

## MISSION ATLAS PROJECT

### Europe

#### THE NETHERLANDS (Kingdom of the Netherlands) (Koninkrijk der Nederlanden)

##### Basic Facts

**Name:** THE NETHERLANDS (Kingdom of the Netherlands, Koninkrijk der Nederlanden)

**Population:** 15,785,699 2000 with annual growth rate of 0.42% and density of 378 persons per sq. km. Predictions are for a population of 15,972,735 by 2010 with annual growth rate of 0.04% and a population density of 382 persons per sq. km. By 2025 estimates call for a population of 15,781,965 with a growth rate of -0.12% and a population density of 378 persons per sq. km.  
<http://www.demographia.com/dbx-nl.htm>.

**Area:** 41,785 sq. km with over 30% under sea level.  
[http://www.theodora.com/wfb/netherlands\\_geography.html](http://www.theodora.com/wfb/netherlands_geography.html).

**Economy:** Strong commercial base with heavy exporting sector. Netherlands is a member of the European Union. Per capita income almost \$ 26,000 or some 82% of USA per capita income.  
<http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/nl.html>.

**Government:** Stable, democratic, constitutional democracy.  
<http://www.emulateme.com/netherlands.htm>.

**Society:** The Netherlands society has become among the most secularized in the western world. Alcohol, narcotics, and family disintegration are rampant. Abortion and euthanasia are legal. The declining moral climate mitigates against the Christian message. The Netherlands, once a citadel for Christian thought and teaching has declined to one that champions ungodliness. The need for a spiritual renewal is as much needed in the social as in the religious realm.  
<http://www.amsterdam-holland-travel.com/society-culture/society-culture.html>.

**Language:** Primarily Dutch—a language with 20,000,000 speakers in all countries, 13, 400,000 in Netherlands, 90,000 in France, 101,000 in Germany, 159,185 in Canada, 5,640,000 in Belgium, 421,637 in United States, 47,995 in Australia, 1680 in Israel, 1000 in Surinam. The Friesian (Western) language is spoken by over 700,000 primarily in Friesland (see province map). The number of languages in Netherlands is sixteen.

**Urbanization:** Some 91% of the people live in urban settings. The capital and administrative center, Amsterdam, has a population of 2,050,000 while The Hague boasts 450,000 and Rotterdam, the world's busiest seaport has 1,175,000 people.

**Literacy:** The literacy rate is 95% to 99%

**Religion:** Combining the reports of the Roman Catholic, the marginal churches, and the non-Catholic Christian churches bring the number of "Christians" to 55.93 % (8,828,941 adherents) of the people. Over 37.98 % (5,995,408) of the people are non-religious. Estimates place some 850,000 Muslims, 47,300 Hindus, 31,500 Buddhists, and 29,993 Jewish people also living in the Netherlands. The Catholic Church claims 3,622,740 members with 5,180,518 adherents in 1700 congregations while the non-Catholic church groups claim 1,358,914 members with 3,647,402 adherents in 6402 congregations. Some 37, 509 members adhere to marginal church groups (Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormons) who also have 448 congregations. The resulting figures

show around 710,000 evangelical Christians in Netherlands whose number is showing a - .6% growth rate annually.

### **Historical Factors**

**Prehistory:** While accounts of prehistoric human habitation in the area of the Netherlands are meager, evidences of tool-making human dwellers exist in sites from 4000 BC where evidence of stone tools have been found. In the early Neolithic period (4000-2900 BC) evidences of megalithic burial monuments (hunebedden) suggest mass, possibly cultic burials. By 2900 BC, in what has been called the "Beaker Phase," the peoples of the region had turned to individual burials.

Historical accounts of the Netherlands begin in the 1st century BC, when Julius Caesar led Roman forces to conquer most of the country. The population at the time consisted of Friesians, a Germanic tribe that lived in the north, other Germanic groups, and minor Celtic tribes.

**The Roman Rule:** Romans controlled the region for around 250 years. There was peace and prosperity during this era. The Romans promoted trade, built temples, established large farms, and generally introduced their civilization to the region. Around AD 300 Roman control began to weaken. German tribes entered from the east, the Friesians asserted themselves in the north, Saxons occupied the eastern part of the region, and the Franks moved into the west and south.

**The Middle Ages:** The Franks, the most powerful of these groups, extended their territories. In time, the Frankish kings subjugated both the Friesians and the Saxons and converted them to Christianity. By AD 800 the entire territory of the Netherlands became part of the realm of Charlemagne. Upon Charlemagne's death, his empire disintegrated, and in AD 843 the Treaty of Verdun divided the empire into three parts. The Netherlands became part of Lotharingia (Lorraine) and still later, in AD 925, a part of the Holy Roman Empire.

During the 9th and 10th centuries the towns in the Low Countries became stronger and more influential politically. This increased power of the towns came from the increasing importance of the local rulers and nobles who provided defenses against the frequent Viking raids against the settlements of merchants and artisans in the towns. The town's new power added significantly to the development of Dutch history during the 12th, 13th, and 14th centuries. As the area became an important trading center, the towns, led by wealthy merchants, began to challenge the power of the ruling nobles. The merchants, by providing protection for the regional rulers, were able to demand privileges. The growing power of the merchants further promoted commerce and thereby further strengthened both the towns and the merchants.

During this period, no actual Dutch nation existed. The Dutch people sprang from numerous medieval statlets, each loyal to various local lords. The situation attracted countless immigrants, such as French Huguenots, Portuguese Jews, and Germans, who gave a strong impetus to the freedom of thought that developed in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. Eventually, over the next centuries, the whole region, including present-day Belgium, came to be called the Low Countries, or Netherlands. The Netherlands remained, at least nominally, with the Holy Roman Empire during the Middle Ages. While some trade was conducted with German coastal cities the major cultural influences came from France.

**The Renaissance:** The dukes of Bourgogne gained control of most of the region, Holland, Utrecht, Noord-Brabant, and Gelderland) during the 15th and early 16th centuries. By 1519, Holy Roman emperor Charles V (of the Spanish Hapsburgs and also king of Spain) controlled most of the area. In 1555 Charles handed control of both Spain and the Netherlands to his son, Philip II, a Spaniard by birth and education, who had little relationship with or sympathy for these northern territories. His oppressive rule led to the Dutch war of independence against Spain, then the most powerful nation in Europe. The war lasted from 1568 to 1648.

**The Effort Toward Independence:** The political problems between the Netherlands and Spain coincided with the Protestant revolt against the Roman Catholic Church--the Spanish State Church. The Protestant movement, especially Calvinism, rapidly gained influence and its adherents established a well-organized church that could challenge the Roman Catholic Church, particularly the Inquisition. Calvinism in particular supported the merchants.

In 1566 the people rioted and destroyed images in Catholic churches. Philip responded by sending Spanish troops commanded by Fernando Álvarez de Toledo who instituted excessively harsh policies of the Inquisition and resulted in open revolt led by William I, the Silent, Prince of Orange. The Dutch concentrated their efforts in the north where William's naval supporters, called the Sea Beggars, seized the Holland port of Brill (Brielle) in 1572. The rebels took control of most northern towns but William was unable to hold the north against the campaigns of a new Spanish commander, Alessandro Farnese.

By 1579 the Dutch established the Union of Utrecht, an anti-Spanish alliance of all northern and some southern territories. This union, which later became the nucleus of the Dutch nation, solidified the final divergence of the northern part of the Low Countries, which later became the Netherlands, from the southern part, which later became Belgium. The Dutch provinces within the Union of Utrecht proclaimed their independence from Spain but suffered a series of reverses in the war, the greatest of which was the assassination of William, the Silent, in 1584. By 1585 the Spanish had retaken most of the south, including the important port of Antwerp. Eventually, the tide of war turned in favor of the Dutch partly due to aid from the British during 1585 to 1587. When, in 1588, the British destroyed the great Spanish Armada and reduced Spain's power, the Dutch were able to shed Spanish control.

The Protestant movement in the Netherlands took a different turn from that in Germany. Germany adopted the *cuius regio, eius religio*, (whose rule that religion). The Dutch opted for more toleration and received much of this toleration in the Edict of Nantes in 1598. The seven provinces in the Union of Utrecht were cleared of Spanish troops by 1600.

A truce existed between the Spanish and the Dutch from 1609 to 1621, but the war was not finished until 1648, when the Spanish signed the Treaty of Münster, which recognized the sovereignty of the Dutch Republic of the United Provinces. The Netherlands severed all theoretical ties with Spain and the Holy Roman Empire and became a republic in the midst of monarchies.

**The Golden Age:** Dutch independence was assured in the early 17th century and a period of commercial prosperity began. This commercial prosperity coincided with the Golden Age of Dutch art, with such painters as Rembrandt and Jan Vermeer. By the mid-17th century the Netherlands was the foremost commercial and maritime power of Europe, and Amsterdam was the financial center of the Continent.

**Worldwide Exploration and Commercialization:** Dutch colonialism began when a Dutch merchant expedition sailed from Amsterdam to Java around 1600. From this beginning Dutch influence and geographic names spread over much of the globe--from Spitsbergen to Cape Horn and from Staten Island to Tasmania. These voyages resulted in the establishment or acquisition of many trading stations in Africa, Southeast Asia, and America.

In 1602 the Dutch parliament granted to the Dutch East India Company a charter that gave it a trading monopoly with all countries east of the Cape of Good Hope in Africa and west of the Strait of Magellan in South America. The charter also conferred many sovereign powers on the company, including the right to wage war and to conclude peace. The West India Company, founded in 1621, established colonies in the West Indies, Brazil, and North America.

The East India Company established itself first in the Moluccas, or Spice Islands, and later on West Java, where Batavia (modern Jakarta) became the center of the company's enterprises. These enterprises centered on trade and the establishment of trading posts rather than governing although the necessity of maintaining order among the local rulers forced the Dutch to begin governing the territories (now called Indonesia) in order to maintain trade.

**Developments in the Netherlands:** The son of William the Silent, Maurice, succeeded his father in the position known as stadtholder and as military commander. Frederick Henry, brother of Maurice, took control after Maurice. These leaders governed in conjunction with the States-General, an assembly composed of representatives of each of the seven provinces but usually dominated by the largest and wealthiest province, Holland. The stadtholder's power varied with the leader's personal qualities of leadership and the office eventually became hereditary in the house of Orange.

During the reign of Maurice, the republic was divided by a religio-political conflict over predestination between two factions within the Reformed (Calvinist) church. Frederick Henry's son, William II of Orange, became involved in a bitter quarrel with the province of Holland, and after his death, no stadtholder was appointed in Holland and four other provinces for more than 20 years. William III of Orange, who was stadtholder from 1672 until his death in 1702, was also king of England after 1689.

**The Decline of the Dutch Republic:** The Dutch and the English, the leading maritime trading nations of the world, came into sharp commercial rivalry and military conflict. The issues were contested, but not settled, by the two Anglo-Dutch Wars (1652 to 1654 and 1664 to 1667). After the second of these conflicts, the Dutch lost New Amsterdam in North America but acquired Dutch Guinea (now Suriname). Other wars, costly in lives and money, followed against England and France.

After the War of the Spanish Succession (1701-1714), in which the Dutch were allies of the British against the French, the economic and political power of the Netherlands began to decline. Eventually the Dutch Republic was overshadowed by the expanding power of the United Kingdom on the sea and by the French on the land. William III died without heirs in 1702 and his distant relative, John William Frisco, claimed the Orange title. In 1747 John William Frisco's son became stadtholder in all seven provinces as William IV. In the late 18th century a struggle broke out between the party of the house of Orange, which had become conservative, and the Patriot Party, which desired democratic reforms. The Orange Party enjoyed a brief triumph with the help of an invading Prussian army in 1787, but in 1795 French troops and a force consisting of self-exiled Dutch citizens replaced the republic of the seven United Provinces with the Batavian Republic, which was modeled on the revolutionary French Republic.

**The Napoleonic Era and the Aftermaths:** The Batavian Republic survived only until 1806, when Napoleon transformed the country into the kingdom of Holland and incorporated it into the French Empire (1810). While the Dutch were under French rule, the British seized Dutch colonial possessions but after Napoleon's fall, the Congress of Vienna restored the independence of the Netherlands in 1815. In addition, the territory now comprising Belgium was made part of the kingdom of the Netherlands.

This reunion of the regions did not last because of their widely disparate positions in political background, tradition, religion, language, and economy. In 1830 the Belgians revolted and established their independence as a sovereign state. A conference in London of the major European powers formulated the conditions of separation in 1831. The conditions of separation were again revised and were finally accepted by both countries in 1839.

**The Development of Parliamentary Democracy:** The second half of the 19th century was marked by a liberalization of the Netherlands government. The seeds of reform were contained in the new constitution of 1848, which became the foundation of the present democracy. The Roman Catholic southern provinces of Limburg and Noord-Brabant, which had been treated as conquered territories under the republic, were given equal status with other provinces under the monarchy, but it remained for the constitution of 1848 to remove the religious restrictions against their citizens. This toleration allowed a powerful Roman Catholic political party to form and to contend with the Liberal group and the emerging conservative Protestant parties. Through the late 19th century, suffrage was extended gradually, agitation for social reform increased, and the rise of a strong Labor Party and unions resulted in further social reforms.

Administration of the colonies was also reformed. In Indonesia, the area under Dutch control was increased, burdensome taxation was gradually abandoned, and, after 1877, no financial surpluses from that colony were used for the benefit of the treasury of the Netherlands.

From about 1880 to 1914 the Netherlands enjoyed an era of economic expansion. This period ended during World War I (1914-1918). Although the Netherlands remained militarily neutral, the nation suffered a loss of trade as a result of the Allied blockade of the Continent. The principal postwar problems of the country were economic, and these were aggravated by the depression of the 1930s.

**World War II and After:** The Netherlands declared its neutrality at the outbreak of World War II in 1939. In 1940, however, the Germans overran the country and destroyed the greater part of Rotterdam. Much destruction eventuated in other parts of the Netherlands, caused, not only by the Germans, but also by the Dutch, who opened many dikes as desperate defense measures. Later Allied aerial assaults on German-held positions caused widespread damage. The Germans occupied the country until they were ousted during 1944 and 1945.

Intensive efforts to rebuild the country and to restore its trade and industry followed World War II. The Netherlands joined most cooperative efforts to restore Europe in the years between 1945 and 1955. During the late 1940s and early 1950s the Netherlands experienced rising prices, generally unfavorable trade balances, and governments dominated by the Labor Party.

Indonesia declared its independence from the Netherlands in 1945 and after a war with Indonesian nationalists in the East Indies the Netherlands formally transferred sovereignty in the East Indies (excluding Netherlands New Guinea) to the Indonesian government in 1949. Netherlands New Guinea remained under Dutch rule until 1962 when it also officially became part of Indonesia. In 1954 Suriname and the Netherlands Antilles became equal members of the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

**Recent Developments:** The Roman Catholic People's Party came to power in 1959 and retained pluralities in the lower house in the elections of 1963 and 1967. This government, and the coalitions that it formed, proved unstable. Unrest in the Netherlands Antilles beset the government in 1969, and marines were dispatched to assist police in riot control. Inflation continued into the 1970s and became a major political problem eventuating in wage and price controls in 1970 and increasing taxes in 1971. Various governments rose and fell in the 1970s. When Suriname attained full independence in 1975, hundreds of thousands of Surinamese immigrants flooded the Netherlands and further burdened the Dutch economy. During this period the island of Aruba reached an agreement with the government of the Netherlands separating the island from the Netherlands Antilles.

In 1993 the Netherlands became the first governmental body to regulate euthanasia, or mercy killing. In early 1995, the Dutch experienced serious flooding as rivers throughout northwestern Europe overflowed. The resulting state of emergency, which saw over 250,000 people evacuated, required over \$1 billion for damages and evacuation expenses.

On May 3, 1998, the Netherlands and 10 other members of the European Union officially agreed to adopt the Euro as a new single European currency. The Netherlands continues as one of Europe's foremost nations and one of the world's most productive shipping centers.

Although the Netherlands has a splendid history as a Christian nation that fought for religious freedom, ministered to and accepted refugees and Jews, and participated effectively in missions, the nation has turned from its past. A dramatic decline in the numbers of churches with an equally dramatic increase in the non-religious underscores this change. Almost 40 % of the population is now among the group, non-religious, and their ranks are increasing at 2.4 % annually (compared to – 0.9% increase among Christians).

In addition, Dutch society is becoming increasingly permissive. Few restrictions exist on drugs, deviant life styles, prostitution, homosexuality, and abortion. The Netherlands became the first nation to legalize euthanasia. The Netherlands has also become a world leader in promoting New Age philosophy and values.

<http://www.batnet.com/starbase/Where3.html>.

<http://www.lonelyplanet.com/destinations/europe/netherlands/history.htm>.

### People Groups

**The Dutch People:** Over 13,400,000 Dutch people live in the Netherlands in twelve provinces (see province map). The Dutch sprang primarily from the Franks, the Friesians, and the Saxons.

**Friesian (Western):** Friesians inhabit the northeastern province of Friesland (see map) and speak a distinctive language, Friesian, a language between Dutch and English. Most Friesian people also speak Dutch. With between 436-597 churches, Friesland is among the four provinces in the Netherlands with the most churches (see map)

**Romani, Sinte:** Of the 200,000 Manouche in the world, some 1000 live in the Netherlands. Johnstone reports 8000 gypsies in the Netherlands. The group has Bible portions and other translations are underway.

**Romani, Vlach:** Around 1000 of this gypsy group live in Netherlands but over 1,500,000 reside in the entire world. The group has the Christian New Testament and other Bible portions

**Saxon, Low:** Some 1,500,000 speakers of the language Saxon reside in the Netherlands. Some 10,000,000 in Germany may understand the tongue. Saxon people live in the northeast provinces, especially Groningen and Drenthe. Most speakers in the Netherlands have Dutch as a second language. A usable New Testament version is available.

#### Other peoples

##### Ex-colonial peoples:

**Surinamer** 320,000

**Antillean (Papiamentu)** 98,000

**Ambonian (Maluku, Indonesia)** 45,000

**Javanese Indonesian** 7500

**Other Indonesian** 10,000

##### Emigrant Peoples:

**Moroccan Arabic** 240,000

**Tunisian Arabic** 60,000

**Turkish** 220,000

**Yue Chinese** 70,000

**Turoyo** 4,000

**Vietnamese** 8,000

**Kurmanji** 40,000  
**Yugoslavia** 25,000  
**Western Farsi** 5,000  
**Upper Guinea Crioulo** 12,000  
**European Union Citizens** 200,000  
**Somali** 20,000  
**Kurds** 70,000  
**Ghanaian** 15,000  
**Cape Verdian** 13,000  
**Tamil** 10,000

## **Religion**

### History of Christianity in the Netherlands

Christian development began in the Netherlands in the 7<sup>th</sup> century but the movement made little progress until the arrival of the missionaries from England, Willibrod (AD 657-739) and Winfrith or Boniface (AD 675-754). Christianity in the region remained at least partially under the Holy Roman Empire until the Empire's disintegration.

Christianity in the Netherlands received great influence from German mysticism in the 14<sup>th</sup> century. Due to the influence of German mysticism and the notable mystics (John of Ruysbroeck and Thomas A Kempis) many in the Netherlands turned to seeking union with God rather than merely following the churchly observances of ritual. From this influence many bonded in groups called Brethren of the Common Life and practiced an ascetic, almost monastic way of life. The influence of these religious groups continued in Dutch religion.

During the late 15<sup>th</sup> and early 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, Holland became a place of refuge for disposed followers of Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin with Calvin's followers taking the lead. The infusion of the "Protestants" led to the notable religious debate between the Calvinists and the Remonstrants over the subject of predestination. The Arminian, or Remonstrant, cause, which stemmed from the teachings of Jacobus Arminius, was championed in the province of Holland by Jan van Olden Barneveldt. Most of the other provinces (and Maurice) sided with the Gomarists, or High Calvinists, who prevailed. The dispute eventuated with the Synod of Dort (1618-1619) taking the side of the Calvinists and Barneveldt's execution for treason in 1619. The Arminians were allowed to return to the Netherlands in 1630 but remained a weak alternative to the primary Calvinist tradition.

The Anabaptists, especially the Mennonites, also are important to Dutch Christianity. The Anabaptists with their emphasis on believer's baptism, separation of church and state, and often pacifism, while persecuted, also influenced. Menno Simonsz (Simmons), who was ordained in 1524, led the Anabaptist group in the Netherlands. The persecution of the Anabaptists declined by the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century although some discrimination remained.

With the efforts of Philip II to force Catholicism on all of Europe, including the Netherlands, the Dutch Reformation became closely associated with the struggle for freedom. This struggle continued until 1648 when the Dutch Republic was established.

The Golden Era of Dutch history in the 17<sup>th</sup> century saw extensive Dutch mission work in the East Indies (Indonesia), Taiwan (Formosa), New York, India, Brazil, and South Africa. Other mission activities reached Caribbean regions. The Dutch Reformed Church (Nederlandse Hervormde Kerk, NHK) became the official religion of Holland in 1651. The Constitution of 1848 affirmed religious liberty and allowed the Roman Catholic Church to gain recognition.

#### The Roman Catholic Church Today

Roman Catholics number around 32.8 % of the population of the Netherlands with 1700 congregations, 3,622,740 members, and 5,180,518 adherents. The Catholic growth rate is – 1.0 %.

A liberal wing in the Catholic Church, which is opposed by the Hierarchy, has a strong influence in leading the Church into a more liberal stance. A strong charismatic and evangelical movement within the church along with widespread Bible Study and home cell groups promises better days for the Church.

The Roman Church is seeing its percentage of the population decline from 41% in 1980 to just over 32% in 2001. Some 300,000 Catholics have been lost to the Church between 1960 and 1971. Declining numbers of priests (both secular and regular) as well as the fact that over one-third of the priests are over 55 years of age also constitutes a problem for the Church.

#### The Christian Churches Today

##### **The Dutch Reformed Church**

The Dutch Reformed Community has a combined membership of over 1, 045, 441 and an affiliation estimate of over 2,900,000. The Reformed Community includes:

Netherlands Reformed Church (NHK) membership 457,240, 1700 congregations  
Reformed Churches of the Netherlands (GK) membership 405, 240, 847 congregations  
Reformed Communities in the Netherlands (GC) membership 44, 564, 107 congregations  
Liberated Reformed Church membership 73,865, 280 congregations  
Reformed Churches in Netherlands and Netherlands Antilles membership 51,800, 156 congregations  
Old Reformed Church membership 6600 - 66 congregations

Much of the schism within the Dutch Reformed community has stemmed from differing emphases on Calvinism and from reactions to the liberalism and state influence within the NHK. The NHK has seen a continuing decline in percentage of the population in its membership (from 60 % in 19<sup>th</sup> century to fewer than 21 % in 2000). The decline is traced to the lessening appeal of the NHK, the smaller birth rate, and lessening impact in the industrial areas. The decline of the NHK has been accompanied by the increase in those claiming to be non-religious.

##### **Other Protestant Groups**

Mennonite Brotherhood 13000 members in 135 congregations

Indonesian churches including Molluccan Protestant Church 13,156 members, 154 congregations

The Baptist Union 12,202 members in 87 congregations  
Apostolic churches 9,500 members in 38 congregations  
Full Gospel Churches 8,000 members in 38 congregations  
Lutheran Church 7304 members, 56 congregations  
Free Evangelical Churches 7,000 members, 43 congregations  
Remonstrant Brotherhood 7756 members in 98 congregations  
Fellowship of Pentecostal Churches 6,000 in 57 congregations  
Salvation Army 7156 members in 80 congregations  
Association of Free Evangelical Congregations 7100 members in 46 congregations  
Bethel Pentecostal 4605 members in 43 congregations  
Berea Fellowship 3000 members in 30 congregations  
Other denominations number 137,000 members and 1815 congregations

**Marginal Christian Groups:**

Jehovah's Witnesses 31,915 members in 399 congregations  
Latter Day Saints 5594 members in 39 congregations

Non-Christian Religions

**Islam:** Researchers estimate Muslims in the Netherlands to number as high as 850,000 and to be growing at the rate of 2.0 % annually. While these peoples come mainly from Turkey, Morocco, Afghanistan, Iran, and Tunisia, this growing and diverse religious group comes from many different cultures. The influx of Muslims stems primarily from recruitment of manual labor. Followers of Islam now number some 5.40 % of the population of the Netherlands and some estimates see the Muslims becoming one-tenth of the population. Small and mainly unsuccessful, evangelistic efforts seek to reach these unresponsive Islamic peoples.

**Judaism:** Although severely decimated by the Nazi occupation (Jewish population fell from 140,000 to around 30,000 at present). Most Jewish people live in Amsterdam where the Jewish Museum is located.

**Buddhism:** Around 31,571 Buddhists, mostly Chinese, live in the Netherlands. A Buddhist Center is located in North Brabant. One group in Amsterdam is composed of Indonesian Theravada Buddhists.

**Hindu:** As many as 47,357 Hindus live in the Netherlands and come mainly from Suriname and Sri Lanka. They are mostly Tamils.

<http://www.gmi.org/ow/>.

**Missiological Implications**

- 1 Evangelical Christians should strive to ignite a vast effort to re-evangelize this major nation

The Christian population, by combining Roman Catholic and all non-Catholic groups claims 55.93% of the population but the population block indicates a – 0.9% annual decline rate. The non-religious population, on the other hand, claims 37.98% of the people but boasts an annual growth rate of 2.4% almost 200% higher growth than the population. The Protestant denominations admit to a negative growth rate of – 1.5%. Among these Protestant groups, the Independents, the Anglicans, and the Orthodox churches show a positive annual growth rate, as high as + 2.6 % among the Orthodox. Charismatic groups show slight decline in their annual growth rate.

- 2 Evangelical Christians and churches should seek to exert Christian influence on the increasingly secular society in the Netherlands.

The society of the Netherlands has become increasingly secular and permissive in recent decades. Few restrictions exist on drugs, deviant lifestyles, the occult, prostitution, homosexuality, and abortion. Increasing evidences of immorality and rising crime rates further tarnish the society. Netherlands was the first nation to legalize euthanasia and remains a leading nation in promoting New Age teachings.

- 3 Evangelical Christians and Churches should seek to realize a revival and change within the historic Churches of the Netherlands

These Churches need to return to biblical Christian teachings and values. The churches need to proclaim the true biblical message in opposition to the secular teachings rampant in the society. There must be a new concern for souls, a return to a commitment to Scripture, and a new generation of spirit leaders.

Evangelical Christians and groups should seek contact with and ministries among the Church groups in the Netherlands. Providing teachers in training schools, supplying staff members for churches, seeking influence on leaders in Churches in the Netherlands could be ways of helping with this revival among the Christians and Churches in Holland.

- 4 Evangelical Christians and Churches should stimulate Dutch Christians to seek conversion growth among the many less-reached groups in the Netherlands. Among these are

- The secularized population who are alienated from the gospel and the churches. This “non-religious” group numbers over 6,000,000 or more than 38 % of the people. The group increases at + 2.4 % per year. *Since the churches are losing this growing population, reaching them most likely will demand a new approach to evangelism and church life.* Aid in the form of new evangelistic and church approaches should be extended to the Dutch Christians.
- The Muslims – who will soon number one-tenth of the population, that is, over 400,000 persons – are mostly Turkish, Moroccans, Kurds, Iranians, and Afghans. Although these people have been resistant to Christian approaches, another method of presenting the gospel should be employed.
- The Chinese, many of whom are Buddhist, should be sought with appropriate patterns of evangelism and church starting.
- The Hindus, many from Suriname and Sri Lanka, should be approached also with appropriate patterns
- Ethnic minorities, many from previous Dutch colonies (Ghanaians, Indonesians, Antilleans, Chinese, and Surinamer) are being reached by churches designed for their specific groups. This evangelism should continue and increase.

- 5 Evangelical Christians and Churches should mount a vast study of and ministry to the secular cities in the Netherlands where a majority (75%) of the migrant populations live—many in poverty. Church starting ministries patterned directly for these peoples should increase. World Christians may need to contribute to the formation of this imperative ministry.
- 6 Evangelical Christians and Churches should pray for a sweeping revival of Christian spirit and ministry to flow over the Netherlands—its Christians and Churches. Prayer should also be raised for the noble Christians who are seeking to minister to this important nation in the world today.