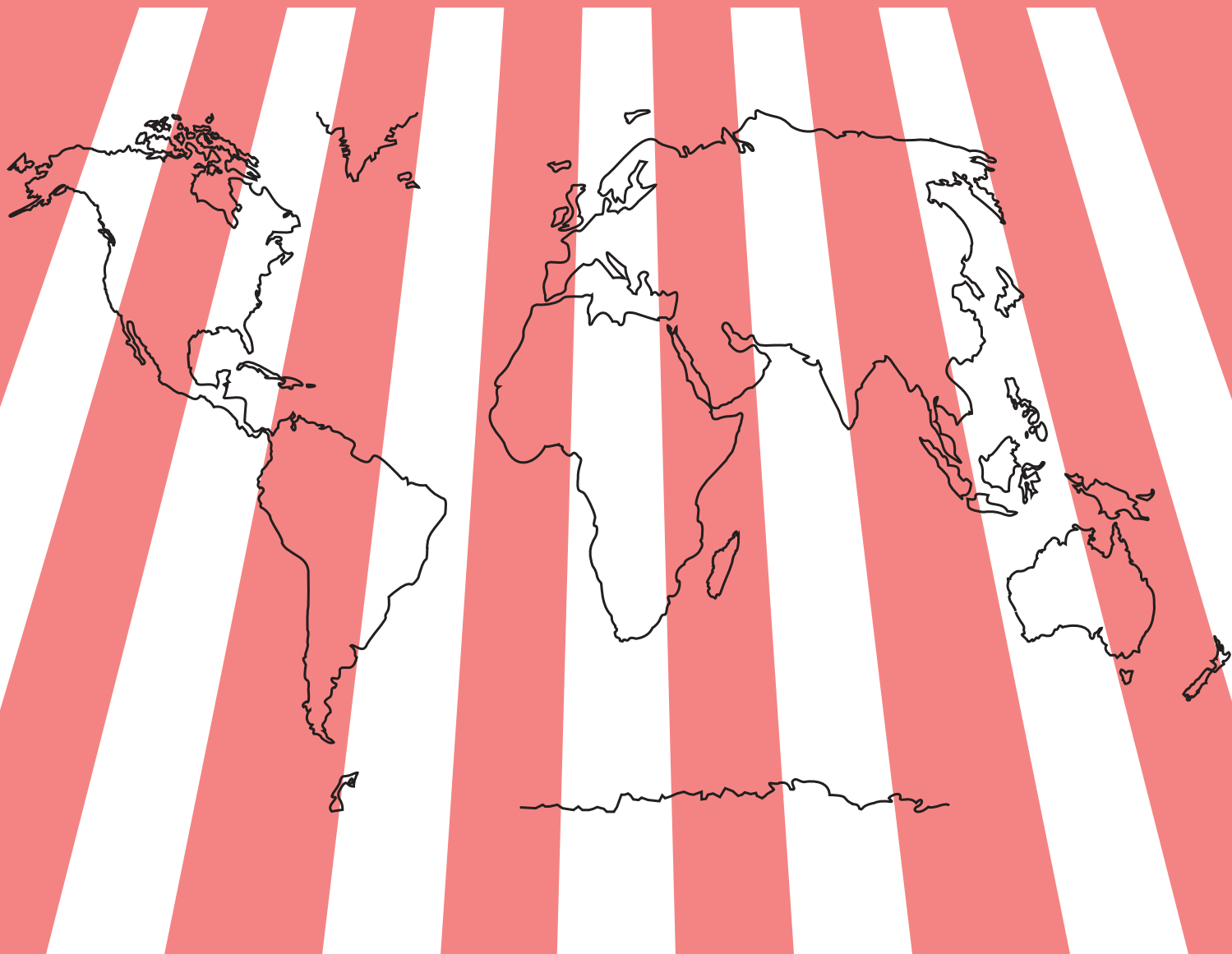


# Lux Mundi

Volume 21 - No. 4  
December 2002



Published quarterly by the  
Committee on Relations with  
Churches Abroad of  
The Reformed Churches in  
the Netherlands

# Lux Mundi

Published quarterly by the Committee  
on Relations with churches Abroad of  
The Reformed Churches in  
The Netherlands  
Volume 21 - No. 4  
December 2002

Editors: Rev. R. ter Beek  
Mr. Tj.S. de Vries  
Mr. E. Gosker

Address for Editorial Matters:  
Mr. Tj.S. de Vries  
Postbus 499  
8000 AL Zwolle  
The Netherlands  
Telephone: +31(0)38 427 04 70  
E-mail: [bbk@gbouw.nl](mailto:bbk@gbouw.nl)

Address for Administrative Matters  
(subscriptions, change of address):  
Mrs. J.J. Klamer-Rietkerk  
Goyerkamp 11  
8014 EH Zwolle  
The Netherlands  
E-mail: [j.klamer@12move.nl](mailto:j.klamer@12move.nl)  
Postal giro: no. 53.66.839  
Subscription Rate in The Netherlands  
per annum:  
€ 5,45.

## Contents

### *Editorial*

by Rev. R. ter Beek, p. 75

### *The way, the Truth, the Life*

by Marten de Vries, p. 76

### *Missionary work amongst Moslems in Rotterdam*

by A.S. van der Lugt, p. 78

### *Moslems and Christians: Condemned to eat biscuits?*

by Janneke Burger-Niemeijer, p. 83

### *God bless America ...?*

by C.J. Haak, p. 86

### *The Cross and the Crescent Moon*

by H.J. Takken, p. 91

### *Commemoration of professor B. Holwerda (1909-1952)*

News update, p. 94



## Editorial

We write these words in the days before the 15<sup>th</sup> November 2002. On that day the ultimatum given to Saddam Hussein and the revolutionary government of Iraq by the United Nations, runs out. The Iraqi parliament has already spoken some determined words....

The political reaction in America to the attack on the World Trade Centre in New York on September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001 has been, up to this moment in time, vehement. A declaration of war on terrorists world wide; war against the Taliban; the *fatweh* against Osama bin Laden. And now, maybe, war against Saddam Hussein. The experts who follow the contemporary history of Europe and the Netherlands say there is no land in Europe where the shock effect of 11<sup>th</sup> September has been greater than in the Netherlands. This has not been in the same way as in the United States, but still... what has caused this? And how do Reformed Christians stand in this situation?

About 3000 years ago, the leaders of Israel asked Samuel for a king (1 Samuel 8). Why did they want a king? What role did they expect a king to fulfil? The leaders of Israel wanted a king as a sort of visiting card for a proud and independent people, as the banner for political freedom. "We want a king over us. Then we shall be like all the other nations, with a king to lead us and fight our battles". What do they want to win? The freedom to serve God?

God grants them their wish, but in the meantime He made known to Samuel that he sensed a sinful desire for freedom-without-God (1 Samuel 8:7-9,22). Later we see that the Lord had noted even more: the need of the people being oppressed by the Philistines. God had long intended to give his people a king (Deuteronomy 17), but the need of his people was His motive at that moment to go ahead and give one (1 Samuel 9:16). Saul was God's candidate, and Samuel has to agree - an unassuming, even shy man, no actor at home on center stage but a man who could lead Israel through God's Spirit.

Why are we so shocked in the West? What do we learn about ourselves, from this vehement reaction? This much in any case, - that a weak spot has been found. We thought we were free; also free to say farewell to God and His service. Free to invest much, even all our energy in serving Mammon.



We are part of a society where money is our god, the stock exchange our temple, the economy its prophet and earning money our religion.

America sets itself up as king of freedom, the ruler who spurns us on against our enemies. But our greatest threat does not come from abroad. It is you and me, the child of Adam and Eve with a heart that wants to be free from God. Our best ally is not the president of king or general here on earth, but King Jesus Christ, who sits at the right hand of God, with the Holy Spirit who keeps our hearts restrained. This is what we should be thinking about - can the one who defends our free world in doing so also damage the honour of this King?

This issue focuses on the reality of life after September 11<sup>th</sup> 2002, a world in which the disciples of Islam live, a world to which King Jesus has sent the Spirit of Truth with the gospel. Our thanks go to guest editor Rev Marten de Vries, evangelist amongst Moslems in Rotterdam, for putting this issue together.



*The University of Egypt is an important Islamic scientific centre.. This mosque in Cairo has the same name.  
Photo Tjerk S de Vries*

# The Way, the Truth, the Life

**Jesus answered to him: I am the way and the truth and the life (John 14:6a)**

## The Way

These days almost everybody, whether familiar with the world of Islam or not, knows the word *shari'ah*. The *shari'ah* is Islamic law, the law that Moslems want to see established in countries where the majority of the population is Islamic. The Koran is the basis of the *shari'ah*, along with the words and the acts of the first generation Moslems. The *shari'ah* covers every area of life. Just as in the Old Testament, the *shari'ah* contains religious as well as social instructions and rules.

In fact *shari'ah* does not mean "law" but "way". Imagine a road which leads to water in a desert. If a traveller wants to survive in the desert, then he has to stay on that road. If he wanders, he will die. For this reason, keeping to the instructions in the *shari'ah* is of vital importance for a genuine Moslem.

In the Bible "law" and "way" can also be synonyms. And the Bible also says that our lives depend upon it. In Deuteronomy 5 (in this chapter Moses recalls the Ten Commandments), we read in verse 33: "walk in all the way that the LORD your God has commanded you, that you may live...". Thus, the Lord has commanded a way! We have to walk on this way in order to stay alive! Sin can be called "departing from the way" (Exodus 32:8). If you do not change your direction and go back to the way of life, if you do not repent, you meet your death.

The *shari'ah* is the Moslem's way through the wilderness. The only way which is passable. In the Bible God's commandments are also called "ways", but the difference between the ways of the Islamite and the Christian are enormous. The law, just like the genealogy of Abraham, ends with Christ. He is the "seed of Abraham" (Galatians 3:16) and "the end of the law" (Romans 10:4).

What does that mean? The law, according to Paul, apostle of Christ, was a "teacher" to bring us to Christ, a pedagogue (Galatians 3:24). The law was meant to drive people into the arms of Christ. This is one of the reasons why the law is still "strictly" preached, as the Heidelberg Catechism phrases it in Lord's Day 44, so that we may seek the "righteousness in Christ". Through sin, the law brings no life in itself, but leads to death (Romans 8:3a, 7, 10). But, thank God, Christ became our *shari'ah*. He became our way, made through the wilderness by God Himself (Isaiah 55:19), because He "fulfilled" (Matthew 5:17) the law for us completely.

There is only one way to God, to His house. That is a way which is far above the understanding of mankind. "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts, says the Lord" (Isaiah 55:9). This way is Jesus Christ.



## About the author:

Maarten de Vries, missionary minister of the Reformed Church (Liberated) in the City of Rotterdam has worked for the MAR (Missionary Work Rijnmond) since 2000. He concentrates on contact with Moslems. He was minister of the church in Hoogvliet-Spijkenisse from 1994-2000 and during this time was also involved as deputy in the missionary work in the Rijnmond area. From 1990-1994 he worked in the church of South and East Drachten and Pretoria for missionary work in Mamelodi, South Africa. He served the church at Winsum-Obergum from 1985-1990. In 1984 he graduated from the Theological University in Kampen.

Jesus *points* us the way to God. He is "our chief Prophet and Teacher", Lord's Day 12. Jesus *leads* our way. "I go and prepare a place for you", He says (John 14:3). Jesus *prepares* the way to God. In one of the Dutch hymns we sing "Thus you cleared for us the way back to God" (*Gereformeerd Kerkboek*, Gezang 30 stanza 4). Jesus *is* the way Himself. He is the only true ladder of Jacob, established by God in the night in which his Word became "flesh" (John 1:14). He is the lift, into which we can step in order to go up to our Father's house.

Jesus had to walk a difficult way to achieve this. Nobody could walk that way with Him. Simon Peter, had to realise this too. Even fanatic "mujahedeen" like him, fell on their faces, (John 13:36-38). Nevertheless it will not be easy for His disciples, too. The way to God is not an easy one. It is a narrow path (Matthew 7:14), which you follow by denying yourself, taking up your cross daily and following Him (Luke 9:23).

In the Arabic Bible translation of John 14:6, there is no *shari'ah* but *tariq*. The feminine form of this word, *tariqah*, is a familiar term in the Islamic world, too. It is used to signify a religious brotherhood, a mystical order. Taking part in this can be seen as a way to approach God, on which you can ultimately merge into Him. This terminology originates from the thinking of the so called Sufism.

Just like orthodox Moslems, we do not believe that you can merge into God. We believe in a unity with Jesus Christ, who became one of us. It is the unity that gave Christ's disciples a way into the Father's house. Together with Him, because of your relationship with the Lord, you sometimes have to make painful choices. You sometimes have to cut in your own flesh to get into the Kingdom of heaven (Matthew 19:12). But it will be worth it. Your Saviour has earned that for you.

## The Truth

Jesus also called Himself "the Truth". God, Allah, has 99

'wonderful names' in the Koran. One of these is "Al Haqq", "the Truth". This name means: God's existence is obvious, God is truly there. The whole creation owes its existence to Him. He is to be seen everywhere and in everything. For Sufi's this is a call to become submerged in God. The so-called "annihilation" in Allah.

You can make a Moslem furious by calling Jesus "the Truth". By saying this you are saying that He really is God. This reveals that you are someone who thinks that there are more gods than the One God, as high as He is. You "have or invent something (or somebody) instead of, or in addition to the only true God, who has revealed Himself in His Word" (compare Lord's Day 34, Heidelberg Catechism). It is the same anger which Jesus experienced from the Jews.

According to the stories, somebody recently ended up in prison in Pakistan, not because of insulting the Moslem prophet Mohammed but because he called Jesus "the Way".

The word 'truth' appears often in the Bible. The word in the Old Testament does not have exactly the same meaning as in the New Testament. In the Old Testament it is the translation of a Hebrew word that is associated with the word 'amen'. Moslems are very familiar with this word from the Arabic (also a Semitic language): "Al-Amin" was a surname of the young Mohammed. Just like many girls these days, his mother was called Amina. "Truth" in this context has to do with "being steady", it means as much as "reliability". The Greek word from the New Testament, on the other hand, means literally "what is not hidden" or better, "what is revealed". In our Lord both meanings come together beautifully.

In Jesus Christ, God has showed his faithfulness altogether. In Him, according to the apostle Paul, is "the mystery of godliness" revealed, which was manifested in the flesh (1 Timothy 3:16). "For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ" (John 1:17).

All God's promises "are Yes in Christ" (2 Corinthians 1:20). God revealed Himself at the time of his choice, in his Son, "born of a woman, born under the law" (Galatians 4:4). He embodied God's goodness and faithfulness in His own Person. He is God's true grace, because all God's promises of reconciliation are fulfilled in Him (Isaiah 53:5; 2 Corinthians 5:18,19; 1 John 2:2; 4:10). God showed whom he really was in Him (John 1:8; Hebrews 1:1), more than a half millennium before Mohammed appeared on the scene.

The full truth about God was made known by the One about whom Moses prophesied: "The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your midst, from your brethren. Him you shall hear" (Deuteronomy 18:15). Moses was not aiming at Mohammed then, which is what the Moslems think. This was an early prophecy about the Lord Jesus Christ who was to come (Acts 3:22; 7:37).

Jesus is the "faithful witness" (Revelation 1:5). "He has fully revealed to us the secret counsel and will of God concerning our redemption" (Lord's Day 12, Heidelberg Catechism). Nothing more could be added to that. He declared THE Truth of God. He is God's Truth in person. He

must be worshipped "in truth" (John 4:24). He is God's temple for all, for Samaritan and Jew (John 4:1-42), for Moslems and Christians today.

Thomas and the others in John 14 could not understand it all at that moment. After the ascension of their Lord the "Spirit of truth" would come and "guide them into all truth" (John 16:13). According to Moslems this again applies to the coming of Mohammed. As if Mohammed could "take from what is Mine and make it known" (John 16:14)!

The church is entrusted with the administration of the truth. It is stored in the Old and New Testament. In the Bible the church is referred to as "the pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Timothy 3:15). The church must not only maintain the truth, she needs to be a billboard which reveals all of the gospel. If she keeps the Truth for herself, she is damaging the truth. When she displays the Truth, the church serves the truth, serves Him. And He deserves that!

### **The Life**

Finally, the Lord also refers to Himself as "the life". Moslems again hear one of Allah's wonderful names: "Al-Hayy", the Living One, the One who lives for ever, the source of all life, the One who has the highest degree of life. The One to Whom you must give yourself completely, according to the Sufi's. Without recognising Jesus as "Al-Hayah", Islamites do not know what they are worshipping (cp. John 4:22).

Our *shari'ah* Jesus, is the way of life. Of "the Word that became flesh" is written: "In Him was life" (John 1:4, 14). He is "the Word of life" (1 John 1:1). In Him, the life that this name can have, "appeared" (1 John 1:2). The uncreated Word (a name Moslems give to the Koran) has "life in himself" (John 5:26).

The Holy Spirit is our *tariqah*. He makes me "by true faith share in Christ and all His benefits" (Lord's Day 20, Heidelberg Catechism). He gives us what we have in Christ, say the Reformed forms for the Baptism. That is unity with Him "in His death and resurrection" (Romans 6:5), in his exaltation, and finally in his glorious appearance (Colossians 3:1-4).

"Now this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent". This is what Jesus prayed just prior to his return to heaven. We read it in the so-called 'high priestly prayer' (John 17:3). With a variation on the *shahadah*, the Islamic confession of faith: "There is no God but the Father of Jesus Christ. And He was His envoy", sent by God to make Him known (John 1:18). Not just to make his will known, his law - that is not life - but to make Himself known! The Lord with whom is the fountain of life (Psalm 36:9).

Jesus said to Martha: "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me will live, even though he dies" (John 11:25). The word "Moslem" literally means "one who has surrendered". So a Christian 'Moslem' is a believer who gives his fragile life in the hands of Him who died, and expects to receive an new, indestructible, everlasting life back from Him who defeated death, and now lives. Long may he live! In glory.

## Missionary work amongst Moslems in Rotterdam



### About the author:

Simon van der Lugt has worked for the Reformed Church (Liberated) in the city of Rotterdam since 1993. He occupies the function of missionary minister for the MAR (missionary work Rijnmond) amongst ethnic minorities in the Rijnmond area, and especially amongst Hindus. Prior to this he was minister of the churches in Rijswijk and Pijnacker. He studied theology in Kampen (1981-1988).

Two ministers work in Rotterdam as missionaries. One is specialised in Hinduism, the other in Islam. There is one evangelist who comes from Pakistan. There are volunteers who are busy reaching ethnic minorities in the Rijnmond area with the Gospel. There are 18 churches which unite in prayer for God's blessing over all these activities. There are just as many churches who make this work possible through their financial support. One active organisation, the MAR, directs all activities and develops policy and plans for the future. In short, Rotterdam lives for the gospel. How has this come about? In this article I will relate a piece of history, then make clear what has changed since the work began, before looking to the future.

### Coffee Bar in Crooswijk, Rotterdam

From September 1973 there was a coffee bar in Crooswijk, a district in Rotterdam. In the seventies, a coffee

bar was an attractive and popular project. An alternative was sought for the popular place of entertainment, the bar, and given an own character by offering coffee instead of alcohol. It was meant to be somewhere to go within the neighbourhood, with all sorts of activities for children, youth and adults. There was an open evening where adults could simply meet each other, for instance. The evening was rounded off in prayer by one of the leaders.



A large Mosque has been built in Rotterdam this year

Photo: Rufus de Vries



*A Hindostani party in Rotterdam*

In the beginning this coffee bar (known as the Pruttelshop) was a success amongst the resident Dutch Crooswijkers. But later in the seventies the population of the district began to change. Surinam became independent and many Creoles and Hindus left for the Netherlands because they no longer trusted their future in their country. Creole and Hindu are ethnic denotations. There are many ethnic groups in Surinam including these two. The Creoles are descendants of African slaves, the Hindus descendants of Indian labourers who took the place of slaves after the abolition of slavery in 1863.

These new Netherlanders also came to live in Crooswijk. New Netherlanders is not really an accurate description, because Surinam was part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. The most spoke reasonable Dutch. Yet they were experienced as “new” by the Dutch population. They came into contact with the volunteers at the “Pruttelshop”, firstly via the children’s club. This always seems to be an inroad for evangelism since via the children contacts are formed with their parents. But the religion and the culture of the Hindus was a shock for the members of the church. What does a Hindu actually believe, and what does a Moslem confess? How do they live, and how does that differ from our culture?

Contact was made with a converted Hindu, brother Heera. He had been an evangelist in Surinam and now lived in the Netherlands, a member of the Community of the

Moravian Brethren (‘Evangelische Broedergemeente’), the largest protestant church of Surinam. This stimulated the study of the ways of the people who crossed the path of the missionary work. A Hindu study group, a Creole study group and a Moslem study group were formed. The members of the church started reading about Islam, Hinduism, about different cultures and about the question of whether or not all religions are the same. People involved in the practical work were involved in the study groups. Those who worked with the children, youth or the adult evenings came together because they felt the need to get to know the culture of their guests. As well as study, there was also a need to meet about the organisation of and visitation of the Moslems and Hindus at home. The ‘Association for Evangelism Projects’ (Vereniging Evangelisatie Projecten) was established, the umbrella covering all the study groups.

### **Worries and Expansion**

In 1979, the Association took over a property. This was a demanding business. Besides there were not enough workers in proportion to the number of guests. The volunteers are busy; too busy. Unfamiliarity with the culture is great, the motivation often under pressure. The question is asked - should we go further? Given the number of the contacts and the group of children, some of whom had been attending for four years, the answer had to be yes. But ought there not to be some extension: a worker holding a permanent appointment? a full time missionary? In the years around

1980, this question was a very real one. They carried on, with worries, but also with blessings. The Moslems and Hindus valued the visits, but because of shortage of time, not many visits could be made.

In the report of 1983, we notice how the missionary activities move into gear. On the one hand, there were not enough volunteers, and they had not enough time and not enough ideas about how to go further. But in the meantime, co-operation between the churches resulted in plans to take on a minister as evangelist. About the same time, a request came from a Hindu family to come and read the Bible with them. And a 15 year old girl wrote a letter: "I don't come to your club anymore but I have not forgotten what you told me: Jesus is my Saviour!". This gave new motivation! The members continue to study together about Hindus and Moslems, they visit more. They look for opportunities to tell how this work had been picked up amongst migrants in Rotterdam. The contacts with the Moravian Brethren appear to be very valuable. The volunteers not only profit from brother Heera's help but also from sister Aafke Wezeman, a Dutch citizen who worked for 46 years in Surinam amongst Hindus. She offers much information and helps with the organisation of cultural evenings. The members of the reformed church also visit the Moravian Brethren Christmas celebration. In this way, the contact comes on friendly terms.

At the end of 1982, and the start of 1983, there was good news for the missionary volunteers: Rev. Jan Willem Roosenbrand accepted the call! In this year an campaign week is organised: ten years of coffee bar! The work is given a boost. But the evangelist minister needs to specialise. The whole area of Moslems and Hindus is too broad. If you direct yourself at one area of the population, then the logical consequences of that are that you study the language and culture. It is impossible that you ask somebody to learn more than one language at the same time. It was decided that Rev. Roosenbrand should focus his attention on the Hindus. He began to study Hindi and look into the religion and culture of this group. He travelled to Surinam and was able to achieve much work amongst contacts. Partly because two Hindu women had become members of the church, a start was made. The practice works as follows: via the one you reach the other. People from an eastern culture entertain a great deal and have a large social network. Whoever is accepted in this, will notice that the opportunities for discussion about the Gospel are greatly increased. This is one of the advantages of working amongst Hindus and Moslems. The work spread out from Hindus (people originally from India) to Pakistani people (from Pakistan). This is possible partly because India and Pakistan both used to be part of the British Empire. Moreover, the languages Urdu (Pakistan) and Hindu (India) are similar. Rev. Roosenbrand and his fellow workers came into contact with a number of Pakistani Christians who had not settled in any church in Rotterdam. Through these new contacts, two new families joined the Reformed Church (liberated). The other remained apart and

later joined the "normal" Reformed Church. Via this route an opening for the missionary work amongst Pakistani Moslems in Rotterdam was created. The Pakistani Christians had many friends amongst them.

### ***Change of Direction***

In the meantime, some of the Moslem volunteers had become disillusioned. Now that there was an evangelist, he could not pay sufficient attention to their work sphere. The contacts with Turks and Moroccans were of a different character and the minister swiftly had so much work for his own target group, that paying attention to the work among the Moslems was impossible. Thus the problems in this part of the work remain: lack of motivation, big turnover of volunteers, collapse of activities. Only one or two people persisted. And on top of this, difficulties also emerged in the Hindu work. The arrival of a minister meant that the work had become professional. Through this a new influence affected the vision and way of work, which was unknown to the workers from the very beginning. This caused friction. Through disagreements and arguments the work stagnated and relationships remained vulnerable even after problems were cleared up. I have no joy in writing these things but it is only honest to say that this was a part of the process in the missionary work at that time.

The conviction that the work had to go on, had not changed. When Rev. Roosenbrand left in 1992 after 9 years, the work of calling someone else was started up again. At this time every Sunday a separate service was held for Hindus and Pakistanis. These services had been started in 1986, on a very small scale with two Hindu women and some Dutch workers. When I, as called minister, came to see one of these services, there were 30 or 40 visitors. Just prior to his departure, Rev. Roosenbrand baptised an Indian family-converted Hindu. In short, there was much to be grateful for. In the congregation were now members of Surinamese Hindu origin, of Pakistani origin and of direct Indian origin. They were brought together: the greatest common factor was that they all originated from the united India. Although everything was still under the guidance of the Dutch evangelist minister and the Dutch church council, some dreamed of a Hindu-Pakistani district or ward under the guidance of a minister from their own ethnical circles. The Dutch had to pull back.

After the second evangelist minister had got used to the work, this point became a live issue again. Discussion about the place of immigrants within the church community was at the same level as the developments in society in general. If the seventies was the time of rousing speeches about the richness of multicultural living and hugging foreigners to death, then the nineties brought realism. This went together with the use of more direct words and a hardening of points of view, but reality was too painful to pretend. Also within the church we saw little of the dreams being realised. Cultural differences were greater there than expected. The life





of an immigrant had its own dynamics which could not be directed by church leaders. Sadly, this led to a split with a number of the initial volunteers. When the direction towards an own ethnical ward was abandoned and their protests were not listened to, they were not prepared to carry on in the new situation.

## **MAR**

On the other hand the organisation was improved. Especially the conflicts revealed that the oversight of the churches via classis deputies had shortcomings. Because the workload increased, all sorts of questions arose which demanded adequate and swift answers. How can we make use of men and women as permanent, paid workers? Can we also start working amongst another target group such as the Antilleans? How do we secure good feedback to the churches which support the work financially and through prayer?

In 2000 the MAR was established (*Missionaire Arbeid Rijnmond* - Missionary Work Rijnmond Area). The MAR is a church foundation. This is a body responsible to Dutch law, a legal person which can employ people independently and work from own premises. In the executive committee of the MAR are experts in financial, legal, communicative, administrative and theological fields. The frequency of meetings was increased and the decisiveness improved. A small company of deputies assigned by the two classes remained in supervisory capacity and maintains the ties with the supporting and cooperating churches. With two years experience of this behind us, this seems indeed to be a better way. This can also be due to the fine mentality which directs the structure: how can we as executive committee of MAR ensure that the field workers, ministers, permanent workers and volunteers, can do their work as well as possible?

The year 2000 was also the year of the arrival of the second evangelist minister for the work amongst Moslems. The Moslem working group had watched with envy as the Hindu working group was supported by the missionary minister. Nevertheless, some had not given up. For years, the children's club work with Moslem children carried on, although it rested on very few shoulders. Youth work had carried on as well. This is a difficult group and sometimes the police has had to be involved in order problems or the club stopped for a time. But again and again members from the church felt called to do something with this group. When, in the mid nineties, the 'Association for Evangelism Projects' (*Vereniging Evangelisatie Projecten*) threatened to collapse due to lack of interest, research showed that also the work amongst Moslems needed professional support. The churches were convinced. It took many years, and the further effort of volunteers before, at the end of the nineties, the door seemed to be opening. The decision was made to call a missionary minister for the work amongst Moslems. At the end of 1999 Rev. M. de Vries accepted the call and was festively invested in February 2000 as a minister of the Reformed Church (liberated) of Rotterdam-City.



*Moslem-men talking together in a coffee-house in a Dutch town.  
photo Rufus de Vries*

He too needed to find his feet in the work. The MAR valued good preparation. Study of the Arabic language, knowledge of Islam, intercultural communication, also a journey to Morocco and a language study journey to Jordan, formed parts of the training. Was it not necessary to visit Moslems? Certainly, and that happened automatically. But it is not for nothing that much time is dedicated to profound studies. We had learned that too much visiting work in the beginning often leads to the study being neglected. Especially the language needs to be learnt well immediately to avoid that communication with your target group sticks at a poor level. In the meantime, time was invested in making international contacts. A visit to a conference in England resulted in good talks with experts there and lasting relationships. To know that Christians elsewhere work with the same joy and difficulty as yourself, is encouraging.

## **Trends and Climate Change**

Now that we can look back at the start of the 21<sup>st</sup> century over 25 years of missionary work amongst ethnic minorities, we can see emerging trends. One of the changes is that there is another sort of active church member. In the seventies a missionary movement came into existence in the Reformed Churches (liberated). This was also responsible for starting E&R (evangelism and recreation) work. This was a reaction to a church too busy within its own walls. After the split in the Sixties, young people wanted to look outside. They were ready to commit themselves to voluntary work for a lengthy period of time. In the nineties youngsters were enthusiastic for short-term projects. That is to say that the work now is divided much more into smaller units and an ever changing group of volunteers supports the ministers and evangelist.

The target group has also changed character. The same ethnic groups are still involved: Hindus, Pakistanis, Turks and Moroccans, but their status in society is much better

established than it was. After 30 years, all sorts of organizations have been set up for them: own radio stations, own broadcasting companies, cultural centers, provision for the elderly, etc. That is to say that they are less dependant on the help provided by the established Dutch population. The need for this help was often a foot in the door for the gospel. The history of missions reveals that such dependant relationships do have disadvantages. The motive for conversion can be wrong: is it about Christ or about a certain progress in society? If we now see that Moslems as well as Hindus are emancipating, we do not consider this as something negative. We see that young Moslems self-consciously and deliberately present themselves in society and search for debate or conversation about religion. High quality internet sites about Islam have appeared. We see the same things happening amongst Hindus. The last few years in Rotterdam have seen the celebration of the Holi Feast with a march through the city and a red spouting fountain on the Hofplein. We see that Hindus and Moslems meet the same problems of secularization as we do. On the one hand people let their faith slip away to enjoy what the western society has to offer. On the other hand, believers resist this drifting away and emphasize the fundamentals of their faith again. This is to say that we meet a less dependant type of Moslem and Hindu and this just makes meeting with them and the confrontation, clearer.

It also has to be said that since September 11th, the climate is more awkward. The contrasts between Dutch society and the Moslem community have become greater. The contrast was always there, religiously determined and eminently comparable with the way in which Christians are critical of society on certain subjects. But now that an aggressive and fundamentalist form of Islam was displayed in the attacks on America, nuances have fallen away for many. For your average Dutchman, every Moslem is a terrorist at heart and his faith cannot mean very much. For the Moslem: the decadent western world is rotten and has now turned against their most holy faith. He who works as missionary or evangelist in this tense sphere often needs many words to find the right nuance. Moslems are very wary of the white who speaks to him. The grassroots Christian is wary and asks himself how a missionary can possibly say good things about a Moslem. In short, we have entered a new phase of the work.

### **Prospects**

From this situation some sketchy lines can be drawn into the future. In the first place it is essential that Christians prepare themselves for the content of discussion with Islam. Well educated Moslems, who speak good Dutch will present themselves more and more in society. Will there be convinced Christians who are prepared to speak to outsiders according to the style of Christ and the Apostles did? According to the style of Christ - because what we say may not be lacking salt, nor aggressive or forceful. As Christians in discussion we are going to have to learn to analyze and control our subconscious feelings of unease.

In the second place, it is the place of the Christian community to really become multi cultural. Now that we have experience in the reception of new members with their own cultural background, we can see how difficult it is to communicate interculturally. Certainly if talented immigrants fill offices in the church, the indigenous Dutch must learn not to make clones out of them, but to receive them so that with their cultural characteristic they can function within the system, and really have influence there.

In the third place, it is time for the churches in the Netherlands to realize that the Christian era is over. Of course there are still countless traces of Christianity to be seen but desertion of the church and the estrangement from new Dutch generations, alongside the flood of Moslems and Hindus and other religions, makes the climate really different. That is to say that we have to learn to read the Bible in a missionary way in order to understand our place in the world. The theology and especially the systematic thinking of the Christian doctrine needs to be thought about in a missionary way. This means that the way the church thinks about ethics, liturgy and church building cannot avoid the following question: what does the presence of brothers and sisters amongst us from another cultural background mean?

In the fourth place there is a need for clarity about the gospel. Moslems meet all sorts of Christians; also people, who have exchanged the gospel of grace and reconciliation through the blood of the cross for their own construction around the truth. This results in a very different sort of discussion with Moslems than we desire. It must be highly suspicious for Moslems when Christians water down their own faith. For this reason, a clear message about heaven and hell, blessing and curse, belief and unbelief, should expect a better reception from Moslems than a vague story that we all believe the same, don't we?! But on the other hand, the clear gospel message also means rejection of that gospel. The realisation must grow, in everyone who is active as a missionary that it is not about the greatest number of evangelisation contacts or the as long as possible maintaining of contacts, but about the clarity of the message at the right moment.

### **Conclusion**

In other words, we see work both outside and inside. There are so many that we could reach. You no longer need to travel far to be a missionary, your own city is far enough. God gives many chances, but that must also touch ourselves and our congregations. Logical, if you think about it. The gospel makes people move, and if the Spirit adds people, the church has to be receptive for that. That is not always without its difficulties. Cares and worries have had their place in this story too. But these do not have the last word. Is it not true that there is nothing greater than to be able to serve in the Kingdom that is coming?  
Indus showed the danger of not studying??





# Moslems and Christians: Condemned to eat biscuits?

- stories and experiences from foreign Christians in the Netherlands about contact with Moslems-

What do Moslems actually think of Christians? And how does that effect Christians in Islamic countries? Is it dangerous for Moslems to become Christians in the Netherlands or are the Netherlands 'safe'? All questions about which your average Christian Dutchman knows little. For this reason this article is devoted to hearing from Christians who originated from lands where many Moslems live but who are now living in the Netherlands. Their experience tells the story.

## Around the table:

- Edward, Kadjatu and Abu Bakr from Sierra Leone. Edward has always been a Christian. His girlfriend Kadjatu was Moslem, but now is being taught in the Christian faith. Abu Bakr calls himself 'religious' and goes to both mosque and church. Edward's family was killed in Sierra Leone, he and his brother were the only survivors.
- Samson from Pakistan. Samson comes from a Christian family in Pakistan; he has lived now for a long time in the Netherlands. Some of his family live in Pakistan; they are Christian.
- Djamilla and Seida come from Iran. They became Christians a few years ago in the Netherlands. They both still have family in Iran; the family is Moslem. Djamilla's son was killed by mullahs when he was very small.

## Moslems on Christians

How do Moslems see Christians? Everyone answers from his or her own background.

Edward: *generally speaking, Moslems are not positive about Christianity. Moslem leaders say that Christianity is wrong and fights against Islam. That has a lot of influence of course. Some Pakistan leaders say "I shall not sleep until Islam governs the whole world." The stories that Christians can become Moslems but that Moslems cannot become Christians are true of Pakistan and Morocco, but not of Sierra Leone. People there accept it when a Moslem becomes a Christian.*

Later I hear that Edward's relationship with Kadjatu was problematical for his family. Now that Kadjatu is pregnant, their relationship is accepted but in some families from Sierra Leone this is still rather sensitive.

Samson: *it is generally said of Christians that they are unbelievers. Fortunately, not everybody thinks the same. Well*

## About the author:

*Janneke Burger-Niemeijer has studied at the Theological University in Kampen since 1996. In the autumn of 2002 she had a placement with the Reformed Church (Liberated) of the City of Rotterdam. She was especially involved with missionary work amongst ethnic minorities.*

*educated Moslems have much respect for Christians. Even so, the majority of Islamic people see Christianity as their direct enemy. The Koran says that Christians and Jews are also people of the Holy book; in practice little of this can be seen. Christians are nearly always oppressed in Islamic countries. Moslems who convert to Christianity are persecuted even more. They are seen as blasphemous. Fortunately they receive strength from God for every new day. They say themselves that they are happier than ever; they believe in a sure Rock.*

Samson himself had problems in Pakistan surrounding his being a Christian. He grew up in Punjab, in a Christian family. He moved to Karachi when he was attending high school. The reason for this was that he was too active in the church. His parents considered that Punjab was no longer safe for him. There were more Christians in Karachi and therefore more opportunities for evangelisation and social work for Christians.

Djamilla: *Moslems in Iran actually think that Christians are better than them, more modern than Moslems, but they do not dare to say that. Moslem fundamentalists have a clear opinion about Christians and that is that they are unclean. The body of a Christian is unclean.*

Djamilla says that she had Christian friends in Iran. Her family demanded that she only gave them biscuits to eat if they came visiting. They were not allowed to drink, nor could they eat from a plate with a knife and fork. They were only allowed dry biscuits since Christians are unclean. Djamilla took little notice and ate normally with her friends, and definitely more than dried biscuits....

Seida: *I had many Christian colleagues in Iran. They were nice people; we used to eat with each other.*

Djamilla and Seida say that the position of Christians in Iran is difficult. The television paints a positive picture, as



A stall with Moslem reading material on a market place in Cairo.  
Photo Tjerk S de Vries

though Christians are free but in reality two ministers have been killed in the past year and at Christmas time, celebrating Christians are always hassled. Seida: *I once went to a church and asked how I could become a Christian. The minister was really shocked. He asked: how did you come here? It is really dangerous!* Eventually Seida went to a church in the Netherlands again and was baptised a number of years ago.

### **Christians and Moslems in the Netherlands**

Westerners seem to realise that if you become a Christian in Pakistan or Iran you are automatically persecuted. But is that true of the Netherlands? How difficult is it to become a Christian in the Netherlands? Is it easier or are there still difficulties?

Samson: *The Netherlands is becoming less of a Christian country. If it carries on as now, then there is a big chance that Christians here too, will be persecuted. And then I don't only mean Christians who converted from other religions but also the believers who were brought up as Christians.*

Seida: *Dutch Moslems think it's terrible if Moslems become*

*Christians. They stalk them. This is why not many Moslems know that I have become a Christian. I don't want to tell them.*

Seida seems to be afraid of her former husband. He regularly makes life difficult for her and tries to give her a bad name in her own family. He is Moslem and wants her to live as a Moslem. The background to Seida's fear is that it is sometimes dangerous for family in Iran if people in the Netherlands become Christians. It is possible that family in Iran then have 'an accident'. Seida is afraid of what her husband could do if he were to know that she is a baptised Christian. He could harm her mother. For this reason she hardly tells anybody. Nor does she know if she dare visit Iran. Maybe that is too dangerous.

Djamilla tells a similar story. Djamilla: *if people ask about my faith, I say simply that I am not a Moslem. I don't say that I'm a Christian, that is in my heart.* Djamilla's children live with their families in Iran. They are modern Iranians. Djamilla is afraid of the mullahs, the spiritual leaders. They kill people, Christians and renegade Moslems. Djamilla would be able to

tell her family, they are modern, but she is afraid of the mullahs and their reaction. She will not tell her children that she is shortly to be baptised. She thinks that she will be able to tell them one day. They know about the Bible lessons she is receiving but not the baptism.

Seida and Djamilla also talk about other Christians in the Netherlands. Seida: *Iranians in the Netherlands spy on each other. I don't think that I am spied upon but I do see that Iranians are scared of each other; we don't know if we can trust each other.* Djamilla recognises this: some of my friends know that I go to church but nobody knows that I will probably be baptised. They won't understand it anyway.

Edward: *for Moroccans it is dangerous to convert to Christianity. The Moroccan family seek 'justice': you can be murdered. A father would kill his son who turned Christian.* Amongst some ethnic groups persecution follows conversion. Edward tells what he saw happening in the Asylum Seekers Centre: *I knew Iranians that became Christians. They had no contact with other Iranians. When they received their Dutch nationality, they asked if they could live in a small village somewhere far away. They wanted to get as far away as possible from other Iranian families and now they feel safe.*

Samson says that Christians and Moslems deal with 'backsliders' very differently: Moslems who convert to Christianity are always persecuted. A converted Christian can expect a difficult life. The new convert misses his family. If a Christian becomes a Moslem, this is different. Christians do not persecute people who become Moslems. They are prayed for, if God will heal the spirit of the person in question.

### **Political situation in the Middle East**

At this moment there is much tension surrounding the question of whether or not the United States will engage in war with Iraq. The whole question is a tense one for the Middle East and especially for the position of Christians in

the Middle East. What do these Christians expect will happen?

Edward does not have gloomy expectations: *one Iranian minister is a Christian, Aziz. Iraqi people will be able to live as Christians. The war will not make any difference; Christians are a protected minority in Iraq.* Kadjatu does not believe this. She thinks that it will become dangerous. Abu Bakr agrees: *the Iraqi people will make a religious war of it.* Edward: *there may be few troubles in Iraq but there will be in other lands, in Saudi Arabia or Pakistan or for the Palestinian Christians.*

The situation in Iran is different again. Many Iranians are completely dissatisfied with the government of the mullahs and would be very pleased if the Khamenei government was overthrown. Even if America was the one to do so. It appears that the Iranians have a strange view of the West. Seida: *Iranians think that all Europeans are Christians. The wrong impression could be created therefore that Christians would be responsible for bringing an end to the regime.* As Abu Bakr also said: they will see it religiously.

Samson tells that in Pakistan it will not become more dangerous because of war with Iraq, it has been dangerous since September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001: *because Pakistan supported America in the attacks on Afghanistan. Through this, Pakistan Christians became direct enemies of the Islamic Movement. If an attack on Iraq comes, it will be over for Christians. I mean that it will become worse than it has ever been. This is why Americans or European countries must not attack Iraq. They must solve their problem another way. Christians should realise: war is not the solution to a problem. We are Christians and carry the message of peace, not of fundamentalism. Evil words should not come out of the mouth of a Christian, and threatening language is no good either. Through the love of the gospel you can quench a mountain of fire. Not through magic but through the power of the Holy Spirit which can only be found in Christ.*

# God bless America...?

American politics against “terrorism” is daily world news. This is relevant for Christians across the whole world, too. The World Council of Churches spoke out against a war with Iraq, for example. This article offers critical comment with a view to the position of the church, mission and evangelism worldwide.

After one year, the world remembered 11<sup>th</sup> September 2002. It was first and foremost a day of mourning, sorrow and sad memories fro the Americans. At the same time it was a manifestation of unity and courage. In spite of all the tension and fears for a new attack on American targets across the world, America was not scared off. Bush even received permission to attack Iraq military without the United Nations if necessary. The message to the world is clear: “We, Americans, are wounded, but not crushed! The fight against terrorism goes on. God bless America”. Even more reason for Christians to think about this radical approach.

## The identification of God with America

The consternation of the attack on 11<sup>th</sup> September 2001, justly gave reason for Bush to swiftly form a clear policy. His advisors came predominantly from Defence circles, not from the churches, and even less from experts on Islam. For this

### About the author:

Kees Haak was sent out from the Reformed Church (Liberated) in North Enschede to Papua (once Irian Jaya) in Indonesia, first as missionary, and later as teacher at the theological school of the Gereja Gereja Reformasi Indonesia in Bomakia. Since 1989 he teaches mission, ecumenicalism and evangelism at the Theological University of the Reformed Church (Liberated) in Kampen. He also works partly for the Intercultural Reformed Theological Training for De Verre Naasten for training missionaries and in the theological administration for African and Aziatic churches.



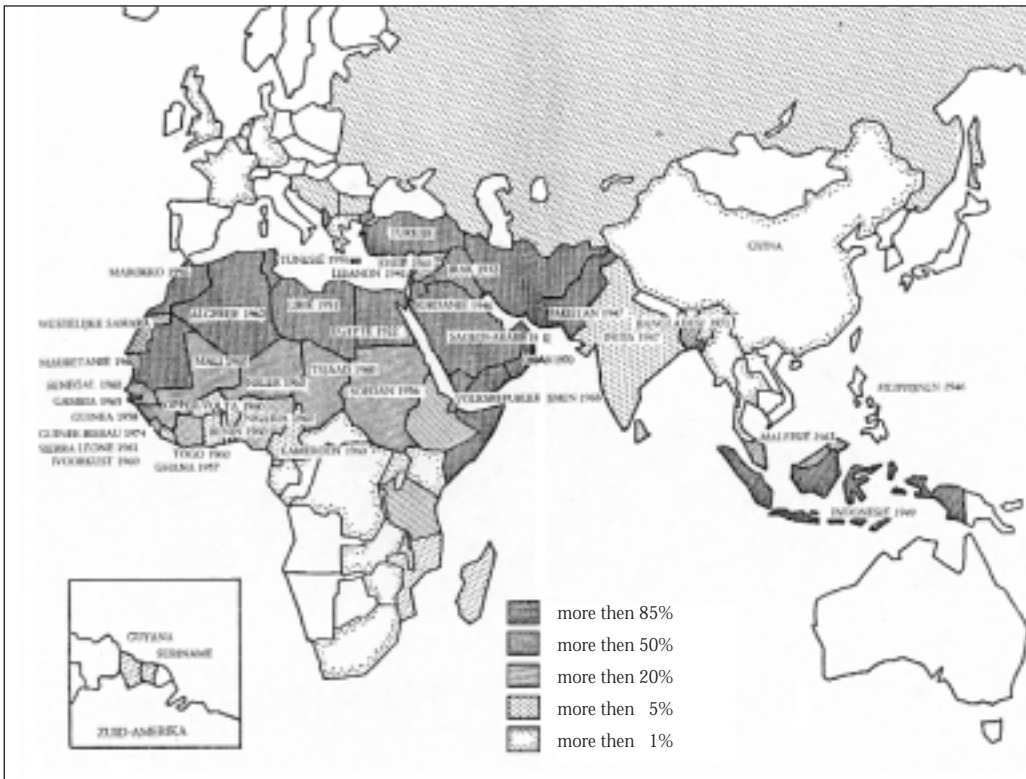
reason violence was met with violence. The war against terrorism was started. Bush was able to bring a part of the world in discredit as “the Axis of Evil”, so the world had freedom to bomb Afghanistan and the Taliban government.

All this went together with calling upon God’s name in prayer, in presidential speeches, in many church services, where the American flag flew high. Although it did not go as far as priests literally blessing the aeroplanes and weapons, the spiritual atmosphere created by the many cries of “God bless America” also at military manifestations, gave the emphatic

impression that God, and yes, the God of the Christians, fully supported America and the American policy against Osama Bin Laden.

This is not written to judge those many Christians, including Bush, who sought their *personal* refuge in days of immense sorrow and pain. We were deeply impressed by the faith that Bush expressed in words borrowed from Psalm 23. We are convinced that many Christians genuinely sought and found their comfort in God in these circumstances. This is about how a land, how a president goes about seeking the safety of his citizens and guarantee of their borders, and calls for international co-operation giving the clear implication that God wants this.

The whole question of America and the battle against



Maps showing the percentage of Moslems in the total population (Source-Islam norm ideals and reality. Publ. Het Wereldvenster; Weesp)



In Oct 2002 a terrorist attack in Bali claimed the lives of a number of victims. The photo shows the remains of the destroyed clubhouse.  
Photo Thijs Oosterhuis

terrorism was justified on the authority of God, the Christian God. Bush did his best later on to reassure the Moslems in America that he was not opposing all Moslems or Islam as such but only fought against Bin Laden and his accomplices. But when he planned his military-aggressive reaction, Moslems were not involved.

We are afraid that a fatal chance was missed here, at the very start. We realise that the "God bless America" ritual was far from always religiously intended or based. It has probably become a piece of religious rhetoric that has found its way in and which many American Christians already take with a pinch of salt. This becomes something else when the "rhetoric" is used openly in relation to Islam. In Islam there is no distinction between church and state. For them it goes without saying that the government is the religious voice of the people. In other words: in Moslem eyes, Bush and the church are one.

When Bush uses religious language, this Moslem idea is re-inforced. Moslems can say with some justification, "You see, America, the (western) Christianity, and Bush, the machine of war that he starts up, it's all the same. And that turns itself on our brother country Afghanistan". Even if many Moslems had no sympathy for the Taliban government, they did support it. They realise all the more the need to stand united against the western, Christian super power. Even if Bush was successful in bringing a coalition together in the attacks on Afghanistan, this does not mean that the whole Islamic population supports the coalition. The uproar in Pakistan against western symbols and goals, is evidence of the opposite.

### **Islam and world history**

Instead of a swift military solution for his damaged nation,

Bush would have done better to ask himself what motivated the Islamite fighters to make such an attack. He really would not have needed to wait for Bin Laden's messages on the Arabic TV Channel Al Jazirah. In short: according to Islam conviction the world is split into two - Islam territory (*dar al-islam*) and the territory of the conflict (*dar al-harb*). In the first territory, where possible the *shari'ah* is valid as the Islamic law for a righteous society.

Non-Moslems can be tolerated temporarily within Islamic territory, they can never receive the same rights

as Islam disciples. The people of the conflict territory are disobedient to the call to repentance (*da'wah*). They can be fought in a spiritual war, where weapons are used if necessary.

This vision rests on what happened at the start of Islam. When Mohammed won the battle of Badr, this was a godly seal upon his role as prophet. This is why his departure from Mecca in 622 was seen as the turning point in history. Then the godly kingdom began. The victory won by the Islamite army and the rule of Islamic states far into Europe until the sixteenth century, underlined Islam's right against the Christian countries. The great cultural and scientific development since the Middle Ages came chiefly thanks to Islam, who preserved the inheritance of Greek philosophy. In Moslem eyes, the emergence of Europe in the 16<sup>th</sup> century and America in the 19<sup>th</sup> century are late arrivals in world history, last spasms of the unbelieving world.

However, these 'late arrivals' in culture and science have grown stronger and stronger since the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Their trade politics and colonial expansion with missionary works following in their wake, gave them possession of large sections of territory which used to belong to Islam, in Asia, Indonesia and large parts of Africa. This growth and the superiority which belongs to it, were a thorn in the flesh for Moslems. After the first crusade in the 11<sup>th</sup> -13<sup>th</sup> century with Palestine and Jerusalem as salient symbols, the second crusade in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries followed. Western trade, science, military systems, and developments overshadowed Islam into a shabby second place. The third crusade really began in 1948 when the state of Israel was founded on Palestinian territory with the support of the West and especially of America.

About that time, the Islamic nations began to throw off the yoke of western, or rather Christian, hegemony. The oil price victory in 1972 gave the Islamic states a new élan. Islam was making a come back on the world map. The superiority of Islam would eventually become known to the whole world. The West was not only faithless but what's more thoroughly immoral, sinful and a morass of vice. Western TV and videos



The call to prayer from the Mosque can be heard in many parts of the world.

Photo Tjerk S de Vries

full of glamour, violence and last but not least sex and porn, were thrown down in disgust by new spiritual leaders among who Khomeini was a successful and shining example. The call for the establishment of Islamite states by introducing the shari'a was obeyed in many lands including, for example, Nigeria. The "Allahu akbar" rings out ever clearer. This "Allah is the greatest" also contradicts the unbelieving West, with America in the lead. The time is more than ripe for godly justice.

### **Poverty and unsuccessful development assistance**

Indirectly, this perception of history is supported by the increasing poverty in the southern hemisphere, alias the Third World. Indirectly, because not all Islamic states are poor, nor are all Moslems poor. Still of importance since the ever increasing poverty in the Third World highlights the failure, perhaps preferably the sin, of Western politics and economy. The rich for all their assistance, do not really appear to be interested in the improvement of the poor areas.

They constantly guard their own economical interests, for example. They are responsible for environmental problems for example, but, especially America, do as good as nothing about it. And this while especially the poorer lands suffer under the increasing climatic changes, with hunger and poverty as the

way ahead. Also the help in the struggle against AIDS is obstructed by the expensive medicine, which rich westerners can afford while great segments of Africa, and soon perhaps also Asia, are decimated.

Add to this the refusal of America to view Taliban prisoners as 'normal' prisoners of war, to sign the Kyoto treaty, to co-operate in a free trade scheme, or to submit to the international court for the judgement of military interventions: one by one arguments for turning against America. No surprise really that many poorer countries can no longer tolerate this selfish attitude and turn to other "sponsors", from the rich Islamic direction.

### **Osama Bin Laden and his struggle**

Bin Laden is characterized as the greatest evildoer of all times. According to American politics he is the ultimate terrorist. Did anybody ever trouble to ask what possesses him? He grew up with the increasing Western, modern influence before him. The changing American politics, in favour of Iran or Iraq, against Iran or Iraq, must have given him a poor view of America. Now that he sends his messages via video out around the world, people should have listened and watched. Even the place from which he spoke means much for the Moslem world. He stands, or stood always with a mountain behind him at the entrance to a cave. His humble clothes, did the rest.. Moslem eyes viewing this, see a successor to the prophet. Just as Mohammed received his revelations near or in a cave, Bin Laden suggests that he too has a godly justification for his messages.

Also what he said could have been better understood. He spoke about a longer than eighty year struggle of which he is now the leader. No one in the media, despite all the speculation and gossip, has ever wondered what this struggle was. And that while the answer is reasonably obvious. In the 1920's, for the first time in world history, American soldiers were stationed in Islamite territory, in Saudi Arabia. Allowing 'unbelievers' inside Islam territory is an unforgivable sin for a strict Moslem, which must be put right as soon as possible.

Bin Laden was a long way from poor. He has learned how to handle the most modern forms of communication. Moreover he moves with such ease in the financial circuit, that the stock exchange rates can be influenced by him. He is not simply a hero for many fanatics but also for many moderate Moslems who realise how they have been injured by the Western economic and politic supremacy. Bin Laden knows many ways to reveal and hit the weak side of Western politics. The choice for the World Trade Centre as the symbol of Western supremacy, was a deliberate one. When that fell, the one necessary hole was smashed into the hated economical system responsible for dealing an uncertain future out to poorer countries. The turning point in the period of the third crusade is there now.

Every reaction from the American side is viewed from this perspective. Of course nobody expects America and Christianity to be defeated in one fell swoop, but the trend has been set, just as in the battle of Badr in 624. The new Islamic leader, although he will never be a Mohammed, can





One of the largest mosques in the world can be found in the centre of Jakarta

Photo Tjerk S. de Vries

count on godly support in his continued resistance to the pernicious unbelief of the Christians. Only the fact that he still has not been arrested by the violent American campaign (with many casualties among normal citizens by the way) is for the Moslems a sign of Bin Laden's invincibility. The naïvety with which Bush started the hunt - "we will smoke him out", is already a millstone round his neck. Now that he has been unsuccessful in this, Bush has been forced to aim for other goals, such as war with Iraq, in order to blur the reality of his loss of face. For the Moslem world it is absolutely not a foregone conclusion that Bush ends up as the winner.

### **America, Christianity and Israel**

An even deeper lying problem for Christians in the Third World is the State of Israel. For many Western Christians, the establishment of this state is a compensation for the suffering of the Jews in the Second World War. For some it is even more: they see in it the start of the realization of a biblical idea. They expect the temple to be rebuilt in Jerusalem as an indication of a mass conversion of Jews to Christ. For this reason Jerusalem and the former temple area must be in Jewish or Christian hands, whatever it costs.

The Palestines are not an issue. Nor is too much thought given to a claim from Islam on Jerusalem as the place of the ascension of Mohammed. Meanwhile America is covering Israel, although this - let's be honest - asks sometimes too much from Bush. But he cannot or will not oppose this policy until Israel will occupy again the Gaza strip. That will go too far for America. But attacking Israel now is difficult, especially now the United States need a foothold in the region for the fight against Iraq.

Such a christian view is biblically questionable, but certainly in Arabic eyes unacceptable. This policy is oblivious to Arabian and Palestinian interests. Much to my regret here Islam scores easy points in her struggle against Christianity. Unintentionally, these pro-Israel Christians who keep hoping on the basis of vague grounds for a mass conversion of Jews, make it difficult for many non-Jews to become christians. The almost unconditional connection between Christianity and the (in their eyes reprehensible) politics of Israel is too great an obstacle for them.

It is not difficult to guess what a difficult position churches in the Third World, and especially where there is an Islam majority, find themselves. Their position has become extremely precarious. What Mark Hertsgaard described in his *The Eagle's Shadow* about the mixed feelings of hate and admiration for America in countries outside of America grow stronger towards hatred. The arrogance with which the Americans behave abroad, with their language, their vision, their (lack of) knowledge of culture and religion, in short, with the idea that outside of America there is only Middle Age darkness, more than ever causes a chasm between Christianity and national pride.

### **The Christian as collaborator**

A Christian in Arabic countries is pitied not so much because he has not yet sought his refuge in the saving faith of Islam. Just as a Moslem who becomes a Christian, he is also viewed as a traitor, even as a collaborator.

While the American troops pour into Afghanistan (and at this moment also into some outlying countries of Iraq) Christians are blamed for having a hand in this new occupation of Moslem territory. Churches are therefore almost automatically set on fire, prominent Christians thwarted or imprisoned. They also become easy targets for riots by people who are otherwise peace loving. Travel papers and visas for strangers, foreigners, suddenly become difficult, certainly when they happen to be pointed representatives of church, mission or Christian help organisations.

Christendom does not need to be shocked by all these things. The deeper question is whether or not Christianity has brought shame upon itself, and so doing leaves the Arabic or Asian Christians without an answer. That Bush responded with *military force*, is that the Biblical way? We do recognise that a land in the Bible gets the chance to defend itself, or to take preventative action, let that be clear. But a Christian government must attack the criminals themselves, not the



Almost 50 years ago the Gospel was proclaimed for the first time in the village of Kouh (Papua/Indonesia) by missionaries from the Reformed Churches (Liberated) of the Netherlands. Now there is also a mosque....  
Photo Tjerk de Vries

neighbouring lands, or the civilians or the nature. And also in this we realise how complex the international obligations and responsibilities are, so that we cannot rule out an obligatory course of action against Saddam Hussein, for example, but then through a well considered position of the United Nations and only when they absolutely default, by the United States on their own initiative.

### **Spiral of violence**

What does Christian America now emanate? First she sought the church en masse, but after one year has no more need of the comfort offered? Of course - force is answered by force. Every heathen understands that. That is also what he expects. That is just what the Moslem expects who knows those Koran passages about using force violence only too well. But from Christians we ought to be able to expect something else, force answered by love, compassion, recognition of the right of others to life, existence, freedom and development opportunities. A wise attitude could turn bitterness away and shame prejudices. The language of the American Defence spokesman differs in no way from that of non-Christians. With its amazing superior power, America can do what it likes; but are self denial and being the humblest on the agenda, too?

Certainly, a Christian government must, of necessity, sometimes take the steps which churches or individual Christians will never have to take. And yet in these cases the government can surely think about the alternatives and the compromises, and consider how to avoid religious and psychological superficiality and to act in righteousness and to

take care for mankind. The (failed) food parcel drops at the start of the bombing of Afghanistan make no difference. They are interpreted as evidence of indifference and short term thinking, of a preference for instant solutions and especially quick successes, as a feeble attempt to justify itself.

### **Terrorist - for who?**

The whole problem is complexly tangled up in the definitions of 'terrorist' and of 'war against terrorism'. These are decided and fixed only by America. That America in the meantime claims the right to use international justice according to its own discretion or to ignore it - that is not called terrorism. Israel's intervention in civilian districts in Palestine with a massive majority of weapons is then called 'crime prevention', not terrorism. If Bin Laden remains untraceable for 'almighty' America, there is still one old enemy, Saddam Hussein, who can be called a terrorist and whom the Americans can still deal with.

Suppose these men really are a great danger to the free West. Even if we accept this just like that, it gives America no right to transgress international boundaries. The repression through the western economy, the dollar and the euro, the political protection of own interests, the environment pollution, which leave half of mankind groaning in poverty, may absolutely not be called 'terrorism'... oh no. It is precisely this arrogant and superior power politics from America that brings Christianity in great parts of the world into discredit. All these political and economical forms of Western dominance fall on top of the many oversimplified and provocative comments made by famous preachers, with the TV ministers heading the tribe. The indignation arising from the *fatwah*, the 'anathema' which is then pronounced from the Islam side is incredible. It is hypocrisy which discredits Christianity for the umpteenth time.

### **Call to prayer**

The 21<sup>st</sup> century has only just begun and already the real way to world peace has been blocked as much by American Christianity as by militant Islamites. This means a setback for mission work, church life and evangelism. Because of this display of power, including religious machismo by both sides, Christians and Moslems are going to avoid each other again or worse: are going to stand on opposite sides again, loaded with all sorts of prejudices.

How should God bless America? Let us by alle means pray that God will spare this "free" Western world with all her material and consumptive desires from drifting further away from the Gospel. May He guard them also from further flirtation with the all too worldly Israel on Palestinian ground. Let us also pray for the prisoners in the Islam world, the Bin Ladens with his many *Al Qaida* fighters, the Saddams, the Arafats. Pray for God's blessing for America and for the *dar al-islam*, the Islamite part of the world, and for the rest of the world as well. Let us ask for God's blessing, the blessing for the whole world, in Christ Jesus who came as the high priest who offered Himself for the sake of others, for God's world. Let us pray: Kyrie eleison, Lord have mercy!



## The Cross and the Crescent Moon

Cross and crescent moon. Two symbols which represent two world religions. We see crosses on church towers around the whole world. It is the ultimate symbol of Christianity. The sickle or crescent moon can also be found across the world as symbols of Islam. Back in early Islam we find the sickle along with a star as emblem in mosaics. It can now be found on nearly all the flags of Islamic countries. The Red Cross has an Islamic equivalent - the Red Crescent. White canisters bearing red sickles (le croissant Rouge, Red Crescent) can be seen in areas where there is war in the Middle East. In this article we do not only want to look at the external differences, but at the heart of the matter: what do Christians and Moslems confess about God and mankind?

This is not an academic question. You and I will have to face it more and more. In the streets and in the locality, in meetings between Christian and their Moslem fellow citizens and their children, Also in the churches, where a group of refugees can suddenly find themselves placed, Arabs or Iranians. Sometimes they need assistance in order to be able to follow the church service. Sometimes a translation must be provided in order for them to understand anything. It is not only language which can be a problem but the totally new things which they hear. What does a Moslem feel if he hears a sermon about Jesus, Son of God or if these words are sung - "glory be to God the Father", or "glory be to God, the Son, glory be to God the Spirit, Great Jehovah Three in one, Halleluja"?

### The Completely Different One

Halleluja. But the Iranian man in the church pew will certainly have to swallow hard. Words which are familiar, devout words for the Christian, are new, radical and shocking for Him. He grew up with *Allahu akbar*; God is greater. God is infinite, and high and lifted up, the Completely Different One, comparable to nothing and nobody else. He grew up believing that God is not a procreating God and therefore cannot have a Son.

When he was very young he was taught the words of the scriptures (and I mean the other scriptures, the Koran). Special attention was paid to sura 112, one of the small chapters at the end of the Koran, also called the sura of purity. The pure faith is expressed as follows:

*In the name of God, the compassionate Merciful one.*

*Say (you Mohammed, to your people): He, God is one, the Steady (the Self Sufficient),*

*He has not begotten. Nor was He begotten. Nobody is as He.*

The last words in Arabic contain a very forceful denial, three times.

### About the author:

Herman Takken works for Evangelism & Moslems in Amersfoort, a foundation which witnesses amongst Moslems in the Netherlands. He studied Islam and Arabic in the Selly Oak Colleges in Birmingham. He was in Lebanon because of the *Morgenlandzending* (Action Chretienne and Orient). He has visited various Arabic countries for evangelisation and diaconal purposes.

## EVANGELIE & MOSLIMS

### Allahu akbar

A visitor to a mosque hears Allahu akbar continually in the ritual prayer. It is the most frequent saying in the call to prayer as well. Five times a day the following words echo over the rooftops in Islamic countries:

*Allahu akbar (4x) (literally = God is greater)*

*I confess that there is no other god than God/Allah (2x)*

*I confess that Mohammed is the messenger from God (2x)*

*Come to prayer (2x)*

*Come to the good (2x)*

*Allahu akbar (2x)*

*There is no god apart from God*

It is as though they constantly want to say: God is greater.

Greater than we can imagine. *Allahu akbar* (together with the confession of faith: there is no god beside Allah) is whispered in the ears of babes; it is said constantly during a circumcision or pilgrimage, in times of war it is a battle cry; these words are the last words on a death bed.

### All emphasis on unity

In the call to prayer, we hear not only the "*allahu akbar*" but also the Islamic confession of faith. The second and third line is short and to the point: *lah ilahah illah allah*, no god beside Allah and Mohammed is the messenger of Allah. In Arabic, it is a saying of only 8 words, in which the core of the Islamic confession is given expression. Apart from being the One who is High and Lifted up (*allahu akbar*) He is also the One and Only apart from whom there is no god. A Moslem repeats these words again and again. The view of god is



A Coptic church in the midst of mosques in a village in Upper-Egypt.  
Photo Tjerk S. de Vries

decided first and foremost by the unicity and transcendence of God. This, alongside the similarities, at the same time forms the most real difference with the Christian faith. No difference between the faith of Moslems and Christians is as real as the view of God. This has everything to do with the unique way Christians speak about Jesus, but also with a vision of mankind and of what God requires of every individual.

### **No Protector apart from God**

The content of the confession of faith is clearly evident in the Koran, but this confession is nowhere to be found literally. There are other expressions which virtually say the same. For example, we read more than once: "There is no other God besides Him", and we come across the term *min dun Allah*. The best translation of this is "outside of God", "except God" or even stronger "exclusive of God", literally: "away from" or "apart from" God.

Sura 2:107: *Apart from God* you do not have any protector or helper.

Sura 22:12: He (who serves other gods) calls upon something *in place of God* that cannot harm nor help him. That is the ultimate heresy.

Sura 29:17 and 41 (sura 'the spider'): But you serve idols *instead of God (min dun Allah)* and you bring forth blasphemy. Those who you serve *instead of God (min dun Allah)* do not have any power to provide with all you need in order to live.

Look to God for the fulfilling of your needs and bring Him your thanks... Those who have chosen for themselves protectors *instead of God* are like spiders who have chosen a house for themselves. And the spider's house is the most fragile of all. If only they would realise that. God knows everything that they call upon in His place (*min dunihi*)... Worshippers of idols shut God out, take no account of Him. They do not let God be God. Mohammed opposed this with complete abandon. He never grew tired of calling his Mecca people to leave their many false gods. This is the context of sura 22:12

### **Criticism of Christians**

In later years these verses were also used to oppose Christians because they know Jesus as Protector and Mediator. There has always been much criticism from Moslems of what Christians believe or should believe. For example, if Moslems criticise 'the deification of a human person' or 'the belief in three gods', then this is right. There are quite a few misconceptions about what Christians believe, partly because of what the Koran says. If, as in sura 29:17, the verb - 'to choose / take for oneself' or 'adopt' (more than 120 times in the Koran) is used, the thought behind this is that people create gods for themselves or think that God is a procreating God.

We read in sura 19:81 and 88: *And they have chosen for themselves other gods instead of God in order to assume power*

through them... And they say 'The Compassionate One has taken a child for himself'. And in sura 72:3: The majesty of our God is great and lifted up. He has not taken either companion nor child for himself. This thought is projected into what Christians possibly believe. Sura 5:116: And when God said: 'O Isa, son of Marjam, have you said to the people: 'Take me and my mother as gods next to God?' He said: "Praise to You! It does not become me to say something to which I have no right..."

Even with the best and most complete explanation of the Bible, Moslems will reject the Christian doctrine of the incarnation. Jesus is merely a man. He is 'the son of Mary', not 'the son of God'. The story in the Koran of the virgin birth of Jesus is in this context, too. The thought that God manifested Himself in human form is viewed as an attack on his godliness and his unity.

How do Christians answer this? What do they say to Moslems who out of holy zeal, want to maintain the chasm between God and man? What is the fundamental meaning of the Islamic image of god and man?

### God's omnipotence contained?

The Anglican Bishop and Islam expert Kenneth Cragg has given much thought to these very questions. He says that Moslems so to say unintentionally shut God up in a heavenly prison. The Islamic theology creates boundaries, within which God must remain. In so doing they restrict His omnipotence. The *Allahu akbar* is valid only in so much as Moslems allow since God is not allowed to become identical with man nor to come too close to man.

The law which does not permit man to rise to heaven, at the same time forbids God to come to earth. In Moslem eyes, God would no longer be God if he bridged that chasm Himself. For this reason the very thought of the incarnation must be opposed. Immanuel could never be one of his names; "The Steady One" is (in sura 112). We could also translate this as "the Self Sufficient" or "the immovable and indestructible Rock". The Islam God continues to be all what He is, He will never 'make himself nothing' (Philippian 2:6-8)

We read in Philippians 2 that Jesus Christ being in very nature God, did not cling on to his equality with God, but laid it aside to take the very nature of a servant in human likeness, and became obedient even to give His life on the cross. The Son of God is the Servant King, He was obedient to the last; His love was 'until the end' (John 13:1).

### Jesus the Servant of the Lord

Many Moslem men are called *Abdallah*, servant of God. Actually, all people are 'abdallahs', servants of God. God is called Lord (*ar-Rabb*). In this, the distance between God and man is emphasised. The noticeable thing is that in the Bible Jesus also has this title, *Abdallah*, the Servant of the Lord. But there it has a completely different and special association. Jesus is *Abdallah* in a unique way, the Servant who gave Himself to bridge the gap between God and man. Through Him, people, *Abdallahs* (slaves) become children of God. In the Koran, Jesus is a special and very highly esteemed

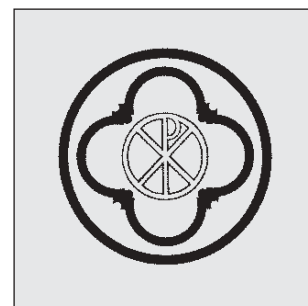
prophet. But he is no more than a prophet. He is not the Son of God, not the Crucified and Risen One, not the Mediator. Really speaking, Jesus is for *Moslems*, a model Moslem. Literally the word Moslem means 'he who surrenders (to the will of God), he who obeys God'. But this surrender and obedience have a completely different meaning to that in Philippians 2 and Romans 8.

### Vulnerable love

In spite of his beautiful name, *ar-Rahman ar-Rahim*, the compassionate Merciful, God is ultimately the Supreme Being, the untouchable and unreachable Ruler. He is the opposite of the God "who did not spare his own son, but delivered Him up for us all" (Romans 8:32). For this reason the Koran favours the name "Lord" (*Rabb*) above "Father" (*Abba*) and names such as "Shepherd" and "Redeemer" are just not given to God. A father's love makes him vulnerable. Children can cause him pain. And a good shepherd is not only recognised by the fact that he has a flock of sheep, but also because he cares for his sheep and he leaves the flock if even one is lost! This is God in Christ. His Almighty power as Ruler is combined with compassion, his government as King with his love.

### Endless love

It sounds paradoxical - Islam shuts God out. It is impossible that *Allahu akbar* should also also means that God is great in love and mercy. This exclusion (*min dun Allah*) does not mean that God does not bother himself with the affairs of men. That



would be a strange religion - no prayer, no law, no prophecy. Moslems believe that God has made *his will* known and that he requires obedience. They believe that they along with all mankind, will be judged on the Last Day, and they believe that there is grace, compassion and forgiveness from Allah. He is after all, the Ruler who has power to grant these things. But that is where the relationship ends. Up to that point and no further.

- Allah 'may' not himself, perform the redemptive act which provides the central point of rest in the life of a Christian.
- There is no text in the Koran like Hebrews 10:7: *Then I said, 'Behold, Here I am - it is written about Me in the scroll - I have come to do your will, O God'.*
- To a Moslem, God's grace does not mean that He took our sins and unrighteousness upon Himself.
- Allah is not the Judge who gave up his seat of judgement for a cross.

Moslems reject this; God must be shut out of this. His omnipotence forbids this love, it would be limited by this. *Allahu akbar*:

Christians turn this around. Nothing limits what God wants to achieve in His love. God, who out of His omnipotence and love chose the way of sacrifice, cannot and may not be

restricted. That is exactly why God is the *Allahu akbar*; greater and more surprising than mankind can imagine. God is great, because His love is infinitely great. Christians say: God is with us, Immanuel; He has lived amongst us as the man from Nazareth and is through His Spirit still very close to us.

### **'Keys' for preaching**

Nothing restricts what God's love wants to achieve. It is the key to the understanding of the gospel. Moslems repeatedly ask Christians: "If God became man, what about his government? How can God still be God if he is the same as a mere insignificant man?" The parable of the prodigal Son, or better still, the parable of the loving father (because it is really about that father), can help us here. The way the opinionated and ungrateful son acted does not mean that the father ceases to be a father. Even the fact that the father gives up all his dignity and runs to meet his son when he returns, does not change the fact that he is the father. The title 'father' is unchangeable. In a similar way God too is unchangeably God, even if He lays aside His heavenly glory and comes down to the sons of men. God could and wanted to be a Friend for mankind in Jesus.

*Our friend on earth may fail and leave us,  
But Jesus' faithfulness endures.  
Who limits his dominion ever?  
He rules creation from on high;  
All that His love and grace endeavour  
Shall Him His power not deny*

Nothing restricts what Gods wants to achieve in His love (Hymn 53, Book of Praise, Dutch: *Liedboek voor de kerken*, Gezang 291 / *Gereformeerd Kerkboek*, Gezang 37). That is how great God is: boundlessly great in love! *Allahu akbar*.

### **Crucified and Risen**

Cross and crescent. Church towers and minarets. Next to each other, just as Moslems and Christians live side by side in many places in our society. We should be striving for a society in which the *shalom* or *salam*, the real peace, acts as a great good and where people can co-exist with their various standpoints. This includes the room to say that the Cross and the Crescent Moon are not the same. The Bible shows us that Christ took up the cross, scorning its shame (Hebrews 12:2) and conquered death by following this hard road.

In terms of the content, the ways separate. The Koran underlines in sura 4:157, that Jesus is not the Crucified One. It says: "they did not kill him and they did not crucify him". Contrary to this, Christians preach "a crucified Christ, a stumbling block to the Jews and to the Greeks foolishness; but to those God has called, is Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God" (1 Corinthians 1:23-24).

News update

## *Commemoration of professor B. Holwerda (1909-1952)*

On 4 October the Archive and Documentation Center of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (liberated) commemorated the death of professor Benne Holwerda. Professor Holwerda lectured Old Testament Studies from 1945 until his sudden death on 30 April 1952 at the Theological University of the Reformed Churches (liberated) in Kampen.

As an Old Testament scholar Holwerda faced the challenges issued by modern biblical scholarship. Being a convinced reformed theologian, his aim was to define his own position on the issue. Although he did not live long enough to publish his research results, he exerted a disproportionately large influence through his students, who posthumously published a great number of his lecture notes.

Prof. Gert Kwakkel, who currently holds Holwerda's chair, gave a memorial speech on 4 October 2002 at the University in Kampen. The title of his speech was: 'Benne Holwerda: Old Testament Scholar between Reformed Dogmatics and historical-critical Bible Interpretation'. Mrs. Veenhof-Holwerda shared memories of her father and talked about the impact of his sudden death on the family. Rev. H. de Jong, a retired minister of the Netherlands Reformed Churches, told the audience how his own reading of the Old Testament was influenced by his master.

Prof. Kwakkel's speech has just been published in *De Reformatie*, Vol. 78 (2002/2003), Issues 6-9 [November 2002]. Dr. R.H. Bremmer wrote a short outline of Holwerda's biography in the *Biografisch Lexicon voor de geschiedenis van Nederlandse protestantisme*, Vol. 4, 213-214 (Kampen: Kok, 1998).



**The Idea of Office**  
by K. Sietsma

Henry Vander Kam in Mid-America Journal of Theology: *The importance of this book is far greater than its small size . . . The author also deals with the office of all believers. He does so in the sense in which the Bible instructs us in this matter and as it was emphasized again by the reformers.*

**Subject: Christian Living** Age: 15-99  
**ISBN 0-88815-065-2** Can.\$6.95 U.S.\$5.90

**Hosea: Love's Complaint**  
by Herman Veldkamp

Jealousy, adultery, pain — these are the themes that dominate the prophecy of Hosea. Against the background of his deteriorating marriage Hosea addresses an urgent message to all of God's people begging them to listen to the complaint raised by the Lord's wounded love. Herman Veldkamp skilfully illuminates the prophet's hard hitting accusations.



**Subject: Book of Hosea** Age: 16-99  
**ISBN 0-88815-031-8** Can.\$9.95 U.S.\$8.90



**What the Spirit Says**  
**to the Churches**  
by Jerome M. Julien

Jelle Tuininga in Christian Renewal: *The sermons are easy to read and to understand. . . the book is recommended, and would make a welcome gift.*

**Subject: Rev. 2 & 3** Age: 12-99  
**ISBN 0-921100-76-0** Can.\$9.95 U.S.\$8.90

**Search the Scriptures**  
by C. Van der Waal

Why do we accept the Bible and reject the Koran, the Edda, and the holy books of India? The author has no other answer than: "The Bible itself claims to be the sole revelation of God. And faith accepts this claim." In this series the author invites us to compare Scripture with Scripture, to look for themes that appear in book after book, to understand the framework of the divine plan of salvation. The author wrote this series to be used in high schools as a guideline to how we should search the Scriptures.

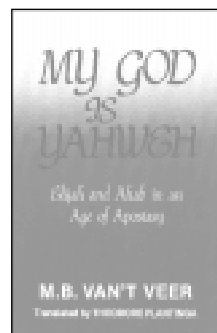
*Ideal for introductory Bible Study!*

**Vol. 1 Subject: Genesis & Exodus**  
ISBN 0-88815-021-0 Can.\$4.95 U.S.\$4.50  
**Vol. 2 Subject: Leviticus - Ruth**  
ISBN 0-88815-022-9 Can.\$4.95 U.S.\$4.50  
**Vol. 7 Subject: Matthew - Luke**  
ISBN 0-88815-027-X Can.\$4.95 U.S.\$4.50  
**Vol. 8 Subject: John - Romans**  
ISBN 0-88815-028-8 Can.\$4.95 U.S.\$4.50

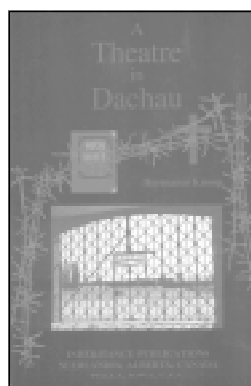


**My God is Yahweh**  
by M.B. Van't Veer  
**Elijah and Ahab in an Age**  
**of Apostasy**

The time in which Ahab and Elijah lived and opposed each other was of special importance for the progress of God's Kingdom during the old dispensation. It was a vital stage in the history of divine revelation.



**Subject: 1 Kings 16-19** Age: 16-99  
**ISBN 0-88815-035-0** Can.\$14.95 U.S.\$12.95



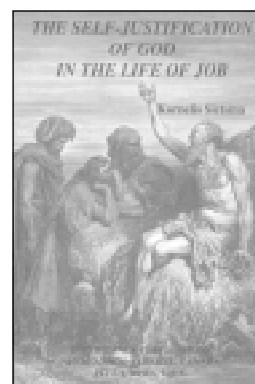
**A Theatre in Dachau**  
by Hermanus Knoop

C. Bouwman in Una Sancta: *The book stood for years on the shelf of my parental home, somewhat formidable with its Dutch language and obscure title. It's now appeared in English, with an equally mysterious (and very accurate!) title: A Theatre in Dachau. I read it, and am sorry I did not read it in my youth. What a treasure of encouragement is tucked away in this gem of a book!*

**Time: 1940-1944** Age: 14-99  
**ISBN 0-921100-20-5** Can.\$14.95 U.S.\$12.90

**The Self-Justification of**  
**God in the Life of Job**  
by Kornelis Sietsma

Christine Farenhorst in Christian Renewal: *This small volume comprises seven sermons, all written and preached by Rev. K. Sietsma almost sixty-five years ago. All seven take their texts from Job with the exception of one which deals with Lord's Day 10 of the Heidelberg Catechism.*



While reading these sermons both my husband and myself became convinced of the fact that Rev. Sietsma was a compassionate and caring shepherd. His concern for and knowledge of the sheep in his care is obvious. The message of the all-powerful providential hand of God, so necessary for our own time, is conveyed.

**Subject: The Book of Job** Age: 14-99  
**ISBN 0-921100-24-8** Can.\$10.95 U.S.\$8.90

Please order from your favourite book supplier, or directly from

**Inheritance Publications**

**Box 154, Neerlandia, Alberta Canada T0G 1R0**  
**Tel. 780-674-3949** Fax 775-890-9118

Please add \$2.50 per order and enclose payment  
Canadian customers: please also add 7% G.S.T.

**in the U.S.: Box 366, Pella, Iowa, 50219**  
**Toll Free Order Number in Canada & U.S.A.**

**1-800-563-3594**

**e-mail: inhpubl@telusplanet.net**

**http://www.telusplanet.net/public/inhpubl/webip/ip.htm**

**The address of the Committee on Relations with Churches Abroad of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands is:**

*Postbus 499  
8000 AL Zwolle  
the Netherlands  
Phone: 31-38-4270470  
Fax: 31-38-4270411  
E-mail: [bbk@gbouw.nl](mailto:bbk@gbouw.nl)*

**Colour brings out in full relief  
– by means of slanting beams –  
the map of all the world.  
Increasingly far-reaching is the Light!  
Over the quarters It will claim  
an ever larger territory;  
each corner of the earth  
must yield to it ultimately.**

**The hands of the clock in God's hand  
mark the Light's feats of conquest on earth  
until in the fulness of time  
every one of the four winds of heaven  
shall be filled with the glory of the Lamb.**

*Lux Mundi: Light shining upon this world.*

*This cover was made according to the design  
of J.P. Gootjes from Zwolle.*