

## SUMMARY

This book begins with an excursus on the biography of a Moluccan minister in the Netherlands. This story shows that the roots of religious spirituality originates far back in time and lies geographically far away from the lowlands at the North Sea.

Those roots lie in the Moluccas. In the old Moluccan sagas there are stories of the creation of heaven and earth. It took place in a special location, namely the mountain Nunusaku. There lived the 'first man' who was created, the 'Alifuru'. The life of the first people was characterized by 'adat' and connectedness as expressed in the 'pela'. In their way of life and their stories, the original Moluccan religion was continued in the 'agama Nunusaku', which got its name because of its eternal connection with this mountain. We explore this primal religion through a reconstruction in Chapter 1.

With the rise of spice merchants, world religions were introduced in the Moluccas. Both Islam and Christianity – of the Roman Catholic and Protestant variants – kept their distance from the Moluccan believers. The Arabs and Javanese who propagated Islam didn't succeed to remove Islam in Maluku from its religious past: the agama Nunusaku. Also for the Portuguese Catholic and the Dutch Calvinist missionaries this task proved to be too difficult. Against the wishes of the Roman Catholic and Calvinist missionaries, the pre-Christian tradition of religious practices and rules continued to exist among the Moluccan Christians as agama Ambon. In Chapter 2, we discover the impact of the conversion to Christianity on the Moluccan islands, based on stories about historical figures such as Francis Xavierius, Joseph Kam and Pattimura.

Christianity in the Moluccas was strongly marked by the colonial times. In it, the battle of the spice trade monopoly was central. However, it never came to a decimation of the agama Nunusaku. In the spring of 1951, Moluccan soldiers from the KNIL – Royal Dutch Indian Army – had to leave Indonesia with their families and crewmembers due to the decolonization of the Dutch Indies. Most of them were Moluccan Calvinists. They took their religious baggage to the Netherlands. As time went by, they were confronted with their cultural and religious Moluccan identity in the country of the Dutch Protestant missionaries. In exile, they were faced with the tensions and questions about how they should behave as Calvinist Moluccans. They also questioned if their pre-Christian religious experiences - from agama Nunusaku - on the other hand were still alive. While in the Netherlands, the Christian lifestyle was strongly swayed by the developments in church and society – including the process of secularization – Moluccan Calvinists continued to cling to the religious practices based on standards inherited from Moluccan 'traditum'. Chapter 3 mainly describes how the GIM

(Moluccan Evangelical Church) developed from an ethnic church to a spiritual home for various members of the Dutch society.

This did not come easily. Young Moluccan theologians who came from Maluku and their colleagues who grew up and/or were born in the Netherlands sought the right relationship between Christ and culture. Chapter 4 shows how they found each other in the MTB (Moluccan Theological Council). The central question was: How can Moluccan Calvinists in the Netherlands live faithfully to their identity and religious practices that were brought from Maluku? The advantage their seminars was that it could be done internally among the Moluccan ministers to clarify the Moluccan identity and position in the Netherlands. Questions were raised about the quality of Dutch and Moluccan theological training. The search for answers to this question put the members of the MTB in a field of tension between agama Nunusaku and Western theology. However, they continued to look for opportunities for a true relationship between gospel and culture among the Moluccans in the Netherlands. Their investment resulted in the publication of two MTB issues showing their theological quest and their findings: *Piring Natar* and *Tete Nene Mojang*.

Both publications were found to be the beginning of contextual theology of Moluccans in the Netherlands. This was broadened by the international meetings between theologians from various continents at the 'Houten conferences'. Here the question of the MTB was expanded: How can Christ be confessed in different cultures?

This question was at stake in the theological disputes in Africa. Here, a theological method to cope with the question had also been developed. This emerged on a 'Houten-conference', where the African theologian Kwame Bediako spoke. He showed that all forms of theology are essentially contextual. In chapter 5 we elaborate a still hardly used term in the theological work of Bediako: 'integrity in conversion (wholeness in repentance). This shows how important the clarification of the relationship with the genuine pre-Christian tradition is for the development of an appropriate contemporary theology. In my opinion, integrity in conversion as a paradigm is the key to understanding the religious history of the Moluccan Calvinists in the Netherlands and their religious identity. I characterize their lives in-between two worlds with liminality. The development of an own theology in this liminality based on integrity in conversion offers possibilities for a '(three) double transformation', a process that I will mention hereinafter.

In the last chapter I give a comprehensive overview of the questions and findings so far and draw, among other things, the conclusion that knowledge of and reflection on agama Nunusaku is a sine qua non for the development of a Moluccan Theology in Western context.

The main conclusions concern:

a. The role of the agama Nunusaku in Moluccan Theology in the Netherlands: Over time, Moluccan theologians learned from MTB activities to look differently at the relationship between Christian faith and the agama Nunusaku by means of the concept of contextual theology. In the international Houten conferences, agama Nunusaku was positioned on the theological world stage. Its position as pre-Christian religion was undisputed in the history and in the development of an own Moluccan Theology in Netherlands.

b. Integrity in Conversion: This central concept is of enduring significance for Moluccan Theology in the Netherlands. The special position of Moluccans in the Netherlands gets historical meaning through the paradigms of 'liminality' and 'Integrity in Conversion'. Integrity in conversion serves as a link between the identity of the Moluccan Calvinist in the Netherlands, the pre-Christian roots of the agama Nunusaku, the special colonial history of the Netherlands with the Moluccans and the process of development of Calvinism among the Moluccans in the Netherlands, in past, present and future.

c. The (triple) double transformation:

1. The transformation of Christianity because of the agama Nunusaku, with as central example the piring natzar, which keeps a pivotal role in Christian faith.

2. The transformation of the agama Nunusaku because of the universal Christianity: Without universal theology, the development of an own theology in the Netherlands is impossible. The particular history of the Moluccans in the Netherlands is also reflected in their creed, which is part of the universal church in Christo.

3. The transformation of the social context: The ubiquitous respect for God in the agama Nunusaku can help to approach God appropriately in the social context of the Netherlands and upgrade this to a 'higher level'.