CHAPTER ELEVEN

CHRISTIANITY IN CENTRAL AND SOUTHERN SULAWESI

Until the beginning of the twentieth century, the great island of Sulawesi (Celebes), with an area of 186,000 km², was touched by Western influences only at its southern and northern extremities: the city of Makassar and the surrounding area, and the Minahasa on the northern tip of the island. Makassar, which after the fall of Ternate (1606) had become the leading power in the central archipelago, had been conquered by the Dutch in 1667. In the second decade of the twentieth century, when the whole island became occupied by the Dutch, the inhabitants of Sulawesi numbered about 2.5 million. Of these, the Buginese and Makassarese in the South had received Islam between 1605 and 1634; during the next centuries Islam had slowly spread to other areas. Minahasa, where Christianity had been first introduced in 1563, had been thoroughly christianised during the second half of the nineteenth century; but in other parts of northern Sulawesi Christianity had lost to Islam the footholds it had obtained during a period of Dutch expansion between 1670 and 1730. Around 1900, generally speaking, only the tribes inhabiting the mountainous interior of Central Sulawesi still kept to the ancestral religion. The coastal Muslims referred to them as Toraja, possibly meaning “upland people,” but they consisted of a great number of peoples large and small, speaking languages which belong to the Malayo-Polynesian subfamily of the Austronesian language family, but in many cases varying widely with each other. Later, under the influence of government and mission, these tribes coalesced into greater units. The Dutch government and mission officials applied the name “Toraja” to all non-Muslim peoples in Central Sulawesi, distinguishing between South, East, and West Toraja. In the post-colonial era, the people inhabiting the southern half of the central highlands kept to the name “Toraja,” with a subdivision of “Sa’dan Toraja,” living in the upper reaches of the Sa’dan River; and the “Mamasa Toraja” in the valleys of the Mamasa River and its tributaries. Conversely, the inhabitants of the Poso River basin and the isolated valleys to the west adopted for themselves the name of “orang Pamona,” taken from their mythical place of origin north of Lake Poso. The tribes in the hill country to the south of Donggala on the west coast of Central Sulawesi are still called by their traditional names: Kulawi, Ledo, and others.
CHAPTER ELEVEN

Christianity in the Poso area and adjacent regions: the missionary Albert C. Kruyt

After the Dutch Missionary Society (NZG) had surrendered its successful mission in the Minahasa to the Protestant Church (ca. 1875), its sphere of activity was restricted to East Java, where the work among the Muslim population advanced with difficulty. Therefore the NZG took up the suggestion made by an official of the Protestant Church that it should start a mission in other parts of Sulawesi. In 1892, A.C. Kruyt (born 1869 in East Java as the son of a NZG missionary) established himself on the southern coast of the Gulf of Tomini, near the mouth of the Poso River. At the time, the inland region had not been occupied by the colonial government. The inhabitants were subject to the Islamic kingdom of Luwu in the south, and to two smaller states in Central Sulawesi, Sigi and Tojo, but their relation to these kingdoms was mainly of a mythical and ritual character. A few years later, the Dutch Bible Society sent the language expert Dr. N. Adriani (1865–1926) to assist Kruyt by translating the Bible. They were to leave their mark on Dutch missionary work in Indonesia during the first decades of the twentieth century.

In many aspects, Kruyt’s approach was still that of the nineteenth century. He tried to found schools, studied the local language, distributed small gifts to those present at the Sunday meetings, and provided medical assistance to the sick and wounded. However, in some respects he took a different attitude. This was not a fruit of theoretical reflection or theological considerations, but of practical experience in the contact with the local people. For example, at first Kruyt, like his predecessors in other mission fields, tried to “prove” that the spirits and powers feared and worshipped by the Toraja simply were not real, did not exist. But the people did not accept his “scientific” arguments. Kruyt for his part respected their attitude and stopped attacking their religion directly. Instead, he argued that the God whose message he came to proclaim was more powerful than the local deities and spirits. This was a level of arguing people could understand. In later years it happened that a village laid out two sets of gardens: one accompanied by the customary ritual, the other without any ritual, with the express purpose of seeing which one would do better. When there appeared to be no difference at all, the village declared itself ready to embrace the Christian faith.

However, for Kruyt renouncing direct attacks on traditional religion was not enough. Like his nineteenth-century predecessors, he wanted the message of the Gospel to penetrate into the hearts of the people and bring them to a personal conversion. But better than they, he understood that to touch the innermost part of his hearers he had to know the patterns prevailing in their minds. So he began studying local religion and culture (and afterwards traditional religion and culture in several other regions of the Dutch East Indies with an
intensity without precedent within the Dutch missions, which made him one of the leading ethnographers of his time, quoted also by foreign scholars, and earned him a doctorate honoris causa of Utrecht University (1913). Maybe what made him break new ground in this aspect was the fact that, as his like-minded colleague in West Papua, F.J.F. van Hasselt, he was a missionary’s son, for whom indigenous people and their ways were something he had seen from his earliest youth. His magnum opus was De Bareë sprekkende Toradja’s van Midden Celebes (The Bareë-speaking Toraja of Central Sulawesi), three volumes, which he published together with Adriani. In his later works Kruyt adopted an evolutionary framework, according to which the “animism” of his Toraja was one of the lower stages in the religious development of mankind, Christianity (in its Western, Protestant form) representing its highest level.

Kruyt’s intimate knowledge of Toraja religion and culture and his fluent command of their language ensured that the Toraja, generally speaking, were paying serious attention to his preaching. But there were other factors that caused him to be held in esteem by the people in whose midst he had come to live. His robust physique and his ability to walk great distances in the forests and mountains of Central Sulawesi not only stood him in good stead on the journeys he undertook to know the land and spread the Gospel, but also earned him the respect of the locals. His good health and that of his family were considered a token of spiritual power and moral pureness. He was admired for his personal courage (once he chased away a swarm of warriors that had come to do away with him just by exploding in fury when they trespassed on his premises). Even though during the first years the mission received no backing whatsoever from the colonial government, Kruyt managed to achieve a position as one of the prominent residents of the country. In 1894 he even acted as a mediator in a conflict between some tribes. The prestige thus acquired made it possible for Kruyt to criticise traditional values and customs without people breaking off contact.

Nevertheless, only after seventeen years did the first baptism take place. In fact, as early as 1898 one of the most influential chiefs, Papa i Wunte, declared his readiness to become a Christian. However, out of a sense of responsibility for the unity and well-being of his people he felt he could not take this step alone. Unlike the average missionary of the nineteenth century, Kruyt respected this attitude and did not press him to come forward individually. Other people, too, felt attracted by the new faith, but they were too much attached to the traditional community. Moreover, the people in the Poso area were afraid of their Muslim overlord in Palopo, who had formally forbidden them to change their religion. This bond with Luwu was more than just political: Luwu was the guarantee of the old way of life; negating this injunction would invoke supernatural sanctions.
Breakthrough of colonialism and Christianity: 1905 and following decades

Then, however, the colonial government made its power felt. Following the final reduction of Aceh in 1903, the Dutch established their rule in the territories which until then had remained independent, such as Central Sulawesi, Papua, and others. In 1905 Luwu was occupied and its ruler compelled to cede his sovereign rights on all territories north of the Takolekaju mountain range. With that, the fear of worldly and supernatural sanctions disappeared. Moreover, the colonial government at once interfered with the traditional way of life. It is true that the traditional structures of society were largely maintained, but head-hunting and killing of people suspected of sorcery were forbidden, slavery was abolished, the people were forced to come down from their hilltop dwellings and settle alongside the roads built by the government (through forced labour provided by the inhabitants themselves). There was more to this than would seem at first sight, because headhunting was not just a way of warfare, but an important guarantee for the general well-being of a community, and leaving the traditional dwelling places meant also leaving the lobo or village sanctuary. Disobedience was punished right away. As the people did not always know or understand the ways of the white rulers, they turned to the missionaries for guidance, and because the changes affected their religious life, they were prepared also to ask for guidance in matters of religion. Even so, the mission (between 1903 and 1910 the NZG sent three more missionaries to Central Sulawesi) was not in a hurry to administer baptism. Only on Christmas 1909 was Papa i Wunte baptised, together with 167 others. This baptism was not the beginning of a mass movement, but during the next decades there was a steady stream of conversions to Christianity. In 1942 baptised Christians numbered ca. 43,000. By then, the greater part of the inhabitants of the interior had become Christian. The villages on the north coast, mostly inhabited by people from other parts of Sulawesi, were Muslim; in the districts south of the Takolekaju Mountains, the lower class people embraced Christianity while the upper class remained Muslim. Efforts by Roman Catholic missionaries to penetrate this Protestant mission field were unsuccessful.

In his Het zendingsveld Poso (The missionfield Poso), J. Kruyt, son of A.C. Kruyt, stresses that conversion was more than a formal transition from one community to another. In two respects the ‘inner life’ of the converts had changed: they had received Pue Ala (the Lord God, the name Kruyt had introduced for the God of the Bible, Ala being the Barèè form of the Malay Allah) as their God, to whom they had direct access, without having to take into account the powers which they had feared and respected before; and they had developed a new sense of good and evil, which was no longer oriented only towards the well-being of the community as previously understood.
Nevertheless, the missionaries were aware that the faith as conceived and confessed by the converts was different from the Protestant faith as conceived by themselves.

This awareness was not new; what was new was that Kruyt, again in contrast to the nineteenth-century missionaries, did not condemn the deviancies and try to suppress them, but made them an integral part of his missionary theory. In his Van Heiden tot Christen (From Pagan to Christian, 1925) he argued that the faith of people coming from animism to Christianity had to go through a ‘magical’ and ‘legalistic’ stage before it could reach the maturity supposedly attained by the ‘spiritual’ Christianity of the West. Thus conversion was not seen as a clean break with the past, but as a process of sifting and transforming. This was true of the individual, but also of society as a whole. Accordingly, people were allowed as much as possible to keep to their traditional culture. Even when a custom seemed incompatible with the Christian faith, the mission did not just forbid it, but tried to adapt it. For example, after the colonial government banned the traditional ceremonies for the dead because they were considered a danger to public health, people had adopted the custom of cleaning the graves of relatives who had recently died, with the same goal as the old ceremonies, i.e. in order to prevent those relatives doing damage to the harvest. Kruyt’s colleague P. Schuyt (1908–1924 on the field) wanted to suppress this custom, by having the congregations celebrate the Holy Supper at the same time. But the majority of the missionaries, led by Kruyt, found another solution: they transferred the cleaning of the graves from harvest time to Easter, connecting it with the resurrection.

Another example of adapting old structures is the way the mission reacted to slavery. Some of the tribes inhabiting the Poso area kept slaves. Slavery was banned by the colonial government, but of course this ban could not erase the dividing line between the slaves and their former masters. Even today, a century after the emancipatory measures of the colonial administration, people in Central and South Sulawesi know full well whose ancestors used to be slaves. When the teacher training school turned out the first teachers from among the indigenous population, it was found that a village community would not accept a former ‘slave’ in a position of authority. Then the rule was adopted that people of slave descent would no longer be accepted in the teacher training school. Twenty years later, a group of Christians descended from ‘slaves’ protested: within the church, there ought not to be any distinction between freeman and slave. Then the conference of missionaries decided to abolished the rule mentioned above (1937). However, this decision was not made public.

From these examples it can be concluded that the Poso mission had a conservative outlook in religious, cultural and social matters. In fact, its avowed aim was to assist the christianised population in creating a truly indigenous
Christian culture and society. This attitude determined the mission’s policy in the field of language as well. Here the influence of Adriani made itself felt. According to him, only in their native language could the people fully express themselves, and only through their native language could their inner self be known and understood. For that reason, the use of Malay in the mission was anathema to the Poso mission. In other missionfields (like the Minahasa, or Papua), the lack of linguistic homogeneity had induced the mission, against its will, to introduce Malay as the language of church and school. Kruyt and Adriani refused to follow that example, even if in Central Sulawesi at least four or five different languages were used. School education was given in the local language, and Dr. Adriani undertook the translation of the Bible into Bare‘e, the language spoken by a majority of the inhabitants.

However, this attitude had its drawback. In the Dutch East Indies, except in Java, all secondary education was given in Malay (or Dutch). The aversion of the mission to Malay caused it to be disinterested in the founding of secondary schools. The only mission schools above the three-year village school level were three vervolgscholen, that is schools where three year supplementary education was given up to the level of a complete elementary school. Unlike most Dutch missions in eastern Indonesia, the Poso mission had one Dutch-language elementary school, but the initiative had been taken by Minahasan Christians living in Poso town, while only a small part of the pupils was from Central Sulawesi. Not even the government, let alone the mission, saw fit to set up secondary schools in Central Sulawesi. This meant that there was hardly an opportunity for Christian children from the region to move on to secondary and higher education outside their native region, that they had no independent access to modernity, and consequently that after World War II they were not represented in the elite of independent Indonesia, as were their southern neighbours the Sädan Toraja, where the GZB mission from 1924 onward had a Dutch-language elementary school and the administrative and educational centre of Makassar was within easy reach. It must be added that this policy of the Poso mission, and of all Dutch missions working in eastern Indonesia except the GZB, was not based on the consideration that outside Java Malay was the bearer of Islam. From the seventeenth century onward a Christian variety of Malay had developed; a Christian terminology was available, and the complete Bible had been translated into that language twice. The mission was not much interested in the spread of ‘Christian’ Dutch either. Malay, like Dutch, was just ‘foreign,’ its use considered a danger to the conservation and further development of local culture.

We have seen that the missionaries emphasised the personal growth of the converts. In contrast, the organisation of the church as a whole received scant attention. The local congregations were served by preachers who also taught at the village school. During the first stages these were mostly Minahasans
or Sangirese, but the teacher training school set up in 1913 at Pendolo and until 1929 led by A.C. Kruyt himself, then by his son J. Kruyt (1929–1953), turned out a growing number of indigenous teacher-preachers. During the first years, the village headmen would spontaneously act as leaders of the congregations alongside the teacher-preachers. Kruyt hoped that in this way a truly indigenous system of church government would develop. However, the increasing involvement of the chiefs in the colonial apparatus made it impossible to continue this practice. In 1921 all congregations had an elder, whom they had chosen from their midst, but as yet there were no local or parish councils. Inspired by the Tambaram Conference, however, in 1939 the mission appointed a committee which was to prepare a provisional church order. It should be noted that of the three members of this committee two were influenced by Barth’s theological thinking. The committee proposed a Presbyterian church government, consisting of local, regional and church-wide councils. Local church councils were instituted after the Netherlands had been involved in the European war (1940), but on the outbreak of the Pacific War there was still no supralocal organisation and not even one Indonesian teacher-preacher was authorised to administer the sacraments.

The Japanese interregnum

Before the arrival of the Japanese, the missionaries hurriedly set up fourteen regional presbyteries, each of which was led by a guru appointed by the mission, who was given the authority of administering baptism and the Holy Supper. As the Japanese took the schools away from the mission and forbade the teacher-preachers to perform any task in the church, the congregations were led by the elders. As in other parts of Sulawesi (see also chapters six and nine), the Christians received much help from S. Miyahira, a Japanese Christian who from 1929 until 1939 had lived in the Dutch East Indies, and who had returned in 1942 to become the secretary of the Japanese governor of East Indonesia in Makassar and (until December 1943) head of the Department of Religious Affairs of the Japanese administration. In that capacity he did much to protect the Indonesian Christians from vexations and intrigues at the hands of other groups (or of Minahasan Christians ill-disposed towards the mission) and from suspicions on the part of the Japanese authorities. He ordained several ministers and provided money to build churches. In 1943 he installed the Selebes Kristoyodan Rengokai (Christian Union of Sulawesi), a federation which included all Protestant churches on the central and southern parts of the island. After he was ousted from office, his role as a protector was taken over by S. Narumi, who before the war had made a living in the region as a trader, and by the Japanese minister, Goro Hujisaki. Narumi, who
declared, “From a worldly point of view, the Dutch are our enemies, but the things brought by the missionaries are good, and their regulations should be followed even now.” However, he introduced the flag ceremony into church services: before the beginning of the service, everybody bowed to a Japanese flag strung out on the wall at the north side of the building, people sang the Japanese national hymn, and prayed for the soldiers killed or wounded in the war; before leaving the building, everybody bowed again to the flag. Many Christians were afraid of being punished by the Japanese if somehow they made a mistake; others considered this ceremony idolatry; all these people stayed away from church. Other factors interfering with church life were the atmosphere of fear prevailing at the time, and the forced labour on the massive road projects carried out by the Japanese. A number of church leaders were arrested, and some died in prison. Nevertheless the congregations made it through the war relatively unscathed. There were no relapses into old patterns and no conversions to Islam. According to the testimony of the Christians themselves, the availability of the New Testament and other parts of the Bible in the vernacular was a great comfort in those dark times.

The independent Christian Church of Central Sulawesi: an eventful history

The history of the Gereja Kristen Sulawesi Tengah after its institution in October 1947 is characterised by the political turmoil and religious strife that shook the region from 1951 to 1965, around 1970, and again from 1998 until the present day. During the power vacuum that followed the capitulation of Japan (August 1945 until well into 1946), the Muslim elite in the southern districts took its revenge on the Christian communities which under the protection of the colonial dispensation of justice had challenged its absolute power and therefore were considered minions of the Dutch. After the unitary Republic of Indonesia had absorbed the Dutch-created autonomous State of East Indonesia (April 1950), an opposition movement increasingly inspired by Islam started a guerilla war under the name Darul Islam (House of Islam) and wrought havoc among the Christian communities in the whole southern half of the island. A great number of Christian leaders were killed; thousands of refugees from the south entered the Poso area. Only in 1965 was this movement finally suppressed. Meanwhile, in 1958 the Minahasa took an active part in a rebellion against the central government in Jakarta (Permesta). Within a few months this rebellion was stamped out, but the remnants took refuge in the forests and mountains of Central Sulawesi. As most of them were Christians, they did not persecute the church, but their presence brought suffering to the local population. The destruction of the communist party in 1965–1966 left Central Sulawesi relatively undisturbed, but in 1970–1971 the reconstruction
of the political landscape by Soeharto’s New Order brought new unrest, as the population, who adhered en masse to the Protestant political party Parkindo, was forced to vote for the government-sponsored Golkar.

After 1971, a relative calm descended upon the region. But during this period fundamental changes took place, which sowed the seed of new disturbances. Central Sulawesi was designated as a transmigration area; thousands of migrants from other islands, especially Java, settled in the coastal area, upsetting the demographic and religious balance. The indigenous population, mainly Christians, was not able to insert itself into modern economic life and was increasingly marginalised. In the 1990s, the growing political influence of Islam on a national level made itself felt in the region as well. Modernisation and centralisation caused traditional leadership and traditional community spirit to diminish. When in the wake of Soeharto’s fall central government was weakened, violence erupted; first at Christmas 1998. The worst incidents took place in 2000–2001. Numbers of Muslim and Christian villages were incinerated, hundreds, if not thousands, died, including women and children; in the end the Christians were pushed back to Tentena. As in the Moluccas, Muslims from Java came to the aid of their co-religionists and caused the conflict to assume even more the character of a religious war. Also as in the Moluccas, there was no wholesale killing of Christian populations, they were ‘merely’ terrorised into leaving their territory, which then was occupied by others. Church life was largely disrupted; many of the 350 congregations ceased to exist.

**Developments within the GKST church**

On 18 October 1947 the Christian Church of Central Sulawesi was instituted. At the time the membership was 80,000 (including about 30,000 in Luwuk Banggai); its territory included the central part of the island and parts of its northern, eastern and southeastern arms. The mission had provided it with a simple church order, which stressed the authority of the central board. The church at once entered into relations with sister churches: it became a member of the WCC (1948) and was a founding member of the Indonesian Council of Churches (1950). The relationship with its parent church, the Netherlands Reformed Church (NHK, which in 1951 took over the mission work from the missionary societies) was a little uneasy. This was in part caused by the nationalist feelings of the Minahasan element in the church, and in part by the wish of the church to improve its credentials in nationalist and Muslim circles. In 1951/1952 the remaining missionaries were requested to leave; in 1952 the relationship with the NHK was restored, and a multidisciplinary team was sent to assist in the development of the region. After 1970 a relationship
was established with organisations from other countries and confessions, like the Overseas Missionary Fellowship, the Missionary Aviation Fellowship, and the Mennonite Central Committee.

At the GKST synods two themes regularly are debated: administrative questions, including financial problems, and the mission of the church. Financial problems arose mainly as a consequence of the centralized structure of the church. The congregations, which mainly consisted of subsistence farmers, appeared unwilling or unable to provide the funds needed for the relatively modest central apparatus. As for the mission of the church, successive synods stressed that the church should follow in the footsteps of the mission and pay attention to the whole of human life. During the 1970s, when the Soeharto government entered upon a massive development program (pembangunan), the church, like its sister churches in other parts of the country, declared its readiness to cooperate and insert its activities into the government programme. However, it also called for attention to the negative consequences of economic development, the more so because often it was the members of the church who felt these consequences. Meanwhile, the church did the best it could to maintain a good relationship with the government; one of the first acts of a newly elected synod board would be to meet with the provincial and regional officials to present its program for the next term. The concentration on economic development caused the church to redefine the attitude towards traditional culture it had inherited from the mission: now traditional practices were seen as a waste of economic resources (1972). The church undertook missionary work among unevangelized tribes in the interior, but in the given circumstances to proclaim the Gospel among Muslims was unthinkable.

*Palu, Donggala, Luwuk Banggai*

The missionfield of the NZG did not include the whole of Central Sulawesi. In 1894 the Dutch branch of the Salvation Army had sent two officers to Central Java, where they were active in social and medical work. Looking for economic opportunities for the Javanese in their care, they decided upon founding a colony in the *Palu Valley*, to the west of Poso (1913). In its turn, this colony became the basis of a mission among the inhabitants of the region, where Islam was stronger already than in Poso. From 1917 until 1949, this work was led by lieutenant-colonel Leonard Woodward and his wife. Their method was not substantially different from that applied in other parts of Sulawesi: they founded schools, gave medical help, and educated teacher-preachers. However, as the Salvation Army does not administer the sacraments, the converts were not baptised and the Holy Supper was not celebrated. This did not prevent the Salvation Army from having their indigenous helpers educated in the teacher
training school at Pendolo. By 1937 there were around 3,000 indigenous Christians; now the Salvation Army is strongly represented in the area.

Large numbers of farmers from the densely populated Minahasa migrated to the Donggala area, to the north of Palu. They were cared for by teacher-preachers sent from Minahasa. In the 1930s they established contact with the indigenous population. This resulted in the autonomous Minahasan Church taking responsibility for missionary work in the area (1936). In 1965 the congregations in the Donggala-Palu area formed the Evangelical Protestant Church of Donggala, which in 2000 had about 23,000 members.

The church in Luwuk Banggai, to the East of Poso, is a fruit of the mission started in 1911 by the Rev. R.W.F. Kyftenbelt of the Protestant Church in Makassar. Formally, his task as a minister of the established church was only to provide spiritual care for Christian Europeans and Indonesians, government officials and others. But during his visits to congregation members outside the town of Makassar (his parish included the whole southern half of Sulawesi), he observed that the pacification of the area had made it possible for Muslim officials and traders to settle in the interior and spread their religion there, the more so because traditional religion was weakened by the measures taken by the colonial government. He travelled to the territories considered threatened by Islam and not yet occupied by the mission (which was short of staff and funds) and appointed large numbers of teacher-preachers from other parts of the archipelago with orders to prepare the Christianisation of the population. Once a minimum of Christian knowledge had been imparted to the people, Kyftenbelt or an assistant minister came back and administered baptism. For a few years this endeavour was supported by the supposedly neutral colonial government, which remembered very well how Islam had been a motivating force in the resistance of the Acehnese to their subjugation by the Dutch.

The method applied by Kyftenbelt and his helpers in this missionary effort was diametrically opposed to that of the Poso mission. People were baptised by their thousands; no attention was paid to the community (for example, schoolboys would be baptised without their parents becoming Christians or even giving permission); traditional culture was disregarded, and actively suppressed by the teacher-preachers, especially the Ambonese among them; Malay was the language of church and school; in many congregations there was hardly any follow-up in the sense of intensive spiritual care; in accordance with the general practice of the Indische Kerk, church members had to do a second and much more serious examination before being allowed to participate in the Lord’s Supper. Even in the few congregations in which it was celebrated only a small part of the baptised members took part. Thus church practice in Luwuk Banggai was much nearer to the customs prevailing in the Minahasan Church than to the method applied by the Poso mission. Accordingly, when the Minahasan Church had been given autonomy (1934, GMIM), the Protestant
Church Board surrendered Luwuk Banggai to that church. However, as the GMIM did not feel equal to the task, it suggested the NZG mission should take over. In 1947 Luwuk Banggai was incorporated into the independent Church of Central Sulawesi. Ethnic and geographic factors caused tensions to develop between the regional congregations and the leadership of the church. In 1966 it was agreed that the church in Luwuk Banggai should become independent. In 1997 the membership of the Christian Church of Luwuk Banggai (GKLB) was 70,000. In its turn, the GKLB experienced the force of ethnicity as a divisive element in the church when part of the congregations in the Banggai archipelago split off on the same grounds as had led to the birth of their parent church.

The Christian start among the Sa’dan Toraja

The group commonly identified as ‘Sa’dan Toraja’ lives in the southern part of the mountain block that constitutes the central part of Sulawesi. They are distinguished from the inhabitants of Central Sulawesi by their language, which belongs to another branch of the Austronesian group, and by certain characteristics of their culture, for example house building and the elaborate ceremonies for the dead. In colonial times (since 1906) their territory belonged to the government of Celebes (which comprised only the southern half of the island); after independence to the province of South Sulawesi, where they account for about 10% of the population. Toraja society is strongly feudal, especially in the southern part of their territory, where the puangs considered themselves on a par with the Buginese kings. During the second half of the seventeenth century, the Sa’dan Toraja withstood efforts by the Buginese to conquer and islamize their territory. However, they maintained trading relations with the Buginese, the most important export products being coffee and slaves.

In 1906 Torajaland was subjugated by the colonial government, not without fierce resistance on the part of some chiefs. As has been expounded in the section on Central Sulawesi, the Rev. Kyftenbelt of the Protestant Church of the Indies in Makassar took measures to prevent the Islamisation of the area, which was now open to foreign influences. Indigenous teacher-preachers were sent to Torajaland, and in May 1913 a number of pupils of the government school in the town of Makale were baptised by an assistant minister of the Protestant Church. This was not to the liking of the NZG mission to the north. Like Kyftenbelt, Kruyt and Adriani wanted to establish a Christian stronghold which would encompass the whole of central Sulawesi, but they wished the mission to be in a single hand, so that the indigenous church would be built on homogeneous foundations. However, the Netherlands Missionary Society did not have the funds and the personnel needed to occupy the territories to
the south of the Poso mission field. Therefore they enlisted the help of the *Gereformeerde Zendingbond* (GZB), which had been founded in 1901 by orthodox Protestants who had not followed Abraham Kuyper into his new *Gereformeerde Kerken*, but had remained in the Netherlands Reformed Church. For several years already this mission had been looking for a mission field, and it readily accepted the invitation of the NZG. For the Poso mission, the fact that the GZB missionaries were educated in the same institute as its own people was a guarantee of homogeneity in the method used. In 1913 the first GZB missionary, A.A. van de Loosdrecht, arrived on the mission field. He spent four months with Dr. Adriani to receive an introduction into the Toraja languages, but also to get acquainted with the ways of the Poso mission. In May 1914 he established himself in Rantepao and started working among the Sa’dan Toraja. Within two years he was followed by the missionary teacher, J. Belksma, who was to start a training institute for Toraja teacher-preachers, and by the language expert, Dr. H. van der Veen.

At first, all went well with the new mission. Following the usual pattern, Van de Loosdrecht founded schools, gave medical assistance, and learned the language, in which he became particularly fluent. In 1915 the government allotted the southern part of Torajaland, which until then had been a mission field of the Protestant Church, to the GZB. However, in the meantime tensions in Torajaland rose. Especially in the Rantepao area, the pacification had been preceded by years of violence and arbitrary rule by several chiefs and warlords. Now those who felt aggrieved came forward and laid charges with the colonial administration. Sometimes the missionary, because of his knowledge of the vernacular, would act as an intermediary between those lodging complaints and the government officials. In his preaching too, Van de Loosdrecht, a labourer’s son and a staunch Calvinist, occasionally gave the impression that God was on the side of the poor. This viewpoint was quite to the contrary of the opinion prevailing among the Torajas, who frankly appreciated wealth as a sign that somebody was favoured by the gods. The banishment of the most powerful man in Torajaland, the raja of Rantepao, and of several other chiefs, following charges of extortion, further increased tensions. Moreover, the attitude of the government, which closely cooperated with the mission, among other things by punishing the absenteeism of school children, gave the population the impression that Christianity would be forced upon them. Actually, the mission was rather reticent in administering baptism: during the three years of Van de Loosdrecht’s activity he baptised only 15 Toraja. In mid-1917 some feudal lords prepared a rising. All Europeans in the area were to be killed. When attempts to murder the local administrator failed, the rebels killed the missionary. This was an extraordinary event. From 1859 (Banjarmasin War) until the outbreak of World War II only four times a Protestant or Catholic missionary was killed in the Dutch East Indies, even though until the early
1900s many of them worked in areas not yet administrated by the colonial government, such as Papua.

The murder of Van de Loosdrecht only temporarily slowed down the mission effort. During the next 25 years the mission founded a network of schools, including a Dutch-language elementary school (1924) led by a Dutch mission teacher, a hospital, and several hundred congregations. In 1938 baptised Protestant Christians in the GZB mission field numbered 13,000, out of a total of approximately 250,000 non-Muslim inhabitants. As in several other mission fields, like North Sumatra, the early years of the Toraja mission are characterised by the active participation in missionary work of charismatic converts, mostly people who had an intimate knowledge of the traditional religion, like the tominaa (priest) Pong Lengko (baptised 1920, died 1930), who in former times had accompanied the men of his district in war. The missionaries noted fragments of their preaching, in which things were put somewhat differently from their own way. For example, just like new converts on other mission fields, Pong Lengko could not understand why the colonial government took a (more or less) neutral attitude in religious matters. For him, the traditional gods were real powers, which in ancient times had usurped the place belonging to the one true God, and now should be driven out.

Seen against the background of the mission in the Dutch East Indies as a whole, the GZB makes an interesting case-study, because in matters of traditional religion and culture it followed the line of Kruyt and Adriani (the ‘Oegstgeest’ policy, inspired by the ethical current in Dutch theology), while in matters of church organization it adopted the Calvinist model applied by the mission of the Gereformeerde Kerken (GZB) on its missionfield in Central Java. The ethical faction within the missionary corps was led by H. van der Veen, son of a minister of the Dutch Reformed Church. In 1923 a committee on which he sat together with the two other missionaries and a number of teacher-preachers and Toraja elders, produced a Christian adat regulation containing a number of stipulations on the disposal of the dead, the harvesting of the rice, the inauguration of a new house, traditional feasts, and marriage. We quote some of these stipulations on the disposal of the dead.

It is up to the family to bury the dead at once or postpone burial (according to traditional custom). None of the two practices is sinful. Only if the government official orders the body to be buried immediately, you must obey him. But do not forget that many people cannot stand the smell of the decomposing body; many get ill by it. At the burial people may slaughter buffaloes as well as pigs; singing lamentations is not forbidden. However, if you slaughter animals, you are not allowed to bring an offering to the soul of the deceased person; you must not think that the dead take along these animals to the place of the souls or to heaven. (…) There is no objection against erecting a bala’kayan (framework from which the buffalo meat is distributed), or a simbuang memorial stone. Much more important is that you keep the meat clean and do not drag it through dung or
mud. People (i.e. Christians) are not allowed to make a tau-tau (statue or picture of the dead person), nor make sacrifices to it. It is not allowed to raise lamentations in front of these statues, because that is just foolish. The Christians do not have to keep to the prohibition of eating rice during the period of mourning. (...) When you are in a house of mourning, where the people do not eat rice, you should not eat rice either, in order not to give offence.¹

This adat-regulation has not become a guiding document of the nascent church; in fact the original text has not even be preserved. However, it mirrors the attitude of the GZB mission (and of its sister organisations within the Hervormde Kerk) towards traditional culture and religion. This attitude has three characteristics: (1) Regarding to traditional culture, a distinction is made between elements considered purely religious (such as bringing offerings to the dead or to the statue of a dead person) and those considered more or less ‘neutral,’ such as slaughtering animals at a burial. (2) Within the ‘neutral’ domain, the ‘freedom of a Christian’ is an important theme. (3) Typically Western notions, like hygiene and government regulations (based themselves on hygiene) are introduced. These considerations determined missionary practice. The feasts of the dead are not prohibited, but Christianised; elements of traditional music are (with little success) introduced into church singing. On the GZB mission field we observe the same caution towards traditional structures as in Poso. From 1924 onwards, many Christians from the middle and lower classes refused to give the tradional gift of meat to the village elite, arguing that this gift had a religious meaning (the buku leso affair). The missionaries, especially Dr. Van der Veen, tried to persuade them to honour tradition, but Belksma secretly supported the Christians. Even under pressure from the government, which throughout the Indies supported traditional feudal structures, the Christians did not give in; after independence they settled the matter through their political party, Parkindo.

Van der Veen also wanted Christian slaves to render the customary services to their former overlords, except those, which were clearly connected with traditional religion. On the GZB mission field, people of slave descent were not formally denied access to the teacher-training course and the evangelists’ course, but in practice, for the same reason as in Poso, the mission preferred teachers from the upper classes. Nevertheless, somehow a number of people of slave descent succeeded in getting through the selection and joining one of the groups which most participated in upward social mobility. Maybe here, too, Belksma was instrumental. He was the son of a farm labourer, a member of the Gereformeerde Kerken, and in his youth had absorbed the social teachings of Abraham Kuyper.

The mission also had to determine its attitude towards the Indonesian national movement. Instinctively it tried to avoid the issue; in the GZB archive, as in those of other missions, there is hardly a document to be found on the emergence of this movement in Torajaland. Indonesian mission workers later confessed that, of course, they adored Soekarno and knew the anthem *Indonesia Raya* (Greater Indonesia) by heart, but did not dare to mention it to the missionaries. Young Toraja returning from Java with a secondary or higher education sometimes were received in the service of the mission, but invariably after some time they opted out because they chafed at the paternalism of some missionaries and at the political conservatism of, for example Belksma, who in the monthly *Soelo* (Torch) published by the mission even dubbed Hatta ‘a communist.’ Conversely, the mission, especially Dr. Van der Veen, supported the regional nationalism of the Toraja, who traditionally had been subject to neighbouring Luwu and whose lands were incorporated by the colonial administration into the territory of that name, which enjoyed a form of self-governing under the traditional ruler, who was a Muslim. The support of the mission for the Toraja secession movement earned it the wrath of the colonial government. Here, too, the Toraja themselves settled the affair after the war, securing for the Makale-Rantepao area an administrative status on a par with that of Luwu.

In all questions mentioned above, GZB policy was not unlike that of its sister mission in Poso. In the matter of church organisation, however, it took a different course. In the first place, as quickly as possible the mission started laying the foundations of a Presbyterian Church organisation. When a group of village dwellers had been baptised, almost at once a local church council was formed which together with the local teacher-preacher or evangelist had to care for the congregation, under the supervision of the missionary. Ten years later, regional presbyteries were formed, and in 1937 Belksma presented a draft church order. Characteristically, Van der Veen stated that this draft was too Western, and that the organisation of the church would have to grow spontaneously from within the congregations. However, the concept was accepted by the missionary conference and passed on to the Mission Board in the Netherlands for further discussion and ratification.

Church order as envisaged by the missionaries was marked by two characteristics. Firstly, it provided for a church growing out of the congregations. Each congregation, which fulfilled certain conditions, could call a teacher-preacher or evangelist to become its minister. The conference would give this minister the authority to administer the sacraments, and with that the congregation would be independent from the mission. Out of these independent congregations an independent church would grow. Secondly, the concept as amended by the conference referred to the Calvinist confessions of faith, and more precisely to the first article of the *Confessio Belgica* “as more broadly
specified in the Heidelberg Catechism.” In both issues, the conference followed the policy of the Gereformeerd mission in Central Java, where the church (instituted in 1931) had grown in the same way and had the Catechism as its confession. But in each the final result was different. As for the growth of an independent church: in 1940 the first congregation reached this stage, but before others could follow the Pacific War intervened, and in 1947 the mission declared the church independent in a way similar to that used in Poso and most other mission fields. As for the confession, conservative elements in the mission inserted the complete Confessio Belgica and the Canons of Dort (of which until 1983 no Indonesian translation was available) in the article regarding the confession of the Toraja Church.

*The Japanese interregnum in Torajaland*

In the Torajaland, the Japanese occupation brought problems and solutions similar to those in the Poso area. The GZB hurriedly ordained five evangelists as ministers and gave them the authority and the money necessary to guide the church through the war. As in Poso, this did not mean that from now on the church was independent; the new structure was a continuation of the missionary organization under Indonesian leadership. During the power vacuum pending the installation of a Japanese administration, the Christians were told that Islam was the only religion permitted by the Japanese, and that these would kill all pigs. But afterwards the Japanese suppressed Islamic agitation. Here, too, the Christians were assisted and protected by Christian Japanese, who ordained several more ministers. However, in Torajaland, too, the population was required to contribute to the war effort. In May 1945, the Japanese authorities organised a course for church workers, with lectures by Indonesian and Japanese agricultural experts and church-leaders. The verbatim account of this course makes fascinating reading. The Japanese Christians present took part in the propagation of the Greater Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere ideology. But the Japanese Presbyterian minister and theologian, Juji Seya had the courage to state that “The present war is a world-wide war, and is of great significance, because it shows that England, America, Russia, Holland, Japan (!), even all mankind, must return to God, by the cross of Golgotha, the cross of Jesus the Messiah.”

After the missionaries came back from Japanese internment, the Toraja ministers, ordained in 1942, duly handed back the leadership of the church to them. In February 1947 the mission convened a Synod in which the autonomous Toraja Church was proclaimed. Belksma’s draft of 1937 became

---

its church order. However, as has been pointed out before, this was a top-down proclamation. As in most other Indonesian churches (for example Central Sulawesi, East Java, West Java, the Toba Batak Church), the church board was the heir of the mission, and its first chairman was a missionary. In fact, between 1947 and 1950 the mission in Toraja had more foreign workers in Torajaland than ever before, and it continued to operate alongside the church as an independent body. In 1950 the outbreak of disorders following the dissolution of the State of East Indonesia caused most mission staff to retire to the provincial capital Makassar and afterwards to Holland. But only when the rift between Indonesia and the Netherlands over western New Guinea (Papua) made it impossible to maintain a missionary presence in Torajaland did the church become truly independent. Just as in the rest of Indonesia, after 1965 the position of new ‘fraternal workers’ from the West within the church was very different from that of their predecessors.

The internal development of the Toraja Church during the first decades after 1945 was strongly influenced by political events in the region. As in the southern districts of the Poso mission, the power vacuum after August 1945 brought suffering for the congregations in areas that were predominantly Muslim, like the coastal plains around Palopo, where Muslim nationalists killed seventeen church leaders. From 1950 until 1965 the Darul Islam rebellion disrupted life in Toraja-land and surrounding regions. Only in the central towns did the government have any authority. In the areas dominated by the guerrillas, again a number of Christians were killed. The adherents to traditional religion (by far the majority of the population) were forced to ‘accept a religion,’ choosing between Islam and Christianity. Tens of thousands chose Islam, but many more had the courage to choose Christianity. In this way, in a few years the membership of the church trebled. Under the circumstances, it was impossible to give baptismal instruction to the new converts. The resulting leeway in Christian knowledge posed a problem to the church for years to come. The unstable situation after the fall of Soeharto (1998) did not have the same disastrous results as in Central Sulawesi, because Christian and Muslim religious leaders succeeded in warding off religious strife in Torajaland proper. But as in the 1940s and 1950s Christian villages in the coastal plain to the east were attacked and burnt down.

The history of the Toraja Church after 1965 is characterised by three developments. In the first place, the church adapted itself to its Indonesian ecclesiastical environment, dropping some of the Dutch conservative Calvinist features received from the GZB mission. The church opened the ministry for women (1984), which by Indonesian standards was rather late. Like other Indonesian churches before and after it, in 1981 the Toraja Church adopted a new confession in which the orthodox faith was formulated in a more contextual way; six years later the classic Calvinist forms were deleted from the church order.
Secondly, the church had to determine its attitude towards the cultural heritage of the Toraja people. In general it followed the line of the mission. Traditional culture was not viewed as something to suppress or to be ashamed of. On the contrary, in church ceremonies traditional clothes were worn, traditional dances received a place, although attempts to introduce dancing and music into worship met with some resistance. The church followed the mission also in its attitude towards social stratification. As late as the 1980s office holders from what were considered the lower strata of society were relatively few and rarely were chosen as members of the regional and central boards. This situation was most pronounced in isolated regions. Christian members of the traditional elite even tried to reverse some of the prohibitions of the mission against what they considered to be pagan elements in ceremonies otherwise tolerated. In the 1980s and 1990s there was much discussion on the question whether or not the tau-tau (statues of the dead) could be tolerated after all, because the homage given them should not be classified as worship, but was just an expression of the reverence due from a child to his parents. The 1984 synod reached a compromise: the church strongly discouraged the use of these effigies, but if a family insisted upon having a tau-tau, provided it was not paraded around or prominently displayed during the funeral ritual, the Church would allow individual ministers to determine whether or not they wanted to officiate at the services. It is significant of the situation of the Geréja Toraja between old and new challenges that the next synod (1988) discussed in vitro fertilization and urbanisation.

The third feature of the history of the Toraja Church was the sustained growth it experienced throughout this period. When it became independent, church members numbered 25,000. This number trebled during the persecution in the 1950s, and doubled again in the sixties. In 2000 the church gave its membership as 375,000, which made it a medium-sized church within Indonesian Protestantism. This growth was mainly achieved at the cost of traditional religion, which long had remained strong among the Torajas, and even had succeeded, just like similar communities in Kalimantan and elsewhere, in winning recognition by the government as a part of (officially recognised) Hinduism.

However, the Toraja Church is not the only expression of Christianity among the approximately six hundred thousand Toraja people. In the late 1930s, the Roman Catholic Church penetrated into what at that time was the mission field of the GZB; after the war it established a number of congregations and at the end of the century it numbered about 65,000 for the whole of Central

---

3 In the sense of: people living in Torajaland proper (the modern regency Tana Toraja) and the area immediately to the east, and their descendants in Luwu and in other parts of Indonesia. Torajas in the broader sense of ‘speakers of the Toraja language’ are said to number 1,500,000.
Sulawesi. Even earlier the Christian and Missionary Alliance (CAMA), which since 1930 had its headquarters in Makassar, established congregations in Tana Toraja. Until the late 1930s, the colonial government forbade missionary work in an area already occupied by another mission, but it could not prevent Indonesians from coming in. Benyamin Bokko’ was first a student at the CAMA seminary at Makassar, and from 1941 onward founded a church named Kerapatan Injil Bangsa Indonesia (KIBAID) in his native Torajaland. In 1986 KIBAID membership numbered 35,000; it even had a theological seminary of its own in the town of Makale. Another Anglo-American denomination entering Torajaland was the Assemblies of God, of Pentecostal stock. In 1966 several congregations in the coastal plain left the Toraja Church and founded the Gereja Protestan Injili Luwu (Evangelical Protestant Church of Luwu), which in 2000 gave its membership as 17,000. As for the Catholic Church, KIBAID, and the Assemblies of God, not only adherents of the traditional religion, but also many members of the Toraja Church entered one of these churches, for various reasons. The Roman Catholic Church is very tolerant towards traditional culture (for example, it makes no objection whatsoever about making tau-tau), while KIBAID and the Pentecostals require their members to avoid all objects and ceremonies even remotely related to the ancestral religion. However, there is one common denominator: in them traditional social structures are much less important than in the Gereja Toraja. Thus people of lower descent feel themselves more at home. The secession of part of the congregations in the coastal plain had another source: Christians in that region felt neglected by the leadership of the church in Rantepao. Nevertheless, the Gereja Toraja remained by far the largest church in the region and among the Toraja people, with strong congregations in Makassar and other towns in the region and in the great cities of Java.

The Gereja Toraja Mamasa (Mamasa Toraja Church GTM)

The early history of Protestant Christianity in Southwest Sulawesi does not differ much from that in Torajaland and in the eastern part of the island. Islam was strong in the coastal regions from the seventeenth century onwards. When the colonial government occupied the interior, the Rev. Kyftenbelt sent preacher-teachers to prevent Islam from spreading there (1912–1913); afterwards the mission took over. Actually, in 1914 the government promised to surrender the whole of Southwest Sulawesi to the GZB provided it could muster the personnel and funds to occupy the area effectively. It could not, and thus the Protestant Church of the Indies (Indische Kerk) was left in charge. It sent an assistant minister, who with government support baptised thousands of people. But in 1928 the Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerk (Christian Reformed Church,
CGK), a small conservative Calvinist church in the Netherlands, fruit of the Secession of 1834, took over responsibility for this mission field. It sent two missionaries, A. Bikker and M. Geleijnse, who in their first reports put the number of Christians at over 20,000. In the statistics of 1932, however, the number reported was 1,338. The others had simply returned to the ancestral religion, which in fact they had never left.

It turned out that the mission had to make a new start. Baptisms administered by the *Indische Kerk* were recognised as valid, but adult Christians who wanted to be accepted as church members were under the obligation of following religious instruction and confessing their faith in a church ceremony. In this way, confirmation in a sense took the place of baptism. The teacher-preachers taken over from the *Indische Kerk* were upgraded and closely supervised; the mission opened a teacher training course and even a Dutch-language elementary school for the indigenous population. In this way the number of church members rose again to 5,500 in 1937. In matters of church organization, the CGK mission followed the same course as the neighbouring mission in Torajaland: in 1931 there were already ten local church councils that were organized into a classis; in 1938 there were three presbyteries. In March 1942 the missionaries ordained two Ambonese, the teacher-preacher J.E. Latuihamallo (father of the well-known Indonesian theologian P.D. Latuihamallo) and the evangelist P. Pattikayhatu, so that administration of the sacraments would go on during the Japanese occupation. The way elders and deacons were appointed was rather remarkable. When a new group of Christians had come into existence, the missionary asked the local teacher-preacher to designate members who would make good elders or deacons. These members were introduced to the congregation and then had to pass a probationary period. They worked together with the teacher-preacher and were supposed to work among non-Christians. Those who had proved worthy were ordained. In this way the elders in particular were involved in the expansion of the congregation.

The CGK mission and the GZB were kindred organisations. There was close cooperation in several fields, such as Bible translation, the preparation of a Psalm-book, education of teacher-preachers (which was concentrated in Barana', near Rantepao), and the development of the church organisation. Actually the idea was that the two mission fields would coalesce into one church. In fact, at the third synod of the Toraja Church (1950) Mamasa was represented as a *classis* and the document in which the Toraja Church applied to the government for recognition as a corporate body was co-signed by the representative of the CGK mission in Mamasa. As late as 1965 the GZB and CGK missions urged the Mamasa Church to unite with the *Gereja Toraja*. However, the Synod of October 1965 rejected this proposal. This decision was mainly inspired by regionalist feelings: “politically we manage ourselves as a
separate district, so why should not we manage ourselves in the church, too, strengthened by geography and by the long isolation caused by the Muslim guerrilla actions between 1950 and 1965?” Thus in the end the Gereja Toraja Mamasa (GTM) emerged as an independent church, which in retrospect considers 1947 as its year of birth.

In Mamasa, the Japanese occupation brought the same experiences as in neighbouring regions. However, because of its isolated situation, the insecurity and suffering caused by the Muslim separatist (DII) guerrilla actions lasted much longer. Many Christians died, among them the first Toraja minister, the Rev. Sem Bombong who not long before had been chosen by the people as a district head (1950). The mission tried to maintain a presence in the Mamasa region, but in 1953 its last representative had to leave. Nevertheless, during this period the church grew; in 1954 it had approximately 20,000 members, in 1965 over 40,000. The history of the church after 1965 more or less follows the pattern of the neighbouring churches, in particular the Toraja Church. There were discussions about the permissibility for Christians of traditional customs and ceremonies. The GTM received woman ministers at about the same time as the neighbouring church (1982). The church also shared with its sister church the experience of secession. In 1977 the congregations in the Galumpang district, to the northwest of Mamasa, founded the Gereja Protestan di Sulawesi Selatan, the Protestant Church in South Sulawesi, GPSS, which in 2001 gave its membership as 16,000.

From 1967 onwards the GTM church again received Dutch fraternal workers, who were active in the education of church leaders, general education, medical care, and agriculture. The problems met in these areas were those encountered also in many other Indonesian churches. The Bible school (founded 1969) succumbed due to its very success: it produced so many graduates that the church could not absorb them and the school was closed after only eight years. For a quarter of a century the church sent its future pastors to Rantepao, Makassar, or Java, but in 2004 it opened a Theological College of its own. In 1973 a Christian Women’s Federation was founded, which, as in other Indonesian churches became one of the most active organisations within the church. At the time of writing (2006) the membership of the Gereja Toraja Mamasa is given as 120,000.

The Gereja Kristen Sulawesi Selatan
(Christian Church of South Sulawesi, GKSS)

As has been related in chapter three, there was a Catholic presence in southern Sulawesi between 1544 and 1661. It was ended by the pressure of the Dutch, who in 1667 conquered Makassar. From 1670 onwards, Protestant ministers
were stationed in that town. These were charged with the spiritual care of the European and Eurasian residents of Makassar and some other coastal towns, but until the twentieth century undertook no mission work among the Makassarese or among the Buginese to the north. The only Indonesian Protestants in the area were government officials from Christianised regions such as the Moluccas and the Minahasa. There was a church council, in which the Christian Indonesians were represented. The church building was located within the Dutch fortress Rotterdam. Church members outside Makassar, who in 1850 numbered 300, were visited only once or twice a year. Some ministers suggested that an assistant minister be placed among them, but the Church Board in Batavia rejected this suggestion because it (i.e. the government) was afraid this would cause trouble among the local population.

Missionary work among the Makassar and Bugis people started in 1848. In that year the Dutch Bible Society sent Dr. B.F. Matthes to Makassar with the instruction to study the local languages and produce a translation of the Bible. When he observed the neglected state of the Eurasian Christians outside Makassar, he urged the NZG to send a missionary to look after them and eventually turn these neglected communities into bases for missionary work. The NZG complied with his request, and from 1852 until 1864 three missionaries worked in the region. They founded schools that were visited by a few dozen of indigenous children, but the government did not allow them to start direct evangelisation among the local population. Therefore the mission withdrew from South Sulawesi, handing back the Indonesian Christians to the Indische Kerk. From 1868 onwards assistant ministers served them, an office that had been created in the 1860s. Matthes remained until 1870. He composed the first grammar and dictionary both of Buginese and of Makassarese, and published editions of literary works in both languages. In 1881 his translation of the New Testament was printed, and in 1900 the complete Bible was available in both languages. But there were hardly any indigenous Christians to use these Bible editions; a second attempt to establish a foothold in southern Sulawesi, undertaken by the mission in 1895–1905, also failed.

Thus the Indische Kerk again was the only representative of (Protestant) Christianity in the area, and once more there was no Christian presence among the indigenous population. In the early 1930s, however, this situation changed. The Protestant minister in Makassar, P.A. Binsbergen, succeeded in establishing lasting contacts with inhabitants of Salayar, an island off the south coast of Sulawesi. After a few years, congregations of the Gereformeerde Kerken on the island of Java started missionary work in the city of Makassar and the surrounding region, where a number of European GKN families lived. After World War II this work was continued by their successors, the Geraja Protestan di Indonesia bagian Barat (Protestant Church in the western part of Indonesia, GPIP), aided by the mission of both the Netherlands Reformed
Church (NHK) and Gereformeerde Kerken (GKN) in the Netherlands and the Gereja Kristen Indonesia (Indonesian Christian Church, GKI) in Central Java, which had originated from the GKN mission in that region. The missionary work undertaken by these churches resulted in the founding of the Gereja Kristen di Sulawesi Selatan (Christian Church of South Sulawesi, GKSS), which almost exclusively consisted of Buginese and Makassarese (1966). This mission had four centres, far apart from each other: the island of Salayar in the south, the Buginese region of Soppeng in the north, both mission fields of the Protestant Church, and the city of Makassar with the neighbouring region of Gowa, the ancient capital of the Makassarese, which before 1966 were served by the GKN/GKI mission.

On Salayar there existed a mystical, semi-Islamic movement, with the name Igama Binanga Benteng (the Binanga Benteng Religion, Binanga Benteng being the place of residence of Haji Abdul Gani, the founder of the movement), which after World War II was named Mukhdi Akbar. This movement seemed to offer a starting-point for the mission, which founded a number of village schools. These schools were popular, but direct evangelisation work turned out to be difficult. In 1938 there were only 58 baptised Christians on the island. However, among them were several future leaders of the Christian Church in South Sulawesi. After the war the work was resumed under the leadership of a Salayar convert, Nonce Daeng Massikki. A Christian community centre was built, a teacher training school was opened that existed for only ten years, but produced a number of teachers who were instrumental in the expansion of the church, and church councils were instituted. But only after the coup d'état in 1965, when the mistrust towards deviant Muslim movements put the Mukhdi Akbar movement in a tight spot, did the church start to grow. However, in many cases the former Mukhdi Akbar members continued to hold their traditional meetings and to honour their former spiritual leaders. In 1982 Protestant Christians on Salayar numbered 1,482, including Indonesians from other islands living in the administrative centre, out of a total island population of 92,000.

In 1933 mission work in Makassar and surroundings was taken up by a GKN minister H. van den Brink (1933–1939, 1948–1962) assisted by a growing number of Indonesian evangelists, teachers, nurses, and book peddlers. He opened several missionary stations, founded village schools and the hospital Labuang Baji (1938); his wife started work among women and girls. These efforts yielded scant results, in particular because at the time several Christian denominations had chosen Makassar as their centre of activity. In 1938 the number of Christians in the care of Van den Brink and his mission numbered 32.

After the war Van den Brink returned to Makassar and he found that the Christian groups outside the town had disappeared. Conversely, the hospi-
tal had become the centre of a flourishing congregation numbering several hundreds, which was led by a Javanese minister. As this congregation mainly consisted of Toraja from the north, which had come to the town in order to escape persecution in their home area, it was transferred to the Toraja Church. The few indigenous members were gathered in a new congregation named Makkio Baji (makkio = to call, baji = good). But this congregation in its turn became dominated by Northerners. Another group of Buginese Christians later entered the GPIL. In the meantime the congregations belonging to Indonesian churches based outside the region (Toraja Church, GPIB, Batak Church etc.) expanded. In 1982 in Makassar there were 46,000 Protestant Christians out of a total population of 718,000. Of these, only several hundred belonged to the GKSS.

Van den Brink also worked in the region of Malino, 60 km to the east of Makassar. Here the mission faced strong opposition on the part of local Muslims. After five years, only nine people were baptised. All of them had come into contact with Christianity previously, through the agency of other Christian bodies, such as the CAMA, the Salvation Army, or the Pentecostal movement. During World War II the work stagnated, and after 1950 the strong presence of the Darul Islam rebellion in this mountainous region made church life impossible. Only in the town of Malino could a congregation continue to exist. As in Makassar, the minority position of Makassarese Christians within this congregation generated tensions. After 1960 there was renewed growth. In 1966 there were three congregations in the area, which together came to form a classis of the GKSS. But in these congregations, too, migrants from other parts of the country were in the majority. According to government statistics, in 1982 in the Malino district there were 2,048 Protestant Christians out of a total population of 366,000. The majority of these Protestants belonged to the GKSS.

In 1936 an indigenous assistant minister of the *Indische Kerk* baptised some Buginese in the coastal town of Barru, 90 km to the north of Makassar. From Barru, Christianity spread to the neighbouring district of Soppeng, with the administrative centre of Watansoppeng. Between 1940 and 1942 some 800 inhabitants of this district embraced Christianity. The Christian groups survived the war, and in 1950 their number had grown to 1,000. The presence of a Pentecostal movement caused a schism, but after ten years this could be overcome. During this crucial period the work in Soppeng was led by a convert from Salayar, Syamsuddin Daeng Soreang (Denso), who had received an education at the GZB seminary in Torajaland and in Malang, East Java. He was assisted by a few influential church members and by several Buginese evangelists. After the war six local church councils were instituted.

In Soppeng, too, the Darul Islam rebellion brought organised church life outside the towns to a standstill. Local elders and evangelists looked
after the remaining Christians. But even now people were baptised and (in Watansoppeng) church services were held, with the help of army chaplains and ministers of the Toraja Church. Between 1959 and 1965, the church in Soppeng was served by ministers, sent by the GPIP who concentrated on the training of church leaders. However, the presence of ‘foreign’ ministers caused irritation. In 1965 the Theological Academy at Makassar produced the two first Buginese theologians, who subsequently were ordained as ministers of the church in Soppeng. In the meantime this church had 1,183 baptised members, out of a population of 200,000.

Out of these four mission fields grew the Gereja Kristen di Sulawesi Selatan (Christian Church of South Sulawesi, GKSS). The Dutch mission wanted the church to become a classics of the Protestant Church in western Indonesia (GPIP). However, the indigenous leaders wished to found an independent church. In April 1965 a musyawarah (discussion meeting) was held at Watansoppeng by the representatives of thirteen Buginese and Makassarese congregations, about 2,000 members. The first synod was held in June 1966. However, as early as 1947 the Conference of Churches and Missions in Malino (15–25 March 1947) had decided that a separate church for Buginese and Makassarese should be formed. In 1949 a provisional church organisation was set up, which from 1954 onwards lived under a provisional church order. The cadres for the incipient church were first educated in a course that produced twelve evangelists, and later in several Theological Academies in Makassar and in Java. The church order of 1965 was fashioned after the GPIP model. Ministers were ordained, appointed, and transferred by the Church Board, chosen by the Synod, which met every five years. The only creedal text mentioned was the Apostles’ Creed.

After 1966 members of the Protestant Church living in the diaspora north of Makassar joined the GKSS. Nevertheless it is still a small church; at the time of writing (2006) the membership is given as 6,450 in 37 congregations, with 45 ministers, among whom 28 are from other regions (Torajaland, Moluccas etc.). In many respects it is similar to the other churches in the region that originated from the work of Dutch missionary societies. It is conservative in theological matters, introverted and tending to avoid critical reflection. Politically it is law-abiding, conservative and patriotic. As in all Indonesian churches, for pragmatic reasons the national ideology (Pancasila), was considered a great blessing, because it guaranteed freedom of religion, even if in practice this freedom was hard to realise. For a long time, the GKSS concentrated on its internal problems and quarrels, which in large part were caused by the socio-economic and political differences between autochthonous church members and migrants from other regions that had joined the church, and upon safeguarding the position gained. Apart from a few personal contacts, there were hardly any efforts to enter into a dialogue with Islam, with the
Mukhdi Akbar movement or any one of the numerous religious currents in southern Sulawesi. Following the example of the Dutch missionaries, Islam was considered an enemy of the faith, while people thought about the relation to traditional religion and customs (adat) in terms of struggle, distance, and enmity. The Christian faith was considered to require a clean break with the religious environment, including Islam. Everything not fitting within this negative pattern was considered syncretism (H. van den Brink). Syamsuddin Denso was an exception to this rule; his statement that the Gospel should be announced “by Buginese to Buginese” conveyed his conviction that Christianity should not be a threat to Buginese cultural values and traditions and that non-Christian elements within the church should be overcome with patience and from within, or even, if possible, adapted and given a new content. In this way, of all missionary workers Denso was closest to what in later years was called contextual theology. The lack of theological creativity and assertiveness made the GKSS membership vulnerable to American faith missions, which entered in the 1980s and sometimes caused great confusion.

The GKSS faces a variety of problems. Among them the hierarchical mentality and approach of many office-bearers and board members, as well as the socio-cultural difference between town and countryside, are among the most important. Hierarchy is the age-old binding agent of the Buginese and Makassarese society, in which the GKSS is rooted. But for a long time this mentality made it impossible for deliberative bodies based upon western ideas, such as church councils and presbyteries, to function properly. The contrast between town and countryside paralleled that between modern dynamic, Java-dominated Indonesia, and the static, introverted societies of eastern Indonesia. This socio-cultural contrast more or less coincided with that between church members originating from other parts of Indonesia, who often did not stay long in one place and opposed the complete integration of “their” congregations into the GKSS on the one hand, and the Buginese and Makassarese members, for whom the GKSS was their sole spiritual home on the other. These differences brought about the frequent breakdowns in communication between the leadership of the church in Makassar and the congregations in the countryside. The schisms and secessions caused the GKSS to lose a large part of its autochthonous membership during the first two decades of its existence. In 1984 there were only 400 autochthonous families left, making up about half of the total membership. Besides, it should be noted that in many of these families either husband or wife came from outside. This decline was made up only by the arrival of a number of new members from other regions, and by the events on Salayar, where in 1966 hundreds of followers of the Mukhdi Akbar movement joined the GKSS. It should be noted, however, that most of these are nominal members only. This development shows that, after a promising start in Soppeng (1940–1950), the GKSS increasingly lost...
ground in the Buginese-Makassarese society. It was less and less a *suku* (tribal) church, and was less and less present in the countryside. The membership, of which in 2006 an estimated 60% were Torajanese, was increasingly concentrated in the towns: Watansoppeng, Pangkep, Maros, Makassar, Malino, and Benteng (Salayar). Contrary to the original intention, the GKSS has become a very heterogeneous church.

*The Catholic Archdiocese of Makassar*

With the exception of the Toraja region (in the broader sense), the Christians are a dispersed diaspora minority community in overwhelmingly Muslim Central, South and Southeast Sulawesi. Moreover, they are divided among larger and smaller churches as is clear from structure and content of this chapter. A special feature for the Catholic church is the fact that it is the only Christian community that is found all over Indonesia but also has its peculiar local history in all regions. In the larger towns all the Christian communities began with the European and Eurasian Christians, either *Indische Kerk* or Catholic Church. Because Makassar was the major harbour for East Indonesia, in 1892 a resident priest started his work for the Catholics residing in the town. Besides, this person took Makassar as the basis for pastoral travelling. Only in 1929 was a second permanent station in this region opened: Raha in the island of Muna (see below under Southeast Sulawesi).

The city of Makassar is until now considered the capital of East Indonesia. In the colonial period the population was already heterogeneous. All kinds of ethnic groups could be found there: the local people of Makassar and Bugis, but also from Java, Flores, Manado, Toraja, the Moluccas, Europeans, Eurasians, Chinese. The Catholic parish was served by the Jesuits and from 1920 on by the MSC priests, but since 1937 it was the CICM or Scheut missionaries who worked here. As in other parts of Indonesia, the diocesan priests came much later. Until 1965 the Scheut Fathers served all mission stations and city parishes in the Archdiocese of Makassar. The proportion between diocesan priests and Scheut Fathers was then one to forty-six. At the beginning of 1989 only two mission stations and four parishes were still in the hands of CICM. There were at that time forty-one diocesan priests and fifteen Scheut Fathers.4

In the late 1930s it was Toraja migrants to the town of Makassar who came into contact with the Catholic priests, converted and in this way prepared the arrival of Catholicism in the Toraja lands, that were until that period considered as a purely Protestant mission field. In the 1960s and 1970s the Catholic clergy in the region took several initiatives for economic development. In 1962

---

CICM priest J. Hauben started an agricultural college in Jonga, a suburb of Makassar. Several agricultural centres were also started in the Toraja heartlands in this period when international development aid was mainly given through the channel of church organisations. Quite typical for this period is the person of CICM priest Ray Stock, who studied agriculture after he finished his study of theology. With fellow priest Kees Brouwer he established a course for ‘agrarian catechists’ in Messawa, West Toraja. This type of pastoral worker was planned as a combination of development worker and instructor for the Catholic faith. Scores of candidates followed the courses and could be nominated for both functions in this region.

In 2001 out of the 166,143 Catholics of the Archdiocese, 34,500 faithful lived in the city of Makassar. They were an urban community of migrants from so many different places. The largest single ethnic group of Catholics was found in the Toraja regions, but also here the Catholics had been latecomers and a minority, as already sketched above. Besides, there were many locations for migrant farmers from Java, Bali and Flores, among who were also modest numbers of Christians.

**Christians in Southeast Sulawesi**

The indigenous population of Southeast Sulawesi consisted mainly of Tomoronene who lived in the Southwestern peninsula (Poleang and Rumbia), Tolaki living in the central parts (Kolaka, Kendari) and some Toraja to the north. The indigenous tribes were the descendants of pre-historic migrants who originated from other parts of Asia and from Oceania. They possessed a hierarchical social structure, which generally consisted of an elite, a middle class and slaves, and lived predominantly in the interior. About 1830, when they entered written history, they appeared to adhere to some form of ancestral religion. They sustained themselves by means of shifting cultivation, hunting and some barter trade. With only a few exceptions they were unfamiliar with coastal fishing and seafaring. Sporadically they came to the shores, mainly to sell their forest produce and to obtain human heads, which they needed for their festivities and rituals.

Except for some sporadic settlements of Bugis, Butonese and Bajo traders and shipbuilders in river estuaries, the coasts of Southeast Sulawesi were empty and uninhabited. These Bugis and Butonese traders were Muslim, at least nominally, which was also the case with the vast majority of the population of Buton and Muna islands located off the south and southeast coasts of mainland Southeast Sulawesi. Through these coastal settlements Islam was

---

slowly gaining some following among the indigenous population, especially among the ruling elite.

*The Catholic mission in Southeast Sulawesi, the first attempt in 1885–1887: the Bay of Kendari*

Dutch colonial involvement with the mainland intensified towards the end of the nineteenth century. Several expeditionary forces penetrated the hinterland without meeting any opposition. The government was of the opinion that the much-desired political stability in the region and the development of its population was (as everywhere else in its colonies) best served by establishing Protestant Christianity. To further its goals it approached the Board of the *Protestantse Kerk in Nederlands-Indië* (PKNI) in Batavia. This church however declined the invitation, whereupon the government turned to the Roman Catholic Apostolic Vicar at Batavia requesting him to send a priest to the area. Eager to re-establish its presence in as many places as possible in eastern Indonesia after having been absent for about three centuries, this church responded in a much more positive way (1882).  

As a result in October 1885 a Jesuit missionary opened a *statie* (RC mission post) on the shore of the Bay of Kendari on the east coast of the peninsula. His name was Franciscus Voogel and he was accompanied by Abdoel Kadir, a Roman Catholic civil servant from Makassar. Although Voogel and Kadir received a rather hostile reception from the local population, they built a school, which was attended by four, later twelve children. The first teacher was a Muslim from Makassar, whereas the children were without exception recruited from the nearby Bugis and Bajo communities. No Tolaki children attended the school.

Voogel had several children live in his house, some of whom were baptised in September 1886. The first two adults who were baptised half a year later belonged to the Bajo community. He tried to make contact with the Tolaki population by acting as an intermediary between them and Bugis, Bajo and Chinese merchants in Kolaka and Kendari. Although initially these efforts met with some success, after a time there grew some resistance to his presence, especially from the Bugis merchants who feared his competition and influence on the indigenous population. As a result Voogel had to abandon his missionary efforts and leave the area (Sept. 1887).

---

6 Kees de Jong 2002.
In 1929 the mission made a second attempt to gain a foothold in Southeast Sulawesi. A missionary of the MSC, Pastoor J. Spelz, set up a base in Raha, a coastal village on the island of Muna, located several miles south of the mainland of Southeast Sulawesi, and from that year on the activities of the Catholic mission in this region were restricted to this island. In 1932 a second missionary joined him. The relationship of the mission at Raha with the local Protestant church, which was established in 1919, was uneasy from the start. A few years later (1937) the Congregation of the Sacred Heart was replaced by the Congregation of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, CICM: the Scheut Missions (a Belgian Order).\(^8\)

In 1930 the government hospital at Raha was entrusted to the Sisters of the Society of Jesus, Maria, Josef (JMJ), who not only provided medical care but also opened a boarding house (asrama) for girls and women and trained them in domestic duties and child-care. Most members of the small Catholic flock were Chinese shopkeepers, or Filippinos who had come as divers for pearls. Right from the start the mission opened several primary schools at Raha, which attracted some pupils. Among the wider indigenous Muna population however the results of the work of the mission were extremely poor. A handful of proselytes were made among the Moronene community on Muna, but all efforts to set up mission-posts on Buton or the mainland met with failure. The Moronene group of Lamanu, Muna, originated from mainland Southeast Sulawesi and remained distinct from the general population of Muna. Their chief, Simon Badaru, had migrated with his clan to Muna after a conflict in mainland Southeast Sulawesi. On 15 February 1932 this chief with members of his clan was baptised. They were the first group of more or less ‘local’ Catholics on Muna. Another small group that accepted Catholicism in the mid-1930s were a non-Muslim indigenous clan in the region of South Muna, Wale-Ale and Lolibu.

The first contact here started with pupils of the mission school, but a breakthrough came after a miraculous event in October 1940. In the beginning of that month one of the local leaders, La Dee, was severely wounded by a water buffalo. His son stayed at that time in the parish house in Raha. When this boy heard the news he came to Wale-Ale together with a doctor and the priest. They brought La Dee to the Raha hospital where sister Joseph nursed him and asked him whether he wanted to be baptised. Under the condition

---

\(^8\) For this section see Kees de Jong 2002:92–106.
that he would be buried in Wale-Ale, this man was baptised as Lambertus La Dee on 15 October 1940. A few days later he died and was buried with a Catholic ritual in Wale-Ale. For the pagan population it was a curious but impressive ceremony. During this burial ceremony a water buffalo turned up from the bushes. While all the people ran away, the water buffalo came to a standstill in front of the grave and bowed his head. After that he disappeared. The conversion of La Dee and the events at the burial motivated some of the inhabitants of Wale-Ale to become Catholic. Between 1 July 1941 and the beginning of the Japanese occupation in April 1942, 120 people were baptised in Wale-Ale.

During World War II all activities of the Catholic mission on Muna came to a standstill as far as the Europeans were concerned. A local chief, G. La Mboki, led regular Sunday services for the small Catholic community. There was even some growth in this period. La Mboki (c. 1922–1996) was, notwithstanding his youth, a powerful and charismatic leader. In 1953 he moved to the village of Lolibu, where he started a Catholic community that already counted 1,695 members in 1965.

In the early 1960s the young Belgian Scheut missionary M. Mingneau started an agricultural project in Lakapera, located between Lolibu and Wale-Ale. The marshland of this region was drained and all families received 2 hectares. The families started the production of cashew nuts, which was extremely successful and gave them some prosperity. In 1984 another group of Catholics started a local migration project in La Tompa in North Buton. The various small but very devout and strongly committed Catholic communities of Muna have provided a relatively large number of candidates for the religious ministry (like their Protestant counterpart in Salayar) to the Christians of Makassar and the related region. In Muna the Catholics counted in 2001 some 4,000 from a total population of 200,000; still a very small minority, as in most parts of this region.

During the decades of development aid, the Scheut order sent in 1958 the priest and medical doctor C. Lemmens to Muna. After Southeast Sulawesi had become a province of its own in 1964, Lemmens was asked to become the director of the new government hospital in the capital, Kendari, notwithstanding the overwhelming Muslim majority in this region. Lemmens also brought JMJ Sisters to the town that opened a maternity clinic that finally became a true Catholic hospital, more or less in rivalry with the government hospital where he was director.

The linguistic scholar René van den Berg worked out a more or less classical triptych in the last decades of the twentieth century. In 1989 he published a grammar of the Muna language, in 1996 a Muna-English Dictionary was ready and since then the translation of the Bible in Muna is under way.
The Protestant Church of the Indies in pre-war Southeast Sulawesi

The Protestant Church (Indische Kerk) entered mainland Southeast Sulawesi via the island of Buton. As a result of the expanding colonial rule the number of predominantly Protestant civil servants and military personnel grew rapidly, especially after 1906 when the pacification of Southeast Sulawesi was intensified.

Until the outbreak of World War II in Southeast Sulawesi there existed four congregations of the Protestant Church, in Kendari and Kolaka on the mainland, in Bau-Bau on Buton (1940: 150 members), and in Raha in the neighbouring island of Muna. As these congregations were generally small, they never had their own ordained minister. Except for Muna (1940: 270 members) which was too difficult to reach, these congregations were visited once or twice a year by an assistant minister or minister from Makassar, under whose ecclesiastical jurisdiction they fell. But usually a member of the local church council, who also took charge of the other congregational duties, led Sunday services. Occasionally missionaries of the Dutch Missionary Society (NZV), who started to work among the indigenous population in 1916, ministered to the Protestant congregations at Kendari and Kolaka.

On the eve of the Japanese invasion in 1942 the number of members of the Protestant Church of the Indies in Southeast Sulawesi, both on the mainland and on the islands, totalled about 700. The vast majority of these were civil servants or employees of several companies who originated from other parts of the archipelago, mostly the Moluccas, Timor, and North Sulawesi and adjacent islands.

It wasn’t until the 1930s that these Protestant congregations had their own trained pastors. The Protestant congregations that grew fastest were those in Kolaka and Pomala’a on the west coast of the mainland. This was the result of the establishment of a mining company among whose work force were a number of Protestants. A considerable influx of new members also occurred at Kendari following the building of an airfield in the late thirties. Apart from the ill-fated initiative of the mission-minded Protestant minister in Makassar, R.W.F. Kyftenbelt, who at the request of a local government official early in the second decade of the twentieth century established two schools for Tolaki children, the Protestant Church was not involved in any missionary work among the indigenous population and no Tolaki or Tomoronene joined the Protestant Church. The task of approaching them was left to the mission.
By the second half of the nineteenth century Islam had gained a foothold among the Tolaki and Tomoronene by way of the contacts of the latter with Bugis and Butonese merchants. As a result Islam quickly became the religion of the elite. Their conversion was greatly facilitated by the fact that it put no restrictions on their role in traditional religion. In contrast, Protestant Christianity, as far as it has been introduced by the Nederlandsche Zendingsvereeniging (Dutch Missionary Society, NZV), found its adherents mainly among the lower half of society, the 

*ata*. As it introduced western education and medical care and put severe restrictions on participation in local society as far as it was governed by traditional religion and adat, its influence on indigenous society was far more unsettling than that of Islam.

The first missionary to arrive was Hendrik van der Klint (1916). At first he settled in Kolaka, but after some time he moved to Mowewe (1919), a tiny village east of Kolaka, where he lived in humble circumstances until World War II. He was followed by five other missionaries, all Dutch men in their twenties, who were accompanied by their families. Just like Van der Klint, they took up their abode in small and remote villages in the hinterland, far away from the centres of commerce and colonial government. In these villages Islam had not yet penetrated.

At first their missionary work was concentrated in their own households where they held short daily services. Their domestic staff and one or two curious neighbours, and occasionally a village head attended these. In some places these *kumpulan rumah tangga* gradually gained momentum and over the years developed into local churches.

On horseback and on foot the missionaries visited villages in their allotted areas. They held religious meetings, gave advice on agricultural matters and opened several schools and small health care centres. They visited each other, kept an eye on the growing number of indigenous schoolteachers and lay preachers, baptised converts, concluded marriages, celebrated Holy Supper, oversaw the building of churches and schools. If necessary they called on the colonial government to intervene when conflicts arose. In their teachings they combined Reformed theology with the practical application of biblical commandments and wisdom. Some tried to bridge the gap between Christianity and traditional religion not by any sort of latitudinarianism but by means of substitution: they maintained that the rules regarding the true and lasting worship of their most important “ancestor” (Jesus Christ) were only to be found in the Bible, not with the pagan village heads or adat chiefs. The purpose was to find a way of gaining the confidence of the local population while at the same time holding on to their original purpose: spreading Reformed Christianity.
The first Tolaki ever to be baptised was Petroes Wongga (1917), who belonged to Van der Klift’s household staff. Although the work of the mission was often made complicated by the semi-nomadic lifestyle of the population, others followed and in 1924 there were 110 baptised Tolaki and Tomorone, living in several parts of Southeast Sulawesi. On the eve of World War II, the number of Christians in the NZV mission had risen to a little over 3,000. At that time, on mainland Southeast Sulawesi there existed a missionary infrastructure which consisted of a gradually expanding number of mission posts, schools (1938: 16 schools with 1,049 pupils), health care centres and fledgling congregations—of which Mowewe was not only the largest, but also the most prestigious because it was the oldest—which were visited on a regular basis by the missionaries. In 1927 a teacher-training course was opened in Mowewe.

On 24 January 1942 the Japanese landed near Kendari. On the first day the very able missionary M.J. Gouweloos and a number of indigenous officials, Christians, were killed. The missionaries had not transferred the possessions of the mission to the indigenous congregations; everything, including church buildings, was confiscated by the Japanese as enemy property, and much was destroyed. The missionaries had not ordained Indonesians either, so that during the war the sacraments could not be administered. During the next years, evangelists, who even managed to hold some meetings and divide the work between them, led the Christian community. In January 1944 they went to Makassar to seek support from Miyahira. As a result, the Minseibu Office of Religious Affairs recognised the Christian community of Southeast Sulawesi as a church, gave it a rudimentary organisation, and promised financial help. However, when the delegates had returned, the Japanese military did not heed the agreement reached in Makassar. They simply prohibited the Christians from holding church services. As the church leaders ignored this prohibition, they were threatened with the death penalty. Two weeks later the war was over.

The end of the war did not bring peace. In November 1945 a rebellion, in which a number of local Christians participated, broke out against the returning Dutch government. Only during the next year could a number of missionaries establish themselves. In 1946–1947 a number of evangelists and teacher-preachers were ordained. But then the members of the team travelling around to prepare the first synod were murdered by Muslim rebels (1950), who continued to destabilise the region and harass the Christian population for years. The foreign missionaries had to leave the region (1951–1953). Only in 1957 had the situation stabilised sufficiently for the church to constitute itself as the Gereja Protestan Sulawesi Tenggara (Protestant Church of Southeast Sulawesi, Gepsultra). However, until 1965 the rebels of Kahar Muzakkar remained active in the region. In 1958 they burnt down the church office in the Christian village of Lambuia, together with the whole village; other settlements were also attacked and burned. The impoverishment and isolation
of the church was such that until 1970 all internal discussions and divisions were to do with the use of and control over the little aid that reached the church from outside. In 1970 the seventh synod of the Gepsultra decided on a reorganisation. From that time on the church settled on a new course, which brought slow but sustained growth. In 2001 its membership was 25,000. Part of the growth came from Christian migrants, as the Indonesian government had designated Southeast Sulawesi as a transmigration area.

Th. van den End, Chris G. F. de Jong (GKSS) and Kees de Jong (Catholics)

Bibliography

Adams, Kathleen M.

Aragon, Lorraine V.

Bigalke, Terance W.

Bikker, A. (ed.)

Brink, H. van den
1943 Dr. Benjamin Frederik Matthes: zijn leven en arbeid in dienst van het Nederlands Bijbelgenootschap. Amsterdam.

Brouwer, Melattie

Buijs, C.W.

Carlier, J.H. et al. (red.)

End, Th. van den

End, Th. van den, & H. van ’t Veld (eds.)

Jongeling, M.C.

Jong, Christiaan G.F. de

Jong, Christian G.F. de

K.A. Steenbrink and J.S. Aritonang - 97890047441830
Downloaded from Brill.com04/21/2019 02:38:02AM
via free access


Jong, Kees de

Kliff-Snijder A.G. van der

Kobong, Th.

Kraan, Nol

Kruyt, Jan


Ngelow, Zakaria J. (ed.)

Noort, Gerrit

Plaisier, Bastiaan

Sarira, J.A.
1975  Suatu Survey Mengenai Gereja Toraja Rantepao, Benih yang Tumbuh VI, Rantepao-Jakarta: GTR dan LPS-DGI.

Schie, Gijs van CICM


Schaauwers, A.

Verhelst, Daniël & Nestor Pycke, (eds.)

Wajah GKST
1992  Buku Kenangan 100 Tahun Injil Masuk Tana Poso. Tentena: GKST.