incoherent, full of repetition, or just too vague.⁵⁸³ Poensen had to see to it that his assistants actually went out to preach the gospel among Muslims. He pointed out that he constantly had to tell them: 'Preach the Gospel! Find opportunities in the school or medical centre!'⁵⁸⁴

Albers agreed with Poensen that many assistants were not very diligent in their work: 'I received an evasive answer to my question whether there had been any attempts to profess the Gospel to the people of Tambas. They believed they first needed to be in possession of a church building, a *kumpulan*, as they call it. The congregation here shows as much disinterest for proselytizing as elsewhere. They are Christians, the others are not; and if the others want to become Christian they should come over and sign up. Going out there to speak about Christianity does not occur to them, not even to the assistant, who is a good man, but also a dolt. I, to do my part, promised to build them a church if they promised to enlarge the congregation to justify the costs. So far I have not heard that there have been any attempts'.⁵⁸⁵

The missionaries also had to deal with men who wished to become assistants seeking an income rather than seeking Christ. The missionaries complained that their assistants often lied to them about their results with preaching in the *desas* and that they suggested people for the baptism that hardly understood anything of Christianity.⁵⁸⁶ Albers wrote: 'The demands the indigenous ministers set will never be high; they just want to baptize people. I'm not exaggerating. For example, I taught Pak Emaj for nine months before baptizing him. When Ismail (Albers's assistant, M.K.) brought him to me with his wife and children, he told me he was ready to be baptized. Could I have found it in my heart to just baptize him and write to Holland that I converted an entire family? Most people back out after the classes. Also, Pak Emaj could not understand why I refused to baptize his friend, but he was living 'in sin' with a woman.'⁵⁸⁷

Pa Djares was a Christian guru who travelled around in the Preanger preaching the Gospel. Albers had heard he was talented and tried to get in contact with him to offer him a paid position as his assistant. He accepted, but Albers was not very content with the quality of his work. Albers found

⁵⁸³ Simon van Eendenburg, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Pangharepan 10 September 1894) Utrechts Archief.

⁵⁸⁴ Carel Poensen, *Letter to the board of the NZG* (Kediri 16 January 1882) Utrechts Archief.

⁵⁸⁵ Christiaan Albers, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Bidana Tjina 5 November 1886) Utrechts Archief.

⁵⁸⁶ Christiaan Albers, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Ciandur 3 January 1883) Utrechts Archief.

⁵⁸⁷ Christiaan Albers, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Ciandur 15 September 1873) Utrechts Archief.

out that his level of Biblical knowledge was insufficient to preach or to participate in debates with other gurus. Furthermore, he often brought people to be baptized who did not have any understanding of Christianity and did not know what it meant to be baptized. Albers explained that he always educated people for several months and that they had to take some sort of exam before he baptized them.

5.8. Initial results and reflections

All missionaries started their mission with the greatest enthusiasm. They were all rewarded initially with the people's attention and curiosity. However, they also experienced that the novelty quickly wore off and that they were left with empty churches and classrooms. Albers explained: 'Among them, there are again many who came to listen for a long time, but eventually stayed away. I am at an utter loss; it usually takes place when one has understood what the Gospel asks.'⁵⁸⁸ He means that many were interested in this new type of *ngelmu*, but lost all interest after they learned that they would have to let go of their present beliefs and practices in order to become Christian. To improve the result of their efforts all missionaries were encouraged to reflect on their work by writing their annual reports. Some dreaded writing these reports because there was hardly ever a success to report. Albers especially made clear how much he detested writing reports for the board and articles for the *Orgaan*. He complained in an article from 1899 that although he was supposed to write an article, he had nothing to report. 'Therefore', he wrote, 'the article will be on the same subject I have addressed in the past 36 years: 'disappointments''.⁵⁸⁹

After years of missionizing, Albers still had not discovered an effective method. He had only converted a small number of people and unfortunately some of them had passed or moved away. So when Albers went on furlough to Europe, twelve years after he had first arrived, he placed only four Christians in the care of his replacement Gijsman.⁵⁹⁰ Evangelizing in the *desas* had proven unsuccessful: 'That requires a rare perseverance, burning love and abnegation; characteristics I would not dare to attribute to myself'.⁵⁹¹ Apart from emphasizing the difficult circumstances in which he had to work Albers did not really reflect upon his methods and results in his writings. Neither did the Catholic missionary Hoevenaars, but this can be due to the fact that he was only active in the mission shortly.

⁵⁸⁸ Christiaan Albers, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Ciandur 13 January 1886) Utrechts Archief.

⁵⁸⁹ Christiaan Albers, 'Teleurstellingen', in: *Orgaan* (Rotterdam 1899).

⁵⁹⁰ Of those four people, one was a multiple-handicapped child.

⁵⁹¹ Christiaan Albers, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Ciandur 3 January 1883) Utrechts Archief.

Samuel Harthoorn did reflect extensively on the methods of the NZG mission and its results. He searched for reasons that were at foundation of the people's aversion towards Christianity to legitimize the lack of results. He explained that at first many were interested in his new type of *ngelmu*, the Christian *ngelmu*, because it could be stronger than Javanese *ngelmu* and would give the supporters power and courage.⁵⁹² To them, the missionary was a *guru ngelmu* who possessed power to heal people and his prayers were formulas to expel diseases.⁵⁹³ Many were eager to enlarge their spiritual knowledge, but when it became clear that the baptized had a separate religion, opposite to that of the ancestors, their affection changed to aversion.⁵⁹⁴

Harthoorn commented in his reflective reports on the use of the Bible in the mission. He did not believe the focus should be on the Bible so much because the stories about an unknown people who lived in an unknown region of the world did not appeal to the Javanese. The focus should be on the Christian message, not on scripture. If too much focus was put on knowledge they would confirm that the idea that Christianity was just a new form of *ngelmu*. The missionary should instead follow Jesus' example of explaining Christianity with parables that were understandable for the Javanese.⁵⁹⁵ Furthermore, Harthoorn explained to the board, handing out Bible translations and pamphlets was considered intrusive and in opposition with Javanese habits in transmitting religious knowledge.

In addition, Harthoorn negotiated with the principles of the 'new mission', the nineteenth century Protestant mission, which aimed at the conversion of individuals, who had to show personal conviction. Harthoorn explained to the board that an individual approach was not desirable in the Javanese society. He argued that in the Javanese society, the community was more important than the individual and that the missionary should therefore use strategies to reach the community as a whole. He had witnessed the success of this strategy, used by the indigenous evangelist Coolen, and was convinced it was also the most important reason for the success of Modjo Warno.

Harthoorn argued that many missionaries brought the Gospel to the people in the wrong way. He had noticed that some of his colleagues belittled local religious traditions in their discussions with the Javanese. For example, some decried the Hindu gods, like Vishnu and Krishna, who were highly regarded in Java by even many Muslims. Harthoorn explained that if a Javanese man would stand in front of the Laurens Church in Rotterdam on a Sunday morning and shouted that the Church, Jesus, and the baptism were all worthless, he would probably not convince many people of his ideas either.

⁵⁹² See chapter 2 and 5.

⁵⁹³ S.E. Harthoorn, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Malang 1-3 June 1857) Utrechts Archief.
S. E. Harthoorn, *Diary on August and September 1857* (Malang 1857) Utrechts Archief.

⁵⁹⁴ Harthoorn, *De Evangelische Zending en Oost-Java*, 43.

⁵⁹⁵ Harthoorn, *De Evangelische Zending en Oost-Java*.

Harthoorn called evangelizing in this way 'desecration of the people's sanctity; defamation to Christianity, and an abomination to God'.⁵⁹⁶

The Dutch missionaries, especially the Protestant missionaries, focused mainly on the *Abangan* people who were the lowest class in the religious hierarchy. They focused on poor and uneducated people living in the countryside because they were thought easier to convert than the more educated and devoted *Putihan*.⁵⁹⁷ Yet, Harthoorn argued that the missionaries should actually focus on the higher social class. He thought Christianity might be considered unworthy by the Javanese if the missionaries focused solely on the lower class. In addition, Harthoorn criticised his colleagues for accepting anyone as a student and for appointing young men without status as preachers and teachers although this was in accord with the ground principles of the NZG. Young men, were, perhaps able to absorb more knowledge, but the Javanese were more interested in an experienced leader with charisma, such as Coolen, Tunggul Wulung, and Sadrach. Harthoorn remarked: 'The apprentices were poor evangelists, who were seldom able to take on the experienced Javanese guru because of their youth and inexperience.'⁵⁹⁸ Harthoorn admitted that his best assistants were actually not trained by him, but had previously been appointed by Coolen to missionize. They eventually had come to work for Harthoorn, because he could pay them a salary. Because Harthoorn believed the training of indigenous assistants had not been very successful and a surplus had arisen over the years he decided to close the seminary in Modjo Warno founded by Jellesma.

Harthoorn's main points of critique were that the methods of colportage, preaching in public, and insisting people to listen to the Gospel did not fit the Javanese culture. Although Harthoorn disapproved of Coolen's 'godless way of life', he was an inspiration to him and Harthoorn travelled often to Ngoro to meet him.⁵⁹⁹ Harthoorn learnt from Coolen that Javanese gurus only shared their knowledge with a limited number of insiders: not with the masses. During debates with other highly qualified gurus they would reveal some of their knowledge and only when the opponent debater had proven to be worthy were he and his students introduced to a higher level of spiritual knowledge.⁶⁰⁰ This way, religious knowledge was considered exclusive and sacred; it was not accessible to everyone and was therefore highly desired. However, the Dutch missionaries preached the Gospel to everyone who wanted to listen; they went door to door and even preached at the *pasar* (market). According to Harthoorn, the Dutch missionaries treated their religion without reverence and as a cheap

⁵⁹⁶ Samuel Harthoorn, *Letter to the board of the NZG* (Malang 31 December 1860) Utrechts Archief.

⁵⁹⁷ See chapter 4 for the division in Javanese Islam.

⁵⁹⁸ Unknown author, 'Verslag der commissie in zake de zendeling Harthoorn en de zending op Java, uitgebracht den 8sten april 1863, in de vergadering des hoofdbestuur van het Nederlandsch Zendelinggenootschap', in: *Mededeelingen* (Rotterdam 1863) 392-476.

⁵⁹⁹ S.E. Harthoorn, *Letter to director Hiebink* (Malang 2 October 1858) Utrechts Archief.

⁶⁰⁰ Nortier, *Het leven van Samuel Eliza Harthoorn*.

commodity, so it was therefore considered worthless by the Javanese. Harthoorn argued that they should stop handing out pamphlets and Bible books and cease talking directly to people about the Christian faith since that would only degrade Christianity. He added that Christians in his area had not been converted by all those pamphlets from Emde, but by Coolen and his assistants.⁶⁰¹

These ideas, however, were contrary to the Protestant principle that Christianity should be accessible to all. The board of the NZG disagreed with Harthoorn's strategy to make Christianity more exclusive by refraining from public preaching. It argued that Jesus himself had descended to the people and taught everyone - the poor, the sick, even sinners, about God. The board even decried his approach as 'anti-Christian' and was afraid his work would eventually be reduced to mere civilisation work without a religious character.⁶⁰² But the headstrong Harthoorn went against the wishes of his employer by choosing his own path. He stopped training assistants and baptizing new converts. He used his time to study Javanese history and ethnology and to reflect on the methods used. He encouraged others to do the same with his well-known expression: '*stilstaan en omzien*' (stand still and look back). He criticised the NZG mission for forming 'superficial' Christians: 'Christians are taught to confess and to deny; doing so and so, and thus they seem to be something they are not! In trying to form them into saints they are on their way to become terrible hypocrites!'⁶⁰³

Although Harthoorn did indicate several matters that should be improved in his annual reports and letters, he never came forward with an improved strategic plan. Harthoorn strongly suggested to his colleagues that they study the Javanese history, culture, and religion more thoroughly before designing a new approach. Unfortunately, his career in the NZG ended prematurely when he was fired in 1863 because he had disregarded NZG's instructions. A few months after his dismissal, Harthoorn published a book '*De Evangelische Zending en Oost-Java, een kritische bijdrage*' (The mission and East Java, a critical contribution) in which he reflected extensively on the mission and called upon his colleagues in the field to resign from their activities to go back to study the Javanese society. Like Harthoorn, Poensen and Van Lith were convinced that studying the Javanese culture intensively was of the utmost importance for the success of the mission. Both spent much time on research and contributed to Dutch scholarship in Java.

Carel Poensen believed a missionizing method was not something that could be taught at school, but that a good missionary created his own method automatically in the course of time. Moreover, he believed it was impossible to prescribe a method, because each district had different customs and traditions. In addition, a missionizing method needed to suit one's own personality. The

⁶⁰¹ S.E. Harthoorn, *Letter to director Hiebink* (Malang 2 March 1856) Utrechts Archief.

⁶⁰² Nortier, *Het leven van Samuel Eliza Harthoorn*.

⁶⁰³ Harthoorn, *Diary on 1860* (Malang 1861) Utrechts Archief.

core of Poensen's strategy consisted of teaching, the 'showing of Christian love', and the support of good causes. For him, these features came all together in the title of 'missionary-teacher'.⁶⁰⁴ This title fitted well in the Javanese culture in which religious gurus were highly regarded.

When Poensen reflected on the conversion process, he realised that converted Christians had given up much for their new faith. Javanese Muslims celebrated many exuberant festivals considered heretical by Poensen. Even the main Christian religious holidays, like Christmas and Easter, were celebrated quite soberly in comparison to Javanese holidays. Therefore Poensen invented a holiday to satisfy the converted Javanese who had let go of their old traditions and holidays. In 1863, Poensen organised an annual event, which he called 'mission day'. Mission day was celebrated each year in August. After a church service there was a fair with food stalls, a lottery, and games for the children. After sunset, the party continued with a great dinner, music, dancing, and even fireworks. Poensen organised this day each year in a different *desa* in the region.⁶⁰⁵

Poensen spent many hours theorizing about innovative missionizing methods. Initially, he composed a number of general guidelines. First of all, a missionary had to master the local language to perfection and had to learn as much as possible about the ethnology of the people in order to make real contact with the population and talk with them at an equal level. He thought that these subjects deserved much more attention during the missionary training. Moreover, the missionary should continue to train himself as much as possible on these subjects at his post. In addition to these general guidelines, Poensen developed two specific methods: he wished every missionary specialized in a worldly profession, and he generated a plan for Christian agricultural enterprises.

Poensen put his first ideal method on paper in 1864. He suggested each missionary should choose a speciality in addition to the general training received in the mission house. The missionaries could choose to specialize in medicine, agriculture, teaching, or carpentry. The specialties did not require the highest level of professionalism; the missionaries, for example, who wanted to specialize in the field of medicine, did not have to be medical graduates *per se*. Poensen wrote: 'But certainly each pupil has to be able, according to his ability and desire to be more specifically trained in one or another subject, to help, knowing so much of medicine and surgery, even without the title of doctor.'⁶⁰⁶ Poensen and his NZG colleagues, including Kruyt, Kreemer, and Hoeszoo, already possessed different specialties; they all taught at a primary school, trained their assistants, and provided medical care at their posts. Poensen felt, however, that he had too little time to give adequate attention to all of these subjects. He pleaded for more missionaries per district so everyone could concentrate on one

⁶⁰⁴ Carel Poensen, *Letter to the Board of the NZG* (Kediri 5 March 1875) Utrechts Archief.

⁶⁰⁵ Carel Poensen, 'Letter from Kediri', in: *Mededeelingen* (Rotterdam 1873).

⁶⁰⁶ Carel Poensen, *Letter to J.C. Neurdenburg* (Kediri 31 August 1880) Utrechts Archief.

profession. According to Poensen, providing healthcare, education, and business opportunities, would result in a more positive view of Christians and Christianity among the Javanese. In addition, the missionaries would more easily make contact with the Javanese while carrying out their speciality. However, there was a substantial difference between Poensen's ideal missionizing methods on paper and those he employed in his own mission field. The NZG was in favour of Poensen's proposal but the plan was never carried out because of a lack of missionaries and financial resources.

Poensen elaborated much more on his second missionizing method; he even calculated the necessary budgets and made contacts in Java to realise his plan. Poensen's second proposal was that the NZG would buy uninhabited land to establish new Christian villages or '*desas*'. He was inspired by the foundation of Christian *desas* in Central Java by indigenous gurus, including Coolen, and which seemed to be successful in attracting new converts.⁶⁰⁷ Poensen had developed this idea already during his first year in Java and had lobbied for it for many years. The Christian *desa* would serve several goals. In ordinary Javanese *desas* Christians were often excluded from their former community. The Christians did not celebrate Islamic holidays and they did not obey Islamic law and were consequently alienated from their neighbours.⁶⁰⁸ Newly converted Christians needed each other's support; in a Christian *desa* they would be able to develop a normal social network. The Javanese culture is more focused on the community rather than the individual; therefore Poensen believed the mission had to focus more on the community as well.

At the start, the missionary should buy just one or two lots that were suitable for rice culture. The NZG would fund and own the agricultural company. The agricultural enterprises should be set up by the Christian missionary together with Javanese Christians. The harvest yields were meant entirely for the residents of the village. It should be made clear to them that they worked for themselves and not for the NZG because 'the natives have planted enough coffee for the benefit of Europeans.'⁶⁰⁹ The purpose of the company was not a commercial profit, but to increase the wealth of Javanese Christians. All profits would be re-invested in the *sawahs* and the villages. The *desa* would have a Christian character and the centre would be the church and a Christian school. The village would be headed by the missionary and supported by a Javanese village head. Together they would ward off

⁶⁰⁷ Carel Poensen, *Zendingsmethode op Java* (Kediri 1874, 1875) (Unpublished article) Utrechts Archief.

⁶⁰⁸ Social exclusion was not only limited to Javanese Muslims who converted to Christianity. Christiaan Albers also reports that Chinese converts risk being excluded from the Chinese community. Albers wrote that the Chinese Christian Kim Hoat had refused to burn incense and bow before a Chinese offering table and was therefore excluded from his community. Christiaan Albers, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Meester Cornelis 9 October 1900) Utrechts Archief.

⁶⁰⁹ Carel Poensen, *Letter to the board of the NZG* (Kediri 5 March 1875) Utrechts Archief.

opium, gambling, and prostitution and would see to it that everyone attended church regularly and did not celebrate the holidays of other religions.⁶¹⁰

An important issue for Poensen was that the agrarian companies would ensure an increase in prosperity among the Javanese. The agriculture would be better structured and brought to a higher level. According to Poensen, the Javanese had very little knowledge of farming and they did not possess adequate tools. A missionary who was trained as a farmer had to manage the company. All families would own a piece of land to build their own home and grow some vegetables for their own consumption. They would work their own piece of land and also in the common fields. The profits would be divided equally and a part would go to the church, school, pharmacy, and to a fund for more difficult times. Poensen wanted every Christian *desa* to have a rice barn with a stock of rice to aid the poorest in the communities. He admitted that the first few years would be expensive for the NZG, but that once the village had repaid their debts, the NZG would not have to contribute anymore.

Poensen hoped the Christian *desa* would arouse the curiosity of its Islamic neighbours. Poensen believed that people from surrounding *desas* would see that the Christians living in the new *desa* were more prosperous than they, and that this would encourage them to convert.⁶¹¹ The board criticised that the mission should not be bribery. Poensen replied that every missionary of course had to be careful that those who wanted to be baptized were truly devoted to the Christian faith and did not convert to enlarge their income.⁶¹²

There were already some private agricultural enterprises in Java, but these, according to Poensen, did not care about the Javanese people or the mission.⁶¹³ The landowners were not prepared to exclusively allow Christian workers or to give them higher wages. Poensen acknowledged that it would be difficult to establish a thriving business with just Christian residents at first. He decided that a small number of Muslims could be allowed if they were supporters of the *Abangan* current. *Hajjis* and *santris* had to be excluded, because they were 'too fanatical', had too much influence on the population, and would never convert.⁶¹⁴ Moreover, the missionary would have to draw up rules, which stated that a Muslim, who had lived in the *desa* for one year and still was not

⁶¹⁰ Carel Poensen, *Letter to the board of the NZG* (Kediri 5 March 1875) Utrechts Archief.

⁶¹¹ Poensen, *Zendingsmethode op Java*.

⁶¹² Poensen did not explain how the missionary should check this. In a different letter he wrote about some sort of exam, which the converted Javanese had to take, before he would baptize them. It is possible he was thinking in the same line on this matter.

⁶¹³ Apart from the Christian *desas* founded by Christian indigenous gurus, there were also already some Dutch-led Christian *desas* with their own communal lands before Poensen drew up his plans. Under the auspices of E.J. Van Vollenhoven – de Wildt, founder of the Salatiga mission, Wonoredjo was founded in 1857. Poensen's writings do not show any sign that he was aware of this.

⁶¹⁴ Poensen, *Zendingsmethode op Java*.

converted to Christianity, had to leave the village. Eventually, the Christian *desa* should only have Christian residents. Poensen wanted his Christians to live secluded from non-Christians to diminish the influence of local culture and local religious beliefs and practices. He was convinced that Javanese Christians who lived in such an environment would have more knowledge of Christianity and show better behaviour than Christians living amongst Muslims. The Christian *desa* was thus also a method to avoid or minimize syncretism.

Poensen calculated that a new *desa* would need around seven thousand guilders for its development; he would need enough money for the purchase and cultivation of the land, the development of the village, livestock, tools, and food for the first year. He estimated that the company could pay the NZG back in just five years. The NZG was positive about Poensen's proposition, but again, it did not have enough money to set up such an agricultural company. Poensen then took matters into his own hands. At the end of 1880, Poensen sought contact with an entrepreneur in the region. He met with Mr Hartens, who was a deeply religious businessman and cared for the mission. Poensen tried to persuade him to invest in a *desa*, so the NZG would not have to come up with the money. Ultimately, the negotiations failed because Mr Hartens wanted to make a profit of the company after all and was not willing to re-invest everything into the *desa*.⁶¹⁵ Later Poensen wrote that he considered himself too old and too inexperienced with agriculture to realise the plan himself. Poensen had developed his plan in the 1860's and had written about it for years. Unfortunately, the plan was not realised in his time. After 1900, a few missionaries from the NZG founded new Christian villages according to guidelines established by Poensen, namely: Pare Redja and Merga Redja.⁶¹⁶ The NZV missionaries Verhoeven and Van Eendenburg founded Christian *desas* in the Preanger; Verhoeven founded Cideres in 1882 and Van Eendenburg founded Pangharepan in 1886.

Like Poensen, Van Eendenburg had started out with the foundation of schools, healthcare centres, and the training of indigenous assistants while also supporting the economies of Christian families in his district. After a few years in the mission, he reflected on his methods and results and came to the same conclusion as Poensen; his results were limited and his methods insufficient. He had also noticed that Javanese Christians were often excluded from their community and lived an isolated life. Because Christians had stopped celebrating Islamic holidays and abiding by Islamic laws they felt alienated from their family, friends, and neighbours. This formed a barrier for other interested Javanese to convert. Van Eendenburg argued that newly converted Christians needed each other's support and that they would be able to develop a normal social network in a Christian *desa*.

⁶¹⁵ Carel Poensen, *Letter to J.C. Neurdenburg* (Kediri 30 December 1880) Utrechts Archief.

⁶¹⁶ N. Adriani, 'In memoriam prof. C. Poensen', in: *Mededeelingen* (Rotterdam 1919) 195.

In a Christian *desa* the Christian traditions could be intensified: Sunday's rest would be observed by all residents and Christian holidays would be grandly celebrated. Parents could raise their children in a Christian environment and they would enjoy Christian education. Van Eendenburg argued that a shared agricultural enterprise would strengthen the Christian community and increase their welfare therefore attracting new members. In addition, the Christian *desa* would be an asylum for Christians where they would not be subject to Muslim leaders and where they could not be harassed by 'fanatic Muslims'. Van Eendenburg wrote for the first time to the board about the method of founding Christian *desas* and communal *sawahs* in 1885. He had witnessed the advantages in the Christian *desa* Modjo Warno, which was led by the NZG missionary -and his father-in-law- Kruyt and was convinced this was the right method for his district. He bought a piece of land the next year and founded a Christian *desa*. This development will be more fully addressed in the next paragraph.

Van Lith struggled and hardly made any converts during his first years in the Muntilan mission. He tried unsuccessfully different methods and put all his efforts into satisfying his superiors. Hoevenaars was more successful than Van Lith right after the founding of his mission post Mendut. His mission had its first success in 1899 just a few months after his instalment. Hoevenaars baptized his first two converts in August and on Christmas day he baptized nineteen people. A year later, seventy-nine people had converted to Christianity in his district.⁶¹⁷ Hoevenaars baptized far more people than Van Lith during those first years. Van Lith reacted disapprovingly of his colleague's success. He complained it took more time to earn the people's trust, and that these Christians could not be true Christians, but had probably converted for economic reasons only.⁶¹⁸

The Jesuit superiors threatened to end the Muntilan mission in 1904 to focus entirely on Mendut. But, at the close of 1904, Van Lith had his first big success. He baptized almost two hundred villagers at the well of Sendangsono. These people came from various *desas* around Kalibawang, the region where the cripple Sarikrama that Van Lith had 'healed' lived. According to the stories about Van Lith and this mass conversion, Sarikrama then became the first catechist of Kalibawang. In reality, these people were not converted by Van Lith, who had only visited the region once or twice before. Other sources show that Sadrach had visited Kalibawang previously and that he had introduced the people to Christianity.⁶¹⁹ Although this event is remembered as a huge success for Van Lith, it should actually be attributed to Sadrach. Nevertheless, these two hundred baptisms satisfied the Jesuit

⁶¹⁷ Vriens, *Sejarah Gereja Katolik Indonesia*.

Petrus Hoevenaars, *Historia missionis Javanica, 1896-1904* (with additions of Van Lith) Archives of the Jesuit Province of Indonesia (Semarang).

⁶¹⁸ Franciscus Van Lith, *Letter to Monseigneur Luypen* (Muntilan 6 February 1900) Archives of the Archdiocese of Jakarta.

⁶¹⁹ Van Rijckevorsel, *Pastoor F. Van Lith, S.J.*, 65.

superiors and they allowed Van Lith to continue. Despite the mass conversion at Sendangsono, Van Lith still had to design a clear strategy for the Muntilan mission. After a few years of trying various strategies he decided to write down his ideas for a practical missionary approach, because 'without a sensible plan, there is no chance for success.'⁶²⁰

Van Lith tried to convert his everyday experience and pragmatic strategies to a generally applicable manual for the Catholic mission in Java. His general method can be divided in four stages. During the first stage the missionary had to learn the language, culture and nature of the local people thoroughly, in order to understand how to communicate with them and to respond adequately to their needs. The second stage can be named the stage of adaptation. Adaptation is a keyword in Van Lith's method, and with it he meant the adaptation of the European clergy to the discourse and traditions of the local people. Adaptation occurred in two ways according to Van Lith. Negative adaptation meant that the missionary should allow the new converts to continue their old way of life to a certain extent and turn a blind eye every now and then. Van Lith, for example, wrote: '...in principle, the mission should leave her followers as much as possible in their own environment and legal system, and the mission should strive to limit a distinction (between the Muslim and Christian communities) at these points as much as possible. This policy should be followed in every case; for example if a *corvée* in the *desa* was required once on a Sunday, one should not worry about it. One should only complain if it was clear that the Christians were continuously being badgered in this way, and then it usually stopped. Christians should contribute and participate to *desa* festivals, as long as they did not commit acts that are specifically Islamic, such as pronouncing the Islamic creed.'⁶²¹ Van Lith added: 'One cannot demand everything at once. Therefore it is better to let things be as they are until the people start to change their mind on these matters, and then we should put pressure on them.'⁶²² Positive adaptation, on the other hand, meant using the qualities of 'their natural aptitude, their existing assumptions and lifestyle to base our mission work and services on.'⁶²³ Van Lith believed that the European missionaries could learn much from the indigenous evangelisers on this point.

The third stage was more concrete and consisted of setting up charitable and social programmes, such as schools, hospitals, and credit unions, in order to reach a respected and appreciated position in the society and to increase people's prosperity. Not until the fourth stage could the missionary start spreading the Gospel, educate, and prepare the people for conversion. Van Lith explained he owed his four stage method to 'the fruit of human insight and the Lord's mercy.'⁶²⁴

⁶²⁰ Van Rijckevorsel, *Pastoor F. Van Lith, S.J.*, 74.

⁶²¹ Van Lith and Merthens, *Resume conferentie met de Gouverneur Generaal* (Buitenzorg 25 January 1912).

⁶²² Van Lith and Merthens, *Resume conferentie met de Gouverneur Generaal* (Buitenzorg 25 January 1912).

⁶²³ Unknown author, *De aanpassing in het missiewerk*, Jesuit Archives of Semarang.

⁶²⁴ Van Rijckevorsel, *Pastoor F. Van Lith, S.J.*, 80.

In order to carry out Van Lith's methodology, a missionary had to have willpower, a suitable nature, a decent knowledge of the local nature and language, and a high level of adaptability. His method suggested a slow process; indeed, he estimated that the first three steps would take at least five years. The goal of his method was not just to convert as many 'heathens' as possible in a short amount of time, but to establish an independent Catholic Church with indigenous priests that was adapted to the Javanese context.⁶²⁵

Eventually, Van Lith came to the conclusion, based on his experience, that the process of conversion would take at least several generations; the process could not be hastened since that would lead to superficial Christians. Therefore, he considered education the best way to prepare the new generations for Christianity.⁶²⁶ Van Lith then decided to focus solely on education as will be more fully addressed in the next paragraph.

5.9. *Adjusted strategies; Van Eendenburg and Van Lith*

Of the six missionaries under study, only two changed their strategies radically in the course of their career; Van Eendenburg and Van Lith. Harthoorn did try to alter his missionizing methods, but was fired because the board of the NZG considered his ideas too extreme. The result of Poensen and Van Eendenburg's contemplation was the idea of Christian *desas*. The reluctant Poensen never realised his plan; he was not sure he had enough knowledge of agriculture and considered himself too old to shift radically to another method. Van Eendenburg, however, did realise his plans three years after he had started missionizing in Sukabumi. He bought a piece of land, which he called Pangharepan (Hope) in 1886. Van Eendenburg decided to start with the cultivation of fifty *baoe*. Thirty *baoe* was intended for *sawah* and twenty *baoe* for the cultivation of coffee. Twenty per cent of the yield was spent on maintenance of the church, school, roads, waterworks et cetera. Every inhabitant received two pieces of land; dry land for a house and garden and wet land for rice cultivation.

The aim of the Christian *desa* was not only to ensure welfare for the Christian community, but also to be the centre for all Christians in the district. The centre from where assistants would travel to neighbouring *desas* to preach and which would attract curious people from all over the region. Pangharepan was not restricted to Christians; Muslims were welcome to live and work there as well.⁶²⁷ Van Eendenburg refused to give people an advance on the yield and forbade the inhabitants to partake in *ronggeng* parties (dances), take opium or strong liquor, or work on Sundays; all children

⁶²⁵ Van Rijckevorsel, *Pastoor F. Van Lith, S.J.*, 80.

⁶²⁶ Van Rijckevorsel, *Pastoor F. Van Lith S.J.*, 35.

⁶²⁷ Simon Van Eendenburg, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Pangharepan 17 April 1893) Utrechts Archief.

were obliged to attend school. Furthermore, every inhabitant had to live according to 'Christian values'; Van Eendenburg had the right to expel anyone that did not abide by these rules. In December 1887, Pangharepan had already 46 Christian inhabitants and after just five years the church consisted of 123 people.⁶²⁸ The new church grew much quicker in comparison to other churches in the Preanger.

Van Eendenburg met with the missionary-inspector Lion Cachet of the NGZV in January 1892. He showed him his work in Bandung, Ciandur, Sukabumi, and Pangharepan. He wrote to the board that Lion Cachet admired and praised his work in Pangharepan. Pangharepan was by then the largest Christian community led by the NZV. Van Eendenburg wrote about the church of Pangharepan: 'it is a church that has a future that no other church in the Sunda lands has so far, a church that is in a higher state of reason and religious knowledge than any other church that I have visited here'.⁶²⁹ After five years, the amount spent on the enterprise had reached 7000 guilders of which the NZV had only contributed 3000 guilders, the rest had been donated by European and indigenous Christians from West Java. However, Van Eendenburg argued, the value was already estimated at 15000 guilders, so the enterprise proved profitable.⁶³⁰

Even though Pangharepan grew quickly, in comparison to other churches, Van Eendenburg was still not completely satisfied with the results. According to Van Eendenburg, the Christian *desa* did not prove to be the final answer in the search for the right missionizing method. While one of the aims of the Christian *desa* was seclusion from outsiders in order to diminish the influence of local religious beliefs and practices, this seclusion also limited the possibility of new proselytes, because it impeded contact between Christians and non-Christians. In addition, Van Eendenburg noticed that many Javanese, including Javanese Christians, did not want to live in a *desa* that was led by a Dutchman. The Christian villages which were founded by the indigenous evangelists, like Coolen, Tunggul Wulung, and Sadrach, were much more acceptable and formed an alternative to the Dutch led villages. The Christian gurus shaped their villages to traditional forms, while Dutch missionaries imposed Dutch cultural and religious structures that distanced people from their indigenous context.⁶³¹ Van Eendenburg wrote to the board that although his method was fruitful in Pangharepan, this did not mean it would work in other regions as well. He believed every region needed its own method, but considered material aid essential.

⁶²⁸ Simon Van Eendenburg, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Pangharepan 17 April 1893) Utrechts Archief.

⁶²⁹ Simon Van Eendenburg, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Pangharepan 17 April 1893) Utrechts Archief.

⁶³⁰ Simon Van Eendenburg, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Pangharepan 17 April 1893) Utrechts Archief.

⁶³¹ Santoso, *Protestant Christianity in the Indonesian context*, 24.

Just like Van Eendenburg, Van Lith reflected on his methods and results after a few years in the mission and he also researched the methods of Protestant and indigenous missionaries. He was mostly inspired by Harthoorn and Sadrach. They inspired him to focus on education. Harthoorn's work convinced him that the development of the Javanese people had to precede conversion. Sadrach's success had strengthened Van Lith's idea that the conversion of Java should be accomplished by the Javanese themselves and not by European missionaries. Therefore, he decided to focus on educating Javanese boys to become civil officers, teachers, and –eventually- even priests. He wrote in the *St. Claverbond* in 1904: 'The hope of the mission does not lie with the adults, but with the children. Therefore schools for boys have been opened in both places (Mendut and Muntilan) and we have taken in a certain number of boys. And they are the ones, who should be permeated with a Christian spirit; who should be the pillars of the church of Java. The readers of the *St. Claverbond* will therefore understand that our Christian community is still too young to show big results. As long as we do not have catechists, who are formed by us since childhood, the mission cannot flourish yet.'⁶³²

After Van Lith had reflected on the initial years of his career, he decided to change his approach. In 1905 he founded a college to train indigenous boys to become teachers in Muntilan. The college was a boarding school where boys, from all over the region, could live and learn in a Catholic environment for several years. The aim of the school was to prepare the students for the official government examinations to obtain a degree as teacher. Dutch was the medium of instruction and the content of the curriculum was practical; the focus was not on religious classes but on subjects such as Javanese history and agriculture.⁶³³ Religious classes had never been obligatory, but Van Lith argued that the students at least learnt to trust the Catholics and to live according to Catholic standards.⁶³⁴ He explained: 'The Catholics wish to participate in the development and upbringing of the Javanese people, without imposing their own religion.'⁶³⁵

From 1905 on, once Van Lith had decided to focus on this one clear policy, the Muntilan mission started to flourish. Moreover, the financial shortages of the mission came to an end during this period because the budgets from the Mendut and Muntilan mission had been united and because the college had been given the predicate of a first class school which yielded a large subsidy. In 1911, the school received its official name: 'the Xaverius College; for the education of indigenous

⁶³² Franciscus van Lith, 'Toediening van het heilige vormsel te Moentilan in de Javanen missie door pastoor F. Van Lith', in: *Claverbond* (1904).

⁶³³ Franciscus van Lith, *Diarum Moentilan 1916-1923* (Muntilan) Archives of the Jesuit Province of Indonesia (Semarang).

⁶³⁴ Steenbrink, *Catholics in Indonesia*, 383.

⁶³⁵ Franciscus van Lith, *Het doel van het katholiek bijzonder inlands onderwijs in Nederlandsch-Indië* (unpublished) Archives of the Jesuit Province of Indonesia (Semarang).

teachers'.⁶³⁶ A year later, the school had nearly four hundred students.⁶³⁷ In October 1913, however, the government threatened to stop the subsidy because they believed the school was used for missionary propaganda and because some of the teachers did not have the necessary diplomas. Van Lith admitted that he was not in favour of neutral education and that he could not leave his faith completely out of his lessons, but denied that he had used the school for religious propaganda. He wished pupils from different religions would feel welcome and he was strongly against forced conversions. Eventually, the government decided in his favour and the subsidy continued.

Van Lith's first goal was that the Javanese learn to trust the Catholics rather than the conversion of pupils. However, many pupils decided to be baptized during their time in college. Yet, the Catholics claimed they never baptized young children from Muslim families since they considered it necessary to wait until the children had reached at least the fourth or fifth class to be sure of their perseverance.⁶³⁸ His second goal was the development of the Javanese people in general. He considered education as the most significant way to assimilate the Javanese with the Dutch community.⁶³⁹ When the Javanese would eventually reach the same level as the Dutch, the Javanese church would be ready to gain more autonomy, and the indigenous Catholics could then adjust the services more to their own preferences.

According to Van Lith, even though religious classes were not mandatory, most pupils asked for extra classes on Catholicism. Even though he and his colleagues claimed they never forced a pupil to convert, almost all pupils left the Xaverius College as Catholics.⁶⁴⁰ He explained that the pupils developed a 'need for lightness and purity' in that Catholic environment. Most pupils, according to Van Lith, had no notion of religion previously because their families usually were not very religious. However, the intensification of Islam was also noticeable in the district of Muntilan. Van Lith wrote: 'Islam spreads with renewed perseverance, with the result that the people form a clearer notion of God, religion and religious obligations. However, the spread of Islam goes hand in hand with an increasing aversion of Christianity and the consequences of this are clearly noticeable in our boys... They are friendly and polite to the fathers, but reluctant. Fear and doubt are visible in their eyes. This marks the beginning of a battle that can take months, even years.'⁶⁴¹ Despite its Catholic character, many Muslim -even *santri*- parents sent their sons to the Xaverius College. The College had an

⁶³⁶ L. Van Rijckevorsel S.J., 'Praatjes over Muntilan', in: *Claverbond* (1911).

⁶³⁷ Madinier, 'The Catholic politics of inclusiveness'.

⁶³⁸ Unknown author, *Algemene richtlijnen voor de missiemethode in Nieuw Oost Indië*, Archives of the Jesuit Province of Indonesia (Semarang).

⁶³⁹ Van Lith, *Autobiographical writings*.

⁶⁴⁰ 'Drie Javanen aan het woord over de bekering van Java', in: *Claverbond* (1919).

⁶⁴¹ Van Lith, 'Brieven uit Muntilan', in: *Claverbond* (1918).

excellent reputation and this led to a vast surplus of applications. For example; in 1917, 270 boys applied, but only 25 new students could be accepted.⁶⁴²

While van Lith focused on the lessons and especially on the practical leadership of the schools in the district, his colleague, Father Merthens became the actual spiritual leader of the schoolboys. It was not easy for Van Lith to point out the most suitable Christian pieties for his students and to explain to them what being a Christian exactly meant in daily life. Through Merthens' teachings, even though his knowledge of the Javanese language was deficient, the boys experienced a warmer devotion and beneficial interest. Consequently, one day the deputy of the senior students came to Van Lith, after he had heard Merthens preach several times, to ask whether Merthens could lead the services more frequently.⁶⁴³ Van Lith was well aware of the fact that he did not have a talent for preaching; he admitted he often spoke too long and used examples that were too difficult. Therefore, he reacted positively upon this request and added that it was difficult for both him and Father Merthens to preach in Javanese, and that the mission would therefore significantly benefit from Javanese priests.⁶⁴⁴

In 1911, the first four students graduated from the seminary in Muntilan. Though they were then permitted to teach at elementary schools, Van Lith did not consider them ready to teach religious classes. He believed they needed more years of training in the field and he tried to keep the Javanese customs in mind. Van Lith believed young teachers had to wait until they were at least in their forties before they could start instructing religious classes.⁶⁴⁵ Two of his first graduates, Pieter Darmasepoetra and Francis Xavier Satiman, decided to continue to study Latin, because they wanted to prepare themselves for the Jesuit noviciate. Van Lith, however, did not have the authority to have them admitted into the noviciate. Merthens was a bit reluctant and his superior, Vicar Apostolic Edmundus Luypen, considered it too early and wished to wait at least until the third generation of Javanese Christians. Darmasepoetra replied; 'It is true that we are first generation Christians, but the apostles were of the first generation as well'.⁶⁴⁶ Eventually, the first Jesuit seminary for indigenous Catholics opened in Muntilan in 1911. Darmasepoetra and Satiman were the first Javanese who were admitted into the noviciate. They also studied several years in Europe and then repatriated to become

⁶⁴² Van Lith, 'Brieven uit Muntilan', in: *Claverbond* (1918).

⁶⁴³ Unknown Author, *Franciscus van Lith, in Memoriam* (1926) Archives of the Jesuit Province of Indonesia (Semarang) 195.

⁶⁴⁴ Unknown Author, *Franciscus van Lith, in Memoriam* (1926) Archives of the Jesuit Province of Indonesia (Semarang).

⁶⁴⁵ Rosariyanto, *Father Franciscus van Lith S.J.* 295.

⁶⁴⁶ Rosariyanto, *Father Franciscus van Lith S.J.* 302.

Java's first indigenous priests in 1926. The idea of an indigenous clergy however, was not originally Van Lith's, since it was already common on the Moluccas.⁶⁴⁷

Once Van Lith had found the right strategy for his mission, he realised that this approach was successful because he did not focus on individuals, but on an entire generation. He had learned that the community was much more important in the Javanese society than the individual. Therefore he focused on training young men to become teachers and governmental officials at the Xaverius College, so they would reach positions from where they could influence the entire Javanese society: 'Later when we have formed the children from all these *desas* to strong Javanese men, they can occupy different posts and we will have access to all families, and then the success of our labour cannot hold of'.⁶⁴⁸ His approach proved to be fruitful; there were as much as 2425 indigenous Catholics in Java in 1915, of which 1327 had attended a Catholic school in the district of Muntilan.⁶⁴⁹

Eventually, both Van Eendenburg and Van Lith focused on just one method after they had tried out different strategies during their first years as a missionary. Van Eendenburg decided to focus solely on the agricultural enterprise and the governing of Pangharepan while Van Lith decided to put all his efforts into teaching. After their change of strategy they both stopped with the method of direct evangelizing. They had realised that they had not been very successful carrying out this method. Eventually they assigned, like the other missionaries, the task of preaching to their assistants, because they believed indigenous evangelisers would be better able to connect to the people.⁶⁵⁰

5.10. Negotiation strategies

In this final paragraph I show how the missionaries reflected, in their own words, on their position and work as missionaries in a Muslim world ruled by a rather uncooperative Dutch colonial government. The Dutch missionaries found themselves in an extremely difficult position: they had to find a successful proselytizing method that pleased the boards of their societies and the financial supporters of the mission, did not cross the boundaries that were stipulated by the colonial government, and which was not too intrusive for the local population. Most failed to do this and never succeeded in converting impressive numbers of people. Consequently, these men had to find ways to justify their

⁶⁴⁷ Rosariyanto, *Father Franciscus van Lith S.J.* 295.

⁶⁴⁸ Franciscus van Lith, *Typed transcript of a letter to Monseigneur Luypen* (Muntilan 6 March 1904) Archives of the Archdiocese of Jakarta.

⁶⁴⁹ Gregorius Budi Subanar, SJ, *The local church in the light of magisterium teaching on mission, a case in point: the archdiocese of Semarang-Indonesia (1940-1981)* (Rome 2001) 143.

⁶⁵⁰ Madinier, 'The Catholic politics of inclusiveness'.

Simon Van Eendenburg, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Pangharepan 25 May 1894) Utrechts Archief.

methods and their lack of results, otherwise they risked being dismissed. They were forced to negotiate the multiple discourses at play in order to claim their position as a good missionary, but also as a good leader to the Javanese, and an obedient Dutch citizen. To do this, the missionaries used these discourses in different ways and employed certain strategies in their writings.

The missionaries all tried to emphasize how hard they worked in their reports, because they knew their results might suggest otherwise. For example, the correspondence between the board of the NZG and Carel Poensen reveals that the board warned him more than once that he should spend more time missionizing and less time studying. Although the board encouraged their missionaries to develop new methods, it was not fond of missionaries who spent too much time contemplating behind their desks and too little in the field.⁶⁵¹ They had called him a 'writing-missionary' and 'a writer who mainly spends his life behind his desk'.⁶⁵² Poensen defended himself by emphasizing all his other activities in his letters: 'My writing is evening and night work! And occasionally, when I am writing in sunlight it is for some reason; it is then necessary! In the morning I keep myself busy with all sorts of activities, with the school and the sick, or I am traveling! I cannot exactly say how I spend the afternoons; certainly I rest for half an hour, and from five to half past six I do as good as doing nothing; that is to say I walk, talk, make or receive visits etc.'⁶⁵³ Poensen stressed that he was also busy during the evenings with preparing catechism lessons, sermons, and his correspondence. This led him into fights with his wife occasionally. He even called upon a colleague as a witness of such a fight: 'And my wife complains as long as we are here that I am useless to her in the evening! Roskes has been a witness of such a conversation!' ⁶⁵⁴

A second way of positioning themselves as good missionaries was stressing the difficult circumstances in which they had to work. They all pointed out time and again that funding deficiencies and the unsupportiveness of the colonial government hampered their work considerably. Albers, especially, excelled in stressing his difficult circumstances. He emphasised repeatedly that missionaries who worked in Muslim territories faced bigger challenges than others. 'The missionary must begin with defending himself, purifying himself from the blame, profess that he is not a servant of a polytheistic religion, but that he recognises one God and it is one God whom he preaches. Where else in the world finds a missionary himself in such circumstances? (...) Everywhere, he comes to preach

⁶⁵¹ Samuel Harthoorn was also told that he should not focus too much on his studies, because his work did not require too much knowledge. Unknown author, 'Verslag der commissie in zake de zendeling Harthoorn', 392-476.

⁶⁵² Al schrijf ik ook veel – men sprak wel eens van een schrijvend-zendeling! –zoo wil dit toch niet zeggen, dat ik een 'schrijver die hoofdzakelijk aan zijn schrijftafel zijn leven slijt' wil zijn! Carel Poensen, *Letter to J.C. Neurdenburg* (Kediri 18 November 1873) Utrechts Archief.

⁶⁵³ Carel Poensen, *Letter to J.C. Neurdenburg* (Kediri 18 November 1873) Utrechts Archief.

⁶⁵⁴ Carel Poensen, *Letter to J.C. Neurdenburg* (Kediri 18 November 1873) Utrechts Archief.

about an unknown Gospel and to proclaim an unknown Saviour; among Mohammedans he must defend the Gospel and re-introduce the world's Saviour, get rid of all blemishes and spots cast on Him by Mohammedans. This unusual situation causes great difficulty.⁶⁵⁵ He continued, noting that missionaries who work among Muslims risked impoverishing their teachings to an apologia and therefore must speak with much more conviction and strength. In addition, he claimed repeatedly that the Sundanese were even more pious Muslims than the Javanese to stress that the missionaries of the NZV faced an even more challenging task than the missionaries of other societies in Java.⁶⁵⁶

The position of Islam in Java was negotiated repeatedly in the missionary writings. While the missionaries often remarked that Java was not really Islamized, they also depicted Islam as a strong force that hampered their work. They used both views to justify the mission's lack of result. The missionaries used the Western discourse that depicted Islam and Muslims as the main Other to stress the difficult situation in which they found themselves. Java was frequently described as a hostile society for missionaries because Islam was too strong in the region.⁶⁵⁷ The pioneers of the NZV mission, Albers and Van der Linden, concluded that the presence of Islam made it impossible to convert large groups at once and felt forced to develop strategies to reach individuals. Hendrik Jan Rooseboom, who wrote a detailed commemorative work on the NZV in 1908, remarked on their approach: 'The foundations of Islam have to be torn down stone by stone'.⁶⁵⁸ The Jesuit Van Lith warned: 'Islam spreads with renewed perseverance, with the result that the people form a clearer notion of God, religion and religious obligations. However, the spread of Islam goes hand in hand with an increasing aversion of Christianity...'⁶⁵⁹ Van Lith noticed this in his pupils; each year the freshmen at the Xaverius College seemed more frightened of the Catholic teachers.⁶⁶⁰

On the other hand, the missionaries justified their lack of converts by pointing to the lack of 'true' converts to Islam. Albers commented: 'The Islamic prayer times are known by just a few, so neglected by the majority, the Islamic duty of washing is unknown, alms are not given, because the rich do the opposite, and the poor are insolvent. Mohammed is only known by name. And God...yes, what do they know of him? Since Mohammed did not even have a clear idea of him, notwithstanding

⁶⁵⁵ Christiaan Albers, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Ciandur 19 August 1868) Utrechts Archief.

⁶⁵⁶ Christiaan Albers, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Ciandur, June 1884) Utrechts Archief.

⁶⁵⁷ Carel Poensen, *Letter to the board of the NZG* (Kediri 22 April 1889) Utrechts Archief.

Simon Van Eendenburg, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Sukabumi 8 May 1883) Utrechts Archief.

⁶⁵⁸ Rooseboom, *Na vijftig jaren*, 110.

This remark is a beautiful intertextual reference to the Bible, where Jesus gives his prophecy regarding the destruction of the temple: '...there shall not be left here one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down' (Matthew 24:1-2).

⁶⁵⁹ F. Van Lith, 'Brieven uit Muntilan', in: *Claverbond* (1918).

⁶⁶⁰ F. Van Lith, 'Brieven uit Muntilan', in: *Claverbond* (1918).

all the names he has given to the God of heaven and earth.’⁶⁶¹ The missionaries assumed that the Islamization process had taken centuries and still was not completed and used this to justify the slow progress of the mission. Moreover, the missionaries constantly repeated that Java was only superficially Islamic to demonstrate that it was nearly impossible to convert its people. They stressed that the Javanese and Sundanese were pragmatic in matters of religion. Van Eendenburg remarked: ‘This people has little true need for religion’.⁶⁶² They were supposedly quick to add new beliefs and practices to their existing traditions, but true conversion was rare. Van Lith explained: ‘The Javanese are extremely willing to add a new religious prayer, on the condition that the old ritual is being preserved. He has no, or little, religious conviction, but he has a vague fear of the invisible, of spirits or gods. This is why excluding an old ritual seems dangerous in the eyes of a Javanese; however adding a new prayer is useful and desired.’⁶⁶³

Another strategy the missionaries used in their writings was emphasizing the small successes they did have. For example, Albers was very proud of small improvements he saw in his congregation: ‘When I think about how the congregations were back in 1886 and how they are now, I see a huge difference. There was no understanding of any decorum, they would walk in and out the church as they pleased, they often squatted on a pew, their back turned to me, to sleep peacefully, their singing was pitiful; did they listen? Well, that was completely absent in our observation. We did not expect much of it. Today? They sit down in an orderly manner: they listen with attention, and when the children are too noisy they leave the *kumpulan* without any noise’.⁶⁶⁴ In this citation Albers stresses the fact that his converts are much more civilized than seventeen years earlier. He did achieve bringing ‘culture’ to the converts. Van Lith did the same by emphasising the effects his school system had on the new generation Javanese. He believed they were better behaved, more orderly, and rational because of his work. He recounted that he once saw children playing in his courtyard. They were pretending to be soldiers and strictly followed the commander’s orders. Van Lith remarked that the previous generations would not have been able to do such a thing and concluded: ‘I thought: what a change does education bring to the Javanese mentality’.⁶⁶⁵

As stated before, a recurrent topic in the correspondence between the missionaries and their superiors was the aim of the mission. Was it only conversion or also civilization and development? The NZV was more outspoken than the NZG on this subject. Although the missionaries of the NZV

⁶⁶¹ Christiaan Albers, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Bandung 20 June 1863) Utrechts Archief.

⁶⁶² Simon van Eendenburg, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Sukabumi 10 October 1883) Utrechts Archief.

⁶⁶³ Van Lith, *De Besnijdenis* (unpublished) Archives of the Jesuit Province of Indonesia (Semarang).

⁶⁶⁴ Christiaan Albers, ‘De post Meester Cornelis voorheen en thans’, in: *Orgaan* (Rotterdam 1903).

Albers described progress in the Chinese church in a similar way. Christiaan Albers, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Meester Cornelis 18 August 1890) Utrechts Archief.

⁶⁶⁵ Van Lith, *De politiek van Nederland ten opzichte van Nederlands-Indië*, 27.

constantly tried to come up with new, practical ways to support the Sundanese Christians, the board continued to stress the use of the key instrument of missionary work - the Christian testimony. The board was afraid their missionaries would spend so much time on education and healthcare that they would lose sight of their central task. Rooseboom described the organization's attitude in his commemorative book on the NZV: 'Mission work is not humanitarian work; its aim is not to civilise, develop, or improve society; this will follow naturally when Jesus Christ is known and confessed, in the power of His death and the power of His resurrection. The result should not become the objective.'⁶⁶⁶

Harthoorn and Poensen believed civilization also belonged to the objectives of the mission, which sometimes brought them in conflict with the board of the NZG, even though 'civilization before conversion' was one of the pillars of the *Groninger School*, that influenced the ideology of the NZG.⁶⁶⁷ Yet, the NZG repeatedly stressed that conversion should remain the missions priority. Poensen's approach to proselytizing was both direct and idealistic. For him the mission was more than just converting the Javanese people to Christianity; it was also about teaching Christian morals and to civilise and educate the people. He tried to change social issues, such as improving the status of women, and the prevention of child marriages and divorces.⁶⁶⁸ He argued that the missionary should focus on the whole social life of the Javanese and thus should also provide aid to enhance their material prosperity.⁶⁶⁹

Samuel Harthoorn believed that civilization was part of the Christian mission, because he thought the Javanese first had to be lifted to a higher level of development; they needed to be civilised before they could understand the complexities of Christianity. He blamed the lack of civilization in Java for the failure of the mission.⁶⁷⁰ He therefore proposed that the mission should focus solely on education and civilisation during the first decades and not yet on religious education. General education should instigate development and generate a desire for religious progress. Only after the Javanese society had reached a certain level of development, could the mission societies, according to Harthoorn, expect results from preaching and colportage.

The missionaries recurrently argued that it was not so difficult to form 'superficial Christians' who seemed Christian but actually continued old beliefs and practices. The most prominent discursive strategy in justifying the low numbers of converts was to construct a distinction between 'true Christians' and people with a hybrid Christian identity, or in their words, 'superficial converts'.

⁶⁶⁶ Rooseboom, *Na vijftig jaren*, 11.

⁶⁶⁷ Carel Poensen, *Annual report 1890* (Kediri 1891) Utrechts Archief.

⁶⁶⁸ Sumartana, *Mission at the crossroads*, 27.

⁶⁶⁹ Carel Poensen, 'De zendingswetenschap, de evangelisatie op Java', in: *Mededeelingen* (Rotterdam 1890) 409.

⁶⁷⁰ Nortier, *Het leven van Samuel Eliza Harthoorn*.

Therefore, they had to negotiate the discourse on religion, or more specifically the discourse on what constitutes a *true* Christian. The Protestants emphasized knowledge and inner experience and both the Protestants and Catholics stressed that real devotion can only happen after sufficient education. Consequently, they argued, rapid conversions were not at all desirable. Forming *true* Christians would take a very long time, probably more than one generation. Since the six missionaries under study were all pioneers of the Christian mission in Java, they were eager to use this argument to legitimize the slow process. They reasoned that they rather focused on quality instead of quantity. However, the next chapter will show that in reality quantity was frequently prioritized over quality.

5.11. Conclusion

My objective in this chapter was to compare the aims, strategies and results of the missionaries and to point out possible differences between the six men and the societies to which they were affiliated. I showed that the initial period of the organised mission in Java can be best described as a period of improvisation; it was a time of trial and error. There was still too much of a lack of knowledge of the mission field to set suitable guidelines. Therefore the missionary writings do not show a particular strategy in dealing with Islam. Yet, this period was probably inevitable and necessary to find the right strategy. Even though all six missionaries did not have to work according to a prearranged plan and the boards actually encouraged them to propose new approaches and strategies, they all started with similar methods. Every missionary started with preaching in the *desas*, the foundation of a school, and medical centre. Furthermore, all six of them believed it was essential to support the people with material aid. Although all missionaries trained indigenous assistants to assist them in the schools and churches, most were initially reluctant to let them preach independently.

The journals of the NZG and NZV do not show a big difference in thinking about strategy; neither between the boards, nor between the missionaries. However, the writings of the NZG missionaries show that the board of the NZG interfered more than the other societies with the methods of their missionaries. It was of the opinion that both Harthoorn and Poensen were focused too much on studying the Javanese history and culture and that this influenced their results negatively. Letters show that both were warned at various times to leave their desks and spend more time on ‘actual’ missionary work, such as visiting the market place to preach.⁶⁷¹

The Catholic missionaries had an advantage over the Protestants because they arrived almost fifty years later in the Javanese mission field and could learn from their experience. Although they

⁶⁷¹ Carel Poensen, *Letter to the board of the NZG* (Kediri 21 June 1880) Utrechts Archief.

criticised the Protestant Bible and prayer translations, their methods and results, the Protestant experiences did form a stepping stone for their own strategic plans. While Hoevenaars did not reflect much on the work of the Protestants, Van Lith did admit in his writings that he had learnt much from Protestant missionaries, especially from Samuel Harthoorn. The Catholics still went through their own phase of trial and error, but decided upon one successful method after just seven years.

Except for Albers and Hoevenaars, all four missionaries reflected extensively on their work in their reports and articles. Each attempted, in his own way, to translate his daily experience to official guidelines. Van Eendenburg and Van Lith, however, were the only two who radically changed their approach after they realised that their initial methods did not bring the desired success. Both decided to focus on just one method from then on; agricultural settlements and higher education respectively. Both Van Eendenburg and Van Lith focused on creating the right environment for a Christian community; the first through the founding of a Christian *desa* and the second through education, so the community could grow and multiply. They eventually took on, like the other four, a more managerial role in their districts. In due course, all six were caught up in their daily tasks of managing their schools and health centres, and traveling around the district to check on their assistants, that they all left the actual preaching to unconverted Javanese to their assistants.⁶⁷²

Another important aim of this chapter was to show how the missionaries legitimized their slow progress and still positioned themselves as a 'good' missionary worthy of funding by their mission societies. To accomplish this, they strategically used various discourses, including the mission discourses on Islam, on 'true' conversion and religiosity, and civilization. They combined these discourses in slightly different ways and negotiated their position as a 'good' missionary in different ways. The most important negotiation strategy was constructing a difference between 'culture' and 'religion' and 'true' and 'superficial' religiosity, which will also be evident in the following chapters. The missionaries justified their slow progress by emphasizing that the Javanese had to be civilized first and reach a higher level of development before 'true' conversion could take place.

⁶⁷² For example: Simon van Eendenburg, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Pangharepan 25 May 1894) Utrechts Archief.

Chapter 6. Conversion; motivations and reactions

*'The missionary stands and shouts, peddles and preaches,
but he shouts in a desert. His cries and preaches are not heard'.⁶⁷³*

The ultimate goal of the Christian mission was to convert people to the Christian faith. The previous chapter focused on how the missionaries perceived and legitimized the way they converted locals, whereas this chapter focuses on the step that follows; the conversion process itself. The aim of this chapter is to answer the following questions: 'How did the missionaries perceive the local population's reasons to convert?' 'How did they justify the divergent reasons to convert of their followers? And 'what were their perspectives on how conversion to Christianity impacted upon the convert's life?' First, I will broadly characterize the converts; were they, for instance, predominantly from a comparable social-economic background? The second paragraph uncovers what the most common reasons for converting were according to the missionaries. The missionaries knew, of course, that some people wished to convert for opportunistic reasons. They dealt in different ways with these cases, as will be made clear in this chapter, but they all maintained that they were able to avert the ones that were not truly devoted to Christianity from baptizing. The conditions the missionaries set for baptizing are discussed in the third paragraph. This paragraph also demonstrates how they negotiated with the discourses on religion and conversion to validate their choices of who to accept and deny.

The aim of the fourth paragraph is to analyse the sustainability of the Christian communities. In a previous chapter I mentioned that people who were converted by the indigenous gurus often converted back after their charismatic leader moved or passed away. A missionary, however, was almost always succeeded by another missionary after his retirement. Did this prevent people from returning to their former faith? And what were the motivations of those that nevertheless decided to (re-)convert to Islam? The fifth paragraph discusses the reasons the missionaries mentioned for people who were interested in Christianity to refrain from baptizing.

The final paragraphs of this chapter consist of a case study. Personal stories are significant sources because they show the many variables that are at play in the process of conversion. Unfortunately, autobiographic conversion narratives of Javanese Christians are scarce. I have inserted one autobiographic life narrative of the Sundanese former *santri* Kartawidjaja. Kartawidjaja converted to Christianity in 1899 after having contact with Dutch missionaries of the NZV. His story is one of the

⁶⁷³ Christiaan Albers, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Ciandur 4 June 1871) Utrechts Archief.

very few conversion stories that survived from this period in the Sundanese mission.⁶⁷⁴ I will analyse Kartawidjaja's conversion story with the method *reading against the grain* to reach a deeper insight into why and how he converted to Christianity in that particular context and how he dealt with the change of his personal and social identity. Moreover, I will interpret to what extent his conversion really changed his religious convictions. As explained in the general introduction of this study, the method of *reading against the grain* aims to critically examine the dominant perspective and to place the reader's viewpoint over that of the author; the reader resists the dominant discourse in the text, in order to reveal subtexts and alternative perspectives and identities.⁶⁷⁵

What do we talk about when we talk about conversion? I have discussed the concept 'conversion' in the general introduction of this study. I will therefore limit myself here to the definition that is employed in this study: the well-known definition of Robert W. Hefner that 'conversion is an adjustment in self-identification through the at least nominal acceptance of religious actions or beliefs deemed more fitting, useful, or true'.⁶⁷⁶ I chose this definition because it covers the different possible reasons for conversion, including political, economic, social, and religious reasons, because he not only used the word 'true', but also added 'fitting' and 'useful'. In addition, 'self-identification' may be understood in both an individual as communal sense.

The content of this chapter is based on the writings of the six missionaries under study. Therefore this chapter, like the others, contains subjective information and viewpoints. My aim is not to reveal the 'true' motivations people had to convert or to refrain from converting. Instead, the perspectives of these six missionaries on these reasons and processes are under discussion. Furthermore, it is uncertain on how many cases these six based their writings. The missionaries sent the statistics of their districts every year to their superiors, but these numbers sometimes show aberrations. Moreover, it is not clear how many of these Christians were actually converted by the missionaries and their assistants. Some may have been converted by indigenous evangelists and only baptized by the missionaries. Consequently, I can only estimate of the number of converts the writings of these six missionaries mention. Still, that number reaches a few thousand in total.

⁶⁷⁴ West Java is often indicated as part of the Sundaland.

⁶⁷⁵ Maaike Meijer, 'Countering textual violence, on the critique of representation and the importance of teaching its methods', in: *Women's Studies International Forum*, Vol. 16, No. 4 (1993) 367-378.

⁶⁷⁶ Hefner, 'Of faith and commitment', 99-125.

6.1. Characterization of those who were interested in Christianity

The missionaries noticed that some people were more difficult to reach, let alone to convert, than others. In this paragraph I discuss under what circumstances people were more likely to convert. Missionary Albers, active in the Preanger, wrote in 1870: 'the more developed part of the population is unreachable for us. They do not want any contact with us. They have deep contempt for us. We are and remain *kafirs*; intended for eternal damnation.'⁶⁷⁷ Albers referred to the *Putihan* and *santri*, who were usually higher educated than the *Abangan*. They sent their children to *pesantren* to learn to read the *Qur'an*. As a consequence this group was better educated in Islam, often more pious, and usually more anti-Christianity than the *Abangan*. Moreover, *Abangan* people were relegated to a secondary status by the *Putihan*. Therefore, it may have seemed more sensible to them to convert to Christianity in the hope of becoming part of a powerful and wealthy ruling class. In addition, the possession of *ilmu* yielded prestige among the *Abangan* and *Kejawen* and since Christian knowledge was perceived as a new type of *ilmu*, acquiring Christian knowledge was a way to gain more esteem. Therefore it was very surprising to Van Eendenburg of the NZV when a *hajji* came to him with the wish to be baptized in 1889. The *hajji*, Oesman, was not only a *hajji*; he was also a member of the nobility. Van Eendenburg was very grateful for this unique event and repeatedly mentioned the matter in his letters, because he hoped the conversion of someone with such a high status would lead to the conversion of many others.⁶⁷⁸

Based on the writings of the six missionaries I argue that more women than men were attracted by the church.⁶⁷⁹ Underprivileged women were especially attracted to Christianity because they believed the church could offer them protection. To women who were divorced, widowed, or otherwise cast out of their families, conversion may have offered an alternative over the position they would have as a poor, single Muslim woman. The missionaries explained that many women sought protection against their fathers or husbands when they did not agree to their prearranged marriage or were unable to get a divorce.⁶⁸⁰ In 1873, Albers wrote about a woman who came to church asking to be baptized. She was well-dressed and had good manners, so Albers suspected she was a member of the nobility. Although she was just twenty five years old, she had been divorced seven times already. Albers noticed, however, no sign of interest in religious matters during their conversation. He asked for her motivations and she admitted that she had committed adultery and had run away from home.

⁶⁷⁷ Christiaan Albers, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Ciandur 3 January 1870) Utrechts Archief.

⁶⁷⁸ Simon Van Eendenburg, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Sukabumi 5 July 1889) Utrechts Archief.

⁶⁷⁹ For example, Christiaan Albers, '*Jaaroverzicht 1900*', in: *Orgaan* (Rotterdam 1901) or Christiaan Albers, '*Aan het einde des jaars*', in: *Orgaan* (Rotterdam 1905).

⁶⁸⁰ For example, Jurrianus Verhoeven, '*De polikliniek te Djokjakarta*', in: *Orgaan* (Rotterdam 1899) or Jurrianus Verhoeven, '*Ook eene gebedsverhoring*', in: *Orgaan* (Rotterdam 1905).

She had come to the church because the police was looking for her and she hoped she would be safe there. Albers wrote to the board in Rotterdam that he did not judge her and had allowed her to stay the night, but that he could not offer her anything else.⁶⁸¹

Apart from often being poorly educated, people who showed interest in Christianity were also often quite poor.⁶⁸² Albers wrote: 'My Christians are very poor. Except for Ali, they eat rice only once every three days, and on other days they eat whatever they can find. The last one I baptized owned only one piece of clothing. I had to provide him with a shirt for visiting the church. I cannot refuse them; 'no you are too poor to be Christian'.⁶⁸³ So the earliest followers of the missionaries were mostly widows, divorcées, orphans, handicapped, sick, and other poor people from the lower strata of society, who felt supported by the missionary and the congregation. Although the missionaries were glad their flock was increasing, it might have led people to believe that conversion was a downward movement in social status.

6.2. Motivations to convert

Within the Dutch mission discourse, the idea of what counts as a legitimate reason to convert was rather strict. Officially, the sole reason to convert should be a true belief in the lord Jesus Christ as the Redeemer, and this could only be expected of people who had obtained sufficient knowledge of Christian teachings. I demonstrated in the previous chapter that the missionaries legitimized their slow progress by pointing out that they aimed at the conversion of 'true', well-educated Christians instead of converting larger numbers of 'superficial Christians'. There were, of course, people who converted because they were convinced of the veracity of the Gospel after they had spent time studying it thoroughly. More than a few converted because they saw Christianity as a fulfilment of certain elements of their own religious beliefs. Contrary to what one might expect, the missionaries did not elaborate much on these kinds of 'right' reasons as why their followers had converted. Perhaps this was because they felt that converting to Christianity was so sensible that it did not need further explanation, or perhaps they only stressed the difficulties they had to deal with in their reports to validate their limited success.

Harthoorn described, in his diary on 1858, a conversion narrative of a *santri* who had undertaken the *hajj*. Although this *hajji* had studied Islam for years, he told Harthoorn that his heart was still unsatisfied. One day he heard about Christianity and it sounded so beautiful that he wished to

⁶⁸¹ Christiaan Albers, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Ciandur 3 May 1873) Utrechts Archief.

⁶⁸² Simon van Eendenburg, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Sukabumi 9 September 1885) Utrechts Archief.

⁶⁸³ Christiaan Albers, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Ciandur 4 December 1878) Utrechts Archief.

learn more about it. This is how he came into contact with one of Harthoorn's helpers, Zacharias, who led him to the missionary who educated and eventually baptized him.⁶⁸⁴ Albers wrote a similar account in 1872 about a Muslim who had converted in 1868. This man had been a devout Muslim, but always felt unsatisfied in his personal religious life. He considered praying in Islam little more than muttering lines that he did not understand. When he heard of Christianity, about sin and about Jesus who took on his sin, he felt saved. Albers recounted: 'He learnt quickly...you could talk about anything with him, you said something, he thought about it, processed it and assimilated it, and then expressed it in his own way, and so it turned into flesh and blood. He inspired me in my preaching. He read my *Bijbelse Geschiedenis* (Biblical History), the New Testament and the two Gospels that were translated to Sundanese by Coolsma.'⁶⁸⁵

However, the mission reports do mention reasons other than the belief in Jesus Christ for conversion to Christianity, even though such aberrant motivations had no place in the missionaries' formal discourse. I have identified the most common reasons for people to convert to Christianity based on the mission letters and reports. People usually had more than one motive to convert and it is therefore difficult to single out reasons. In addition, varying backgrounds and circumstances led to varying motives, so a common reason for one group of people can be quite uncommon to another group. For example, age mattered significantly. Being older means that one is close to one's death and then the issue of going to heaven can become much more important. On the other hand, young people were more attracted to a modern or Western life-style, or they were attracted by the lure of wealth and hoped to acquire a government position through Christian education.

Despite the fact that there were usually multiple motives at play, it became clear that conversion to Christianity was often considered a strategy to improve one's life. In the West, religion was perceived as secluded from other societal categories, like economics or politics. Yet this boundary was deemed less definite or even non-existent in Asia. There was no dichotomy between the spiritual and the material in that context, so religion could be understood as a profitable phenomenon. All missionaries mentioned in their reports that many people who showed interest in Christianity were actually just interested in material recompenses. Jurrianus Verhoeven of the NZV wrote for example: "Give my children something to eat every day and some clothes and you may baptize all six of them right now and make them Christians' said a father to me; and he was not the only one who spoke this way.'⁶⁸⁶ Also Albers admitted that many Christians came to him to borrow money; 'They think this is

⁶⁸⁴ S.E. Harthoorn, *Diary on 1858* (Malang 1858) Utrechts Archief.

⁶⁸⁵ Christiaan Albers, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Ciandur 1 April 1872) Utrechts Archief.

⁶⁸⁶ Jurrianus Verhoeven, *Tot welzijn van Java, eenige causerieën bij gelegenheid van het vijf-en-twintigjarig bestaan van den zendingspost Tjidjërës, West Java, met "kiekjes"* (Neerbosch 1909) 79.

what the *padri* (religious leader, M.K.) is for, for what other reason would we have become Christian?’⁶⁸⁷

Not everyone, however, considered this a bad motive per se, but believed the missionary could make use of this notion. As became clear in the previous chapter, all six have used methods that were aimed at enlarging the Christians’ welfare. Van Lith, for example, used to give some change or tobacco to the churchgoers.⁶⁸⁸ Some gave or lent them money, especially in times of drought, others bought them land, cattle, or tools. Nevertheless, they all agreed that the missionary should be careful that those who wanted to be baptized were truly devoted to the Christian faith and did not convert in the hope of enlarging their income. Another motivation many missionaries mentioned was gaining access to healthcare. Most missionaries had set up a medical clinic where they performed small procedures and distributed medicines. Even though the healthcare provided by the missionaries was not exclusive for Christians, they noticed that patients and their families stopped attending services and catechism classes once they no longer needed the treatments or medicines.

Although not mentioned explicitly in the sources, I believe that some were attracted to Christianity because it offered people a chance to break out of their social class. Contrary to the Javanese society, the hierarchy in the church was not based on class, wealth, or age. Status depended on one’s level of education and knowledge of Christianity. Conversion therefore offered an opportunity to younger men to gain prestige and move upward in the Christian community. In addition, most missionaries took young men into their homes to educate and train them to become teachers or assistant-ministers. Completion of the training guaranteed a job and a stable income, and perhaps more importantly: status in the Christian community.

Apparently some considered the new faith as the road to modernity. Conversion to Christianity meant also to acquire some of the Western culture. These people wished to become part of the global elite which was at the time European and hence Christian. They adapted their way of life to that of the Dutch; the way they dressed, their language, and sometimes their religion as well. These opportunists hoped that converting to the European religion would increase their status in the colonial society and perhaps make them equal to the ruling white elite.⁶⁸⁹ To others, and especially after 1900, Christianity seemed a stepping stone to Western knowledge, education and secular thinking, and therefore the right path towards a modern and independent Indonesia.

⁶⁸⁷ Christiaan Albers, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Meester Cornelis 6 September 1902) Utrechts Archief.

⁶⁸⁸ P. Van Kalken, *Kritiek op het handschrift over het leven van F. Van Lith en nadere gegevens van Van Rijckevorsel*, Archives of the Jesuit Province of Indonesia (Semarang).

⁶⁸⁹ The Dutch colonial government had decided to legally assimilate the indigenous Christians to Europeans in 1848. However they suppressed this measure already in 1853. Madinier, *The Catholic politics of inclusiveness*.

NZG missionary Harthoorn complained that many people considered converting to Christianity appealing for reasons that had nothing to do with their religious convictions. In his book, *De zending en Oost-Java, een kritische bijdrage*, (The mission and East Java, a critical contribution) he indicated several reasons why Javanese were willing to convert. He mentioned the encouragement of influential people, mostly European employers. He continued with the hope for material prosperity and the hope of being (legally) equated to Europeans. Some people simply followed the example of their already converted family members while others wished to be baptized so they could marry a Christian spouse. Many wished to enlarge their *ilmu* in order to gain prestige, desired more morality in their lives, or they disapproved of the behaviour or teachings of their own priest, and some had superstitious ideas about being baptized; they believed for example that it was beneficial for illnesses.⁶⁹⁰

6.3. Conditions for the baptism

The missionaries were expected to act simultaneously as proselytizers and gate-keepers. The formal discourse stipulated a strict division between ‘true’ and ‘superficial’ Christians and the latter were to be withheld from baptism. Simultaneously, the missionaries were constantly pressured to meet their superiors’ requirements to convert more people. Even though the missionaries were desperate for more converts, they claimed they only baptized those they considered sincere and knowledgeable. The questions that arise are: ‘what motivations were considered legitimate and illegitimate?’ and ‘how much did a person need to know, experience, and do to be considered a true convert?’ My aim here is to analyse how the missionaries negotiated the discourse on what constitutes a ‘true’ and ‘proper’ Christian to find out what was considered ‘good enough’ for conversion. I will analyse the writings on the missionaries’ ambiguous positioning in order to reveal how they compromised between the various demands and interests at play in the contact zone.

The Jesuit Van Lith, who was active in Central Java, made clear in his letters that he was very careful with baptizing people. He claimed that his candidates needed to be educated in Christianity for at least a few months and preferably six months to a year before he would consider baptizing them. He accused his colleague Hoevenaars of baptizing people who were not yet sufficiently educated.⁶⁹¹ Hoevenaars is not clear in his letters what level of knowledge he demanded of a candidate, so it is not obvious whether Van Lith was accurate on this point, or if he made the accusation out of jealousy of Hoevenaars’ success during his first years. However, his own letters show that Van Lith did not always

⁶⁹⁰ Harthoorn, *De Evangelische Zending en Oost-Java*, 93.

⁶⁹¹ Van Rijckevorsel, *Pastoor F. Van Lith S.J.*, 41.

follow his own advice, since he baptized the people from Kalibawang already after a few meetings.⁶⁹² Perhaps he saw no other option at that time to save the mission from being terminated by his superiors because of the lack of success.

Before baptizing converts, Carel Poensen of the NZG explained, he had to be convinced someone truly was a sincere Christian with a deep sense of faith, instead of a Christian in name only. This connects to the dominant discourse that distinguishes between 'true' and 'superficial' religiosity.⁶⁹³ Therefore, he let his converts take an actual test before their baptism. They had to explain in their own words why they believed in God and sought to become a Christian. Second, they had to recite the Lord's Prayer and the 'Twelve Articles of Faith'.⁶⁹⁴ Furthermore, they had to show 'basic knowledge, desire and zeal'. Only then was he convinced that they understood the Gospel and let them join the church. However, Poensen was of the opinion that even people who were serious about converting often knew little of the Christian faith. He explained that he paid more attention to what was alive in their hearts and that, despite the test, he did not focus too much on knowledge. He justified baptizing people who had failed the test by arguing that their knowledge would naturally increase when they regularly attended the church services.

Albers, too, mentioned the use of a test at various times. His exam consisted of questions such as: 'How many Gods are there?', 'Where does God live?', 'In how many days did God create the earth?', 'How did men become sinful?' and 'How can we be saved?'.⁶⁹⁵ Albers confessed that even the answers of people who had visited the church faithfully and had followed his catechism classes for months often drove him to despair. Like Poensen, he explained that he did not necessarily look for the right answers, but that he tried to discover what the candidates felt in their hearts. So Albers negotiated the dominant discourse in the same way Poensen did. Yet, there are also examples of people to whom he denied baptism.

In April 1888, Albers explained to the board why he had refused baptizing a candidate. This particular candidate from Pondok Melati had been educated by Albers' assistant Nathaniel. When Albers arrived on the Sunday morning of his baptism, in the church of Pondok Melati, the man was not there yet because he had gone to the market. This already disappointed Albers, since it showed that he did not care much about such a special event and that he apparently did not observe Sunday's rest. Albers nevertheless started with the exam and asked the candidate to recite the Lord's Prayer, but the

⁶⁹² The conversion of the people of Kalibawang is discussed in chapter 5 and in the extended biography of Franciscus van Lith in the appendices of this study.

⁶⁹³ Carel Poensen in: Unknown author, 'Java', in: *Maandberigten* (Rotterdam 1862) 157, 158.

⁶⁹⁴ Carel Poensen, *Letter to the board of the NZG* (Kediri 21 September 1885) Utrechts Archief.

⁶⁹⁵ Christiaan Albers, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Ciandur 14 July 1880) Utrechts Archief.

candidate failed to remember all the lines. Moreover, he did not understand the words ‘saviour’ and ‘sinner’ and had never even heard of the words ‘sin’, ‘immortal soul’, or ‘redemption’.⁶⁹⁶ Albers continued by asking him why he wished to become a Christian. He simply answered that a neighbour had advised him to convert. He confessed that he did not really understand what or who God was and that he had never really given a thought to the world’s creation. Albers therefore decided not to baptize him and sent him back to his assistant for more education. This narrative shows that Albers did not deny this man for his lack of knowledge, since he continued the test after he failed to recite a prayer, but for his lack of ‘true desire’ for conversion.

Harthoorn made clear that he tested the candidates before baptism by letting them recite the Lord’s Prayer, the Christian Creed, and the Ten Commandments. He concluded the test by asking some questions about the Old and New Testament that were based on Jellesma’s introductory booklet.⁶⁹⁷ He mentioned, however, that he did not like asking questions from Jellesma’s booklet, because the candidates learned the answers by heart, without really understanding them. Furthermore, he stressed at other times that the focus should not be too much on knowledge, otherwise the Javanese will treat the Christian teachings as *rapals*.⁶⁹⁸ Harthoorn took his first exam in 1855, while he was still an apprentice. After asking several standard questions, he asked a number of questions that were not in the booklet. The candidates failed to answer these, but Harthoorn did not want to reject his first candidates and decided to baptize them anyway.⁶⁹⁹

In 1858, Harthoorn described extensively taking a test to measure a woman’s level of knowledge before her baptism. This account gives insight into what sorts of questions were asked and what level of knowledge was expected. He asked her: “What do you wish?” ‘I wish to be healthy.’ ‘And if you are healthy what do you wish then?’ ‘Then I do not wish for anything.’ ‘If you die, where will you go?’ ‘I don’t know, how would I know?’ ‘Are you a sinner?’ ‘No’, with a certain tone. ‘Who created you?’ ‘How would I know?’ ‘Have you created the sun?’ ‘No’, with a certain tone. ‘Did I create the sun?’ ‘You? Of course not, no man could do that, God created the sun.’ ‘Eh, so God has created the sun, and the moon, who has created the moon?’ ‘How would I know?’⁷⁰⁰ Even though this woman’s level of Christian knowledge does not seem to be sufficient, Harthoorn concluded the story with an account of her baptism.

⁶⁹⁶ Christiaan Albers, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Bidana Tjina 7 April 1888) Utrechts Archief.

⁶⁹⁷ S. E. Harthoorn, ‘Uit het dagverhaal van de zendeling Harthoorn, 16 augustus – 20 september 1855’, in: *Mededeelingen* (Rotterdam 1858).

⁶⁹⁸ S.E. Harthoorn, *Diary on 1858* (Malang 1- 4 April 1858) Utrechts Archief.

⁶⁹⁹ S. E. Harthoorn, ‘Uit het dagverhaal van de zendeling Harthoorn, 16 augustus – 20 september 1855’, in: *Mededeelingen* (Rotterdam 1858).

⁷⁰⁰ S. E. Harthoorn, *Letter to the board of the NZG* (Malang 30 May, 1 June 1858) Utrechts Archief.

Harthoorn recounted another conversion story in the same letter. An elderly woman, who knew the Lord's Prayer and the Twelve Articles of Faith, but not much else, asked him: 'Please baptize me, I request urgently to believe and to be forgiven. What could I, as an old person, desire more than the salvation of my soul?'⁷⁰¹ Even though her level of knowledge was limited, Harthoorn baptized her, because she convinced him she truly believed in Jesus Christ. Van Eendenburg agreed with Albers, Poensen, and Harthoorn that it was more about one's devotion than one's knowledge. In May 1883, he questioned a Chinese man who did not know much about Christianity. However, this man confessed to be a sinner and that he believed that only Jesus Christ could save him. Van Eendenburg believed this man had a faithful soul and considered this enough. Therefore he baptized this man despite his lack of knowledge.⁷⁰²

It seems contradictory that all four Protestant missionaries in this study included stories that show that they baptized people who failed their own invented tests. Surprisingly, they were not afraid to admit that they accepted people without much knowledge, even though they fiercely distinguished between 'true' and 'superficial' conversions at other points in the mission discourse in order to justify their slow progress. When it came to making proselytes, they were apparently quickly inclined to choose quantity above quality. Consequently, the missionaries' positioning in this discourse is ambiguous, since they had to negotiate between the official discourse on 'true' motivations to convert and alternate motives they encountered in the field, in order to meet the ever-pressing demand for larger numbers of converts. To legitimize their choice, the missionaries stretched the boundaries of the discourse on what constitutes a *true* Christian by prioritizing the vague notion of 'inner belief' and downplaying knowledge. The Catholic missionaries do not mention using certain tests before baptism. They did, however, underscore repeatedly that they aimed to baptize only truly dedicated Christians who were sufficiently educated. Nevertheless, the conversion narrative of the people of Kalibawang indicates that in reality, the Catholics also prioritized quantity over quality.

All missionaries agreed that the baptizing ritual was one of the most important events in a person's life. This *rite de passage* symbolizes the transition from non-believer to being a member of a congregation. To stress the importance of the baptism, it was often celebrated with a Christening party. The missionaries demanded that the ritual would be performed in public for everyone to witness.⁷⁰³ The Protestant missionary Albers mentioned a few times that there were candidates who requested to be baptized in secret or at least in a church far away from where they lived.⁷⁰⁴ Albers

⁷⁰¹ S.E. Harthoorn, *Letter to the board of the NZG* (Malang 30 May- 1 June 1858) Utrechts Archief.

⁷⁰² Simon van Eendenburg, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Sukabumi 27, 28 May 1883) Utrechts Archief.

⁷⁰³ S.E. Harthoorn, *Annual report 1856* (Malang 1867) Utrechts Archief.

⁷⁰⁴ Christiaan Albers, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Ciandur 24 July 1871) Utrechts Archief.

Christiaan Albers, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Meester Cornelis 8 April 1890) Utrechts Archief.

always refused these requests because he feared they would then deny being Christian to their friends and family. The missionaries tried to make it clear to the candidates that the ritual meant that they would be reborn. The ritual should mark a clear break between one's old and one's new life.

According to the Catholic Van Lith the transfer ceremony itself should be 'a splendid ceremony', so the people would understand that the decision to be baptized was very significant. The anointing was in Latin, but the prayer was spoken in Javanese, to make sure the people would understand the ritual.⁷⁰⁵ Not only was the baptism celebrated in an exuberant way, the Confirmation ceremony was celebrated with an abundant feast as well. When a large group did their Confirmation on the same day it was celebrated with a feast meal, parade, or even a carnival. The Catholic fathers hoped this would attract many people who would become interested in visiting the church more often.⁷⁰⁶

6.4. Sustainability of Christian communities

In the introduction of this thesis I mentioned that the Javanese religious identity has often been described as being fluid. The Western concept of conversion, leaving one religious system and community to enter another, was often not considered definite in Java. Although incomprehensible to the missionaries, Christianity did not have a permanently transformative effect on men's minds. Reality did not resemble the Pauline model: the Christian faith which enters the soul as a bright light and changes it for ever. In reality, the process of conversion went rather slow and often in partial stages. Moreover, it was not uncommon that baptized Christians left the congregation after some time, sometimes because of social pressure and sometimes because they considered Christian life just too demanding. The changing of religions was not exceptional in the Javanese society; some people also shifted between the *Abangan* and the *Putihan* current, sometimes even a few times during one lifetime.

New converts needed the support of a strong Christian community and the guidance of a Christian leader to hold on to their faith. It was common that people who were converted by indigenous Christian gurus converted back after their guru left to another region or passed away. In theory, Christian communities in the mission districts were more stable because the missionaries were bound to a district, could not travel around to spread the Word, and were succeeded by another

Christiaan Albers, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Meester Cornelis 18 August 1890) Utrechts Archief.

⁷⁰⁵ Franciscus van Lith, *Uitwerking 'Plan en werkwijze der Java-missie*, (Muntilan July 1902) Archives of the Jesuit Province of Indonesia (Semarang).

⁷⁰⁶ J. Mulders, 'Praatjes over Muntilan', in: *Claverbond* (1912) 38-47.

missionary after retirement. However, this did not always prevent people from returning to their former faith. The missionaries mentioned regularly Christians who had given up their Christian identity. This paragraph indicates the most common motivations that led people to (re-)convert to Islam or to another religion.

People gave up their Christian identity for several reasons. Albers argued that re-conversion to Islam merely meant that new Christians gave up living according to Christian rules, not that they suddenly became pious Muslims. Throughout Albers' career people, sometimes even his assistants, re-converted. The most common reason to convert back was a faulty Christian social network. It proved often difficult for young Christians who wished to get married to find a Christian spouse because the number of Christians in this period was insignificant. Many therefore converted back to Islam so they could marry a Muslim. This was necessary because the families of a Muslim bride or groom usually did not accept a Christian spouse for their sons or daughters. Yet, it was easier for a Christian woman to marry a Muslim man, because that is allowed in Muslim law, unlike a Christian man marrying a Muslim woman. The Christian missionaries did not forbid mixed marriages.

Another reason, according to Albers, to renounce the Christian identity was that some people were disappointed when they learned that the missionary refused to support them financially.⁷⁰⁷ Van Eendenburg mentioned that because of a deficiency in employment in his region, many young men moved away and failed to hold on to their Christian identity in their new environment without the support of a Christian community.⁷⁰⁸ Harthoorn explained that many people considered the Christian life too demanding or were pressured by their family to convert back to Islam. Nevertheless, the missionaries also mentioned apostates coming back to church to re-join the congregation. Simon Van Eendenburg, for example, wrote about a woman named Ma Tejo, who continuously changed her religion. She was married and divorced multiple times and adjusted her religious identity to that of her current husband.⁷⁰⁹

Van Lith argued that it was important to travel to the *desas* to visit his Catholic alumni, because he understood the transition from living in a Catholic boarding school to living in a Muslim *desa* as a Christian was difficult. Catholics were not always accepted in the community; some were even harassed or shunned by their families. According to Van Lith, ridiculous stories were told about Catholics in the region. For example, some said that Catholics were actually cannibals who ate human

⁷⁰⁷ Christiaan Albers, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Ciandur 18 March 1879) Utrechts Archief.

⁷⁰⁸ Simon van Eendenburg, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Sukabumi 9 September 1885) Utrechts Archief.

⁷⁰⁹ Simon van Eendenburg, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Sukabumi 4 January 1884) Utrechts Archief.

flesh and drank human blood during the Eucharist.⁷¹⁰ He supported his alumni by visiting them and writing them as often as he could, in order to prevent these young men from converting back to Islam.

Albers did not only worry about Christians converting back to Islam; because of the vicinity of a Catholic monastery to Kampung Sawah, where many of his Christians lived, he also worried about intra-religious conversion. In 1895, Albers went on his second leave to the Netherlands to have a denture. This time he went to Europe without his family; he was away for only for six months. When he returned in 1896, he found out that there were Catholic priests active in his district and that some of his people had visited their services. Albers was convinced that the only reason so many attended the Catholic services in Kampung Sawah was that everyone received a meal afterwards. In July 1896, he reported that six of his families had re-baptized themselves as Catholics, including one of his own assistants.⁷¹¹ He added that a few families had come to him to ask for money to buy *sawahs*: 'Meanwhile, they asked me to give them five *sawahs*. If I would give the *sawahs* they would not go to the pastor in the near future. But I did not give them the *sawahs* and some have been re-baptized.'⁷¹² Furthermore, a large number of men moved to Batavia since they were offered well-paid positions in the monastery there. This and many other examples confirmed Albers' opinion that the Sundanese had no ethical standard and would even betray their own parents for money.⁷¹³

Albers also suspected that some people were registered in both churches in the hope of receiving double financial aid. The rivalry with the Catholics depressed him: 'Often I have the feeling that I'm surrounded by people who only try to betray me for money'.⁷¹⁴ People who had been in his church for years would renege without any consideration. In June 1897, Albers wrote to the board that the Catholics had caused an exodus from his community. By then, the Catholics had built a church right next to the Protestant Church in Kampung Sawah. Albers mentioned in 1904 that the number of Catholics that used to be Protestant had risen to 54.⁷¹⁵ He explained that the Protestant and Catholic communities had no contact and did not interfere with each other despite their proximity. However, he sometimes also reported that Christians returned to his church. Examples like these make it clear that religious identities were not as fixed as the missionaries wished they were in the Preanger.

⁷¹⁰ Rosariyanto, *Father Franciscus van Lith S.J.* 272.

⁷¹¹ Christiaan Albers, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Meester Cornelis 14 July 1896) Utrechts Archief.

⁷¹² Christiaan Albers, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Meester Cornelis 14 July 1896) Utrechts Archief.

⁷¹³ Christiaan Albers, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Meester Cornelis 5 September 1896) Utrechts Archief.

⁷¹⁴ Christiaan Albers, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Meester Cornelis 26 October 1904) Utrechts Archief.

⁷¹⁵ The assistant-resident estimated the number of Catholics in Kampung Sawah at 40 and the Catholic Bishop at 90. Christiaan Albers, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Meester Cornelis 7 April 1904) Utrechts Archief.

6.5. Motivations to refrain from conversion and counter strategies to missionary activities

This paragraph addresses the personal motivations to refrain from converting to Christianity and the various reactions people interested in Christianity received from the Muslim community as indicated in the mission discourse. Again, the reasons mentioned here are as the missionaries perceived them. As mentioned above, conversion is a process with consequences beyond the religious field as it also changes one's position in the community. Someone who showed interest in Christianity had to deal with reactions from family, friends, and neighbours which were not always supportive. According to the missionaries, negative reactions and counter strategies of family, friends, and Muslim leaders primarily withheld people from being baptized.

In an article in the *Mededeelingen*, Poensen summed up the most common reasons people gave him to refrain from converting to Christianity.⁷¹⁶ Many considered Christianity a European religion and therefore not suitable for the Javanese. Some were afraid that if they converted to Christianity they would become subordinate again to the Dutch in heaven after their death. Others were afraid that they would not be reunited with their family after they passed away because they would go to a different heaven. Moreover, they were not sure their souls would ever find peace if the *santris* did not pray for them after they died. Moreover, converting to Christianity meant refraining from venerating local spirits which was an important part of the Javanese culture. In addition, there were, according to the missionaries, governmental policies that counteracted the mission goals. For example, article 124 stipulated that there had to be an agreement between the religions of the indigenous leaders and the people they governed.⁷¹⁷ So if a regent converted during his appointed he was obligated to resign. For example, Christians were not granted dispensation for religious (Islamic) taxes, they were not represented in the *landraad* (judicial council) and were even obliged to swear on the *Qur'an* in court.⁷¹⁸

Poensen indicated rejection by one's community, including one's family and friends, as the most important reason for refraining from baptism.⁷¹⁹ The Javanese society was a communal society; communities worked together to secure their income. For many Javanese it was difficult to convert, because it could result in losing one's livelihood. Most land was communally owned and the entire community worked together during the harvest. People who converted to Christianity risked becoming outcasts in the Muslim society. This could ultimately result in economic hardship because some were deprived of their share of land. Missionary Verhoeven of the NZV explained that Arabs and

⁷¹⁶ Carel Poensen, 'Een en ander over den godsdienstigen toestand van de Javaan'.

⁷¹⁷ Alting von Geusau, *Neutraliteit der overheid*, 57.

⁷¹⁸ Alting von Geusau, *Neutraliteit der overheid*, 57.

⁷¹⁹ Carel Poensen, 'Een en ander over den godsdienstigen toestand van de Javaan'.

hajjis deliberately turned people against the converts in his district and that they made sure the Christians were excluded from social life in their *desas*. As he wrote about the Christians in his district: 'No one ever bothered to obtain a part of the communal grounds. And every time I urged them, they replied me with just a smile, because they know that I know very well that a Muslim, who converts to Christianity no longer counts and is no longer part of the Mohammedan community. Because of this, an indigenous Christian family, who settles in a Mohammedan *desa*, will never obtain a part of the communal grounds.'⁷²⁰ This shows that Christians were often excluded from economic life in Muslim regions.

According to some missionaries, Muslim leaders forbade people to enter the missionary's house or church and tried to scare them: 'if someone enters the building, the missionary will write down his name and send him to Aceh or the Netherlands!'⁷²¹ Other rumours were that everyone who converted would be sent to the Netherlands to join the Dutch army, or that they even became Dutch after they 'drank Christian water'.⁷²² In addition, the missionaries wrote that converted Javanese were sometimes openly persecuted by fanatic *hajjis*; 'the bitter enemies of Christianity'.⁷²³ The missionaries also reported that *santris* frightened the people with the rumour that the medicines, provided by the missionaries, were actually poisonous.⁷²⁴ Albers reported that there was a rumour in his district that Western medicines would make people more amenable to Christianity.⁷²⁵ Missionaries complained that sometimes when a patient died, despite their provided medical aid, the Muslims opposition accused them of murder. However, when a patient did recover, they would always ascribe the recovery to another cause than the missionaries' care.⁷²⁶ In 1884, Van Eendenburg wrote that he was worried because all Christian families, except for one, in his community had trouble having children and he knew others gossiped about this and were convinced they were punished by God.⁷²⁷

In 1879, a tremendous earthquake destroyed a large part of Ciandur, where Albers was posted at the time. The mosque had collapsed, killing five *hajjis* and the head-*penghulu*. The Muslim people blamed the Christians for this accident because the church and the houses of the Christians had remained unharmed. For a while, the resistance against the missionary and his followers grew stronger. A few months later, Albers wrote that the opposition had calmed down, but that it still had a

⁷²⁰ Verhoeven, *Tot welzijn van Java*, 140.

⁷²¹ Rooseboom, *Na vijftig jaren*, 53-58.

S.E. Harthoorn, *Diary on April – October 1856* (Malang 2 March 1857) Utrechts Archief.

⁷²² S.E. Harthoorn, *Diary on 1855* (Malang 16 August 1855) Utrechts Archief. S.E. Harthoorn, *Diary on October 1856* (Malang 12, 13 April 1856) Utrechts Archief.

⁷²³ Rooseboom, *Na vijftig jaren*, 53-58.

⁷²⁴ Rooseboom, *Na vijftig jaren*, 53-58.

⁷²⁵ Christiaan Albers, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Meester Cornelis 9 December 1896) Utrechts Archief.

⁷²⁶ Rooseboom, *Na vijftig jaren*, 53-58.

⁷²⁷ Simon van Eendenburg, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Sukabumi 22 January 1884) Utrechts Archief.

'paralyzing' effect on his work.⁷²⁸ People who visited his sermons were bullied and excluded from social events. He wrote that at first people would come and listen to his sermons in secret, but that eventually even the bravest did not dare to enter the church anymore.⁷²⁹

The missionaries maintained that many Christians had to endure severe social pressure. They told stories about people who were bullied for months for visiting even a single sermon. Missionary Verhoeven, who was positioned in West Java wrote: 'Those Christians had to be willing to sacrifice a lot for their faith; houses were burnt, clothes were stolen et cetera, so that I even had to give the advice that, if something like this would happen again, they should not be ashamed to come to church, if necessary covered in leaves. To see churchgoers, who are dressed in leaves, persevere would generate regret of the wicked.'⁷³⁰ People who went so far as to be baptized were sometimes harassed by neighbours, friends, and families. For example, Ismail and Moerti, Albers' first converts, had to endure severe opposition from their community. *Hajjis*, and even the police, came by their house to change their mind. They were ignored, bullied, threatened, and their adopted child was even taken from them.⁷³¹

The mission reports claim that while many had to endure name-calling or threats, or were deprived of their inheritance, the reactions were sometimes more radical. Sometimes converts were spit on, physically attacked, had their land taken from them, had their market stalls boycotted, were shunned by their families, or had their houses set on fire.⁷³² Albers even suspected that two Christians in his district had been poisoned and died because of it, but he was unable to prove it.⁷³³ Both Van Eendenburg and Verhoeven of the NZV wrote that many Christian Javanese therefore chose to live together, in a place where they could live peacefully, and where they were protected against the teasing and mocking by Muslims. This was an important reason for Van Eendenburg to establish the Christian *desa* Pangharepan.

The harassment and threats were not all incidents inflicted by angered family members or friends. Intermittently it was organised by *desa* leaders or even by a regent. Harthoorn wrote about a terrible incident in Djunggo, a *desa* not far from Malang, with a small community of converted Javanese. These Christians, who were baptized by Jellesma, were forced to forswear their belief by the local leaders. When they refused to do so they were taken to the house of the regent to be mocked, reviled, and ridiculed for hours in the burning sun. Among these Christians were even women and

⁷²⁸ Rooseboom, *Na vijftig jaren*, 58.

⁷²⁹ Rooseboom, *Na vijftig jaren*, 59.

⁷³⁰ Marinus Lindenborn, *Een welbesteed leven; Jurrianus Verhoeven, de vader van Tjideres* (Oegstgeest 1923)23.

⁷³¹ Christiaan Albers, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Ciandur 5 March 1881) Utrechts Archief.

⁷³² Ricklefs, *Polarising Javanese society*, 118.

⁷³³ Blinde, *Christiaan Albers*, 18.

children.⁷³⁴ Albers reported to the board in 1879: 'When a family converted to Christianity in Tjibolong the *penghulu* had to appear before the head-*penghulu* to explain how that could have happened. The people in the region were threatened the names of Christians would be written down and sent to the resident of Bandung. It was forbidden to associate with Christians. Family members had to renounce their Christian family and deny them their home and yard.'⁷³⁵

Besides social pressure on individuals, pressure was sporadically applied to a whole Christian community and their leading guru or missionary. Albers, for example, reported a few times that people had broken into his church, that certain items that had been stolen, and that pews and books had been demolished.⁷³⁶ These strategies were not only directed against the Christian communities led by the Dutch missionaries as also the Christian *desas* that were directed by indigenous gurus were sometimes the victim of harassment. In the 1880's, a few Christian *desa* led by the indigenous evangelist Sadrach, had been repeatedly harassed. The services on Sunday morning had been rudely interrupted, a few churches had been set on fire, Christians had been driven out of their houses, and their *sawahs* and crops had been destroyed.⁷³⁷

Surprisingly, the Catholic missionaries did not mention counter strategies by Muslims in their districts. On the contrary, Van Lith and Merthens reported in an account from 1912, that Christians were not being excluded from the communities. 'Although we cannot deny that the transition to Christianity can cause some difficulties for Muslims, there are no signs of expulsion from the community. Christians do not experience (...) troubles from Muslims.'⁷³⁸ Remarkably, the Catholic missionaries reported that some Christians complained that they were excluded from *slametans*, whereas many Protestant missionaries were worried Christians would be forced to attend this 'pagan' ritual. Other than their Protestant colleagues, the Catholic missionaries did not note that Christians who refused performing their feudal duties on Sundays got into trouble. Van Lith and Merthens wrote that Christians in Yogyakarta once complained about feudal duties on a Sunday, but that the local authorities reacted positively to the missionaries' complaint and made sure they would be scheduled on different days in the future.⁷³⁹ They added: 'Cases of injustice because of one's faith in regency or

⁷³⁴ Nortier; *Het leven van Samuel Eliza Harthoorn*.

⁷³⁵ Christiaan Albers, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Ciandur 11 February 1879) Utrechts Archief.

⁷³⁶ Christiaan Albers, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Ciandur 18 January 1874) Utrechts Archief.

Christiaan Albers, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Ciandur 5 May 1879) Utrechts Archief.

⁷³⁷ Ricklefs, *Polarising Javanese society*, 118.

⁷³⁸ Van Lith and Merthens, *Resume conferentie*.

⁷³⁹ Van Lith and Merthens, *Resume conferentie*.

district courts cannot be reported. It is undesirable to exclude Christians from that jurisdiction and to form an alternative court for this group.’⁷⁴⁰

While Carel Poensen blamed the risk of rejection by one’s community as the main obstacle for converting in many of his writings, he has also reported that the situation was usually not too bad for Javanese Christians: ‘... kinship is not always equally hurt by the difference of religion among the Javanese; initially, during the time one reveals his intention to become a Christian and during the actual transition, opposition and enmity will sometimes occur; but after some time, it seems that former aversion is pretty well overcome; or rather, people accommodate themselves to circumstances, although a Mohammedan can never be completely at peace with it.’⁷⁴¹ His statements are thus ambiguous on this point.

Perhaps the Protestant missionaries exaggerated the risk of ostracism in their reports to justify their slow progress and lack of major results. The cultural tradition of Java was traditionally open to new religious influences, so a reaction as radical as ostracism seems a bit out of place, even though the region was becoming more Islamized and consequently more turned against Christianity. Stressing the social pressure that was put on converts could also be a negotiation strategy aimed at explaining why people, who had previously been presented as ready to convert by the missionaries, repeatedly refrained from being baptised in the end. In addition, it could be a strategy to legitimize the need for indirect methods such as development aid. For example, Simon van Eendenburg stressed the risk of unemployment and exclusion after conversion in his plea for founding a Christian *desa*: ‘They ask him (the missionary M.K.) for a place where they can live peacefully, where they are protected against being teased and mocked by Muslims, where they are able to find a modest livelihood. They want work for themselves and for their children, and therefore want a piece of land that they can cultivate.’⁷⁴²

Despite a few local incidents, the relationship between Muslim communities and the Christian missionaries and their followers were peaceful in general. There are no accounts of big uprisings against the Christian presence. The most important reason for the lack of organised resistance was the insignificant number of converts. Because this number was so small during the researched period, the Muslim community did not really feel challenged and therefore did not feel the need to organise themselves against the mission. In fact, the missionaries wrote that they often felt that they were being ignored. Some of the six missionaries had worked for decades in the same district and had only converted a small number of people. Perhaps an uprising would at least have been a sign of

⁷⁴⁰ Van Lith and Merthens, *Resume conferentie*.

⁷⁴¹ Carel Poensen, *Letter to the board of the NZG* (Kediri 23 September 1880) Utrechts Archief.

⁷⁴² Simon van Eendenburg, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Sukabumi 9 September 1885) Utrechts Archief.

recognition of their mission. Rooseboom of the NZV wrote in a commemorative work: 'Anger and mockery is even preferable for the missionary, because anger is a sign of being affected and mockery is 'a cry of anguish of the conscience', but that calm and languid silence breaks the heart, extinguishes all energy, and is thus worse than hatred and enmity'.⁷⁴³ The peaceful coexistence between Muslims and non-Muslim others was considered proof of the lack of interest of the Javanese for the Christian mission.

Nonetheless, converting to Christianity was a decision with many consequences. In many cases it meant losing one's job, land, social status, family, friends, or even one's spouse. Besides losing one's place in the community, it meant giving up a large part of one's identity. To be Javanese and to profess Islam was more or less the same during that age. Baptism was therefore also seen as a betrayal of the Javanese identity; as a 'political sin'.⁷⁴⁴ Van Lith remarked: 'It is known that a person who is converted is accused by others for being a turncoat who joined the Dutch. He stopped being Javanese, because he has broken with the *adat*'.⁷⁴⁵ Because most missionaries expected their converts to abandon most traits of their group, conversion was consequently considered the same as becoming Dutch.⁷⁴⁶ The first converts even had to receive permission from the Resident to be baptized, and they had to convince the Resident that their conversion was not a strategy to claim civil rights that only applied for Europeans.⁷⁴⁷ The converted Javanese often found themselves in a difficult position. They were not accepted anymore by the Muslim Javanese community, but they were not accepted into the Dutch community either because of their ethnicity.

Moreover, most Javanese Christians were not considered 'true' Christians by the missionaries. They continuously Othered indigenous Christians as 'superficial' Christians by pointing out their 'disappointing behaviour' and 'inadequate' level of knowledge. Influenced by the dominant discourse on racial hierarchies, they simply did not consider the Javanese and Sundanese capable of true religiosity. They portrayed repeatedly the local people as underdeveloped or as children who were generally not mature enough to really understand Christianity or to show real devotion.⁷⁴⁸ So the intersection of the identities 'Javanese' and 'Christian' was seemingly an unattainable ideal. In nineteenth century Java these were clearly considered conflicting identities by the majority. A saying about Javanese Christians Harthoorn had heard in his district illustrates this: 'They are not Dutch and

⁷⁴³ Rooseboom, *Na vijftig jaren*, 241.

⁷⁴⁴ Christiaan Albers, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Bandung 10 April 1863) Utrechts Archief.

⁷⁴⁵ Van Lith, *Kjahi Sadrach*.

⁷⁴⁶ S.E. Harthoorn, *Letter to the board of the NZG* (Malang 1-3 June 1856) Utrechts Archief.

⁷⁴⁷ S.E. Harthoorn, *De Evangelische Zending en Oost-Java*.

⁷⁴⁸ For example, Christiaan Albers, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Ciandur 29 August 1864) Utrechts Archief. S.E. Harthoorn, *Letter to the board of the NZG* (Malang 31 December 1858) Utrechts Archief.

therefore Jesus does not want them! They are neither Javanese and therefore Mohammed does not want them either!’⁷⁴⁹

6.6. Kartawidjaja’s biographic narrative of conversion

In these final paragraphs I will focus on the biographic narrative of the Sundanese Kartawidjaja, who converted to Christianity in 1899 after having contact with Dutch missionaries of the NZV in Java. I will analyse Kartawidjaja’s conversion story to reach deeper insight into why and how he converted to Christianity, whether his conversion radically changed his religious convictions, and how his religious conversion changed his personal and social identity. His narrative is unique because he was a former *santri*, whereas most other conversion narratives, like those of the Christian gurus, are about people who converted from popular Islam rooted in Javanese cultural mysticism. Moreover, Kartawidjaja’s story is one of the very few autobiographical conversion stories that survived from this period. This scarcity is due to various reasons. First and foremost, the total number of converts was rather small, and second, the Dutch missionaries focused predominantly on the poorly educated peasantry who usually were not able to write down their stories. Christians who could read and write were usually educated in mission-schools from a young age and therefore not representative for adults who converted to Christianity.

There are some problems with Kartawidjaja’s conversion story that first needs to be addressed. Kartawidjaja’s story was written and published in 1914 by the NZV under the title ‘*Van Koran tot Bijbel*’.⁷⁵⁰ Kartawidjaja, however, was introduced to Christianity twenty -three years before and was baptized on Christmas day 1899. The long period between the actual conversion and the biographic narrative has consequences for the story because people tend to explain earlier choices from their present perspective. The book was written just seven months before Kartawidjaja passed away, so as his life came to an end he reread his life story.⁷⁵¹ Moreover, Kartawidjaja wrote the book because it was commissioned by Aart Vermeer, a missionary of the NGZV.⁷⁵² The aim of the book was to inform people in the Netherlands about the success of the mission and possibly to encourage them to support the mission financially. It is plausible that Kartawidjaja wrote the story in such a way that he would please his reverend, missionary Vermeer, and the Dutch public.

⁷⁴⁹ S.E. Harthoorn, *Letter to the board of the NZG* (Malang 31 December 1860, Malang) Utrechts Archief.

⁷⁵⁰ From *Qur’an* to Bible.

⁷⁵¹ Kartawidjaja passed away on October 4, 1914.

⁷⁵² The book was commissioned and translated by Aart Vermeer who was born in 1872, who was the son of a Chinese Christian. After his father died, the boy was adopted by the Dutch missionary Aart Vermeer (1828-1891).

Furthermore, Kartawidjaja wrote his story in Malay and it was translated by Aart Vermeer. He stated in the introduction that there are phrases in Kartawidjaja's narrative that do not correspond with the views of the NZV (addressing Jesus as a prophet for example), but that they decided to keep the story as authentic as possible and therefore did not adjust it. The NZV claimed that they did not alter anything in Kartawidjaja's writings.⁷⁵³ However, during the process of translation a story always changes due to the personal interpretation of the translator. Unfortunately, the source is not available in Malay, so the quotations in this thesis are the result of two translations; from Malay to Dutch to English. I have based my analysis on the Dutch text to stay as close as possible to the original source and translated the results after my analysis.

In addition, the NZV decided to leave out the first seven chapters of the biographic narrative, because it would make the narrative too long and expensive to print. These chapters focused on the *Qur'an*, Islamic law, the Five Pillars of Islam, Islamic education, and mysticism. The board of the NZV did not consider this of importance for the Dutch audience, even though Kartawidjaja apparently did consider his Islamic past an important part of his conversion narrative.⁷⁵⁴

6.7. Kartawidjaja's conversion story

Kartawidjaja was the grand-son of a *hajji* and a *santri* himself. He described himself as a very pious Muslim who lived strictly according to Muslim law. He admitted, however, that he often felt dissatisfied in his faith; he always had the feeling something was missing. He thought performing the *hajj* would eliminate this feeling and he started the preparations for his journey to Mecca. During this process, his cousin, who was a student of the NZV missionary Zegers, told him about the Christian Gospel alleging that Mohammed was a false prophet. Kartawidjaja reacted furiously and discussed the matter with his teacher at the *pesantren*. His teacher gave him permission to read and examine the Bible. Eventually, he became convinced the Bible was true and that Islam indeed was a false religion. The story does not indicate reasons other than Kartawidjaja's belief in the veracity of the Gospel for his conversion. A monetary motive can be ruled out since he had a well-paying job before he embarked on his religious quest.⁷⁵⁵

⁷⁵³ Kartawidjaja, *Van Koran tot Bijbel, uit het Maleisch vertaald* (Rotterdam 1914) IV.

⁷⁵⁴ Three years later the missing chapters were published in de *Mededeelingen* of the NZG (*Mededeelingen*, 1917, 119-127).

⁷⁵⁵ Kartawidjaja had learnt the Latin alphabet and started his career as a bookkeeper at a plantation. Eventually, he became a government official with a salary of 275 guilders and *sawahs*. Kartawidjaja, *Van Koran tot Bijbel*, 5.

Kartawidjaja was, however, afraid to admit to his family and friends that he wished to become a Christian for a long period of time because they detested Christianity. After a while, however, he stopped performing the *salat* which angered his community: 'The Arabs started to spread the message that I had become a Christian, and they started to slander me in a vile manner and they caused great commotion. Especially my family members, whether or not they are *hajjis*, evoked a storm of resistance against my choice. Almost every day they came to me and hoped they could force me to stop the process of converting to Christianity.'⁷⁵⁶ Kartawidjaja postponed his christening for years, because his mother and wife were very much against it. Eventually, both died and Kartawidjaja remarried. His new wife was not in favour of his baptism either. Yet, Kartawidjaja eventually decided to be baptized even though it was against his wife's wishes. The day he was baptized he found out that his wife had left him and had moved in with a Muslim man. Kartawidjaja wrote: 'I lacked the courage to go there and bring her home, because I was too afraid to be beaten up. I could not sleep the entire night, because outside there was a troop of Arabs, armed with sticks, lurking. It was too dangerous for me to go outside because I would certainly be beaten.'⁷⁵⁷ This statement ties in perfectly with the Dutch colonial notion that Muslims were fierce and prone to be violent. In the end, Kartawidjaja moved to a *desa*, where more Christians lived, so he could live in a less 'hostile environment' and live according to Christian customs.

Interestingly enough, Kartawidjaja hardly mentioned contact with missionaries in his narrative. He learned about Christianity through his cousin and went through the process of conversion alone by rereading the *Qur'an* independently. In addition, he wrote about discussions with Arabs and Chinese, not with missionaries, which led him to grow in his faith.

6.8. Analysis of Kartawidjaja's biographic narrative

This part focuses on the way Kartawidjaja constructed and reconstructed his religious identity in his biographic narrative. The first thing to notice about the text is that it is organized in chapters and verses. The form of the narrative is in itself an intertextual reference to the *Qur'an* and the Bible. This adds another layer to the text because it stresses the religious theme and strengthens the author's image of being familiar with religious texts. He further enhanced his position as a knowledgeable Christian with intertextual references such as 'now I eat the bread of life' which refers to John 6: 26. He became part of the Christian community by claiming the jargon of Christians.

⁷⁵⁶ Kartawidjaja, *Van Koran tot Bijbel*.

⁷⁵⁷ Kartawidjaja, *Van Koran tot Bijbel*.

The narrative starts when Kartawidjaja was still a Muslim and he continually emphasised his status as pious believer. In the very first sentence he called upon his grandfather, a *hajji* and a teacher at a famous *pesantren*, to strengthen his own identity as Muslim. He pointed out that he was trained at a *Qur'an* school from the age of six or seven and that he had read the entire *Qur'an* before the age of twelve, the year of his circumcision. Three years later he started working as an assistant at a government office, but he stressed that he remained a *santri* at heart and continued praying and fasting. Years later, in 1891, he resigned because his workload hampered the performance of his religious duties. After his resignation, Kartawidjaja spent all his time studying the *Qur'an* and Islamic visiting scholars. He recounted that his diligence was noticed by others, especially by Arabs: 'Every Friday I performed the communal prayer in the mosque with some Arabs. Many of them admired me, because *they* saw me as a deeply religious man.'⁷⁵⁸ (Italic by M.K.) By changing the focalization in this sentence from himself to those Arab Muslims, Kartawidjaja used these Arabs as 'witnesses' of his piety in his text, because Arabs were deemed to have a higher status as Muslims than the Javanese and Sundanese at the time.⁷⁵⁹ The indigenous people assumed Arabs were better Muslims and understood Islam better than they did because they had originally come from the Holy Land, could often read Arabic, and were perhaps even descendants of the Prophet himself. By stating that Arabs admired him and considered him a deeply religious man, Kartawidjaja placed himself above the Arab Muslims, who had such an admirable position in the Javanese society. This change in focalization thus strongly reinforced his status as a pious Muslim.

Nevertheless, all this studying did not satisfy Kartawidjaja: '...again did I read the *Qur'an*—commentaries diligently, because the *Qur'an* is according to the Muslims God's Word. No matter how many times I read them, it did not make me wiser, because in the *Qur'an* many sentences are incomplete, or a repetition of what has been said before.'⁷⁶⁰ This quotation shows that Kartawidjaja started to doubt the *Qur'an* by pointing out its imperfections despite still reading it diligently as a 'proper' Muslim should. This is the first sign of a conflict in his religious identity. Moreover, he had already distanced himself from Muslims by stating that 'according to the Muslims' the *Qur'an* is God's word, instead of acknowledging that he himself believed this to be true at the time. This change in

⁷⁵⁸ Kartawidjaja, *Van Koran tot Bijbel*, 6,7.

⁷⁵⁹ The first Arab settlements in the Indonesian archipelago may date from before the seventh century. Arab traders have been present in parts of Indonesia long before Islam became established. These early communities adopted much of the local culture, and some disappeared entirely while others formed ethnically distinct communities. During the colonial period they were classified as 'foreign Orientals' along with the Chinese by the Dutch, which led to them being unable to attend certain schools and restricted from traveling, and having to settle in special Arab districts, or *Kampung Arab*. These laws were repealed in 1919. Most Arabs living in the archipelago are descended from Hadramis. The Islam they practised tended to be more 'orthodox' than local, indigenous-influenced forms. Therefore, Arabs often enjoyed the status of 'more pious' or 'better' Muslims than the indigenous people.

⁷⁶⁰ Kartawidjaja, *Van Koran tot Bijbel*, 8.

focalization - 'the Muslims' instead of 'I' - shows that Kartawidjaja started to restructure his identity and no longer wanted to identify himself as a Muslim.

The next chapter deals with Kartawidjaja's introduction to Christianity. While performing his daily worship ritual, Kartawidjaja was disturbed by a visitor, Raden Wira Adibrata, his cousin as we find out later in the story. This Raden Wira Adibrata said to him: 'Be assured that Mohammed is not a prophet; he acted as one. Nor is the *Qur'an* God's Word; because it is an invention of Mohammed. The veritable Word of God is the Law and the Gospel' (the Old and the New Testament)⁷⁶¹. Kartawidjaja was upset and angry, sent his guest away, and continued reading the *Qur'an*. But then *Sura* 2, verse 3 and 4 caught his eye. These verses state that true believers ought to believe in the Law and the Gospel. This made Kartawidjaja uncertain, because why were the Law and the Gospel prohibited for Muslims while the *Qur'an* orders to believe them? He hurried to his teacher *kyai haji* A., who allowed him to read the Bible.⁷⁶² Permission from this Muslim scholar relieved Kartawidjaja. It meant he was not doing something that threatened his pious identity; he still acted within the borders of what the dominant Islamic discourse considered proper behaviour for a Muslim. Right after Kartawidjaja left the *pesantren* he met with a Chinese man, who turned out to be Christian, and who gave him a summary of the Bible. This man also told him that only the Law and the Gospel are truly God's Word and that the *Qur'an* was written by Mohammed. Kartawidjaja wrote: 'This time I did not get angry, as I was at Raden Wira Adibrata, because I started to believe that the Law and the Gospel truly was God's word...'⁷⁶³

The following chapter starts with: 'Thus being introduced to the Law and the Gospel, I understood that the *Qur'an* could not really be God's word, but had to be composed by Mohammed of stories from the Law and the Gospel. Because what is being told in the *Qur'an*, is already mentioned in the Law and the Gospel, and they were present much earlier. Moreover, the *Qur'an* is unfinished, incomplete, confused and full of contradictions. The Law and the Gospel are easier to understand than the *Qur'an*. Although this was my conviction, I did not openly admit this, but abided by Islam.'⁷⁶⁴ Kartawidjaja is at many times very elaborate in his writing -especially since he wrote the story twenty three years after the fact- he includes details such as at what time he went home or how many hours it took him to read something.⁷⁶⁵ His actual conversion -the very subject of this biographic narrative - however, is not thoroughly explained at all. He was silent on the actual subject and did not elucidated his thoughts or feelings during the process of reading the Bible summary, but immediately skipped to

⁷⁶¹ Kartawidjaja, *Van Koran tot Bijbel*, 9.

⁷⁶² 'Kyai' is Javanese for 'sage' and the title 'haji' increases his status as knowledgeable Muslim.

⁷⁶³ Kartawidjaja, *Van Koran tot Bijbel*, 13, 14.

⁷⁶⁴ Kartawidjaja, *Van Koran tot Bijbel*, 14.

⁷⁶⁵ Kartawidjaja, *Van Koran tot Bijbel*, 14.

the part where he admits, at least to the reader, that he had ceased to believe the *Qur'an*. He then immediately started to build up his new identity as a Christian. He used the same argument for being a good Christian as he had used for reinforcing his status as a good Muslim; he emphasised that he read the Bible day and night.⁷⁶⁶

Interestingly enough, one page later Kartawidjaja stated that he again started to research the *Qur'an* in order to find evidence for Jesus to strengthen his faith.⁷⁶⁷ Why would he still need evidence from that text when he was already convinced the *Qur'an* was not God's word, but Mohammed's? Yet he continued, even after his internal conversion, to rely on the *Qur'an*. The *Qur'an* did not only strengthen him in his new faith, it also provided him with arguments in debates with Muslims: 'Because they regard the *Qur'an* impeccable...'.⁷⁶⁸ Again he uses 'they' to distance himself from the Muslim identity and to underscore that he did not believe anymore that the *Qur'an* was perfect. On the following page Kartawidjaja cited six *Qur'an* verses that should count as evidence for Jesus.⁷⁶⁹ He added that there were many more proofs for Jesus in the *Qur'an*, but that these were already sufficient to refute Muslims. He concluded: 'Finding these Quran-texts made me feel very encouraged.'⁷⁷⁰ So the *Qur'an* formed the base of his belief in Jesus, even though he simultaneously pointed out that the *Qur'an* is erroneous and not God's word.

Remarkably, Kartawidjaja explained abandoning Islam exclusively with rational arguments. He lost his faith because of errors, incompleteness, and contradictions in the *Qur'an*: 'In sum, if the *Qur'an* would truly be God's word, would it then contain so many errors and mistakes?'⁷⁷¹ His attraction to Christianity, on the other hand, is explained with predominantly emotional arguments. For example, Kartawidjaja's recount of his first church service shows this: 'Listening to his sermon, it made me miraculously weary and tears ran down my face.'⁷⁷² In addition, he wrote that he *felt* his not yet forgiven sins press on him during the sermon.⁷⁷³

Kartawidjaja confessed that it frightened him to admit openly to being a Christian, because Christians were 'hated' by Muslims. So in this phase there was clear friction between his private and public identity. Statements such as 'In my heart I did not believe in Mohammed anymore, but in Jesus...' show his Christian faith was something of the inside, invisible to others. In this sentence

⁷⁶⁶ Kartawidjaja, *Van Koran tot Bijbel*, 14.

⁷⁶⁷ Kartawidjaja, *Van Koran tot Bijbel*, 16.

⁷⁶⁸ Kartawidjaja, *Van Koran tot Bijbel*, 16.

⁷⁶⁹ Kartawidjaja cites *Sura* 2 verse 225, *Sura* 3 verse 31, *Sura* 4 verse 79, *Sura* 42, verse 12, *Sura* 3 verse 59 and *Sura* 29 verse 27. Kartawidjaja, *Van Koran tot Bijbel*, 16, 17.

⁷⁷⁰ Kartawidjaja, *Van Koran tot Bijbel*, 18.

⁷⁷¹ Kartawidjaja, *Van Koran tot Bijbel*, 18.

⁷⁷² Kartawidjaja, *Van Koran tot Bijbel*, 18.

⁷⁷³ Kartawidjaja, *Van Koran tot Bijbel*, 18.

Kartawidjaja argues in line with the Protestant discourse which presents being Christian as something internal; one's inner belief and private connection to God make someone Christian. A few pages later Kartawidjaja wrote: 'I am not yet a Christian, since I have not been baptized yet'.⁷⁷⁴ This suggests that not only his beliefs, but primarily his actions determined his identity; he is not a Christian, because he is not baptized. He argues in line with the mission discourse that stressed the need for baptism in order to be 'reborn'. Again, he showed he was well aware of the formal discourse, to underline his identity as a 'good' convert. Being Muslim is exclusively presented as performative, as an outward communal identity. For example, communal praying, fasting, and undertaking the *hajj* made someone Muslim, according to Kartawidjaja. After visiting three times the nearby church of missionary Van der Brug, Kartawidjaja stopped performing the *salat*.⁷⁷⁵ By going to church and refraining from performing his Islamic duties he slowly altered his public identity.

It is interesting to note that Kartawidjaja did not claim responsibility for his actions in the following sentence: 'I did go to church three times, not out of my own motivation, but forced by God's will...'⁷⁷⁶ He went to church because God made him go; not because he chose to do so. Similarly he argued that he would not give up his new beliefs, because Jesus would not let him go: 'As Jesus has seized me, it is impossible that I will be released.'⁷⁷⁷ Kartawidjaja isolated his actions from his will in both sentences so it did not directly influence his identity.⁷⁷⁸ This shows that his religious identity was in the process of being reconstructed and thus ambivalent in this period.

In a discussion with his former teacher *Hajji* A. and a group of twenty five Arabs, Kartawidjaja explained his reasons for conversion: 'I have to read the Law and the Gospel, because I fear God's commandment in the *Qur'an*, *Sura Baqarah*, verse 3, and I have received permission of my teacher *Hajji* A. to research them. Moreover, I fear God's curse, if I do not belief in Jesus, according to what is said in the *Qur'an*, *Sura Al Imran*, verse 6 (54?) My Lords *habibs*, do not consider me in *revolt* against God's commandments; that is not the case, contrary, I *follow* God's commandments.'⁷⁷⁹ (Note included by the translator of the NZV) (*Italic in the original*). Kartawidjaja again negotiated with the dominant discourse of Islam and based his choices on arguments that were accepted within that particular discourse. He explained continuously his position outside of Islam with arguments from within the Islamic discourse.

⁷⁷⁴ Kartawidjaja, *Van Koran tot Bijbel*, 22.

⁷⁷⁵ Kartawidjaja, *Van Koran tot Bijbel*, 19.

⁷⁷⁶ Kartawidjaja, *Van Koran tot Bijbel*, 22.

⁷⁷⁷ Kartawidjaja, *Van Koran tot Bijbel*, 23.

⁷⁷⁸ Meijer, *In tekst gevat*, 70.

⁷⁷⁹ Kartawidjaja, *Van Koran tot Bijbel*, 22.

Kartawidjaja based his Christian faith on arguments from the *Qur'an* and tried to stretch the boundaries of the Islamic discourse by using arguments from that discourse to explain his conversion. For example, when he talked about Jesus, he addressed him mainly as Jesus the Prophet, as is commonly accepted within Islam.⁷⁸⁰ However, when he talked about the conversion process of a Chinese friend, Theng Liang Tjoen, he is much bolder in his statements. Not only did this man address Jesus as 'the only Son of God' in Kartawidjaja's account, but his statements about Mohammed were also sharper than the statements Kartawidjaja himself claimed in the narrative.⁷⁸¹ Kartawidjaja articulated his own arguments through this Chinese man with sentences such as 'O that Mohammed is a false prophet and a cunning religion thief' but was careful to never put words like those in his own mouth.⁷⁸²

After Kartawidjaja converted, he started evangelizing in other *desas* in his region.⁷⁸³ He travelled from *desa* to *desa* to spread the Gospel to the population. He shared an anecdote about a discussion with a cousin and a Chinese man about the Christian faith. Both men were not convinced of the veracity of Christianity and did not understand the Bible. 'Although both knew the Law and the Gospel, they were not able yet to believe, because they did not know the *Qur'an*.'... 'Needless to say, I, who knew the *Qur'an*, came to believe the Law and the Gospel easier. That is why I told them that they should read the *Qur'an*.'⁷⁸⁴ This quotation demonstrates that Kartawidjaja not only based his own faith on the *Qur'an*, but expected the same from others, even from non-Muslims.

Although Kartawidjaja was introduced to Christianity in 1891, he was not baptized until 1899. The reason for this long period is, according to Kartawidjaja's narrative, the strong objections of his mother and first wife. His mother died quite suddenly of cholera in 1896, and although Kartawidjaja was sad, he felt also relieved that this barrier between him and his baptism had been removed. When his wife got angry at him for preaching the Gospel to their guests that same year, he secretly thought: 'what if my wife could die just as suddenly as my mother?'⁷⁸⁵ Miraculously, his wife, who was only forty years old, died the next day. Even though the two reasons why Kartawidjaja had postponed his baptism for so long were gone, he still did not want to be baptized. His priority was to find a new wife

⁷⁸⁰ Kartawidjaja, *Van Koran tot Bijbel*, 25. Since I do not have Kartawidjaja's original account in Malay, I do not know which word he used that is translated by the NZV as 'prophet'. The title 'nabi' which can be translated as 'messenger' or 'prophet' was not an uncommon title for Jesus in that period and area.

⁷⁸¹ Kartawidjaja, *Van Koran tot Bijbel*, 32.

⁷⁸² Kartawidjaja, *Van Koran tot Bijbel*, 31.

⁷⁸³ Kartawidjaja explains that he was not comfortable with his new identity in his own community and that he therefore liked to travel to other places. He claims that he spread the Gospel in other *desas*, so apparently he did not worry about his Christian identity outside of his own community.

Kartawidjaja, *Van Koran tot Bijbel*, 23, 24.

⁷⁸⁴ Kartawidjaja, *Van Koran tot Bijbel*, 27.

⁷⁸⁵ Kartawidjaja, *Van Koran tot Bijbel*, 36.

to take care of his children and he understood that it would be very difficult to find a wife after he had been baptized, because a Muslim woman cannot marry a Christian man. This illustrates how complicated one's motivations to convert or to refrain from converting can be and that very practical reasons can often be prioritized. Furthermore, it is interesting that although Kartawidjaja had been living as a Christian for five years -he was even an evangeliser- he was still not considered a 'true' Christian because he was not baptized yet. Two years later, he married a Muslim woman, Mastimah, who also objected to his baptism. However, this time Kartawidjaja ignored his wife's wishes and was baptized on Christmas Day 1899.

Years after his baptism, Kartawidjaja visited a Christian friend. This friend owned a Javanese copy of the New Testament and Kartawidjaja browsed through it. To his surprise he saw his grandfather's signature on the last page. His grandfather, who had been a *hajji* and a respected *kyai*, had owned a Bible! For Kartawidjaja, this proved that his grandfather had believed in Jesus, however secretly. He believed that his grandfather had been like a bud and that he and his cousin were the fruit of his tree because his grandfather had taught him to read the *Qur'an* that later formed the base for his Christian conviction.⁷⁸⁶ Kartawidjaja used his grandfather to reinforce his status as a Christian; similarly to his exploitation of his grandfather's status as a *hajji* and Islamic scholar to strengthen his Muslim identity in the first chapter of the book. Ancestors were extremely important for one's position in the Javanese and Sundanese society. Demonstrating his grandfather's – however secret - Christian identity strengthened Kartawidjaja's position in the Christian community.

In the final chapters of the narrative, Kartawidjaja summarized his conversion story. This time he began his story with his visit to a mission church rather than with his conversation with his cousin. The events surrounding his conversion are more structured and rational in the summarized version. The conversion is described as an event rather than a lengthy process. Here, Kartawidjaja identified it as a clear break. He explained that before baptism, he had no peace, was tired, and restless, and that after his baptism he was joyous and felt God's mercy and consolation.⁷⁸⁷ Moreover, he added that his material wealth had increased as well after his conversion. Kartawidjaja's re-interpretation of his own story shows how the mind seeks to structure the past and place series of events in a logical order of cause and effect.

In the final chapter, Kartawidjaja articulated a fictional argument between him and Muslims to prove the veracity of Christianity and the deceit of Islam. He emphasised the difference between the Javanese, 'the undeveloped and poor', and the Dutch as the 'developed', 'wise', 'powerful', and

⁷⁸⁶ Kartawidjaja, *Van Koran tot Bijbel*, 43, 44.

⁷⁸⁷ Kartawidjaja, *Van Koran tot Bijbel*, 45.

‘wealthy’ and argued that this difference was solely due to the religious difference between the two peoples.⁷⁸⁸ He explained that both the Javanese and the Dutch were descendants of Adam and therefore equal before God. Yet, the Dutch have been blessed with these qualities because they worship Jesus. This argument fit well in the Christian discourse that insists on a hierarchy in religions with Christianity at the absolute top. Kartawidjaja continued to explain that God gave power over the Indies to the Dutch and that those who were loyal to them would ultimately receive that same blessing: ‘God wants the Mohammedans to understand well that there is no blessing than through the Dutch, who have indeed been blessed by Him, because they have sought the way to His Kingdom in the Law and the Gospel.’⁷⁸⁹ Kartawidjaja argument here is fully in line with the dominant European colonial discourse, a discourse which actually Othered and marginalized him because of his Sundanese descent. As a native, he was ‘underdeveloped and poor’, but he created agency in the colonial society by prioritizing his Christian identity and connecting the Christian discourse to the colonial discourse to situate himself more firmly in the latter. As a Christian, despite his ethnicity, he could claim ‘Christian’ qualities like ‘developed’, ‘wise, powerful’, and ‘wealthy’.

His arguments also fit perfectly in the then dominant Western discourse of the White Man’s Burden; the presumed responsibility of Westerners to govern and impart their culture to non-Westerners in order to ‘raise’ them to their level. With these statements, Kartawidjaja knowingly distanced himself from his own people. He claimed qualities that belonged to the European class according to the then dominant discourse in an attempt to increase his position in the colonial society. His conversion thus not only marked a religious change, but also a change in his local identity; he, and his environment, no longer considered himself entirely Sundanese.

6.9. Conclusion

In this chapter, I analysed the process of conversion in the missionary writings. I aimed to clarify who the people were who converted, why they chose to adopt a new religious identity, and how this decision changed their lives, according to the missionaries. Furthermore, I discussed the various reasons the missionaries saw as reasons to refrain from converting or to reconvert to their former religious tradition. This chapter ended with the analysis of an autobiographical conversion narrative that aimed to deepen the understanding of the process of religious conversion.

⁷⁸⁸ Kartawidjaja, *Van Koran tot Bijbel*, 52.

⁷⁸⁹ Kartawidjaja, *Van Koran tot Bijbel*, 54.

The Christian communities were not homogeneous; people from different backgrounds made the choice to convert for very different reasons. However, the writings of the six missionaries show that, in general, people of lower social status showed an interest in Christianity, probably because the missionaries could offer them security in the form of education, medical, or financial aid. A significant number were lower-educated, poor, handicapped, or ill. In addition, substantially more than half of the converts were female. Common reasons for conversion were the hope to increase one's social status, the hope for material prosperity, to follow the example of family members, to marry a Christian spouse, or because people were dissatisfied by their former religion or religious leaders. But there were, of course, also people who wished to be baptized for the sole reason that they were convinced of the veracity of the Christian faith.⁷⁹⁰ The missionary writings demonstrate that motives to convert were usually multi-layered rather than pragmatic, opportunistic, or emotional.

The Protestant missionaries blamed negative reactions in the Javanese society to conversion for their lack of success. The missionary accounts maintain that those who converted to Christianity experienced severe social pressure. According to the reports, they were bullied, their crops were destroyed, their market stalls were boycotted, they were physically threatened or attacked, or they were shunned by their community, including their closest friends and family.⁷⁹¹ Remarkably, the Catholic missionaries did not discuss social rejection or harassment explicitly. The frequent occurrence of ostracism was possibly exaggerated in the Protestant reports to 'prove' that the task of the missionaries was a most difficult one.

The missionaries also functioned as gatekeepers of the Christian community and claimed that they only baptized 'true' Christians. Yet, their writings on this topic often appear to be ambiguous, since they had to compromise between the formal discourse on 'true' conversion and the ever pressing demand for more converts on the one hand, and the divergent motivations for conversion they encountered in the field, on the other. The Protestant missionaries all tested the candidates for baptism on their knowledge to avoid baptizing 'superficial' Christians. Surprisingly however, they all admitted recurrently that they baptized persons who had failed the exam. They stretched the boundaries of the notion of what constitutes a 'true' Christian by downplaying knowledge and prioritizing the uncheckable factor 'inner belief' in order to enlarge the number of eligible candidates. That the notion was not as strict as the discourse suggests, at first, becomes even clearer in the following chapter. There I will discuss the missionaries who argued in favour of accepting 'superficial' Christians and condoning 'mistakes' of the newly converted for the time being in the hope of enlarging

⁷⁹⁰ S.E. Harthoorn, *De Evangelische zending en Oost-Java*, 93.

⁷⁹¹ Carel Poensen, 'Een en ander over den godsdienstigen toestand van de Javaan'.

their flock. They, too, justified that approach by focusing on inner conviction instead of knowledge and 'proper' Christian behaviour.

Kartawidjaja's conversion narrative, and many other stories of the missionaries, showed that people who chose to convert usually struggled with reforming their identity. Becoming Christian was sometimes considered the same as becoming Dutch and conversion as the betrayal of one's local identity.⁷⁹² Conversion had consequences beyond in the field of religion. As Robert W. Hefner claims, conversion is 'not a deeply systematic reorganisation of personal meanings' but a 'new locus of self-identification' or in other words: 'Conversion need not reformulate one's understanding of the ultimate conditions of existence, but it always involves commitment to a new kind of moral authority and a new or conceptualized social identity.'⁷⁹³

The converted Javanese found themselves in a difficult position. If they started acting too much like Europeans in the eyes of their family and friends they risked exclusion from their community. On the other hand, if they stayed too close to their Javanese beliefs and practices they were not allowed to be baptized or they were excluded from the Eucharist by the missionaries. Therefore, the converts needed to negotiate their multiple identities by using various strategies to manage their intersecting identities in such a way that there was no internal contradiction between their ethnic and religious orientations in order to find their place in the Javanese, Muslim society as a Christian. In many cases this proved an unattainable ideal. Because conversion came with so many difficulties, it was not uncommon that people revised their choice and returned to Islam and to their former community.

Kartawidjaja's biographic narrative elucidated the process of conversion in the context of a colonised Muslim society at the turn of the nineteenth century. I analysed Kartawidjaja's conversion story in order to reach a deeper insight into why and how he converted to Christianity, whether his conversion radically changed his religious convictions, and how his religious conversion changed his identity. His autobiographic narrative showed how complicated (re)constructing one's identity can be. Kartawidjaja's position changed from being a respected *santri* to that of a social pariah in his former community.

Although his conversion resulted in a complete break with his former community, it did not result in a complete break with his former religious convictions. Most striking about Kartawidjaja's biographic narrative is that he evoked continuity by constructing his Christian identity through his

⁷⁹² S.E. Harthoorn, *Letter to the board of the NZG* (Malang, 1-3 June 1856) Utrechts Archief. Verhoeven, *Tot welzijn van Java*, 126-127.

⁷⁹³ Hefner, 'Of faith and commitment', 17.

Muslim identity. His Christian faith was based on arguments he had found in the *Qur'an*, which suggests that his religious convictions had not fundamentally changed. His final words were a mandate for the Dutch missionaries; 'In my opinion the Mission societies are obliged to reprint the *Qur'an* in Javanese ... These have to be spread throughout the entire world, so all people can come to faith without difficulties...' ⁷⁹⁴ Although Kartawidjaja repeatedly pointed out that the *Qur'an* was erroneous and not God's word, he believed it to be the only medium through which the Javanese could come to true faith. He strategically negotiated the dominant discourse of Islam and based his choices on arguments that were acceptable within that particular discourse. In other words, he continuously explained his position outside of Islam with arguments of within the Islamic discourse, perhaps to minimize the negative reactions his conversion evoked in his community, or because he considered this an effective strategy to convert other Muslims to Christianity.

⁷⁹⁴ Kartawidjaja, *Van Koran tot Bijbel*, 55.

Chapter 7. Localization of Christianity in the mission districts.

*'We all use the same Bible as a source, but our culture and upbringing determines what we understand from it. This makes the work of the missionaries so complex.'*⁷⁹⁵

Previous chapters showed how Islam and Christianity have been internalized in the Javanese context and how this resulted in the emergence of a hybrid religious landscape with currents of localized Javanese Islam (*Abangan*) and Javanese Christianity (*Kristen Jowo*). The missionaries also witnessed their followers internalizing Christian beliefs into their lives and they noticed that previous traditions were often still present. They were aware that they were supposed to avoid such localized expressions of Christianity, but every missionary had to recognise eventually that Christianity in Java could not be an identical translation of that in the Netherlands. They all had to relent and include some of the local customs in the communities they led. My aim with this chapter is to show how they negotiated the dominant discourse on religion in order to justify their choices to include certain practices.

The writings of the missionaries show that they considered guiding newly converted Christians their most important task; even more important than proselytizing to the unconverted. They spent most of their time teaching and visiting churches to support and advise their assistants and congregations. During these visits, they were confronted continuously with beliefs and practices that did not, according to them, belong in a Christian community. So they had to decide how to deal with such local expressions of faith and to what extent they allowed it.⁷⁹⁶ That decision was not just based on their own ideas and preferences, but depended largely on what the boards considered to be appropriate. The missionaries could not deviate too much from what was expected of them by their superiors, but they also wanted to ease the transition process as much as possible for the converts by allowing the continuation of Javanese traditions. Each missionary negotiated in order to find a compromise between the demands of all pressuring parties. Consequently, their positioning in the discourse on localizing Christianity was often highly ambiguous.

When reading the missionary reports, it seems that most missionaries prioritized their employers' wishes and dismissed nearly all local ideas and practices they encountered in their congregations as superstitious, syncretic, or heretical and tried to eradicate them by implementing church discipline. The majority claimed that they sought to ban all 'alien' elements from their Christian

⁷⁹⁵ Van Lith, *Kjahi Sadrach*.

⁷⁹⁶ The concept localization reflects the anthropological interest in local particularity and the ability of societies to resist and transform external forces. Keane, *Christian moderns*, 91.

communities, rejected compromise, and sought to reshape local society along Dutch Christian lines. L. Tiemersma, a former missionary of the NZV, condemned this attitude of the Dutch missionaries: 'The preacher of Christianity among heathens and Mohammedans is often rigid; so inflexible. Everything has to be Western: the services, the interior of the church: everything is sharply delineated and strictly dogmatic.'⁷⁹⁷ In reality however, many missionaries negotiated the discourses on religious behaviour and tried to stretch the boundaries of what was considered proper behaviour for Christians. They condoned the continuation of certain Javanese traditions in their districts to ease the process of conversion.

The aim of this chapter is to explore to what extent the missionaries really adhered to the official guidelines of their organizations and, if not, how they legitimized their choices deviating from these. I will show how the missionaries negotiated the discourse on religion in deciding which Javanese traditions were to be considered acceptable for a convert and which not? The first paragraphs concentrate on Christians recently after their baptism. In which ways had their religious convictions changed? Did they completely break with their former religion or not? In the third paragraph I discuss how the missionaries translated the official guidelines to a workable policy given local conditions. The following paragraphs focus on the specific cultural aspects which were most often subject to debate: *gamelan* orchestras, *wayang* plays, the *slametan*, and circumcision.⁷⁹⁸ The six missionaries had very different ideas about these practices, some sought to ban them from their Christian communities while others argued to allow them after some adjustments. Special attention goes to the missionaries' dealing with marriages within the Christian communities. The missionaries realised that Javanese marriage practices differed from Christian marriage practices and were, for example, unsure how to deal with arranged marriages, child marriages, divorce, or mixed marriages. The final paragraph, before the conclusion, addresses church discipline, which was sometimes implemented to reprimand Christians who did not act within the borders of what the missionaries considered acceptable behaviour for Christians.

7.1. Adapting missionizing methods to the local context

Adaptation in the mission can be understood in different ways. For example, adaptation can refer to adjusting the missionizing methods; the way the missionaries transmitted the Christian message to customs in the local context. Samuel Harthoorn of the NZG, for example, noticed that two-thousand

⁷⁹⁷ M. Lindenborn, 'De zending op West Java, antwoord op den aanval van den heer L. Tiemersma, namens het hoofdbestuur der NZV', in: *De Macedonier* (Rotterdam 1914)7.

⁷⁹⁸ *Gamelan* are traditional Javanese orchestras. The *wayang*-plays are the world famous shadow plays. The *slametan* is a communal feast in Java to ask the local spirits for peace and safety.

year old Bible stories about a people in a country the Javanese had never heard of before did not appeal much to the Javanese. Therefore he tried to focus on the Gospel of the future kingdom and relate Bible stories to the everyday life of the Javanese. The NZV missionaries were supposed to connect their sermons to the needs, ways of thinking, and expressions of the Javanese, but 'this will always remain foreign for missionaries, no matter how much they try to penetrate it'.⁷⁹⁹ The services too, 'do not show a special Indian character, but are a lot like, except for the language of course, our services.'⁸⁰⁰ Therefore the missionaries organised *kumpulan* (assemblies) during the week that had a much more 'informal' character. NZV missionary Albers tried to adapt Christian prayers to the existing Javanese praying culture. He suggested the NZV board member Coolsma should produce Christian prayers that could be used instead of Javanese *rapal* for different events, such as morning and evening prayers, prayers for illness or death, and prayers for rain, drought, planting, seeding, and harvesting. He wanted these prayers to be written down and learned by heart in order to prevent the people from creating their own versions. For that same reason, the NZV produced forms for different practices in the church, like baptism, communion, confirmation et cetera. Moreover, the board tried to create unity between the districts by dictating the exact words to the missionaries and their assistants who also led services.⁸⁰¹

Although the missionaries felt mostly frustrated that Islam was such a strong force in the Indies, some did see the advantages of evangelizing under Muslims, namely that in some areas, abstract religious concepts had already been introduced in Arabic by Muslim missionaries before them. The board of the NVZ stated that the missionaries should take advantage of the fruit of the Islamic mission: 'Islam, as a religion hostile to Christianity, is an obstacle to the spread of the Gospel, but it also contributes, and not a little, to the proclamation of the Gospel and for the preparation of the society for Christianity.'⁸⁰² Coolsma of the NZV argued: 'For the translation of the Bible in Sundanese it is of great value that Islam has preceded the preaching of the Gospel. Islam has enriched the language with words such as Allah, *malaikat* (angel), *iblis* (devil) *setan* (devils), *Nabi* (Prophet), *tobat* (penance, repentance), *ibadah* (piety), *salamet* (peace), *aherat* (eternity or future), *kitab* (book), *moedjidjat* (miracle) and a great number of more words, without which it does not seem possible to translate the Holy Scripture.'⁸⁰³ So the NZV urged their missionaries to use these words in their sermons and Bible translations.⁸⁰⁴

⁷⁹⁹ Lindenborn, *Onze zendingsvelden*, 150-151.

⁸⁰⁰ Lindenborn, *Onze zendingsvelden*, 150-151.

⁸⁰¹ Christiaan Albers, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Sukabumi 2 October 1892) Utrechts Archief.

⁸⁰² Coolsma, *Twaalf voorlezingen*, 153.

⁸⁰³ Coolsma, *Twaalf voorlezingen*, 153.

⁸⁰⁴ Coolsma, *Twaalf voorlezingen*, 153.

However, other mission societies, especially the NZG, were against using Arabic loan-words and names to introduce Christianity. They considered Arabic an Islamic language and therefore not suitable for the propagation of the Christian message. The board of the NZG has debated how the missionaries should communicate the Christian message to the Javanese for many years. Should or should they not use the word 'Allah' to address the Christian God? The ones who were in favour stated that the use of the term 'Allah' would be recognizable for the Javanese and that this would make it easier to understand what the missionaries had to tell. Others, however, considered the difference between the Islamic God and the Christian God too big to address them with the same name. Allah was, according to them, a 'loveless despotic ruler' and thus completely different from the 'loving Christian father'.⁸⁰⁵ They argued that using the same name would only confuse the Javanese and that it would make it harder for the missionaries to convince them that the Christian and Muslim God were not identical.⁸⁰⁶ The same debate was conducted about other words, for example the Portuguese word *gereja* for church instead of *mesdjid*, or the use of the Islamic name 'Isa' to address Jesus Christ. The majority of the NZG missionaries addressed Christ as Jesoës and not as Isa.⁸⁰⁷

The Jesuit Van Lith was convinced that adapting his methods to local habits was necessary to attract new members. He adopted some of the strategies applied by the indigenous evangelist Sadrach and his followers, whom he followed closely, in the Muntilan mission. As mentioned before, he also considered the legend of *Ratu Adil* a practical starting point for the announcement of the advent of Jesus.⁸⁰⁸ Van Lith did admit that Sadrach's claims were not always accurate and that his teachings must sound strange to Catholics, let alone to Protestants who were much more focused on the scriptures. Van Lith explained, 'we all use the same Bible as a source, but our culture and upbringing determines what we understand from it. This makes the work of the missionaries so complex.'⁸⁰⁹ He agreed with the Protestants that some of what Sadrach taught was mistaken, but that he meant well. Van Lith argued that a missionary should be open-minded and should sometimes turn a blind eye to the mistakes of a young congregation.

⁸⁰⁵ Brouwer, 'Hoe te prediken voor heiden en mohammedaan?', 31.

⁸⁰⁶ Lindenborn, *Zendingslicht op den Islam*, 46.

⁸⁰⁷ Lindenborn, *Zendingslicht op den Islam*, 55.

⁸⁰⁸ '...nu vormt die voorspelling van den *Ratu Adil* ontegenzeggelijk een prachtig aanknopingspunt van de verkondiging van de blijde boodschap der komst van Christus Jezus.'

Van Lith, *Kjahi Sadrach*.

The legend of *Ratu Adil* has been discussed in chapter 5.

⁸⁰⁹ Van Lith, *Kjahi Sadrach*.

7.2. Localising Christianity

All missionaries expected their converts to give up their former lifestyle, at least partly, after conversion. The baptism marked a break with one's old life and symbolized one's rebirth as a Christian. Yet they understood, some better than others, that a literal translation of Dutch Christianity in the Javanese context was impossible. Some therefore allowed their followers to continue certain practices and to integrate Christian beliefs somewhat with the pre-existing hybrid traditions. The Protestant Samuel Harthoorn believed it was best to educate and stimulate the Javanese to develop the good elements in their culture and religion. Once the people and culture were further developed the missionaries could start inculcating Christian beliefs.⁸¹⁰ A missionary should, according to Harthoorn, be patient and allow the Javanese to form an independent Christian identity. He criticised other missionaries, especially the conservative Emde in Surabaya, for harming the Javanese nationality.⁸¹¹ Harthoorn expressed his critiques on the methods of this German layman missionary, who was active in Surabaya since 1811. Emde's method was to form a congregation in Java that was similar to the one he grew up with in Europe. His community lived according to European standards and were subsequently called the '*Kristen Londo*'; the Dutch Christians, by the Javanese. Harthoorn suggested that Emde demanded his followers to stop being Javanese and become Dutch. Harthoorn wrote down some rules of this church in Surabaya and satirically called them the Ten Commandments;

1. Thou shalt cut your hair short.
2. Thou shalt take of your headscarf in church.
3. Thou shalt not listen to *gamelan*.
4. Thou shalt not go to a *wayang* show.
5. Thou shalt not circumcise.
6. Thou shalt not attend a *slametan*.
7. Thou shalt not read poetry.
8. Thou shalt not clean the graves of your ancestors.
9. Thou shalt not plant flowers or trees on the cemeteries.
10. Thou shalt deny your children vain games.⁸¹²

⁸¹⁰ S.E. Harthoorn, *Letter to the board of the NZG* (Malang 31 December 1858) Utrechts Archief.

⁸¹¹ S.E. Harthoorn, *Letter to the board of the NZG* (Malang 31 December 1858) Utrechts Archief.

Johannes Emde is more thoroughly discussed in chapter 4.

⁸¹² In Dutch '*ijdele spel*'. I have not come across this term anywhere else, so I am uncertain about its meaning.

Harthoorn protested against these rules, because he believed they undermined the Christian mission. He even considered most rules to be hypocritical. He wrote, for example, that the only reason for including the tenth rule was that *santris* forbade their children to play such games and that Emde did not want his Christians to seem less pious.⁸¹³ Harthoorn also did not understand why converted Javanese should dress differently; what had clothes to do with one's inner belief? Mrs Emde even tried to introduce some sort of uniform to wear for Javanese Christians. It would consist of shoes, white pants, a long black *kebaja* and a hat; a style which of course closely resembled the Dutch style.⁸¹⁴ Harthoorn was of the opinion this would only provoke people, however the board of the NZG initially expected converted Javanese to behave and dress like Europeans as well. At first, it considered the indigenous *sarongs* and scarves inappropriate for Christians, especially at church, but the board later altered its opinion. The board also expected the converts to change their name to a Christian one such as Mattheus, Johannes, Paulus, or Sara. This new name would symbolize their rebirth as a Christian and show their new Christian identity. However, the names I found in the baptismal registers were not always Christian names per se. Sometimes baptized Javanese were given European or Dutch names without a Biblical origin, like Hugo, Bastiaan, Bernardus, or Cornelis; names that are as much connected to Christianity as Javanese names.⁸¹⁵

NZG missionary Wessel Hoeszoo agreed with Harthoorn that the board asked too much from the Christian community. He wrote: 'with all your love for the good cause, you have let yourself be carried away to ruthlessness, even to cruelty, I would say, abusing the trust the Javanese has given to you as their master. Or have you not taken away his name, his clothes, even his hair and, all in the name of Christianity, reduced him to a caricature? Even his entertainment has not been spared. All of that kind, his reading material not excepted, have you condemned, and you gave nothing in return for all he is attached to with heart and soul than the Bible. The Bible alone.'⁸¹⁶ The board felt they did not deserve this accusation and replied: 'The directors of our society have never understood it as such; and they have never given instructions in these matters, be it for or against it, as they believed they could leave deciding on policy to the missionaries.'⁸¹⁷ This shows that the communication between the board and the missionaries lacked and that the missionaries were not clearly directed by their superiors, which led to considerable problems in the initial years of the NZG mission.

⁸¹³ Nortier, *Het leven van Samuel Eliza Harthoorn*.

⁸¹⁴ Nortier, *Het leven van Samuel Eliza Harthoorn*.

⁸¹⁵ For example: S.E. Harthoorn, *letter to the board* (12 May 1857, Malang) Utrechts Archief.

⁸¹⁶ Unknown author, 'Verslag der commissie in zake de zendeling Harthoorn', 392-476.

⁸¹⁷ Unknown author, 'Verslag der commissie in zake de zendeling Harthoorn', 392-476.

Poensen was also of the opinion that a Javanese Christian ought to continue being first and foremost 'Javanese'.⁸¹⁸ He allowed, for example, his Christians to wear their hair long and carry a *kris* (knife) into church.⁸¹⁹ He also allowed his followers to wear headscarves, because, he argued, it was a Javanese tradition, not Islamic.⁸²⁰ Some churchgoers liked to sit on the floor in church, instead of sitting on pews, and this was no problem to Poensen. These outward appearances, according to Poensen, did not matter to God. Nonetheless, he did note it would be more hygienic if the Javanese wore their hair short, and added that Javanese Christians should adopt 'Christian' virtues such as purity, cleanliness, order, industriousness, modesty, and temperance.⁸²¹ These instructions show that Poensen did not go as far as Harthoorn when it came to adapting to Javanese customs and looked down upon certain aspects of the Javanese culture.

Poensen mentioned in his letters that he had to keep a close eye on the newly converted people, because they still made many mistakes. He assured the board that he did everything to avoid the rise of a 'syncretic form of Christianity' and that he did not allow 'immoral' behaviour such as divorce, use of opium, and the celebration of Muslim holidays.⁸²² He sometimes wrote about problems he experienced with the Javanese: 'The road of bringing newly converted Christians to a higher point of morality and spiritual insight is full of difficulties and disappointments, of heartache and sorrow for the missionary.'⁸²³ He understood that it was not an easy process for the converts either, so while he officially denounced hybridity, in his actual performance he acted in a more nuanced way. Moreover, he tried to ease the transition with initiatives such as the Mission Day, which would make up for giving up all Islamic holidays. Hoevenaars was also often frustrated about the knowledge and behaviour of his followers: 'I try to keep my patience during the disappointments that occur every day. The first Christians in Mendut do not give, just like elsewhere, very much consolation'.⁸²⁴ He added that a missionary needed to be 'supernaturally patient'.⁸²⁵

Beliefs and practices that the Dutch missionaries considered superstitious was a recurring topic in the missionary writings. They discussed practices their converts continued such as putting a pair of scissors in a baby's crib to keep away evil spirits, pregnant women who carried around a knife to ward off the '*Koentianak*' (an evil spirit who kills unborn babies), or burying a Bible next to the

⁸¹⁸ Poensen, *De zending en het leven des Gebeds op Java*.

⁸¹⁹ A 'kris' is a traditional Javanese dagger, which every man ought to carry around as a symbol of status.

⁸²⁰ Carel Poensen, *Annual report 1867* (Kediri January 1868) Utrechts Archief.

⁸²¹ Carel Poensen, *Annual report 1865* (Kediri January 1866) Utrechts Archief.

⁸²² Carel Poensen, *Annual report 1867* (Kediri January 1868) Utrechts Archief.

⁸²³ Poensen, 'Mattheus Aniep'.

⁸²⁴ Petrus Hoevenaars, *Letter to Monseigneur Duffels* (Mendut 15 December 1900) Archives of the Jesuit Province of the Netherlands (Nijmegen).

⁸²⁵ Petrus Hoevenaars, *Letter to Monseigneur Duffels* (Mendut 15 December 1900) Archives of the Jesuit Province of the Netherlands (Nijmegen).

deceased person's mouth.⁸²⁶ The missionaries agreed that such ideas should be removed from the Christian communities. Poensen complained that the people considered him a guru with much *ngelmu* because he rode a horse that was considered to be possessed by an evil spirit for years without any difficulties.⁸²⁷ Another anecdote of Poensen was about a Christian named Manghoen Dosiah. When Manghoen died in 1871, Poensen's assistants and other Christians came together to mourn in his house. Suddenly they saw a piglet walking through the garden. They were surprised that the piglet did not destroy the crops and were therefore convinced it was Manghoen.⁸²⁸ Poensen was disappointed that old beliefs, dispositions, and feelings were still present in the Christian community, even among his well-trained assistants.

Samuel Harthoorn wrote about small errors in their thinking, like the idea that giving money during Sunday services for the poor was actually an offering to God, but he also mentioned more fundamental errors, like the idea that the missionary is a good doctor because he possesses superior *ngelmu*. He explained that their understanding of who Jesus was often differed from his own understanding; some considered Jesus a spirit who was stronger than other spirits. To be a Christian meant to them worshipping Jesus and being protected against weaker spirits because of it.⁸²⁹ Moreover, they considered the Twelve Articles of Faith, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments as Christian *rapal*; 'weapons' that one could use against other, inferior, *ngelmu*.⁸³⁰

Out of the six missionaries under study, Petrus Hoevenaars and Christiaan Albers were presumably the most conservative and strict. They were not in favour of adapting Christianity to local customs or allowing the continuation of traditional beliefs and rituals. Albers regularly complained that Christians in his district had no sense of what was morally acceptable and what was not. According to him, they did not understand the concept of a Christian monogamous marriage and could not stay away from *desa* parties. He complained that these parties were not only immoral because dancing girls, card games, and opium were present, but also because these parties resulted in empty churches on Sunday mornings, since the parties usually went on until the early morning.⁸³¹

It is clear from the reports that Albers was not content with most of his assistants. He constantly complained about their lack of commitment and knowledge. He tried to instruct them as carefully as he could to avoid them from making mistakes, but they kept on disappointing him. In

⁸²⁶ Marinus Lindenborn, *Stukken van Marinus Lindenborn over de Zending in Indië onder Moslims en Animisten*, Utrechts Archief.

⁸²⁷ Carel Poensen, 'Bijgeloof', in: *Mededeelingen* (Rotterdam 1882).

⁸²⁸ Carel Poensen, 'Iets over Javaanse naamgeving en eigennamen', in: *Mededeelingen* (Rotterdam 1870).

⁸²⁹ Harthoorn, *De Evangelische Zending en Oost-Java*, 55.

⁸³⁰ *Rapal* are spiritual formulas that resemble prayers and are used in all sorts of situations.

⁸³¹ Christiaan Albers, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Bidana Tjina 12 September 1888) Utrechts Archief.

1899, he wrote to the board about an incident with one of his assistants. A church member, Kesen Nipis, had apparently gone mad; he was singing and crying constantly. His neighbours were convinced he was being punished for converting. Albers sent an assistant to pray for him. This assistant, however, performed a ritual of chewing on a bunch of *sereh* leafs and *sirih*.⁸³² He blessed this substance with a prayer that had both Christian and Javanese elements;

'God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit, these three are one.

All poisons become powerless, barren earth and harmful fruit become harmless.

*This is the burden of the Lord Jesus Christ, our Saviour, for all eternity'.*⁸³³

The patient had to swallow the substance while the assistant continuously repeated this prayer. The man got better, but the missionary was very upset that one of his well-trained assistants had used such an un-Christian 'hocus pocus' ritual to cure the man, although this assistant probably considered this perfectly acceptable Christian behavior, since the prayer consisted of Christian elements.⁸³⁴

Anecdotes like this one show that newly converted Christians tried to find a path of continuity in the midst of their new creed, and that ideas and rituals from their own culture and previous religious tradition were still present. Many Javanese had an identity based on hybrid religious notions and this did not cause conflict. It was not uncommon that a devout Muslim or Christian would turn to previous religious traditions in certain circumstances. Specific circumstances, such as illness or other misfortune, could require additional prayers or rituals from one's traditional religion, because their new religion did not really offer a strong alternative. This switching between codes was probably not considered contradictory by the Javanese.⁸³⁵ To be a Christian and to perform rituals from the previous religious tradition was not considered fraud or cheating; both religions could be professed alternately or simultaneously. At the individual level, religion is not something fixed, unitary, or even necessarily coherent. Albers and most other missionaries, however, did consider dual affiliation inconsistent and objectionable. They believed this indicated that most Christians were not truly devoted to their new religion. However, it probably meant most newly converted Christians did not have a complete understanding of how they should act and think as Christians according to the Dutch missionaries.

⁸³² *Sereh* is more commonly known as lemongrass. *Sirih*, or betel leaf, is commonly used in Asia as a stimulant or antiseptic.

⁸³³ Christiaan Albers, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Meester Cornelis 10 April 1899) Utrechts Archief.

⁸³⁴ Christiaan Albers, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Meester Cornelis 10 April 1899) Utrechts Archief.

⁸³⁵ Alvarsson, and Segato, *Religions in transition*. Code-switching is a concept that originated in linguistic studies, like creolization. Code-switching occurs when a speaker alternates between two or more languages in one conversation.

7.3. Negotiating borders

The Dutch missionaries allowed adaptation of their teachings to different extents. When the missionaries encountered vastly different beliefs and practices in their districts, they had to make decisions about which should be abandoned, altered, or could be kept. They invented various considerations and used different criteria to distinguish between acceptable and unacceptable belief and behaviour. A way to decide what was acceptable or unacceptable belief or behaviour was to differentiate between individual internal conviction and external practices. Some Protestant missionaries decided to focus on personal faith, stressed verbal ritual forms, and dismissed virtually all other rituals to avoid hybridization.

The dominant Dutch mission discourse suggests that the criteria to decide whether a specific practice or idea could be allowed or had to be abolished was to determine whether the practice was 'cultural', and therefore more or less harmless, or 'religious' in origin.⁸³⁶ In the context of the Christian mission it depended exclusively on what the missionary himself defined as religious or as secular, or in their words, as culture. The missionaries were convinced, in line with the then prevailing dominant theories on social formations, that a distinction could be made between the category of 'religion' and other spheres of human activity. The idea that religious beliefs and rituals could be distinguished from other spheres of life is, however, essentially European in origin and was formulated in the context of the separation of church and state.⁸³⁷ Religion is now often considered a universal and ahistorical social category, but even in Europe, 'religion' has never been a distinctive space of human practice and belief.⁸³⁸ Religions are lived traditions with indistinct boundaries and there are always overlaps with other societal fields including culture, law, art, politics, et cetera. The indistinct borders between these categories vary between different societies and therefore the understanding of what these categories mean varies in different societies. Moreover, the classification of certain cultural phenomena as 'religious' and its separation from a sphere known as 'culture' was often obvious in Western eyes but not so to non-Europeans who had a completely different cultural background. Therefore, the choices the missionaries made concerning which practices were still allowed and which were not were most likely considered arbitrary by many new Christians.

Western institutional distinctions among religious, juridical, and political domains et cetera, did not exist in the Dutch Indies. Consequently, the missionaries' decision required active formation

⁸³⁶ Keane, *Christian moderns*, 85.

⁸³⁷ Talal Asad, *Formations of the Secular*.

Daniel Dubuisson, *The western construction of religion; myths, knowledge and ideology* (Baltimore 2003).

⁸³⁸ Talal Asad, 'The construction of religion as an anthropological category', in: *Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam* (Baltimore 1993) 27-54.

and implementation of these conceptual categories.⁸³⁹ It proved difficult to classify the wide variety of customs the missionaries encountered in these discursive categories, which explains recurrent ambiguities in their writings. Each missionary applied this constructed division differently when deciding to keep or reject certain practices. In the following paragraphs, I will discuss Javanese customs that were most often subject to debate, in order to show how each of the missionaries negotiated the discursive border between 'culture' and 'religion'.

7.4. *Gamelan and wayang*

The word *gamelan* derives from the low Javanese word *gamel*, which refers to a type of hammer like a blacksmith's hammer. *Gamelan* refers to the instruments in a musical ensemble which is typical for the islands Java and Bali. *Gamelan* usually features a variety of instruments such as gongs, drums, xylophones, metallophones, bamboo flutes, and string instruments. Sometimes vocalists are included. For most Javanese, *gamelan* is an integral part of their culture. The earliest image of such a musical ensemble is found on the Borobudur temple, which was built in the ninth century in Central Java. A *gamelan* orchestra often accompanied performances of *wayang*. *Wayang* is a particular kind of theatre. The first record of a *wayang* performance is an inscription from the tenth century.⁸⁴⁰ From that time until today it seems certain features of traditional puppet theatre have remained. *Wayang kulit*, shadow puppet theatre, is the best known of the different types of Indonesian *wayang*. In *wayang kulit* the puppets are held up behind a piece of white cloth and with a light source shadows are cast on the screen. The plays are often based on romantic tales; adaptations of the classic Indian epics were especially popular. *Wayang* was also a vehicle to express people's feelings about everyday life, including the political situation. Consequently, there are various examples of *wayang* storylines that satirically criticise Dutch imperialism.

In 1858, Harthoorn's followers asked advice regarding *gamelan* orchestras and *wayang* plays in Christian communities. Harthoorn downplayed the religious elements in *gamelan* and *wayang* and focused on the cultural aspects of these customs to defend his choice to allow them. Perhaps because he realized that it would be too difficult to fully ban these traditions from the Christian communities. He explained that he could not understand why other missionaries forbade Javanese songs, *gamelan*, and poetry, while Dutch Christians were addicted to visiting cafés, comedies, and balls. Harthoorn's apprentice Smeding made clear to the board that it did not make sense that the *gamelan* was

⁸³⁹ Keane, *Christian moderns*, 85.

⁸⁴⁰ Laurie J. Sears, *Shadows of empire, colonial discourse and Javanese tales* (London 1996) 51, 52.

considered sinful whereas the violin and piano were not.⁸⁴¹ However, Harthoorn commanded that *gamelan* performances should be without dancing girls present and that *wayang* play should not be used for showing 'immoral stories'.⁸⁴² Furthermore, he never encouraged *gamelan* and *wayang* in his district because he believed it could easily lead people to temptation.

Christians in the district Meester Cornelis never went to a *wayang* or *gamelan* performance, according to Albers. Surprisingly, he maintained: 'I have never bothered my Christians with commandments and prohibitions. I have never forbid them to go to the *wayang*, take part in *tandok* (dance) parties, or attend Muslim offerings etc. etc. I do not remember a case in which a Christian has attended one of these occasions. Their conscience forbids it.'⁸⁴³ He explained: '...soon one sees that these Christians are not at peace with some things, things they did not consider wrong when they were still Muslim. Their conscience immediately protests against joining *wayang* shows, against participating in the local dances, etc..'⁸⁴⁴ This indicates that Albers must have found another way to make perfectly clear to his community that a 'proper Christian' did not attend such happenings. Therefore, I cannot readily typify Albers as a tolerant missionary who strived to adapt Christianity to the local culture.

Jurrianus Verhoeven of the NZV advised his colleagues in the *Orgaan* to replace *wayang* by showing pictures with a 'magic lantern' during festive events.⁸⁴⁵ Other missionaries, including Hoevenaars, explicitly prohibited the *gamelan* and *wayang* in their districts for their supposed 'immoral' nature. Contrary to his colleague Hoevenaars, Van Lith believed *gamelan* and *wayang* were not bad in nature. He believed they were just often used the wrong way. He explained that the Protestants were often excessively strict in their policies concerning these matters.⁸⁴⁶ He argued that the Catholic clergy should 'purify' these traditions and use them for a higher purpose instead of simply banning them. He believed *wayang* plays and traditional dances could effortlessly be 'Christianized' and, indeed, he used *wayang* himself to support his teachings.⁸⁴⁷ He considered the traditional dances suitable for Catholic processions and Bible stories could be performed by a *wayang* puppeteer in church, as he had seen in the Sadrach churches. So Van Lith even went so far as to merge Javanese practices with Catholic rituals.

⁸⁴¹ Smeding, 'Over een reis aan Kediri en Madioen', 245-286.

⁸⁴² S.E. Harthoorn, *Diary on August and September 1858* (Malang 1858) Utrechts Archief.

⁸⁴³ Christiaan Albers, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Bidana Tjina 10 June 1886) Utrechts Archief.

⁸⁴⁴ Christiaan Albers, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Bidana Tjina 10 June 1886) Utrechts Archief.

⁸⁴⁵ Jurrianus Verhoeven, 'Gebedsverhoring', in: *Orgaan* (Rotterdam 1899).

⁸⁴⁶ Van Lith, *Kjahi Sadrach*.

⁸⁴⁷ Albertus Soegijapranata, *Onze emancipator als opvoeder* (Maastricht January 1926) Archives of the Jesuit Province of the Netherlands (Nijmegen).

The fact that a *wayang* show was commonly preceded by a spiritual ceremony in which a sacrifice to the gods was made, was not stressed much in the missionaries' arguments. Only Poensen explicitly mentioned this aspect, but surprisingly enough in his motivation for allowing *wayang*. In line with the prevailing discourse, he distinguished between culture and religion and allowed the cultural elements of the tradition. He took an ambiguous position in the discourse and reluctantly allowed the Christians in his district to enjoy *gamelan* music and *wayang* plays on the one condition that the *dalang* (puppeteer) would not make an offering to the present spirits beforehand.⁸⁴⁸ He encouraged Christians to pay the *dalang* with money, instead of paying him with the food of the offering.⁸⁴⁹ Yet, Poensen's ambiguous standpoint is clearly demonstrated by the prohibition of *gamelan* and *wayang* in his proposal for the Christian *desa*.⁸⁵⁰

7.5. Slametan

A *slametan* or *sedekah* was a communal feast to strengthen the community ties and to offer food to the gods to ask for peace and prosperity. A *slametan* could be organised for several reasons such as a harvest, birth, marriage, death, or circumcision. The host invited the *desa* men (women were not allowed) his ancestors, local spirits, and Allah. The host started the ritual by praying and explaining his motive to his guests and then a local *santri* chanted Arabic prayers. After this, everyone received a share of the food. It was believed that the essence of the food was consumed by the spirits who were present and that only the physical part was left for the guests.⁸⁵¹ Although this ritual had a clear hybrid identity, *Putihan* Muslims offered *slametans* as well. They reformed it by changing all Javanese prayers to Islamic prayers and offering the meal only to Allah.

As has been mentioned before, Albers was quite conservative with respect to adapting Christianity to the Javanese context. He was, however, liberal on one point - the *slametan*. He wrote, in 1882: 'I used to treat pastries while singing, like we are used to present refreshments. This time we decided to leave this habit. We have to be more and more 'volkstümlich' (traditional, M.K.), also when it comes to our transferred holidays. Therefore, we ended with a *sedekah* (*slametan*, M.K.).'⁸⁵² Albers permitted the Javanese Christians to close celebratory services with a *slametan* from then on, even

⁸⁴⁸ Carel Poensen, 'Eenige vragen over de zending op Java, beantwoord door Carel Poensen', in: *Mededeelingen* (Rotterdam 1868).

⁸⁴⁹ Carel Poensen, 'De Wajang', in: *Mededeelingen* (Rotterdam 1872).

⁸⁵⁰ Carel Poensen, *Letter to the board of the NZG* (Kediri 5 March 1875) Utrechts Archief.

⁸⁵¹ Santoso, *Protestant Christianity in the Indonesian context*, 85-86.

⁸⁵² Christiaan Albers, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Ciandur 4 January 1882) Utrechts Archief.

though he labelled it in other letters as an Islamic ritual.⁸⁵³ He allowed his community to continue the tradition of celebrating with a *slametan* on the condition that they changed all prayers into Christian prayers. His followers were, however, discouraged to attend *slametans* that were organized by non-Christians. Harthoorn and Poensen had a similar approach to the *slametan*.

Sharing a *slametan* with family and neighbours was also allowed for Catholic Christians. Hoevenaars and Van Lith even held *slametans* on celebratory days. Van Lith explained that the *slametan* was a part of Javanese culture, of the *adat*, but also admitted the sacrificial ritual had religious significance.⁸⁵⁴ He added that the religious aspects of the ritual could be 'Christianized' by replacing Javanese prayers with Christian prayers. In contrast to the other missionaries, Van Lith even allowed his Catholics to attend *slametans* of non-Christians. He had attended Islamic *slametans* himself and had been allowed to pray for the meal in his own way. He argued that as long as he behaved accommodatingly, the host usually behaved very accommodatingly as well. He wrote that other missionaries should not turn a feast into a battlefield, but that they should use the occasion as an opportunity to propagate Christian beliefs.⁸⁵⁵ Other traditions with religious significance, such as rituals during the seeding and harvesting of rice, could also be carried out within a Christian context, according to Van Lith. He aimed to 'purify' most Javanese rituals instead of banning them altogether like most other missionaries, including his Catholic colleague Hoevenaars, did. Van Lith argued: 'We should not ban their culture, but elevate it...'⁸⁵⁶ Note that he chose the word 'culture', even though he referred to rituals with significant religious meaning, in order to stay within the borders of the dominant discourse.

Van Lith argued that other missionaries should not immediately accuse the local population of heresy and superstition because they did not yet understand the difference between their local traditions and 'true faith'.⁸⁵⁷ He argued that conversion is a process that consists of several stages and added: 'however, there comes a time when it is better to fight openly against the *slametan*, but that time has not come yet everywhere. It is not a question of can and cannot, should and should not, but it is primarily a matter of tactics.'⁸⁵⁸ In a letter to his superior, Van Lith reflected on the issue of adapting to local traditions in general and there he also argued: 'When our control over the indigenous people is sufficiently established and a sufficient number of children have been raised by

⁸⁵³ Christiaan Albers, *Annual report on 1887* (Bidana Tjina 1 January 1888) Utrechts Archief.

⁸⁵⁴ Van Lith, *Kjahi Sadrach*.

⁸⁵⁵ Van Rijckevorsel, *Pastoor F. van Lith S.J.* 132.

⁸⁵⁶ Van Lith, *De Besnijdenis* (unpublished) Archives of the Jesuit Province of Indonesia (Semarang).

⁸⁵⁷ Van Rijckevorsel, *Pastoor F. van Lith S.J.*, 132.

⁸⁵⁸ Van Lith, *Kjahi Sadrach*.

us, then the time has come to gently tighten the reigns.⁸⁵⁹ Both statements fit very well in Van Lith's approach to missionizing: first attract members by adapting Christianity to the existing traditions, and then purify their beliefs and practices in a later stadium.

The salient argument in the mission discourse for allowing the continuation of a certain practice was whether the practice was 'cultural' instead of 'religious' in origin. The *slametan* for example, is a communal feast with clear religious significance; it can be considered the core ritual in Javanese religion. So the usual argument to allow a certain practice was not valid. Nevertheless, all six missionaries allowed the ritual, despite its clear religious character. Why did they allow the *slametan* in their Christian communities and how did they defend their choice to do so?

Initially, it seemed that the missionaries legitimized their decision by separating 'cultural' from 'religious' aspects in order to meet the expectations of their superiors, because the latter required that all Muslim prayers would be dropped. Yet, when we read the missionaries' arguments more closely it becomes clear that another condition is prioritized in their writings. It seems that a practice could be tolerated as long it clearly was *not* rooted in Islam - even if it had its roots in a different religious system. As we have seen, Van Lith defended his decision to allow *slametans* by explaining that, when he attended a *slametan* himself, he was always permitted to pray for the meal in his own way. This formed an argument that it was not purely a *Muslim* ritual in the eyes of the Javanese.⁸⁶⁰ This, and the condition set by all missionaries that the accompanying prayers had to be Christianized, indicate that in practice the distinction was not actually made between religion and culture, like the discourse initially suggested, but between Islamic and non-Islamic.

The missionaries found a solution in presenting Javanese religious traditions as cultural traditions and opposing these to Islam. They stretched the border of their category 'culture' to include hybrid rituals. Possibly, the missionaries did not consider a ritual which had its roots in a 'primitive' religion a threat to Christianity in contrast to a ritual which was linked to orthodox Islam. The missionaries did not value the pre-Islamic Javanese religious traditions highly; animistic religions like Hinduism and Buddhism were considered primitive and underdeveloped. Expressions of these traditions were often dismissed as superstition which would disappear by itself. Another reason for the missionaries' tolerance in respect to pre-Islamic religious traditions is that those traditions had penetrated Javanese society more thoroughly than Islam and therefore seemed more difficult to fight. Perhaps the missionaries' choices were mere pragmatism than anything else.

⁸⁵⁹ Franciscus Van Lith, *Letter to Monseigneur Luypen* (Magelang 7 March 1902) Archives of the Archdiocese of Jakarta.

⁸⁶⁰ Van Lith, *Kjahi Sadrach*.

7.6. Circumcision

Most people, including the Dutch and the indigenous people of Java, considered circumcision to be an Islamic tradition. Most missionaries, including Poensen, Albers, Van Eendenburg, and Hoevenaars, therefore, forbade their community members to circumcise their sons. They had to admit, however, that sometimes Christians still performed the procedure in secret.⁸⁶¹ Harthoorn and Van Lith formed the exception to the rule. Both studied the practice, wrote much about the tradition of circumcising boys, and decided to tolerate the practice in their districts. Since this went beyond the borders of what the mission discourse allowed, they had to justify their choices to their superiors by negotiating these boundaries.

In 1858, a Christian boy in the Malang district was circumcised with permission from NZG missionary Harthoorn. He allowed it because the boy had been bullied severely by his friends for being a *kafir* (unbeliever). Harthoorn explained his choice with arguments from the dominant discourse; he argued that the practice was not necessarily religious and could be considered cultural. He admitted that because the ritual was ancient and there used to be no distinction between culture and religion, all cultural phenomena, including circumcision, used to have some religious symbolism.⁸⁶² Yet, the practice could be continued after it was stripped of its religious significance.⁸⁶³ Harthoorn presented it as an operation that was advisable in tropical areas and compared it to the cowpox vaccine. Although he had to admit that most Javanese considered it a religious ritual which confirmed their Muslim identity, he figured it was only a matter of time until they would let go of this idea.

By downplaying the religious aspects of the ritual, Harthoorn legitimized his choice for permitting it. But above all, he based his decision on the argument that circumcision was not a Muslim ritual since it was not mentioned in the *Qur'an*.⁸⁶⁴ He assured the board that no *penghulu* would be present to chant Islamic prayers during the procedure to minimize the Islamic character of the procedure. Thus, he argued his case in allowing the circumcision to the board. Similar to the discussion about *slametan*, the question whether the practice was Islamic or non-Islamic proved decisive in deciding whether to consent to it or not.

When the other missionaries and the board of the NZG found out that Harthoorn had consented to the circumcision without asking for advice from any of them, they reacted furiously. Missionary Hoezoo argued that the circumcision was commonly perceived as a Muslim ritual that confirmed one's Muslim identity and could therefore never be allowed in a Christian community.

⁸⁶¹ For example: Carel Poensen, 'De zending in Kediri en Madioen', in: *Mededeelingen* (Rotterdam 1887).

⁸⁶² S.E. Harthoorn, *Diary on 22 August 1858* (Malang 1857) Utrechts Archief.

⁸⁶³ Nortier, *Het leven van Samuel Eliza Harthoorn*.

⁸⁶⁴ S.E. Harthoorn, *Diary on 22 August 1858* (Malang 1857) Utrechts Archief.

Johannes Emde from Surabaya demanded the boy and his parents would be exiled from church and he immediately stopped his financial aid of twenty guilders a month to Harthoorn. The NZG board did not go as far as Emde, but reprimanded Harthoorn, wished the family to be excluded from the Lord's Supper, and ordered Harthoorn to have a serious conversation with the parents.

Harthoorn defended his position by explaining that the difficult circumstances forced him to make this decision and added: 'You believe that I have acted impractical and inconsiderate. I believe that if Hoeszoo had found himself in the same circumstances in which I found myself, he would not have acted otherwise. I do not want to state whether it was practical or (in-)considerate.'⁸⁶⁵ Moreover, Harthoorn did not consider it fair that practices tied to Javanism were permitted by other missionaries: 'If this is not permitted, than that should not be permitted either. How does Jansz judge visits to the graveyards with New Year's? Circumcision has been attached loosely to Javanism, but 'vows', '*slametans*', and visiting graveyards belong to its soul and essence.'⁸⁶⁶

Although Harthoorn did not find any support among the Protestant missionaries, his ideals were later shared by the Jesuit Van Lith. Van Lith's ideas concerning circumcision were also considered radical within the Catholic world. The Jesuit missionary argued that circumcision had long been practised in the Indies before the arrival of Islam. It should therefore be treated as a remnant of the Polynesian-Malayan culture that had flourished in Java centuries ago. He admitted that it was difficult for the missionaries to deal with this particular tradition because it was not always clear whether the ritual was carried out in a religious or in a cultural context. He believed, however, that the missionaries should be able to differentiate between the Muslim and the Polynesian-Malayan circumcision. Van Lith explained that the Polynesian circumcision was often performed during puberty and the Muslim circumcision was mostly performed on new-borns.⁸⁶⁷ The Muslim circumcision (*ngeslamake*) was a ritual to denote a boy's Muslim identity although, as Van Lith continuously emphasised, the ritual was not prescribed in the *Qur'an*.⁸⁶⁸

Van Lith suggested casting circumcision as a Polynesian-Malayan cultural tradition that was good for a man's hygiene and reproduction. He added that the missionaries did not prohibit this kind of circumcisions in Ambon, Flores, and the Philippines either. The circumcision as part of a Muslim initiation ceremony, however, had to be banned completely; even though this was not customary

⁸⁶⁵ Samuel Eliza Harthoorn, *Letter to director Hiebink* (Malang 16 November 1858) Utrechts Archief.

⁸⁶⁶ Samuel Eliza Harthoorn, *Letter to director Hiebink* (Malang 16 November 1858) Utrechts Archief.

⁸⁶⁷ The distinction Van Lith made was not commonly valid. In many parts of the world, including Java, Muslim boys were usually circumcised between the age of seven and twelve.

⁸⁶⁸ Van Lith, *De besnijdenis op Java*, Jesuit Archives Semarang.

among Javanese families according to Van Lith.⁸⁶⁹ This meant that Islamic prayers could not be allowed during the circumcision ceremony. In addition, Van Lith admitted that the Polynesian-Malayan ritual used to have a religious character as well, but that this aspect was long forgotten by the Javanese.⁸⁷⁰ So again, the dichotomy between Islamic and non-Islamic was at the forefront of his thoughts rather than the dichotomy between culture and religion as the official mission discourse suggested.

He reinforced his argument by mentioning that Wilhelm, the Dutch Reformed missionary who assisted Sadrach, had also allowed circumcision. According to Van Lith, the very reason he had been so successful was because he was very respectful and tolerant to all Javanese traditions.⁸⁷¹ Van Lith mentioned that 'a missionary should sometimes play stupid and let the people have it their way for the time being'.⁸⁷² He even remarked: 'As soon as we can teach them Christian prayers, we can require that during the circumcision the Arabic prayer is replaced with a Christian prayer and as long as that is not the case, just let it go, even the Arabic prayer, which is not understood...'⁸⁷³ So although he claims in multiple sources, including this one, that Arabic prayers should absolutely be prohibited in the Christian community, he also suggests that one may turn a blind eye since the Javanese do not understand the prayers. These ambiguous viewpoints show that he was constantly negotiating between the official discourse and what he had to deal with in everyday life. At the end of his article '*De besnijdenis*' (the circumcision), Van Lith wrote that a full ban of circumcision would be devastating for the success of the Catholic mission, since the ritual had such an important place in society.⁸⁷⁴ He concluded the article with the idea that a complete ban had to be postponed to the next generation, despite all his previous arguments for allowing circumcision. He thus started off with an innovative message - adapt Christianity to Javanese practices - but in the end it came down to a practical strategy to win over as many Javanese possible.

7.7. *The institution of marriage*

The institution of marriage proved to be a problem to the Christian missionaries. They not only had to find a compromise between the Dutch discourse on a Christian marriage and local customs, but they also had to take government laws into account. They realised that Javanese marriage practices

⁸⁶⁹Nico Kaptein, 'Circumcision In Indonesia: Muslim or not?', in: Jan Platvoet and Karel van der Toorn, *Pluralism and Identity : Studies in Ritual and behaviour* (Leiden 1995) 285-302.

⁸⁷⁰ Van Lith, *De besnijdenis*, Jesuit Archives, Semarang.

⁸⁷¹ Van Lith, *De besnijdenis*, Jesuit Archives Semarang.

⁸⁷² Van Lith, *De besnijdenis op Java*, Jesuit Archives Semarang.

⁸⁷³Franciscus Van Lith, *Uitwerking 'Plan en werkwijze der Java-missie'* (Muntilan July 1902) Archives of the Jesuit Province of Indonesia (Semarang).

⁸⁷⁴ Van Lith, *De besnijdenis*, Jesuit Archives Semarang.

differed significantly from Western or Christian marriage practices. Harthoorn even suggested that there were no 'true' marriages in Java, he described them as arrangements of 'temporary selfish cohabitation'; 'people are together to enjoy the other, not to live for each other, or console or support the other'.⁸⁷⁵ The missionaries were unsure how to deal with matters like arranged marriages, divorce, or mixed marriages, and negotiated the discourses of the three parties involved in various ways. Some missionaries believed the Christian laws concerning matrimony needed to be loosened to adapt to the Javanese context, at least in the initial phase of the mission. For example, Poensen reasoned that since divorce could not be avoided in this stage, the church should benefit from it. He charged five guilders for the service.⁸⁷⁶ Harthoorn was also pragmatic in his thinking about marriage in a Christian Javanese context. For example, he once married two baptized Christians, even though he knew they had already lived together 'in sin'.⁸⁷⁷ Therefore, he decided not to marry them in church, but at their house, and he did not allow bridal wear or a procession.⁸⁷⁸ He explained to the board that these young Christians did not yet understand the concept of a Christian marriage and therefore needed to be educated within the church instead of being banished from it.

Dutch colonial law demanded that a *penghulu*, a Muslim leader, conduct the marriage ceremony. The *Shari'a*, however, did not demand that people were married by an *imam* or *penghulu*. The missionaries believed that the Dutch colonial authorities only introduced this law in order to reach more insight into the civil status of the colony. They complained that the Dutch government enhanced the Islamization process in the region through these kinds of new regulations. Moreover, the groom had to pronounce the *shahada* in order to complete the ceremony.⁸⁷⁹ Christian Javanese therefore had only two options; not to get married or to deny their Christian faith by pronouncing the *shahada*. Poensen decided that Christians in his district should have a ceremony in church only. He admitted that his following was not aware that these marriages were not legal in European law, but he preferred that they did not know this, since that would only create problems.⁸⁸⁰

The Jesuit Van Lith tried to change the course of the Catholic mission by focusing on social issues such as the Christian marriage. He had protested against the prevalent marital laws in Java since 1902. He considered it unacceptable that Christians had to pronounce the *shahada* in order to get married and fought for years to change this particular law. Especially because Christian priests in the

⁸⁷⁵ S.E.Harthoorn, 'Iets over den Javaanschen mohammedanen en den Javaanschen christenen', in: *Mededeelingen* (Rotterdam 1857) 183-213.

⁸⁷⁶ Carel Poensen, 'De zending in Kediri en Madioen', in: *Mededeelingen* (Rotterdam 1887).

⁸⁷⁷ Nortier, *Het leven van Samuel Eliza Harthoorn*.

⁸⁷⁸ S.E. Harthoorn, *Diary on May and June 1857* (Malang 1857) Utrechts Archief.

⁸⁷⁹ The *shahada* is the Muslim creed.

⁸⁸⁰ Carel Poensen, 'De zending in Kediri en Madioen en staat', in: *Mededeelingen* (Rotterdam 1886).

external areas were already allowed to marry people.⁸⁸¹ Still, he had to come up with a solution for the time being. He allowed his followers to celebrate their marriage twice, once before the *penghulu* and once before him in church. But he opted that during the first ceremony, the bride and groom should send representatives, so that these representatives instead of them had to pronounce the *shahada*.⁸⁸² This demonstrates clearly how Van Lith sought to compromise between the Catholic discourse and the discourse of the colonial state.

Van Lith opted to install secular civil officers to conduct all marriages in order to replace the ritual from the religious sphere to the cultural sphere. People could decide for themselves to have a second ceremony headed by a *penghulu*, Christian priest, or reverend. He was convinced that most people would not opt for a second ceremony with a *penghulu* because of the additional costs. He added optimistically, 'this will lead to a complete break between the local population and Islam, especially in Central Java.'⁸⁸³ Eventually, Van Lith received a permit to become a marriage registrar allowing him to marry and divorce people. Thus the Christians in his district did not have to go to the *penghulu* anymore.

Van Lith's colleague Hoevenaars, and his superior Vicar Luypen, were very much against this development because a marriage registrar did not only marry people, but he had to divorce couples as well. Divorce, of course, was against Catholic law. Van Lith replied that this was just a practical issue and that they should not turn it into a theological problem. He argued that missionaries encounter many unforeseen problems in the field and that they had to deal with them in a practical way or the mission would soon come to a halt.⁸⁸⁴ Even though his superior, Vicar Luypen, was against the development, Van Lith could continue his work because he had received the necessary approval from the mission superior Hellings, who outranked Luypen in the Jesuit Order.

Although Van Lith had received the permission to marry people, he did not stop to lobby for a total revision of the laws, so Christians outside of his district would have the freedom to decide where to get married as well. Eventually the law was revised in 1933, and from then on Christian Javanese were free to get married by a Christian priest or minister anywhere in Java.⁸⁸⁵ When the legal problems were resolved, new problems arose. Van Lith had to teach the Javanese what a Christian marriage was, but remarked that the people were 'still far too childish to contract a Christian

⁸⁸¹ The external areas or 'outer possessions' were the name of the Dutch-Indian areas outside Java and Madura.

⁸⁸² F. Van Lith, *Het geheim van de Javaan* (The original paper can be found in the Jesuit Archive in Rome and a copy is available in the Jesuit Archives in Semarang).

⁸⁸³ Franciscus van Lith, *Scheiding van kerk en staat* (Oudenbosch 9 August 1921).

⁸⁸⁴ Franciscus van Lith, *Letter to Monseigneur Luypen* (Muntilan 12 July 1907) Archives of the Archdiocese of Jakarta.

⁸⁸⁵ Marriage Ordinance for Indonesian Christians in Java, Madura and Ambon (Staatsblad 1933 No. 74).

marriage.⁸⁸⁶ According to Van Lith, a Muslim wedding was a business transfer where the woman was made subordinate to her husband. In a Christian wedding, both parties had to agree to an arrangement for life. Moreover, Catholic marriages were not polygamous and the concept of inseparable marriages was uncommon in Java where divorces were commonly accepted. Van Lith even claimed that fifty per cent of the women ran away in the first fourteen days of a marriage.⁸⁸⁷ He did not know how to deal with this problem; an annulment had to be requested in the Vatican and that cost a lot of time and money. Once again, Van Lith found a practical solution and founded his own marital court.⁸⁸⁸ He did not believe the first generation of converts were ready to commit to a Catholic marriage; the people needed to go through a process of development. He had made the first step in the process by becoming a marriage registrar, so he could marry -and divorce- people in a Christian environment.

Another problem was the occurrence of mixed marriages. Van Lith had to allow mixed marriages, since there were many more Catholic boys than girls, due to the Catholic schools for boys.⁸⁸⁹ Officially, a dispensation had to be requested, but that process took months. Luypen advised Van Lith to baptize the girls before the wedding to avoid the problem. Van Lith, however, was against this suggestion; he did not want to force the people to be baptized and he refused to baptize people without sufficient Christian education. Nevertheless, he did ask the brides to sign an agreement that she would allow their children to be raised as Christians. Although rare, a mixed marriage between a Christian woman and a Muslim man sometimes occurred, and this proved to be more problematic. The husband -the head of the family- had the right to force his wife to convert back and to raise their children as Muslims. Van Lith therefore tried to persuade the grooms to sign an agreement to respect the Christian identity of their wives, to refrain from having a second wife, and to allow his children to be raised as Christians.⁸⁹⁰

If the missionaries would not act indulgent, Van Lith argued, the people would go to the *penghulu* to be married and probably be lost to the church. He admitted his system was not perfect, but that the situation would improve in time. He believed much would change once a Catholic school

⁸⁸⁶ Franciscus van Lith, *Letter to Monseigneur Luypen* (Muntilan 21 March 1902) Archives of the Jesuit Province of Indonesia (Semarang).

⁸⁸⁷ Franciscus van Lith, *De casus van het Javaanse huwelijk* (unpublished) Archives of the Jesuit Province of Indonesia (Semarang).

⁸⁸⁸ Franciscus van Lith, *De casus van het Javaanse huwelijk* (unpublished) Archives of the Jesuit Province of Indonesia (Semarang).

⁸⁸⁹ Mixed marriages could even be a conversion strategy to win over the spouses, according to Van Lith.

Franciscus van Lith, *Het Javaansche huwelijk in verband met de besnijdenis* (unpublished) Archives of the Jesuit Province of Indonesia (Semarang).

⁸⁹⁰ Van Lith, *De casus van het Javaanse huwelijk*, (unpublished) Archives of the Jesuit Province of Indonesia (Semarang).

for girls would open. Since the opening of the Catholic schools for boys, many boys from the region around Muntilan had converted to Christianity, but they could not find Christian girls to marry. The consequence of this was that many of them married Muslim girls and went back to live in a Muslim environment. This often resulted in the husbands converting back to their former beliefs. In 1908, a girls' school, led by Franciscan sisters, was opened in Mendut. The education however, was poor during the first years, because the sisters still had to master the indigenous language. They focused mainly on teaching girls to run a household and they practised some handicrafts. Still, Van Lith was very pleased with the opening of this school, because it would prepare the girls for forming a 'solid Christian family'.⁸⁹¹ But Van Lith wished the school would teach the girls more than just housework. A few years later, he managed to open the first *kweekschool* for girls, where they could be trained to become teachers at primary schools.

7.8. Church discipline

Church discipline refers to the practice of censuring church members when they have supposedly sinned. Its aim is to bring the offender to repent so he or she can be reconciled to God and the church. Depending on the crime, a person could be excluded from the Eucharist or, as a last resort, excommunicated if they did not repent of their sin. The implications of church discipline differed between Catholicism and Protestantism and between different Protestant currents as well. The NZG did not form a clear policy that indicated when a missionary should implement church discipline, but left the decision to the missionaries themselves.⁸⁹² Yet, they were clear that the missionaries had to be strict in matters regarding 'public immorality' and the use of opium. They were not clear about the Javanese forms of entertainment; *gamelan* and *wayang* plays. They only advised their missionaries to be tactful in these matters. The missionary could therefore decide for himself what Javanese practices they wished to ban or allow in their districts. Although Poensen did not consider himself strict, he did not really adapt European Christian values to the local traditions. Therefore he punished members who did not follow his rules; for example, when converts had an 'immoral lifestyle', attended Islamic parties, or circumcised their sons. He particularly sought to prevent Christians from using opium. Those who did use opium were immediately banned from church. According to Poensen the people would be much better off, and substantially richer, without the widespread drug abuse.⁸⁹³

⁸⁹¹ Rosariyanto, *Father Franciscus van Lith S.J.*, 262.

⁸⁹² Unknown author, 'Verslag der commissie in zake de zendeling Harthoorn', 392-476.

⁸⁹³ It was difficult to eradicate the use of drugs, especially since the government encouraged the opium trade, rather than banishing it. The government earned much by raising tax over the opium trade and therefore did not actively restrict it.

Harthoorn rejected church discipline altogether because he believed it did not protect the young Javanese Church, but actually harmed it. He wrote: 'Today I consider (I thought differently in the beginning of my career, but study and experience have led me to other insights) any offense that is punished with banishment from church to be illegal, because the church is not an asylum for saints, but a device for the sick. It is unwise, because the law is weak because of the flesh and because the commandment assumes a life situation from which the people are still far away from'.⁸⁹⁴ He also believed it was imprudent because it meant people who were of good will, but just needed more education, were banished as well. In addition, he would probably have to banish all members, because everyone in the nascent Christian community still made mistakes. Furthermore, he was sure that if he, for example, forbade divorce, it would not stop anyone from getting a divorce from the *penghulu*. He added that denying people marriage because one of the two was not baptized or still of a very young age would only lead to secret affairs. He explained to his followers that he would re-accept everyone who showed genuine repentance after they made a mistake instead of banning them from church.⁸⁹⁵ He believed the young Javanese church was not ready for church discipline yet and that the missionaries had to allow time for transition, errors, and growth. His colleagues, however, considered him indifferent to God's laws for this.

As repeatedly argued in this chapter, Van Lith's proselytizing strategy was quite pragmatic. Like Harthoorn, he did not believe in strict rules and punishment because that would discourage the young community. He believed a missionary should not forbid Javanese practices right away, since that would form an obstacle to conversion. He often stated: 'It is not a question of may or may-not...it is a question of strategy'.⁸⁹⁶ He believed issues such as mixed-marriages and divorce should not be handled from a theological, but rather from a practical, point of view. This is how he handled problems in his district although not everyone in the Catholic mission agreed with him.⁸⁹⁷

⁸⁹⁴ 'Wat mij aangaat tegenwoordig (in het begin mijner bediening dacht ik er anders over, studie en ervaring hebben mij tot andere inzichten gebracht) acht ik elk verbod, welks overtreding met verbanning uit de gemeente gestraft wordt te zijn onwettig, omdat de kerk geen asiel voor heiligen, maar een inrichting voor zieken is. Onverstandig, omdat de wet krachteloos is door het vlees, omdat het gebod een levenstoestand veronderstelt, waarvan de mensen nog ver verwijderd zijn.' S.E. Harthoorn, *Annual report 1858* (Malang 1859) Utrechts Archief.

⁸⁹⁵ S.E. Harthoorn, *Diary on October 1856* (Malang 1856) Utrechts Archief.

⁸⁹⁶ Rosariyanto, *Father Franciscus van Lith S.J.* 368.

⁸⁹⁷ Van Lith, *De casus van het Javaansche huwelijk*, Archives of the Jesuit Province of Indonesia (Semarang).

7.9. Conclusion

The mission organizations demanded results, both quantitative and qualitative. Van Lith's letters, for example, show that those mission districts that did not meet expectations risked being shut down. Every missionary thus felt a continuous pressure to produce acceptable numbers. However, they were not supposed to accept just anyone into the church. Only genuine devotees who were willing to part with their former way of life should be accepted. Many who converted to Christianity, however, were not willing to radically alter their lifestyle and to separate themselves completely from their communities. They sought ways to localize Christianity and continue former practices. I showed in this chapter how the six missionaries responded to the embedding of their teachings in new locality.

The mission letters indicate that the most challenging aspect of being a missionary was actually not persuading people to convert, but guiding young converts on their way of becoming 'true' or 'proper' Christians. The missionary found himself in a difficult position where he had to accommodate both the wishes of his employer and of the local population. The missionaries' decisions and lines of argumentations often appear to be ambiguous, as the result of their constant negotiating with multiple, often opposing discourses in the contact zone in which they worked. The boards of the missionary societies required from the missionaries to remove all elements that had their origin in non-Christian religious traditions. This, however, turned out to be an impossible task. The missionaries dealt in different ways with controversial practices such as *gamelan*, *wayang*, *slametan*, and circumcision. Some, like van Eendenburg and Hoevenaars, have avoided discussing such practices in their reports. Others, like Harthoorn and Van Lith, have spent many hours developing policy.

In order to explain their liminal position most missionaries stressed that a division between 'culture' (*adat*) and 'religion' exists in order to legitimize their policies. In line with the dominant discourse, they aimed at an accommodation with the local *adat*.⁸⁹⁸ This construction was applied differently by each missionary, because there was no unanimity about which belief or ritual belonged in which category. Hybrid rituals proved especially difficult to classify. Eventually, they decided to present hybrid traditions as cultural traditions and being opposed to Islam. The actual criterion for the missionaries turned out to be whether the practice could -or could not- be linked to Islam. They used this criterion as a discursive strategy to justify their approach and position. For instance, Poensen allowed women to wear a veil in church and sit separately from men because he did not consider those Islamic customs *per se*. Additionally, a practice that undoubtedly had severe religious significance, the *slametan*, was allowed by all six missionaries on the assumption that it was not

⁸⁹⁸ The more orthodox Muslims, the *Putihan*, tried to distinguish between religious superstition and cultural traditions as well; they too sought to expel heretical beliefs and rituals, but allow cultural practices.

reminiscent of Islam. Furthermore, the argument Harthoorn and Van Lith employed to allow circumcision was that it was not necessarily perceived as a Muslim ritual in the Indies and that circumcision could be allowed after it was deprived of its Islamic significance.

While most converted Javanese did change their lives in quite remarkable ways, the changes the missionaries effected were not always the ones to which the missionaries aimed. The six missionaries reacted in different ways to the local spread of Christianity, but they can roughly be divided in two groups. Albers, Van Eendenburg, and Hoevenaars acted well within the borders of the dominant mission discourse and sought to reshape local society along Dutch Christian lines. Although they had to relent at times, they tried their best to eliminate local expressions of faith and culture that did not belong in a Christian community. In general, their converts were expected to abandon most traits of their group, that is performance, music, dance, ways of dressing, the mythology and cosmological vision, and other kinds of traditional behaviour.⁸⁹⁹ These three handled local expressions of Christianity as incidents that needed to be abolished. Albers articulated his vision in the words: 'They want to be Christian in their own way, but that is impossible of course.'⁹⁰⁰

Harthoorn, Poensen, and Van Lith tried to accommodate the aspiration of the local population to adapt Christianity to the local context and aimed to include elements of local culture in their efforts to enlarge and sustain local communities of converts. All three theorized extensively about adaptation to form a general policy because they realised that it was impossible to reform the Javanese society into a European society. Poensen was not as strict as Albers while Van Eendenburg and Hoevenaars were and allowed Christian Javanese to continue traditions that were not directly linked to religion, such as poetry, music, and the performing arts. However, he was not as open minded as Harthoorn and Van Lith.

Missionaries Harthoorn and Van Lith have spent much of their time contemplating the idea of a local church that was fully adapted to the Javanese culture. Both acted liberal in allowing local traditions in the communities they led. Nevertheless, Harthoorn was fired in 1863 because of a severe disagreement with the board about 'adaptation' as a missionizing method. Harthoorn objected to the fact that the mission societies expected the Christians to leave their *adat*, including habits that had nothing to do with religion. He was of the opinion that church discipline made adaptation impossible,

⁸⁹⁹ This was not only expected of Javanese who converted to Christianity. Abangan Muslims who converted to Putihan Islam also had to give up on various beliefs and practices. The majority of Javanese Muslims; Abangan Muslims, considered Putihan Muslims as people who had to some extent removed themselves from their social and cultural environment. Ricklefs, 'Six centuries of Islamization in Java', 127.

⁹⁰⁰ Christiaan Albers, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Bidana Tjina 1 January 1888) Utrechts Archief.

yet that adaptation was their key to success.⁹⁰¹ He was the first missionary who reasoned that the process of conversion would take time, probably more than one generation, and that a missionary therefore should not be too strict in his community. He allowed his followers to continue customs that other missionaries considered heretical, such as *wayang* plays, *gamelan*, divorce, and even circumcision. He did not reject people who violated the church's rules, because he saw being 'Christian in name' as the first and necessary stage in the process towards becoming a 'true' Christian. He believed a missionary had to think pragmatically instead of dogmatically, that the Christian communities would evolve, and that heretical beliefs and traditions would gradually disappear. So, even though he is remembered today as modern and liberal, he was actually not really in favour of forming a localized, hybrid Christian theology.

Van Lith's mission strategy was very similar and it is clear he had studied Harthoorn's work. He believed issues such as marriages, circumcision, the *slametan* et cetera, should not be handled from a theological, but from a practical, point of view. He went a step further by allowing cultural traditions - including Buddhist, Hindu, and hybrid traditions, since these were considered part of culture - by merging indigenous and Catholic religious rituals such as *wayang*, dances, and processions. Not everyone in the Catholic mission agreed with him initially, but unlike Harthoorn, Van Lith was eventually praised for his ideas and his method became the standard for the Catholic mission in Java.⁹⁰²

Harthoorn and Van Lith often opted for a pragmatic solution that satisfied the needs of their Christian following. Consequently, both seem more broad-minded compared to their colleagues. For example, Van Lith is remembered, both popularly and by scholars such as Rosariyanto and Subanar, as a modern and liberal thinker, and even as the founder of the localized Catholic Church in Java.⁹⁰³ Both, however, assured their superiors that their unorthodox policies were of temporary nature. Localized expressions of Christianity had to be tolerated only in the initial phase of the mission, but should eventually be removed. Both considered adaptation a method to attract believers; not the ultimate goal of the mission. Their pragmatic policies should be understood as strategies in the context of settling dispute and difference in between Christianity and Islam, allowing for hybridity in ritual and belief as means, not as an end.

⁹⁰¹ S.E. Harthoorn, *Diary on 1860* (Malang 1860) Utrechts Archief.

⁹⁰² Van Lith, *De casus van het Javaansche huwelijk*, Archives of the Jesuit Province of Indonesia (Semarang).

⁹⁰³ Floribertus Hasto Rosariyanto, *Father Franciscus van Lith S.J. (1863-1926): turning point of the Catholic Church's approach in the pluralistic Indonesian Society* (Rome 1997) and: Gregorius Budi Subanar, *The local church in the light of magisterium teaching on mission, a case in point: the archdiocese of Semarang-Indonesia (1940-1981)* (Rome 2001).

Conclusion

I aimed to produce a history of the Dutch missionary encounter with local communities in Java in order to contribute to our knowledge of Christian-Muslim relations in the imperial context. The writings of six Dutch missionaries, four Protestants and two Catholics, formed the base of this study. I conducted my research at a micro level to analyse their expectations, convictions, strategies, developments, results, and reflections upon their encounter with Javanese Muslims. Moreover, this study sought to reach a deeper understanding of the Dutch mission discourse on themes like Javanese Islam, indigenous evangelization, missionizing methodology, conversion, and localization of religion in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Ultimately, I aimed to show how the missionaries negotiated the multiple discursive borders that were at play in the colonial contact zone. I discussed how both the Dutch missionaries and the Javanese and Sundanese encountered their ethnic, cultural, and religious 'Other' in the contact zone and how they were both transformed in the process.

My primary body of sources, the missionaries' letters, did not seem to contain much more than endless descriptions of day to day activities. However, methods of contemporary literary criticism, such as *discourse analysis* and *reading against the grain* enabled me to see the multi-layeredness of these texts. These letters offer insight into the challenging position in which the missionaries found themselves. The missionaries lived on the border between their own, the colonial, and the local culture, which gave them a unique perspective on various processes, including the process of internalizing new religious convictions and practices. However, this border position also made their proselytizing task quite difficult since they constantly had to negotiate the diverse discourses that constituted the boundaries of those borders. The missionaries were constantly pressed to compromise between seemingly contradictory demands of the various parties involved in their mission.

The methods that I used in this study are relatively uncommon in mission studies. Nevertheless, they enabled me to recast the narratives of these six men and to give texture to their reports on encounters with the local population of Java. These methods proved useful to discover the personal opinions of the missionaries on the Christian mission and the indigenous population and their religion. The missionaries negotiated dominant discourses of the different mission societies and the overarching discourse of the colonial government on multiple subjects, and developed discursive strategies to cope with them. I realise that ego-documents are open to a range of potential readings and conflicting interpretations. The analysis of ego-documents is a continual negotiation between the different ideologies and discourses of the author and of its reader. In other words, my analysis and conclusions include subjective interpretations. Nevertheless, these analytic strategies, even though

they have their limitations, have led me to a better understanding of the Javanese dimension of this history and the missionaries' positions in the then prevailing discourses.

The leading question of this study was: *'how did the missionaries negotiate discourses on religion in their goal to proselytize the Javanese Muslim population in the context of Dutch colonial rule between 1850 and 1910?'* In order to answer this question I focused in the first part of this thesis on the historical, religious, and institutional context in which the Dutch missionaries tried to convert the local population of Java. The second part revealed the missionaries' narrow understanding of the concept of religion by analysing their perceptions of Javanese Islam and indigenous mission activities. The missionaries constructed a division between 'true' Islam and 'true' Christianity and hybrid traditions that were not considered to be 'true' religions. The third part discussed the three consecutive stages in the mission: evangelisation, conversion, and internalization of Christianity. I researched the more or less pragmatic methods missionaries used to convert people and the indigenous responses to the Christian missionaries and their message. Moreover, I analysed how the missionaries legitimized their methods and results to their superiors.

The nature of conversion and acceptable behaviour of Christian Javanese constituted the two main areas where the interests of the mission organizations and the local communities in Java conflicted. Because the missionaries quickly realised that the ideas of their superiors in the Netherlands about these issues were not reconcilable with local conditions, they constantly had to mediate between the discourses of all parties in their endeavour. They stretched the boundaries of what constitutes 'true' conversion in order to justify their decision to baptize people having little knowledge of Christianity. They negotiated discourses on culture, hybridity, and religion to defend their approach to local expressions of Christian beliefs and practices and the challenges they faced.

In this conclusion I discuss my research findings. First, I recapitulate my analysis of the missionary writings in order to show how the missionaries implemented the aims of the mission organizations in practice and legitimized decisions that went beyond the boundaries of the dominant mission discourses in order to provide an answer to my research question. Second, I formulate opportunities for further research into the Dutch mission endeavour in the Dutch Indies.

1. A rapidly changing religious landscape

The religious landscape of Java was transforming at a fast pace in the second half of the nineteenth century. An Islamization process occurred that was steered by various processes. First, the contact between Java and the Middle East intensified. Due to better means of traveling and communication

the ties with the centre of Islam grew stronger. The number of *hajjis* grew increasingly during these years and many of them opened *pesantren* in the country after their return to Java. Consequently, more children received an Islamic education. Second, illiteracy decreased and more books and magazines about Islam became available. As a result, more Javanese in the interior accepted Islam and a part of the Javanese population that was already Muslim strove to become more 'orthodox'.

A remarkable schism occurred as a result of this Islamization process. A group of *hajjis*, religious leaders, and *santris* sought to strengthen and purify Javanese Islam from 'foreign' elements that had derived from animistic, Hindu, and Buddhist traditions. They reacted to the majority that adhered to hybrid and localized versions of Islam by calling them the *Abangan* (the red people). They referred to themselves as the *Putihan* (the white people), probably to emphasise their 'purity'. Many indigenes, who were now suddenly considered 'unorthodox' or even 'pseudo' Muslims, reacted by returning to Java's traditional mystical beliefs and practices. The distinction between these two groups was first noticed by Dutch missionaries who were active in East Java. They, too, considered the *Abangan* lifestyle syncretic and not really Islamic. However, they were neither impressed by the piety, nor the knowledge of the *Putihan*. Samuel Harthoorn argued: '...No one, no matter how much more knowledge he has of Mohammed than the other Javanese, is detached from pantheistic Buddhist beliefs that used to control Java.'⁹⁰⁴ In the early twentieth century the rough separation into two groups had become clearly noticeable in every region in Java.

The second reason why the religious landscape of Java changed was, of course, the increasing presence of Dutch colonials and Christianity. Prior to the Dutch period, there had been no demarcation lines between religion and other spheres of human activity such as politics, economics, science, and philosophy. The Dutch increasingly identified religion as a distinct domain by, for example, creating a clear distinction between Islamic law, the *Shari'a*, and customary law, the *adat*, which simultaneously reinforced the gap between *Putihan* and *Abangan* Islam. Furthermore, by determining what religion was, the colonial government and the missionaries alike decided which beliefs and traditions were or were not religious. Consequently, many Javanese religious beliefs and practices were now classified as superstition or heresy. Java's religious discourse became colonised and as a result present religions became static under European influence.

The Dutch colonial state was not always supportive of the Christian mission because their aim was to act neutral in matters of religion. On the contrary, the missionaries often felt their work hampered by the state and were not afraid to express their critiques. Towards the end of the century, however, it became easier for the missionaries to compromise between their own expectations and

⁹⁰⁴ S.E. Harthoorn, *Annual report 1856* (Malang 1857) Utrechts Archief.

objectives and those of the colonial state because the differences between their objectives slowly faded. Whereas the state tried initially to minimize the Christian mission to avoid indigenous uprisings and revolt, they eventually started to think of the missionaries as their allies in their struggle against 'Islamic fanaticism'. The state considered mission schools more and more as the perfect tools to suppress this and to assimilate the Javanese with the Dutch. After 1901, when the Ethical Policy was introduced, the relationship between the mission societies and the colonial state improved considerably since the latter came to appreciate the mission's initiatives in education, healthcare, and development work.

2. Various responses to the transmission of Christian knowledge

When Christianity first arrived in the region, long before the organised mission started, it was considered the 'white man's religion' and thus unsuitable for the Javanese. However, in the early decades of the nineteenth century some Javanese considered Christianity a new type of *ngelmu* (spiritual knowledge) and incorporated elements into their own religious tradition. Java has a long history of traveling religious teachers; *gurus*, who combined *ngelmu* from various religious traditions including Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, and eventually some *gurus*, included Christian convictions. These Christian *gurus* wandered around Java for many decades and were quite successful in comparison to the Dutch missionaries who entered the stage around 1850. The success of these Christian *gurus* lies in the fact that they were better able to associate Christian convictions with local religious traditions.⁹⁰⁵ They presented Christianity as additional *ngelmu*, which added new mystical rituals and formulas to the already existing hybrid tradition and allowed most old rituals and beliefs to be preserved or altered. Their followers selectively assimilated certain elements into their own religious lives and 'translated' the Christian message into their own terms.

In the Christian communities that were led by indigenous *gurus*, local *adat* was still obeyed, sometimes in more or less the same manner as was common in Muslim communities. For instance, they continued to celebrate Java's harvest festivals, but with Christian instead of Islamic prayers. Moreover, these *Kristen Jowo* (Javanese Christians) did not alter their physical appearance, built their churches in the same style as Javanese mosques, and used *gamelan* and *wayang*, sometimes even during their services. A specific Javanese religious belief retained by many of these Javanese Christians was the belief that Jesus Christ was the long-expected Ratu Adil; the messianic figure that would free the Javanese from repression and poverty.

⁹⁰⁵ Ricklefs, *Polarizing Javanese society*, 93.

Because of this continuation of Javanese traditions, conversion to this hybrid form of Christianity was not considered such a radical break with one's former life and community. Even though the process clearly resulted in an adjustment in self-identification, it usually did not result in a severe identity conflict as it most often did for converts in the Dutch Christian communities. The *Kristen Jowo* were better able to adapt Christianity and to incorporate their ethnic and religious identities without much tension and conflict. As a result, they were generally still considered 'true Javanese' after converting to Christianity, unlike the *Kristen Londo* (Dutch Christians). The Dutch missionaries presented Christianity and conversion rather differently than the indigenous Christian gurus. Whereas the Christian gurus presented a local religious option, the missionaries presented a universal, foreign set of beliefs. The response to their work ranged from total resistance, which was in some cases even violent, to acceptance and commitment.

The missionaries persistently Othered the *Kristen Jowo*. They constructed a boundary between their own communities and those led by the Christian gurus by opposing their 'syncretic' traditions to those of their own. They focused on their hybrid characters and maintained that this was the main reason for their success. The constructed opposition between both groups was, however, not so clear-cut in real life. For example, the Dutch missionary Wilhelm, who chose to join Sadrach's movement, Paulus Tosari, who led Modjo Warno together with missionaries of the NZG, and Leonard, the leader of the so-called 'Anthing Churches', all acted as cultural brokers between mission and indigenous congregations. Perhaps the construction of a boundary was a discursive strategy to overstate the differences and competitive circumstances that made their work difficult, in order to legitimize their presence in Java despite the low numbers of converts.

The missionary writings show that the Western understanding of the concept of conversion differed from that of the Javanese. In general, the Dutch missionaries understood conversion as a clear break with former religious convictions and practices while many Javanese and Sundanese apparently did not consider conversion a radical change in one's personal religious life. In reality, the process of conversion in Java occurred in slow and often in partial stages. It was not unusual that people incorporated only a few elements of Christianity into their own hybrid religious framework which basically remained unchanged. Dual affiliation, practicing Christianity and indigenous religion simultaneously, also occurred, without trying to merge the two into one coherent system.⁹⁰⁶ Moreover, leaving one religious system and community to enter another was not perceived as a

⁹⁰⁶ For more on indigene responses to Christian missionary activities in Asia and Africa, see David Lindenfeld and Miles Richardson, *Beyond Conversion and Syncretism. Indigenous Encounters with Missionary Christianity, 1800-2000* (Oxford, New York 2011).

definite decision, and so it was not uncommon that baptized Christians converted back after some time.

3. Motivations to convert or resist conversion

Initially, relatively marginal groups in society were attracted to Christianity. A significant number were poorly or uneducated, poor, handicapped, or ill. People that were in need of help, like unmarried women, widows or orphans, were more likely to join the church, - possibly because the missionaries could offer them security in the form of education, medical, or financial aid. The writings of the missionaries give some insight into the reasons why people chose to convert or resisted the Christian message. But, unfortunately, conversion narratives make up only a small portion of the articles in the mission journals. Moreover, the available descriptions are usually very concise and ego-documents of converts are not extant. The available conversion narratives, including the biographical account of Kartawidjaja, are all ontological narratives. Most are sensible stories, written in such a way that they resemble the Pauline model. In general, the missionaries understood conversion as sudden, rapid, and as a complete change in one's inner religious life. Conversion was commonly presented as something that happens by the grace of God. The missionaries' understanding of this concept, however, denies all agency to the people who converted or rejected conversion.

According to the mission discourse, the only acceptable reason to convert was that one accepted Jesus Christ as his or her saviour. The missionaries tried to stop people with more worldly reasons to convert from joining their congregations. The missionary writings, however, do mention divergent motives they came across, such as financial security, the hope to increase one's status, to be able to marry a Christian spouse, or other pragmatic reasons. Reasons concerning education and healthcare were probably not decisive, because the missionary writings do not imply that non-Christians were excluded from these services. I found that the missionaries frequently negotiated the narrow idea of what was considered an acceptable motivation for conversion to include deviant motives they encountered in daily life.

After analysing the writings of the six missionaries and especially the conversion narrative of Kartawidjaja, I can conclude that people's motives to convert were usually multi-layered; not merely pragmatic, opportunistic, or emotional. Conversion sometimes occurred as a quick, and sometimes, as an enduring process. Sometimes people converted individually, but often communally, and it often did not lead to a complete change in one's inner religious life and lifestyle. It proved hard for most people to give up former beliefs and practices, but it was equally hard for the missionaries to accept

adjustment of their teachings to the local context. I therefore agree with Rémy Madinier that conversion to Christianity often resembled a bargaining game between the missionaries and the local population.⁹⁰⁷

The majority of the Javanese and Sundanese, however, wholly rejected Christianity. Those who rejected the Christian faith did so for equally diverse motives as those who did choose to be baptized. The primary reason not to convert was, for most people, that they did not accept the Gospel as their truth. However, the missionary writings report that a substantial part of those who did show an interest in Christianity refrained from baptizing. Some chose to do so because they feared leaving the familiarity of their own religion, but more importantly, many feared losing social and economic status within their (Muslim) community. There are also examples of people who rejected the Gospel but had a desire for Western culture and knowledge.⁹⁰⁸ These people considered the Dutch missionaries transmitters of secular knowledge and were especially attracted to the Western style of education the missionaries offered. This explains the enormous number of students who yearly applied to Van Lith's Xaverius College in Muntilan. Although not all students converted to Christianity, they did convert their lifestyles after spending several years in a Western environment.

According to the mission reports, individuals who wished to convert were almost always put under pressure by the people around them, ranging from name-calling to physical harassment. The missionary writings relate most of these counter strategies to 'fanatic' *hajjis* and *santris*. The Protestant missionaries blamed especially these negative reactions to conversion for the missions' lack of success. Remarkably, the Catholics did not explicitly mention such counter strategies, which might suggest that the Protestants overstated the risk of ostracism to justify the limited number of baptists.

Only sporadically was pressure applied to entire Christian communities and their leading missionary or guru. Even though the *Kristen Jowo* communities differed less from their Muslim neighbours than the *Kristen Londo*, they were not always accepted without difficulties either. For example, Sadrach's congregation had occasionally been the victim of harassment; its church has even been set on fire.⁹⁰⁹ There are, however, no accounts of big uprisings against the Christian presence. Likely, the Christian missionaries had such little success in making converts in this initial phase that they were not perceived as much of a threat. Javanese Muslims therefore did not see the need to organise themselves against the mission. The relationship between Muslim communities and the Christian missionaries and their followers were peaceful overall. Even though some of the six

⁹⁰⁷ Rémy Madinier and Michel Picard, *The Politics of Agama in Java and Bali* (London, New York 2011).

⁹⁰⁸ Lindenfeld, 'Indigenous encounters with Christian missionaries in China and West Africa', 327-369.

⁹⁰⁹ Ricklefs, *Polarising Javanese society*, 118.

missionaries studied here wrote that they maintained good relations with local Muslim leaders, there was no official dialogue between the Christians and Muslims.

4. *Becoming Christian*

According to the mission discourse, accepting Christianity meant the beginning of a new life. Because reality asked for a more nuanced view, I believe this rigid attitude was the main reason for the lack of success for the Dutch mission. In the Christian communities that were led by Dutch missionaries, converting to Christianity generally meant giving up the *adat*, including many traditions such as the decoration of family graves, harvest festivals, *zakat*, *wayang* plays, *gamelan* music, and circumcision - traditions that coloured social and family life. Converts in the Dutch congregations had to alter their lifestyles completely - they were expected to give up their holidays, celebrate weddings and births in a different way, deal with illnesses differently, and bury and commemorate their deceased in a 'Christian manner'. Consequently, people feared identity loss because becoming Christian implied becoming 'Dutch' in the eyes of many Javanese.

All missionaries complained occasionally that the Javanese and Sundanese focused solely on the external elements of religion. They believed that being a good Christian meant one was baptized, went to Church, prayed, and participated in the Eucharist. Harthoorn was convinced that religion did not mean anything more to the Javanese than fulfilling its obligations and that there was no 'inner experience' whatsoever.⁹¹⁰ Van Eendenburg and his wife shared this opinion with Harthoorn. Niescina Van Eendenburg complained in a letter to the board that although the Christians had changed their habits from praying five times a day and circumcising their children, to attending the services on Sundays and baptizing their children, they still did not understand that they should pay attention during the services and that they did not internalize what was being discussed. According to Niescina, they thought that fulfilling the obligations was enough to be a good Christian and that personal faith was not a priority.⁹¹¹

After analysing the missionary writings closely, however, I can conclude that faith alone was also not considered enough to be a 'good Christian'. The missionaries expected more of their followers despite their continuous emphasis on inner conviction. The missionaries expected their followers to act according to what they considered 'proper Christian behaviour'. So the Christian identity was also an enacted identity; an identity that shows in everyday practice. Christian Javanese

⁹¹⁰ Harthoorn, *de Evangelische Zending en Oost-Java*, 55.

⁹¹¹ Niescina van Eendenburg, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Pangharepan 10 September 1894) Utrechts Archief.

were in many cases supposed to change the way they celebrated, ate, dressed, prayed, or talked. Conversion therefore had many consequences besides a changed religious adherence. Baptized Javanese Christians found themselves in a difficult position. They were no longer accepted in their former communities because they had given up a large part of their Javanese identity. However, they were not accepted into the Dutch Christian community either; simply because their ethnic decent prohibited that in such a strict hierarchical society. The converts needed to negotiate their multiple identities by using various strategies. They sought to manage their intersecting identities in such a way that there was no internal contradiction between their ethnic and religious orientations in order to find their place in the Javanese Muslim society as a Christian.

The Dutch, including the missionaries, did not consider the Javanese and Sundanese equal. The population of Java was constantly Othered by portraying them as inferior to Europeans in the missionary writings. Albers wrote for example: 'It is an unfortunate people, those Sundanese; it is a people without a brain and without a heart.'⁹¹² The indigenous people were mostly presented in a child-like manner or as existing on a different timescale to the Dutch.⁹¹³ Poensen argued that all missionaries should simplify their teachings the best they could because he did not think the Javanese were able to understand Christianity. He compared them to babies who could not digest solid food at once, but needed to be breastfed first for months.⁹¹⁴ The local population was depicted as 'backward', 'primitive', 'underdeveloped' or 'immature', and these representations gained the status of 'truth' because they were created in an imperial context with a strong imbalance in power. These created 'truths' had very real consequences in state policy; it legitimated imperial aggression and suppression. The mission churches were not free of disparity either. The missionaries, too, belittled continuously their followers and often did not even consider them 'true' Christians. In line with the then dominant discourse on racial hierarchy, the missionaries portrayed the Javanese and Sundanese as children who were not yet capable of true religiosity.⁹¹⁵

It seems that many missionaries, including Hoevenaars, Van Eendenburg, and Albers, were unable to accept that Christianity in Java could not be an exact duplicate of Christianity in the Netherlands. They had difficulties allowing Christianity to become locally rooted and tried to exclude nearly all foreign elements from their communities and to reshape them along Dutch Christian lines.

⁹¹² Christiaan Albers, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Ciandur 13 July 1866) Utrechts Archief.

⁹¹³ For example: Carel Poensen, 'lets over de Javaan als mensch' or S.E. Harthoorn, *Diary on April and May 1858* (Malang 26 May 1858) Utrechts Archief.

Carel Poensen, *Letter to the board of the NZG* (Kediri 25 March 1883) Utrechts Archief.

Carel Poensen, 'lets over Javaanse naamgeving en eigennamen', in: *Mededeelingen* (Rotterdam 1870).

⁹¹⁴ Carel Poensen, 'lets over Javaanse naamgeving en eigennamen', in: *Mededeelingen* (Rotterdam 1870).

⁹¹⁵ For example, Christiaan Albers, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Ciandur 29 August 1864) Utrechts Archief. S.E. Harthoorn, *Letter to the board of the NZG* (Malang 31 December 1858) Utrechts Archief.

The missionary writings, including those of Harthoorn and Van Lith, are ambivalent on this point. While the intersection of a 'true' Javanese and a 'true' Christian identity was the formal aim of the Christian mission, it was actually an unattainable ideal, because these identities were considered conflicting by many. This is confirmed by the then commonly heard expression: '*Landa wurung, Jawa tanggung*' (not Dutch enough and not fully Javanese anymore).⁹¹⁶

5. Culture or religion?

The colonial government stipulated the dominant discourse on religion and determined to a large extent the definition of 'religion'. As such the state categorized local practices in terms of 'religious' or 'cultural'. A distinction between Islamic law, the *Shari'a*, and customary law, the *adat*, was invented, and *adat* changed into a rigid system. I showed that in line with the prevailing political discourse in the Dutch Indies, the Dutch mission discourse concerning the continuation of Javanese practices within Christian communities also focused on the assumed division between 'religion' and 'culture' (*adat*). Whereas some missionaries, including Van Eendenburg, avoided discussing the continuation of former practices in his community, other missionaries spent hours theorizing the subject and arguing their viewpoints to their board. The dominant mission discourse stipulated that practices that could be considered cultural could be allowed, but that non-Christian religious practices should be banned from the Christian communities. There was, however, no unanimity about where the border between those two categories should be exactly. Every missionary applied this construction as he pleased in deciding upon certain practices. Especially hybrid traditions proved difficult to sort in the official categories and the missionaries' arguments for allowing or denying certain practices are consequently ambiguous.

Most missionaries found a solution in presenting hybrid traditions as cultural traditions and opposing these to Islam. While the discourse did not openly turn against Islam, I found that the actual criterion for them was not so much whether a practice was cultural or religious in origin, but whether the practice could be linked to Islam. The missionaries used this criterion as a discursive strategy to negotiate the dominant discourse that focused on the distinction between culture and religion to justify their decisions. For example, a practice that undoubtedly had severe religious significance, the *slametan*, was allowed by all six missionaries. To justify this decision, which went against the dominant discourse, they emphasized that the ritual was not tied to Islam. In this way, they could argue that the *slametan* was part of Javanese *adat*. The argument Samuel Harthoorn and Franciscus van Lith

⁹¹⁶ Kristanto Budiprabowo, *Sadrach, early leader in the history of Javanese Christianity*, unpublished thesis at Universitas Gadjah Mada (2010) available at: https://www.academia.edu/2554109/SADRACH_EARLY_LEADER_IN_THE_HISTORY_OF_JAVANESE_CHRISTIANITY (May 2014).

employed to allow circumcision in their communities was also that it was not a Muslim ritual *per se*, but a ritual event native to the Indies. In this way, they crossed the boundary constructed by their colleagues, who considered the ritual too closely linked to Islam to allow its continuation.

The missionaries were much more tolerant in respect to animistic, Hindu and Buddhist remnants in Javanese culture than towards Islam. Apparently, they did not even classify these traditions as religions, but considered them purely part of culture or *adat*. Perhaps this was because these elements had so deeply penetrated Javanese society that they seemed invincible.⁹¹⁷ Islam, however, had not yet rooted itself firmly in all parts of Java and could be the reason why the missionaries dared to take a firmer stand against Islamic beliefs and traditions. Another possibility is that the missionaries considered animism, Hinduism, and Buddhism at a lower stage of development than Islam and Christianity, and were convinced these elements would in due time disappear by themselves.

After analysing the missionary writings it became clear to me that the most challenging aspect of being a missionary was not persuading people to convert, but guiding those willing to convert on their way of becoming 'true' Christians. Because the missionaries worked in a contact zone where disparate cultures met, they were constantly pressed to accommodate. They found themselves in the difficult position where they had to accommodate the often contradictory wishes of both their employer and of the local population, while still producing sufficient quantitative results. Each missionary tried to find this balance in their own way and their practical decisions disclose their personal priorities.

The Protestant missionary Samuel Eliza Harthoorn and the Jesuit Franciscus van Lith were different from their contemporaries in their missionary approach. Both prioritized the wishes of the local Christians over the demands of their superiors and allowed their followers to continue customs that the other missionaries considered unchristian, including *wayang* plays, *gamelan*, divorce, and even circumcision. Their unorthodox approach led them into conflict with their colleagues and superiors, yet these conflicts encouraged development in the mission discourse and policies of the societies and the missionaries. Van Lith started as a missionary 36 years after Harthoorn left the mission and it is clear he built his theory on Harthoorn's experiences. Although Harthoorn and Van Lith are now remembered as liberal, modern thinkers for allowing their Christian followers to continue most of their former customs and traditions, I consider them mere pragmatics. I argue in this thesis that their writings show that they both considered adaptation a method to attract new believers and certainly not the ultimate goal of the Christian mission. Harthoorn, and especially Van Lith, may have

⁹¹⁷ Madinier, 'The Catholic politics of inclusiveness'.

contributed to the formation of a localized church, but this was not their ideal. Both argued that localized expressions of Christianity had to be tolerated in the initial phase of the mission to minimize people's sense of identity loss, but had to be eradicated after several generations.

6. *The Dutch mission and Islam*

The missionaries' attitude towards Islamic practices within their Christian communities fits in the greater Dutch mission discourse concerning Islam. Direct confrontation was to be avoided; by not openly focusing the debate on Islam, Islam was silenced and marginalized. I showed that Islam was downplayed in the discourse and that both the mission organisations and all missionaries minimized repeatedly, or even denied, the prominence of Islam in Javanese society and especially in the personal lives of the Javanese and Sundanese. The missionaries continually constructed a difference between the peoples' personal and public religious lives in their writings to reconfirm the common, orientalist notion that Islam was nothing but a thin veneer that covered an entirely different religious system. Even Samuel Harthoorn and Carel Poensen of the NZG, who studied the Javanese people thoroughly and acquired a good reputation with their publications on Javanese Islam, held the conviction that the Javanese were not *true* Muslims and even that *real* Islam could not be found in the Indies. Harthoorn is famous for coining the term 'Javanism', which is still used today. However, with this term, he diminished consistently the importance of Islam in the Javanese society and in the personal lives of Javanese Muslims. Although Poensen dealt explicitly with Islam in his work, he too differentiated continually between *real* Islam and Javanese Islam, the last being of a different, hence lower, order in his opinion.

In general, the missionaries had a deep contempt for Islam. Yet, the difference between Muslims and Christians in the Javanese interior were not as clear-cut as the missionaries wished them to be. There are some striking similarities between Islam and Christianity as they occurred in Java. I believe the divergence in Javanese Islam resembles the divergence in Javanese Christianity and I will draw some parallels between them. Both Christianity and Islam were divided into two currents in Java: a 'more orthodox' current, namely the *Putihan* and the *Kristen Londo* and a hybrid 'Javanized' version of each religion: the *Abangan* and the *Kristen Jowo*. The adherents of the 'Javanized' currents included beliefs and traditions of their forefathers which had its roots in various religions. Animistic, Hindu, and Buddhist elements were present in *Abangan* Islam; when the indigenous Christian communities began to form, they built on this tradition and consequently included pre-Islamic and Islamic beliefs and practices. The sources show that the indigenous Christian communities accepted traditions that had originally derived from Islam, such as praying at fixed times, like Paulus Tosari did in Modjo Warno.

The *Abangan* and *Kristen Jowo* communities focused especially on the mystical aspects of their faith. Some Javanese Christians would have prayer meetings during the week, during which the partakers performed rituals, or ‘mystical exercises’, to reach ‘*slamet*’ or peace of mind. For example, Sadrach’s followers repeated a Christian *shahada* that had been introduced by the Christian guru Coolen: ‘*La ilaha illa Allah, Yesus Kristus iyo roh Allah*’ (There is no God but Allah, Jesus is the spirit of Allah) until the participants reached some sort of trance.⁹¹⁸ This ritual strongly resembled Sufi *dhikr* rituals. The *Abangan* and *Kristin Jowo* currents were not institutionalized and usually depended on charismatic leadership. They did not have strict doctrines and rituals were more important than texts in the practice of their religion. In contrast, the two ‘modern’ and ‘orthodox’ currents, the *Putihan* and *Kristen Londo*, were strongly institutionalized and dogmatic. They put more emphasis on meaning in their faith and focused on text, rather than ritual. Fixed scripture became more important than oral religious traditions.

The resemblance, however, does not hold water when it comes to the social and economic status of its members. A clear difference in socio-economic status can be detected between the *Putihan* and *Abangan*. The *Putihan* was an elitist group. They were mostly highly educated in Islam and able to read the *Qur’an* and other scripture. Many of them had the financial capacity to undertake the *hajj* and study for a while in Mecca. The majority of Javanese society considered the purist *Putihan* an exclusivist group that had, to some extent, removed itself from the Javanese social and cultural environment. The *Abangan* was, in contrary to the *Putihan*, better represented in the interior, not in the urbanized coastal areas. They were mostly uneducated, illiterate people who held on to the traditions of their forefathers. Such a difference does not exist between the *Kristen Jowo* and *Kristen Londo*. Both the gurus and the Dutch missionaries focused primarily on the *Abangan* in the interior. They were supposedly easier to convert because they were less captivated by Islam. The majority of the *Kristen Jowo* and *Kristen Londo* were therefore from the lower social strata of the Javanese society.

7. Rivalry and development in missionizing strategies

The missionaries not only competed with the indigenous Christian gurus, but also with each other. There was an ongoing competition between the various Protestant denominations and between the Protestants and Catholics. The NZG had the advantage that they started the mission fifty years prior to the Catholic mission. The NZV started proselyting in Java 35 years before the Jesuits. The Catholics,

⁹¹⁸ Partonadi, *Sadrach’s community and its contextual roots*, 130-135.
Guillot, *L’affaire Sadrach*, 82.

however, had other advantages; they had higher educated missionaries, who could learn from the Protestant mistakes, and a larger budget which they did not have to divide between many districts. After Petrus Hoevenaars was released from his position in Mendut, Franciscus van Lith had the freedom to decide the course of the Catholic mission and could rely upon the entire mission budget. He chose to spend all his efforts and resources on education, which proved a very successful strategy. Muntilan, where the famous Xaverius College was situated, quickly became the Catholic centre of Java, and Catholics still form a substantial minority in this area today.⁹¹⁹ The Protestant organizations all had more than one missionary working the field and the boards did not prioritize one district above the others. Therefore, all the Protestant districts struggled with financial problems and did not have the resources to strongly pursue their ideas. For example, Carel Poensen never managed to raise the necessary money to realize his plan for Christian agricultural enterprises. An enormous institution like the Xaverius College in Muntilan could never have been realised by any of the Protestant organisations.

Their missionizing approach also differed: the Protestants focused primarily on the conversion of individuals and emphasized 'inward' conviction, whereas the Catholics concentrated on converting communities, which proved more successful. The Protestants also concentrated more on people of the lower classes, while Hoevenaars and Van Lith aimed more at the conversion of the indigenous elite. Furthermore, the Catholics were more indulgent towards their young Christian communities in the sense that they already allowed Catholics of the first generation into priesthood. The Protestants refused to train indigenous ministers because they believed that the young Javanese congregation did not yet have the theological sophistication to govern itself. The most important difference was, perhaps, that Catholicism resembled Javanese religious traditions more than Protestantism. For example, Catholic devotions fit well in the Javanese tradition where various gods and spirits were worshipped and asked for help with short prayers, small sacrifices, and other rituals. Van Lith figured these 'pagan' rituals could be easily replaced with a devotion to a particular saint.

Even though all six missionaries did not have to work according to a prearranged plan and the boards actually encouraged them to propose new approaches and strategies, they all used similar methods. Every missionary focused primarily on teaching and providing medical care. Furthermore, all six of them supported the people financially in implicit or more explicit ways. I disclosed that there was not much development in the missionaries' methods in the initial phase of the organized mission in Java. Only a few of the first generation missionaries changed their strategy in the course of their careers. The most successful missionaries I have analysed adjusted their strategies and made it a

⁹¹⁹Madinier, *The Catholic politics of inclusiveness*.

priority to create a safe and social environment for Christians. NZV missionary Simon Van Eendenburg and the Jesuit Franciscus Van Lith focused on creating a safe environment for a Christian community by the founding of a Christian *desa* with communal land and through setting up an extensive Catholic education system to form a new generation that was raised in a Catholic environment, respectively. The others did not alter their strategy much in the course of their careers. After 1910, however, a change is noticeable in the Protestants' approach. The way the indigene converts understood Christianity in their own terms started to receive more attention in the mission discourse. Furthermore, the Protestants started to envision how they could adapt their missionizing methodology to this understanding. This new phase in missionizing is shortly addressed in the epilogue of this thesis.

Remarkably, all six missionaries studied eventually were so preoccupied with their daily tasks of managing their schools and health centres, traveling around the district to check on their assistants, and attending to their congregations, that they left the actual preaching to unconverted Javanese to their assistants. So even in the Dutch mission districts, it was ultimately indigenous Christians who continued the process of religious exchange and conversion. Samuel Harthoorn sadly concluded at the end of his career as a missionary: 'the missionary is not an apostle, but a proselytizer. Not a man of the people, but a manufacturer of churches. Not an evangelist, but someone who merely baptizes and serves the Lord's Supper, not a father in spiritual matters, but a judge in spiritual matters, who threatens with the curse of excommunication.'⁹²⁰

8. Negotiations

The Dutch missionaries arrived in a rapidly changing socio-economic, political, and more importantly, religious environment, where they encountered cultures and religions significantly different from their own. My foremost aim was to elucidate how challenging their position was, since they found themselves on the border between the Christian and Islamic world, as colonizers amongst the colonized. Because of their position in the colonial contact zone, the missionaries had to deal with the discourses of the multiple parties involved. They had to take the aims and rules of the mission societies' boards and the colonial state into account in their attempt to win over the local population - a third party that also had its own expectations and objectives. Because the boards' strict ideas about 'true' conversion and 'proper' Christian behaviour differed considerably from what the missionaries encountered in the field, they were compelled to compromise at these fields and to justify their

⁹²⁰ S.E. Harthoorn, *Diary on 1860* (Malang 1860) Utrechts Archief.

choices to their employers. With *reading against the grain* I exposed and analysed these continual negotiations in the missionary writings.

I argued that the missionaries needed to justify their presence, approach, and results to the boards of their societies, but also to the sponsoring public in the Netherlands, the colonial state, the local population, and even to other mission organizations active in Java. Since the results were not very convincing in this initial phase of the organized Dutch mission in Java, they had to find ways to negotiate their positions as good missionaries. I showed how they all strategically used and combined various discourses that evolve around the overarching discourse on religion to claim that identity. Their most important discursive strategy was constructing a distinction between 'culture' and 'religion' and between 'true' and 'superficial' religiosity.

First, the missionaries in this study all negotiated with the discourse on Javanese Islam to justify their limited results. Many, including Albers and Van Eendenburg, pointed to Islam as too strong a force in the region and argued it was nearly impossible to missionize among Muslims who 'hated' Christianity.⁹²¹ Conversely, the missionaries also legitimized the slow progress of their work by pointing out that after centuries; Java still was not really Islamized. They continuously Othered Javanese and Sundanese Muslims from *true* Muslims by claiming they had only pragmatically adopted a few Islamic convictions and practices into their religious lives. They used this as an argument to claim that true conversions were nearly impossible in Java.

Second, the question as to what was *real* religiosity and who could be considered *true* Muslims or Christians as opposed to superficial believers formed the most prominent discussion in the mission discourse. The Dutch had a very different understanding of what constitutes *real* religiosity from the people of Java and it proved quite difficult for the missionaries to negotiate with both discourses. As a consequence, their positioning seemed often ambiguous or even inconsistent. It is very admirable that some missionaries, for example Van Lith, succeeded in finding a middle way between local cultural traditions and local ways of being religious and the notion of Dutch religiosity.

The missionaries were constantly Othering Muslims and Christians with a hybrid religious identity from what they considered 'true' adherents of these religions. The missionaries were instructed by their superiors to avert 'superficial Christians' from entering their congregation. The Protestants therefore even tested their candidates on their knowledge before baptism. However, I showed that the missionary writings often contained ambiguities on this point. The missionaries' attitude differed in real life from what they claimed on paper. They all confessed that they sometimes

⁹²¹ For example: Simon Van Eendenburg, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Sukabumi 8 May 1883) Utrechts Archief.

admitted persons who had failed the exam. To comply with the order to convert large numbers of people, while obeying the instruction to deny 'superficial Christians', the missionaries had to negotiate the discourse on what constitutes a 'true Christian'. They stretched the boundaries of this notion by downplaying knowledge and prioritizing the factor of 'inner belief' which was much harder to verify by the boards back home.

Third, all missionaries stressed repeatedly that impressive results could not be expected yet since the Javanese people were not developed enough to grasp the magnitude of Christianity. The missionaries legitimized their slow progress by arguing that the Javanese had to be civilized first and reach a higher level of development before true conversion could take place. Real devotion was only possible after sufficient education; hence rapid conversions were actually not desirable. They maintained that forming *true* Christians would take a very long time, probably more than one generation. This tied in to the dominant discourse on religion and especially to the discourse on the distinction between culture and religion. The missionaries maintained that while they may not be very successful at bringing religion, they were successful at bringing civilization or culture to the people of Java.

9. Suggestions for further research

Even though most Javanese resisted the Christian call, the Dutch missionaries did have an impact on the Javanese society in various ways. The Christian mission was definitely decisive for the future of religion in the region.⁹²² I believe the missionary endeavour in Java deserves more scholarly attention beyond the matter of successfulness in numbers of converts. Social realities are more complex than a win-or-lose rhetoric can describe and the missionaries exerted a significant impact relative to the actual proselytizing. They were undoubtedly agents of change and incited social and scientific progress. However, they were primarily factors in collective change rather than the individual change they desired.

Recent scholarship has only just started to address the profoundly material dimensions of missionary activities. Many missionaries have been heavily involved in practical projects to remake the world. Their global projects have transformed landscapes, forms of architecture, and modes of dress, but have also shaped underlying narratives of modernity and modernisation.⁹²³ In Java, missionaries had a substantial influence on social developments because they opened healthcare centres, and

⁹²² Steenbrink, *Catholics in Indonesia Vol. 1*, 219.

⁹²³ Keane, *Christian moderns*, 2007.

schools, credit unions, and agricultural enterprises. These Christian *desas* formed small Christian enclaves within the Muslim society. Together they formed a network through which goods, ideas, and people moved. Consequently Dutch missionaries transformed the social, religious, and economic landscape of nineteenth century Java. Moreover, they had a considerable influence in the field of language development. The missionaries not only introduced new religious and philosophical terms, they standardized spoken language by translating the Bible in the vernacular languages, while simultaneously changing the Javanese notion of religion by vigorously propagating literacy.

Even if the number of Javanese Christian converts was small in the period under study, still it was a unique achievement in missionary history in the Islamic world. Comparative research between the Christian mission in the Indies and other Islamic regions is therefore necessary to uncover the unique qualities of this mission in this context. I have not given much attention to embedding of the Dutch mission discourse in the international discourse, which is especially an important angle after 1910. That year, the first World Mission Conference was held in Edinburgh; this event can be seen as the culmination of all nineteenth century Protestant Christian missions. After this conference, organisations from various countries began to work closer together and share their experiences and knowledge. Consequently, the international mission network became much denser in the course of the twentieth century.

Although biographies are not uncommon in mission studies, not many really address the personal and family lives of the missionaries. The available material can provide us with more insight into the personal developments of these extraordinary men. What kind of impact did this all-consuming type of work and the continual lack of major results have on their self-image, spiritual life, and faith? How did this work influence their personal life, for instance their relationship with their wives? The missionaries' wives have also remain understudied even though many formed central figures in the mission. Many supported their husbands by setting up handicraft schools for girls and making contact with indigene women. Nevertheless, the majority of them led isolated lives under difficult circumstances. They tried to raise their families in a country with a trying climate, without knowledge of the customs and languages, and without any social network.

Other scholars have researched the Dutch perception of Java's local culture and religion, culminating in Karel Steenbrink's book *'Dutch colonialism and Indonesian Islam'*. However, the Javanese perception of the Dutch mission has remained understudied and is also largely left out of the scope of this inquiry. Unfortunately, sources written by the Javanese about their encounter with Dutch missionaries are scarce. I have managed to include just one account - the conversion story of Kartawidjaja. Yet, I believe it is of the utmost importance to continue the search for more indigenous

sources on both the Dutch mission and on those Javanese gurus who spread the Gospel in the nineteenth century. Sources from Javanese authors are necessary in order to provide a more complete and nuanced story of Java's encounter with the Christian mission. Surely, the history of how the people of Java rejected or accepted and localized the Christian faith cannot be told without their stories.

Epilogue: Towards a new phase

The epilogue of this thesis addresses the changes and developments in Dutch mission organisations and in the politics of the Dutch Indies in the beginning of the twentieth century. The character of the mission changed after the turn of the century because of external influences. Political developments in this period, such as the introduction of the 'Ethical Policy' and Snouck Hurgronje's 'Association Policy', and of course the burgeoning of Indonesian nationalism had great impact on the mission and will therefore be discussed briefly in the first paragraph. The cry for independence was also audible in the mission churches. In various regions of Java, congregations announced that they considered themselves ready for more independence. The fourth paragraph therefore addresses the emancipation of mission churches in the 1920's and 1930's.

The Catholic and Protestant mission also changed because of internal developments. The NZG and UZV grew closer together after the turn of the century. The boards first decided to combine their forces in the training of aspirant missionaries, but later expanded their collaboration to other fields. This collaboration was first known as *De Combinatie* (The Combination) and eventually received the name: *Samenwerkende Zendingscorporaties* (SCZ, Collaborating Mission Corporations). In due course, the NZV joined this overarching organisation as well. Furthermore, the Protestant missionaries slowly changed their perspective on missionizing and realised that it was necessary to deeply understand the people they were trying to convert. Thus, they started to adapt their methods and message increasingly to suit local customs. The Jesuit mission also changed its methods after the turn of the century. Franciscus van Lith decided to focus on one mission strategy around 1905 and this strategy remained the principal approach of the Jesuit mission in Java until the Second World War.

In the closing paragraph, I evaluate how Dutch missionaries contributed to the knowledge of Islam and ethnology of Java in Dutch scholarship. The Protestant societies maintained ties with Dutch universities, especially with the University of Leiden. Most missionaries were not educated at a university, but the teachers of the mission schools and the board members generally were, especially after 1900.⁹²⁴ Eventually, the seminary of the SCZ set up a collaborating programme with the University of Leiden, so its students could study there during the final years of their education. On the other hand, scholars who were interested in Javanese culture, religion, and customs were very much interested in the knowledge gained by the missionaries who spent years in the field. Many scholars studied the journals of the mission societies with great interest. Most missionaries were prolific authors and the mission journals consisted, for a large part, of ethnographic accounts of the local

⁹²⁴ Enklaar, *Kom over en help ons!*, 36-45.

communities. In this way, many missionaries contributed to the institutionalization of knowledge about non-Western cultures, languages, and religions.

1. A new phase in colonial policy

An unintentional effect of the educational programmes of the Ethical and Association Policy introduced shortly after the turn of the century was the development of a new Indonesian elite who did *not* associate themselves with the Dutch, but who aspired to rule over an independent Indonesia. This new generation was well-educated in European-style schools and knew how to organise themselves and to articulate their objections to Dutch rule. In hindsight, many of the colonial establishment therefore considered the Ethical and Association Policy a mistake. They believed it countered Dutch interests and actually contributed to the Indonesian National Awakening.

Most literature argues that the Indonesian National Awakening started with the Japanese victory in Russia in 1905. This victory showed it was possible for an Asian country to defeat a European imperial empire and inspired many in the Asian colonies. However, the Dutch had imposed their authority on multiple peoples in the Indonesian archipelago who had never shared a unified national identity before. Only in the first half of the twentieth century did people from different parts of the archipelago began to develop a national consciousness; they started to feel 'Indonesian'. A new highly educated elite emerged with nationalistic feelings. In general, the mission reacted positively to the Indonesian awakening. As Marinus Lindenborn, director of the NZV commented, 'The mission should be rejoiced about the National Awakening because a sleeping people is not a desirable missionary object.'⁹²⁵ Nevertheless, most missionaries were active in the interior of Java, far from the bustling and political centres, where it took much longer to notice a change.⁹²⁶

New organisations and leadership started to develop. In 1908 *Budi Utomo* was founded and in 1911 the *Sarekat Islam*.⁹²⁷ *Budi Utomo* (Prime Philosophy) was the first native political society in the Dutch East Indies. *Budi Utomo*'s primary aim was, at first, not political; its initial goal was to inspire native intellectuals to improve the masses in education and culture. However, it gradually shifted toward political aims with representatives in the conservative *Volksraad* (the People's Council). *Budi Utomo*, however, officially dissolved in 1935. *Sarekat Islam* (Islamic Union) was the first nationalist political party in Indonesia to gain wide popular support. Founded in 1912, the party originated as an

⁹²⁵ Lindenborn, *Zendingslicht op den Islam*, 141.

⁹²⁶ Graaf van Randwijck, *Handelen en denken in dienst der Zending*, 339.

⁹²⁷ Much has been written about the Indonesian National Awakening and the founding of the nationalist parties. For example: Ricklefs, *A history of Modern Indonesia*.

association of Muslim merchants who wanted to advance their economic interests in relation to Chinese merchants in Java. However, the association became more and more political. It quickly gained mass support and started working for the self-government of the Dutch Indies. Whereas most missionaries had reacted positively to the foundation of the *Budi Utomo*, everyone was worried about the effects the *Sarekat Islam* would have on the Indonesian people. The *Sarekat Islam* was hostile to the Christian mission, which was, for example, evident in the boycott of Jurrianus Verhoeven's mission hospital in Cideres for several months.⁹²⁸

The Jesuit missionary Franciscus van Lith welcomed the Indonesian Revival with great enthusiasm. He remarked: 'A new era and a new world is ushered and who is smart, prepares himself for it' and that is exactly what he did and he encouraged the Catholic Church to do so as well.⁹²⁹ He tried to support the upcoming nationalist movement by stimulating the development of Javanese culture by founding cultural associations, organizing conferences, and of course, especially by promoting Catholic education. Unlike most missionaries and colonial officials, including Snouck Hurgronje, he foresaw an independent Indonesia and realised that the Indonesians would perhaps turn against the 'Dutch religion' after they had gained their independence. Therefore, he considered it necessary, already in the first decade of the twentieth century, for the Catholic Church to develop a Javanese character. He tried to include local religious and cultural values and traditions in his church and to form an indigenous clergy early on. Van Lith urged the Catholic Church to operate independently from Dutch colonial politics so the churches would not be closed down after independence. He continuously stressed that in the church everyone is Catholic; not Dutch or Javanese.⁹³⁰ Again, Van Lith argued and acted from a pragmatic point of view.

In December 1916, the Dutch government installed the *Volksraad* (The people's council) and Van Lith represented the Catholic Party in this council, since he had co-founded the '*Katolika Wandawa*' (The Catholic Family), a Catholic socialist federation in 1913.⁹³¹ Nevertheless, Van Lith repeatedly criticised the Catholic Party because the majority members were European, not Indonesian. In reality, the people's council had hardly any influence and a new council was formed as a result - '*de Indische Herzieningscommissie*' (The Indian Committee for Revision). This council consisted of twenty-six members who were supposed to represent all movements in the Indonesian archipelago. The members were chosen from different ethnic backgrounds, areas, classes, and

⁹²⁸ Graaf van Randwijck, *Handelen en denken in dienst der Zending*, 340.

⁹²⁹ Franciscus van Lith, *De politiek van Nederland ten opzichte van Nederlands-Indië* ('s Hertogenbosch 1922) 28.

⁹³⁰ Van Lith, *De politiek van Nederland ten opzichte van Nederlands-Indië*, 80.

⁹³¹ Karel Steenbrink, *Catholics in Indonesia, a documented history 1808-1942, Volume 2, The spectacular growth of a self-confident minority 1903-1942* (Leiden 2007) 387.

religions. Van Lith was also chosen to represent the Catholic party in this council and continued to function as a middleman between the Javanese and the Dutch.

That same year, he was appointed by the Dutch government as a member of the '*Onderwijsraad*' (Education Council). In the context of this council, he made a journey to Manila in the Philippines to write a comparative study about education in colonies. The Philippines were governed in a decentralised way by the United States of America during that period. Decentralization was one of the aims of the Dutch-colonial Ethical Policy and Van Lith was very positive about this principle. He wished to introduce it in the Dutch Indies as soon as possible so that the colonial government in Java had all the power rather than of the government in The Hague.⁹³² He believed this would result in better legislation in the colony, since locals understood their own interests better than politicians on the other side of the world.

Many politicians in the Dutch Indies agreed that the colony would benefit from a decentralized system because the ministers in The Hague were not well enough informed about the situation in the colony to make the best decisions. However, there was no agreement on how that government would be formed. The Dutch, who lived in the Indies, were of the opinion that they, and perhaps also people of mixed descent, should form the colonial government. Many Indonesians, on the other hand, believed they deserved more control over their own country. Van Lith was of the opinion that the power should be equally shared between the Dutch, the people of mixed descent, and the indigenous population. He argued: 'Our biggest concern is that we, Catholics, do not get blamed for the introduction of a governmental system that is oppressive and humiliating to the natives'.⁹³³

In Van Lith's proposal, the colonial government would consist of two parties; a Dutch party and a party of people of mixed descent and indigenous people. The parliament needed regulation to avoid the outvoting of one of the two parties. Van Lith suggested introducing the British system of the House of Lords and the House of Commons, where the consent of both houses was needed to approve a proposal. One house would represent the whole population of the Indies, including Europeans, people of mixed descent, Arabs, and the Chinese. In this house, the indigenous Indonesians would form the majority. This majority was required because they knew best what the country needed. The other house would be formed by people who had the most 'interest' in the country. In this house the Dutch would form the majority, since they had the most necessary

⁹³² Franciscus van Lith, S.J. *Opvoeding tot autonomie 1, 2, 3* (three undated notebooks of Van Lith, available in the Jesuit Archive in Semarang).

⁹³³ Van Lith, S.J. *De politiek van Nederland ten opzichte van Nederlands-Indië*, 9.

knowledge and capital to safeguard the country's interests, according to Van Lith.⁹³⁴ Moreover, Van Lith believed that every man who could read and write should have voting rights so that this new government could be formed democratically.

Although Van Lith was in favour of increasing autonomy for the Indonesian people, he was not in favour of full independence. He did not believe the Indonesians were ready or able to govern themselves without Dutch guidance. He believed the Dutch first had to raise the Indonesians until they would be 'mature' enough to govern themselves and have an equal relationship with the Dutch.⁹³⁵ Yet, he saw in his own classroom that the children were much more disciplined than previous generations and he considered this clear proof that the guidance of the Dutch paid off.

The Protestant missionaries were not as involved in politics as the Jesuit Van Lith. There was no special attention in their writings to the upcoming political movements.⁹³⁶ Protestants in the Dutch Indies were represented in the *Volksraad* by the *Christelijke Ethische Partij* (Christian Ethical Party, CEP) since 1916, but indigenous Christians were not represented in this party. The Christian organisation *Mardi Pracoyo* (Pursuit of Faith) was founded in 1913 by indigenous Protestants. The organisation had around six thousand members after several years.⁹³⁷ Although the organisation was founded in Modjo Warno it was not an initiative of missionaries of the NZG. Still, the missionaries received it with enthusiasm because they hoped it would balance out the Islamic league. *Mardi Pracoyo* was initially not a political party; their aim was to organise social activities, to lead evangelization groups, to set up funds for poor church members, and to open schools, cooperatives, and banks.⁹³⁸ The organisation eventually gained political aspirations, but was unable to achieve them because of insufficient leadership and a lack of unity. In May 1918, the organisation underwent a reformation, was renamed *Perserikatan kaum Kristen* (union of Christians), and became more political.

2. The merging of the Protestant mission societies

The history of the Dutch Protestant mission was marked by the major separations in the nineteenth century. However, the differences between the societies had always been less pronounced in the Indies than in the Netherlands. Missionaries of different societies visited and supported each other in the field. They even became friends or family members! The NZV missionary Van Eendenburg, for

⁹³⁴ Van Lith, *De politiek van Nederland ten opzichte van Nederlands-Indië*, 23-24.

⁹³⁵ Van Lith, *De politiek van Nederland ten opzichte van Nederlands-Indië*, 46.

⁹³⁶ Sumartana, *Mission at the crossroads*, 132.

⁹³⁷ Sumartana, *Mission at the crossroads*, 130.

⁹³⁸ Sumartana, *Mission at the crossroads*, 130-134.

example, married the daughter of Johannes Kruyt, a prominent missionary of the NZG. Already in 1880, all Protestant missionaries active in Java had started to organise regular mission conferences to exchange their experiences and thoughts.⁹³⁹ Until 1901 these conferences were organised every few years, but from then on the conference became an annual event of the *Nederlandsche Zendingsbond* in Depok. At these conferences, the missionaries of different societies met with each other and strengthened the ties between them. After the turn of the century, the relationships between the different Protestant societies started to improve slowly in the Netherlands as well. Students of the NZG and the NZV participated together in a medical training program in a hospital in Rotterdam since this was financially beneficial for both groups.

J.C. Neurdenburg, who had been the director of the NZG for almost thirty years, passed away in 1895. His successor, Jan W. Gunning, was more open to the idea of collaboration with other Protestant mission societies. Gunning's journey to Java in 1900-1901 is now remembered as the starting point of the collaboration between the numerous Dutch Protestant mission societies that were, by then, active in the Dutch Indies. He not only visited mission districts of the three largest societies the NZG, the UZV, and the NZV, but also went to the districts of smaller societies such as the DZV, the NGZV, and the Salatiga-mission. In addition, Gunning attended the annual mission conference. This trip intensified the contacts between the various societies which eventually led to the instalation of a mission consulate in Batavia in 1905.

After his return in 1901, he proposed to the other board members of the NZG to join forces with other societies in the training of aspirant missionaries. The board invited the boards of the UZV and NZV to talk about a possible collaboration. The NZV rejected the proposal; fifteen members of the General Assembly were in favour, but twenty-nine voted against the idea because they considered the plan to be contrary to the first article of the NZV's declaration. This stated that 'the association consists of members who acknowledge that the Lord Jesus Christ is their infallible Saviour, who demonstrate this in their actions and declare that they will *not cooperate* with those, who deny His truthful and eternal Deity.'⁹⁴⁰ Nevertheless, The NZG and the UZV did proceed and officially founded a collective seminary in 1905 - the Dutch Mission School (*Nederlandsche Zendingsschool*) - to avoid fragmentation of knowledge and to diminish the costs of the missionary training.

⁹³⁹ Chr.G.F. de Jong, *Geschiedenis van de Nederlandse Zending en Overzeese Kerken: Midden-Java 1859-1931* (Zoetermeer 1997) 32.

⁹⁴⁰ 'De Vereeniging bestaat uit leden die erkennen, dat de Heere Jezus Christus hun volkomen Zaligmaker is; die dit in hunnen wandel betoonen, en verklaren niet te mogen samenwerken met degenen die Zijne waarachtige en eeuwige Godheid loochenen' (artikel 1, statuten 1858). Lindenborn, *De Nederlandsche Zendingsvereeniging*, 10.

That same year, Gunning also took on the position of secretary in the UZV. He now functioned as a bridge between these two societies; his reputation was further enhanced when he was also appointed as director of the UZV. The collaboration between the NZG and UZV became eventually known under the name *Samenwerkende Zendingcorporaties* (SCZ, Collaborating Mission corporations). The SCZ was led by a board which consisted of board members of both the NZG and the UZV who had equal saying. This way, both organisations kept their own character. The board came together once a week and met with the boards of the separate societies twice a month. In 1913, the Sangihe- and Talaud-Comité joined the corporation.⁹⁴¹ The SCZ was closely tied to the Dutch Reformed Church.

Those who had been leading figures of the NZV in the nineteenth century had by now retired and a new generation had assumed control. This generation had not experienced the fights and separations in the 1850's and 1860's and was therefore more open to the idea of collaboration between themselves and other mission societies, even including the NZG. The NZV changed their declaration in the summer of 1916. They changed 'their Saviour' back to 'the Saviour' and erased the clause regarding cooperation with other societies.⁹⁴² This opened the way for collaboration with the NZG. In 1917, the mission school of the SCZ moved to Oegstgeest and the board tried once again to convince the NZV to join them. That year the first student of the NZV was admitted to the mission school of the SCZ in Oegstgeest and after three years the seminary of the NZV officially acceded into the Dutch Mission School.⁹⁴³ The NZG, UZV, and NZV all contributed equally to the costs and were equally represented in the school's management. Even though the three largest Dutch mission societies worked together to train their aspiring missionaries for their task overseas, the societies themselves were not ready to merge. It was important to the NZV to hold on to their own essential character and therefore to minimize contacts with the NZG. They tried to avoid a fusion, but were ready to 'co-operate with others who share the aim to pursue the arrival of God's kingdom in our East-Indies, by the preaching of Jesus Christ; the only base of the mission and the mission association'.⁹⁴⁴

Despite their disagreements, it had become impossible to continue working separately because all societies had significant debt. Moreover, they finally realised they could work much more

⁹⁴¹ <http://resources.huygens.knaw.nl/repertoriumzendingmissie/gids/organisatie/12104145> (April 2014).

⁹⁴² The new declaration was: 'Members may only be those who recognise the true and eternal deity of Christ, confess Him as **the** perfect Saviour and are willing to contribute to achieve the in art. 1 mentioned aim.'

('Leden kunnen slechts zijn die de waarachtige en eeuwige Godheid van Christus erkennen, Hem als den volkomen Zaligmaker belijden en daarom willen medewerken tot het bereiken van het in art. 1 genoemde doel') (article 2, statutes 1916).

Van den Berg, *Kerkelijke strijd en zendingsorganisatie*, 77.

⁹⁴³ Lindenborn, *De Nederlandsche Zendingsvereniging*, 27.

⁹⁴⁴ Lindenborn, *De Nederlandsche Zendingsvereniging*, 36.

effectively in Java if they joined forces instead of competing with each other. Therefore, the NZV officially joined the SZC in 1923 and in 1931 the JC acceded into the cooperative corporation. All major Protestant mission societies were then together again under one administration after being apart since 1858. The office of the SZC was based in Oegstgeest where the seminary was already situated. The organisation, however, remained federal; each society kept their own administration and archive and the directors of the individual societies had equal authority within the overarching board.⁹⁴⁵ The SZC sought to strengthen the ties with the Dutch Reformed Church, whereas the NZG and NZV had always remain unaffiliated to any church.

After the Second World War (November 1946), the separations between the individual mission societies within the SZC completely vanished and the cooperating societies proceeded under a new name - *Vereenigde Nederlandse Zendingscorporaties* (United Dutch Mission corporations, VNZ).⁹⁴⁶ The periodicals of the various organizations were included in the '*Mededeelingen, Tijdschrift voor zendingswetenschap*' (Announcements, Journal for Mission Science), which formed the national platform for Dutch missionary activities after 1920. In 1951, the VNZ acceded into the *Raad voor de Zending* (Mission Council, RvZ) at the instigation of Hendrik Kraemer and the Dutch mission then became the responsibility of the churches.⁹⁴⁷

3. Changing approach in Protestant proselytizing

During the initial phase of the Dutch-organised mission in Java, all missionaries viewed the Indies from a Western perspective. They were all, but a few, assured of their own Western superiority and did not make an effort to see the world, Christianity, or Europeans through eyes other than their own. Most missionaries in the nineteenth century had not studied the local people and their culture and thus their opinions about native religious traditions usually did not differ much from that of colonial officials, tradesmen, or soldiers.⁹⁴⁸ They, too, labelled the convictions and practices of the Javanese and Sundanese mostly as emotional, chaotic, and irrational. The NZG had formed an exception in the nineteenth century because, in general, its missionaries had studied the local peoples, religions, and cultures more intensively than missionaries of other societies. After the turn of the century, and especially after 1910, a change was noticeable in the Dutch mission discourse. The missionaries finally increased their efforts to understand Islam and started to write much more on the subject.

⁹⁴⁵ Graaf van Randwijck, *Handelen en denken in dienst der zending*, 103.

⁹⁴⁶ On paper, however, the different societies remained separate from each other to avoid losing revenue.

⁹⁴⁷ H. Lems, 'Van genootschappen tot kerkelijke zending', in: H. Lems and K. van Vliet, *Geroepen tot Zending, Gids voor onderzoek naar de geschiedenis van de Hervormde zending in Indonesië en elders* (Utrecht 2010) 23.

⁹⁴⁸ Graaf van Randwijck, *Handelen en denken in dienst der zending*, 390.

Furthermore, the missionaries began to write about how the people they were trying to convert understood Christianity in their own terms and how they could adapt their methods to this understanding.

Before the fusion of the different mission schools in the Netherlands, the knowledge of Islam in the Dutch Indies was rather fragmented. The aim of the fusion was not only to reduce costs, but also to accumulate the knowledge that was available in the different societies. The societies attempted to reform the curriculum to a more academic programme after the fusion. Professor Dr A.M. Brouwer, headmaster of the Dutch Mission School since 1910, published a booklet '*De opleiding onzer zendelingen*' (The education of our missionaries) in 1912, in which he emphasised the need for more study of Islam in the curriculum.⁹⁴⁹ Since then, Islam formed an essential topic in the mission training of the SZC. In due course, the school set up collaboration with the University of Leiden and its students took classes on Islam during the final two years of the program.⁹⁵⁰ Moreover, from 1922 onward, Arabic was made a compulsory subject in the missionary training. This indicates a reversal in the perception of Java in the minds of the leading figures in the Dutch mission. Finally, the Javanese and Sundanese were really considered an Islamic people.

As a result of the changing missionary training in the Netherlands and the shifting interest in the mission discourse, the missionizing strategies in the field began to change too. Twentieth-century missionaries approached the people differently than their predecessors had in the nineteenth century. The younger generation of missionaries had gained more knowledge of the people they were trying to convert and they made a better effort to take their convictions and customs into account. For example, they no longer bluntly asked Muslims whether they wished to convert from a false and mendacious religion to the only true religion, but showed more respect to Muslims.⁹⁵¹ The leaders of the SZC agreed that the aggressive, controversial attitude of the nineteenth century must be entirely abandoned. Furthermore, they had learned from the success of the indigenous Christian gurus to present Christianity as something exclusive. The gurus did not try to convert anyone who would listen, but only those who met certain requirements could become Christian.⁹⁵²

Albert C. Kruyt and Nicolaus Adriani, both missionaries of the NZG, and L. Tiemersma of the NZV were responsible primarily for the change in the Dutch mission discourse after 1910. Tiemersma was a proponent of adaptation; he believed that the people of Java needed time to process the Gospel

⁹⁴⁹ A.M. Brouwer, *De opleiding onzer zendelingen* (Baarn 1912) 47.

⁹⁵⁰ Smit, *De islam binnen de horizon*, 207.

⁹⁵¹ Graaf van Randwijck, *Handelen en denken in dienst der zending*, 414.

⁹⁵² Graaf van Randwijck, *Handelen en denken in dienst der zending*, 416.

and that they eventually would form their own form of Christianity.⁹⁵³ Both Kruyt and Adriani had devoted as much effort to ethnography as to conversion, and they started to advocate for the importance of Christianity acculturated in the indigenous religious system.⁹⁵⁴ They saw conversion as requiring a movement on both sides of the religious divide. A.C. Kruyt stated in the preface of his monograph on animism that he tried to bring the Gospel to the people of Celebes in such a form that they would accept it. He suggested presenting Christianity as a more developed version of traditional religions and therefore to emphasise parts of the indigenous peoples' previous culture that were compatible with Christianity.⁹⁵⁵ Kruyt stated that he aimed at founding a localized church: a '*volkskerk*' (people's church).⁹⁵⁶ His approach was based on the assumption that conversion should be a gradual process if it were to bring any enduring results. In addition, he argued that the success of conversion in the Indies depended entirely on the community; not just on the sincerity and perseverance of individuals. Following the successful approach of the indigenous Christian gurus, but also of Franciscus van Lith and Simon van Eendenburg, all missionaries now designed strategies that influenced entire communities.

Although the Catholics had arrived much later in the mission field, they developed their strategies much faster than the Protestants had done. Van Lith realised in 1904 that the 'mission among the Javanese started with an in-appropriate method of proclaiming the Gospel individually'. He continued: 'We have to consider that the success of our mission depends on the education of leaders and teachers.'⁹⁵⁷ The Jesuit missionaries focused solely on education since 1905; all missionaries devoted their time fully to teaching and did not travel around preaching. They trained young men to become teachers and government officials so that the next generation would be governed and educated by a new Catholic middle-class. This method proved successful: of the 2425 indigenous Catholics in 1915, 1327 had studied in Muntilan.⁹⁵⁸

4. Independent churches

While the cry for independence grew stronger in the nation's politics in the early twentieth century, the same sentiments were picked up in the mission congregations. In various regions of Java, congregations announced that they considered themselves ready for more independence from the

⁹⁵³ M. Lindenborn, 'De zending op West Java, antwoord op den aanval van den heer L. Tiemersma, namens het hoofdbestuur der NZV', in: *De Macedonier* (Rotterdam 1914) 7.

⁹⁵⁴ Santoso, *Protestant Christianity in the Indonesian context*, 5.

⁹⁵⁵ Albert C. Kruyt, *Het animisme in den Indischen Archipel* (The Hague 1906).

⁹⁵⁶ Keane, *Christian moderns*, 97-98.

⁹⁵⁷ Subanar, *The local church in the light of magisterium teaching on mission*, 123.

⁹⁵⁸ Subanar, *The local church in the light of magisterium teaching on mission*, 143.

mission societies. Because the mission societies received larger subsidies after the introduction of the Ethical Policy, more schools could be opened; not only elementary schools as in the nineteenth century, but now also higher education. This resulted in a large number of highly educated Christians in the 1920's and 1930's who were demanding more autonomy. In addition, the NZG appointed the first Javanese ministers in that period and these men no longer wished to be mere assistants to the missionaries.⁹⁵⁹ According to the missionaries, however, there was also a large group of Javanese Christians who did not wish independence of the mission societies. They suggested that while many loudly proclaimed their desire for autonomy, only a few had an earnest desire for it. The missionaries claimed that many congregations lacked confidence, were far from self-support, were lacking in self administration, were very hesitant in carrying out self-propagation, and were not yet ready to take on the responsibility of self-government.⁹⁶⁰

The missionaries of the NZG had already decided on a conference in East Java in 1899 to establish a seminary for the training of indigenous teachers and ministers. D. Crommelin took the initiative for this seminary in 1905, but it only began to flourish in the 1920s and then received its name 'Bale Wiyata'. Initially its aim was to train indigenous men to become mission assistants, but the school changed its aim in the 1920s to prepare indigenous ministers to work independently. Many congregations gradually became self-supporting in this phase, but Javanese personnel and financial autonomy was not enough to become a fully independent church; the Javanese church also needed its own theology rooted in Javanese thinking in order to become fully autonomous. The mission societies started to discuss the path towards independent churches more often. Finally, they came to realise that independence would come sooner or later, so they agreed it was better to lead the churches slowly to autonomy instead of abandoning them suddenly. The missionaries gradually changed their roles from being administrators to advisors, especially in theological matters. The majority of missionaries now encouraged the people to find their own style of Christianity that suited Javanese family and community life.⁹⁶¹

The first church that officially gained its independence from a missionary society was the congregation of Modjo Warno. Modjo Warno was the eldest mission church in Java. As discussed in chapter 4, this Christian *desa* had been founded in the 1840's by the indigenous Christians Abisai, Pak Dasimah, and Mattheus Aniep. From its foundation onward, the church had been sponsored by Dutch sympathizers and, when NZG missionary Jelle Jellesma was appointed to Modjo Warno in 1851, it became the centre of the first mission district of the NZG. The original leaders of the church did not

⁹⁵⁹ Sumartana, *Mission at the crossroads*, 244.

⁹⁶⁰ Hendrik Kraemer, *From mission field to independent church* (The Hague 1959) 90.

⁹⁶¹ Kraemer, *From mission field to independent church*, 91.

become subordinate to Jellesma, but rather, they led the congregation closely together. The Dutch missionaries who were stationed there during the following decades continued to lead the church together with indigenous leaders, so Modjo Warno had always been different from other mission churches. Moreover, the Christian theology which was preached in this church has always been more in accordance with Javanese beliefs and traditions than in other places because it was formed through the Javanese concept of *ngelmu*. Because of this continual autonomous character, it was no surprise that this church was the first to be fully independent in 1923.⁹⁶²

The Protestant congregations differed from the nationalist parties by focusing on their own region and not on Java as a whole, let alone the outer regions. There was no sense of unity between the churches of East, Central, and West Java and the churches gained autonomy independently from each other.⁹⁶³ The East Christian Church and Batak Church became independent in 1930, the East Javanese Church and the Javanese Christian Church in Central Java a year later. The churches of the NZV gained their independence of the mission in 1934.⁹⁶⁴ At first, not much changed after independence; the missionaries remained important advisors and the societies continued to support the churches with donations. However, in the course of time it became clear that the independent churches were developing their own identity. Javanese Christians had not passively received the Christian message, but rather, had actively absorbed it. They managed to take in Christian convictions while staying faithful to their religious heritage. Contrary to the convictions of the Dutch missionaries, the Javanese managed to create an indigenous Christian theology.

The Jesuits had focused on forming a native clergy almost from the start of the mission. First generation Christians were accepted into the novitiate in 1911, only fifteen years after the arrival of Petrus Hoevenaars and Franciscus van Lith. The two first novices were sent to the Netherlands in 1914 to complete their education.⁹⁶⁵ One of them, Francis Xavier Satiman, completed his education and was ordained a priest in 1926.⁹⁶⁶ Nevertheless, the Catholic Church in Java remained very dependent on the Dutch Catholic Church until 1940 and did not become fully independent until 1961.⁹⁶⁷

⁹⁶² Sumartana, *Mission at the crossroads*, 143.

Kraemer, *From mission field to independent church*, 75.

⁹⁶³ Sumartana, *Mission at the crossroads*, 247.

⁹⁶⁴ C.W. Nortier, *Een Indonesische kerk in opbouw* (Hoenderloo 1947).

⁹⁶⁵ Satiman, *Pastoor van Lith volgens een Javaanse leerling en vereerder* (Maastricht January 1926) Archives of the Jesuit Province of the Netherlands (Nijmegen).

⁹⁶⁶ Steenbrink, *Catholics in Indonesia*, Vol. 2, 383.

⁹⁶⁷ Huub Boelaars, *Indonesianisasi, het omvormingsproces van de katholieke kerk in Indonesië tot de Indonesische katholieke kerk* (Kampen 1991) 76.

5. Contribution to the academic field of ethnology, linguistics and religious studies

During the colonial era, Europe showed a great interest for representations of non-Western people. Travel literature, museum exhibitions, and other expositions with artefacts from far away countries and 'exotic' peoples were very popular at the time. Missionaries were, on this front, no different from other travellers; they also wrote stories about their exciting new lives in the tropics. Some mission articles and books are even written like adventure books for teenagers. The issues of the Jesuit journal *St. Claverbond* were full of positive, adventurous, and heroic stories about the lives of the missionaries with titles like 'From North to South, through the land of the Belonesian head-hunters'.⁹⁶⁸ The missionaries' writings were often a mix of genres, such as natural history, geography, history, ethnography, and linguistics. Their articles and books provided a large amount of valuable information. Moreover, missionaries who were on leave in Europe or returned home after their retirement also brought artefacts with them to use in the mission school and as 'promotion material' during informative lectures and speeches about the mission to attract attendants and raise money.⁹⁶⁹ The NZG has even displayed its collection at the Parisian World Exhibition in 1867.⁹⁷⁰ The representations of non-Western peoples by missionaries and by other European travellers as well, were all from a Eurocentric perspective and was often contradictory. On the one hand, these people were depicted as primitive, wild, and ignorant, while on the other hand, they were praised for their sincerity, innocence, and genuineness.

In many cases, the writings of the missionaries can be read as success stories of the mission. Most essays and books started with describing the primitive nature of the 'exotic' societies and concluded with the many improvements the mission had made so far and would make in the future. In this way, they tried to legitimate their presence, even though they did not have much success in terms of numbers.⁹⁷¹ Even though the missionary writings were not of high quality in general, they were nevertheless important sources for scholars about newly discovered peoples and cultures simply because there were not many other sources available. For example, the 1726 published book *Oud en Nieuw Oost Indien* (Old and New East Indies), by reverend Francois Valentijn, remained the most important source of information about the region well into the nineteenth century.⁹⁷²

⁹⁶⁸ Van de Kimmenade-Beekman, *De Sint Claverbond*, 14.

⁹⁶⁹ See for example; Van de Kimmenade-Beekman, *De Sint Claverbond*, 24, or NZV, *Instructies aan zendelingen en agenten, 1859-1913*, Utrechts Archief: 'De zendeling zal er zich op toeleggen om voorwerpen van kunst, belangrijk tot kennis van de geschiedenis, de godsdienst, de zeden en gewoonten, de kleding, de huishouding der eilanders, en van hunne denkbeelden te verzamelen.'

⁹⁷⁰ NZG, *Correspondentie 1821-1926*, Utrechts Archief.

⁹⁷¹ Nielssen, Okkenhaug & Skeie, *Protestant missions and local encounters*, 29.

⁹⁷² Vrolijk and Van Leeuwen, *Voortreffelijk en waardig*, 98.

Although the missionary books and articles were generally not intended for critical outsiders, they proved to be useful sources for scholars in the Western world. Missionaries often stayed for prolonged periods in the field and learned the local languages sufficiently to be considered 'insiders' in comparison to other Europeans by the local population. They were, in many cases, allowed to attend cultural practices which enabled them to gain a profound, but often biased, understanding of the local culture, religion, and society. Consequently, the missionaries made important contributions to the institutionalization of knowledge about non-Western cultures and religions, and to the newly developing scholarly fields of ethnology, anthropology, and comparative religion. What the missionaries had achieved in the vast array of human contacts has been of considerable help to many anthropologists. Yet, many anthropologists did not acknowledge those who preceded and prepared the encounter of the anthropologist and those who formed their major informants. In fact, they were often criticised for intervening in 'pristine societies', for actively effacing native architecture, manufacture, dance, music et cetera.⁹⁷³ In addition, the texts the missionaries produced were generally not received well within academic circles. As previously stated, the majority of the missionaries was ill-educated, which often showed in their writings. Their accounts were usually mere descriptions of what they encountered, but often lacked critical insights, structure, or argumentation.

Still, missionaries have left an important historiographical legacy which is still valuable today: they have attributed to the fields of theology, comparative religion, non-Western history, geography, and language studies. Their sources enable historians to see important aspects of historical realities which can often not be approached otherwise, since there is a lack of historical sources that focus on 'ordinary' people. Most of the material was produced by the Dutch and Javanese elite and simultaneously focus on the elite. Yet, the missionaries had arguably more knowledge of the daily lives of Javanese common men than Dutch civil officers or even the Javanese nobility. Missionaries lived in small *desas*, often far away from the centres of power, and therefore knew better the realities of provincial life than the Dutch and Javanese elite. Of course the sources the missionaries produced are Eurocentric and subjective, but this distortion can be rectified with historical methods.

The nineteenth century missionary contacts were one of the earliest real Dutch encounters with Muslims. At that time there was little knowledge of Islam in the Netherlands and the missionaries went to the colonies with a very limited understanding of this religion. Ethnography was still a science in the making. The cultural encounters of the Dutch missionary enterprise with Javanese Muslims contributed to the image of the Muslim 'Other' in colonial and Dutch society at large. Dutch scholars did not, however, always appreciate the missionaries' writings on Islam.

⁹⁷³ Alvarsson and Segato, *Religions in transition*, 1-8.

Carel Poensen of the NZG has published numerous articles and a book on the Javanese society. He studied the language, culture, literature, and religious lives of the Javanese and his articles are still used by scholars who study these topics.⁹⁷⁴ His book *Brieven over de Islam, vanuit de binnenlanden van Java* (Letters on Islam, from the interior of Java) was published in 1883 and received quite significant attention from Islam scholars, such as Johannes Veth, who wrote the introduction, and Christian Snouck Hurgronje. Although the book is now praised for being an important contribution to the knowledge of Javanese Islam in the nineteenth century, it was not reviewed quite as positively at the time. Veth and Snouck Hurgronje were of the opinion that Poensen did not possess enough knowledge to write about Islam in general. They believed he had to concentrate solely on describing his experiences around Kediri because they considered only those passages in his work valuable for the ethnology of Java. Nevertheless, as mentioned above, the attitude towards Islam in the Dutch mission discourse changed after the turn of the century. From then on, the missionaries made more effort to really study and understand Islam in the Indies, and consequently, their work became more appreciated in the scholarly world.

The missionaries' knowledge was most appreciated in the field of linguistics. Dutch missionaries spent years studying the languages of the Indies, which was a difficult process since there were no dictionaries or grammar books available yet. The missionaries had to acquire the languages through speaking with the local population and they were, in some parts of the archipelago, the first to put the spoken languages in writing. The Dutch missionaries were consequently active agents in the systematisation and standardization of the vernacular languages in the region. This was true not only because they spread literacy, but also because in order to spread Christianity, the missionaries felt compelled to translate the Bible into the indigenous languages and to conduct services in those languages.⁹⁷⁵ Before the 1880s Dutch missionaries had already produced Bibles in Javanese, Batak, Malay, Makassarese, Buginese, and Sundanese.⁹⁷⁶ They not only produced Bible translations, they also produced the first dictionaries and grammar books of the languages of the archipelago.

When Snouck Hurgronje was appointed as 'Advisor for Indigenous Affairs' in Batavia, former missionary H.C. Klinkert of the DZV received his chair in Malay at the University of Leiden.⁹⁷⁷ The appointment of a former missionary at a university was not exceptional. Numerous retired missionaries taught the languages of the Dutch Indies at schools or universities in the Netherlands. G.J

⁹⁷⁴ See the work of Petrus Johannes Veth, Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje and recent work of Lauri Sears, Robert Hefner and Merle Calvin Ricklefs and many others.

⁹⁷⁵ Both Protestant and Catholic missionaries emphasised the importance of the Bible and prayers in the local languages.

⁹⁷⁶ Coolsma, *De Bijbel en de evangelische zending*, 7.

⁹⁷⁷ Vrolijk and Van Leeuwen, *Voortreffelijk en waardig*, 112.

Grashuis of the NZV taught Sundanese in Leiden. G.K. Niemann and Carel Poensen of the NZG became lecturers at the *Indische Instelling* in Delft. The *Indische Instelling* was a training college for East Indian civil servants and the larger part of the staff consisted of retired missionaries and officials. Sierk Coolsma of the NZV was a member of the exam committee in Delft. G.K. Niemann eventually became professor 'Ethnology of the Indies' at the University of Leiden, where he also taught Makassarrese and Buginese.⁹⁷⁸ B.M. Alkema of the NZV became a lector in Sundanese and mission history at the University of Utrecht after his retirement as a missionary.⁹⁷⁹ These appointments show that the knowledge the missionaries had acquired of the languages of the Dutch Indies was much more appreciated in Dutch academic circles than their achievements in the fields of ethnology, religious studies, or anthropology.

⁹⁷⁸ Cees Fasseur, *De Indologen, ambtenaren voor de Oost, 1825-1950* (Amsterdam 1993).

⁹⁷⁹ Fasseur, *De Indologen*, 421, 422.

Appendix I

Samuel Eliza Harthoorn

Samuel Eliza Harthoorn (1831-1883) started his missionary training in Rotterdam at the age of seventeen. He travelled with his wife, Celia Johanna Blankenhart, to the Dutch Indies to spread Christianity in East Java in 1854. Harthoorn was the third missionary of the NZG who was destined for Java. He spent his first two years in Modjo Warno, a fruitful district led by Jelle Eeltje Jellesma, who had started to missionize in 1848 in order to study the language and learn to lead a Christian community.

Harthoorn moved to Malang in 1856 to start his own mission. Harthoorn experienced severe trouble there with obtaining the right permits to start his evangelizing work, because the Resident was against a Christian missionary in his residency. After he moved to Malang, he was denied permission to visit the small Christian congregations which lay scattered in the area. In addition, the Christian Javanese did not receive the necessary pass to travel the main road, so they were unable to visit Malang. It took him months before he obtained the right permits to travel freely in his district and to missionize. His district was very large and the Christian communities were so scattered that he had to travel for days to reach them. As a result, he could visit some of these communities only once or twice a year and this did not meet the NZG's standard of serving the Lord's Supper at least four times a year. Harthoorn was frustrated; he believed this was not sufficient to properly lead these churches, let alone to evangelise in the surrounding *desas*.

Furthermore, shortly after his arrival, he found out that the process of conversion was slow and challenging. He devised various strategies, but realizing them proved difficult. He noted that people in remote villages were scared of the Dutch and hid themselves inside their homes whenever he entered their village. This, of course, made it hard to missionize. When he did succeed in discussing his faith with people, he saw that most people rejected Christianity because converting meant changing one's lifestyle and, in many cases, enduring pressure from family and friends.⁹⁸⁰ According to Harthoorn, they did not reject the Christian faith because they did not agree with its content.⁹⁸¹

Harthoorn's mood worsened because of his untrustworthy assistants, the weak condition of his wife, his own health problems, and because of his struggles with loneliness.⁹⁸² He longed for letters from Rotterdam and was very disappointed in J.C. Neurdenburg, his friend and former teacher, who

⁹⁸⁰ S.E. Harthoorn, *Diary on 1858* (Malang 1858) Utrechts Archief.

⁹⁸¹ S.E. Harthoorn, *Letter to the board of the NZG* (Malang 1-3 June 1857) Utrechts Archief.

⁹⁸² He was deceived by one of his assistants, Timotheus, who collected money for him in Surabaya in 1857.

did not write as often as he had expected. Furthermore, he did not feel at home in the European community in Malang. In order to keep positive relations with the assistant-resident, he had to join the Malang Society and go to concerts, dances, and other parties, but he did not feel any connection to the other Europeans who only talked about gambling, money, cards, and women. He would rather live outside of Malang so he would not have to attend these festivities.⁹⁸³ Yet, he tried to remain positive and sent hopeful letters to the board. 'I am delighted that the people in church listen intently from the beginning to the end and that their answers to the questions I ask during my sermons prove that they understand me. Oh, that's an incredible pleasure.'⁹⁸⁴

1. Disagreements with the board

When Jellesma passed away in 1858, it had a great impact on Harthoorn. Not only did he lose his mentor and friend, he also became responsible for a much larger district. He became in charge of the residencies Surabaya, Kediri, Madiun, and Pasuran; an area as large as the whole Netherlands.⁹⁸⁵ That same year he and the board had a severe disagreement. A Christian couple in Harthoorn's community had circumcised their son and Harthoorn had given his permission. His colleagues and the board of the NZG reacted furiously when they found out. The incident fired up a more general discussion about implementing church discipline. Harthoorn rejected church discipline, because he believed it was counterintuitive and did not protect the young Javanese church, but actually harmed it. He believed the young Javanese church was not yet ready for church discipline and that the missionaries had to allow time for transition, errors, and growth. His colleagues, however, considered him indifferent of God's laws in these matters.

Harthoorn chose a different strategy and allowed his followers to continue customs that other missionaries considered heretical. He believed a missionary had to think pragmatically instead of dogmatically. He had been pragmatic in the case of the circumcision because he knew he would have lost the whole family if he had not allowed it. Another example of his pragmatic way of thinking is when he married two Christians, even though they had already lived together 'in sin'.⁹⁸⁶ Harthoorn explained that these young Christians did not yet understand a Christian marriage and therefore

⁹⁸³ Nortier, *Het leven van Samuel Eliza Harthoorn*.

⁹⁸⁴ S.E. Harthoorn, *Letter to the board of the NZG* (Malang 2 March 1856) Utrechts Archief.

⁹⁸⁵ Nortier, *Het leven van Samuel Eliza Harthoorn*.

⁹⁸⁶ Nortier, *Het leven van Samuel Eliza Harthoorn*.

needed to be educated within the church instead of being banished from it. However, he did not marry them in the church, but at their house, and he did not allow bridal wear or a procession.⁹⁸⁷

Harthoorn's way of dealing with incidents like these brought him in a major conflict with the board of the NZG and other missionaries in Surabaya. Johannes Emde, a watchmaker who spent all his spare time circulating Christian tracts, filed an official complaint with the board after the circumcision incident, arguing that Harthoorn allowed heresy in his community.⁹⁸⁸ Harthoorn, on the other hand, critiqued Emde on being too narrow-minded. Harthoorn explicitly expressed his critiques on the methods of this German layman missionary.⁹⁸⁹

Harthoorn's ideas about localizing Christianity were not always conclusive. He was, for example, not clear on the subject of adopting a new name after conversion. He argued in a letter that this was not only common in Christianity, but in Islam as well. He emphasised that the baptized person should take on a Christian name, not a Dutch name.⁹⁹⁰ Yet, he mentioned several baptized men in his letters with European names, such as Cornelis, Bernardus, Bastiaan, and Hugo, that lack a Biblical origin.⁹⁹¹ Furthermore, he noticed that most Javanese did not care much for their Christian name: 'It makes a strange impression when one sees the upcoming baptists trying to remember their new name, when asked whether they like it. Most then stare at the minister with a pensive expression, as if they want to say 'yes, what was it again?' The strange name that is given to them already escaped their memory'.⁹⁹² Later, he wrote in his diary that God's kingdom does not exist in words or names, but in the demonstration of spirit and power.⁹⁹³

Harthoorn believed that everything grows in natural stages. He applied this theory on his missionary thinking and stated that one could not expect too much in the first stage. The missionaries had to be patient, because the first generation of Christians could not be 'perfect' Christians at once. Europe had not become a Christian society in just one generation either.⁹⁹⁴ Gradually the Christian communities would evolve and heretical beliefs and traditions would disappear on their own. Harthoorn did not reject the people who were still 'superficial' Christians because he saw being 'Christian in name' as the first stage in the process towards becoming a 'true' Christian. However, he did criticise some of his colleagues for purposefully forming 'superficial' Christians, by only teaching

⁹⁸⁷ S.E. Harthoorn, *Diary on May and June 1857* (Malang 1857) Utrechts Archief.

⁹⁸⁸ S.E. Harthoorn, *Letter to director Hiebink* (Malang 27 January 1859) Utrechts Archief.

⁹⁸⁹ More on Harthoorn's conflict with Emde can be read in chapter 7.

⁹⁹⁰ S.E. Harthoorn, *Letter to the board of the NZG* (Malang 21 March 1855) Utrechts Archief.

⁹⁹¹ S.E. Harthoorn, *Letter to the board of the NZG* (Malang 12 May 1857) Utrechts Archief.

⁹⁹² S.E. Harthoorn, *Letter to the board of the NZG* (Malang 21 March 1855) Utrechts Archief.

⁹⁹³ S.E. Harthoorn, *Diary on August 1856* (Malang 1856) Utrechts Archief.

⁹⁹⁴ S.E. Harthoorn, *Letter to director Hiebink* (Malang 12 November 1855) Utrechts Archief.

them to recite the Ten Commandments and the Lord's Prayer. The danger of this was that they would use it in the same way they used heretical formulas to eject diseases and other disasters.⁹⁹⁵

Harthoorn considered the regulations, and especially the disciplinary measures, of his colleagues too demanding and as a result counterproductive. He tried to partake in a dialogue with the community instead of preaching an 'instructive discourse', which was common in the missionary fields. According to his writings, he would try to have a 'pastoral conversation' with someone who made a mistake instead of punishing them like his colleagues did.⁹⁹⁶ He wrote that the church was not meant for saints only, it was meant for anyone who believed in God, including those who made mistakes.

2. The end of Harthoorn's career in the NZG

The year 1859 was a turning point for Harthoorn, both in his personal and professional life. He suffered from depression: 'Sometimes I feel so despondent, that I'd rather die than live'.⁹⁹⁷ Jellesma's death, the disagreement about the circumcision incident, and the departure of his colleague Ganswijk, his friend since mission school, was very hard on him. He reflected on his initial results and the results of the Christian mission in Java in general. He came to the conclusion that the mission had been unsuccessful because the Javanese could not really understand Christianity. He was convinced that the Javanese were not yet ready and first needed to be civilised and educated properly. Moreover, he believed he and the other missionaries were not ready to bring the Gospel to the Javanese. He believed he did not know enough about the Javanese language, culture, history, and religions, and neither about Western philosophy and Christian theology. He repeatedly requested the board send him books from Augustine, Luther, and Calvin and from philosophers such as Schleiermacher, Rothe, and Herder.⁹⁹⁸ He begged: 'I yearn for these books, like I'm thirsty for water'. He confessed to the board: 'Not only have many objections crossed my mind and have I been disappointed in matters of family, work and friends, but severe storms have also raged my heart and have shaken my thoughts and beliefs in its foundations. Have these five years been a gain or loss? If I do not deceive myself, I have to admit I have lost, but that loss is gain...'⁹⁹⁹

⁹⁹⁵ S.E. Harthoorn, *Letter to the board of the NZG* (Malang 1-3 June 1857) Utrechts Archief.

⁹⁹⁶ Van Akkeren, *Sri and Christ*, 97.

⁹⁹⁷ S.E. Harthoorn, *Letter to director Hiebink* (Malang 27 January 1859) Utrechts Archief.

⁹⁹⁸ S.E. Harthoorn, *letter to director Hiebink* (Malang 26 June 1859) Utrechts Archief.

⁹⁹⁹ S.E. Harthoorn, *letter to director Hiebink* (Malang 26 June 1859) Utrechts Archief.

Harthoorn believed that the first job of every missionary should be ‘internalizing all this strangeness in order to really know the condition of the people to whom he preaches of Christ, in order to distinct appearance from reality, nationality from sins, and to speak to the essential needs and susceptibility of these people’.¹⁰⁰⁰ Furthermore, he believed a missionary had to find good elements in the present Javanese religion, develop these, and connect them to Christian views. However, the idea that there could be good elements in a religion other than Christianity was already considered heretical by most of his colleagues. He wished to learn more about both Javanese culture and Protestantism because he often had trouble finding a compromise between the Javanese culture and Protestant convictions. Yet, he was convinced the only way to succeed was to adapt his methods and his message to the Javanese context.

Harthoorn came to the conclusion that he needed more time to study the people and culture of East Java before he could continue missionizing. He therefore wrote a letter to the board of the NZG in 1860 to inform them that he would no longer marry people or offer the Lord’s Supper in his community. He added that he would also let go of his assistants in order to save money. According to Harthoorn, this did not mean that he resigned as a missionary. The board sent multiple letters to ask him to clarify his opinions and his plans for the future. They also wrote that they were disappointed in him for ridiculing their work in a letter to the assistant-resident, that they believed he was too biased to criticise the new mission, that he lacked patience and faith, and that they could not understand why Harthoorn wrote to them in such a contemptuous way.¹⁰⁰¹ Eventually, Harthoorn stopped baptizing new converts and visiting the Christian communities in his district because he could not continue working in ‘the wrong direction’.¹⁰⁰² The board was of the opinion that he stopped being a missionary at that moment, even though he still considered himself a missionary. He believed the board and all missionaries should stop their work and reflect on their strategies and achievements. The NZG should carefully examine their experience in order to determine the right path for the mission. He explained his reasons in a letter written on New Year’s Eve in 1860: “... When I saw the Javanese Christian Church was just a union, without the inner right of existence, a burden on itself and on society, without its own life force, only seldom brought in stiff motion by artificial means, and when I feared that they would continue to form to the already existing, I realised that a gradual development would

¹⁰⁰⁰ S.E. Harthoorn, *Enkele gedachten over het werk den persoon en de opleiding* (unpublished) (Malang 1857) Utrechts Archief.

¹⁰⁰¹ H. Hiebink, *Letter to Harthoorn* (Rotterdam 1861) Utrechts Archief. Verhoeven, *Letter to Harthoorn* (Rotterdam 1861) Utrechts Archief.

¹⁰⁰² S.E. Harthoorn, *Diary on 1860* (Malang 1860) Utrechts archief.

be more bothersome than beneficial. Then I was forced to make the decision that I would not continue with baptizing newcomers.’¹⁰⁰³

Harthoorn also wrote to the board that his earlier letters, and those of his colleagues, were full of exaggerations and even lies to paint a rose-tinted picture, and that the situation in Java was therefore actually worse than they realized in Rotterdam. ‘Accurate reading will prove that what they (the letters of missionaries, M.K.) contain give the right to presume that the state of affairs is as said above. When one only superficially reads it, one imagines the contrary, because it is in the nature of the unctuous missionary writing style to break the sharp contrast of light and darkness, to hold information back or to belittle it. But is that not cheating? Deception is fraud: the heart is deceitful; it makes us see what we want to see. And yet do we not see? One does not call it deception if only for their own sake, but! One does not omit to warn against deception, for the sake of the general interest of the people, including one’s own. One should not forget that everywhere, both in the mission and elsewhere, illusions and prophecies cause disappointment.’¹⁰⁰⁴

In addition, Harthoorn tried to make a statement against the pietistic movement within the Society by resigning from his duties. He could not accept that the Christian Javanese had to become ‘European’ after their conversion; he believed the mission harmed the Javanese nationality and forced converts to stop being Javanese.¹⁰⁰⁵ He tried to fight the European arrogance about their ‘superior’ lifestyle and wished for the Javanese converts to remain Javanese and hold on to their traditions.¹⁰⁰⁶ Furthermore, Harthoorn believed all missionaries should stop and reflect on their work. ‘...the importance of this case demands that one stands still and looks back, as soon as one presumes they have wandered astray from the right path.’¹⁰⁰⁷ Only then the board and other missionaries would realise ‘that the regulations and institutions of the church do not lead to the intended goal, that all the traveling costs strength without making profit, that distributing booklets, including the New Testament, makes no sense! That occasional teaching is not fruitful, that there are enough assistants, which makes further training unnecessary. That the motive for making manuals for the college has also ceased to exist.’¹⁰⁰⁸

After Harthoorn had stopped most of his missionary activities in 1861, he focused on researching the methods and achievements of the new mission. He reflected on the evangelization process, the books they used, their school system, church discipline, the rules concerning baptism and

¹⁰⁰³ S.E. Harthoorn, *Letter to the board of the NZG* (Malang 31 December 1860) Utrechts Archief.

¹⁰⁰⁴ S. E. Harthoorn, *Diary on 1860* (Malang 1860) Utrechts Archief.

¹⁰⁰⁵ S.E. Harthoorn, *Letter to the board of the NZG* (Malang 31 December 1860) Utrechts Archief.

¹⁰⁰⁶ Van Akkeren, *Sri and Christ*, 74.

¹⁰⁰⁷ S.E. Harthoorn, *Letter to the board of the NZG* (Malang 31 December 1860) Utrechts Archief.

¹⁰⁰⁸ S.E. Harthoorn, *Letter to the board of the NZG* (Malang 31 December 1860) Utrechts Archief.

marriage, and especially on the missionaries themselves. He considered the missionary 'not an apostle, but a proselytizer. Not a man of the people, but a manufacturer of churches. Not an evangelist, but someone who merely baptizes and serves the Lord's Supper, not a father in spiritual matters, but a judge in spiritual matters, who threatens with the curse of excommunication.'¹⁰⁰⁹

From then on, he put all of his effort into studying the language, religions, and traditions of the Javanese in order to adapt the Christian message to their understanding of religion. He was of the opinion that church discipline made adaptation impossible and that adaptation was their key to success.¹⁰¹⁰ A fierce debate between Harthoorn and the board followed and, in the end, the board tried to reach a compromise with Harthoorn. They allowed him to fully focus on his studies of Javanese language, religions, and traditions while the missionary Visser would take over his district for the time being. However, the board did not think it was necessary for Harthoorn and his family to move to Batavia, like Harthoorn requested, to be close to renowned libraries. Harthoorn protested, but the board stood firm. Harthoorn then decided to fire all his assistants and to go to Rotterdam in 1862, to talk about his problems and suggestions in person. However, the board had not given its permission for the passage and refused to see him after his arrival. Eventually, Harthoorn was fired because of this and because the board was of the opinion he had permitted heretical, syncretic beliefs and customs, and had failed to carry out the principles of the Society.

3. *Stand still and look back*

As a reaction to his dismissal, Harthoorn published the book '*De Evangelische Zending en Oost-Java*' to elucidate his opinions and ideas. The book addresses several issues, such as missionary work in general and gives a historical recount of the mission in East Java and especially Malang. Furthermore, he discussed the baptism, the training and test which precedes it, the Lord's Supper, church discipline, education to believers and non-believers, and the mission school in Modjo Warno. His judgement was harsh; he believed the whole system had to be restructured. He encouraged board members and other missionaries to '*stilstaan en omzien*' (stand still and look back); to reflect on the used methods and their results. The book started a fierce discussion, not only within the NZG, but also in other mission societies and in the Christian community as a whole in the Netherlands. Because Allard Pierson had written the introduction of the book, and Busken Huet wrote an extensive review in *De*

¹⁰⁰⁹ S.E. Harthoorn, *Diary on 1860* (Malang 1860) Utrechts Archief.

¹⁰¹⁰ S.E. Harthoorn, *Diary on 1860* (Malang 1860) Utrechts Archief.

Gids, Harthoorn's arguments became part of the greater discussion on modern theology and orthodoxy.¹⁰¹¹

Although Harthoorn was no longer a missionary of the NZG, he still wished to contribute to the conversion of the people in the Dutch Indies. Therefore, he moved to Pamekasan, Madura in 1866, as an independent missionary. Two years later, Harthoorn ended his career as a missionary after a traumatic event. His three daughters were out for a walk when a Madurese man attacked them and stabbed them with his *kris*. His eldest daughter ran home and cried for help. Harthoorn ran outside and threw himself on the man. They fought and Harthoorn's wife then tried to help her husband. Unfortunately the man stabbed her several times and she died a few hours later. The man declared in court that he was paid by two Madurese princes; one of them was the regent of Pamekasan, to kill Harthoorn. The princes were devout Muslims and could not accept the presence of a Christian missionary in their district. The two princes and the attacker were sentenced to death and shortly after that executed.

Harthoorn resigned from missionary work and moved to Batavia where he remarried. He took on a position as a teacher and taught ethnology and history at the Koning Willem III Gymnasium. He passed away off the coast of Sumatra on the SS Sumatra to Europe in 1883.¹⁰¹²

4. Conclusion

Harthoorn had arrived in Java only six years after the first missionary with a permit entered Java. After a few years of struggling to convert people, Harthoorn was the first missionary in the Java mission who reflected extensively on the initial results of the mission. He came to the conclusion that the methods he and his colleagues had been using were not effective. He was the first missionary who wrote down that the process of conversion took time, probably more than one generation, and that a missionary therefore should not be too strict in his community. Furthermore, Harthoorn believed it was necessary to first civilise the Javanese before trying to convert them. According to him, the right method to

¹⁰¹¹ Nortier, *Het leven van Samuel Eliza Harthoorn*.

¹⁰¹² Boone, *Bekering en beschaving*, 120-183.

S.E. Harthoorn, *Oude grieven en nieuwe bewijzen ten aanzien van de Evangelische Zending* (Haarlem 1864).

S.E. Harthoorn, *De toestand en de behoeften van het onderwijs bij de volken van Neêrlands Indië* (Haarlem 1865).

H.C. Voorhoeve, *De Evangelische Zending op Oost-Java. Een woord naar aanleiding van de Evangelische Zending en Oost-Java. Eene kritische bijdrage door S.E. Harthoorn, oud-zendeling (Met een begeleidend schrijven van A. Pierson)* (The Hague 1864).

Cd. Busken Huet, *Litterarische fantasieën en kritieken. Part 7* (Haarlem 1868).

teach the Javanese morals was through nationwide education.¹⁰¹³ However, the board believed his strategy to separate civilisation from evangelization was too constrained and therefore fruitless.

Harthoorn stressed the importance of a thorough study of the local language, culture, and religion in order to connect the Christian message to Javanese thought.¹⁰¹⁴ He had spent years studying the Javanese society himself and wrote a large numbers of articles on this in the *Mededeelingen*. The term 'Javanism' was in fact coined by Harthoorn to address the multi-faceted religious tradition of Java.¹⁰¹⁵ In his annual report on 1857 he wrote: 'to call the Javanese Muslim in a political sense, because Islam is regarded as a state religion, is acceptable. However, to designate the folk religion, the religion of the people, which controls their conscience, their existence and behaviour, this designation is not by any means sufficient. One cannot call them Brahmins, Buddhists, Shaivists etc. either. To be accurate and to prevent misunderstandings and false representations, it may have its use to indicate the folk religion mentioned above with the word 'Javanism'''.¹⁰¹⁶

Carel Poensen

Since childhood, Carel Poensen (1836-1919) was active in his church and very serious in his faith. He was a member of the Presbyterian Reformed Church in Amsterdam and was active in the church's youth group. His family did not have enough money to give him a good education, so he started to work as an apprentice in a wallpaper store at the age of fourteen. However, Poensen knew he did not want to become a paperhanger; he wanted to devote his life to God. He later wrote that there was an 'ardent desire' in his heart 'to serve Jesus', but that he did not know what he could do. He later read about the Christian mission in the colonies and he knew instantly that this message was directed to him. He then decided, at the age of nineteen, that he wanted to become a missionary for the NZG. Poensen received the necessary permission from his parents to attend the boarding school of the NZG for five years. Poensen wrote in his application letter that he wanted to become a missionary because '... the love of Christ forces me to make the poor blind heathens acquainted with the road to salvation in Jesus Christ our Lord ... only through Him is our salvation available, and besides Him there is only misery and wretchedness. We can see this clearly in the gentile world'.¹⁰¹⁷ Poensen indicated that there was enough work for the church in the Netherlands, but that there was so much more work to

¹⁰¹³ J.J. Van Angelbeek, *Brief en aantekening betreffende S.A. Harthoorn* (1865) Utrechts Archief.

¹⁰¹⁴ Van Akkeren, *Sri and Christ*, 154.

¹⁰¹⁵ Nortier, *Het leven van Samuel Eliza Harthoorn*.

S.E. Harthoorn, *Annual report 1857* (Malang 1858) Utrechts Archief.

¹⁰¹⁶ S.E. Harthoorn, *Annual report 1857* (Malang 1858) Utrechts Archief.

¹⁰¹⁷ Carel Poensen, *Letter to the board of the NZG* (Modjo Warno March 1855) Utrechts Archief.

do overseas. He wrote that he was aware that there would be 'many difficulties' on his path, but that he trusted on 'the Lord's help'.¹⁰¹⁸

Poensen started his education in 1855 in the Mission House in Rotterdam. There, he was taught general subjects such as mathematics, geography, history, and also theology and missiology. The pupils also had to study agriculture and ethnology and, of course, the vernacular languages Malay and Javanese. One of Poensen's school essays has survived in which he explains why he wanted to become a missionary and what a good missionary should be like. In Poensen's eyes a missionary should have 'true faith', 'love for God and the gentiles', and a 'sincere and humble heart'. A missionary should be prepared to leave everything he loves behind in order to fully devote himself to the missionary work and a missionary should also be capable to learn the needed skills and languages and has to be free of any physical defects.¹⁰¹⁹

Poensen left for Java in 1860 together with his wife Maria Catharina Westrik (1830-1909). He spent his first two years with the missionary Wessel Hoeszoo in Modjo Warno, East Java, for the actual missionary training and to improve his Javanese. In a letter to the director of the board, he wrote about his first impressions of Java and the people. He wrote extensively on how they dressed, worked, lived, ate, and about their manners and traditions. Poensen quickly became accustomed to his new environment and to the people. After he was settled, the monotonous routine of everyday life began and he wrote: 'I quickly found out that every day in Java has 48 instead of 24 hours.'¹⁰²⁰ Although he did not have government's permission to proselytize yet, he had already preached a few times among the Javanese. This had not gone unnoticed, and he had received an official warning from the colonial government.¹⁰²¹

After spending two years in Modjo Warno, Poensen finally received permission to start evangelizing in his own district. He was assigned to the district of Kediri, a small city in South-East Java. This district was formerly lead by missionary Smeding, who had recently returned to the Netherlands because of health issues. When Poensen began his work in Kediri, there were already four Christian communities in the district. Plus, he had to supervise two communities in Madiun, as no missionary was available there. The six Christian communities consisted together of three hundred souls. Later, the district of Malang was also added to his work area. Poensen faced many difficulties in leading these people, and the long hours he spent traveling frustrated him because he did not have the time to stay long enough in one place to establish something that would last. Poensen still considered

¹⁰¹⁸ Carel Poensen, *Letter to the board of the NZG* (Modjo Warno March 1855) Utrechts Archief.

¹⁰¹⁹ J.C. Neurdenburg, *Dagboekje van een docent te Rotterdam* (Rotterdam) Utrechts Archief.

¹⁰²⁰ Carel Poensen, *Letter to J.C. Neurdenburg* (Kediri 12 July 1862) Utrechts Archief.

¹⁰²¹ Carel Poensen, 'De Javanen en het evangelie', in: *Mededeelingen* (Rotterdam 1870).

missionary work to be very difficult. The churches grew slowly and he considered many converts not 'true Christians'. He wrote that some were only 'superficially Christian' and only turned to God when they needed something. He wrote: 'Some people change their religion as they change their clothes!'¹⁰²² However, things went better and better as he spoke the language more fluently and learned more about Javanese habits.

Javanese society was hierarchical and the mission took place primarily in the lower social classes amongst craftsmen and labourers. Sometimes people from higher classes converted through previously converted people from these groups. Poensen would like to have seen this phenomenon reversed; it would have been much more effective if leaders and other members of the elite gave 'the good example'. This was, however, opposed by the government; they fostered a law which deterred Javanese village leaders and officials from converting.¹⁰²³ Furthermore, a missionary was not free to preach in public, for instance at the market. The government had decided, in order to prevent mutiny that a missionary could not evangelise before a large Muslim crowd. For Poensen this was not a problem, because he thought it was better to have one on one contact with the people. During his first years in the mission, he went door-to-door to talk to people about Christianity. This did not prove very fruitful, however, and he was sometimes even scared away with violence.¹⁰²⁴

Every Thursday night and Sunday morning, Poensen held a service. The services were short and consisted of singing, praying, and a short sermon. He tried to use examples from Javanese life as much as possible and to minimize the emphasis on names and history in his sermon. He tried to speak 'childlike but not childish' to the audience.¹⁰²⁵ Yet, he was confident that, eventually, the knowledge would linger with the Javanese Christians. It was difficult for Poensen to connect to the people outside his church, elementary school, and medical centre. He argued in his writings that the Javanese were distant people who were difficult to talk to, especially about serious matters such as faith. After several years, however, Poensen grew closer to the people of Kediri and eventually referred to the Javanese as his 'friends'. This did not mean that he converted an increasing number of people; he still compared the mission in Java to seeding on a rock, because the Javanese ground was not fertile for the Gospel.¹⁰²⁶

The NZG had never imposed a prescribed method on their missionaries; every missionary was free to develop his own method. Through the *Mededeelingen*, the missionaries kept each other

¹⁰²² Carel Poensen, *Letter to J.C. Neurdenburg* (Kediri 10 February 1879) Utrechts Archief.

¹⁰²³ Carel Poensen, 'De Javanen en het evangelie', in: *Mededeelingen* (Rotterdam 1870).

¹⁰²⁴ Carel Poensen, 'Een en ander over den godsdienstigen toestand van den Javaan'.

¹⁰²⁵ Carel Poensen, *Letter to the board of the NZG* (Kediri 25 March 1883) Utrechts Archief.

¹⁰²⁶ Carel Poensen, *Letter to the board of the NZG* (Kediri 25 March 1883) Utrechts Archief.

informed of their strategies and ideas and Poensen published many articles in this journal. Poensen developed specific methods for the mission, because he had realised that the missionaries did not achieve sufficient results by merely preaching: 'We have preached to the masses to convert only a few.'¹⁰²⁷ Poensen believed the mission should encompass improvement of the Javanese people and society. He sought to stimulate education and promote prosperity among the population by providing material aid.¹⁰²⁸ Yet, he was of the opinion that all missionary work should have a 'Christian character', but unfortunately did not further explain what he exactly meant by this phrase.

A common 'missionary tool' was setting up an orphanage. This was especially true in the Catholic mission. This 'tool' was, however, not commonly used in the NZG. Most NZG missionaries had a family of their own and did not have enough time and money to raise Javanese orphans. Poensen and his wife did not have children of their own and they did take in orphans and other children who could not be raised by their parents. Poensen wrote to Neurdenburg that quite often parents came to him to ask if he would take their child: 'One cannot conclude from these cases that the natives easily abandon their children, or that they do not care about them, in fact the opposite is true!' Children were very important in the Javanese society and were a symbol of status. The most common reason for divorce was childlessness. These examples therefore illustrate the extreme poverty and hopelessness in the area. Nevertheless, Poensen wrote very little about the children he and his wife had adopted. It is not clear how many they adopted, but we do know there were both boys and girls. Some stayed for a few months, others for years, until they were old enough to get married and live on their own.

Poensen and his wife were troubled with money issues throughout their lives. Their small income was often not enough to cover all their medical bills. They both dealt with health problems, which were aggravated by Java's hot climate. Furthermore, life in Semampir was monotonous and often lonely, according to Poensen. The other missionary families lived a few days travel away so they did not visit each other often. The few occasions where they did meet the other missionary families were described by Poensen as very joyous. Poensen wrote often to his colleagues, especially to A.C. Kruyt, who he considered to be his best friend. The missionaries were not supposed to have too much contact with other Europeans living in their districts, since the Javanese people had to understand that the missionaries were different from the officials and planters. They were not looking to make a profit, instead they wanted to give aid and, of course, the Christian message, to the people. Because of this rule and their remote residence, Poensen and his wife rarely spent time with other Europeans. Therefore they were excited that in the fall of 1869 a new missionary came to Semampir.

¹⁰²⁷ Carel Poensen, *Letter to the board of the NZG* (Kediri 5 March 1875) Utrechts Archief.

¹⁰²⁸ Carel Poensen, *Letter to the board of the NZG* (Kediri 5 March 1875) Utrechts Archief.

The newly graduated Kreemer came to live with them for a couple of years to learn more about mission work from Poensen, just as Poensen had spent his first two years in Modjo Warno. Kreemer moved into a barn on Poensen's compound. He was unmarried and Poensen considered this to be a bad thing: 'Never should a missionary be send out unmarried, because the experiences and lessons from married life form one's character, sense and heart, so that a youngster can perform like a man in the world.'¹⁰²⁹ Not only would an unmarried man rouse suspicion among the people, but a missionary wife could also contribute much to the mission. Poensen's wife, for example, taught at the girls' school, established contacts with local women and offered much support to her husband. Missionary wives functioned as guardians of the domestic sphere and taught local women about Western gender relations, modes of dress and family life. Poensen was therefore very glad that Kreemer eventually married by proxy and that his wife joined him a couple months later.

In 1873, Poensen assigned the district of Malang to Kreemer, who received permission to lead his own district after an internship of four years. However, this did not mean Poensen was done traveling. He received custody over the district Madiun once more in 1878, which again led to an increase in traveling time and expenses. Madiun was too remote to visit on a regular basis, therefore Poensen sent some of his indigenous assistants to the district. The small community was led by one of the first assistants in the NZG mission trained by Poensen's predecessor, Smeding. The shortage of missionaries was an ever present problem to the NZG. The districts of the missionaries were too large to guide effectively and Poensen did not think the indigenous assistants had enough knowledge and qualities to lead a district themselves.

Poensen depended heavily on his assistants in his work. His assistants were Javanese, Christian men, who he had trained himself to become parsons and teachers. After their education they could lead their own church or school somewhere in the district under his supervision. Poensen selected the most promising boys during their primary education and gave them a secondary education. Many of them moved in with Poensen and his wife. He taught them to preach and to teach catechism lessons. They spent most of their time studying the Bible and Poensen encouraged his pupils to debate with each other over theological questions, while other missionaries focused merely on having assistants memorize the verses. He tried to keep his lessons uncomplicated and to focus on Javanese customs, because: 'We tend to forget how weak their memory is and how small the capacity of the indigenous spirit is to assimilate scientific knowledge.'¹⁰³⁰

¹⁰²⁹ Carel Poensen, *Letter to J.C. Neurdenburg* (Kediri 28 March 1871) Utrechts Archief.

¹⁰³⁰ Carel Poensen, 'De zending in Kediri en Madioen en staat', in: *Mededeelingen* (Rotterdam 1886).

However, not all of Poensen's pupils proved suitable to become an assistant after their education. Poensen believed most of them lacked biblical knowledge or leadership qualities to lead a church or school. Poensen trained almost sixty men during the years and no more than ten of them actually became his assistants. On average, Poensen had six assistants working in different areas in his district. He visited them regularly to support them and all assistants came to Semampir for a meeting once every two months. During these meetings they discussed the difficulties they encountered in the field with Poensen who would then provide them with advice.

There were two streams in the missionary field, according to Poensen: the 'dogmatic' and the 'ethnographic' current. Poensen considered the dogmatic current to be patronizing and condescending towards the Javanese population.¹⁰³¹ He thought the theological differences between Christian denominations were not of any importance to the Javanese. The essence of Christianity, namely the belief in the Trinity, was shared by every Christian and the missionary message should focus on only this essence. He therefore placed himself in the ethnographic trend. Poensen believed that every missionary should learn as much as possible about the Javanese population, culture, and religion. He studied the languages, literature, and customs of the Javanese as well as he could. He thought this was the only way to get real access to the 'inner life' of the Javanese. He tried to empathize with the people and used examples from their culture when he told about his faith. He tried to get in touch with the local population by wandering through the village every afternoon, by attending parties, and visiting the market. Because of this, he also maintained friendly relationships with devout Muslims, like *santris* and *hajjis*.¹⁰³² He visited the Christians regularly at their homes because he considered personal contact with them very important. It was of especial importance for those who lived remote, because they had such little contact with other Christians and thus needed more support from the missionary.

A reoccurring trouble for Poensen was inspection by the *controleurs* (auditors) of the colonial government. The missionaries were limited by all kinds of regulations. The auditors inspected the districts a few times a year, usually in secret and unannounced. All the missionaries disliked them and described them as 'non devout' and 'immoral'. A NZG missionary, C.J. Van der Liefde, was so annoyed by some of these auditors that he wrote an article about their misconducts for the *Soerabajasche* newspaper.¹⁰³³ Poensen was very angry at Van der Liefde for mentioning their full names in the article. He was certain this would anger the auditors to their disadvantage.

¹⁰³¹ Carel Poensen, *Letter to J.C. Neurdenburg* (Kediri 14 December 1886) Utrechts Archief.

¹⁰³² Carel Poensen, *Letter to J.C. Neurdenburg* (Kediri 10 February 1879) Utrechts Archief.

¹⁰³³ Carel Poensen, *Letter to J.C. Neurdenburg* (Kediri 11 April 1871) Utrechts Archief.

5. *Gymnasium Willem II and seminary in Depok*

Poensen was asked to become the new teacher of Javanese at the Gymnasium Willem II, a secondary school, in Batavia in 1874. The school insisted for months and repeatedly with approached him with higher salary offers, according to Poensen's letters to the board. Poensen wrote to Neurdenburg that he certainly would have taken the job if he had not been a missionary.¹⁰³⁴ Providing good education was useful for the development in Java, and he would receive a good salary; the school had its own doctor and pharmacy, and it would give him certain status.¹⁰³⁵ However, after hesitating a few months Poensen eventually rejected the offer and remained with the NZG.

Two years later, Poensen was asked to become director of the Protestant seminary in Depok. At the seminary indigenous boys would be educated to become assistants in the mission districts and the best of them might even be able to become independent ministers outside the districts. This was basically what Poensen had been doing on a smaller scale for many years by educating his own assistants at home. Poensen was very interested in the offered position. He had several lengthy discussions with the board to come to an agreement. Poensen asked for advice and consent from the NZG. He received permission from the board of the NZG because he could do so much for the mission in general at this seminary. The negotiation process lasted almost two years. Eventually, Poensen and the board of the seminary failed to reach an agreement on the nature of the education programme. Poensen had other dogmatic ideas from the majority of the board members. The board wanted to accept only Javanese, unmarried men. Poensen was of the opinion that Chinese, European, and married men should not be excluded. He insisted that the lessons would be given in Javanese since the apprentices should preach in Javanese after graduation. Most of the other teachers called for education in Malay or in Dutch, since they did not master Javanese. Moreover, Poensen wanted to emphasise pedagogical subjects, rather than theological subjects. He even wished to include subjects as agriculture, trade, and industry into the programme, because he considered the alleviation of poverty as one of the main tasks of the mission. The founders of the seminary considered this not a primary task of the mission and felt that only languages, theology, and missionizing methods were necessary to teach.

The most discussed issue was the purpose of the training. The majority of the board members wanted to train these men to become independent preachers who would work without supervision of the missionaries. Poensen was of the opinion that the graduates had to remain under the leadership of the missionaries and work inside the mission districts. He felt that the Javanese were 'too

¹⁰³⁴ Carel Poensen, *Letter to J.C. Neurdenburg* (Kediri 12 January 1875) Utrechts Archief.

¹⁰³⁵ Carel Poensen, *Letter to J.C. Neurdenburg* (Kediri 12 January 1875) Utrechts Archief.

inconsistent' to independently lead a congregation.¹⁰³⁶ After a final vote, six of the eleven board members voted against Poensen's demands. Poensen then declined the offer, because he did not want to work for the seminary under the board's conditions. Even though Poensen did not become the director of the seminary in Depok, the issue engaged his attention for two years. The fact that the board wanted him as director shows that Poensen was known favourably as a missionary and a teacher in Java. Moreover, his proposals provide more insight into the Seminary leadership and into Poensen's thoughts about the mission. This episode shows Poensen was more focused on practicalities than on dogmas.

6. Leave to Europe and retirement

Poensen, and especially his wife, suffered regularly from illnesses; they both could not withstand the heat and the long periods of rain very well. Once in a while they went to the mountains of Tosari to stay there in a fresher climate, but this was just a temporary solution. In the fall of 1888 Poensen's wife became seriously ill and her doctor advised them to leave Java as soon as possible. The couple eventually decided to take leave and they left for the Netherlands. Missionary Bieger temporarily administrated Kediri. They stayed more than a year in the Netherlands and travelled around the country. Poensen spoke in numerous churches about the mission, hoping he would excite young men to apply and others to donate generously. The couple returned, in good health and spirit, to Kediri in the spring of 1891: 'We are strengthened, refreshed, and return with new enthusiasm and desire to work in the old site of our vocation.'¹⁰³⁷

However, Poensen came to the decision to leave Java and the mission the next year. He had accepted a job as a professor of the Javanese language at the *Indische Instelling* in Delft. The *Indische Instelling* was a training college for East Indian civil servants. The board was not happy about this decision; they considered it too soon after his leave and accused him of setting this up during his stay in the Netherlands. They thought he had used the NZG to go to Kediri once more to say his final goodbyes after he had already accepted the job. Poensen admitted there had been some talks at the Institution, but that it had not been his intention to accept an offer. He stated that his health had deteriorated significantly during the last couple of months and that Kediri deserved a younger, more

¹⁰³⁶ Carel Poensen, *Letter to the board of the NZG* (Kediri 6 March 1877) Utrechts Archief.

¹⁰³⁷ Carel Poensen, *Letter to the board of the NZG* (Kediri 14 February 1891) Utrechts Archief.

vital missionary, who was able to travel more often. After a 'soul touching' farewell, Poensen handed Kediri over to the eldest son of his best friend A.C. Kruyt.¹⁰³⁸

Poensen had worked in Java for 31 years. During this period, the number of baptized Christians in Kediri had increased substantially. All churches now had their own pastor and a church council. Every church had a primary school attached, staffed with well-trained teachers. Poensen looked back with mixed feelings on his life as a missionary. It had not been an easy life. He had faced many setbacks and often felt frustrated; the churches had not grown as much as he had hoped and regularly members, even his own assistants, had left the church. Notwithstanding many setbacks, he was grateful that he had been allowed to do this work. He wrote: 'I certainly did not become a missionary to have an easy life, but I was compelled by the desire to do something for the glory of Jesus' name and the salvation of the Javanese.'¹⁰³⁹ Poensen wrote to Neurdenburg that if he could make the decision once more, it would be unlikely that he would choose life as a missionary again: 'I know only too well, with a thirty-year experience, who I am and what I'm worth! And have I felt like this thirty years before, I would not had dared to apply for the mission!'¹⁰⁴⁰

Poensen started his new job at the age of 55. The Institution in Delft was not regarded very highly and it continued to lose students to the University of Leiden. After the influential Islamologist Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje had stated that the training at the Institution was insufficient, the school was forced to close their doors.¹⁰⁴¹ At that time Poensen was 64 years old, but he still did not want to retire. He joined the board of the NZG and he functioned as editor in chief for the *Mededeelingen* (Announcements of the NZG) in the period between 1897 and 1913. This function suited him very well. He has contributed tremendously to the journal between 1864 and 1919. Poensen's wife died in 1916 and Poensen was not the same after this loss. He suffered from dementia and passed away on 6 February 1919 at the age of 82 in The Hague. According to his friends of the NZG his last words were: 'Being dissolved and being with Christ is best.'¹⁰⁴²

7. Poensen as an author and ethnologist

Poensen had worked as a missionary for more than thirty years and maintained good relationships with the local population and therefore had the opportunity to witness cultural and religious rituals

¹⁰³⁸ Carel Poensen, *Letter to J.C. Neurdenburg* (18 juni 1891) Utrechts Archief.

¹⁰³⁹ Carel Poensen, *Letter to J.C. Neurdenburg* (Kediri 31 August 1880) Utrechts Archief.

¹⁰⁴⁰ Carel Poensen, *Letter to J.C. Neurdenburg* (Kediri 31 August 1880) Utrechts Archief.

¹⁰⁴¹ Fasseur: *De Indologen*, 323.

¹⁰⁴² Adriani, 'In memoriam prof. C. Poensen' 195.

from up close. His long-term field knowledge, linguistic and cultural competence, as well as his vast array of contacts with the local population helped him to write detailed articles about Javanese society. He was convinced that the key to success in the mission was to understand the Javanese thoroughly. He therefore considered his studies part of his missionary work. The board, however, was not satisfied with the amount of hours he spent behind his desk and urged him to do some 'actual missionizing'.

The book '*Histories of the Old Testament*, was, in Poensen's eyes, his Magnum Opus, however it did not become his most famous book. This book took several years to write and made him feel 'more an author than a missionary'.¹⁰⁴³ The book consists of a series of stories from the Old Testament, translated into Javanese. The publication was funded by the NZG and the NBG. Poensen started writing a second part, on the New Testament, but never finished this edition because of other work. In addition, Poensen wrote several songbooks and schoolbooks, which were used by him and the other missionaries. He wrote countless articles for the *Mededeelingen* and regularly published in other journals and newspapers. In 1886, his most famous work was published: *Brieven over de Islam, vanuit de binnenlanden van Java* (Letters on Islam, from the interior of Java). This book consisted of a number of letters, which were previously published in a Javanese newspaper. The letters were published anonymously and Poensen wished the book to be published in the same way. Nonetheless, the book was published with his name on the cover and received quite some attention in the media and by scholars, such as Petrus Johannes Veth and Christian Snouck Hurgronje. However, the reviews were not all positive and Poensen was very disappointed and aggrieved by the criticism. He swore to Neurdenburg that he would never write a book like this one again.

Poensen dealt with Islam as it was practiced in East Java in his articles. Until then, scholars in Europe did not know much about the lived practice of Islam; their knowledge came from books from the Middle East. The Dutch knew Islam in Java differed from what they had learned from these books and therefore often considered the Javanese 'bad Muslims'. Poensen showed in his work that the Javanese were not bad Muslims, but that they were in fact devout Muslims who had localized Islam. He showed that in Java, Islam was not perceived as a static set of beliefs and practices, but that as fluid and adaptable. Because of his detailed descriptions of local beliefs and rituals his work is still highly valued by scholars today.

¹⁰⁴³ Carel Poensen, *Letter to J.C. Neurdenburg* (Kediri 18 November 1873) Utrechts Archief.

8. Conclusion

Carel Poensen's daily life in Java consisted of teaching, providing medical assistance, traveling, preaching, instructing his assistants, and writing. His life was marked by financial worries, the lack of success in the mission, loneliness, and the illnesses of his wife. Poensen was most happy behind his desk, because writing brought him the most satisfaction; it produced a lasting result, unlike his missionary efforts. The life of a missionary was, according to Poensen, full of 'disappointments and setbacks', but despite all the discouragements the work was dear to him. Poensen believed missionary work encompassed more than proselytizing. He therefore dedicated himself to the development of the local community by adopting children, educating the youth, providing healthcare, and supporting the poor. Poensen remained involved with the NZG after his retirement; he continued writing for the *Mededeelingen* until his death and was a member of the board of the Society between 1891 and 1917.

Poensen's missionizing methods focused mainly on the development of the Javanese population. He proposed several ideas to the board but never actually realised them. However, his proposals do provide insight into his missionary philosophy. His ideas were practical and pragmatic. He put much effort in internalizing the vernacular languages, his research and his detailed descriptions of the local cultural, political and religious circumstances. Poensen differed from many of his colleagues by allowing the Javanese Christians to stay 'Javanese'. He was also involved in social issues, like improving the status of women and the prevention of child marriages. He was cautious when it came to actual preaching to Muslims; he left most of the direct evangelization to his assistants. His missionary style was in line with the ideas of the *Groninger School*, whose philosophy had a great impact on the NZG at the time.

Poensen's writings show that he struggled with his different identities. He was not just a missionary, but also a scholar and he had trouble uniting these facets. In his letters to director Neurdenburg he continuously strengthened his missionary identity and simultaneously weakened his scholarly identity. Although the NZG did not always appreciate Poensen's efforts in writing, his work has had a significant impact on the Society and especially on the missionary training. Because of his work and his repeated pleading, more attention was given to the languages, geography, and ethnology in the curriculum of the mission school. Despite the critique he had to endure, he continued to write ethnological articles and has even issued an ethnological book. Eventually, he became a professor at the *Indische Instelling* in Delft and the editor of the *Mededeelingen* after his retirement as a missionary. Poensen thus concluded his career as a scholar.

'*Brieven uit de binnenlanden van Java*' was received with mixed feelings in the academic world. Veth and Snouck Hurgronje were of the opinion that Poensen did not possess enough knowledge to

write about Islam in general. They believed he had to concentrate solely on describing his experiences, because they considered only those passages in his work useful for the ethnology of Java. Poensen's research method consisted of observing and sometimes even participating. In the second half of the nineteenth century, these methods were still hardly used by ethnologists. Distinguished scholars at the time based their texts usually on reports and resources of others, and also in many cases, on missionary writings. Poensen's work was therefore quite uncommon in that period because he incorporated his own findings in his articles. Because his numerous articles on the Javanese society are very detailed, his work is still an interesting source for scholars today. Poensen's commitment to the missionary work and to academia has influenced both the NZG and the scientific discourse on Javanese culture and religion.

Christiaan Albers

In the summer of 1859 Christiaan Albers (1837-1920) took his entrance exam for the missionary school of the NZV, together with fourteen other young men. Five of them passed the test and were invited for an interview in Rotterdam. In the end, Albers and Van der Linden were the first two students accepted by the NZV. Albers moved from Amsterdam, the city he grew up in, to the boarding school of the NZV in Rotterdam. He and Van der Linden lived with the secretary of the NZV, A. Meyer, and his family for the first few years, since the NZV did not have its own mission house yet. The NZV emphasized especially learning foreign languages: Malay and Javanese. A few hours a week were reserved for Dutch, mathematics, and music. Remarkably, theological subjects were not part of the curriculum during these first years. Moreover, Albers and Van der Linden did not learn Sundanese, the language spoken in West Java, and the area where the board was searching for suitable districts. Unfortunately, the board had not succeeded in finding anyone yet to teach this language. Nevertheless, they took their final exams in May 1862, after a shortened training of barely three years. Later that day, Albers and Van der Linden were blessed during a delegation ceremony at the Laurens Church in Rotterdam.

They did not leave, however, right away to the Dutch Indies. Albers, Van der Linden, and their teacher Grashuis, who would accompany them to Java to work on a Sundanese translation of the Bible, first travelled around the Netherlands. They visited many churches in the hope of instigating '...compassion; both through faithful prayer and by sacrificial gifts'.¹⁰⁴⁴ A few days before the men boarded the *Wilhelmina Johanna*, Albers asked Van der Linden's sister to marry him. She accepted,

¹⁰⁴⁴ J.H. Blinde, *'Christiaan Albers, 1837-1920, Zendeling der Nederlandsche Zendingsvereniging', in Lichtstralen op den akker der wereld* (Rotterdam 1920) 5.

and they agreed she would travel by herself to Java a few months later. The board was very content with this development because they were not keen on sending unmarried men to the colonies; they believed that unmarried men would raise suspicion under the local population.

On 16 August 1862 the ship finally left for the Dutch Indies. They endured many setbacks during the journey; they almost faced shipwreck and a storm took them so far in the wrong direction that the voyage took weeks longer than expected. The Wilhelmina Johanna finally arrived after a gruelling journey of 142 days in Batavia. Albers was very optimistic at his arrival because he believed the Sunda mission was wished and blessed by God.¹⁰⁴⁵ However, Albers and Van der Linden soon discovered the Sundanese were not so eager to learn about Christianity as they had expected: 'these same letters will tell us that they did not cry out in distress; and that they did not very much appreciate the help, offered to them by the missionaries in Christ's name.'¹⁰⁴⁶

Not only were the missionaries disappointed by the cold reaction of the Sundanese, they were also worried about the possible restrictions the government would impose on them. They chose to leave Batavia for Bandung: 'When we stay here, near the coast, the government can easily send us back to the Netherlands, however if we move to the interior, they cannot send us back just as easily.'¹⁰⁴⁷ The missionaries could stay for a short period of time in Ciandur with the Baptist missionary H.C. Klinkert, who had been there for seven months. From there, Albers and Van der Linden moved to a small rental house in Bandung, but it proved to be very difficult to obtain the necessary papers there because the local resident was not in favour of the Christian mission.

The missionaries were only allowed to evangelise among the European and Ambonese people, since the colonial government had not yet given their permission to evangelise to the Sundanese. The NZV wrote about this initial period: 'The government already saw flames rising, Europeans being murdered and Java going under. Making the people familiar with Christ would be fatal for the Sundanese, or rather for the government.'¹⁰⁴⁸ Albers believed that the Dutch government was more resistant to the mission than the indigenous leaders. Moreover, he argued that banning the mission was in fact everything but neutral.¹⁰⁴⁹

¹⁰⁴⁵ Christiaan Albers, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Batavia 22 January 1863) Utrechts Archief.

¹⁰⁴⁶ Blinde, 'Christiaan Albers', 7.

¹⁰⁴⁷ Blinde, 'Christiaan Albers', 8.

¹⁰⁴⁸ Blinde, 'Christiaan Albers', 11.

¹⁰⁴⁹ Christiaan Albers, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Ciandur 10 August 1863) Utrechts Archief.

9. Ciandur

After a few months in Bandung, Van der Linden moved to Cheribon and Albers went back to Ciandur. Missionary Klinkert had left Ciandur and the mission in a state of despair when Albers took over his house and school. Albers' fiancée, Christina, arrived in Java, after he was settled down in his new house. They were married on 18 January 1864 in Batavia. Records from the NZV show that she was much appreciated for her support to the mission. She was designated as 'a pious woman, but with strong determination and an inflexible character'.¹⁰⁵⁰ Moreover, she was a qualified teacher and since Albers was not, the mission school could be put in her name. Unfortunately, Albers and his wife were both in poor health. Both suffered of a disease that affected their intestines, called 'tropical sprue'. Moreover, Christina also suffered of biliary colic, a gallstone disease, which limited her ability to assist her husband in the girl's school.

The first years of the mission turned out to be difficult 'amidst those indifferent, lascivious Sundanese of Ciandur'.¹⁰⁵¹ Albers and Van der Linden had to study the language, nature, and spirit of the Sundanese through encounters, but it turned out to be very difficult to get in contact with the people. Albers complained that his encounters were usually limited to small talk with shop owners and that they often replied in Malay instead of Sundanese. During those first years Albers noted that people were afraid of him and flew into their houses when he entered their *desa*.¹⁰⁵² The people seemed scared to talk to the Dutch, because that was regarded as a 'political sin', according to Albers.¹⁰⁵³ After a year, his initial optimism and enthusiasm had somewhat depleted: 'It takes a huge effort of the missionary, much silent grief and many prayers. And we are not so strong; we are still so young, so inexperienced, not wise or learnt'.¹⁰⁵⁴ In a commemorative book, the pioneers of the NZV are remembered as heroes: 'How different are the circumstances today in comparison to those in the times of the first brothers. They had to pave the way, which we later, at least partly, could walk freely.'¹⁰⁵⁵

Albers focused, like most other missionaries, mainly on education during the first years of the mission. The school was not just there for the education of children, but also for making contact with parents, according to Albers. Albers taught reading, writing, mathematics, topography, music classes, and Bible history. He tried to make his school an intermediate between a mission and a government school. It could not be a real mission school because Albers still did not have permission to do

¹⁰⁵⁰ Blinde, 'Christiaan Albers', 12.

¹⁰⁵¹ Blinde, 'Christiaan Albers', 14.

¹⁰⁵² Rooseboom, 'Na vijftig jaren', 53.

¹⁰⁵³ Christiaan Albers, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Bandung 10 April 1863) Utrechts Archief.

¹⁰⁵⁴ Christiaan Albers, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Ciandur 4 November 1863) Utrechts Archief.

¹⁰⁵⁵ Blinde, 'Christiaan Albers', 13.

missionary work. His wife also taught a class of European children who lived in Ciandur when her health permitted it.

The number of pupils varied much. Albers wrote in 1864 that there was only one pupil left, but three years later he mentioned there were 37 pupils enrolled. He confessed: 'I go to school in fear every day, because one whim in the boys and they are gone and I am left with an empty classroom'. After Albers baptized his first convert in Ciandur, Ismail, the number of pupils dropped even more. Many parents withheld their children from going to Albers's school because they were afraid he would baptize them as well.¹⁰⁵⁶ The number of enrolled pupils continued to decrease until Albers was forced to close the school. In the years that followed he re-opened and closed the school several times.

Albers often wrote in his letters to the board that life was very monotonous and that he therefore did not really know what to write about. He had arrived in Java in the spring of 1863 and two years later he still had not received permission to do missionary work. His activities were limited to teaching and laying down foundations for the future mission. He taught classes during the morning and tried to make contact with the *desa* people in the afternoons. There was no church yet, so Sunday's service meant little more than reading the Bible with his wife. Moreover, he did not notice any interest in religious matters in the people he spoke to. As he wrote: 'The Indies are a true wilderness in the spiritual sense, dry as a desert; barren as any country in the world can be. However, this is -praise God- no reason for us to slow down.'¹⁰⁵⁷ He often confessed that he would rather work in a 'heathen' instead of an Islamic area, even though he believed Muslims in his area were not very attached to their faith.¹⁰⁵⁸ He considered Islam the enemy of the Christian mission; 'The devil himself created Mohammedanism'.¹⁰⁵⁹

Albers and his wife sometimes took in pupils whose families lived far away or were too poor to continue taking care of them. The first boy they took in, Wangsa, came to live with them in 1864. Albers wrote to the board that they allowed Wangsa to continue visiting the mosque every Friday and explained that he did not forbid it because it would only be counter effective.¹⁰⁶⁰ He only sporadically mentioned Wangsa and the other children that lived under his roof through the years in his letters. His writings also show that he not only took a number of children into his home, but that he also supported some pupils with food and clothes.¹⁰⁶¹

¹⁰⁵⁶ M. Lindenborn, 'Onze zendingsvelden', 164.

¹⁰⁵⁷ Christiaan Albers, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Ciandur 9 July 1864) Utrechts Archief.

¹⁰⁵⁸ Christiaan Albers, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Ciandur 12 January 1867) Utrechts Archief.

¹⁰⁵⁹ Christiaan Albers, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Ciandur 5 April 1869) Utrechts Archief.

¹⁰⁶⁰ Christiaan Albers, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Ciandur 28 September 1864) Utrechts Archief.

¹⁰⁶¹ Christiaan Albers, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Ciandur 26 February 1866) Utrechts Archief.

In November 1864 Christina gave birth to their first child, a son who was named Christiaan. In the years that followed they had three daughters; Niescina, Hendrika, and Nora. Nora was born with stunted legs and suffered of spasms. She would live her entire life with Albers and his wife. Unfortunately, their eldest son Christiaan became ill and died in January 1869. In 1871, Albers and his wife had another son, Jan Hendrik, who died just six months later. In December 1871, Christina delivered a fourth daughter, whom they named Dorothea Johanna. She died during Albers' leave in Europe. In February 1874 another girl was born and a year later Christina gave birth to a boy, who was named Christiaan as well.

10. The first years of missionizing

In July 1865, Albers finally received the necessary permission to proselytize in the region of Ciandur. He had waited for this approval for more than two years. His first point of action was to transform the elementary school into an actual mission school. However, a few months later, he had to close the school for a few months due to a lack of pupils. In addition, he commenced Sunday morning public services. The first public service was held at 20 July 1865. Albers spoke in Malay, since his Sundanese was not yet sufficient. The only attendees were his domestic staff.¹⁰⁶² He admitted that the staff considered this part of their job, but he believed the Holy Spirit would affect their hearts during the services anyway.¹⁰⁶³ Although there were no converts yet, Albers pleaded for money to build a proper church, because he thought people were hesitant to enter his house. The board, however, considered it too soon to build an expensive church, therefore Albers decided to rent a barn and have his services there. He preached every Sunday in this barn until he received permission to start building a church in 1868.

In December 1868, three years after Albers had started to evangelise in Ciandur, the first two Sundanese decided to be baptized. They were named Ismail and Moerti. Albers and Coolsma, another missionary of the NZV who lived with Albers for two years, were very content and this encouraged them to persist in the mission. Ismail and Moerti had to endure severe opposition from their community. *Hajjis*, and even the police, came by their house to change their mind. They were ignored, bullied, threatened, and their adopted child was even taken from them. Albers noticed the opposition had worsened after these two were baptized. Blinde of the NZV wrote in a commemorative book about this period: 'Later, when the first proselytes had joined the Church, they (the missionaries, M.K.)

¹⁰⁶² Christiaan Albers, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Ciandur 11 July 1865) Utrechts Archief.

¹⁰⁶³ Christiaan Albers, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Ciandur 7 February 1871) Utrechts Archief.

felt the immense and fierce hatred of the people, incited by their priests and *hajjis* against everything which was Christian.¹⁰⁶⁴

A couple months later, at Pentecost 1869, a third woman, Sara, was baptized by Albers. That same day he served the Lord's Supper for the very first time in Ciandur. From then on Albers, his family, servants and the three Sundanese Christians came together in church every Sunday. Albers always preached with the doors open, by order of the board, so that curious people could have a look. However, he wrote, 'It has never appeared to us that these meetings had any effect on the non-Christians'.¹⁰⁶⁵ On a Sunday morning in 1870, Albers was surprised to see his church full of people. Apparently, a European landlord had sent his entire staff to church. A few seemed sincerely interested and decided to take Bible lessons several nights a week. However, Albers wrote to the board that he did not want to write much about developments like these because they often turned out to be disappointing in the end. He noticed that in the course of time, people became less and less curious about the church and its services. 'The missionary stands and shouts, peddles and preaches, but he shouts in a desert. His cries and preaches are not heard'.¹⁰⁶⁶

Ismail brought a few family members to church in July 1871. Albers visited them afterwards and wrote to the board that not everyone seemed eager to convert. Aedjang Isa, Ismail's cousin, for example, was a coppersmith and thus dependent on Muslim customers. Albers knew it would be difficult for him to convert because he would then probably lose his business. Furthermore, one of his brothers was a *hajji* who visited him every night to discourage him from converting. A married couple, Ali and Aminah, were baptized only a few months later. Unfortunately, Ismail, Albers' first assistant, died in 1872 along with Pa Emaj, a man who just recently had been baptized. In addition, Ali and Aminah moved to another district, so the number of Christians in Ciandur dropped back to three in 1872. Although this meagre number sometimes made Albers miserable, he maintained that he did not want to lower his standards for admitting people like indigenous evangelists did.

In August 1874, Albers took a leave after twelve years and went back to Holland with his family to recover from illness, but most of all from despondency: 'There are merely closed doors for me and the school is forlorn'.¹⁰⁶⁷ Missionary Gijsman took over in Ciandur to take care of the small congregation which consisted of four Christians. Gijsman, however, managed to convert and baptize four people during Alber's leave. When Albers returned the congregation had thus grown to eight

¹⁰⁶⁴ Blinde, '*Christiaan Albers*', 14.

¹⁰⁶⁵ Christiaan Albers, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Ciandur 3 January 1870) Utrechts Archief.

¹⁰⁶⁶ Christiaan Albers, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Ciandur 4 June 1871) Utrechts Archief.

¹⁰⁶⁷ Lindenborn, *Onze zendingsvelden*, 132.

members.¹⁰⁶⁸ Albers managed to convert another family of four persons shortly after he had returned in March 1878. The years that followed were more successful than those before his leave. The school attracted more pupils, a few boys proved talented enough to become assistants and the number of converts slightly increased each year.

11. Meester Cornelis

Mr Anthing was a lawyer who supported the Christian mission by funding and training indigenous evangelists in North West Java. Over the years his assistants had managed to establish a few Christian communities in the Preanger. The NZV tried to take control over these churches after Anthing's unfortunate death in 1883. The churches, with over five hundred members, were led by Leonard, an indigenous evangelist, who had become very influential after Anthing's passing. He refused to surrender his power to the NZV. Albers and the other missionaries tried to win him over by offering a salary that was much higher than what the other assistants received. Eventually, he accepted the monthly allowance and agreed to work under missionary Van de Linden's guidance. Yet he remained difficult to control and he even continued performing the sacraments himself. Unlike Van Eendenburg, Albers was not against this: 'I hold the opposite opinion since long ago, and I think that the missionary should work in such a manner that the churches can do without him as soon as possible'.¹⁰⁶⁹

Van der Linden passed away in 1886 which left the post in Meester Cornelis vacant. Albers was transferred to that district and Van Eendenburg looked after Ciandur until missionary De Voogd would arrive in Java. Albers first bought a house in the *desa* Bidana Tjina, not far from the district's capital Meester Cornelis, but eventually moved to Meester Cornelis in 1890. The district of Meester Cornelis was much larger than Ciandur and there were numerous *desas* with small Christian communities that were founded by Anthing's assistants. This meant that Albers had to travel more often to lead all these churches. The number of Christians together reached almost five hundred when he started his appointment. This was a much bigger number than he or any other missionary had converted in the NZV mission. He visited all *desas* immediately after his appointment to meet with his new assistants and congregations. Albers was disappointed in what he found. The number of people that actually attended church services was much lower than what the assistants had told him. For example, at an unannounced visit on a Sunday morning in Tjiater, Albers found all Christians fishing and they showed no intention to go to church. 'They want to be a Christian in their own way, but that

¹⁰⁶⁸ Coolsma, 'Twaalf voorlezingen', 218.

¹⁰⁶⁹ Christiaan Albers, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Ciandur 12 August 1885) Utrechts Archief.

is impossible of course.¹⁰⁷⁰ He noticed elsewhere that everyone was chatting or just left in the midst of a service. Furthermore, most assistants were not aware of the dates of the Christian holidays, not every assistant taught Bible classes at school, some never taught catechism classes at all, and most services included little more than reciting the Lord's Prayer, the Twelve Articles of Faith, and the Ten Commandments.¹⁰⁷¹

Albers found out that the Christians in this region were very poor. He wrote that most of them only ate rice twice a week and usually owned just one set of clothes.¹⁰⁷² He helped them as much as he could, but only if they showed genuine devotion. He had already bought, for example, several *sawahs* to help poor Christian families in 1880.¹⁰⁷³ After he had moved to Meester Cornelis, he allowed poor Christian families to live on his courtyard. The number of Christians living on his compound reached 21 in 1906.¹⁰⁷⁴ Moreover, Albers wrote to the board that all of his assistants used him to enrich themselves. They would ask for money for the maintenance of the church or to support poor Christians, but Albers was convinced they kept at least a part of the money themselves.¹⁰⁷⁵

Albers was not just busy with his missionary work. Together with Van der Linden, Albers had founded *De Nederlandse Zendingsbond*, 'The Dutch-Mission Union' in 1881. He functioned as chairman for years. Its aim was to diminish rivalry between different mission societies and to work together to enlarge their success. Albers also founded and directed the *Jacobus Vereeniging*, an association that supported widows and orphans of missionaries. Furthermore, Albers did editorial work for the mission journal *De Opwekker* between 1886 and 1894.¹⁰⁷⁶

12. Results and retirement

Albers celebrated his fortieth anniversary as a missionary in 1902. Both Albers and Verhoeven received a medal from the queen of the Netherlands that same year; they became knights in the Order of Oranje Nassau.¹⁰⁷⁷ This shows that after the turn of the century, relations with the state were improving. After the radical change to the *Ethische Politiek* (Ethical Policy) in 1901, the state was much more supportive of the mission, especially of their efforts in education and healthcare.

¹⁰⁷⁰ Christiaan Albers, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Bidana Tjina 1 January 1888) Utrechts Archief.

¹⁰⁷¹ Christiaan Albers, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Bidana Tjina 23 March 1886) Utrechts Archief.

¹⁰⁷² Christiaan Albers, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Ciandur 4 December 1878) Utrechts Archief.

¹⁰⁷³ Christiaan Albers, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Ciandur 9 February 1880) Utrechts Archief.

¹⁰⁷⁴ Christiaan Albers, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Meester Cornelis 23, 24 July 1906) Utrechts Archief.

¹⁰⁷⁵ Christiaan Albers, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Bidana Tjina 12 September 1888) Utrechts Archief.

¹⁰⁷⁶ *De Opwekker* was a mission journal which was published since 1907 by the *Nederlandsche Zendingsbond*.

¹⁰⁷⁷ Christiaan Albers, 'Jaarverslag 1901' in *Orgaan* (Rotterdam 1901).

In July 1907, after 45 years of mission work, Albers and his family returned to Holland indefinitely due to Albers' deteriorating condition. Missionary Bliet took command of the congregation in Meester Cornelis. Albers looked back at his career in Java with mixed feelings. He had experienced many disappointments: 'Oh, everything always broke down in my hands!'¹⁰⁷⁸ The family moved to Zeist with their handicapped daughter Nora. Just two months after their return, Albers' wife passed away. After his official retirement, Albers still tried to be of use for the NZV, but his memory faded more and more. He suffered from dementia and only had memories of his youth left in the end. At the age of 82, Christiaan Albers passed away. According to his *In Memoria* he was: 'lively, well informed, clear in his views and rarely done talking.'¹⁰⁷⁹ Moreover, his friends said he had 'a cheerful heart, which kept him going despite all disappointments.'¹⁰⁸⁰

13. Conclusion

Christiaan Albers did not have an easy life as a missionary. His first years were especially challenging. He faced difficulties to receive permission to start missionizing and his results during those first years were negligible. When he took his first leave to Europe, after spending twelve years in the mission, he left just four people in the care of missionary Gijsman. His work proved a bit more successful in the years after his return, but he remained dissatisfied and suffered from depression. A new phase in his career started when he was transferred to Meester Cornelis. Suddenly he had to lead a congregation of a few hundred Christians who had previously been converted by Anthing's assistants. The years that followed were marked by traveling to attend all the Christian communities. Albers had more than enough work with guiding these churches and eventually left proselytizing to his assistants.

Albers had been the leading figure among the NZV missionaries because he had been the first of them to arrive in Java. He had taken on several responsibilities, like directing the *Nederlandsche Zendingsbond* and the *Jacobus Vereeniging*. Although he had not been successful in converting large numbers of people, he is remembered as the pioneer of the mission in West Java, who worked hard and had cleared the way for many other missionaries to come.

¹⁰⁷⁸ Blinde, 'Christiaan Albers', 16.

¹⁰⁷⁹ J.A. Schuurman on Christiaan Albers in Blinde, 'Christiaan Albers', 14.

¹⁰⁸⁰ J.A. Schuurman on Christiaan Albers in Blinde, 'Christiaan Albers', 15.

Simon van Eendenburg

Simon van Eendenburg (1853-1912) arrived in Batavia on 29 november 1882. It had been a long, but good, journey and the captain had given him the honour of leading the service every Sunday morning. He was welcomed by Van der Linden and Dijkstra and spent his first weeks in Buitenzorg. Just before Christmas, he travelled to Sukabumi to stay another few weeks with Albers and his wife. From there he went to Modjo Warno, East Java, where he was reunited with his fiancé Niescina Kruyt (1863-1914), daughter of Johannes Kruyt, NZG missionary, and Dorothea van der Linden, sister of NZV missionary D.J. Van der Linden and Albers' wife Christina van der Linden. Van Eendenburg and Niescina were married on 28 February 1883 by Kruyt.¹⁰⁸¹ Van Eendenburg was happy to spend a few weeks in Modjo Warno, a Christian *desa* that was founded by indigenous Christians. This Christian community would inspire him in forming his own missionizing method. He also visited the districts of Hoeszoo and Kreemer and this shows that the relations between missionaries from the NZV and NZG were good in Java at an individual level.

Van Eendenburg and his wife went back to West Java in March to stay with Albers until he received permission to lead a district on his own. He held his first sermon in Sundanese on 29 April 1883 and was given the honour by Albers to baptize a Chinese man that same day. He started traveling around the district with Albers' assistant Sarioen to visit Christians and to evangelise among Muslims. He noticed during this initial trip that Islam was quite strong in West Java and that a difficult task lay ahead of him.

14. Sukabumi

Albers gave territorial authority over Sukabumi to Van Eendenburg in 1883. At that time the church consisted of 22 members, including children. Only a week after his appointment, Van Eendenburg baptized two people and married them in church a week later. His wife, Niescina, started a school for girls straightaway, where she taught reading and sewing. She tried to attract Muslim girls to her classes, but failed to do so. Unfortunately, Van Eendenburg fell ill in August 1883 and had to stay in Buitenzorg to recover. However, he was called back to Sukabumi after seven weeks because of a quarrel between church members. Van Eendenburg wrote to the board that all the Christian couples, with just one exception, in his district were childless and that this was a large disadvantage for the growth of his church. People gossiped that everyone who converted to Christianity became

¹⁰⁸¹ Simon van Eendenburg, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Buitenzorg 28 March 1883) Utrechts Archief.

infertile.¹⁰⁸² The image of the Christian community was also affected because some of the members were opium users.

In January 1884, Van Eendenburg and his wife took in a fourteen year old girl. She was Christian and wished to live with a Christian family, but her mother, Ma Tejo, had switched between being Christian and Muslim several times and eventually left the Church indefinitely when she married a Muslim man.¹⁰⁸³ However, a month later Van Eendenburg wrote to the board that the girl took all the clothes she had received from them and had left. He assumed that she had ran off with a Muslim boy. He explained that it was quite common that young Christian girls suddenly disappeared and reappeared in the *desa* as a married Muslim woman.

Van Eendenburg and his wife had their first child on 30 March 1884. Niescina gave birth to a boy who they named Simon van Eendenburg Jr. Van Eendenburg baptized his son at Pentecost in a service for the European community of Sukabumi. He hired Aminah, the former wife of Ali, and one of the first Christians of Ciandur, as his *baboe* or nursemaid. In June 1886, Niescina gave birth to a second son, Johannes, who unfortunately died the next year. Two years later, Van Eendenburg and his wife had another baby, Maria. Niescina gave birth to another girl, Dorothea, in August 1890.

15. The Christian *desa*

Some missionaries responded to the material loss of their followers after their conversion by providing them with jobs or land. Other missionaries gathered their converts to create separate villages with their own communal lands. These missionaries acted as both secular and spiritual leaders in these Christian *desas*. The method was applied in several areas in Java around 1900, including in West Java under the leadership of Van Eendenburg. A piece of land in Djampang, which was suitable for the cultivation of rice and tea, had been offered for sale to Van Eendenburg in 1885. Van Eendenburg believed the success of the mission mainly depended on the prosperity of the Christian community. He was convinced a shared agricultural enterprise would strengthen the Christian community and increase their welfare and, as a result, attract new members. In addition, the Christian *desa* would be an asylum for Christians where they would not be subject to Muslim leaders and where they would not be bullied and harassed by Muslims.

Van Eendenburg's plan was to move to Djampang with his community of 25 Christians. Each family would receive a piece of land and wood to build a house, a yard to grow vegetables, and a share

¹⁰⁸² Simon van Eendenburg, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Sukabumi 22 January 1884) Utrechts Archief.

¹⁰⁸³ Simon van Eendenburg, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Sukabumi 4 January 1884) Utrechts Archief.

in the profit of the communal *sawahs*. During the initial phase of forest mining, constructing, and sowing the NZV would have to support the community. However after twelve to eighteen months the *desa* would be self-sufficient, according to Van Eendenburg. A tenth of the profit would then be used for the maintenance of the church, school, and hospital and for the expansion of the *desa*. Djampang offered enough space for approximately 150 families.¹⁰⁸⁴ The total costs for the NZV would be around 12,500 guilders, that amount included the land, building materials, and buffalos and horses.

However, Van Eendenburg opted for another plan just a few weeks later. He had found a smaller piece of land, 50 *baoe* instead of 250, which was much cheaper and already included a furnished European house.¹⁰⁸⁵ This land was not only cheaper; it was also situated in a more densely populated area and closer to Sukabumi, so that Van Eendenburg could still visit the church there. However, the board was against both plans, which surprised Van Eendenburg. He wrote back that they had to support a plan that would strengthen the economic position of the Christian community, since that was the only way to ensure growth. If the missionary did not provide jobs, young Christian men would move to different regions to find jobs and fall back into their old religious traditions. He had already done everything that he could on this point. He had hired Christians as baboe, cook, wrangler and gardener, and in all other positions he could think of.

Due to the objections of the board, Van Eendenburg had to pass on both investments. However, he did not give up on his plans and continued looking for a suitable piece of land. Eventually the board assented and allowed him 3000 guilders to buy land. Van Eendenburg found a piece of land of a hundred *baoe* to realise his plans. He named this land Pangharepan (Hope). However, just after he had bought the land, he received a letter from the board, stating that they had changed their mind and granted him 1000 instead of the previously promised 3000 guilders. In the end, the board approved Van Eendenburg's acquisition.

The costs of the construction soon exceeded Van Eendenburg's expectations and he did not receive the amount he had hoped for the house in Sukabumi. The board accused him of being incautious with their money, especially when he asked for another large sum to build a new church in Sukabumi. Van Eendenburg defended himself by explaining that Sukabumi needed a prestigious looking church to attract members. Eventually he collected the money himself and built a new church for 1000 guilders. He tried to justify his expenses by arguing that Albers agreed that this new church was much better than the church of Ciandur, which had cost the NZV 3000 guilders.¹⁰⁸⁶

¹⁰⁸⁴ Simon van Eendenburg, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Sukabumi 16 May 1885) Utrechts Archief.

¹⁰⁸⁵ Simon van Eendenburg, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Sukabumi 2 July 1885) Utrechts Archief.

¹⁰⁸⁶ Simon van Eendenburg, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Sukabumi 19 September 1887) Utrechts Archief.

When Albers moved to Meester Cornelis in April 1886, Van Eendenburg was instructed to look after Ciandur until a new missionary was appointed to that region. He visited Ciandur every week to hold a service for the 28 Christians who lived there. He wrote that he was not too optimistic about the future of Ciandur because he did not believe that the church would attract new members. Nevertheless, a few months later, he reported that two Muslims from Ciandur started catechism classes.¹⁰⁸⁷ Besides Sukabumi and Ciandur, Van Eendenburg regularly travelled to Tjikenbar where nine Christian families lived.

The newly founded *desa* Pangharepan grew quickly. Van Eendenburg visited the new *desa* once a week, for as long as his house there was not finished. He sold his house in Sukabumi in March 1888 and moved into a temporary house in Pangharepan. His wife and children stayed with his in-laws in Modjo Warno until the house was completed. The Christian community in Pangharepan increased quickly, especially in comparison to other congregations in the Preanger. Van Eendenburg was proud of his initial results. In contrast to most of his colleagues he was always cheerful and optimistic about the future in his letters. 'I belief more and more that God has guided me to the path I currently walk, and that He has wished for this to happen.'¹⁰⁸⁸ In July 1888, Van Eendenburg wrote an article about his results over the years. The article was very positive. He had built churches in Sukabumi, Pangharepan, and Tjikenbar, had made a profit on the house in Sukabumi and had bought land, cattle, and houses for Pangharepan. Pangharepan had its first harvest, which already reached a profit of 60 guilders, and its church consisted of 72 members 1889.¹⁰⁸⁹ Sukabumi had grown from 16 to 79 members in 1888.¹⁰⁹⁰

In 1891, missionary De Voogd had to resign from his missionary duties because of health issues. This meant that Van Eendenburg was also temporarily assigned to Bandung. His district consisted now of Pangharepan, Tjikenbar, Soemedang, Sukabumi, Ciandur, and Bandung.¹⁰⁹¹ Van Eendenburg had to travel often and complained several times that the workload was too heavy. In May 1896, Van Eendenburg went on leave to the Netherlands with his family to rest and to visit his eldest son Simon who went to school there. Müller moved to Pangharepan to lead the *desa* while Van Eendenburg was in Europe. Van Eendenburg did not have a positive opinion about Müller; he was of the opinion Müller lacked medical knowledge and did not speak Sundanese well enough. The family returned to Pangharepan in October 1898 and Van Eendenburg wrote to the board that Müller had done very well.

¹⁰⁸⁷ Simon van Eendenburg, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Sukabumi 26 December 1886) Utrechts Archief.

¹⁰⁸⁸ Simon van Eendenburg, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Pangharepan 26 April 1888) Utrechts Archief.

¹⁰⁸⁹ Simon van Eendenburg, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Pangharepan 4 January 1889) Utrechts Archief.

¹⁰⁹⁰ Simon van Eendenburg, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Pangharepan 30 July 1888) Utrechts Archief.

¹⁰⁹¹ Simon van Eendenburg, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Pangharepan 8 December 1891) Utrechts Archief.

16. Van Eendenburg's dismissal

1900 proved to be a difficult year for Pangharepan and for Van Eendenburg personally as well. The rice-harvest was not as good as in previous years because of a plague of mice and the prices for coffee had dropped. Besides, the *desa* was severely damaged by an earthquake in January. Many people had flown from Pangharepan and some never returned. But everything changed when Van Eendenburg was accused of immoral behaviour by the church council and Müller in the end of February. They accused him of being a drunk and eleven boys accused him of assaulting them. Müller wrote a letter to Albers about the matter, but Albers could not believe it at first: 'I know that brother Van Eendenburg is strict, very surly, imposes his will on everyone and is not very sociable. I know some things that were instituted under Müller's administration, were abolished again by Van Eendenburg. And I know how faithless the natives are. His present accusers are the same ones that shed big tears at Van Eendenburg's departure to Europe. Müller has been in their midst for over two years and never have these sins, that he supposedly has committed before his departure for Europe, been mentioned'.¹⁰⁹²

Van Eendenburg denied the accusations and replied that the people were angry because of the low coffee prices and that it was a conspiracy against him to get Müller back to Pangharepan. According to him, Müller was more popular because he lent large sums of money to the people. He wrote: 'I am not guilty of the sin of which I am so explicitly accused. However, I can explain the reason for this accusation. I loved the Sundanese people dearly. For a long time my love for that people had been some kind of 'cult'. I felt connected to them and only felt happy and satisfied when I was alone with one of them. It was something pathological, I acknowledge that now and I thank God that He broke that connection, so I can be much calmer, freer and happier now.'¹⁰⁹³ He admitted that he let schoolboys sit on his lap, that he sometimes pressed himself to a pupil, hugged them, or took their heads in his hands. He admitted that he never should have touched them, but 'I could not have imagined that these people who I loved and who knew me, for whom I lived and worked could be so bad.'¹⁰⁹⁴

The NZV installed a committee, consisting of Albers, Verhoeven, and De Haan, to investigate the case. They were sent to interview the church council, the boys, the assistants, and even Van Eendenburg's family and send a report to the board. The committee visited Pangharepan unannounced, just when Van Eendenburg was in Sukabumi. Albers, Verhoeven, and De Haan first talked to Van Eendenburg's wife, Niescina and to the assistants Sarioen and Philipoes. Philipoes stated

¹⁰⁹² Christiaan Albers, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Meester Cornelis 20 March 1900) Utrechts Archief.

¹⁰⁹³ Simon van Eendenburg, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Pangharepan 25 March 1900) Utrechts Archief.

¹⁰⁹⁴ Simon van Eendenburg, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Pangharepan 25 March 1900) Utrechts Archief.

that Van Eendenburg had admitted he was guilty to the church council, but that he had instructed the boys to not tell everything to the committee, since that would be too embarrassing for him.¹⁰⁹⁵ The committee awaited Van Eendenburg's return before they questioned the boys. They hoped he would admit his sins and resign so further investigation would not be necessary.

Van Eendenburg did resign to avoid further questioning. Albers reported to the board: 'this and the fact that he refused to elaborate on what he had done that could have led to these dirty accusations, made a huge impression; Van Eendenburg is guilty. Because I wanted more information from him, I confronted him with one of the many allegations; a boy claimed he was stained with his sperm after caressing him. I asked him if that was true, and I could have died when he calmly answered me; 'I do not know'. This 'I do not know' settled it for us.'¹⁰⁹⁶

The report of the committee was very clear and they telegraphed the board that they had found Van Eendenburg guilty. Before the board could fire him, Van Eendenburg resigned on 29 April 1900. However, he did not admit he was guilty, but said he was sorry for not being careful enough. *Orgaan*, the journal of the NZV, never mentioned the case. The board wished the matter would be discussed as little as possible so that the name of the Lord would not be blemished in the Preanger. Pangharepan was taken over by Müller temporarily and he was instructed to never discuss the matter again with the community.

Van Eendenburg left Pangharepan with his wife and children on 14 June and got a job on a coffee plantation in West Java. Niescina refused to believe the accusations and stayed with her husband. However, in 1907 she filed for divorce after all. Simon jr. grew up to be a famous lieutenant in the KNIL and he died in a battle on Aceh in 1912. Van Eendenburg himself passed away a year later, on 13 November 1912 in Sukabumi.

A few years after Van Eendenburg had left Pangharepan an unfortunate incident happened there again. In July 1905, Albers wrote to the board that Van Eendenburg's successor Müller had to leave Pangharepan as soon as possible. Albers explained that Müller had made 'filthy propositions' to two boys.¹⁰⁹⁷ Albers admitted he was not sure something had actually happened, but to be sure he had made a deal with the boys that Müller would be replaced if they promised to be silent about the incident. Albers did not want another investigation since that would further damage the reputation of

¹⁰⁹⁵ Haan, A. de, *Report on the case of Van Eendenburg to the Board, including letters of Philipoes to Müller*(Pangharepan 22 March 1900) Utrechts Archief.

¹⁰⁹⁶ Christiaan Albers, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Meester Cornelis 1 May 1900) Utrechts Archief.

¹⁰⁹⁷ Christiaan Albers, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Meester Cornelis 17 July 1905) Utrechts Archief.

the NZV in the Preanger. He hoped everyone would forget about it as soon as Müller was replaced and the board fully agreed with his decision.¹⁰⁹⁸

17. Conclusion

Van Eendenburg was a man full of ambition. He entered the mission with high hopes and endless enthusiasm. His career can be divided in two phases: Sukabumi and Pangharepan. He spent four years in Sukabumi and missionized there according to the usual methods; he taught at a school, provided medical aid, and preached in the *desas*. His results were not bad in comparison to those of his colleagues, but he wanted more. Inspired by the success of his father-in-law at Modjo Warno he designed a plan to buy land and found a Christian *desa* with a communal agricultural enterprise. This Christian *desa*, Pangharepan, proved to be successful; the Christian community grew at a much faster rate than others. His success, however, came to an end when he was fired in 1900, after being accused of sexual assault. Pangharepan was taken over by another missionary and continued to be the most successful mission post in West Java.

Petrus Hoevenaars

Petrus Hoevenaars (1860-1930) received his education at a small seminary in Breda, close to his place of birth, Gilze. In the year 1880 he joined the Jesuit Order and became a novice. Five years later he moved to Stonyhurst, England, to study philosophy at a Jesuit College. Franciscus Van Lith, who would later become his colleague in the Javanese mission, studied here as well in the same period. Three years later Hoevenaars returned to the Netherlands and completed his education in Maastricht. There he was told he was selected to do missionary work in Java. Hoevenaars was pleased with his appointment because his brother Jacobus Hoevenaars had started to work in the Javanese mission two years earlier. In 1896, Petrus Hoevenaars arrived together with Van Lith, Engbers, and Frencken in Java. Both he and Van Lith were destined for the Java mission; Engbers was sent to Sumba and Frencken to Flores. Due to problems with the required permission, however, he and Van Lith could not start right away. Both were initially placed in Semarang to await the necessary paperwork. The two new missionaries used this time to study Javanese, which proved to be rather difficult without a teacher or adequate books. Moreover, they strictly refrained from contact with the indigenous population and thus they could not practice their pronunciation.

¹⁰⁹⁸ Christiaan Albers, *Letter to the board of the NZV* (Meester Cornelis 17 July 1905) Utrechts Archief.

A few months later, Hoevenaars was sent Yogyakarta to assist father Hebrans, together with his brother Jacobus. He still did not have a permit to evangelise under the Javanese, however he was too excited to wait for the official permission, and started evangelizing without the necessary papers. His effort proved not to be without success; within a month he baptized almost ninety Javanese, including who two princes, who proved to be valuable contacts in his later career. Nevertheless, the authorities found out about his premature actions and sent him back to Semarang where he continued his language study and started to translate the Catechism. When he finally received permission to start the Javanese mission in 1899, he found out to his surprise that he was not destined to return to Yogyakarta, but that he was ordered to a small *desa*, called Mendut, near the famous temples of Borobudur. The Dutch community and the sultan in Yogyakarta had forestalled his appointment in Yogyakarta out of fear for unrest and uprisings.¹⁰⁹⁹ Besides, in the meantime a Protestant missionary had set up a small medical clinic in Yogyakarta, and 'double mission' was prohibited in Java.¹¹⁰⁰

18. Mendut

After Hoevenaars had arrived in Mendut, he moved into an abandoned oil-factory and its outbuildings. His initial plan was to use parts of the building as stables for buffaloes and poultry belonging to the local community. He never realised this plan, but used the space to open a church instead. Two months after Hoevenaars' appointment, father Hebrans joined him in Mendut. Hebrans focused primarily on education, he had led a '*kweekschool*' or a seminary where pupils were educated to become teachers, in Semarang, and ten of his pupils had accompanied him to Mendut. Hoevenaars and Hebrans opened two schools during that summer, a primary school and a seminary, and they received the necessary permits to educate Muslim children as well. They also founded primary schools in Mungkid and Tempuran in 1903. The primary schools and the church attracted a reasonable number of pupils during those first few years.

After Hoevenaars settled in Mendut and had founded a church, he commenced serving Sunday's mass. Every Sunday he gave a sermon and provided Catechism lessons to those interested in the evenings. The initial reactions were positive; there was a reasonable number of people who were interested in what this Dutch priest had to say. Immediately, Hoevenaars started to train young,

¹⁰⁹⁹ According to Van Rijckevorsel the sultan of Yogyakarta had not complained about the presence of the Catholic mission. He believed the Dutch colonial government acted out of unnecessary precaution; 'It would not be the last time that the Dutch civil officers showed more concern for the Islamic faith, than Muslims themselves', (Van Rijckevorsel, *Pastoor F. Van Lith, S.J.*, 34).

¹¹⁰⁰ Van Lith, *Autobiographical writings*.

interested boys in order to become Catechists, so they could provide Catechism lessons in the future. In 1901, seven boys had already completed the classes held in his home. He taught Catechism classes every day, but after a while people lost their initial curiosity and stopped attending his classes. In addition, the growth of the church declined.¹¹⁰¹ Hoevenaars was often frustrated about his lack of major results: 'I try to keep my patience during the disappointments that occur every day. The first Christians in Mendut do not give, just like elsewhere, very much consolation'.¹¹⁰² He added that a missionary needed to be 'supernaturally patient'.¹¹⁰³

The Mendut mission had its first success in 1899; Hoevenaars baptized his first two converts in August that year. On Christmas day that same year nineteen people were baptized and a year later, 79 people had converted to Christianity.¹¹⁰⁴ Hoevenaars baptized far more people than Van Lith did in Muntilan during those first years. Van Lith, however, reacted disapprovingly of his colleague's success: 'Petrus Hoevenaars speaks Javanese poorly and has an unfit nature for the mission. He wants to be honoured by the people and does not adapt himself to the requirements the Javanese have for people that deserve adoration'.¹¹⁰⁵ The Jesuit superiors had intentionally placed Van Lith and Hoevenaars in districts close to each other; Mendut and Muntilan are only fifteen kilometres apart. They hoped that the two could assist each other and reinforce each other's approach. However, soon it became clear that the two did not support each other's approach, but that their methods were in some matters even opposed to each other. The superiors were displeased with this development, especially because the two districts were so close. They were afraid the people would notice the differences, would be confused, and would eventually be deterred. Van Lith, however, did not necessarily see it as a problem: 'It was good for the mission that Hoevenaars and I worked in a very different way; we were pioneers and we did not know yet which method would work. We have always lived in peace and even in friendship during that period. We never had an argument; we just disagreed with each other's working methods.'¹¹⁰⁶

¹¹⁰¹ P. Van Kalken, *Kritiek op het handschrift over het leven van F. Van Lith en nadere gegevens van Van Rijckevorsel*, Archives of the Jesuit Province of Indonesia (Semarang).

¹¹⁰² Petrus Hoevenaars, *Letter to Monseigneur Duffels* (Mendut 15 December 1900) Archives of the Jesuit Province of the Netherlands (Nijmegen).

¹¹⁰³ Petrus Hoevenaars, *Letter to Monseigneur Duffels* (Mendut 15 December 1900) Archives of the Jesuit Province of the Netherlands (Nijmegen).

¹¹⁰⁴ Vriens, *Sejarah Gereja Katolik Indonesia*.

Petrus Hoevenaars, *Historia missionis Javanica, 1896-1904* (with additions of Van Lith) Archives of the Jesuit Province of Indonesia (Semarang).

¹¹⁰⁵ Franciscus van Lith, *Werkplan van de Java missie* (Muntilan 8 August 1915) Archives of the Jesuit Province of Indonesia (Semarang).

¹¹⁰⁶ Franciscus van Lith, *De geschiedenis der katholieke Java missie* (Katwijk 1926) (Available in the Archives of the Jesuit Province of the Netherlands (Nijmegen)).

Father Hebrans moved to Muntilan after he spent just a few months in the Mendut mission, because his ideas about the mission were more similar to those of Van Lith than to those of Hoevenaars. However, he was forced to repatriate due to illness that same year. From 1900 on, Hoevenaars led the Mendut mission by himself. It did not affect the Mendut mission; in 1902, Hoevenaars baptized ninety eight people. In 1903, a new church was officially opened in Mendut in the presence of many Javanese leaders from the area. The next day ninety people performed the Confirmation.

Even though Hoevenaars had converted a reasonable amount of people, at least more than Van Lith at that point, his mission still did not meet the expectations of the Jesuit leaders. The conversion process was full of adversity and disappointments and they even considered abolishing the mission at several points in time. According to P. Van Kalken, who later became the director of the Xaverius College in Muntilan, Hoevenaars did not have any strength for proselytizing, because he was too much of an organiser. Nevertheless, he added that it was not just Hoevenaars' fault, since the people of Mendut were 'stupid and immoral'.¹¹⁰⁷ Hoevenaars, on the other hand, said more or less the same about the Muntilan mission. He wrote that after four years of mission work there were not even ten Christians in Muntilan. Moreover, he believed there was no hope for the future either, no matter what Van Lith would try, because the people in Muntilan were 'very rotten and hopelessly poor'.¹¹⁰⁸

Hoevenaars suffered from depression; one of the reasons for this was the slow progress in the mission. Nevertheless, he tried to hold on to his faith and to stay hopeful: 'There is enough work to be done, and much of it promises success. We therefore live in hope! We are prepared for disappointments, but have a solid faith for real success.'¹¹⁰⁹ The large amount of work that remained to be done caused him stress from time to time, because he knew he could not do it all by himself, and because there was no money to appoint more missionaries in Central Java. Towards the end of his appointment he became more hopeful. He wrote that he clearly noticed a progress in the mission. Not only did the converts grow in number, but he also saw progress in their knowledge of the faith and improvement in their lifestyle.¹¹¹⁰

¹¹⁰⁷ P. Van Kalken, *Kritiek op het handschrift over het leven van F. Van Lith en nadere gegevens van Van Rijckevorsel*, Archives of the Jesuit Province of Indonesia (Semarang).

¹¹⁰⁸ Petrus Hoevenaars, *Letter to Monseigneur Duffels* (Mendut 15 December 1900) Archives of the Jesuit Province of the Netherlands (Nijmegen).

¹¹⁰⁹ Petrus Hoevenaars, *Letter to Monseigneur Hellings* (Mendut 16 October 1899) Archives of the Archdiocese of Jakarta.

¹¹¹⁰ Petrus Hoevenaars, *Letter to Monseigneur Hellings* (Mendut 16 February 1905) Archives of the Archdiocese of Jakarta.

19. *The issue of catechism and prayer translations*

Although Hoevenaars and Van Lith worked from the same premise in the beginning, they chose not to combine their forces, perhaps because a conflict had arisen between the two in 1899. According to Van Lith, he had been instructed during his studies in Semarang to translate the Catechism into Javanese, since the version the Protestants used was considered inadequate. However, he believed he had to be sufficiently trained in the language before he could translate the catechism, and therefore the process took him years. To his surprise, Hoevenaars published his own version of the Catechism in 1899. Van Lith was very upset, since he had not been aware Hoevenaars had been working on a translation as well. Van Lith asked permission to publish his version too, but the superiors considered two versions too confusing for the people and therefore did not allow it. The quarrel was aggravated when both started working on the translations of the prayers 'the Lord's Prayer' and 'Hail Mary'. Both tried to convince the superiors to publish their translations, but the superiors did not have sufficient knowledge of the Javanese language to decide between the two. As a result the superiors kept on postponing the publication and the conflict went on for years.

Van Lith considered Hoevenaars' version unsuitable for the Javanese people, he believed Hoevenaars did not pay enough attention to the meaning of the prayers. According to Van Lith, he translated every word, but did not capture the true meaning with these literally translated words. Van Lith believed that it was not just about 'Javanizing' Dutch words. He was convinced he not only had more knowledge of the language, but of the Javanese spirit and traditions as well, which he considered most important in this matter. He wrote that his versions were 'more in line with the nature of the natives'.¹¹¹¹ He tried to do justice to the traditional way in which the Javanese addressed God - as their king. He wrote to his superior in the Netherlands, Petrus Duffels, that his translation was the result of years of study and consultation with people from different social classes.

Hoevenaars reacted by stating that Van Lith had not proved at all that he had more, or rather, more specific knowledge than he had. He continued: 'I rely on all the best translations from Protestant Catechism and prayer books of our time (...)'¹¹¹² Indeed, the idea of Van Lith regarding 'the Lord's Prayer' and 'Hail Mary' deviates so much from the praxis in the ecclesia, that I cannot share his convictions. However, it proved to be just as impossible for me to change Van Lith's mind'.¹¹¹³

¹¹¹¹ Luypen, *Letter to Monseigneur Duffels* (Batavia 10 February 1901) Archives of the Archdiocese of Jakarta.

¹¹¹² Hoevenaars was addressing to the translations of the Protestant missionaries Carel Poensen and Wessel Hoezoo.

¹¹¹³ Rosariyanto, *Father Franciscus van Lith S.J.* 26.

Moreover, in his later correspondence he even accused Van Lith's prayers of containing heretical elements.¹¹¹⁴

This debate lasted for years and this made further cooperation between the two impossible. Van Lith suggested dividing the translation of the Catechism and the prayers between them; he proposed that since Hoevenaars had already published his Catechism, he deserved to translate the prayers. He believed that the superiors had no other choice than to make a decision soon, because using the old and faulted Protestant versions would harm the mission. The superiors did not allow the missionaries to use their own versions in their own districts because Mendut and Muntilan were too close from each other. The people would notice the differences and this confusion could harm the mission. The superiors did not know how to solve this problem. Monseigneur Luypen wrote to bishop Petrus Duffels: 'The mission superior told me that the problem of the Javanese mission caused him more suffering than any other mission field. He appreciates the knowledge of father Van Lith very much, but he does not have enough courage to tell that to father Hoevenaars, and neither do I. He (Hoevenaars, M.K.) is a violent person. We share the same opinion that, whatever we decide, the other will feel greatly offended. That is the reason why we did not take a decision up to now.'¹¹¹⁵ Duffels suggested to maintain the old translation and was not impressed by Van Lith's self-acclaimed superior knowledge of the language: 'A Jesuit who knows perfect Javanese, but refuses to oblige does not deserve the title and does more damage than good to the mission with his knowledge'.¹¹¹⁶ Eventually, the quarrel was settled when Hoevenaars left the mission in 1905.

20. 'Opposing' missionizing methods

Although Van Lith and Hoevenaars would not admit to it, they actually worked according to quite similar strategies during their initial years in the Java mission. Both decided to focus on the economic wellbeing of the local people. The superiors noticed that their ideas did not differ much from each other and therefore tried to force the two to work more together in the same manner. During a council in 1902, the superiors threatened that one mission would be made superior to the other if they would not come to a solution. Monseigneur Hellings asked both missionaries to write out their

¹¹¹⁴ Franciscus van Lith, *Letter to Monseigneur* (Muntilan 13 February 1901) Archives of the Archdiocese of Jakarta.

¹¹¹⁵ E. Luypen, *Letter to Monseigneur Duffels* (Batavia 10 February 1901) Archives of the Jesuit Province of Indonesia (Semarang).

¹¹¹⁶ Petrus Duffels, *Letter to Monseigneur Luypen* (16 March 1901) Archives of the Jesuit Province of the Netherlands (Nijmegen).

method and ideas for the Java mission and send it to the other.¹¹¹⁷ He hoped they would find similarities and would come to a more corresponding strategy. Hellings was right; the proposals turned out quite similar. Both, for instance, urged for the opening of a hospital to replace the small distribution point for medicines. Hoevenaars wished to open his own hospital in Mendut. Van Lith, however, hoped that the Franciscan Sisters would found a hospital in Muntilan, so the Jesuits could benefit from it, without any additional costs. A few years later the colonial government opened a hospital in Muntilan, independent of the church, taking away the need for another hospital. Hoevenaars believed Van Lith had something to do with the chosen location for this governmental hospital, and accused Van Lith of playing political games.¹¹¹⁸

Despite their similarities, the two headstrong missionaries did not grow closer together and both refused to work according to the other's programme. Both programmes were very elaborate and therefore the mission did not have enough funding to carry out all suggestions. This shortage drove an even bigger wedge between the two, who now also considered each other rivals for the limited budget. Van Lith proposed to make one of them the superior of both missions and to transfer the other to a district far away. Hoevenaars was more outspoken in his opinion and wrote to Hellings that the only solution was to dismiss Van Lith, since his stubbornness only caused problems for the Java mission.¹¹¹⁹

However, both missionaries stayed in the mission for another few years and persisted in working according to their own ideas. Hoevenaars continued attacking Van Lith's methods in his letters. In 1900, one of Van Lith's assistants, Andreas, visited Hoevenaars in Mendut. Hoevenaars wrote that Andreas came to him for help, because the Muntilan mission deviated from the right track. He explained Van Lith taught the *adat* incorrectly to the children, taught incorrect versions of the prayers, and had allowed his schoolboys to play *gamelan* every Friday afternoon. He even allowed them to dance the '*Tadakke*', which even most Muslims consider immoral. Hoevenaars reacted: '...It is my opinion that P. Van Lith has done much damage to the Javanese.'¹¹²⁰ Hoevenaars wrote to his superior that the boarding school in Muntilan was a place of immorality, sodomy, and imprudence, in short; 'a hotbed of vice'.¹¹²¹ According to Hoevenaars, the schoolboys in Muntilan went out every night to party, and he wrote that 'all beds were infected by evil!', since he had heard rumours that some of the boys suffered of syphilis. He understood that the boys were '...in their years of puberty,

¹¹¹⁷ These programmes can be found in Appendix II.

¹¹¹⁸ Rosariyanto, *Father Franciscus van Lith S.J.* 236.

¹¹¹⁹ Petrus Hoevenaars, *Letter to Monseigneur Duffels* (Mendut 15 December 1900) Archives of the Jesuit Province of the Netherlands (Nijmegen).

¹¹²⁰ Petrus Hoevenaars, *Letter to Monseigneur Hellings* (Mendut 23 September 1900) Archives of the Archdiocese of Jakarta.

¹¹²¹ Rosariyanto, *Father Franciscus van Lith S.J.* 236-237.

that I know. Truly all measures, caution and morality are neglected in an unbelievable manner...Rotten elements are placed together with decent children.'¹¹²²

Hoevenaars stressed continuously that Van Lith neglected his work because he did not proselytize in Muntilan or in the surrounding *desas* anymore. He would hardly take confessions of his people and would even conduct and divorce Muslim marriages!¹¹²³ He wrote that Van Lith often went out to play cards, sometimes even from Saturday night to Sunday morning, and then went straight to the church to hold the service.¹¹²⁴ He accused Van Lith of paying people to go to church or to have their wedding in his church and that he baptized people too soon. He concluded by stating that he did not write these accusations out of jealousy, but because he believed it was his duty to inform the superior about the situation in Muntilan. The superior ought to know that the Muntilan mission was 'little more than a waste of money'.¹¹²⁵ He added that it was best to concentrate the Java mission in Mendut, because the costs of the Muntilan mission were much higher than the costs of the Mendut mission and there was already a *pesantren* and a government school in Muntilan, which caused competition.¹¹²⁶ Van Lith denied that the costs of the Muntilan mission were higher than those of Mendut and replied that the Mendut mission in fact had a higher budget. He added that his school attracted more pupils than Hoevenaars' school. Moreover, he wrote that Hoevenaars caused trouble for the mission because of his behaviour towards government officials. Earlier, Hoevenaars had made a statement in a local newspaper, that many government officials were impious and lived 'in sin' with their '*nyai*', their Javanese housekeepers.¹¹²⁷ For many years the superiors did not choose sides, and let the two missionaries continue their work in their own ways.

In September 1904, Hoevenaars wrote to his superiors that he had some exciting news. Almost the entire population, namely 286 people, of a *desa* in his district wished to convert themselves to Catholicism. This *desa* was situated close by, it took only fifteen minutes to go there, so Hoevenaars visited them every day to prepare them for their baptizing. According to his letter, they were willing to change their lifestyles, but Hoevenaars knew it would be difficult to raise these people to 'good Christians'.¹¹²⁸ Despite this hopeful news, this letter was the only time Hoevenaars wrote

¹¹²² Rosariyanto, *Father Franciscus van Lith S.J.* 236-237.

¹¹²³ Petrus Hoevenaars, *Letter to Monseigneur Hellings* (Mendut 23 July 1903) Archives of the Archdiocese of Jakarta.

¹¹²⁴ Petrus Hoevenaars, *Letter to Monseigneur Hellings* (Mendut 23 July 1903) Archives of the Archdiocese of Jakarta.

¹¹²⁵ Petrus Hoevenaars, *Letter to Monseigneur Hellings* (Mendut 12 July 1902) Archives of the Archdiocese of Jakarta.

¹¹²⁶ *Pesantren* are Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia.

¹¹²⁷ Steenbrink, *Catholics in Indonesia*, Vol. 1, 211-212.

¹¹²⁸ Petrus Hoevenaars, *Letter to Monseigneur Hellings* (Mendut 14 September 1904) Archives of the Archdiocese of Jakarta.

about this *desa*. Therefore it is unlikely that he ever baptized its inhabitants. Perhaps the people changed their minds during the conversion process or the story was greatly exaggerated to begin with. This would not be the first time Hoevenaars exaggerated his results in his letters to impress his superiors. He admitted in a letter in 1904 that the number of Christians he had written down in his annual report on 1903 was too high, and explained he had made a mathematical mistake.¹¹²⁹ Furthermore, Van Lith had accused him of forging the numbers of converts he made during his first year in Yogyakarta.¹¹³⁰

21. The 'baptism' incident

Every holiday, like Easter and Christmas, Hoevenaars prepared an exuberant celebration in his church and held a *slametan*, a feast meal, after the sermon. He did not only invite the Catholic community, but all the schoolchildren, *desa* leaders, and even Muslim leaders in the region. He hoped the exuberance of the service would attract the people and convince them to visit another sermon on a regular Sunday.¹¹³¹ However, on 23 April 1905, an incident took place during the celebration of Easter in Mendut that changed the Java mission, and Hoevenaars' position in it, for ever.

Hoevenaars invited, as he had done in previous years, all pupils and their parents from all schools in the district to attend the festivities he had planned. Many children went to Mendut that day, and attended the service in the church, together with *desa* and Muslim leaders from the region. There were approximately three hundred guests, of which only a hundred were Christian. According to Hoevenaars' writings on the event, his sermon was uncontroversial. Moreover, he wrote that he had made clear to all guests that attending a Christian service did not mean one had to convert to Christianity.¹¹³² After the sermon, everyone came together outside to have lunch. During this meal, Hoevenaars gathered the children to take a picture with them in front of the church. According to Hoevenaars this was all that had happened that day.

¹¹²⁹ Petrus Hoevenaars, *Letter to Monseigneur Hellings* (Mendut 2 and 20 March 1904) Archives of the Archdiocese of Jakarta.

¹¹³⁰ Antonius van Aernsbergen, *Aantekeningen bij de biografie over Van Lith van Van Aernsbergen door Van Rijckevorsel en anderen die met hem op school hebben gezeten, samen hebben gewerkt, of hebben gekend*, Archives of the Jesuit Province of Indonesia (Semarang).

¹¹³¹ Petrus Hoevenaars, *Letter to Monseigneur Hellings* (Bandung 22 March 1906) Archives of the Archdiocese of Jakarta.

¹¹³² Petrus Hoevenaars, *Letter to Monseigneur Hellings* (Bandung 22 March 1906) Archives of the Archdiocese of Jakarta.

Other sources, however, state that Hoevenaars then lured the children into the church, sang 'Asperges me' to them and then sprinkled water upon the children as the act of baptism.¹¹³³ The children told their parents what had happened inside the church, and the parents were very upset, since most of these children were from Muslim families. The next day, only a handful of children showed up for class, which raised the attention of the government's school inspector. Hoevenaars, however, explained that the low number of pupils was not unusual that time a year, since it was harvest time. During harvest time many boys had to help their families on the *sawahs*. Moreover, the people earned more money during that period, which resulted in more weddings, circumcision rituals, and other festivities during that season that also caused pupils to stay home. Although Hoevenaars denied all accusations, the damage had been done already. The inspector reported Hoevenaars to his superiors and a governmental investigation followed.

One of the outcomes of that investigation was that Hoevenaars had been teaching religious classes at his primary schools even though the education at these schools was supposed to be neutral. Hoevenaars defended himself by indicating that he had given religious classes since 1899 without ever getting complaints, and that these classes had always been indicated on the timesheets that hang in every classroom, clearly visible for the parents. The religious classes were, according to Hoevenaars, voluntary and only consisted of the 'Ten Commandments', the 'Hail Mary', and the first four lessons of the Catechism. He insisted that he had instructed his assistants at other schools to never force the children to attend these classes and to be patient and careful.¹¹³⁴ Moreover, he added that even a Muslim teacher had taught at one of the schools until February 1905 to emphasise the neutral character of the school.

Despite his defence, Hoevenaars was officially charged with preaching the Catholic faith in a 'too aggressive manner'.¹¹³⁵ The Dutch colonial government had him reassigned to another district. The Jesuit superiors were actually not too sorry to transfer Hoevenaars, since this was the perfect solution to end the ongoing conflict between him and Van Lith. This incident dissolved the problem without them having to choose a side. In the end, Hoevenaars reacted nobly to his reassignment, he wrote that he was very sorry he had to leave Mendut, and that he wished all the best for the future of

¹¹³³ Antonius van Aernsbergen, *Aantekeningen bij de biografie over Van Lith van Van Aernsbergen door Van Rijckevorsel en anderen die met hem op school hebben gezeten, samen hebben gewerkt, of hebben gekend*, Archives of the Jesuit Province of Indonesia (Semarang).

¹¹³⁴ Petrus Hoevenaars, *Letter to Monseigneur Luypen* (Bandung 11 March 1906) Archives of the Archdiocese of Jakarta.

¹¹³⁵ Article 123: 'leeraars, priesters en zendelingen moeten voorzien zijn van eene of dor namens den gouveneur generaal te verleenen bijzondere toelating om hun dienstwerk in eenig bepaald gedeelte van Nederlands-Indië te mogen verrichten. Wanneer de toelating schadelijk wordt bevonden, of de voorwaarden daarvan niet worden nageleefd, kan zij door den gouveneur generaal worden ingetrokken.'

the mission. The superiors tried to keep the incident as limited as possible, therefore nothing can be found on the matter in the *St. Claverbond* journal. The news, however, did eventually even reach the Governor-General, Joannes van Heutz. Van Heutz placed Hoevenaars under surveillance and advised Hoevenaars' superiors to keep a close eye on him, even after his transfer to Cheribon. A few months later Van Heutz repealed his order to keep Hoevenaars under surveillance+ after Monseigneur Luypen had promised to control the situation.¹¹³⁶

In the summer of 1905, after six years of hard work in Mendut, Hoevenaars was transferred to Cheribon. The statistics show that there were 213 Catholics living in the district of Mendut, at the end of 1905; the fruit of six years of hard labour.¹¹³⁷ The Mendut mission was taken over by J. Schröder who passed away in his first year. This meant the end of the Mendut mission and Muntilan then became the centre of the Catholic mission in Java. Gradually, Mendut was taken over by the Franciscan Sisters, who founded a girls' school and a hospital there. In Cheribon, Hoevenaars became an auxiliary priest, like he had been during his first years in Java. He also accepted a position at the Java Post, a Catholic weekly. A year later he became a priest in a European church in Batavia, and in 1909 he moved to Meester Cornelis, where he taught at the Xaverius Salemba institute. Two years later, he became the director of an orphanage in Semarang where two hundred boys lived. Hoevenaars ended his career in the 1920s, again as a missionary, in Soerakarta near Solo. This time he was willing to follow Van Lith's approach of adaptation, which by then had become the standard in the Jesuit Java mission.¹¹³⁸ Hoevenaars had to repatriate in 1923 due to health problems, but a year later he was well enough to return to Java. He passed away in 1930 at the age of seventy.

22. Conclusion

The Jesuit superiors expected less articles and reports from their missionaries than the boards of the Protestant mission societies. The mission was just one part of the work the Jesuits did in Java, and Hoevenaars and Van Lith were the only two missionaries for a long time. Therefore, the sources on the Catholic mission are not as extensive as the Protestant sources. The main reason for the Catholic missionaries to write their superiors was to ask them for guidance and advice. As a result, the main theme in Hoevenaars' writings is his quarrel with Van Lith. He did not often address his methods and results explicitly. However, we know that he was more focused on reaching the elite than other missionaries, because he believed the lower classes would follow the elite if many of them converted

¹¹³⁶ J.B. van Heutz, *Letter to Luypen* (Buitenzorg 5 March 1906) Archives of the Archdiocese of Jakarta.

¹¹³⁷ Petrus Hoevenaars, *Historia missionis Javanica, 1896-1904*, (with additions of Van Lith) Archives of the Jesuit Province of Indonesia (Semarang).

¹¹³⁸ Van Aernsbergen, *Chronologisch Overzicht van de werkzaamheden der Jezuïeten*, 227.

to Christianity. Moreover, he tried to restructure the economy in his area by supporting financially the young Christian community.

The first years of the Catholic mission in Java did not bring the success for which the Church had hoped. Hoevenaars was still searching for the right approach and tried diverse strategies. This process was made more difficult by his superiors, who put him under continuous pressure to show better results. He had, on more than one occasion, expressed confidence in his reports that he would convert one or even a few *desas* in the near future. However, these promising messages apparently did not lead to success. These promising *desas* were never mentioned again in later correspondence. It is unclear whether Hoevenaars had really cherished the hope of converting a large number of people or if he felt pressed to report something positive.

Even though Hoevenaars had only worked for six years in the Mendut mission, his work was not entirely without success. He managed to convert more than two hundred people in a period of six years. Nevertheless, Hoevenaars, one of the two pioneers of the Java mission, is not remembered as a saint or as the apostle of Java like his colleague Van Lith. In fact, he is not remembered at all by the present day Catholic community in Java. His work is often reduced to a mere footnote in anniversary books on the mission and the reason for his transfer to Cheribon is attributed to a different point of view on the right approach of the mission and the 'baptism' incident is never mentioned.¹¹³⁹

Franciscus van Lith

Franciscus Georgius Josephus van Lith (1863-1926) was born in Oirschot, a village in the Catholic south of the Netherlands. At the age of eighteen Van Lith joined the Jesuit Society and became a novice in Mariendaal. During his education he studied philosophy in Stonyhurst for three years, together with Petrus Hoevenaars. After his return to the Netherlands they both studied theology in Maastricht. During these years, Van Lith also taught Dutch, English, mathematics, and geography to Jesuit scholastics in Katwijk and thus gained some teaching experience, which proved to be very helpful in his later career. He continued his studies in Drongen, Belgium, where his teachers described him as 'pious', 'ardent', but 'inconsiderate'.¹¹⁴⁰ Near the end of his education he received a letter that stated he was selected to go to Java to become a missionary. This appointment came as a shock to him, because it was not his ambition at all to become a missionary. 'To be completely open about my thoughts; I believe that the mission will not really pay off anywhere in the world, as long as Europe has

¹¹³⁹ Panitya Kerja Monumen Romo F.V. Lith S.Y. *Memanunggal dengan rakyat dasar mangrasul Romo F. V. Lith*.

¹¹⁴⁰ J.E.A, Akkermans, 'Eene bestemming die al mijn idealen doodde, vorming en zelfbeeld van Frans van Lith, S.J. (1863-1926) pionier van de Java missie', in: *Tijdschrift voor Nederlandse kerkgeschiedenis* (2005) 46-57.

not been recaptured by the church. I think that the battle for world domination by the Catholic Church will be fought out in Europe. I prefer to be there, where the decisive battle will be fought; nevertheless, even more where obedience will send me.’¹¹⁴¹ With this last remark he clearly tried to emphasise his Jesuit identity, since one of the most important vows of the Jesuit Order is the vow of obedience. He therefore tried to emphasise that his own wishes were subordinate to the wishes of the Order.

Years later Van Lith wrote about his feelings at that time: ‘I did not see a future for the mission, and I was convinced that my qualities would be pointlessly wasted there’, ‘I went to the Indies with great reluctance, however with complete submission to God’s holy will, even though my feelings were not at peace’, and even ‘While at sea, I could not have cared less if the boat would have sunk’.¹¹⁴² Before he took his last vows in 1894, to become a Jesuit priest, he was comforted by one of his superiors. Van Lith realised during that conversation: ‘I strived to find my happiness in the pursuit of my own ideals, the ideals of the self.’ He wrote that after that realization he conceded and started to pursue God’s ideals.¹¹⁴³

Van Lith arrived in Java in the fall of 1896. During the first months that Van Lith spent on the island, he still was not really at peace with his imposed task. He was situated in Semarang in Central Java and did not have permission to evangelise to the indigenous people yet, but had to focus solely on the European, Catholic community. He wrote that he did not notice a real conviction in them and that made him even more miserable. He limited his daily work to studying the vernacular languages, without a tutor, and obediently abstained from seeking contact with the indigenous population. He spent all of his time studying, because he understood that learning a language is more than learning words and pronunciation. To learn a new language one has to learn a new way of expressing themselves, therefore one has to learn how to think differently. Van Lith wrote: ‘language is the key to the soul of a people’.¹¹⁴⁴ The only thing that could excite him during his stay in Semarang was the overwhelming beauty of the Javanese nature. Later he wrote that seeing that beautiful nature made him realise that God had sent him there for a reason; so he could see that God is everywhere and that therefore his Word needs to be spread everywhere.¹¹⁴⁵

¹¹⁴¹ Franciscus van Lith, *Letter to Pater Provincial* (Drongen 8 January 1896) in: Floribertus Hasto Rosariyanto, *Father Franciscus van Lith S.J. (1863-1926): turning point of the Catholic Church’s approach in the pluralistic Indonesian Society* (Rome 1997).

¹¹⁴² Van Lith, *Autobiographical writings*.

Van Rijckevorsel, *Pastoor F. van Lith S.J.*, 16.

¹¹⁴³ Van Lith, *Autobiographical writings*.

¹¹⁴⁴ Franciscus van Lith, *Het geheim van de Javaan* (The original paper can be found in the Jesuit Archive in Rome and a copy is available in the Jesuit Archives in Semarang).

¹¹⁴⁵ Van Lith, *Autobiographical writings*.

23. Muntilan

A year later, around Easter 1897, Van Lith started his mission with great enthusiasm in the district of Muntilan. When Van Lith arrived on his post in Muntilan he discovered that there were already about two hundred indigenous Catholics, supervised by Javanese catechists. However, he soon found out most of them had been baptized for 'statistical reasons' and had no intention to embrace the Catholic faith.¹¹⁴⁶ Although his education had taken more than fifteen years in the Order, he never received a special training for missionary work. Moreover, the Jesuit Order did not provide any guidelines, so he and Hoevenaars were completely free to set up the mission according to their own ideas. When Van Lith started his mission in Muntilan, he was depending heavily on his assistant Johannes Vreede, a former assistant of missionary Teffer. Teffer had worked in Central Java as a Protestant missionary, but after a few years, he and the Christian community he led, converted to Catholicism.¹¹⁴⁷ After Teffer repatriated, Vreede headed that Catholic community of thirty-six indigenous people himself until he met with Van Lith.

Vreede joined Van Lith on his visits to Javanese families in the district. When they indicated an interest in Catholicism, they could follow Vreede's catechism lessons, since Van Lith was not yet capable to do that himself in an adequate manner. However, Vreede did not prove to be a valuable asset to the mission. A few weeks after Van Lith's arrival, Vreede showed him a piece of land that was for sale because he was looking for suitable ground for a Catholic cemetery and farmland to rent to local people. Van Lith was very enthusiastic to start with these plans and therefore bought the land without checking the paperwork himself. Several days later, Van Lith noticed that the cross he had put in the ground had been broken down. He went to the leader of the *desa* and found out that he had not bought the land from the real owner, but that Vreede had set him up.¹¹⁴⁸ Unfortunately, Van Lith could not trace the alleged owner anymore, who apparently was an opium addict paid by Vreede, to get his money back. He had to admit to his superiors that all the money was lost and that he was deceived by his own catechist.

After this incident, Van Lith immediately started an investigation with his other assistants. He went to the *desa* where Vreede's brother worked as Van Lith's assistant. Vreede's brother was not at home when Van Lith arrived and his wife let him wait for him in their house. There he found an old note from Vreede, stating that Van Lith would soon visit the converts in his village to hear their

¹¹⁴⁶ Madinier, *The Catholic politics of inclusiveness*.

¹¹⁴⁷ According to Van Rijckevorsel, Mattheus Teffer had a severe argument with his Protestant superiors and colleagues, which led to his resignation. His conversion to Catholicism can therefore be understood as a pragmatic answer to his sudden unemployment. This interpretation is supported by the fact that Teffer still visited a Protestant Church after his conversion. Van Rijckevorsel, *Pastoor F. Van Lith, S.J.*, 20.

¹¹⁴⁸ Van Rijckevorsel, *Pastoor F. Van Lith, S.J.*, 28.

confessions. Vreede commanded that the people should limit their confession to the words '*Rama Kawoela*' (Our Father).¹¹⁴⁹ Van Lith immediately understood why the confessions he had taken earlier had been so strange; Vreede had forged the number of converts to earn more money and had tried to cover it up by instructing the alleged converted people to limit their confessions to those two words, so they would not say something incorrect. In another desa, which was led by the assistant Martinus, Van Lith found out that Martinus had kept two *sawahs* himself, which were bought by the Order to rent to the people. Martinus had also stolen money that was intended to build a church and had paid people to be baptised. Furthermore, Van Lith found out that another one of his catechists in Magelang had two wives.¹¹⁵⁰ Another source tells about this period: 'In Djagalan, several children, young boys, were baptized more than once, even though they never intended to convert to Christianity. However, the catechist received money for every baptist, and he only had to give a few cents to satisfy these boys and he could keep the rest himself. I have known a few men that had been baptized like this, personally.'¹¹⁵¹

Van Lith had no other choice than to fire all his catechists and to start all over. Johannes Vreede was very angry because of his dismissal and wrote a letter to Van Lith's superior. He accused Van Lith of breaking in into his brother's house, of molesting his brother's wife, and of stealing three hundred guilders. In addition, he wrote that Van Lith was an alcoholic; even though other sources claim Van Lith never drank alcohol.¹¹⁵² After these incidents, the superiors decided that all new catechists had to be trained for at least several years at the seminary in Semarang. The seminary relocated a few years later to Mendut and eventually to Muntilan.

Van Lith experienced great difficulties finding a good strategy after this deception. Both he and Hoevenaars tried different methods in order to find the right one during those first years, but nothing proved successful. The lack of success and the continuous critique of his superiors made him miserable: 'The work for the salvation in Indie is a heavy cross for me. A small success, which came into being with fights and accusations, is, indeed, a heaven on earth'. In another letter he wrote: 'To always be lied to and to never have confidence in someone's sincerity; it is surely a bad thing, especially since they are lying to you about religious matters, they are lying in words and deeds. I have therefore, and this is my regular mood, no joy in any work in Indie, where all our work is a great fiasco without solid success. Some people find distraction in other matters, but I do not. My consolation is death. If Christ has suffered, I'm willing to suffer too, and I do suffer here. I cannot write to my friends

¹¹⁴⁹ Van Lith, *De geschiedenis der katholieke Java missie*.

¹¹⁵⁰ Van Lith, *De geschiedenis der katholieke Java missie*.

¹¹⁵¹ Unknown Author, *Korte geschiedenis van het college Muntilan*, Archives of the Jesuit Province of Indonesia (Semarang).

¹¹⁵² Van Lith, *De geschiedenis der katholieke Java missie*.

back home in this state of mind. I feel like I am a hermit in this world... Here we must lure children in a childlike manner, but I'm not successful with that strategy. I feel I don't belong here at all. Even the fruit does not taste me well ... sure I'm prepared to spend my life here and to burn as a candle for God, hoping for death to come, which will bring me to Christ.'¹¹⁵³

Eventually, Van Lith was joined by father Engbers, and from then on, Van Lith could spend more of his time on the education of the children, which he enjoyed. He opened a school in Muntilan and the attendance was quite high and stable. However, it is not certain that his teachings were the main reason for the pupils to attend because, according to his own writings, he provided clothes and food for the pupils. He had to use strategies like these because, according to him, Javanese parents did not understand the importance of learning to read and write. He often found his classroom empty during harvest time. Father Engbers left the mission in Muntilan in 1900 to teach at the seminary in Semarang and he later became the mission superior of Java. For a short while, Van Lith was supported by friar Kersten, who helped him with the distribution of medicines and also taught the schoolchildren to braid and weave. Van Lith ordered him to teach these skills to the children, so they would have different options to support their families in the future. However, 'due to the ignorance of the people' this initiative failed.¹¹⁵⁴

Van Lith visited the *desas* regularly, and always brought some tea, sugar or tobacco with him to present to the *loerah* (leader) of the desa. His strategy was not to focus solely on religion, but also to discuss governmental issues, the need for a good education system, and other matters that interested the people.¹¹⁵⁵ Van Lith tried to be a father figure in his small community and tried to help them in any way he could. For example, he helped his people with their correspondence to official agencies, banks, landowners et cetera. He also functioned as an intermediary between his people and state officials: he stood by their side in quarrels with desa leaders, landowners, and Dutch administrators. For instance, there was once a man who had not received his part of his father's inheritance because he had converted to Christianity. According to Muslim law, this was an acceptable reason to withhold his part of the inheritance. However, Van Lith appealed this in court and eventually the man did receive his share. At another occasion, Van Lith succeeded in convincing a judge of the High Court in Batavia to reconsider his verdict to exile one of his converts, who had attacked a rice thief.

¹¹⁵³ Franciscus van Lith, *Letter to Monseigneur Hellings* (Muntilan December 1898, January 1899) Archives of the Archdiocese of Jakarta.

¹¹⁵⁴ Van Rijckevorsel, *Pastoor F. Van Lith S.J.*, 49.

¹¹⁵⁵ Van Rijckevorsel, *Pastoor F. Van Lith S.J.*, 53.

In May 1901, Van Lith made a short remark in a report to his superiors about twelve small *desas*, together known as 'Dremo', that he had visited weekly to discuss the Gospel. These twelve *desas* combined had a population of approximately three thousand people, but Van Lith had discussed religious matters with the male population only. He wrote: 'I have come so far with my teachings that I cherish the hope to convince the whole population of Dremo to join my church... but I will not succeed if I cannot offer them jobs.'¹¹⁵⁶ Unfortunately, this short note is the only time Van Lith mentioned Dremo in his reports. It is uncertain to what extent this hopeful message was true or just a strategy to buy time to keep his superiors from shutting down the so far unsuccessful mission. Towards the end of his career he wrote about his strategies during these initial years: 'I was foolish and tried to act like a man, even though I was still a child.'¹¹⁵⁷

Van Lith understood that it was important in order to be successful to overcome the gap between the two very different cultures. He tried to become 'one of them' to convince the Javanese that Christianity was not just a 'white man's religion', but meant for everyone on earth. According to his writings, the Javanese felt superior to Europeans; not in the field of science and knowledge, but in the field of chastity and honour. On the other hand, the Dutch people felt superior to the Javanese: 'The dumbest and lowest, including half or even people with an eighth part of European blood, looked down upon them, as if they were slaves.'¹¹⁵⁸ Van Lith also blamed Hoevenaars of this racial pride: 'I sought to become Javanese with the Javanese, and father Hoevenaars continued to be European -the more developed and powerful, victorious race- to make use of the privilege of his Dutch citizenship and act as a benevolent lord, as a superior, who indulgently descends to his inferiors in order to be their teacher and thus remain superior to the Javanese.'¹¹⁵⁹ Van Lith strongly believed that missionaries should not behave themselves as colonials, on the contrary: he aimed at fraternization with the Javanese people.¹¹⁶⁰ He was an expert of the Javanese language, culture, and customs and frequently expressed his appreciation of the culture. He sought to internalize multiple aspects of the Javanese culture, so the people, even including Muslim leaders, would trust and consult him.¹¹⁶¹

In an attempt to be 'one of Javanese', Van Lith moved into an indigenous house, made of bamboo and wood. In contrast, Hoevenaars had bought a stone house, the former home of a European factory owner. According to Van Lith, his stone house was an 'insuperable barrier' between him and the Javanese. A Javanese would never feel comfortable in his stone house and they would be

¹¹⁵⁶ Van Rijckevorsel, *Pastoor F. Van Lith S.J.*, 64-65.

¹¹⁵⁷ Van Lith, *Autobiographical writings*.

¹¹⁵⁸ Van Lith, *Autobiographical writings*.

¹¹⁵⁹ Van Lith, *Autobiographical writings*.

¹¹⁶⁰ Akkermans, 'Eene bestemming die al mijn idealen doodde', 46-57.

¹¹⁶¹ Unknown Author, *Franciscus van Lith, in Memoriam* (1926) Archives of the Jesuit Province of Indonesia (Semarang).

too ashamed to invite him into their homes, because they could not offer him the comfort to which he was accustomed.¹¹⁶² Therefore Van Lith tried to live according to Javanese habits; he filled his house with Javanese furniture, sat on mats with his guests, and did not sleep under a mosquito net. In addition, he hardly ever wore the black cassock or the ephod with a white priest collar, unlike father Hoevenaars. Van Lith usually wore 'shabby clothes' according to his colleagues; a grey coat and pants, worn-out sandals and a grey-yellow hat that had holes in it.¹¹⁶³ He also used a bicycle as his means of transport instead of a carriage to keep the distance between him and the people as limited as possible.

Nevertheless, Van Lith eventually did change his mind about his accommodation. After a couple of years he moved from Semampir to the capital of the district, Muntilan, and there he moved into a stone, European house. He explained his decision by stating that his life should not differ too much from the lives of the other Dutch clergymen, because that would only confuse people. In Muntilan, he chose to build the school, the college buildings, and even the church, in a European manner as well. The Xaverius College was also designed as a European boarding school and the boys had to live there in a European manner. He justified this decision by stating: 'This will stimulate the boys to exalt themselves until they reach our level'.¹¹⁶⁴ This contradicts his well-known statement that a Javanese should stay Javanese as much as possible and proves he suffered just as much of the 'racial delusions' of which he accused Hoevenaars. It also contradicts his statement that he tried to raise the boys at his schools as normal Javanese children, because he did not want them to feel better than the other villagers.¹¹⁶⁵ He refuted this by stating that this was still his most important principal, but that the Javanese were not ready to choose their own path just yet.¹¹⁶⁶

When father Merthens joined Van Lith in the beginning of 1904, he had time to reflect on all the ideas he had tried during the last seven years. This was necessary, because the superiors had threatened to shut the mission down because his results were insufficient. He stated, 'There is no reason to speak of little success. What can we expect of the mission after only seven years? We still do not have a single suitable guru. On the other hand, both Hoevenaars and I have mainly devoted our energy to form gurus and I have already spent two years on training boys in order to reach a sufficient number. I have travelled to all the *desas* to establish relations so I can recruit children and now finally

¹¹⁶² Van Lith, *Autobiographical writings*.

¹¹⁶³ Unknown Author, *Franciscus van Lith, in Memoriam* (1926) Archives of the Jesuit Province of Indonesia (Semarang).

¹¹⁶⁴ Van Lith, *Autobiographical writings*.

¹¹⁶⁵ Unknown Author, *Franciscus van Lith, in Memoriam* (1926) Archives of the Jesuit Province of Indonesia (Semarang).

¹¹⁶⁶ Unknown Author, *Franciscus van Lith, in Memoriam* (1926) Archives of the Jesuit Province of Indonesia (Semarang).

the process has started; I can recruit the children now. What is the fruit of so much labour? Later when we have formed the children from all these *desas* to strong Javanese men, they can occupy different posts and we will have access to all families, and then the success of our labour cannot hold of. Our method is now sound, but seemingly slow. One day, however, the Java mission will be our most beautiful mission and that is why I give my heart and soul to our mission, and so does father Hoevenaars.¹¹⁶⁷

24. The converts of Kalibawang

Fortunately, Van Lith had his first big success at the end of 1904, seven years into the mission. He had heard that some people from four small *desas* in the mountains, near the border of his district, were interested in learning about Catholicism.¹¹⁶⁸ Some villagers had heard about Christianity from the indigenous evangelist Sadrach and wished for more guidance.¹¹⁶⁹ Van Lith decided to visit the *desas*, of which Kalibawang was the largest. During his first visit in the village he noticed the chief's goats were rather small and promised to bring a larger goat and also some high quality mango seeds with him on his next visit. Other sources claim that he brought tools and even money to the villagers.¹¹⁷⁰ During these visits, he tried to '...discuss subjects in which these simple people were interested, and to bring up the subject of religion from time to time'.¹¹⁷¹ The people were indeed interested in what Van Lith had to say and some of them started to attend the Sunday services in Muntilan. Some even arrived on Saturday night to attend his catechism classes that evening. Only a few months later Van Lith baptized almost two hundred villagers at the well of Sendangsono, which formerly had been used by Buddhist monks as a resting place during their pilgrimage to Borobudur.¹¹⁷² These two hundred baptisms saved the Muntilan mission and encouraged Van Lith to continue his work. Van Lith wrote to his superiors that he could not explain this sudden success because he had been to many other *desas* to evangelise without any success. He believed it must have been God's doing. Today, Javanese Catholics celebrate this event as the first victory of the Java mission and Sendangsono has become a popular Catholic

¹¹⁶⁷ Franciscus van Lith, *Typed transcript of a letter to Monseigneur Luypen* (Muntilan 6 March 1904) Archives of the Archdiocese of Jakarta.

¹¹⁶⁸ Since the *desas* were outside the borders of the Muntilan district, he had to request a special permit to evangelize in these *desas*. The number of baptists vary. Van Lith wrote about 'almost two hundred people' in his reports, but the official register shows that four people were baptized in May 1904 and another 170 in December 1904.

¹¹⁶⁹ Franciscus van Lith, *Mijn eerste bezoek aan Kalibawang*, Archives of the Jesuit Province of Indonesia (Semarang).

¹¹⁷⁰ Van Rijckevorsel, *Pastoor F. Van Lith S.J.*, 68.

¹¹⁷¹ Franciscus van Lith, *Mijn eerste bezoek aan Kalibawang*, Archives of the Jesuit Province of Indonesia (Semarang).

¹¹⁷² Franciscus van Lith, *Mijn eerste bezoek aan Kalibawang*, Archives of the Jesuit Province of Indonesia (Semarang).

pilgrimage place. However, these two hundred converts should actually be attributed to Sadrach, the indigenous Christian guru who educated and converted people in this region, long before Van Lith paid Kalibawang a few visits.¹¹⁷³

25. Xaverius College

Even after the success of Kalibawang, Van Lith still had to design a clear strategy for the Muntilan mission. It was clear to him that the Christian mission in Java was most successful in Modjo Warno. This was a Protestant *desa* in East Java where every child went to a Christian school with the result that all future generations grew up as Christians. He was inspired by Modjo Warno, but understood that it would take many years to establish a similar community in his district. He wrote: 'They (the Javanese) yield to every urge and animal inclination since their childhood', therefore they could not be accepted into the 'Christian flock' immediately, but their hearts have to be prepared slowly first. Missionaries should not make the newly converts commit to all Christian laws from the first day on, but they should give them time to adjust to their new religion.¹¹⁷⁴ Van Lith was convinced that the process of conversion would take several generations and that education was the best way to prepare the new generations for Christianity.¹¹⁷⁵

Father Merthens encouraged Van Lith as well to focus on education. Van Lith had already set up a few primary schools in the region and he had educated a few advanced pupils at his home to become catechists. He therefore decided to set up a college to train indigenous boys to become teachers in Muntilan in 1905; a boarding school where boys, from all over the region, could live and learn in a Catholic environment for several years.

Van Lith loved teaching and coaching teenagers and finally found his place in the Java mission: '... and once he had won the hearts of the boys, he did not spare them, but sought to 'improve the deficiencies of the nation' by teaching and encouraging them. Allegedly he once said: 'Boy, rather spit me in the face than to agree with everything I say.'¹¹⁷⁶ He was strict in the classroom, expected the boys to think for themselves, and to stand up for their opinions. He tried to form a new generation of leaders, teachers, and officials. After school hours he continued to try to motivate the boys, and to uphold the 'Christian spirit', by organizing sport events and other activities.

¹¹⁷³ Van Rijckevorsel, *Pastoor F. Van Lith S.J.*, 65.

¹¹⁷⁴ Franciscus van Lith, *Het huwelijk van niet-gedoopten* (Muntilan 1902) Archives of the Jesuit Province of Indonesia (Semarang).

¹¹⁷⁵ Van Rijckevorsel, *Pastoor F. Van Lith S.J.*, 35.

¹¹⁷⁶ Unknown Author, *Franciscus van Lith, in Memoriam* (1926) Archives of the Jesuit Province of Indonesia (Semarang).

Although Van Lith spent most of his time in the classroom after 1905, he wrote to the board that he still visited the congregations in the *desas* around Muntilan. He wrote that he took his bicycle and went to the *desas* in the afternoon, after he had finished his morning classes. There he talked to his catechists and supported them in leading their congregations. He admitted, however, that he had stopped preaching to unconverted *desa* people. During the previous years, hardly anyone had asked for Catechism lessons and even fewer had wished to be baptized. Van Lith blamed his unsuitability for the actual mission work for these meagre results and therefore decided to stop evangelizing.¹¹⁷⁷ He passed that task on to his catechists. It was a loss for the Java mission that Van Lith paid no attention to primary missionary work after 1905 since he was still the only missionary who had an adequate competence in speaking Javanese. Father Merthens was quite fluent in the language too, but limited his contact with the indigenous population to his pupils only.

26. Indonesian nationalism

Towards the end of his career, van Lith saw the influence of the nationalists increasing in Java. He tried to support this movement by stimulating the development of Javanese culture by founding cultural associations, holding conferences, and, of course, especially by promoting education. He foresaw an independent Indonesia and thought that the Indonesians would probably turn on the 'Dutch religion' after they had gained their independence. Therefore, he considered it necessary, already in the first decade of the twentieth century, for the Catholic Church to develop a more Javanese character. He tried to include local religious and cultural values and traditions in his church and to form an indigenous clergy. Van Lith urged the Catholic Church to operate independently from the Dutch colonial politics so the churches would not be closed down after independence.

In December 1916, the Dutch government installed the *Volksraad* (The people's council) and Van Lith represented the Catholic party in this council. Van Lith had founded the '*Katolika Wandawa*', a Catholic socialist federation in 1914. In reality, however, this council had hardly any influence and, as a result, a new council was formed: '*De Komissie tot Herziening van de Staatsinrichting van Nederlands-Indië*' (The Commission for the Revision of Polity of the Netherlands East Indies). This council consisted of twenty-six members, who were supposed to represent all movements in the Indonesian archipelago. The members were from different ethnic backgrounds, areas, classes, and religions. Van Lith was also chosen to represent the Catholic party in this council, since he already functioned as a middleman between the Javanese Catholics and the Dutch. That same year, he was

¹¹⁷⁷ Van Rijckevorsel, *Pastoor F. Van Lith, S.J.*, 62.

appointed by the Dutch government as a member of 'The Commission of Indigenous Education'. In the context of this commission he made a journey to Manila in the Philippines to write a comparative study about education in colonies. The Philippines were governed in a decentralised way by the United States of America during that period. Van Lith was very positive about this principle and wished to introduce it to the Dutch Indies as well, so that the colonial government in Java had all the power, instead of the government in The Hague. Decentralization was one of the aims of the Dutch-colonial *Ethische Politiek* that was introduced in 1901.

27. *The final years of Van Lith's life*

In 1921, twenty-five years after his first arrival in Java, Van Lith had to leave the mission because of health issues. He returned to the Netherlands to recuperate. During this leave, from 1921 to 1924, he reflected on the years he had spent in Java and on the work he had done. While in Holland, he did not forget the mission in Muntilan. He tried to raise attention and money for the mission, but he found it very difficult to 'beg' for money at fundraisers. He wrote several articles for the *St. Claverbond* and a short manuscript for an autobiography.¹¹⁷⁸ His work consisted mainly of his reflections on education policies of the Dutch government in Java and on the current political circumstances in the Dutch Indies. His articles on the latter subject proved to be highly controversial. The political climate at that time was changing; newly founded political parties hoped to gain more power for self-government. Most politicians in the Dutch Indies agreed that the colony would benefit from a decentralized system because the ministers in The Hague were not well enough informed about the situation in the colony to make the best decisions. However, there was no agreement on how that government would be formed. The Dutch, who lived in the Indies, were of the opinion that they, and perhaps also people of mixed descent, should form the colonial government. Many Indonesians, on the other hand, believed they deserved more control over their own country. Van Lith was of the opinion that the power should be equally shared between the Dutch, people of mixed descent, and the indigenous population. Moreover, he believed that every man who could read and write deserved voting rights, so the new government could be formed democratically.

Van Lith was in favour of increasing autonomy for the Indonesian people, but he was not in favour of full independence because he did not believe the Indonesians were able to govern themselves without any guidance of the Dutch. He believed the Dutch first had to raise the Indonesians until they would be 'mature' enough to govern themselves. He saw, in his own classroom,

¹¹⁷⁸ This autobiography is accessible in the Jesuit Archive in Nijmegen.

that the children were much more disciplined than the older generations and saw this as clear proof that their guidance paid off.

Van Lith brought the wrath of other Jesuits on himself with his progressive statements about an independent Church and a semi-independent Indonesia. When he was well enough to return to Java, some even protested against his return, because they considered his ideas too radical and dangerous.¹¹⁷⁹ Van Velsen, Luypen's successor as the mission superior, was also against Van Lith's return from his leave and wrote a letter to forestall it. He had an ambiguous relationship with Van Lith, both at a professional and a personal level: '...during these many years he has been an annoyance for me in many cases. In some educational issues he even is my opponent.'¹¹⁸⁰ Furthermore, he thought Van Lith had dominated the mission too much and did not give young missionaries a chance to find their own approach. On the other side, he did admit that the pupils at the Xaverius College missed his presence.¹¹⁸¹

Eventually, Van Lith went back to Java in 1924, but he did not return to Muntilan as a missionary. He taught Jesuit novices at the Jesuit seminary in Semarang and taught once a week at a Catholic college in Yogyakarta. Van Lith's health was deteriorating during these last years and he suffered, according to some sources, of dementia.¹¹⁸² He died on 9 January 1926 in the hospital of Semarang. His body was transferred to Muntilan where he was buried near his church and schools. Numerous people, from all strata of society, including Muslim, *desa*, and Chinese leaders, came to his funeral to pay their last respects.

28. Van Lith's status in the Javanese Catholic church

After Van Lith passed away, his colleagues wrote several *In Memoria* and biographies. These authors also commented on each other's work and this set of sources gives a deeper insight into the person of Van Lith, but especially in the way they wished he would be remembered; in most writings he is compared to a saint or a prophet. Van Rijckevorsel explains in the introduction of his 1952 biography of Van Lith that the purpose of his work was 'to delineate the man as an object of admiration and

¹¹⁷⁹ Rosariyanto, S.J. *Father van Lith S.J.*, 203.

¹¹⁸⁰ Van Velsen, *Letter to R.V. Oppenraaij in Rome* (21 April 1924) in: Rosariyanto, Floribertus Hasto, *Father Franciscus van Lith S.J. (1863-1926): turning point of the Catholic Church's approach in the pluralistic Indonesian Society* (Rome 1997).

¹¹⁸¹ Van Velsen, *Letter to R.V. Oppenraaij in Rome* (21 April 1924).

¹¹⁸² Some sources speak of dementia (Van Rijckevorsel, *Pastoor F. van Lith S.J.*, 127), but others stress that he was still lucid on his deathbed.

sympathy, as an example, and for the encouragement of others'.¹¹⁸³ A number of *In Memoria* emphasise that Van Lith was 'very religious, benign and of good nature'.¹¹⁸⁴ For example, he did not want to succeed his father as a bailiff because he did not want to throw families on the street; he already knew at the age of twelve that he wanted to become a religious man, after reading a text on nature by Francis of Assisi.¹¹⁸⁵

Furthermore, his colleagues tried to emphasize his image as a sincere devout man. P. Van Kalken, his successor at the Xaverius College, deleted a passage which stated that Van Lith never prayed, or at least never performed, the usual prayer exercises. He considered this issue too delicate and explained that Van Lith told him that he prayed continuously. He also deleted a passage about Van Lith's appearance that stated that he often looked 'shabby', and that sometimes Javanese and Chinese people looked at him speechless and horrified. Van Kalken altered the word 'shabby' into 'plain'.¹¹⁸⁶ However, he wrote in a private letter that Van Lith's 'shabby look' was not another way to adapt himself to the local population, since Javanese were generally very neat when it came to their appearance. 'The reason why he looked like that seems too idealistic to me, Van Lith was not only sloppy, but also ill-mannered and sometimes even messy'.¹¹⁸⁷ Furthermore, Van Kalken wrote that he doubted Van Lith really went to the *desas* that often, but that he sometimes just went for a ride on his bicycle.¹¹⁸⁸ He added, 'his mission reports had to be taken with a grain of salt', which probably means that he thought Van Lith exaggerated the hours he spent on missionary activities and maybe also the numbers of converts. Several sources state that Van Lith did not evangelise after 1904, but solely focused on directing the school. Merthens, for example, reported in 1908 that Van Lith taught Dutch and mathematics thirty hours a week and spent another twelve hours on catechism classes; this did not leave much time to visit the scattered *desas*.¹¹⁸⁹

¹¹⁸³ Van Rijckevorsel, *Pastoor F. van Lith S.J.* Introduction.

¹¹⁸⁴ Van Rijckevorsel, *Pastoor F. van Lith S.J.*, 10.

¹¹⁸⁵ Van Rijckevorsel, *Pastoor F. Van Lith S.J.*, 10.

¹¹⁸⁶ P. Van Kalken, *Kritiek op het handschrift over het leven van F. Van Lith en nadere gegevens van Van Rijckevorsel*, Archives of the Jesuit Province of Indonesia (Semarang).

¹¹⁸⁷ P. Van Kalken, *Kritiek op het handschrift over het leven van F. Van Lith en nadere gegevens van Van Rijckevorsel*, Archives of the Jesuit Province of Indonesia (Semarang).

¹¹⁸⁸ P. Van Kalken, *Kritiek op het handschrift over het leven van F. Van Lith en nadere gegevens van Van Rijckevorsel*, Archives of the Jesuit Province of Indonesia (Semarang).

¹¹⁸⁹ G. Vriens, 'Honderd jaar Jezüieten- Missie', in: *Streven, maandblad voor geestesleven en cultuur* Vol. 12 (1958) 888.

29. Conclusion

Looking back on Van Lith's career, his colleagues were all of the opinion that Van Lith was the true founder of the Java mission, who had achieved great results. There is no doubt that he did an excellent job in the field of education. He had proved to be a significant figure in forming a Javanese schooling system. For example, his *kweekschool*, the Xaverius College, was the first school where the programme took four years, instead of the two years the programme took at the government schools. As a result, the government schools extended their programme to four years as well. The school attracted pupils from all over the region and the graduates were highly valued as teachers and government officials. In 1917, Van Lith founded 'Canisius', an association with the aim to spread 'Christian charity'. The association focused on the organisation of healthcare and education in Central Java. Eventually, 270 Catholic schools joined Canisius in Central and East Java.

Nevertheless, his efforts in the field of the actual mission work were less successful. Van Kalken stated: 'One might wonder whether the little success of Van Lith's mission work was caused by his insufficient aptitude for the work' and about his initial results: 'people did come to the church, but this was also because he gave them some change and sometimes a meal at holidays.'¹¹⁹⁰ Van Lith mastered the language well, but had no talent for preaching. His sermons and catechism classes were often too difficult, both in language and in content, and therefore he did not always grasp the attention of his audience.¹¹⁹¹

The controversy between Van Lith and Hoevenaars takes an important place in the memory of Van Lith, because it clarifies Van Lith's true vision on the mission. The different attitude towards the Javanese people was the first controversy between Van Lith and Hoevenaars. It turned out to be a longstanding conflict, and when Van Lith looked back at his career in the 1920s he wrote the following passage on the issue: 'He (Hoevenaars) understood that European, racial pride was wrong, but still he felt he was obliged, as a European, to place himself above the Javanese, while I felt it was better to renounce my feelings of superiority and to descend to the natives. The results have proven me right.'¹¹⁹² In this fragment, Van Lith does not hide the fact that he too feels superior to the Javanese and that he only acts to be equal in order to earn their trust.

Nevertheless, he is remembered as a man who was 'one of the Javanese', who fought for more acknowledgement and autonomy, both in the church and in national politics. Treating Javanese as equals was apparently still not the prevailing way of thinking in 1926. A quote in an *In Memoriam* of

¹¹⁹⁰ Van Aernsbergen, *Aantekeningen bij de biografie over Van Lith*.

¹¹⁹¹ P. Van Kalken, *Kritiek op het handschrift over het leven van F. Van Lith en nadere gegevens van Van Rijckevorsel*, Archives of the Jesuit Province of Indonesia (Semarang).

¹¹⁹² Van Lith, *Autobiographical writings*.

Van Lith in a newspaper stated: 'Why did the pastor humiliate himself so much by equating himself with the Javanese? But in truth the secret can be explained with a few words: it was his priestly altruism that prompted him to descend, if we may say so, to those people to educate them morally and spiritually'.¹¹⁹³

Today Franciscus van Lith is remembered as the founder of the Javanese Catholic Church, as a pioneer with 'intrepid belligerence', as the apostle Paul of Java, and as the father of all Javanese Catholics.¹¹⁹⁴ Narratives on the mission in Java tell wonderful stories of how Van Lith healed the cripple Sarikrama, a resident of Kalibawang. Sarikrama had heard of the beneficent missionary Van Lith and therefore decided to undertake the challenging journey to Muntilan, even though he could hardly walk. When he arrived, Van Lith prayed for him and took care of his legs. After his miraculous recovery he asked Father van Lith to baptize him. Sarikrama changed his name to Barnabas and became the first catechist of Kalibawang.¹¹⁹⁵ Van Rijckevorsel described him as follows: 'Kindness, extreme kindness, was the trait of the future missionary.'¹¹⁹⁶ He also designated Van Lith as a sensitive man; 'once he read something of Macaulay to me and he was clearly touched by his words, and at that moment he reminded me of a prophet'.¹¹⁹⁷ In present times he is remembered as almost a saint and Muntilan is often dubbed as the 'Bethlehem of Java'. Biographies of Van Lith, still popular today, are almost written as a hagiography.

¹¹⁹³ Newspaper articles concerning Van Lith's death, available in the Jesuit Archives in Nijmegen.

¹¹⁹⁴ Van Rijckevorsel, *Pastoor F. van Lith S.J.*

¹¹⁹⁵ Panitia Kerja Monumen Romo F. v. Lith S.Y., *Memanunggal dengan rakyat dasar mangrasul room F.V. Lith*, 23.

¹¹⁹⁶ Van Rijckevorsel, *Pastoor F. van Lith S.J.*, 11.

¹¹⁹⁷ Van Rijckevorsel, *Pastoor F. van Lith S.J.*

Appendix II

In July 1902, Monseigneur Hellings ordered both missionaries to write out their ideal method for the mission. He then asked them to send their programmes to each other, so they could hopefully find similarities and come to a more corresponding strategy. Hellings was right, their proposals were quite similar. Despite the similarities, however, the two missionaries did not grew closer to each other and refused to work according to the other's ideas. Unfortunately, because both programmes were quite elaborate, the church did not have enough money to carry out both proposals. Van Lith advised the superiors to make him in charge of both missions and make Hoevenaars subordinate or to replace him. Hoevenaars wrote to Hellings that the only solution was to dismiss Van Lith, because he was too stubborn and caused problems for the mission.¹¹⁹⁸

1. Programme A, by Franciscus van Lith, 17 July 1902¹¹⁹⁹

- A. The founding of a Roman Catholic association with a special department for helping the poor.
- B. A lottery to raise the necessary money to found this association and also a hospital, where the Franciscan sisters can work. Although there is already a governmental hospital in Muntilan, it does not meet acceptable standards, because the staff is not sufficiently skilled. The Franciscan sisters could, besides working in the hospital, also train young girls in handicrafts and teach them other skills which are necessary for forming the core of a Christian family. These new Christian families will penetrate the whole region with their Christian spirit in the future.
- C. A part of the profits will be invested in funds and the interest of these funds will be lend to people as agricultural credit. It has been made impossible for Europeans to buy or rent land from Javanese, while this was a solid base of warranty for the credit banks. We now can only take chattel as collateral, and when we are forced to sell this, because the moneylenders cannot repay, the people will probably break all connections to the church. Therefore, I have developed a plan in consultation with the resident for providing agricultural credit. The main goal of this plan is to subtract the population from Islam, so they will join us. The requirements for these first converts will be very low; they are not allowed anymore to be married or divorced by the *penghulu*. This requirement is indeed very low, 'but what can we demand from people, who are in the darkness of death, completely devoid of the breath of life of divine love?' Our hope lies with their children, because it will take time before the people are ready to become true Christians.

¹¹⁹⁸ Petrus Hoevenaars, *Letter to the superiors of the Java mission* (Mendut 15 December 1900) Archives of the Jesuit Province of the Netherlands (Nijmegen).

¹¹⁹⁹ The programme is paraphrased and summarized.

- D. A nursery school will be founded, preferably next to the hospital.
- E. We will open a boarding school. We will first try to persuade *desa* leaders to intern their sons in our college. They will have to take care for their own clothes, but we will provide their meals. Besides sons of the *desa* leaders, we will accept a small number of the most talented children of our primary schools in the district. The education of the boys has to be solid; therefore the college has to remain small and under my direct supervision. Two scholastics will be appointed and they will be assisted by indigenous gurus. The level of education has to meet the standards of the governmental schools, so our boys can become first class teachers, government officials or doctors. Others will go back to their *desas* and take over their father's posts and reform the *desas* to Christian *desas*.
- F. Starting an industry, such as a weaving mill.

2. *Programme B, by Petrus Hoevenaars, 18 July 1902*¹²⁰⁰

- A. The founding of an agricultural association '*Goena Dharma*'. The goal of this association is not just to give an advance on the harvest yield or credit to rent a *sawah*, but also to raise money to build a tapioca, rice-mill and peanut-mill. The necessary amount is twenty thousand guilders, but because all these activities are profitable, we can ask interest or provide up to five hundred guilders a year.
- B. The founding of a seminary to train indigenous catechists. The European staff repeatedly proves to be insufficient; therefore we need to train Javanese religious teachers. The seminary will also be conducive for the European staff; it will improve their knowledge of the Javanese culture, language, geography and ethnology, and, moreover, proper religious education can be provided in the surrounding *desas* by our pupils.
- C. A technical school to train future blacksmiths and carpenters.
- D. The founding of a hospital.

¹²⁰⁰ The programme is paraphrased and summarized.

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Dutch Summary

‘Roepen in een woestijn’

De Nederlandse zending en missie op Islamitisch Java, 1850-1910

‘Als ik den apostel Paulus kon ontmoeten zou ik hem vragen of hij zijn rusteloos, veelbewogen leven zou hebben willen ruilen met de onze? En ik maak mij sterk, dat hij onmiddellijk zou antwoorden; ‘In geen en deele. Ik heb honger en koude geleden, ik ben gezeseld, gestenigd, geslagen; maar desniettemin zou ik niet met u hebben willen ruilen. Die langdurige en langzame martelingen zijn erger dan alles wat ik ondervonden heb.’¹²⁰¹

Met deze regels probeerde de zendeling Christiaan Albers van de Nederlandse Zendingsvereniging aan het publiek in Nederland uit te leggen hoe zwaar het leven voor een zendeling op Java was. De christelijke missie op Java, het meest dichtbevolkte eiland in de Indonesische archipel, kende veel tegenslagen en weinig succes, met name in de eerste periode van de georganiseerde zending en missie, namelijk tussen 1850 en 1910. In mijn proefschrift heb ik de egodocumenten (verslagen, brieven en dagboeken) van vier protestantse zendelingen en twee katholieke missionarissen onderzocht om het Nederlandse zendings- en missie discours in beeld te brengen. Ik heb verschillende thema's onderzocht, te weten: (Javaanse) Islam, inheemse evangelisatie, bekeringsstrategieën, het bekeringsproces, de doop en als laatste, internalisering van het christendom. Mijn uiteindelijke doel was te laten zien hoe de zendelingen en missionarissen onderhandelden met de verscheidene discursieve grenzen, die de *contact zone* waarin zij leefden en werkten afbakenden.

De egodocumenten en overige bronnen uit de zendings- en missiearchieven leken op het eerste gezicht geen rijke bron van informatie te zijn. Het merendeel bestaat uit droge verslagen van dagelijkse activiteiten, opsommingen van inkomsten en uitgaven en benodigdheden voor de scholen en medische klinieken. Met behulp van analytische methoden, waaronder *reading against the grain* (tegendraads lezen), werd echter de gelaagdheid van deze teksten zichtbaar. Zo werd duidelijk dat de zendelingen en missionarissen zich in een zeer complexe positie bevonden. Ze leefden letterlijk op de grens van hun eigen cultuur en die van de Javanen en Sundanezen (bevolking van West-Java). Dit zorgde voor een uniek perspectief op processen als bekering en het zich eigen maken van religieuze ideeën en rituelen. Deze grens-positie zorgde echter ook voor moeilijkheden voor de zendelingen en missionarissen. Zij moesten continu onderhandelen met de discourses van de verschillende partijen

¹²⁰¹ Christiaan Albers, 'Gemengde berichten uit Meester Cornelis', in: *Orgaan* (Rotterdam 1898).

waar ze mee te maken hadden, zoals de bestuurders en de geldschietters in Nederland, de Nederlandse koloniale staat en die van de lokale bevolking. De methode *reading against the grain* heeft mij geholpen om de manier waarop de zes zendelingen en missionarissen onderhandelden met deze discoursen te onthullen en de gelaagdheid in hun brieven te doorgronden.

Daarnaast heb ik gebruik gemaakt van een aantal concepten in de analyse van de bronnen. De verscheidene concepten waren te scharen onder het overkoepelende concept *contact zone*.¹²⁰² Dit concept benadrukt de complexe positie waarin de zendelingen en missionarissen zich bevonden en maakt duidelijk dat zij zich continu staande moesten houden ten opzichte van die verschillende partijen. Het begrip *conversion* (bekering) staat in direct verband met het concept *borderzone*, omdat het de overgang naar een andere godsdienst aanduidt. Deze definitie bleek echter te simplistisch en gebonden aan een westerse, christelijke context. De zendelingen en missionarissen beschreven het bekeringsproces veelal als een plotselinge, snelle en complete omslag in iemands persoonlijke religieuze leven. Bekering werd vaak voorgesteld als het resultaat van Gods genade; als iets dat iemand overkomt. Deze opvatting ontnemt echter alle *agency* aan de mensen die zich bekeren, maar tegelijkertijd ook aan degenen die zich niet bekeren. In werkelijkheid bleek men zich op grond van zeer uiteenlopende beweegredenen te bekeren en niet zelden stonden deze redenen los van religieuze overtuiging. Bovendien bleek bekering meestal een gradueel proces te zijn zonder een duidelijk begin- en eindpunt en bleek het eenvoudiger om nieuwe ideeën en rituelen op te nemen, dan de reeds bestaande op te geven.

Het resultaat van het christelijke bekeringsproces op Java bleek als gevolg hiervan niet altijd overeen te komen met wat de zendelingen en missionarissen zich ervan hadden voorgesteld. Een groot gedeelte van de Javaanse bevolking dat was bekeerd tot het christendom bleef vasthouden aan elementen die hun oorsprong hadden in tradities als het animisme, hindoeïsme, boeddhisme en de islam. De zendelingen en missionarissen deden deze elementen in hun christelijke gemeenschappen af als syncretistisch. Dit concept heeft echter een zeer negatieve connotatie gekregen, ook binnen het wetenschappelijk discours. Ik heb daarom gekozen voor de concepten *localization* (lokalisering) en *religious hybridity* (religieuze hybriditeit) om het proces en de uitkomst van uitwisseling tussen verschillende godsdiensten aan te duiden.

Het laatste concept wat ik behandeld heb is *Othering* (afgeleid van 'the other'). Dit concept omvat het definiëren van de andere groep in relatie tot de eigen groep. Doordat de zendelingen en missionarissen zich in een grenspositie bevonden tussen enerzijds de koloniserende en anderzijds de gekoloniseerde maatschappij is dit proces veelvuldig aan te duiden in de bronnen. De Nederlanders

¹²⁰² Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial eyes: travel writing and transculturation* (London and New York 1992) 4.

werden sterk gedreven door hiërarchische ideeën die gebaseerd waren op rassenongelijkheid. De zendelingen en missionarissen waren er tevens van overtuigd dat hun aanwezigheid voor vooruitgang en ontwikkeling in de Javaanse samenleving zou zorgen, onder andere op het gebied van religie.

Met behulp van de besproken methode en concepten heb ik in dit proefschrift een antwoord gegeven op de volgende onderzoeksvraag: *‘Hoe onderhandelden de zendelingen en missionarissen met de verschillende discoursen omtrent religie in hun poging de Javaanse, islamitische bevolking te bekeren in de context van de Nederlandse koloniale overheersing in de periode tussen 1850 en 1910?’* In wat volgt zal ik mijn voornaamste conclusies toelichten.

Het religieuze landschap van Java veranderde ingrijpend in de tweede helft van de negentiende eeuw. Allereerst vond er een intensivering van het islamiseringsproces plaats, doordat de contacten tussen Java en het Midden Oosten sterker werden. Het aantal *hajjis* (pelgrims die naar Mekka trekken) groeide explosief en velen deze *hajjis* openden koran-scholen, of *pesantren*, nadat zij naar Java waren teruggekeerd. Bijgevolg kregen meer kinderen islamitisch onderwijs, waardoor de nieuwe generatie een stuk meer onderlegd was dan de vorige. Een aantal probeerde de Javaanse islam ‘orthodoxer’ te maken en te ontdoen van animistische, hindoeïstische en boeddhistische elementen die nog veelvuldig voorkwamen op Java. Deze ‘orthodoxe’ groep noemde zichzelf de *Putihan* (de witten), waarschijnlijk om hun eigen ‘zuiverheid’ te benadrukken, en ze noemden de andere groep de *Abangan* (de roden). De *Abangan* hielden vast aan de tradities van hun voorouders en combineerden elementen die hun oorsprong hadden in verschillende religieuze tradities in een gelokaliseerde en hybride vorm van islam. Het onderscheid tussen deze twee groepen moslims werd voor het eerst opgemerkt door Nederlandse zendelingen die actief waren op Oost-Java. Zij volgden het discours van de *Putihan* en beoordeelden de *Abangan* als pseudo-moslims en deden hun tradities af als syncretisch.

Een tweede reden voor de snelle ontwikkelingen in het Javaanse religieuze landschap was natuurlijk de toenemende aanwezigheid van het Nederlands koloniale bestuur en daarmee de verspreiding van het christendom. Begin negentiende eeuw, een aantal decennia voor de Nederlandse overheid de missie toestond op Java, nam een aantal Javanen al het christendom aan. Sommigen van hen trokken rond om het christendom te verkondigen en waren zeer succesvol in vergelijking met de Nederlandse zendelingen en missionarissen die na 1850 op het toneel verschenen. Deze goeroes waren succesvol omdat zij in staat waren christelijke ideeën en gebruiken te koppelen aan lokale religieuze tradities. Zij presenteerden het christendom als een aanvulling en lieten bestaande overtuigingen en rituelen grotendeels ongemoeid. Bekering tot deze Javaanse vorm van het

christendom werd hierdoor niet zozeer ervaren als een radicale breuk met de eigen tradities en identiteit. Deze groep, die zichzelf de *Kristen Jowo* (Javaanse christenen) noemde, wist het christendom te lokaliseren en hun etnische en religieuze identiteiten te combineren zonder al te veel spanning en conflict. Als gevolg hiervan werden de *Kristen Jowo* in de meeste gevallen nog steeds beschouwd als 'echte Javanen', dit in tegenstelling tot de *Kristen Londo* (Nederlandse christenen), die bekeerd waren door Nederlandse zendelingen en missionarissen.

Dit onderscheid tussen *Kristen Londo* en *Kristen Jowo* heeft overeenkomsten met het onderscheid tussen de zojuist genoemde *Putihan* en *Abangan*. De twee 'moderne' en 'orthodoxe' stromingen, de *Putihan* en *Kristen Londo*, waren sterk geïnstitutionaliseerd en dogmatisch. Zij legden veel nadruk op betekenis en tekst en het ritueel raakte ondergeschikt. Ze braken met de tradities van hun voorouders en richtten zich op het Westen. De *Abangan* en *Kristen Jowo*, daarentegen, kenden geen strenge doctrines, richtten zich op charismatische leiders en het ritueel werd belangrijker geacht dan tekst en betekenis. Bovendien waren ze sterk gericht op de mystieke aspecten van hun geloof. De *Kristen Jowo* en *Abangan* probeerden de overtuigingen en rituelen van hun voorouders te waarborgen, met als gevolg dat islam en christendom in deze gemeenschappen hybride vormen aannamen en gecombineerd werden met elementen uit andere religieuze tradities. Het was bijvoorbeeld niet ongebruikelijk onder de *Kristen Jowo* om te bidden op vaste tijden op de dag, iets wat gebruikelijk was - en is - in de Islam, en sommige Javaanse christenen hielden gebedsbijeenkomsten waarin een ritueel werd uitgevoerd dat sterk leek op het soefi *dhikr* ritueel; een vorm van meditatie waarbij een woord of zin langdurig wordt herhaald. Soms deden ze dit met de zin '*La ilaha illa Allah, Yesus Kristus iyo roh Allah*' (Er is geen God dan Allah, Jezus is de geest van Allah) een zin die sterk lijkt op de islamitische *shahada*: 'Er is geen God dan Allah en Mohammed is Allahs profeet'. Dit voorbeeld laat goed zien hoe een nieuwe religie meestal geleidelijk eigen gemaakt wordt en gecombineerd wordt met reeds aanwezige tradities.

De Nederlanders presenteerden het christendom echter heel anders dan de Javaanse christelijke goeroes. Zij zagen bekering tot het christendom als een totale breuk met het verleden en benadrukten dat tijdens de doop een bekeerling wordt 'herboren'. De herboren christen diende vervolgens voormalige religieuze overtuigingen en rituelen achter zich te laten en een geheel nieuwe levensstijl aan te nemen. Deze stugge houding verklaart voor een groot deel waarom de meerderheid niets voelde voor bekering.

Over het algemeen hielden alle zendelingen en missionarissen er dezelfde methoden op na. Alle zes gaven onderwijs en medische zorg, maar ook materiële en financiële hulp vormden

belangrijke methoden. Ondanks de tegenvallende resultaten pasten maar weinig zendelingen en missionarissen hun zendingsstrategieën aan gedurende hun soms decennia lange carrières. De enige uitzonderingen zijn Simon van Eendenburg van de NZV en de Jezuïtische Franciscus van Lith. Van Eendenburg week af van de tot dan toe gebruikelijke methoden door een stuk land te ontginnen en een christelijke nederzetting te stichten. De stichting van dit dorp had zowel religieuze als sociaaleconomische motieven: de christelijke gemeenschap zou hechter worden, minder worden blootgesteld aan ‘verderfelijke’ niet-christelijke invloeden en bovendien welvarender worden doordat elke bewoner een deel van de gemeenschappelijke landbouwgrond toebedeeld zou krijgen. Franciscus van Lith besloot om zich uitsluitend te focussen op hoger onderwijs. Hij richtte een katholiek college op waar jongemannen op hoog niveau werden opgeleid. Zijn doel was om de bevolking ‘voor te bereiden’ op het katholicisme en een katholieke elite te creëren, die na de opleiding terecht zou kunnen komen op sleutelposities in de Javaanse maatschappij.

Over het algemeen raakten de zendelingen en missionarissen na verloop van tijd echter verstrikt in hun dagelijkse taken, zoals het leiden van hun scholen en ziekenhuizen en met het rondreizen tussen de verschillende gemeenten om daar te preken, huwelijken te sluiten, avondmaal te vieren en te dopen. Vroeg of laat verloren ze daardoor allemaal het werkelijke bekeringswerk wat uit het oog en lieten dit over aan hun Javaanse assistenten. Zending Samuel Harthoorn van het Nederlandsche Zendinggenootschap concludeerde daarom: *‘De zending is geen apostel, maar een proselietenmaker. Geen volksman, maar gemeente-fabrikant. Geen evangelist, maar een doper en avondmaalhouder.’*¹²⁰³

De onderzochte bronnen bespreken niet of nauwelijks de motivaties van mensen om zich te bekeren. De zendelingen en missionarissen beschouwden een diep geloof in Jezus Christus als de Verlosser de enige aanvaardbare reden tot bekering, maar ze kwamen natuurlijk ook in aanraking met mensen die er andere motieven op na hielden. Een veelvoorkomend motief was bijvoorbeeld dat men dacht dat lid worden van de kerk meer financiële zekerheid zou betekenen. Na het analyseren van verschillende bekeringsverhalen kan ik concluderen dat de motieven meestal uit meerdere aspecten bestonden; zowel emotionele als meer pragmatische. De meerderheid van de Javaanse bevolking voelde echter niets voor bekering tot het christendom en men had hiervoor net zulke diverse redenen als degenen die zich wel bekeerden. De meest voorkomende reden van het zich niet bekeren was natuurlijk dat men simpelweg niet geloofde in het evangelie. Er waren echter ook mensen die zich wel aangetrokken

¹²⁰³ S.E. Harthoorn, *Dagboek 1860* (Malang 1860) Utrechts Archief.

voelden door het christendom, maar toch afzagen van de doop, omdat ze bang waren voor negatieve reacties uit hun omgeving.

Degenen die zich bekeerden werden volgens de missieverslagen in veel gevallen onder druk gezet door hun gemeenschap. Het onder druk gezet worden varieerde van uitgesloten worden voor *kafir* (ongelovige) of 'Hollander', tot fysiek geweld en verbanning. Opvallend is dat de protestanten deze sociale druk en het risico op verbanning veel nadrukkelijker benoemden dan de katholieken. Mogelijk overdreven de protestanten dit risico om hun lage bekeringsaantallen te legitimeren. Er zijn bovendien geen grote opstanden geweest tegen de missie *an sich*, wellicht omdat de missie zo weinig succes had dat ze niet gezien werd als een serieuze dreiging. De relatie tussen islamitische en christelijke gemeenschappen was dus relatief vreedzaam.

Het autobiografische bekeringsverhaal van de Sundanees Kartawidjaja heb ik in hoofdstuk 5 uitvoerig geanalyseerd om meer inzicht in het bekeringsproces te verkrijgen. Zijn verhaal maakt duidelijk hoe ingewikkeld het bekeringsproces was en dat het niet alleen gevolgen had voor zijn religieuze identiteit, maar dat het proces ook invloed had op zijn sociaaleconomische positie. Kartawidjaja's bekering tot het christendom leidde tot een breuk met de (islamitische) gemeenschap waartoe hij voorheen behoorde. Opvallend was echter dat zijn bekering niet tot een definitieve breuk met zijn voormalige religie leidde. Hij benadrukte structureel de continuïteit tussen zijn oude en nieuwe overtuigingen en baseerde zijn christelijke identiteit op argumenten die hij vond in de Koran. Met andere woorden, Kartawidjaja verklaarde zijn religieuze positie buiten de islam met argumenten vanuit het islamitische discours. Dit was mogelijk een discursieve strategie om de verschillen tussen hemzelf en zijn voormalige gemeenschap af te zwakken, om de sociale druk te verminderen, of om andere moslims gemakkelijker te overtuigen het Evangelie aan te nemen.

Zoals gezegd verwachtten de zendelingen en missionarissen een radicale verandering in het leven van hun bekeerlingen. Veel Javaanse gebruiken werden niet geschikt geacht voor christenen, bijvoorbeeld *wayang* (schaduwspel) *gamelan* (Javaans orkest) en vanzelfsprekend meer uitgesproken islamitische tradities zoals islamitische feestdagen en de besnijdenis. Pas bekeerde christenen werden gedwongen veel van deze tradities, die het sociale leven op Java kleurden, op te geven en onttrokken zich daarmee aan hun sociale omgeving. Het overgangsproces verliep daardoor meestal traag en moeizaam. De zendelingen en missionarissen hadden continu kritiek op hun volgelingen, omdat ze het christendom op een andere manier beleden dan men in Nederland gewoon was.

Uit de bronnen blijkt dat geloof in Jezus Christus alleen niet genoeg was om een goed christen gevonden te worden. Er werd vaak ook verwacht dat christelijke Javanen een andere naam aannamen, zich anders kleeadden, anders baden en zich anders gedroegen. Kortom, men moest vooral handelen als een goed christen. De christelijke identiteit was zodoende een *performative identity*: een identiteit die je uit in je dagelijks handelen. Bekeren betekende een groot deel van de oude gewoonten en identiteit opgeven. Daarvoor kwam de christelijke identiteit in de plaats, maar deze bleek moeilijk verenigbaar met de Javaanse identiteit. Javaanse en Sundanese christenen werden niet langer gezien als ‘echte’ Javanen en Sundanezen, omdat het christendom werd beschouwd als de religie van de Hollanders: de koloniale bezetter. Anderzijds accepteerden de Nederlanders, inclusief zendelingen en missionarissen, de inheemse christenen ook niet als hun gelijken, simpelweg vanwege hun etnische afkomst, die beduidend lager geacht werd in die negentiende-eeuwse koloniale context. Javanen en Sundanezen werden over het algemeen niet in staat geacht om het christendom werkelijk te begrijpen. Inheemse christenen vormden dus een kleine groep die op zichzelf stond. Een veelgehoorde beschrijving voor Javaanse christenen was daarom: *‘Landa wurung, Jawa tanggung’* wat zoiets betekent als ‘niet Hollands, maar ook niet langer Javaans’.¹²⁰⁴

De zendelingen en missionarissen stonden niet alleen voor de taak mensen te bekeren, maar ook om degenen die bekeerd waren een nieuwe levensstijl aan te leren. Ze moesten constant bepalen welke Javaanse gebruiken wel of niet acceptabel waren. Men probeerde dit onderscheid te maken door te bepalen of een gebruik ‘cultureel’ dan wel ‘religieus’ was, waarbij gebruiken die overwegend ‘cultureel’ waren, wel toegestaan werden en religieuze gebruiken niet. Er was echter geen eensgezindheid over waar de grens tussen beide categorieën lag, waardoor de zendelingen en missionarissen in veel gevallen een ambigue positie innamen. Zij deelden lokale gebruiken zodoende naar eigen inzicht in en vooral hybride tradities bleken niet eenvoudig te classificeren.

De zendelingen en missionarissen losten dit op door hybride tradities te classificeren als ‘cultureel’ en deze af te zetten tegen islamitische tradities. Het bleek er voornamelijk om te gaan of een bepaald gebruik al dan niet gekoppeld kon worden aan de islam. Dit blijkt bijvoorbeeld uit het feit dat alle zes de *slametan* toestonden. Een *slametan* is een offermaaltijd waarbij ten behoeve van de voorspoed voedsel aan lokale geesten geofferd wordt. Deze maaltijd wordt vervolgens gedeeld met de gemeenschap. Dit ritueel heeft duidelijke religieuze kenmerken, zowel qua uitvoering als qua betekenis. Toch stonden alle zes het ritueel toe, omdat het geen uitgesproken islamitisch gebruik was.

¹²⁰⁴ Kristanto Budiprabowo, *Sadrach, early leader in the history of Javanese Christianity*, ongepubliceerde dissertatie aan de *Universitas Gadjah Mada* (2010).

Daarnaast stonden Samuel Harthoorn van het NZG en de katholieke Franciscus van Lith de besnijdenis toe met als argument dat het niet uitsluitend gezien werd als een islamitisch gebruik.

Het zendingsdiscours richtte zich dus niet openlijk tegen de islam, maar hield op papier vooral vast aan het onderscheid tussen 'cultuur' en 'religie'. Opvallend genoeg is de islam nauwelijks aanwezig in het missiediscours. Het islamitische karakter van de Javaanse samenleving werd continu ontkend of geminimaliseerd. Een gedachtegang was dat de Islam slechts als een dun laagje vernis over de oude religieuze tradities lag en dat de Javanen dus eigenlijk helemaal geen 'echte' moslims waren. Samuel Harthoorn bedacht zelfs de term 'Javanisme' om de hybride religieuze traditie van Java aan te duiden.

Mijn uiteindelijke doel was onderhandelingen met diverse discourses binnen de egodocumenten van de zes zendelingen en missionarissen uit te lichten en te analyseren. Zij moesten in het bijzonder onderhandelen met verscheidene discourses om hun positie als zendeling of missionaris te legitimeren en hun methoden en de bijbehorende tegenvallende resultaten te rechtvaardigen. De voornaamste strategie bleek de constructie van een tegenstelling tussen 'cultuur' en 'religie', en tussen 'echte' en 'oppervlakkige' religiositeit te zijn.

Alle zes onderhandelden met het discours omtrent de Javaanse islam. Christiaan Albers van de NZV beargumenteerde bijvoorbeeld dat de islam een zodanig sterke kracht was op Java dat het bekeering tot het christendom haast onmogelijk maakte. Daarentegen probeerden sommigen, waaronder diezelfde Albers, tevens hun beperkte resultaat te legitimeren door erop te wijzen dat het islamiseringsproces ook na eeuwen nog altijd niet was voltooid. De Javanen en Sundanezen werden in dit argument neergezet als 'oppervlakkige' moslims, die slechts een aantal aspecten van de islam uit pragmatische overwegingen hadden aangenomen. Dit, zo beargumenteerden zij, toonde aan dat 'echte' bekeringen haast onmogelijk waren onder de Javaanse bevolking.

Om te voorkomen dat er 'onechte' of 'oppervlakkige' bekeerlingen gedoopt werden, testten de zendelingen de doopkandidaten. De bronnen laten echter zien dat het niet zeldzaam was dat mensen die het examen, met vragen over de Bijbel en de belangrijkste gebeden, niet gehaald hadden toch werden gedoopt. De zendelingen en missionarissen dienden enerzijds te voldoen aan de prangende vraag om zoveel mogelijk mensen te dopen, terwijl zij anderzijds moesten waarborgen dat uitsluitend 'echte' christenen werden gedoopt. Ze rekten het begrip 'echte' christen strategisch op door de nadruk te verleggen van kennis naar de moeilijk controleerbare factor 'innerlijke overtuiging', zodat mensen met weinig kennis van het geloof toch gedoopt konden worden.

Een ander argument dat door veel zendelingen en missionarissen gebruikt werd om het trage kersteningsproces te rechtvaardigen was dat de Javaanse bevolking nog niet vergevorderd genoeg was om zich te kunnen bekeren tot het christendom. Snelle resultaten konden niet worden verwacht, omdat de bevolking zich eerst verder diende te ontwikkelen. Sommigen, waaronder Samuel Harthoorn, bepleitte daarom dat men zich eerst moest richten op de algemene ontwikkeling van het Javaanse volk en dat er pas bij een volgende generatie overgegaan kon worden tot kerstening. Binnen dit argument werden de concepten 'cultuur' en 'religie' tegen elkaar afgezet. Er werd gesuggereerd dat de zending en missie weliswaar nog geen groot succes had op religieus gebied, maar dat men wel degelijk vooruitgang boekte door het volk te civiliseren en te ontwikkelen.

Kortom, mijn proefschrift draagt bij aan onze kennis van christen-moslim relaties in de koloniale context. Het geeft een overzicht van de eerste fase tussen 1850 en 1910 van de Nederlandse christelijke missie op Java. Ik heb de egodocumenten van zes zendelingen en missionarissen nader onderzocht om inzicht te verkrijgen in hun verwachtingen, denkwijzen, (discursieve) strategieën, ontwikkelingen en resultaten. Ik heb laten zien hoe de ontmoeting met een andere cultuur en religie hun opvattingen en discours heeft beïnvloed en hoe zij onderhandelden met de discourses van uiteenlopende partijen zoals het bestuur in Nederland, de koloniale overheid en de lokale bevolking. Bovendien blijkt dat, hoewel de missie niet heel succesvol was qua aantal bekeerlingen, zij toch een aanzienlijke impact heeft gehad op het sociale, culturele en religieuze leven op Java.

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Maryse Kruithof (1988) studied *Global History and International Relations* at the Erasmus University of Rotterdam and graduated on a biography of the Dutch missionary Carel Poensen in 2010. After her graduation she continued studying the Dutch Christian mission in the Netherlands' Indies. She has presented her work at several national and international conferences. Furthermore, she is affiliated to NISIS (Netherlands' Interuniversity School for Islamic Studies) and has taught courses on World History and Narrative Analysis at the Erasmus University of Rotterdam. Her research interests include mission history, religious exchange, conversion, internalization of religious beliefs and discourse analysis.