University of Groningen

The “Biographical Lives” of Missionary Barend Schuurman

Busschers, Iris

Published in:
Social Sciences and Missions

DOI:
[10.1163/18748945-03001006](https://doi.org/10.1163/18748945-03001006)

IMPORTANT NOTE: You are advised to consult the publisher's version (publisher's PDF) if you wish to cite from it. Please check the document version below.

Document Version
Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

Publication date:
2017

[Link to publication in University of Groningen/UMCG research database](#)

Citation for published version (APA):

Busschers, I. (2017). The “Biographical Lives” of Missionary Barend Schuurman: Spatial and Temporal Contexts in Biographical Renderings of Schuurman’s Life. *Social Sciences and Missions*, 30(1-2), 95-118. <https://doi.org/10.1163/18748945-03001006>

Copyright

Other than for strictly personal use, it is not permitted to download or to forward/distribute the text or part of it without the consent of the author(s) and/or copyright holder(s), unless the work is under an open content license (like Creative Commons).

The publication may also be distributed here under the terms of Article 25fa of the Dutch Copyright Act, indicated by the “Taverne” license. More information can be found on the University of Groningen website: <https://www.rug.nl/library/open-access/self-archiving-pure/taverne-amendment>.

Take-down policy

If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact us providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

Downloaded from the University of Groningen/UMCG research database (Pure): <http://www.rug.nl/research/portal>. For technical reasons the number of authors shown on this cover page is limited to 10 maximum.

The “Biographical Lives” of Missionary Barend Schuurman

Spatial and Temporal Contexts in Biographical Renderings of Schuurman’s Life

Iris Busschers*

University of Groningen

I.Busschers@rug.nl

Abstract

This article engages with the genre of missionary biography through the lens of the life of Dutch missionary Barend Schuurman and the biographical commemorations of him. Missionary Barend Schuurman worked in East Java from 1922 until he died as a prisoner of the Japanese during World War II. After his death, and during the years of the Indonesian War of Independence, Schuurman rose to prominence as one of the few missionaries who had tried to bring Christianity to the population in East Java from an ‘insider’ perspective. Bringing in questions about the spatial and temporal contexts in Barend Schuurman’s biography, this article seeks, first, to destabilise heroic missionary narratives by drawing attention to the entangled belongings present in Schuurman’s work. Secondly, the article highlights how changing contemporary concerns in Dutch mission influenced Schuurman’s rise to fame within the nationally and transnationally constituted genre of missionary biography.

* A first version of this article was presented in a panel on Transnationalism in Mission History at the European Social Science History Conference in Vienna, 2014. I want to thank the participants of that panel for their comments: Dr. Seija Jalagin, Dr. Margo S. Gewurtz, Dr. Malin Gregersen, Dr. Maryse Kruithof, and Dr. Maria Småberg. I also want to thank the two anonymous peer reviewers for their helpful suggestions and comments.

Résumé

Cet article s'intéresse au genre de la biographie missionnaire, à travers la vie du missionnaire hollandais Barend Schuurman et des commémorations biographiques autour de sa personne. Le missionnaire Barend Schuurman a travaillé dans l'est de Java, de 1922 jusqu'à sa mort, survenue alors qu'il était prisonnier des Japonais durant la seconde guerre mondiale. Après son décès, et pendant la guerre d'indépendance de l'Indonésie, Schuurman est devenu une figure importante, pour avoir été l'un des rares missionnaires ayant cherché à apporter le christianisme « de l'intérieur », auprès de la population de l'est de Java. En prenant en compte la dimension spatiale et temporelle de la biographie de Barend Schuurman, cet article vise, premièrement, à questionner les récits missionnaires héroïques en soulignant les liens d'appartenance complexes présents dans l'œuvre de Schuurman. L'article met ensuite en évidence la manière dont les préoccupations changeantes de la mission hollandaise ont contribué à la célébrité grandissante de Schuurman, au plan national et international, dans le genre littéraire de la biographie missionnaire.

Keywords

missionary biography – mission and decolonisation – new imperial histories – missionary networks – transnationalism

Mots-clés

biographie missionnaire – mission et décolonisation – nouvelle histoire impériale – réseaux missionnaires – transnationalisme

Introduction

Missionary biographies are often characterised as repetitive narratives about Christian masculine heroes in so-called 'dark lands'. It is true that traditional biographies about missionaries tend to highlight the heroic to the extent of becoming hagiographic. Biographical texts about missionary workers also commonly reiterate narratives about Christian self-sacrifice in the context of conversion of 'uncivilised' populations at the mission site. As such, a dismissal of missionary biographies as conservative, hagiographic and uniform is not unjustified. What this dismissal does not acknowledge, however, are the ways in

which historians can make use of the very nature of missionary biographical narratives, nor does it recognise the space that might be opened up for critical questions within the bounds of the genre.

In this article, I engage with the genre of missionary biographical narratives through the lens of the life of one particular missionary, Barend Schuurman, and the commemoration of that life in biographical publications. Three names frequently appear in Dutch mission historiography about the pre-WWII period: Hendrik Kraemer, Albert Kruyt and Nicolaas Adriani.¹ These three were also some of the few Dutch Reformed missionary workers – only one of these three officially bore the title missionary – who received their own printed biography.² Between 1945 and 1950, however, another name also rose to prominence: that of missionary Barend Schuurman, who worked in East Java from 1922 until he died there as prisoner of the Japanese in 1945. In the following, I engage with Schuurman's biography in two ways. First, I look at the networks of belonging in Schuurman's life, and reflect on the extent to which this allows for new reimaginings of missionary lives. Secondly, I analyse the different representations and commemorations of Schuurman in biographical renderings of his life, and examine the effect of a changing missionary and colonial context on recasting narratives about missionary lives and the rise to fame of certain missionary figures.

For this article, I have made use of the archival files pertaining to Barend Schuurman in the archives of the *Nederlandsche Zendelinggenootschap* (abbreviated as NZG), the mission society for which Schuurman worked.³ For the second part of this article in particular, I consulted the biographical and commemorative texts which appeared about Schuurman in the period after his death.⁴ Last but not least, I consulted the published texts written by Barend

1 In this article, the term mission is used for those Calvinist (Reformed Protestant) mission societies who were united in the *Samenwerkende Zendingcorporaties* (abbreviated as SZC) and were affiliated with, although not officially part of, the Dutch Reformed Church (*Herformde Kerk*). Among the organisations united in the SZC was the *Nederlandsch Zendelinggenootschap* (abbreviated as NZG), for which Barend Schuurman worked. Reformed and Calvinist are used interchangeably in this article. On the SZC: S.C. van Randwijck, *Handelen en denken in dienst der zending: Oegstgeest, 1897–1942*, 's-Gravenhage: Het Boekencentrum, 1981.

2 For a brief analysis of Dutch missionary biographies: Elsbeth Locher-Scholten, "Religie als beroep: zendingsarbeiders in Nederlands-Indië, 1890–1942", in Mirjam de Baar, Yme Kuiper, Hans Renders (eds.), *Biografie & religie: de religieuze factor in de biografie*, Amsterdam: Boom, 2011, pp. 148–165. A more detailed analysis will follow in my PhD Dissertation (expected 2018).

3 Utrecht, Het Utrecht's Archief (HUA), Archive Raad voor de Zending (RvdZ) 1102–1: 952–954; 1015; 3271; 3529; 4269; Utrecht, HUA, RvdZ 1102–2: 6744.

4 C.W. Nortier, "Barend Schuurman", *Nederlandsch Zendingsblad* (NZ) (1945), 26–27; Drya Mes-

Schuurman himself.⁵ As I come to Barend Schuurman from the angle of cultural and religious history, with a specific interest in biographical commemorations, a theological evaluation of Schuurman does not fall within the scope of the present research.⁶

The interpretative framework of this article was informed by collective memory studies and work on imperial networks and transnationalism. In light of the special issue of which this article is a part, I want to briefly reflect on my approach to the latter two here.⁷ Transnationalism has a complex theoretical background and I cannot do justice to it in the space of this article.⁸ I employ the term in the context of an interest in the networked nature of Dutch missions, which I believe will further efforts to question the isolated nature of Dutch Calvinist missions. I approach the Dutch mission of the NZG on East Java as a religious project within a constellation of multiple colonial projects, which sometimes intersected with other colonial projects and sometimes opposed them. Following this approach within 'new imperial histories', I explore the different networks in which mission and its individual workers – in this case Barend Schuurman – acted, the ideas which they adopted from these different circles, and the manners in which they

taka, "Ontmoeting met Dominé Schuurman gedurende een dag en een nacht (uit het Javaans vertaald)", NZ (1947), 103–104; HUA, ARvdZ 1102–1, 952; Carl Wilhelm Nortier, "Barend Schuurman: Zending Bij de Gratie Gods", Written Copy of Speech, *Radiotoespraak N.C.R.V.*, July 12, 1948; the biographical remembrances published in: B.M. Schuurman, *Over Alle Bergen: Geschriften van Dr B.M. Schuurman*, 's Gravenhage: D.A. Daamen, 1951; J.J. Buskes, *Hoera voor het Leven*, Amsterdam: De Brug, 1959, 92–97.

- 5 See the bibliographies of Schuurman in *Over Alle Bergen* and Geert Hoekstra, *Dr. Barend Schuurman: zijn persoon en werk als zendingstheoloog op Java*, Unpublished Thesis: Evangelische Theologische Faculteit Heverlee, 1989.
- 6 Others have written about Barend Schuurman in light of his theological contributions: Hoekstra, *Dr. Barend Schuurman*; Karel Steenbrink, *Dutch Colonialism and Indonesian Islam: Contacts and Conflicts 1596–1950*, Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1993, pp. 113–116.
- 7 Cf. Iris Busschers, 'Missionary Commemoration in a Colonial World: Dutch Calvinist Missionary Obituaries as Collective Memory (1930–1951)', *Swedish Missiological Themes*, 100(4), 437–463.
- 8 See: Steven Vertovec, *Transnationalism*, London; New York: Routledge, 2009; For the uses of transnationalism in history: C.A. Bayly et al., 'AHR Conversation: On Transnational History', *American Historical Review* 111 (5), 2006, pp. 1441–1464; Kevin Grant, Philippa Levine, and Frank Trentmann, "Introduction", in Kevin Grant, Philippa Levine, and Frank Trentmann (eds.), *Beyond Sovereignty: Britain, Empire and Transnationalism, c. 1860–1950*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007, pp. 1–15; Pierre-Yves Saunier, *Transnational History*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2013.

appropriated them into their own work.⁹ A similar approach can be taken in analysing biographical texts about missionary workers. In both instances, the transnational then figures as the spatial configuration of some of these networks.

In its most elemental meaning, transnationalism is used to denote that which transcends the boundaries of nation states. An evident employment of the concept in mission history can be found in Steven Vertovec's definition of transnationalism as involving "sustained linkages and ongoing exchanges among non-state actors based across national borders".¹⁰ While the NZG was officially not bound to state or church, and could as such be considered the non-state actor of Vertovec's definition, the work of Dutch missions concentrated solely on the Dutch East Indies, or colonial Indonesia, one of two Dutch colonies. To the missionaries, this would not have been understood as outside of the borders of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. My use of the term transnational in this article then, does not refer to these interactions between the Netherlands and mission sites in colonial Indonesia. Instead, I use it to refer to persons, organisations or networks that functioned outside of the bounds of these geographical spaces. A second manner in which I use the transnational is in the missionary idea of a Kingdom of God, in which the mission identified itself as part of a transnational initiative for "the evangelization of the world in this generation".¹¹

Part I Barend Schuurman's Networks of Belonging

Beginnings: The Netherlands

Barend Martinus Schuurman (b. 10 April 1889) grew up as the third son of a minister. The family belonged to the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (*Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland*), a church which from 1892 onwards united two groups that had seceded from the Dutch Reformed Church (*Nederlandse Hervormde Kerk*). Barend Schuurman initially planned to follow in his father's footsteps and to that end he studied theology at the *Vrije Universiteit Amster-*

9 Alan Lester, 'Imperial Circuits and Networks: Geographies of the British Empire', *History Compass* 4(1), 2006, 124–141; Alan Lester, 'Colonial Networks, Australian Humanitarianism and the History Wars', *Geographical Research* 44(3), 2006, 229–241; Remco Raben, 'A New Dutch Imperial History? Perambulations in a Prospective Field', *BMGN – Low Countries Historical Review* 128(1), 2013, 5–30.

10 Vertovec, *Transnationalism*, pp. 3.

11 John Raleigh Mott, *The Evangelization of the World in This Generation*, London, 1902.

dam (vU). During his studies, however, he changed his mind about becoming a minister and opted to become a missionary instead. In preparation, he began studies in Javanese, Malay and religion at Leiden University.

The *Nederlandsche Christen-Studenten Vereniging* (NCSV) was an active player in Christian student life in the Netherlands at the time. This association was modelled on, among others, the UK-based Student Christian Movement.¹² Barend Schuurman was an active member of the NCSV. It was a place where he found an intellectual home, even though relationships between the NCSV and the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands were difficult.¹³ In the circles of the NCSV the relationship between Christianity and social, political and cultural issues were frequently discussed. In the context of WWI these questions were felt as particularly urgent. For Schuurman, it meant a further embrace of the immediacy of, in Kraemer's words, the "Universal Church", but it also introduced doubts about the acceptability of his views within the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands.¹⁴ And so, in 1920, he applied to become a missionary for the NZG, a mission society which, while independent from any church, was considered part of the spectrum of the Dutch Reformed Church.

At the time of his appointment as a NZG missionary on 13 July 1921, Barend Schuurman had had a very different trajectory than most missionaries of that society. His family had better means than most workers, who often had a lower middle-class background. He had received a theological university education and as such he did not follow the full six-year course programme at the mission school. Schuurman's alternative training meant that he had not been as thoroughly socialised into the missionary community as were many of his colleagues, nor was he as automatically subservient to the board members of the mission society, who partially retained their superior status through class and educational differences. Schuurman's application, however, came at a time when the cooperation of mission societies of which the NZG was a part, the *Samenwerkende Zendingcorporaties* (SZC), began to acknowledge a need for more academically trained personnel alongside its lay missionaries.¹⁵

12 A.J. Van den Berg, *Nederlandse Christen-Studenten Vereniging, 1896–1985*, 's Gravenhage: Boekencentrum, 1991, pp. 1–60; Cf: Michael Parker, *The Kingdom of Character: The Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions (1886–1926)*, Lanham: University Press of America, 1998.

13 Van den Berg, *Nederlandse Christen-Studenten Vereniging*, pp. 34–37.

14 Hendrik Kraemer, "Persoon en werk", in Schuurman, *Over Alle Bergen*, pp. 13.

15 Gerrit Noort and Huub Lems, "Nederlandse Zendingsschool en Zendingshogeschool (1905–1971)", in Gerrit Noort (eds.), *Protestantse zendingsopleiding in Nederland (1797–2010)*, Zoetermeer: Boekencentrum, 2012, pp. 85–92.

Mission in East Java

Upon his arrival in East Java in 1922, Barend Schuurman and his wife Hester née Nijhoff became part of a circle of younger missionary workers who argued for a change in missionary perspective. This change involved a shift in focus from the *desa* (or agricultural villages), where missionaries had worked among older Christian communities, to the cities. A new focus on city centres was suggested with a view to acquaint the full breath of Javanese society, including Muslims, with Christianity.¹⁶ Schuurman's missionary work in Malang, together with C.W. Nortier, Pik and missionary doctor A. Nortier, should be understood in this light.

In the 1920s and beyond, East Java was undergoing changes in terms of social and economic mobility and Indonesian nationalism. With this in mind, Kraemer was sent to Java at the behest of the Dutch Bible Society to work on Javanese culture and act as an advisor on missionary questions. While in East Java, he attended the missionary conferences and together with his missionary colleagues formulated a number of changes in missionary practice that they considered imperative for the future of Christianity in the region. Schuurman was actively involved in the suggestions put forward by Kraemer and the missionary conference, of which he himself was a part. Following their friendship in the Netherlands, where they had met at Leiden University and in the context of the NCSV, Kraemer and Schuurman corresponded frequently. In their correspondence, they kept each other abreast of personal news but also recommended and discussed internationally renowned works on theology and missiology.¹⁷

The influence of the NCSV was felt in East Java not just in terms of established friendships, but also in some of the practices introduced at the mission site. Youth work, was, for example, established in the form of camping trips. Missionary doctor A. Nortier had organised camping trips for (Muslim) students and personnel of the Mojowarno hospital since 1917, working from his own experiences in NCSV camps in the Netherlands. By 1925 more centrally coordinated trips were held which were open to all male Christians from East Java, trips which Schuurman regularly attended.¹⁸ According to Carl Nortier, these trips were not the whims of an imported "typical Anglosaxon free Christian lifestyle", as opponents would have it, but instead offered opportunities

16 C.W. Nortier, *Van Zendingarbeid tot Zelfstandige Kerk in Oost-Java*, Hoenderloo: Stichting Hoenderloo vanwege de Zendingstudieraad, 1939, pp. 175–217.

17 HUA, ARvdZ, 1102–2, 6744: Correspondence between Barend Schuurman and Hendrik Kraemer.

18 Schuurman, "Uit Oost Java", NZ, 1925, 21–23.

for communication on equal grounds between missionaries and the Javanese population in a climate that was hardening due to the rise of Indonesian nationalism.¹⁹ The missionary wives in East Java, among whom was Hester Schuurman-Nijhoff, organised similar camping trips for the Christian female population as part of their general endeavour to propagate women's work for women.²⁰

Youth work, women's work and the training of Javanese ministers were among the focal points of the practices put forward by the East Java missionary conference. The board was not always eager to approve these proposed policies. When John Mott visited East Java in 1926, his suggestions that the mission site needed more indigenous ministers, YMCA work, and women missionaries came at an opportune time. His opinion was cited by the missionary conference of East Java in their requests for approval and financial support from the board.²¹ Previously, Schuurman had alluded to Mott's opinion in *Outlook in the Muslim World* that "Protestant mission in general has subordinated direct mission among the Mohammedans to other missions", in a letter to the board in 1924 which addressed the NZG mission's new direction in East Java. In that same year Schuurman also contextualised a plea for a training institute for Javanese ministers by appealing to a conversation C.W. Nortier had had in Cairo where someone had expressed surprise that "it was possible that after seventy years of mission [in East Java], there were no independent indigenous ministers."²² In their petitions for support from the Dutch mission board, then, the missionaries of East Java did not just appeal to changing local circumstances, but contextualised these requests by addressing the perceived prestige of Dutch missions in the transnational missionary community.

In the midst of these directional changes, the establishment of Mojowarno as the first local independent congregation in 1926 marked an important step. Five years later, the East Javanese Christian Church (*Geraja Kristen Jawi Wetan*) held its first Synod as an independent church, being the second Reformed

19 Nortier, *Van Zendingssarbeid*, pp. 196–202, cf. Nortier, "Kampeeren te Wonosalem", NZ, 1925, 131–133.

20 H. Schuurman-Nijhoff, "Onze eerste meisjes-conferentie op Oost-Java", NZ, 1926, 140–141; H. Schuurman-Nijhoff, "De Vrouwen op Bale Wyata (Malang)", NZ, 1929, pp. 149–150. Cf. Iris Busschers, "Gendered Remembrance: Women in the Dutch Calvinist Mission and its Historiography, c. 1900–1942", *Trajecta* 24 (2), 2015, pp. 285–308.

21 HUA, RvdZ 1102–1, 827: Minutes of the missionary conference 1925–1927; Van Randwijck, *Handelen en Denken*, pp. 83.

22 HUA, RvdZ 1102–1, 952: Barend Schuurman to the Board. Djokja, 6 September 1924; Barend Schuurman to the Board, Nongkodjarjar, July 1924.

church to gain independent from Dutch missionaries. Kraemer was at the forefront of championing independence for Indonesian churches, although he saw an important role for Dutch missionaries as "guides towards adulthood" (*guru kadiwasan*) and in leadership positions. Independent congregations needed ministers, and it is in this context that Schuurman's primary occupation, the development of the *Bale Wiyata*, first at Kediri and from 1927 onwards at Malang, should be seen. Unlike the mission of the *Rheinische Missionsgesellschaft* (RMG) in Batak (North Sumatra), Dutch SZC missions had not appointed indigenous ministers before Dryo Mestoko was ordained in the context of the establishment of the Mojowarno congregation in 1926.²³

Transnational Networks

While the East Java missionary conference sought to integrate missionary methods proposed in the context of transnational missionary networks, Barend Schuurman also actively took part in these networks. In 1928, Schuurman was part of the Dutch delegation to the World Missionary Conference in Jerusalem. In his evaluation of the conference, Schuurman wrote that Jerusalem 1928 was partially founded in matters particular to America, which made for a certain disconnect between European and American participants. The other two reasons for convening were more familiar to Schuurman: the uncertainty created by WWI in the self-understanding of Western Christians as well as the end of the self-evidence of Western superiority and the growing nationalist sensibilities in Asia and Africa. For Schuurman, the Jerusalem conference sought to provide answers to questions that had occupied him during his time as a student as well as in missionary practice. Uniform answers were not always available, and different voices could be heard at Jerusalem, but it was the fact that these questions were debated openly and cordially, resulting in a sense of communal reinvigoration, that seems to have struck Schuurman most. He particularly admired Mott's ability to "speak to young people of all nations who require a global and yet sober and valid ideal". Moreover, he was impressed by the meeting of minds from participants across the world, and particularly the unanimous assent between "West and East": "One has to have been in the East, to realise the deep significance of this."²⁴ Back in East Java,

23 Jan Sihar Aritonang and Karel Steenbrink (eds.), *A History of Christianity in Indonesia*, Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2008, pp. 175–176, 716.

24 B.M. Schuurman, "De Zendingsconferentie van Jeruzalem", in Schuurman and Kraemer, *De Boodschap*, pp. 5–7, 12, 17.

Schuurman wrote to Kraemer about the deep impression the conference had made on him: "What I have seen, heard, and lived through there, still surges through me."²⁵

In 1930, Schuurman took an extended period of leave from mission to work on his doctorate. The pursuit was informed by a wish on Schuurman's part for deeper reflection on missionary work in East Java. It was strengthened by discussions with Kraemer who felt it would accommodate the heightened level of education among Javanese and the possibilities of opening a school for higher theological education. The board of the mission society was not necessarily in favour of Schuurman's plan, but did allow him the time off to work on his dissertation.²⁶ Because Schuurman had graduated from the VU his diploma was not recognised by Dutch state universities and he had to pursue his doctorate outside of the Netherlands. As such, he went to Zurich where he studied under Emil Brunner. His dissertation, *Mystik und Glaube in Zusammenhang mit der Mission auf Java*, appeared in 1933 and is an attempt to think through Javanese mysticism. In the last chapter of his dissertation, he tried to relate his findings to mission in Java, and came to the conclusion that mission was caught between letting Christianity dissolve into Javanese mysticism, or emphasising the institutional and rational foundations of Christianity which would isolate it from Javanese culture.²⁷ Kraemer would review this understanding unfavourably, stating that it put too much emphasis on dialectical theology, and that Schuurman had neglected a third option: Javanese conversion.²⁸

While in Europe as a doctoral student, Schuurman was introduced to the house parties of the Oxford Group. Schuurman was drawn to the style of meetings organised by the Group because of their sense of community and the possibilities for personal religious growth that this communal feeling offered. In them, he found a belonging that he missed in SZC circles in the Netherlands. Back in Java after his return from leave, he would articulate his disappointment with the Dutch missionary community in a letter to the Board:

If the mission, in all her organisational work in the background, does not have a community of people before the face of Christ, a community, in which those who return home on leave with all their difficulties, as

25 HUA, RvdZ 1102-2, 6744: Schuurman to Henk and Hijke Kraemer, Malang, 18 June 1928.

26 HUA, RvdZ 1102-1, 953: Schuurman to the Board, Malang, 9 December 1929; The Board to Schuurman, Oegstgeest, 20 January 1930.

27 Schuurman, *Mystik*; see: Van Randwijck, *Handelen en Denken*, pp. 418-421 and Hoekstra, *Dr. Barend Schuurman*, pp. 118-153 for this interpretation.

28 Kraemer, "Geloof en Mystiek", *De Opwekker* (1935), 300-343.

well as those newly departing to the mission sites, can find grounds of support for their labour, a community of people, who, on a deeper level than solely where they work, can sustain the work of mission, then the mission underestimates the powers with which it dares to combat, and will reveal itself unable to handle the task which it undertook here in the Indies.²⁹

In this evaluation of the SZC, Schuurman highlights that in the Dutch mission's move towards professionalization, it had lost that which at the Jerusalem conference too had been put forward as an important informer of mission's home base: prayer. The SZC, in turn, responded that they would not favour the interpretation of Christianity put forward by the Oxford Group over other interpretations, for it was the responsibility of the SZC to be open to many forms of Christian and missionary belonging.³⁰

Missionary Practice: Bale Wiyata and the Local

Shortly after his arrival on Java in 1922, Barend Schuurman began to articulate a view of mission's role in East Javanese society. This began with disappointment in what had been accomplished. Schuurman signalled a deficiency in appropriation of Christianity by the Javanese; they had failed to make Christianity truly their own. According to Schuurman, missionaries should stimulate Javanese discovery of their own identity, and as such he cast himself as a supporter of Indonesian nationalism: "only when there exists a natural area in which independent Javanese consciousness can be exercised and developed can the Gospel be truly assimilated," he wrote in 1923.³¹ From early on, then, Schuurman partially opposed the repression of national consciousness by the Dutch colonial government and would argue for emancipation (*ontvoogding*) of the Javanese Christians from the side of Dutch mission.³²

Schuurman's own contribution towards an integration of Javanese culture and Christianity was the foundation of *Bale Wiyata*, a training school for Javanese ministers. The school was meant to stimulate the development of Javanese Christian theology, and until Javanese Christianity was able to produce such thought, or so Schuurman argued, mission should provide the proper environ-

29 HUA, RvdZ 1102-1, 4269: Schuurman to the Board, Malang, 29 May 1933.

30 HUA, RvdZ 1102-1, 4269: D. Crommeling to Barend Schuurman, Oegstgeest, 14 May 1934.

31 HUA, RvdZ 1102-1, 952: Schuurman to the Board, Kediri 9 March 1923.

32 Missionaries in East Java who supported Indonesian nationalism generally supported a particular form of nationalism, eg. Budi Utomo.

ment for it to come to fruition.³³ In part, Schuurman sought to accomplish this by taking important markers of Javanese identity and incorporating them into the design of the school. The name *Bale Wiyata* was an old Javanese expression for a school of religious education, and referencing the Muslim *pesantren*, it was to welcome anyone who had an interest in learning about Christian religious life, including non-Christians. The buildings mirrored Javanese architecture. And the curriculum of the school included Javanese history and “proper Javanese language (...) and traditions”, among which were “Javanese melody” and *gamelan*.³⁴ Betraying the influence of the NCSV and the Oxford Group, *Bale Wiyata* was conceptualised as a school of communal living between teachers and students with the aim of deepening the spiritual life of the residents, a context in which demarcations of difference fell away.³⁵ For Schuurman, the opening of the school meant that, “now we can finally pronounce our whole hearts and the content of the worldwide Gospel in its entire breadth, length, and depth to the Javanese”.³⁶ To further this aim, and in answer to the agenda of Jerusalem 1928, Schuurman wrote two versions of a Javanese doctrine of faith in which he tried to move beyond translation of Western concepts and instead sought to address Christianity from ‘inside’ Javanese culture.³⁷

Schuurman's missionary practice cannot just be contextualised in the change of perspective in the East Java mission set out above. Others before him had introduced a Javanese interpretation of Christianity, most notably C.L. Coolen and Paulus Tosari. Schuurman considered these interpretations too lenient when it came to Christian doctrine, but did acknowledge that in some ways his approach was a return to founder of the NZG mission in East Java, Jellesma.³⁸ The idea for a theological training school also had a long history. It had been missionaries Jan and Ary Kruyt who had first suggested it around 1900, and the NZG had previously appointed two theologically trained missionaries to put it into practice. Moreover, elsewhere in the Indonesian archipelago, mission organisations outside the SZC had founded theologically oriented training schools. These included RMG mission schools in Batak (since 1883) and Nias

33 Schuurman, “Proeve van Theologisch Denken op Java”, in *Over Alle Bergen*, pp. 148–149.

34 HUA, RvdZ 1102–1, 952: Barend Schuurman to the Board, Malang, [no date: received February 1927].

35 Nortier, *Van Zendingenarbeid*, pp. 184–186; Barend Schuurman, “Bale Wyata in 1934”, *Mededeelingen*, 1936.

36 HUA, RvdZ 1102–1, 952: Barend Schuurman to the Board, Malang, [no date].

37 Kraemer, “Kort Apercu van Schuurman's Javaanse Geloofsleer”, in: Schuurman, *Over Alle Bergen*, 201–210; B.M. Schuurman, *Pamblake Kekeraning Ngaurip* part I and II, 1951.

38 HUA, RvdZ 1102–1, 952: “Zending en Volk”.

(since 1901), as well as the theological school of the *Gereformeerde* mission which had been present in Central Java from 1911 onwards.³⁹ The latter was the mission site for which Schuurman was initially intended, before he became a NZG missionary.

Belongings

To Schuurman, it was through a Javanese appropriation of Christianity that a global Christian belonging could be realised. Of his own work and position, Schuurman thought in terms of a global sphere, and in his personal letters to the board and to his colleagues he would identify with the idea of "mission" and "the work" as a global endeavour, and not one bounded primarily by mission site, nation, or colony.⁴⁰ According to Ian Tyrrell, "Moral reform groups and missionaries often thought of their work as analogous to empire – but a kind of Christian moral empire that rose above 'nation,' and one nobler in aspiration than the grubby motives of gold and glory."⁴¹ Schuurman's exposition on the moral "duty", or rather "privilege", of the Dutch to "serve" Indonesia by way of bringing Christianity to its population, can be read in this light, as well as his admonishment that diluted and covert political interests had no place in a labour directed by the idea of God's Kingdom.⁴² Simultaneously, however, his texts also echo ideas current in Dutch colonial Ethical policy; a policy which had been introduced circa 1900 and which was articulated in terms of a Dutch moral obligation to "uplift" the Indonesian population.⁴³ Similarly, a strand of Dutch colonialism is mirrored in Schuurman's advocacy of Javanese cultural self-discovery under mission's guidance. Dutch colonial administrators commonly fashioned themselves as curators of knowledge about and the protectors of regional cultures in the Indonesian archipelago, by means of which local elites were kept in power and broader nationalist initiatives were silenced.⁴⁴ In the context of *Bale Wiyata*, missionaries decided what belonged in the curricu-

39 Van Randwijck, *Handelen en Denken*, pp. 476.

40 Eg. HUA, RvdZ 1102–1, 6744: Schuurman to Kraemer, Kediri, 21 June [no year].

41 Ian R. Tyrrell, *Reforming the World: The Creation of America's Moral Empire*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010, pp. 12.

42 Schuurman, "Zending, een Plicht, een Privilege", *De Opwekker* (1921), 237–249 and "Zending en Volk".

43 Elsbeth Locher-Scholten, *Ethiek in Fragmenten*, Utrecht: Hes, 1981.

44 Frances Gouda, "From Emasculated Subjects to Virile Citizens", in: Stefan Dudink et al (eds.), *Representing Masculinity: Male Citizenship in Modern Western Culture*, Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007, pp. 239–240, cf. Gouda, *Dutch Culture Overseas: Colonial Practice in the Netherlands-Indies 1900–1942*, Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1995.

lum of “proper” Javanese language and culture, defining its boundaries in the process.⁴⁵ The colonially informed paternalism displayed by Schuurman and his colleagues in their work towards a global Kingdom of God by way of defining the regional illustrates how these conceptually different spheres of belonging became entangled in missionary work.

While *Bale Wiyata* was the prime site of Schuurman's labour, he also engaged in other activities. He temporarily supervised the mission activities of the East Javanese church in Bali.⁴⁶ In 1935, he also temporarily filled a vacancy in the *Indische Kerk* of Malang, alternating with his immediate colleagues, which meant ministering to the European Christian congregation. Such ministry was not encouraged by the SZC for fear it might detract from what was considered the actual work of a missionary: engaging with the local population at the mission site.⁴⁷ Nevertheless, Schuurman sought to engage with Dutch Christians during his time as a missionary as well, particularly in the context of the Group meetings he organised in his home. Schuurman's ministry among the Dutch would intensify during the war years, first in Malang and later in Tjimahi, one of the Japanese prisoner-of-war camps. In January 1945, Schuurman and his colleague Hendrik van den Berg were sent back to Malang under suspicion of espionage and insurrection. Schuurman supposedly held leadership over a group of Javanese *Pandita's* (ministers), many of whom were also imprisoned. Schuurman died in prison on 6 July 1945 from a progressive illness.⁴⁸

Part II Barend Schuurman and Missionary Biography

Missionary Biographies: A National and Transnational Framework

While in the Dutch context very few comprehensive missionary biographies appeared, biographical texts about missionaries were in heavy circulation in a multitude of forms among the Dutch missionary public. These ranged from

45 Cf. Steenbrink, *Dutch Colonialism*, pp. 111–113 on how Kraemer isolated Islam from his construct of Javanese culture.

46 HUA, RvdZ 1102–1, 1015: Schuurman, “Achtste Verslag omtrent den stand van het Christendom op Bali”.

47 HUA, RvdZ 1102–1, 3159: J. Pik to the Board, Malang, 28 May 1935; The board to J. Pik, Oegstgeest, 26 July 1935.

48 Kraemer, “Persoon en Werk”, Dryo Mestoko, “Ontmoeting met Dr B.M. Schuurman: Eén dag en één nacht in de gevangenis te Malang”, in: Schuurman et al., *Over Alle Bergen*, pp. 38–41; L. De Hartog-Meijjes, “Een vriendschap”, in: *ibid.*, pp. 61–68; J.A.C. Rullman, “Schuurmans werk in de kampen te Tjimahi”, in: *Ibid.*, pp. 69–77.

memorial texts in the main periodical of the SZC on occasion of jubilees or death, to (entries in) memorial books, and shorter biographies in a Dutch series of missionary tracts titled *Lichtstralen op den akker der wereld*. As such, I employ a broad definition of biographical texts in this article, including shorter commemorative pieces. These shorter texts may appear superficial because they lacked the space to provide in-depth portrayals of their subject, however, through a comparative approach they can become informative sources. Taken as a body of sources, the numerous biographical texts which appeared in the context of missionary publications provided the Dutch missionary public with their own missionary exemplars, in the course of which they also received a general orientation to Dutch mission's concerns as well as their monetary and other needs. Moreover, and this shall become apparent in the analysis of Schuurman's biographical representations below, biographical texts – as a form of memorialisation – were written not just as commemorations of the past, but also as contemporary orientations on the future, and as such allow for the identification of major shifts in missionary self-understanding.⁴⁹

The majority of the biographical texts that appeared at the hands of the SZC concerned Dutch missionaries of their own missions, but missionaries who bore different nationalities were also occasionally given a place. First, the RMG, *Zeister Zendingsgenootschap* (Hernnhut), and *Basler Mission*, in respectively 1913, 1923, and 1925, joined forces with the SZC for propaganda purposes in the Netherlands, meaning that their activities were also reported on in the SZC's periodical. From these dates onward, then, the periodical officially transcended its national boundaries in terms of the mission societies it covered, although the work that was reported on was still mostly contained to the Dutch colonies in present-day Indonesia and Surinam. Before this time, it had already been common practice in the *Lichtstralen* series to report on other missions; in this series, texts about Dutch missionary lives and mission sites were interchanged with those of other nationalities, turning it into a view of mission as a transnational endeavour in which the Dutch fulfilled a small part.⁵⁰ In the SZC periodical, missionaries from other countries serving in other parts of the world featured at specific moments, for example around important jubilees, but also when no other material was available. The latter happened most prominently during World War II, when from the end of 1941 onwards the SZC was for-

49 Cf. Busschers, "Missionary Commemoration".

50 L.J. Oosterom, *Lichtstralen: Registers*, Utrecht: RUU, 1986, for a list of published titles in the *Lichtstralen* series.

bidden to publish about the current missionary situation in the Indonesian archipelago.⁵¹ A solution was found in reporting on missions by and in other nations. And so, the issues of the periodical from October 1941 until the end of 1942 heavily feature articles about other missions and missionaries, appearing under such titles as “John Williams, Apostle of the South Seas” and “Mary Slessor, a pioneer in Africa”.⁵² By 1943, articles about past experiences written by missionaries on leave had become the main focus, but international missions continued to receive their own place in the periodical under the header “News from World Missions”.

Isabel Hofmeyr has argued that the missionary archive was transnationally made and that, as such, it “opened up novel possibilities for international addressivity, which allowed people to think, read, and write *as if* they were addressing a vast international Protestant public, even if in reality they only reached a limited actual or potential audience.”⁵³ Hofmeyr takes the missionary tract as an example of a text that was “imagined as transnational in its address, intended for distribution across a vast domain, often in several languages.”⁵⁴ The same does not necessarily hold for Dutch missionary biographies, which were generally addressed to an imagined Dutch public, yet, the inverse does hold true. As portrayed above, the Dutch adopted missionaries from other nationalities as biographical subjects, imagining themselves as part of a transnational missionary endeavour in the process. Furthermore, biographical texts about Dutch SZC missionaries shared narrative structure and style with biographical missionary texts from other countries – similar to, albeit with a much more Metropolitan focus, the cross-fertilisation between Metropole and colonies in textual missionary sources analysed by Hofmeyr.⁵⁵

The latter point, while still deserving of more thorough analysis, can be traced in the frequently recurring framing and themes in both Dutch missionary commemorations and English missionary biographies, perhaps best exemplified by the influence of narratives about Livingstone or even the epit-

51 Albert Zaaier, “Ons Zendingsblad tijdens de bezetting”, *NZ*, 1945, pp. 5–6.

52 *NZ*, 1942, 5–7, *NZ*, 1942, 42–44.

53 Isabel Hofmeyr, “Inventing the World: Transnationalism, Transmission, and Christian Textualities”, in Jamie S. Scott and Gareth Griffiths (eds.), *Mixed Messages: Materiality, Textuality, Missions*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005, pp. 34.

54 *Idem*, 23.

55 Hofmeyr critiques the often primarily Metropolitan focus of studies on the mutual constituency of Metropole and colony: Hofmeyr, “Inventing the World”, pp. 20–21.

ome image of St. John in Jane Eyre.⁵⁶ As such, these were narratives that, I want to suggest, travelled across national borders, flowing into missionary consciousness through the biographical renderings about previous missionary generations, and providing exemplars for missionary candidates to aspire to. Missionary fame was not always contained to national borders, as the examples of David Livingstone or Mary Slessor show us, and national biographical traditions could build upon these narratives, adapting certain aspects, which occurred, for example, in the portrayal of missionary calling in Dutch versus English narratives. As such, missionary biographies were constituted both within the transnational flow of information about missions as well as in the tradition of the nation and/or mission society.⁵⁷ Changes in narrative in the one might influence the other, becoming adapted to the specific circumstances and purposes in the process. It is in this light that I now turn to the different biographical texts appearing on missionary Barend Schuurman, particularly in the years between 1945 and 1950.

Biographical Renderings of Schuurman's Life

The first biographical text that appeared about Barend Schuurman was his obituary in the November 1945 issue of the SZC's mission periodical, *Nederlandsch Zendingsblad*.⁵⁸ It was one of many obituaries appearing in that and the following issue of the periodical, all dedicated to workers who had died during the Japanese occupation of the Indonesian archipelago. These obituaries were published in a new context mission was only just coming to terms with: having lost a third of their overseas workers, searching to position themselves in regard to Indonesia's declaration of independence and the impending Dutch-Indonesian war, and finding anew mission's purpose and place. Furthermore, the tumultuous post-war months opened up space for a more personal interpretation and less strict adherence to formal style in missionary obituaries.⁵⁹

56 Jeffrey Cox, *The British Missionary Enterprise since 1700*, New York; Londen: Routledge, 2008, pp. 4, 14, 145–152, Valentine Cunningham, "God and Nature Intended You for a Missionary Wife: Mary Hill, Jane Eyre and Other Missionary Women in the 1840s", in Fiona Bowie, Deborah Kirkwood and Shirley Ardener (eds.), *Women and Missions: Past and Present. Anthropological and Historical Perceptions*, Providence; Oxford: Berg Publishers, 1993, pp. 96–105, cf. Busschers, "Missionary Commemoration".

57 This is based on a preliminary comparative analysis of Dutch missionary obituaries with those of LMS missionaries. For more, see my forthcoming PhD dissertation.

58 C.W. Nortier, "Barend Schuurman", *NZ*, 1945, 26–27.

59 Iris Busschers, "Memorialisation on the Brink of a Changing World: Remembrance and Amnesia in the Commemoration of Missionary Lives in Dutch Calvinist Mission, 1942–

This context certainly affected Schuurman's commemoration in his obituary. Schuurman's obituary, in turn, set the tone for many of the themes we find in other biographical texts about him.

Former friend and colleague Carl Nortier authored Schuurman's obituary and placed emphasis on two things. First, he brought Schuurman's contemplative nature to the fore, something that was not commonly appreciated in missionaries. Nortier acknowledged this, contrasting Schuurman's "*homo divinus*" with the more appreciated "*homo faber*". Schuurman made an effort to be more "practical", according to Nortier, and was successful particularly where it concerned "social distress of ordinary people". Secondly, Nortier drew a parallel around funerals which was meant to illustrate Schuurman's commitment to the Javanese culture and people. He was remembered as "aiming to live in true community with the Javanese", which Nortier illustrates by his having carried the funerary casket of one of the Christian servants. At the end of the obituary, Nortier describes Schuurman's own funerary procession, organised by "a Muslim undertaker", during which his casket, "submerged in flowers", was carried from the missionary hospital, "which was owned by nationalist parties at the time", and followed by many "Javanese, Chinese, and Indonesians".⁶⁰

In the following years, a number of texts about Schuurman's life, or one aspect of it, appeared. The *Nederlandsch Zendingsblad* continued to pay homage to war casualties in the years following 1945, and the July 1946 issue was dedicated to Schuurman's memory "and the mission site he held so dear". The featured texts were not biographical. Instead the issue featured autobiographical texts that were not necessarily about Schuurman but about East Java and the aftermath of the war and/or its present circumstances. They included: a lecture by Schuurman,⁶¹ memories about 1945/1946 written by his wife (in which Schuurman goes unmentioned),⁶² wartime news by a former student of *Bale Wiyata*,⁶³ as well as a reflection on the return to Surabaya by colleague Hilderling.⁶⁴ By means of the dedication at the beginning of the issue, Schuurman was closely identified with East Java, as well as with the strong and lasting

1949", paper presented at Colonial Christian missions and their legacies conference, 27–29 April 2015, Copenhagen.

60 Nortier, "Barend Schuurman", NZ, 26–27.

61 B.M. Schuurman, [untitled], NZ, 1946, 62–63.

62 H. Schuurman-Nijhoff, "Herinneringen aan onze laatste maanden op Java", NZ, 1946, 64–65.

63 "Poetra" [Title instead of name], "Een brief van een Javaansche predikant", NZ, 1946, 65–66.

64 H.A.C.H., "Terug in Soerabaja", NZ, 1946, 66–67.

connections between European workers and the Javanese and Chinese population throughout World War II and the Indonesian War of Independence, as identified in all pieces – even those that also mentioned the tension between nationalist forces and Europeans on the island.

In 1947, Schuurman was brought up in the periodical again, in a Dutch translation of a piece written by the first minister of the East Javanese Church, Dryo Mestoko, to the Synod of that church. The piece recalled Schuurman and Mestoko's meeting in prison in 1945. In it, Mestoko describes the mutual respect between himself and Schuurman, but also portrays Schuurman as a great teacher – bringing to the fore Schuurman as the messenger of "a meeting of the congregations of East and West, in the midst of the world's turmoil" and articulating Schuurman's dedication to unite the churches of Java.⁶⁵ This same piece was reprinted in the 1951 edited collection about Barend Schuurman titled *Over Alle Bergen* which brought together multiple biographical remembrances about Schuurman as well as a selection of pieces written by him.⁶⁶ Meanwhile, other types of commemorations were also initiated: Nortier gave a radio speech for the Dutch Christian broadcasting association NCRV in 1948, titled "Barend Schuurman: Missionary by God's Grace".⁶⁷ Finally, in 1950, an effort was made to restore and maintain the graves of ten ministers who had died as casualties of the Kempeitay, among which were Schuurman and Van den Berg, as well as "four Javanese, and two Ambonese".⁶⁸ This last document is the only one I have been able to trace in which Schuurman's commemoration concurred with those of Javanese Christian war casualties.

In 1959, outside of direct mission circles, Schuurman's life was recalled one more time in the memoirs of theologian J.J. Buskes. In the words of Buskes, Schuurman had

become one the great missionaries. He has sought new missionary methods and he found them. He has sharply recognised the meaning of the colonial relationship and its fatal consequences. He has unconditionally

65 Drya Mestaka, "Ontmoeting met Dominé Schuurman gedurende een dag en een nacht (uit het Javaans vertaald)", *NZ*, 1947, 103–104.

66 Schuurman, *Over Alle Bergen*.

67 HUA, ARvdZ 1102–1, 952: Carl Wilhelm Nortier, "Barend Schuurman: Zendeling Bij de Gratie Gods", Written Copy of Speech, *Radiotoespraak N.C.R.V.*, July 12, 1948.

68 HUA, ARvdZ 1102–1, 3158: H.A.C. Hilderling to the mission office at Oegstgeest, 24 October 1950.

identified himself on the side of Indonesian nationalism. He has, more than anyone, realised, that the old faith – the faith in Jesus Christ as Lord of the world – propels us into a new and unknown future.⁶⁹

Biographical Commemorations of Schuurman: Themes and Meanings

These last words of Buskes provide an entry into Schuurman's rise to prominence in missionary memory after World War II: mission began (partially at least) publicly positioning itself as opposing the Dutch war actions in Indonesia. Schuurman had identified as pro-Indonesian nationalism, something which could now be lauded publicly where before it had been evaded.⁷⁰ In the biographical texts about him, this was captured in the core theme of Schuurman's realisation of communal living, mutual respect, and understanding for Javanese culture, encapsulated by his ability to work with and bring together diverse groups of people. It was highlighted in his obituary, implied in the 1946 issue of the *Nederlandsch Zendingsblad*, brought to the fore by Dryo Mestoko, and it was what framed the numerous entries in the edited biographical collection *Over Alle Bergen* beginning with Kraemer's piece on his life and works and ending with the remembrances of a former *Bale Wiyata* student. The pertinence of this theme in its contemporary time frame of Indonesia's decolonisation is almost self-evident, but the question remains why it was Schuurman who was singled out in this manner. After all, there were others who might have fit the bill: Samuel van Hoogstraten, for example, who also received an obituary written by Nortier in the November 1945 issue of the *Nederlandsch Zendingsblad*, was commemorated as someone who had "nothing of the colonial Dutchman about him, and this is why his loss is so unfortunate, particularly at this time."⁷¹

Van Hoogstraten and Schuurman had a number of things in common which befitted the changing missionary circumstances post-1945. First, they both wrote about the complicated relationship between mission and the population in the midst of Indonesian nationalism and Dutch colonialism.⁷² Sec-

69 Buskes, *Hoera voor het Leven*, pp. 95.

70 Hans van de Wal, *Tot op het bot verdeeld. Nederlandse protestanten, de zending en de Indonesische revolutie*, Zoetermeer: Boekencentrum, 2012.

71 C.W. Nortier, "Samuel van Hoogstraten", *NZ*, 1945, 27.

72 A publication on Van Hoogstraten appeared recently. This publication concentrates on his letters to his family: S.A. van Hoogstraten and Renée van Hoogstraten, *Als steeds uw Samuel: brieven van ds. S.A. van Hoogstraten op Java 1927–1945*, Zoetermeer: Uitgeverij Boekencentrum, 2001.

only, both had been educated in theology at a University, something which would increasingly become the norm.⁷³ Thirdly, the commemorations of both centred around their deep religiosity, and it was this that was considered to place them in authoritative positions. Schuurman and van Hoogstraten distinguished themselves as religious leaders, according to their biographical commemorations, while in other respects they were able to live on equal footing with the local population at the mission site. In this portrayal we can distinguish the influence of colleagues Nortier and Kraemer, who favoured this understanding of mission's role and also underlined it in the commemoration of other deceased missionaries at the time. It was also a manner of justifying mission's continued significance at a time of impending decolonisation.⁷⁴

What distinguished Schuurman from his colleagues in commemorative texts was his introspective character. In Nortier's account, it was exactly this that enabled Schuurman to forge a connection with the Javanese, because "Orientals" and particularly Javanese, as Nortier put it, "judge inner religiosity on outer appearance".⁷⁵ It was not just that this personality trait apparently fit the supposed nature of the Javanese people. I want to suggest here that it was by highlighting these characteristics that in Schuurman could be offered an alternative model of missionary identity; one in which less emphasis was placed on extravert and physical masculinity, but that highlighted quiet perseverance and personal faith. Missionary narratives of masculinity had long mirrored aspects of imperial masculinity and ideas about middle class "self-made men", which were then counterbalanced with Christian narratives of self-sacrifice and humility; a balance which would be renegotiated repeatedly according to time, place, and position in the missionary hierarchy.⁷⁶ At this particular juncture in time, Schuurman's introspection offered an opportunity for the temporary reconceptualization of missionary exemplarity. In this reconceptualization, missionary identity was further disentangled from Dutch colonial identity narratives, while it retained familiar elements of traditional embodiments of missionary identity.

73 Noort, "Nederlandse Zendingsschool", pp. 99–103.

74 Busschers, "Memorialisation".

75 HUA, RvdZ 1102–1, 952: Nortier, "Barend Schuurman: Zendeling bij de Gratie Gods", pp. 1, cf. Nortier, "Zendeling en Docent", in Schuurman, *Over Alle Bergen*, 42–52.

76 Kristin Fjelde Tjelle, *Missionary Masculinity 1870–1930: The Norwegian Missionaries in South-East Africa*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014, for an in-depth account of these negotiations in one particular location, cf. Iris Busschers, "Missionaire Mannelijkheid: Hervormde zendelingen tussen 1900–1949", *TussenRuimte* 9 (3) (2016), 4–8 for an exploration of these ideas in the context of Dutch mission.

That the emphasis on the type of exemplarity offered could shift over time becomes visible through comparison of the 1945 text with those of 1950. In the former, it was community and understanding for the Javanese that was underlined. In the latter, this was still a major theme, but it was cast alongside Schuurman's vision of a global Kingdom of God and his efforts towards ecumenism as another contemporary theme. Ultimately, Schuurman entered Dutch mission historiography as a missionary who respected, emphasised the importance of, and aimed to establish "an open dialogue" with, Javanese language and culture.⁷⁷ It was as such that Schuurman would also receive sparing attention in international historiography: "Schuurman was one of the few missionaries in the colonial era who attempted to contextualise Christianity."⁷⁸ Schuurman's importance, however, remained a predominantly Dutch matter. The very circumstances which favoured Schuurman's temporary rise to prominence in Dutch missionary memory would result in dwindling interests from the side of East Javanese Christianity. Contrary to what Schuurman and his colleagues had set out to do, Schuurman's legacy remained most influential in the East Javanese villages, where Javanese was still spoken, whereas he became irrelevant in the Javanese cities, which were quickly caught up in the Indonesian revolution, its language and its culture. By 1988, Schuurman was fondly recalled by his former students, but most of them deemed his teachings outdated; for they were written with a view to encounter a Javanese culture of the past, and could not anticipate the rapid changes brought by decolonisation.⁷⁹

Conclusion

Ellen Fleischmann reminds us that biographical and historical writing is "an act of interpretative creativity" in which the same facts can create disparate narratives.⁸⁰ As such, like the individual himself, the author of a life story will often create an imagined coherence in the interpretation of said life. In traditional missionary biographies, that imaginary coherence was often found in a narra-

77 Aritonang and Steenbrink, *A History*, pp. 716, 757.

78 Jan A.B. Jongeneel, "Schuurman, Barend Marinus", in G.H. Anderson (eds.), *Biographical Dictionary of Christian Missions*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999; cf. Steenbrink, "Barend Schuurman", pp. 114.

79 Private archive of Geert Hoekstra: Ismanoe Mestoko to Geert Hoekstra, Batu, 15 May 1988 and Batu, 25 November 1988.

80 Ellen Fleischmann, "I Only Wish I Had a Home on This Globe": Transnational Biography and Dr. Mary Eddy', *Journal of Women's History*, Vol. 21 (3), 2009, pp. 108–130.

tive of white male workers pioneering 'uncivilised' lands, persevering despite difficulties, following a calling by God to serve the mission. This, of course, is not surprising in the context of the aim that was served by these texts; they were never solely stories about an individual's life, for they were written with the cause that these individuals served in mind. Ultimately it was mission itself that was celebrated through the commemoration of these individual figures. As a result, historians are left with a body of source texts about missionary workers that seem uninformative in its uniformity and a genre that does not easily allow room for different narratives. In this article, I explored two avenues for rethinking missionary lives by engaging with their spatial and temporal situatedness. I did so through the lens of one particular missionary worker, Barend Schuurman, and the biographical texts written about him.

In the first part of the article, I have drawn out the entangled belongings of Barend Schuurman. His missionary work in East Java was inspired by the idea of a Kingdom of God, which he served by working towards a regional integration of Christianity at his mission site. His method was informed by an agenda he drew from transnational Christian and missionary circles which aligned with the social and political changes he perceived in Javanese society. Casting himself as a supporter of Javanese and Indonesian nationalism in the process, he also mirrored Dutch narratives of colonial self-understanding. Disentangling the layered networks which were part of Schuurman's missionary life makes plain that missionaries cannot always be caught under one header. Like any other person, they shaped their lives in response to a number of spheres which they then brought together more or less coherently. Bringing in transnational networks advances a reconsideration of the missionary identity construct by taking missionaries outside of the traditional narrative that to be a missionary meant the embodiment of the norms of a nationally-based mission society in the local environment of the mission site. Moreover, it allows for a reframing of discussions in which missionaries are either isolated religious actors or colonial agents by broadening the scope of spheres missions intersected with. My aim has thus been not so much to offer a new imaginary coherence in interpreting Schuurman's life, as to provide one avenue of deconstructing it.

In the second part of the article, I have traced how others before me have found an imaginary coherence in Schuurman's life by highlighting his integration of Christianity with Javanese culture. In tracing these biographical representations, the point has not been to argue that any of these representations of Schuurman's life are 'right' or 'wrong'. Instead, my aim has been to reveal how changing contemporary concerns can serve to highlight different aspects of a person's life, which may reframe its significance or meaning. This observation brings to the fore how such a generally considered conservative and rigid

format as missionary biography may offer information on changing preoccupations in the missionary agenda and disjunctures in missionary discourses. It also makes visible how within its formal boundaries the genre could appropriate changing worldviews, identity markers, and missionary strategies. Barend Schuurman rose to prominence at a time when Dutch mission tried to reposition itself as non-colonial. Schuurman's life offered explicit indicators which enabled a disassociation of missionary identity with Dutch colonialism and a recasting of Dutch missionary exemplarity. This happened in a nationally framed reorientation of mission, but was still partially informed by transnationally circulating models of missionary embodiment. In biographical narratives about Schuurman, the themes of perseverance, self-sacrifice and Christian calling could be powerfully reaffirmed, while his religious introspection contrasted nicely with narratives of extravert colonial masculinity that were part of missionary pioneer identities.

Finally, the spheres of belonging in the life of Barend Schuurman, who was, after all, a higher-educated white male working at a mission site that was deemed relatively 'civilised' in contemporary colonial worldviews, might not translate to lives of other missionary workers in Java or elsewhere. Acknowledging this in analysing the multiple networks of belonging in other missionary workers' lives, however, will only bring us closer to a recognition of the pluriform entangled nature of missionary identities. Bringing in the analytical level of the formation of missionary biographies, and the different geographical spheres in which they functioned and were constituted, may make us more aware of this. As a research avenue it requires a more thorough engagement with the genre's limitations and with the different strands of narratives that might intersect in the biographical commemoration of missionary workers. In order to make full use of this, more in-depth analysis of missionary biography as a transnationally and nationally constituted genre is required.