Huub Lems (ed.)


For some years now the Provincial Archive in Utrecht (*het Utrechts Archief*) has been the designated official depository for archive materials from all the churches in Holland which are national or supranational in scope. More recently it has also become the designated depository for archive materials from all Dutch missions, and Protestant missions in particular have started making active use of this facility. In April 2010 a conference in Utrecht, with many young participants (especially from Indonesia), celebrated the incorporation of materials in the Provincial Archive which originate with the well-known *Raad voor Zending* of the *Nederlandse Hervormde Kerk* and a whole string of related institutions. The materials cover 350 linear metres, comprising 13,500 items listed in a new 700-page inventory. This covers about 60 separate archives, each with a critical introduction by Thomas van den End, roughly half of them different institutional archives, while the rest includes papers from leading Dutch missionaries and missiologists, including those of Hendrik Kraemer. The book under review here, from beginning to end in English, both communicates the proceedings of the April 2010 conference and offers a welcome approach to that inventory – and to the institutional systematics of Dutch Protestant mission history.

Indeed outsiders will probably be surprised by the complexity of Dutch mission history, and for many readers the most valuable part of *Mission History and Mission Archives* may well be the series of appendices following a racy and pointed general introduction to the archive(s) by van den End (pp. 173–297). These appendices, also compiled by van den End, provide a general introduction to the history of the Mission of the Netherlands Reformed Church and its predecessors and associates, as well as to their archives (pp. 182–200). This introduction is followed by statements about the organisation and content of each archive. Besides taking care to make issues of chronology and geography clear, van den End shows sensitivity to organisational questions and the location of authority in mission organisations; to the history of the training of missionaries; and to links between mission organisations and their home base in Holland.

Although in these appendices the Dutch names of the organisations are clear, it would have helped the non-Dutch reader to have had a separate systematic alphabetical list of the Dutch names with the English translations, since in the general texts the two often appear unlinked. The complexity of theologies and patterns of piety in Protestant Holland in the nineteenth century is
impressive but also very confusing, and this is, I suspect, compounded by what is probably a distinctively Dutch style of developing institutions. It would also have helped the outside reader to have been given a clearer idea as to whether there are important Dutch Protestant mission archives that are not included in the purview of this book. It is still not entirely clear to me how far this compilation, in which the missions of the old *Hervormde Kerk* provide the main centre of gravity, also includes parallel accounts of the mission archives of the *Gereformeerde Kerken* which developed from the renewal movements of the nineteenth century. In the light of a new repertorium of all known Dutch missionary archives listing 47(!) archives that belonged to mission organisations linked to the *Gereformeerde Kerken*, it seems that many of these have also been migrated to the Provincial Archive in Utrecht.

The other main section of the volume is, not surprisingly, entitled “Voices from and on Indonesia” (pp. 70–172), and it provides lively insight into regional Indonesian concerns about church archives and regional Indonesian efforts to build up indigenous church history. As symbols of a necessary pluralism, one article is by the Muslim historian Mufti Ali (pp. 119–125), and the Catholic expert on intercultural theology, Karel Steenbrink, offers an interesting account of Dutch Catholic archives on Indonesia and developments in Catholic historiography (pp. 165–172). The discussion of archives and history in Indonesian Protestantism is led off by J.S. Aritonang’s compact and vigorous account of the all-Indonesian action programme necessary for church history, including a bibliography of historical writings on Indonesian Christianity between 2000 and 2010 (pp. 74–83) of which only ten of the titles listed are in a Western language. As a church leader and Professor of Church history in the Jakarta Theological Seminary, Aritonang is a key personality in relation to archives and history. Eight other contributions focus on specific regions of Indonesia, and three are of special interest. Steve Gasperz writes about the importance an organised archive service would have had in Ambon had it been able to save the land deeds applicable to Christians in the period when Muslim extremists were driving many of them away from their villages in recent years (pp. 100–107). Gasperz puts this very practical issue in a broader context – “historical study [as] a systematic effort to understand social reality within a continuum of time”. Gerrit de Graaf summarises his research on the social history of missions and churches since c. 1970 in an isolated region of Papua (pp. 134–145). In view of the conflicting ideas of modernisation which have been operational in the area, he emphasizes how complex our analysis of the social and political tensions which Christians experience must be. The government has been imposing a new *Kampong* style of social organisation, while missions have tried to work out a reformed pattern of social life in their congregations based on