

# Summary

Albert Christiaan Kruyt (1869-1949) served as a missionary of the Netherlands Missionary Society among the To Pamona in Central Celebes (Indonesia) from 1892 till 1932. He became a well-known man in his days, because of his successful missionary strategy and his prolific writings on mission and ethnography. This study endeavors to systematically describe his life, work and missionary theology, and to evaluate his thinking and influence. The focus of this study is on Kruyt's innovative missionary approach and the concepts which underlie his missiological reflections. Kruyt's writings were used as primary sources, as well as relevant documents in the archives of the former Board of Mission of the Netherlands Reformed Church, and interviews with elderly people in Central Celebes.

## PART I

### LIFE AND SPIRITUALITY OF KRUYT

Chapter 2 gives a biographical overview of Kruyt's life and work. Born in Mojowarno (Indonesia) as a son of the missionary Jan Kruyt and his wife Dorothea van der Linden, Albert Kruyt was 'repatriated' to The Netherlands at the age of seven in order to receive a proper education. Between 1877 and 1884 he lived in 'Huize den Arend', a home for missionary kids, living next door to the Missionary Training College (MTC) where his older brothers Arie and Hendrik received their training. In 1884 Kruyt applied for admission to the MTC himself and was admitted at the age of 15. The training at the college prepared him in fields such as Indonesian language studies, theology, mission history, missionary methodology, comparative religion and medical training. In 1889 Kruyt took the exam before the 'Committee on the affairs of the Protestant churches in the Netherlands East- and West-Indies' and was ordained. During later years Kruyt would often refer to the last years at the MTC as a time of fierce spiritual struggle: he was influenced by the liberal theological climate in the Netherlands Reformed Church and had doubts about the meaning of Christ. This crisis led to his firm roots in Dutch ethical theology, which had a dominant position in Dutch missionary circles at the end of the nineteenth century.

The Netherlands Missionary Society (NMS) had decided to start new missionary work in Central Celebes in response to an urgent plea from the influential government official Van Hoëvell, who felt that Christian mission could be an effective barrier to the influence of Islam. Kruyt was assigned to undertake this pioneering work, among people who were generally referred to as 'animists'. He started his ministry in Central Celebes in February 1892. In the years between 1892 and 1905, the year in which he went on furlough, he worked diligently: visiting the Pamona people scattered over the scarcely populated area, establishing mission schools and preaching the gospel. He met with resistance to the 'religion of the Dutch', mostly due to the influence of the Islamic kingdom of Luwu, and the smaller kingdoms of Sigi and Tojo, who feared that the opening of the schools would undermine their political power. Kruyt managed to open a number of schools, but attendance was small and there were no conversions to Christianity. Kruyt was

convinced that his work could not bear fruit as long as the influence of the *raja* in Luwu remained unbroken.

In 1905 and 1906 the Dutch colonial government intervened and ‘pacified’ the region through military expeditions in Southern and Central Celebes, whereby the area was effectively brought under Dutch colonial rule and was integrated into its administrative system. Kruyt expected that this would have a major impact on the missionary work and that people would turn to the mission in order to find guidance in this time of crisis. This did indeed occur as Dutch colonial rule forbade a number of rituals which were essential to the religion of the To Pamona, such as the rituals for the dead, sacrifices in the village temple and headhunting.

After having returned from furlough to The Netherlands Kruyt witnessed that the To Pamona started to turn to Christianity. In 1909 Papa I Woente, an important village head in the coastal area, indicated that he and his relatives were ready to receive baptism. At that time Kruyt himself had already moved further inland, leaving the responsibility for the coastal district to a colleague, while he maintained his focus on pioneering work. In 1913 however, it became necessary to open a training school for Pamona *gurus*, who could work side by side with the Minahasa *gurus*. Kruyt was appointed as director of this training college and combined these duties with pioneering missionary work in the lake-district. He was director the training college till his son Jan Kruyt took over in 1929. During these years the number of missionaries in Central Celebes grew steadily. Albert Kruyt repatriated in 1932, finished a translation of the New Testament into the Bare’e language and became a lecturer at the MTC in Oegstgeest.

Kruyt published many writings on mission and ethnology. His name as an ethnographer was established by the publication of *Het Animisme in den Indischen Archipel* (‘Animism in the Indonesian Archipelago’, 1906). Upon publication of the four volume work *De Bare’e-sprekende Toradja’s van Midden-Celebes* (‘The Bare’e-speaking Toradjas of Central Celebes’), co-authored with Nicolaus Adriani, in 1913 he received an honorary doctorate from the State University of Utrecht (The Netherlands). In 1918 he published his ‘Measa’ in which he elaborated his ideas about pre-animistic religion (dynamism). In 1925 he published his most important missiological work *Van Heiden tot Christen* (‘From Pagan to Christian’), which sharply outlined his evolutionary view of religions. His last major ethnological work is *De West-Toradja’s op Midden-Celebes* (‘The West Toradjas of Central Celebes’, 1938).

Chapter 3 shows that the above mentioned spiritual crisis during his training as a missionary brought him to the firm conviction that the atoning work of Christ was ‘God’s way’ to salvation. During his life this certainty remained of crucial importance to him. Kruyt’s diaries make clear that his daily prayers and Bible reading were an integral part of his missionary spirituality: he aimed to involve the other in praying and reading and he hoped thereby to stimulate the other in the growth of faith. It is remarkable that Kruyt had a strong interest in spiritism and was actively involved in seances. He hoped that being in touch with spirits of the deceased would result in a better knowledge of how to proclaim the Christian message. After the year 1900 his interest in spiritism diminished, especially because he never met the spirit of his deceased mother. Kruyt’s spirituality was strongly focussed on an inner change of heart and the growth of ‘spiritual’ faith, although politically he sympathized with the religious socialists who emphasized change in

society. His works, including his diaries, do not contain theological or spiritual reflections on poverty nor issues like the existing slavery in Central Celebes. Kruyt's spirituality was focussed on God, and not on God's creation, the world.

## PART II

### THE ENCOUNTER OF CHRISTIAN MISSION AND THE RELIGION OF THE TO PAMONA

Chapter 4 describes Kruyt's views on animism. It is shown that he was strongly influenced by the ethnological concepts of E.B. Tylor, G.A. Wilken and F.D.E. van Ossenbruggen. Based on extensive ethnological research in Central Celebes, he concluded that the religion of the To Pamona was a primitive, animistic religion which contained elements from different stages in the evolution of local culture and religion. Under influence of Van Ossenbruggen he distinguished between pre-animism (called 'dynamism') and animism. Within animism he recognised theistic notions as well. In his opinion these elements in Pamona religion were like layers and were in evolutionary competition with one another: dynamism was related to magic and was therefore considered most primitive. Faith in the gods indicated theistic notions and was deemed of a higher evolutionary order and a later development in the animist religion.

Kruyt, being influenced by Dutch ethical theology, concluded that the religion of the To Pamona was primitive because he saw little evidence of 'inward' faith and trust in God. Animism was 'outward', focusing on the world and controlling it through magic. It is of importance that Kruyt concluded that magic practices were primitive and that faith in the gods was evidence of a higher development. In his missionary work he positioned magic against faith. He therefore opposed dynamistic practices but tried to relate to practices that contained elements of faith in God. He saw the role of a missionary as supporting the evolutionary process by interacting with 'faith' in animism and helping people to trust God instead of magic. Kruyt acknowledged that in this process revelation from God (the message of Christian faith), from outside, is necessary, but he comes close to describing the process as an evolutionary growth.

Chapter 5 shows that Kruyt's missiological thinking was influenced by the German theologians G. Warneck and R. Grundemann. Correspondence between Kruyt and his colleague G. Maan, missionary in Halmahera (Indonesia), shows that they studied missiological literature on 'Volkschristianisierung'. In his work Kruyt was confronted with the strength of a 'communal' society in which important decisions were a matter for the community and not the individual. For the missionary endeavor in Central Celebes this resulted in a lack of progress: Kruyt worked for years on end without witnessing conversions. He therefore started looking for a missionary strategy which was rooted in the community. In so doing, he became the first Dutch missionary who consistently used German missiological thinking on 'Volk' in his missionary strategies. He did not aim to plant a church consisting of converted individual Christians, but focussed on christianizing the people as a whole and maintaining as much of the 'traditional culture' (*adat*) as possible. This traditional culture should be renewed and transformed through the power of the gospel and would then lead to material progress as well. He criticized the government for expecting change through restructuring public life without looking at the needed change of the heart. Only the yeast of the gospel could help to create a

new community where true development was visible. In his opinion the government was responsible for the disintegration which was occurring and the lowered ethical standards, as it did not take into account the vital role of religion in communal society and attempted to separate church and state. He stated that the process of transformation towards a Christian society would, even in an ideal situation, take centuries and that partial continuity of old and new was not only to be expected, but was an integral part of the transformation as such. 'Deviations' should be allowed as a necessary element of growth in spiritual understanding of the truth. In order to be able to act as a guide in this process Kruyt stated consistently that the missionary needed a thorough knowledge of local culture, religion and language.

Chapter 6 deals with the relationship between Kruyt's view on animism and on mission. It has been shown that Kruyt does not work with an antithesis of animism and Christian faith, but opts for a model of growth, which was strongly influenced by his views on the evolution of culture and religion: 'material, magical-mechanic faith' had to develop into authentic faith in God. He therefore did not want to introduce a new religion, but he hoped to strengthen the growth of faith in God by relating 'animist' faith in the gods with faith in the one God. With these assumptions in mind he reshaped the Feast for the dead, which initially led to opposition from his mission organization. The Pamona ritual of cleaning the bones became a yearly ritual of cleaning the graves at Easter, not to honor the dead but to commemorate them and remind the people that Christians put their faith in God who promised the resurrection of the dead.

Around 1925 Kruyt had parted with the theory of the degeneration of religion and had fully accepted the consequences of evolutionary thinking for his interpretation of the Genesis account: men descended from animals. This only becomes clear in his correspondence with A.M. Brouwer. In his writings he was never explicit about his convictions on the origin of man.

### PART III

#### THE CHRISTIANIZATION OF THE RELIGIOUS WORLD OF THE TO PAMONA

Part III deals with the relationship of theory and praxis in Kruyt's work. Chapter 7 tries to establish if he succeeded in applying his principles of christianization to the people in Central Celebes. The research shows that Kruyt's evolutionary thinking was vital in the way he evaluated the process of christianization: he did not expect a high level of true, 'spiritual', faith in God, but accepted that many who were baptized had not yet reached a high level of development and therefore had only limited understanding of the Christian faith: a Christian could still be a pagan at heart. He therefore considered mission schools as an important pedagogical tool: in order to support the mission through the development of the human mind. As a result people would learn to abolish magical practices and put their faith in God. Kruyt was criticised by conservative missionaries for not putting enough emphasis on the call to conversion. His approach was indeed different from classical methodistic and pietistic strategies. Patience was a key word for Kruyt, as well as acceptance of, what he called, 'material faith' (faith that was 'still' focussed on substance). 'Spiritual faith' was the result of a long process of growth. This growth also signified the development from primitive to civilized.

Chapter 8 explores Kruyt's perspectives on the translation of the Bible and the

planting of the church as such. Kruyt, and his colleague Adriani, the linguist, were convinced that christianization of the To Pamona should precede translating the Bible, as the people of Central Celebes should develop a Christian and spiritual vocabulary of their own before a good translation could be made. It appears that Kruyt and Adriani were not in agreement on this principle as soon as people started becoming Christians. Kruyt felt they really needed a translation of the Bible as soon as possible, whereas Adriani felt the paraphrased Bible stories would suffice. In this respect Kruyt did not stick to his own principles: he did not want to wait till a Christian vocabulary had been developed by those who became Christians. When Adriani died in 1926 and major parts of the New Testament still had to be translated, Kruyt himself finished the work.

Kruyt's ideas about shaping the church were severely hampered by the interventions of the government. He wanted the village heads to act as elders of the church, as he was convinced that in a communal society state and church are one and cannot be separated. The government forbade this however. Kruyt resented this decision and kept hoping that communal unity could be maintained. Thus he overlooked the influence of the imposed structure of colonial rule, which led to a breakdown of communality. It was only after Kruyt's repatriation that elders were elected.

Chapter 9 describes christianization in relation to the renewal of worship and the renewal of adat. The first part of this chapter shows that Kruyt and Adriani wrestled with the appropriate name for God. In the end they decided not to use local names of the gods, such as *Pue mPalaburu* (Lord Creator) or *i Lai*, but opted for the Malayan *Ala*, which is the same as the Arabic *Allah*. Kruyt had come to the conclusion that it was not wise for a missionary to make use of the old names for the gods, when speaking about the true God, as too many undesirable connotations would be brought into Christian worship.

From the very outset Kruyt had conducted meetings in which he explained the gospel to the To Pamona. As the number of Christians grew, the character of those meetings changed: a line between baptized and not-baptized became ever more evident. Kruyt tried to maintain the open character of the meetings, but he did not succeed in maintaining the communal character of the meetings. He tried to balance this development by introducing communal meals after baptismal services and after celebrations of the Lord's Supper. His aim was to keep the line between the congregation and the village community as fluid as possible. This also applies to his views on church discipline: the Christian population had to grow towards high Christian standards step by step. He felt that strict discipline would not help this process, but would only create unnecessary lines between Christians and animists. Kruyt strongly advocated that time should be allowed for an indigenous development of Christian *adat*.

#### PART IV

##### THE INFLUENCE OF KRUYT

Part IV tries to establish the extent of Kruyt's influence. Chapter 10 describes his influence on church and mission in Indonesia, with special reference to Central Celebes. It is shown that Kruyt greatly influenced the missionary strategy of protestant Dutch and German missions working in Indonesia. He became an

influential missionary not only because of his extensive writings, but also because of his many contacts. He influenced young missionaries like A.A. van de Loosdrecht, working with the Mission of the Reformed League, but also influenced an experienced missionary like J. Warneck, working with the Rheinisch Mission in Sumatra. He was a leading person in the debate on missionary strategy. His influence on missionary method was limited however to The Netherlands and The Netherlands Indies, although he exerted some influence in Germany through his contacts with the Rheinisch Mission. It is fair to say that it is hard to overestimate Kruyt's influence on the missionary thinking and work of the Dutch protestant missions ('hervormd') between 1900 and 1930. His influence diminished as soon as the theology of Karl Barth became influential in missionary circles: Kruyt had pleaded for qualified (evolutionary) continuity, whereas Barth stressed discontinuity. In the period after 1945, new questions came to the forefront: the end of a colonial era, issues of modernization, questions concerning the relationship of 'sending' and 'receiving' churches. Missiological discussions moved away from christianization and its methodology, not in the last place because it had been developed in a context of colonial rule.

Chapter 11 describes Kruyt's influence on theology, comparative religion and cultural anthropology. It states that Kruyt's contribution to the issue of gospel and culture was at the heart of missiological debate before 1940. As his writings were used at the MTC in Rotterdam and later Oegstgeest, and through his appointment as a lecturer upon repatriation, all students were introduced to his thinking and methodology. He plays hardly any role in the missiological debate after 1945. The general idea was that his work was outdated, belonging to a colonial era and that the time of modernization came with new demands for missionary work.

The same is visible where it concerns his anthropological writings: before 1940 he was very much involved in the debate on animism, but the evaluation of his work was varied. Some ethnologists criticized his evolutionary approach, others were not happy with his concept of 'soul stuff'. All Dutch ethnological textbooks of the thirties refer to him. Around 1940 his work is no longer discussed, but only mentioned. His theories about dynamism played no role in ethnological debates after 1945. His approach is known as noteworthy, but dated. His descriptions of Pamona culture are used to this day however as he has carefully catalogued traditional culture and had an in-depth knowledge of local customs before colonial rule was established in Central Celebes. Nowadays his work is still used by anthropologists who study the culture of Central Sulawesi, as is shown in the work of Schrauwers, Aragon and others.

Chapter 12, containing the evaluation of Kruyt's work as such, points out that his writings cannot be understood if it is forgotten that he was both a missionary and an ethnographer. Sometimes these roles were in competition. His firm roots in Dutch ethical theology enabled him to be open towards other cultures and religions. Yet at the same time this theological background set limits to his views on the evolution of religion: revelation from God was needed to foster the growth to even greater heights. Kruyt was influenced by Darwinist thought, yet at the same time kept distancing himself from modern theology. Although in his later years he was convinced that man was the product of an evolutionary process, he maintained a focus on mission as guiding people towards 'spiritual' faith in God and did not want to permit medical work or the setting up of business enterprises as a valid way of doing mission. In retrospect it can be said that Kruyt should have devoted more attention to the process of modernization in Central Celebes and should have

prepared the Pamona people more than he did. This can be said for much of the Oegstgeest mission.

It is not right to qualify Kruyt as, in essence, a man of the nineteenth century. His thinking is built upon missiological thought of the last quarter of the nineteenth century, but he contributed new elements: the relationship between mission and evolutionary thought, fostering the evolution from animism to faith in the one God, a relatively positive view of other religions and cultures. In the final paragraphs Kruyt is briefly discussed in relation to the work of H.W. Turner, H. Maurier and Kw. Bediako. In the very last paragraph reference is made to the striking fact that between 1800 and 1900 the number of Christians in Indonesia rose from 51.000 to 311.000 people, but between 1900 and 1941 from 311.000 to 2.200.000. In these 40 years the number of protestant Christians increased sixfold: from 285.000 to 1.665.771. This growth occurred at the same time that the Oegstgeest mission decided to change its missionary strategy: from an approach oriented towards the individual to an approach oriented towards the people (the community).