

# *The Future of* **FAITH**

Ethics, Religion and Spirituality in the New World Order

**Adjiedj Bakas**  
**Minne Buwalda**



green church on the rise • hodgepodge god becomes personal god  
• in fastest growing economies also most religious fervor • new  
capitalism: new market for ethics • internet causes spiritual revival  
• return of the shaman • new superpowers, renewed christianity

**Scriptum**

met een samenvatting in het Nederlands 





# The Future of Faith

Ethics, Religion and Spirituality  
in the New World Order

Adjiedj Bakas & Minne Buwalda

With a Foreword by Ashok Bhanaut





For our mothers, Soemintra Bakas-Sital (1938)  
and Hinke Buwalda-Lettinga (1928-2006).

*“Because God could not be everywhere  
simultaneously, he created the mother.”*

**Korean Proverb**



© 2012 Adjiedj Bakas & Minne Buwalda. All rights reserved. Except as permitted under the current Copyright Act of The Netherlands, no part of this publication may be reproduced or distributed in any form or by any means, or stored in a database or retrieval system, without the prior written permission of the publisher.

First print published in december 2010

Second print: January 2012

Also available in Brazilian Portuguese, first print published in July 2011.

Scriptum Publishers Ltd  
Nieuwe Haven 151  
3117 AA Schiedam  
The Netherlands  
Tel: +3110-4271022  
Fax: +3110-4736625  
info@scriptum.nl  
www.scriptum.nl

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means including photocopying, electronic, mechanical, recording or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the rights holders, application for which must be made to the publisher. Any product mentioned in this book may be a trademark of its company.

Book design: Wentelwereld, Bergen op Zoom NL  
Cover: Rodwell Design, based upon an idea by Rene Boender  
Edited by: Dawn Sackett, Brighton UK  
Dutch summary edited by: Dirk van Harten, Sofia, Bulgaria  
Produced by Bal Media, Schiedam NL

ISBN 978-90-5594-771-3  
NUR 706  
NUR 740  
NUR 801

www.bakas.com  
www.scriptum.nl

# Inhoud

Foreword by Ashok Bhanaut	9
Preface by the authors	13
Part I. Some backgrounds on ethics, religion and spirituality	23
Part II. Religion, spirituality and ethics in a New World Order	51
Part III. The future of Faith: the megatrends	83
Megatrend 1. Towards the individualization of religion and a multiform religious landscape	85
Megatrend 2: Towards new orthodoxies and the politicization of religion	115
Megatrend 3: Towards the commercialization of religion and the rise of God in the media	153
Megatrend 4: Towards the rise of the Green God	185
Megatrend 5: Towards a rising market for apocalyptic beliefs and the growth of higher consciousness	207
Megatrend 6: Towards a shift in focus from religious doctrine to religious experience	233
Megatrend 7: Towards multicultural superpowers influencing religion and the rise of morality in global capitalism	261
Part IV. Religion and ethics in a New World Order: scenarios for the future	277
Dutch Summary/Nederlandse Samenvatting	287
Sources	313
Photo Credits	316
Columns:	
• <i>Conversion to Judaism: From exclusivity to inclusion.</i> By Vinco David	108
• <i>Demystified in Djogja.</i> By Mucha-Shim Q. Arquiza	144
• <i>Faith in 21st century Turkey.</i> By Seth Onal	178
• <i>Young Emiratis and the future of Islam.</i> By Samr Al Marzouqi	201
• <i>The future of Shamanism.</i> By Norbert Spekking	228
• <i>The future of Chinese Spiritual art.</i> By Thomas Cheung	257
• <i>Some Garden: A New Yorker's Guide to the Bible.</i> By Lisa Lipkin	272



# foreword



I have known Adjiedj Bakas for many years now. His books are not only fun to read but also give many messages for the public and politicians. I also have enjoyed watching and listening to him on several television programs.

I share many of the messages and ideas that Adjiedj Bakas writes in his books. And which he communicates in his speeches and lectures as well. He expresses these ideas and his vision of the future very eloquently. In this age of globalization, his works as a trendwatcher in the fields of global economy, social behavior, technology, culture and now God and spirituality, are well recognized.

He is invited by the business corporate world and political leaders to share his views on these important issues whether in business, politics or the social behaviour. His vision and messages are taken seriously and with great interest. In the Netherlands he also appears on talk shows and other television programs related to trends.



In this book, *The Future of Faith*, Adjiedj Bakas writes together with journalist/philosopher Minne Buwalda about the trends in religion, ethics and spirituality in the 21st century. The trends expressed in this book are as powerful as the ones in the previous Bakas-books like *World Megatrends*, *Beyond the Crisis*, *Living without Oil* (co-authored by Rob Creemers) and *The Future of Love*.

This book is an essential reading both for the parents & children, teachers & students, politicians & police, government bodies, social sciences institutions. It is very wise to read and absorb these trends so that each indi-

vidual, institutions, organizations or even governments can include the implications of these trends in their policies and life patterns.

Our world is very flat today. Global citizens inhabit it. They work together, communicate together, do business together and come in contact with many religions and beliefs. The identity and the need for God are much different today than in the past. The 21st century will see the merging of the ideas and philosophies expressed by different beliefs. It will play an important role as one of the tenets of global connectivity.

I strongly believe that this book of Adjiedj Bakas and Minne Buwalda must not only be shared and published in Europe, where they both live. It must extend to South America, Asia and Africa. The messages of this book are universal for us living in the 21st century. The authors know their stuff and this book definitely advances the knowledge of this arcane field that they are engaged in.

### *Ashok Bhanaut*

*Ashok Bhanaut (1943) is currently chairman of Genkey Corporation Ltd, which produces identity management systems of superior technology to developing nations. He was born in Mombasa (Kenya), raised in India and lived in the US and currently in The Netherlands. He worked with IBM for 27 years. In his last 10 years with IBM, he held various executive and technical architecture positions at European and global levels, working in various countries (US,UK, France and The Netherlands). Prior to this he was the head of IT IBM EMEA (Europe, Middle East & Africa) in Paris. Before working in Paris, he was in the office of The CIO at IBM Headquarters in New York, being responsible for Business Transformation and Infrastructure for IBM internal systems Worldwide. He is Hindu, married to a Christian wife of Dutch origin. He is a passionate fore fighter of globalization.*





# preface



The first decade of the twenty-first century is now behind us. Those ten years were troublesome, with a major economic crisis and growing worldwide tensions between religious and cultural groups. Perhaps they were lost years: a decade of farewell to the twentieth century and preparation for the twenty-first century, which can now really get under way.

The new century is promising to be even more technology-driven than the last was; as a result, people are becoming increasingly insecure about where humanity is heading. In general, people think that a technological world will automatically be a cold and de-spiritualized one, but that is not necessarily the case. In one of the most technology-driven places on Earth, Silicon Valley, a young scientist told us: “I don’t believe in God anymore, but I do miss him. Within a couple of years computers will be smarter than humans. Within twenty years the first robot will win the Nobel Prize. Where will humanity end up, if all of this continues to expand?”

### **Globalization and its influence upon religion**

During the twentieth century globalization transformed our world into one big global village. For some people, the cosmopolitans of the world, this is a great development that offers many opportunities. They are happy with the global society and its broad assortment of cultures, beliefs and religious expressions, content to pick whatever suits them. But there are also a lot of people who feel threatened by globalization. For them the world seems to have become too big, too obscure and too chaotic:

A miner or factory worker born in the 50s, may fear losing his job to lower-wage countries and find his neighborhood, with its multiple ethnicities and religions, an alien place, making him long for the times when his world seemed familiar and safe.

A Hindu woman living in a town with increasing numbers of Muslims, and where people of the lower castes are converting to Christianity, may dream of the days of her parents, when the Hindu world was still intact.

A young Muslim growing up jobless in the Middle East, may find the ideas of the Mujahedeen attractive, because of their promises of respect, power and glory.

A Chinese farmer, who saw his world change completely within the

space of twenty years, may cling to the home altar and the spirits of his forefathers or seek comfort in a new religious movement like the *Falung Gong*.

Religion helps many of us to cope with the present global risk society.

### **The Economic World Crisis and its influence upon religion**

There is normally a boost in religion and spirituality during an economic crisis, as we can see happening now. In times of crisis people tend to believe more strongly that something, somewhere out there, an almighty power, is looking after their wellbeing, soothing their pain and their worries about losing their job, house and savings. Stockbrokers and bankers who lost fortunes while relying on their own instincts in investing in complex financial products or depended on the technical analysis of the stock markets, change over to financial astrology. If instinct and calculation can't bring them fortune, maybe knowledge of the cosmic constellations will. This is the fifth major economic crisis in the past 200 years. What was the role of religion and spirituality during former economic crises and what impact is the current crisis having on religion?

### **Religion as a stronghold**

One of the main questions we ask in this book is how religion will develop in the years to come; what role faith will play in the future of our global village and in the new concepts of virtue which we can expect to emerge after the crisis. Globalization has had an enormous impact on religion. Members of religious groups that would never have met fifty years ago, nowadays live and work together in the same neighborhoods and offices. But unlike economics and politics, which tend to create worldwide uniformity, religion and culture seem to create dividing lines among peoples. For a lot of us, religion and spirituality are our roots, and they give us our identity. In a world in which everything looks the same and dangers seem to come from all directions (swine flu from Mexico, cheap labor from China, Jihadi's from Pakistan) religion is like a stronghold for our personality, something to hold onto in a world that has become too big and too unpredictable. Orthodoxy is on the rise in many parts of the world, resulting in a politicization of religion.

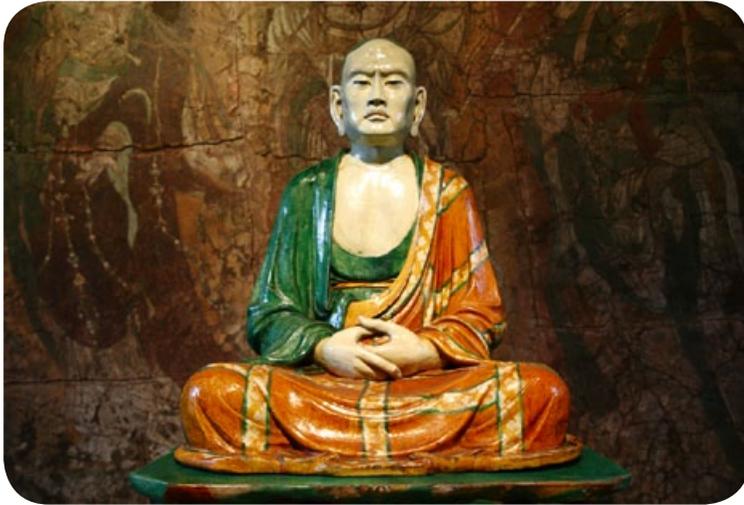
### **Towards the individualization and humanization of religion**

On the other hand there are developments away from orthodoxy, towards an ever greater individualization of religion. Especially in Europe and among cosmopolitan elites all over the world, there is a tendency towards more and more individual forms of spirituality. People combine elements from different backgrounds and bring them together in a personal religious mix. Christian, but with a belief in the Indian concept of reincarnation? No problem. A shamanic dream-catcher next to the statue of Mary on your personal altar? Why not?

Much of the new spirituality in today's world focuses on psychology (personal development) and religious experience. People who follow this type of spirituality are not, in general, interested in religious rules or popular opinion on religious matters (the *doxa* in orthodoxy), but seek unique religious experiences and personal enlightenment. This is the type of spirituality that is most suited to commercialization. Nowadays you can buy statues of the Buddha in interior design shops or garden centers, and the number of spiritual workshops marketed on the Internet is dazzling. Sometimes these are genuine client cults, in which the believers (clients) buy pieces of enlightenment by paying to follow courses.

### **Development of a pragmatic attitude towards spirituality**

Another approach to modern belief can best be described as the Chinese attitude towards spirituality: pragmatic. With the economic rise of the East, an up and coming superpower like China will leave its mark on our belief systems and our attitudes towards religion and ethics. And that means that the trend towards individualization, which belongs to Western culture and therefore has been in the ascendant for almost the whole of the twentieth century, is going to be balanced by the trend of collectivization. For the Chinese, unity and harmony within society as a whole (the collective) is more important than individual freedoms and religious differences. They believe that people should not be divided by religion. Chinese people rarely attempt to convert others to their religious beliefs. In dealing with strangers the focus is on similarities, and religion is treated as a private matter.



### **Growing consciousness and new religious mixes**

Worldwide consciousness is growing fast, mainly because knowledge is available to and shared by more and more people through the Internet. There is ever more communication tying the world together; we read and hear about the newest findings in science and get to know about the ethical stands of people on the other side of the globe. Of course there are a lot of silly conspiracy theories on the web: speculations about the malevolent agendas of global elites, about intruding life from outer space and so on. The important thing to note is that despite the fact that these theories are often hoaxes, a growing number of people believe the information that is circulating.

The rise of (false or true) consciousness and the rise of new religious concepts originating from multicultural countries like the US and Brazil – countries we call “new countries” in this book – might lead to the end of the hegemonic religions of the world. The first of the major religions to go might be Roman Catholicism. Just like multinational companies, big religious institutions nowadays are very vulnerable to sudden changes in public opinion. The negative publicity about Catholic priests that sexually abuse children is an example of this.

New regional religious approaches, based on the original religion of a region or country but mixed with a strong consciousness about nature and linked to climate change, will emerge.

### **The rise of the Green God**

Contrary to common belief the temperatures on Earth are not rising everywhere, and therefore the term “global warming” doesn’t really capture what’s happening. Author Thomas Friedman explains: “Avoid the term global warming. Global weirding is best because that is what actually happens as global temperatures rise and the climate changes. The weather gets weird. The hots are expected to get hotter, the wets wetter, the dries drier and the most violent storms more numerous.” A lot of people are worried about this newly weird climate, and are calling for more respect for nature. They believe that our “sins” of polluting and exploiting nature are causing her to counter-attack with natural disasters, just like the biblical flood that came as a punishment for human sins.

As a result they demand respect for nature and mother Earth, sometimes called *Gaia*, after the Greek goddess. We see this as the return of the Green God, and the networks and organizations that are declaring Earth and nature to be holy, we call the Green Faith. We believe that “climate weirding” has more than one cause, but factors include: the magnetic activity of the Sun (the amount of so-called sunspots and sunstorms which influence the Earth), overpopulation and human behavior. Many believers in the Green Faith also believe in astrology, which is, or used to be, a major element in a lot of religions on Earth. We expect that the Green Faith will become very large, although it will not be centrally led. In fact, we expect that most centrally ruled religions will be replaced by network religions like the Green Faith. They will be hybrid and often have grassroots characteristics. Some will link to conspiracy theories, others won’t.

### **Mapping of global religious and spiritual trends**

Will the twenty-first century see a rise in nationalism, religious orthodoxy and cultural clashes as a result of the (economic) uncertainties we are confronted with? Or will the individualization of spirituality create a world of infinitely varied personal faiths? Will we follow the paths of existing religions, but without treating the belief in another God as a capital crime? This book explores the boost in religion and spirituality in a world that is increasingly interconnected and interdependent.

It describes relevant religious examples from all over the world in a kaleidoscopic way, examples that illustrate the spiritual trends of our day and age.

In this book, the religious and spiritual trends in various areas are mapped and linked with each other. It offers an insight into the religious currents at the beginning of the twenty-first century. From rent-a-priests to Sufis, from hell and damnation cyber-preachers to gospel-thumping Pentecostals, from Muslim fundamentalists to whisky-drinking Mino's (Muslims in name only), from youth churches to reli-sex, from religious-themed restaurants (such as Woytila in Berlin) to religion in politics, from religion in fashion to the new religious function in art, from the new Judaism to neo-Paganism, from religion on the Internet to a renewed belief in spirits and life after death, from the search for spirituality in nature to spirituality in technology: this book is an odyssey through today's ethics as they are voiced by religion and spirituality.

*The Future of Faith* came into being thanks to various people and institutions. Our publisher had faith in us and invested in this lavish edition of the book. Many people acted as readers and offered many valuable suggestions, including Ricardo Fakiera, Wim de Ridder, Rob Creemers, Ralph Bijker, Marjolein Wilming, Afzal Baig, Lia van Broekhoven (Cordaid) and Lisette van der Wal (Icco) helped with the research. Peter-Michael Fäustle (MAF Servicos Literários) sold the rights. The Dutch Publisher *Scriptum* (Hans Ritman & Gerjan de Waard) published the first edition of the book. Dawn Sackett edited it, and Thiërry Tetenburg (Wentelwereld) designed it. We were inspired and helped by: Els Lubbers-Toxopeus, Hans Nieuwerkerke, Jan Hartendorp, Luuk Wessels, Karin Snijders, Lans Bovenberg, Annette Nijs, Liesbeth van Dijk, Dirk Aleven, Frans Afman, Steyn Afman, Yasser Barakat, Mark Rutte, Frits Bolkestein, Lambert Pater, Maarten van Nispen, Norbert Spekking, Erik Swart, Cedric Lepelblad, Jos Latour, Emile Ratelband, Fred Butter, Gabriel Aslan, Mirjam Sijmons and Paul Iske. Others supplied illustrations, inserts, and other contributions to this book. Our thanks to them all.

*Addis Abeba, New York City, Urumqi, Bogota, July 2010*  
Adjiedj Bakas & Minne Buwalda