

Autobiography Johan Maasbach

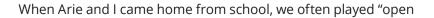
CHAPTER 1 My CONVERSION

Hearing the gospel

When I was a little boy living in the west of Rotterdam, the Netherlands, I heard about an open air meeting held by the *Salvation Army*. I went out to watch and listen. One thing gripped my attention more than anything else. It was a young boy, already dressed in uniform, standing boldly among the grownup musicians, playing for the Lord. I envied him and thought how wonderful it must be to serve the Lord at such a young age. Somehow he reminded me of little Samuel in the Bible.

We moved to the center of the city. One day, I heard that a gospel truck from an outreach team would come to our neighborhood. I went out and listened attentively from beginning to end. The gospel songs blessed my soul. A young woman accompanied them on a small pump organ. Others shared their testimonies about Christ, their Redeemer. And one man brought a short message about the salvation of sinners. The strange thing was that I immediately felt a great desire to do something similar in the future: to preach the gospel.

Our neighbors, living in the apartment below us, were evangelical Christians in the true sense of the word. Their little son, Arie, played the pump organ. We were classmates in school and friends. I liked to visit these people who sang the gospel songs so often and so beautifully.





Cornelis Hendrik Maasbach and his wife Leentje Maasbach-Brandwijk, the parents of evangelist Johan Maasbach.

Rotterdam – The Netherlands, 1927 Johan when he was nine years old, the age at which he made the decision to accept Jesus Christ as his Lord and Sav<u>ior.</u>

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air meeting." I would place some old wooden chairs together to form a platform, just like the gospel truck, while Arie played the organ. Then I would lead the imaginary audience in songs, and preach from my chair platform, interrupting myself once in a while with a loud "Hallelujah!"

At school, I met a friend who was a member of the *Salvation Army*. It was not long before I also attended the meetings of the *Salvation Army*, both morning and evening.

My conversion

By this time I knew that I also had to make a public decision to accept Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior. I will never forget how difficult this was for me. When the *Salvation Army* officer invited us to give our hearts to Jesus, it was so hard for me to raise my hand. I just did not have the courage to do it. Fear took hold of me. My heart was beating faster than usual and I felt a lump in my throat. I was afraid and thought, I can do this at home. When I came home that night, I knelt at my bed and I asked the Lord to forgive me. "Oh, Lord Jesus, come into my heart!" I pleaded. "There is room in my heart for You." But it seemed as though a still small voice said, *"Whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of them when He comes in His glory"* (Luke 9:26). I had no peace in my young and longing heart. Therefore, I promised the Lord that I would openly give my heart to Him the next Sunday.



Little Johan, together with his sister.

But the next Sunday, courage failed me again. I simply did not dare to publicly make a decision for Jesus. Oh, the invitation hymn for sinners to come to Him made my heart beat faster again. The persistent call of the *Salvation Army* officer to come to Jesus brought that lump to my throat again. Once again I fooled myself with the thought that I could just as well do it at home, and that I really did not have to do this at the *Salvation Army*, in front of everyone. But later, back at home, the same thing happened as before. That still small voice was speaking to my heart, telling me I was a coward, that I was ashamed of Him Who had not been ashamed of me. I was searching for peace, but found none. The following Sunday I decided to sit in the front row, in order to make this step as easy as possible for myself. I promised God that I would not be ashamed this time. The officer had barely finished his invitation, when I jumped up and ran straight forward to kneel at the sinners' bench (a bench located at the front where people confess their sins, and receive forgiveness). What a victory! How grateful I was to know that God had accepted me, a nine-year-old boy, as His own child through Jesus Christ.

My time at the Salvation Army

Not long afterwards I was ordained as a soldier under the banner of the *Salvation Army*. Soon after that, I was the only one from our family of fourteen children (I was number thirteen), standing in uniform on the street corners of Rotterdam. I beat the big drum, and occasionally they would let me carry the flag as we marched. How proud I was to be able to sing and play those beautiful salvation songs for Jesus on the streets.

For a long time, the prayer meetings were my biggest problem. For example, at the start of our band rehearsal, we would all kneel in prayer and pray out loud, one after another. When it was my turn, I would get this lump in my throat again. I could not utter a single word. However, after everyone else had prayed, they would wait for the last one, which was me. Whether I wanted to or not, I had to pray. They just kept waiting for me until I did. What a relief when I had finished my prayer! I can understand why the disciples asked Jesus, *"Lord, teach us to pray"* (Luke 11:1). How wonderful that we can also learn how to pray. Because, I can tell you, it is not easy!

I will never forget the wonderful time I spent as a boy at the *Salvation Army*, nor the blessed conventions we had. This was during the '20s and '30s, when the fire of God's Spirit was burning fiercely, and many souls were being saved.

A great urge to go to sea

After finishing elementary school, I attended the Technical

"HOW GRATEFUL I WAS TO **KNOW THAT GOD HAD** ACCEPTED ME AS HIS **OWN CHILD** THROUGH JESUS CHRIST."

Father and mother Maasbach with their children. Second from the left is Johan, their thirteenth child.



School, as I intended to work in my father's business. My father owned a factory producing sunshades and awnings. Even though I really enjoyed this kind of work, there was also growing within me a great urge to go to sea someday. As I grew up in Rotterdam, I spent hours watching ships of all sizes from many nations. I was fascinated as these great ocean liners entered the port, or lifted anchor and moved slowly towards the sea.

I discovered that the only way for me to go to sea would be as a cook's mate. And even that was not easy in those days. Among other things, a cook's mate had to be able to bake bread. Therefore I went to work in a bakery, where I got a weekly wage of 1.50 guilders. I was very happy with this job, because I was primarily there to learn as fast as possible how to bake bread. I had to work pretty hard for those 1.50 guilders. Apart from oiling thousands of bread tins with a brush, I soon learned the art of baking bread. Meanwhile, I was also applying for a job at all shipping companies. As a seventeen-year-old boy I strongly believed that God would make a way, and would get me on board of a ship.

Leaving home

I will never forget the day my father came to visit me at the bakery to tell me that I had received a letter from a shipping company. It was a miracle that my boss would let me quit my job that very same day, since I also delivered baskets of bread on my cargo bike daily. All this, just to learn how to bake bread! That same week I left on my first trip to Hamburg, Germany.

My father and mother were very sad that I was leaving. It was a touching moment as I stood in the hallway with my duffle bag and new suitcase, ready to go to sea for the first time. I will never forget how my father shook my hand, saying, "Son, I have raised you before the Lord and have watched over you. Now you are going places where I cannot watch over you anymore. I commit you now into the hands of my God Almighty. He Himself will watch over you, protect you and keep you safe."

"MY SOUL WAS THIRSTING AND LONGING FOR THE LORD MY GOD, THE CREATOR, WHO MADE HEAVEN AND EARTH." There are often sad moments in the lives of parents which they do not understand. But whatever happens to the true Christian, by faith we know that God is love and that He will make all things work together for good to those who love Him. Often we do not see until later that the good hand of the Lord was upon us, even when we were walking through the darkest valley. That was the case with Jacob and his son Joseph, from whose lives we can learn that God's love is victorious, no matter what happens to us.

Many times since, I have realized that this urge I had as a boy to sail the high seas as a cook's mate was indeed the guiding hand of the Lord. And often I have thanked God for it.

The good hand of the Lord rested on me. And after some time I began to work for a very capable chef who soon taught me the secrets of his profession.

In awe of God and His creation

For a long time I sailed on different ships across every ocean. I believe it was no accident, but a miracle of the Lord that I had a nice double cabin all to myself. It was during these trips that I would read my Bible in my spare time; whenever I was not writing letters to my mother or my girlfriend, who later became my fiancée. I also consumed all the spiritual literature I could get my hands on. My soul was thirsting and longing for the Lord my God, the Creator, Who made heaven and earth.

I developed a great love for the seas and oceans of the world. Especially the wind and storms reminded me of the authority and power of Jesus, who commanded the wind and the sea to be quiet by the power of His Word. In the tropics I could spend hours watching the stars and the splendor of the night sky, while the ship split the surface of the sea on its way to its destination. Especially at times when many shooting stars were leaving their bright tracks against the dark sky. The stars reminded me of Abraham and God's promise to him,



Rotterdam – The Netherlands As a boy, Johan often sat at one of the ports, watching the ships for hours. He felt a great urge to go to sea. "Look up at the sky and count the stars – if indeed you can count them. Then He said to him, So shall your offspring be" (Genesis 15:5). The ocean with the great whales and jumping dolphins; the sky and the clouds; the billions of stars at night, and the rising and setting of the sun in its splendor of colors: all creation fascinated me and reminded me of the majesty and mighty power of our heavenly Creator.

What impressed me most of all, though, was the fact that this majestic, powerful Ruler of the infinite universe had a personal interest in me, a little cook's mate, wandering over the earth's great oceans. The natural man, who depends upon his own intellect, will never be able to understand such a thing. I believe this is because the natural man only lives in the visible world and only accepts what his natural mind and physical senses reveal to him. Who can comprehend the greatness of the universe? By faith one can remain steadfast like Moses, who constantly "endured as seeing Him who is invisible" (Hebrews 11:27), the almighty Majesty, the great Creator of heaven and earth and everything in it, the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End, Him of Whom the prophet said, "For the eyes of the LORD range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to Him" (2 Chronicles 16:9).



Johan Maasbach:

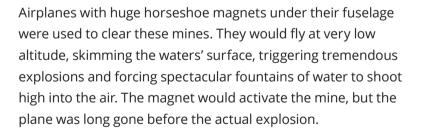
"As a seventeen-year-old boy I strongly believed that God would make a way, and would get me on board of a ship."

Rotterdam – The Netherlands, 1937 At the age of 19, Johan was already working as a chef at sea. While the terrible Second World War was about to break out, which no one expected at that time, God had already urged Johan through His Holy Spirit to go to sea. The invisible hand of God led Johan to distant countries and destinations to keep him for a greater purpose. In God's time and place, He would reveal Himself through him.

CHAPTER 2 The Second World War

Danger at sea

The war between Germany and the United Kingdom was not without danger for those at sea. Especially in the English Channel, many ships struck a magnetic mine. These mines, scattered below the sea surface, were treacherous gadgets. It was quite possible for a ship to sail over one, entirely unaware that the detonating mechanism had been fired. The metal of the ship activates the ignition, so the mine on the bottom of the sea explodes. The power and impact are enormous. The pressure of the water ripped a ship open like a can of sardines.



Once, while in Dover, we were delayed by the Britsh authorities for cargo inspection and customs control. During the three days we were anchored there, every night at precisely nine o'clock, German planes bombarded the many ships. Usually these attacks lasted about three hours. We were surrounded by eleven large sunken ships, each with only a small section of their masts or smokestacks visible.



August 1939 The 20-year-old Johan Maasbach during a stopover of his voyage on the ship *M.S. Marken Saigon-China*.

Just before we were given clearance to leave, a small Norwegian freighter passed by. With a sudden tremendous explosion, which made us think that we had been hit ourselves, the Norwegian ship struck a magnetic mine. For a few moments there was nothing but steam, wood and smoke filling the air. After two minutes the only visible remnant of the ship was a tiny piece of the stern. Of the 24 crew members, only two survived. I saw it happen right in front of me. This was just one of very many ships whose crews found their grave in the waves, never to return to their loved ones at home.

The hand of God was clearly upon us, because twice our captain had lifted anchor to leave, and twice he had received countermanding orders to let it down again. Just after the destruction of the Norwegian freighter we received our final instructions to leave. There was no doubt that the Norwegian freighter, at the expense of 22 lives, had cleared the way for us to sail in safety.

That same day, I watched another large cargo boat hit a mine. There was a tremendous noise. Within just a few moments the ship stood straight up on end, with her stem thrust into the air. The lifeboats dangled uselessly alongside it, while many sailors of the ship found their death. To this day, I am still humbly thanking God for His protecting hand upon my life, and for His love, mercy and faithfulness.

The day the Netherlands became involved in the war, on May 10th, 1940, I happened to be ashore. Seven crew members were rushed to the front. On May 11th, our ship left the dock in a hurry. We left Vlissingen to sail for Norfolk, and from there to Buenos Aires. Early that morning we were under German air attack, but we made it safely to the Atlantic Ocean. However, we were not yet out of danger. A heavy German warship had just been sunk at the River Plate. There were German submarines everywhere. We were definitely one of their targets. There were also armed German cargo



Vlissingen – The Netherlands

boats. We called them "pirates," because they were used to supply submarines and warships. They were in contact with the enemy. At that time it was important to avoid any ship near South America.

I did not feel like staying on this particular ship any longer, and made every effort to sign off. The chief steward, for whom I worked, was an old drunkard. He called me all sorts of bad names and apparently could not stand the sight of me, although I was loyal and did my job well.

In the hospital in Buenos Aires

I often had problems with my back, so I decided to see a doctor in Buenos Aires. Although I complained about my back, the Argentinian doctor barely looked at it. He was much more interested in my throat. After a quick examination, he made a rapid diagnosis, and informed me through the interpreter that I needed surgery on my throat. Personally, I could not see the connection between my throat and my back problem. But since I desperately wanted to get off that ship, I decided to go straight to the hospital.

I was still very young, and had never heard of healing through prayer. I believed in God with all my heart, but I was oblivious of that great truth. This just seemed like my legal chance to leave that ship.

In the hospital, my tonsils were removed. It was a few years later when I actually discovered what kind of surgery they had performed. The first few days I could not speak or eat anything, and I was in a lot of pain. By the time I was feeling well enough to eat, they did not give me much food. In fact, the food was really bad. I noticed that visitors brought food for the patients. I spent about twelve days in the hospital, all by myself, in a foreign country and unable to understand the language. Meanwhile, the ship had gone up the river to Rosario to unload, and by now it was on its way back. The doctor came to see how I was doing. Of course, while the ship was still around, I felt very ill. But it was of no use. Suddenly,

"I WAS Still very young and i had never heard of healing through prayer."

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two nurses came in with my clothes. Sick or not, I had to get dressed. A taxi brought me back to that ship. As soon as I was on board, we took off and left Argentina. Although I did not understand this at the time, I later saw the good hand of God in this. He had other plans for me.

Since I had been working on this ship for a long time, I told the captain one day, that I definitely needed a break. I pointed out that it was not my fault that the war had forced me to stay with this ship so long. It seems that the hand of the Lord was with me. Because at the Barry Docks in Cardiff, I was the only crew member who was allowed to sign off, on condition that I would go to London.

In London during the Blitz

In London I looked for a furnished room. I vividly remember the first night I spent there. The room was continually illuminated by exploding shells and gunfire aimed at the enemy's aircrafts. Occasionally, the whole house would shake. I did not realize that I was the only occupant at night. Everyone else spent the night at the bomb shelters. Strangely enough, I was never afraid at sea or during the Blitz in London in 1940 and 1941.

No one knew how long the war would last. Some said it could be over very soon. I then decided to stay in London, so that I could easily cross over to the Netherlands once the war was over.

I found a nice room in the home of a Scottish widow, who took good care of me. Every evening I had the whole house to myself. I would stay in my room, reading my Bible or Christian books. When I heard the explosions outside, I occasionally stopped reading and listened to the roaring aircraft engines. If you listened carefully, you could tell the difference between the Germans and the British. Whoever they were, I would lift up my hands and pray for the safety of the crew. It made no difference to me whether they were German or British. They were soldiers and officers who had to fight, whether they



Buenos Aires – Argentina

wanted to or not. Whether friend or foe, to me they were all people with a precious soul.

I could not escape the fact that I felt safer at home than in a bomb shelter. The Lord was my shelter, and I always felt His wonderful presence. One evening, a young man, who also lived in the house, insisted that I would go with him to the shelter. But I had no peace about doing this. So I decided to stay home. The next morning he did not return, because the shelter had taken a direct hit, and he had not survived the blow. Another large bomb shelter, holding about 200 people, got hit as well. Many of those people had lost their lives. I am not criticizing the use of shelters; obviously they saved many lives. It was just my personal conviction that I was safer remaining where the Lord placed me.

Movie theater

A neighbor, who was living below me, had asked me at least ten times to take her daughters to the movies. I had always declined, since I did not consider the movie theater the right place for a born again Christian. Finally I agreed, as I had no friends or relatives nearby.

I will never forget the experience! The movie was interrupted by the announcement of an air raid. Many hurried to the nearest shelter. I had never been afraid before, not even on the ship, while facing the danger of submarines, airplanes or mines. But now that I found myself, walking on what seemed to me the broad road leading to destruction (Matthew 7:13), my heart was overwhelmed with fear. Walking home that night, the girl asked my opinion about the movie. I could only say that the music had been beautiful, because I had not seen the movie at all! The only thing I had done, was sitting there with my eyes closed, praying for mercy and forgiveness, and for God's hand to protect me!

As I remember, this was the last time I ever went to a movie for an evening out. However, it was not my last experience with movie theaters. More than 20 years later, I visited "THE LORD WAS MY SHELTER, AND I ALWAYS FELT HIS WONDERFUL PRESENCE." another theater, this time in Rome, Italy. This theater was showing its last movie before closing for good as a cinema, and being reopened as a Full Gospel Center. It was this theater which inspired me, exactly one year later, to buy the magnificent *Capitol Theater* in The Hague, the Netherlands, and make a similar transformation. In a later chapter of this book you can read more about this powerful and divinely led experience.

I have nothing against the remarkable film technology in itself. However, what is being presented on the film screen is often far from edifying for the moral values of both young and old. It is titillating; adultery, sexual immorality, occultism, murder and violence are rampant. It is sad to see how small the percentage of good movies is. I recently had a conversation with a cinema director, who operates several theaters. He said, "Mr. Maasbach, if there is no nakedness or sex involved, who would go to see a movie nowadays?" Therefore, I personally believe that a born again Christian has no need to go to a movie theater. I am not saying that you are going to hell when you visit a movie theater. But I do think it shows the spiritual condition of the Christian who is still longing for these things.

The protective hand of God

What a blessing it is that we may personally experience the mighty hand of our Heavenly Father in our lives. It was my habit to go for a walk around eight o'clock in the evening. One day, I walked down the stairs and was about to leave the front door, when my landlady called me back for some reason. I ran back upstairs. As we stood talking, we heard the whistling sound of a falling bomb, which struck very close. She grabbed my hands and anxiously clung to me. We instinctively ducked and bent down to find cover. The whole house shook violently on its foundation. In some places, the plaster fell from the walls and ceiling. Then there was a muffled blow. And then all was quiet. I ran downstairs to see what had happened. When I opened the front door, I saw that the whole street was buried under many feet of rubble.



Rome – Italy

Years later, during a visit to this city, Johan visited a cinema, which would soon reopen as a Full Gospel Center. This inspired him to buy the *Capitol Theater* in The Hague, the Netherlands. The entire block of homes across the street was in utter ruins. Tears came to my eyes, and I thanked God heartily for His mercy in having me called back upstairs by my landlady to save me from a certain death. Hundreds of windows across the entire neighborhood had been shattered. The astonishing thing was that not one window of my room was broken! Somehow, the air pressure had been diverted in the other direction.

Looking back at that time in London, I regret the fact that no one ever took me to a church or Full Gospel meeting. In fact, I did not even know of the existence of Full Gospel churches. Otherwise I would definitely have searched everywhere to find one.

Back at sea

Unfortunately, the bombs, grenades and gunfire were not the only things that wanted to disturb me. Unexpectedly, I was notified by the authorities to sign on to another ship, or be transported to Canada for military training. If I refused, I could go to jail, or possibly be executed. I actually had no intention to leave England. I would rather stay close to the Netherlands, so that I could go home as soon as the war was over. And military service was a problem for me because of my personal conviction. (However, I do respect the army, and am grateful for the soldiers who fight for the freedom of their country.)

I tried to delay the case. But chefs for the merchant marine were hard to find, and I was ordered to sign on a ship leaving for Indonesia. I refused, because I did not want to go to the Far East.

I prayed to the Lord that if I had to go to sea again, He would give me a ship to America. My eldest brother had left the Netherlands for the United States of America when I was only six months old. I thought that this would be a good time for me to meet him. "WHAT A BLESSING IT IS THAT WE MAY PERSONALLY EXPERIENCE THE MIGHTY HAND OF OUR HEAVENLY FATHER IN OUR LIVES."

chapter 3 God leads the way

News from home

It was almost impossible to receive any news from home. All I knew was that the center of Rotterdam had been bombed by the Germans, that more than 30,000 houses and buildings had been destroyed, and that the entire center of the city was devastated beyond recognition. I could not imagine that anything serious had happened to my parents, knowing that both my father and mother walked with God. However, I had no confirmation. All I could do was wait.

Strangely enough, while I never really worried about my parents or my brothers and sisters, I did have an immense concern for the safety of my fiancée. Before I left the Netherlands, we had become engaged, and I had promised her that this would be my last trip. It turned out not to be the last one, but very definitely the longest: from 1940 until 1946!

God's protection and guidance

Suddenly, I was notified that a ship from the Holland America Line needed a cook. They wanted to see me immediately. The ship was docked in Glasgow, Scotland, and I was to pick up my papers and train ticket. I realized that I could not refuse this time. And I thought this might be the ship that would take me to New York.



Young Johan on the deck of a ship during one of his earliest trips. He still had a lot to learn. God sent him ahead of his contemporaries, and took him in His personal Bible school to prepare him for the work that was still ahead of him. Because my clothes were still at the dry cleaners, I wanted to leave the following morning. But in spite of my vigorous arguments, they insisted that I leave by train that night. The ship was leaving soon, they said. Somewhat reluctantly, I packed my bags and rode out of London on the night train for Glasgow. The train ride certainly was not without challenges. We often stopped because there was an air raid. We would hear the German planes pass right over us. However, because of the fog, they were unable to locate the railroad tracks. The next morning we safely reached Glasgow.

As soon as I reported on board, I discovered that the ship had not yet been unloaded. It was not expected to sail for another two or three weeks! I was very upset. First of all, because I was forced to leave my clothes at the cleaners. And second, because I was not allowed to travel one day later. Another crew member would come that day with the day train which I had wished to take. But he never made it, because the train was bombed and he was killed. When I heard the news, I could hardly hold back the tears. I found a place where I could be alone. There, I let my tears run freely as I thanked God for His love and mercy, and for His protecting hand. I asked Him for forgiveness for hearing and understanding His voice and guidance so poorly. Or, to put it in other words, I offered God my sincere apologies.

I never cease to be amazed at how our good and faithful God keeps His almighty hand and all-seeing eye on our lives. We know that God is able to keep His people from danger and death. The lives of Joseph and David in the Bible are powerful demonstrations of God's protection. By faith we know that this is the grace of God. We could also call this the "electing grace of God." Truly I believe what David says in Psalm 34:7: "*The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear Him, and He delivers them.*" (Also read Psalm 91.) It is wonderful to belong to Him!

There was a rumor on the ship that we were going to Canada. Officially we never knew where we were heading. We were never told our destination until we had been at sea for three days. This was a precaution against espionage. Sometimes,



Glasgow – United Kingdom

however, the cargo would give us a clue. After I was settled on board, I suddenly knew that this was the ship the Lord had given me in answer to prayer. To know things like that is often very important, especially in times of danger. When we are in His will, we are always safe. Throughout the whole trip at sea, I had no fear. I knew that we would safely reach our destination. Imagine how very grateful I was when, a few days out to sea, I learned that we were heading for New York!

The journey proceeded without difficulty. Our route was kept far north, and we were able to watch the splendor of the northern lights at night. Naturally, the weather was very cold.

A miracle in the kitchen

We had about 100 crew members and 30 passengers to keep me busy all the time. Especially, since I only had one cook's assistant. There was no second cook and, as far as I remember, the baker had missed the boat! The person who had hired me told me that throughout his career he had never taken on such a young chef. I was only 22 years old, and did not want to have any complaint about my work.

However, there was one incident. For dinner I had placed a beef stew on the menu, among other things. Something that hardly ever happened to me took place that day: the beef stew burned! This dish was one of the main courses, and there was no time left to make anything else. I tasted once more and was convinced that no one would want to eat this. With great haste I rushed into the bakery, next to the kitchen, and locked the door behind me. I fell on my knees in front of the dough trough and prayed, "Father, in the name of Jesus, help me! I do not know what to do. Please, change the taste of this dish. You are Almighty! When the water was bitter, You made it sweet!" (Read Exodus 15:22-27.) I went back to the kitchen, and began handing the dishes to the waiters. To my surprise they kept coming back for more, until every bit was gone!

Psalm 91:1-2

"Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the LORD, 'He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust."

That night, as I was strolling on the deck, the captain suddenly

approached me and complimented me. He said, "Chef, I have never tasted such a delicious beef stew. Especially the passengers kept asking for more." After this confirmation of the miracle, I could only thank the Lord with tears of gratitude! How often do we lack the courage to believe that we received what we have prayed for? I had prayed and expected all the food to be returned to the kitchen. But instead, I ran short, and every bit had been eaten. And to top it all, the captain had even thanked me for a delicious meal! The Lord did this to confirm the fact that He really does hear! We are so often inattentive, and we forget so quickly what the Lord has done for us.

Arriving in New York

It was an impressive sight as we sailed into New York's harbor. For the first time, I saw the *Empire State Building*, over 100 stories tall, towering above its smaller brothers and sisters of only 40 or 50 floors high. I also saw the famous *Statue of Liberty*, with her arm raised high as a witness to all nations of the freedom that finds a home in America. And I admired the great hanging bridges.

One of the first things I wanted to do was to visit my brother. When I was given permission to go ashore, I headed for Brooklyn and found his home. A little girl, around twelve years old, answered the doorbell. I asked her if Mr. Maasbach was at home, and she said yes. Even though I was a complete stranger to her, I went right up the stairs, into the living room. "Are you Mr. Maasbach?" I asked the surprised man in the room. "Yes, I am," he replied. In Dutch I said, "Then I am your brother Johan!" At first, he did not recognize me. First, because he was not expecting me. And second, because I had only been a baby when he left home. One of the first things he asked me was, "Are you saved?" Sure enough, we had a lot to talk about.

Experiencing the Pentecostal church

I will never forget the first time my brother took me to the *Ridgewood Pentecostal Church*. The church was located on the

"I ASKED HIM FOR FORGIVENESS FOR HEARING AND UNDER-STANDING HIS VOICE AND GUIDANCE SO POORLY."

While Johan enjoyed sailing the seas, seeing the different countries and cultures and working as a chef, the Holy Spirit was changing his heart and mind. God gave him an ever growing desire for Himself and a burden and divine love for people.



second floor. I thought I had arrived in the Upper Room in Jerusalem, where the Holy Spirit had fallen on the disciples (as recorded in Acts 2). For the first time in my life, I heard people speaking in other tongues, just like it says in 1 Corinthians 12 and 14 and in the Acts of the Apostles. I heard people magnifying the Lord together and praising Him as I had never heard before. It was all completely new to me. I had never seen anything like it in the *Dutch Reformed Church*. I could feel the presence of the Holy Spirit in a tremendous way as I had never felt Him in any other church service. People stood on their feet and worshiped the Lord with lifted hands and loud voices. I raised my hand a little bit. Suddenly, my brother pushed my elbow up, so that my hand was way up in the air. I needed that little push, because I was not used to this!

What bothered me at first was the fact that everybody prayed at the same time, and often I could not understand anybody. I tried to listen to what they were saying. Later, my brother told me, "You have to open your mouth yourself and praise the Lord. You do not have to listen to what they are praying. They are praying to God, and He hears them all. If you pray yourself, you will be blessed too." Indeed, I had yet to learn to praise the Lord in the midst of the congregation. And I am very grateful that I was able to learn this. It brings you into closer fellowship with God and with your brothers and sisters in Christ.

"I DID NOT Know how The lord Would Make A Way for Me, but I had Prayed."

At Ridgewood, there were times of praise, but also moments of holy silence. At other times, someone would spontaneously stand up and testify about Jesus. On occasions, people would dance before the Lord in the midst of the congregation. Later, there were times when I could hardly keep my feet on the floor. Many people will not understand this manifestation. King David must have had the same experience when the ark was brought into Jerusalem with joy. David danced before the Lord with all his might (2 Samuel 6). Knowing that the ark is a representation of Jesus, how much more should we rejoice in the presence of Him Who bought us with His own precious blood. Therefore I am not ashamed. I rejoice with those who exalt our Savior Jesus Christ with a liberty which sometimes results in dancing. But I can also understand those pastors who do not allow dancing in their churches. Dancing in the Spirit before the Lord does not occur very often. It can easily degenerate into a fleshly activity, which has nothing to do with the Holy Spirit. My point is that the true manifestation of the Spirit at the right time in the right place is pleasing to the Father, because it exalts His Son.

One more thing from my early experiences in Ridgewood is worth mentioning. One day, after the offering plate had passed during the meeting, my brother suddenly asked, "How much did you put in the offering?" The question shocked me. In the Netherlands, people do not ask guestions like that. Still I was glad that I was able to reply, "One dollar," instead of a shameful "One quarter." To my surprise, my brother said, "Being single, you should be ashamed to give the Lord only one dollar. You should give at least five dollars each time, or more. Did you ever give one hundred dollars?" I thought, What is he talking about? I had guickly calculated: in those days, 100 dollars was about 385 Dutch guilders. It sounded like a small fortune to be putting on the offering plate! My brother continued: "Dutch people are greedy. You will never experience God's blessings if you do not give first. They are proud too," he added. "They are too proud to raise their hands or open their mouths to praise the Lord. A Dutchman wants to 'be himself' and to 'keep sober.' But as long as we are not willing to lose ourselves in Him, we will miss the blessings God has for us." Now, that was a proper telling-off! But I never regretted it. I tried to argue that the Bible says that the left hand should not know what the right hand is doing. The response to this was, "No wonder. For then your left hand would be deeply ashamed to know that your right hand gave so little!"

In the past I may have put only a few quarters in the offering. Today I would not dare to do that. For God says, *"With the measure you use, it will be measured to you"* (Matthew 7:2) and *"God loves a cheerful giver"* (2 Corinthians 9:7). So many Christians do not realize that the secret of prosperity lies in direct proportion to the standard of measure with which we give. They do not know that God values our offering according to what we have. I am very grateful that I have learned the secret of how to

Johan Maasbach:

"If we want to receive something from God, we will have to start living on a higher level." receive abundantly from God, and that this secret is found in giving. (Read Luke 6:38.)

In New York

I did not know how the Lord would make a way for me, but I prayed, "Lord, please help me and make it possible for me to get off this ship, so that I can stay in New York." This was not going to be easy, being the only chef on board.

One morning, while we were still docked in New York, a Dutchman approached me. I was working in the kitchen, and he asked me how I liked the ship. I soon discovered that he was a chef, who had stayed ashore because of illness. He had a girlfriend in Glasgow. And he wanted to get on this ship as it was almost certain to return to Glasgow. I advised him to see the captain and show him his papers. If it was all right with the captain, I said, then he could take my job. It was not too long before he returned to tell me that it was all arranged! This was another milestone in which I saw God's hand in a miraculous way.

I had quite a lot of baggage to move. The day I was leaving the ship, a man came on board looking for someone. But that person was not present. I asked him if, by any change, he was going to Brooklyn. He said he was, and I could get a ride. He drove his car right to the place where I could easily load my baggage. It was the day after Christmas and it was very cold. At the dock gate he showed his pass and we were waved through immediately. During war, customs inspection used to be quite severe. Yet I did not have to open one of my bags. The man brought me right in front of my brother's house, where I would be staying for the time being.

The strange thing was that I got ashore without meeting any immigration official. I was not told to report anywhere. I just received my whole salary from the chief officer, left the ship with all my baggage, entered the United States, and was a free man! Later, of course, I realized that this was all the Lord's doing. I was then 23 years old. I could not return to the Netherlands because



Photograph of New York's skyline, taken from the ship as it entered the harbor.

of the war, so I looked for a job in New York. It was not long before I had worked my way up and found a well-paying job in a large restaurant. Once again, God was faithful to His Word: *"My God will meet all your needs according to the riches of His glory in Christ Jesus"* (Philippians 4:19).

New York is a very big city, one of the largest in the world. Every day, millions of people rush through the streets of New York. Traffic is therefore incredibly heavy, especially during rush hour. Not only do people travel above ground, there are also countless numbers riding the subway. I remember that at one point four trains were passing each other at different levels, which was unique at that time.

The city has many nationalities and races, often living together as groups in certain neighborhoods. For instance, there is an African-American neighborhood, Harlem, an Italian and a Chinese district. And many Jews have found their home here. How wonderful that it was in this very city that I got to know Jesus Christ as my great Healer. (You can read about this in the next chapter.)

Isaiah 43:2-3 says, "When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze. For I am the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior; I give Egypt for your ransom, Cush and Seba in your stead."



New York – United States

CHAPTER 4 How God healed me

Pain in my back

I had a terrible pain in my back and could not walk upright. My brother asked me what was wrong. I told him that I had these pains in my back and had been to several doctors for tests and treatment. Two years previously, I had been in the hospital in San Francisco and the doctors had prescribed a surgical corset. But nothing seemed to help.

Instead of sympathy, I got a totally unexpected response from my brother. He told me that I should be ashamed of being a sick Christian! I could not easily accept this accusation. I believed in God with all my heart and knew He could perform miracles and heal me. Yet my brother insisted that I was sick because of my unbelief. He said, "If you believe what is written in Isaiah 53:4-5: *'Surely He* (Jesus) *took up our pain and bore our suffering... and by His wounds we are healed,'* you will no longer accept your illness. Why should we still carry what Jesus has already carried for us?" While he kept accusing me of unbelief, I kept justifying myself by saying I did believe.

When I came home that night, I opened my Bible and began to read and reread what is written in Isaiah 53:4-5: *"Surely He took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered Him punished by God, stricken by Him, and afflicted. But He was pierced for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities;*



Johan on the *M.S. Marken Washington-Seattle* (USA).

the punishment that brought us peace was on Him, and by His wounds we are healed." I also read Exodus 15:26: "I am the LORD, who heals you" and Deuteronomy 7:15: "The LORD will keep you free from every disease. He will not inflict on you the horrible diseases you knew in Egypt," as well as 1 Peter 2:24: "By His wounds you have been healed."

Again and again I would place my Bible open on my bed, kneel down beside it and read. And I prayed, often in tears, "Lord, it is written in Your Word that I am healed. Yet I am sick. Lord, please heal me."

Accepting my healing by faith

I made a new discovery: I had to learn to resist the devil by faith and to persevere in this battle of faith. I had prayed, "Oh Lord, heal me!" But I had never actually accepted my healing. I finally decided to accept my healing by faith and to resist the devil until the end, without ever giving up.

At that time I was working for a contractor as a bricklayer's assistant. I had taken this job to start with, because I could hardly speak any English. I will never forget my first assignment. I had to break up an old concrete floor with a sledge hammer. Just the job for my back! The funny thing was that although everything in America is electrical and mechanical, the tools of my first employer were not. When this job was finished, I had to carry cement up ten flights of stairs because the elevator was not working. It was extremely hard and heavy work, and I could easily have given up, using my back as an excuse. But this time I was determined not to give up. I sometimes cried in pain, and every day I had to pray, "Lord, give me strength to carry this bucket of cement upstairs." Each step I took was accompanied by a sigh and a prayer to God. Some readers might find this strange. However, I thought to myself, That old devil in my back has to give up!

The healing power of God

On Sundays I would go to the meetings. One day I asked the

Johan Maasbach:

"Believe not only in forgiveness of sins, but also in healing of the body." pastor to pray for me. He rebuked the pain and sickness in my body and commanded it to leave in the name of Jesus. After this prayer, I did not feel any immediate changes. But I remembered the words of my brother. I was not going to doubt, but hold on to faith.

I made another discovery which I did not fully understand until much later. My brother was right. I did believe, as so many Christians do, that God can heal. But I did not believe that He has already healed us! That was the faith my brother was talking about. Just as our sins were paid for at Calvary, about 2,000 years ago, even so were our sicknesses paid for. "By His stripes we ARE healed." So I began to thank the Lord and said, "Lord, I believe that You have healed me. Lord, I thank You for it." While I was praying this, I still had that terrible pain in my back.

After some time the pain disappeared. Strangely enough, I did not realize at first that I was healed. Three months later – I was now working for a different employer – I was lifting a heavy pan of potatoes on the stove, when the Holy Spirit drew my attention to the fact that my back no longer bothered me. Suddenly I realized that I had been completely healed! I started thanking the Lord, and with tears streaming down my face again, I blessed and praised His holy name. Kneeling at my bed that night, my Bible open in front of me, I thanked God that He not only forgives our sins, but also heals all our diseases. (Read Psalm 103:3.)

My faith tested

One day I strained my back while lifting something heavy, and immediately I felt that terrible pain in my back again. That old devil with his lies came back and whispered in my ear, "I told you that you were not really healed." How often the devil uses such circumstances to create doubts and to weaken our faith. But I immediately recognized his tactics. I replied, "Devil, you are a liar. God did heal me, and what I am feeling now is only temporary and will go away soon." Praise God, I could ignore that old lying devil, and the pain disappeared. Since then I have never had any trouble with

"I BEGAN TO THANK THE LORD AND SAID, 'LORD, I BELIEVE THAT YOU HAVE HEALED ME. LORD, I THANK YOU FOR IT."

my back again. I thank God that He not only bore my sins, but also my diseases.

The promises of God

I know what it is like to be in pain and to pray for healing for years. As you pray, you might think that it could be His will for you to remain ill, and that it is a cross God wants you to bear. Through ignorance, I had no knowledge of positive prayer. Sometimes I had prayed, "Lord, if it is Your will, please heal me," but deep inside I had doubted whether He would really do it. Now these doubts are gone. I know what God's will is. He has revealed His will in His Word. We have to accept His Word and believe it in order to pray in positive faith. We should have the victory in our hearts for the things we are praying for; we must be assured that we will receive what we are asking for. This kind of victory is not always readily available for all things. Sometimes we might have to pray and fast in order to be victorious in our faith, so that we can receive what we ask for. How amazing is God's patience with us of little faith!

Another lesson I learned was this: that I should seriously examine my personal life to see whether there was anything that was not pleasing to God. I discovered some things which I eliminated from my life, so that they would not hinder my healing. Still, I did understand that we do not receive healing through self-righteousness or good works. Only through the righteousness of Christ, who bore our sins upon the cross.

The promise given by the Lord to His chosen people in Exodus 15:26, *"I am the LORD, who heals you,"* was only effective if they would fulfill the conditions attached to the promise: *"If you pay attention to His commands and keep all His decrees."* We have all failed to do so. But Jesus did what we could not do. Now we can go to the Father in His name. That means we can go in the name of Him who has fulfilled all the commandments and statutes for us. He did it in our place, so that we would be justified by Him. Therefore, all the promises of God are "yes" and "amen"



New York – United States, 1941

in Christ Jesus. Including the promise: "I am the LORD, who heals you."

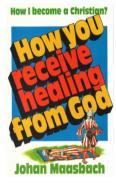
Good news

Now I am a preacher of the wonderful gospel of Jesus Christ. The word "gospel" in Greek means: good news! I want to tell everyone that God is a good God, and that He forgives all our sins and heals all our diseases.

The Bible says, "Now is the day of salvation" (2 Corinthians 6:2). Most Christians believe that. Why not also believe that today is the day for your healing? Let us firmly believe that today He is the Rock of our salvation as well as our great and mighty Healer. These are not my words, but the words of Jesus Himself: *"Everything is possible for one who believes"* (Mark 9:23).

You can read more about this in my book: *How you receive healing from God.* It is a practical book, which gives you knowledge about divine healing. As you know, *"Faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ"* (Romans 10:17). And, *"Without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to Him must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who earnestly seek Him"* (Hebrews 11:6).

Psalm 103:1-5 says, "Praise the LORD, my soul; all my inmost being, praise His holy name. Praise the LORD, my soul, and forget not all His benefits – who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion, who satisfies your desires with good things so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's."



Years later, at a time when this was not preached, Johan brought the message that God still heals. He wanted to tell people about this Biblical truth, and also wrote a book about it.

One of the places where Johan liked to pray during his journey. Around the large chimneys there was always much noise. There he could cry out to God. It was on this spot that he had an amazing vision while he was praying. He saw himself speaking to a large crowd. Many accepted Jesus as Savior and received divine healing from God. Years later, he saw this vision being fulfilled at the Malieveld in 1958. (You can read about this in a later chapter.)

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chapter 5 A battle

Famine in the Netherlands

The war persisted. I heard reports of the terrible situation in the Netherlands, where thousands were dying of starvation. Naturally, my thoughts often turned to my fiancée, my relatives and the rest of the Dutch people. It was as though God was hiding me in His tent as we read in Psalm 91:9-11, *"If you say: 'The LORD is my refuge,' and you make the Most High your dwelling, no harm will overtake you, no disaster will come near your tent. For He will command His angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways."*

I worked alongside an American Jew. His own son was fighting on the frontlines in Europe. In a way, I took his son's place. I was living in the land of plenty and was working in one of Brooklyn's busiest restaurants with an abundance of food. However, on Thanksgiving Day I chose to fast, while almost everyone else was having the traditional turkey dinner. I also fasted during the Christmas season. When everyone was having their Christmas dinner, I fasted and prayed for my country and my people. On my knees, I cried out to God and asked Him to show His mercy to my beloved at home.

God gives and sometimes takes away

"The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away; may the name of the LORD be praised" (Job 1:21). Every man or woman of God has experienced, or will experience the truth of this well-known Bible verse. These experiences seem to be necessary for the perfection of our life of faith. More than once I have gone through this process myself.



The famine in the Netherlands was severe, also in Rotterdam. A large number of people died of starvation. During the winter of 1945 people moved from the cities in the west of the country to the countryside, using bicycles and pushcarts, searching for food. I was still on my final journey which, since the war was preventing my return to the Netherlands, had turned out to be a rather long one. One day, a friend of mine asked me whether my fiancée had the same ideas about the Christian faith as I had. "Besides," he said, "would she be willing to follow you in whatever direction the Lord might lead you?" I could not directly give him a positive answer. I had never really thought about that issue. In the past I would have given a quick, positive reply to questions like these, but not any more. Since I had come into contact with the Pentecostal movement, my life had been radically changed and my faith had grown much deeper. Inside me there was a battle raging.

My friend had said, "Unless your fiancée is completely surrendered to the Lord as you are, you will never be able to serve Him one hundred percent. Instead, if you marry her, you will be held back and weighed down by a burden which you have taken on yourself."

The problem was that I was convinced that the Lord had given her to me to be my future wife. Many guestions tormented me. Is it possible that God gives you something and then takes it away? Does He allow you to first love something or someone, only to take it away from you later on? Fortunately, there are many examples in the Bible which show us that our good God does indeed do such things. Think about Abraham and Isaac in Genesis 22, the Shunammite woman and her son in 2 Kings 4, and Jairus and his daughter in Mark 5. Indeed, God can give you something or someone to love first, and then He may take it back. He wants to teach us something. He is the Father, the Creator. He sits on the throne. He does not take things away from us to hurt us, but to test us to see how much He can entrust to us. We are so easily inclined to look upon things as our own possessions, even though the earth and its fullness belong to Him. We so often forget that we are only servants of Christ; that we are only stewards of the good things that God has entrusted to us.

"DOES HE ALLOW YOU TO FIRST LOVE SOMETHING OR SOMEONE, ONLY TO TAKE IT AWAY FROM YOU LATER ON?"

The right decision

I understood that I would never be able to make my girl completely happy. I knew her too well, and I realized that she would be unable to pay the price if the Lord would want to use me entirely for His service. So I prayed earnestly to the Lord and I fasted. Often, when I had fasted in the past, I would go without food or drink for three days. If I fasted while I was working, I only drank some water or tea at the most. This time I did the same. However, on this occasion, the Lord did not answer, except through His Word. I had to make this decision based only on His Word, the Bible. God spoke to me through a scripture which He subsequently used to help me again. It is found in Mark 10:29-30 where Jesus said, "Truly I tell you, no one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for Me and the gospel will fail to receive a hundred times as much in this present age: homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children and fields – along with persecutions – and in the age to come eternal life."

I finally made the difficult decision to write her a letter, explaining things, and breaking off the engagement. I will never forget that moment. It was a hard and tearful battle. With greater respect than ever, I remembered Abraham, who did not deny God his dearest one, his only one. I also found a deeper appreciation for our dear Heavenly Father, Who did not spare His dearest One, His only One, but gave Him up for us, lost sinners (John 3:16). Often, afterwards, I fell to my knees, praying to receive power from Him. How the devil attacked me, whispering accusations that I was not treating her fairly. She had been waiting for me so long, and she had been faithful to me throughout the war and during all my long trips. The devil will always try and evoke a sense of pity in the flesh. Suddenly he does not want to hurt anyone's feelings! But true faith believes what is written in 1 Samuel 15:22, "To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams."

Johan Maasbach:

"It is better not to be married and think, I wish I was married, than to be married and think, I wish I was not married!" You may ask, "Brother Maasbach, did you ever regret your decision?" My answer is: "Never, no never!" I am still grateful that I made this decision, although I would not like to go through a battle like that again.

Choose the partner God has for you

How many men and women, called by God, are unable to fulfill their calling and are suffering in the flesh because they did not want to wait upon the Lord, or because they did not want to pay the price to deny themselves, or because they felt sorry for the flesh? Every Spirit-filled Christian knows that we can never be truly happy and enjoy the abundant peace of God, unless we fulfill God's calling upon our lives. What a tragedy it would be if our high calling should be hindered by having the wrong spouse!

There are Christians who have chosen their spouse before their conversion. They can only be jealous when they see, in the lives of others, how good and beautiful it could have been if they had met the Way, the Truth and the Life sooner.

At that time, I made up my mind to leave this choice entirely up to Him Who knows our hearts. He knows who we truly are, and He knows our heart's desire. Would our Father, through His Holy Spirit, not lead and guide us in these important matters too? Of course He would! But are we willing to wait for Him and to pay the price? In Mark 8:34-35 Jesus said, *"Whoever wants to be My disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow Me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for Me and for the gospel will save it."*

I am so grateful for the wife God did give me later on, with whom I can freely fulfill God's calling for my life. How important it is for young Christians to wait upon the Lord for the right partner. "I AM SO GRATEFUL FOR THE WIFE GOD DID GIVE **ME LATER** ON. WITH WHOM I **CAN FREELY** FULFILL **GOD'S CALLING FOR MY LIFE.**"

chapter 6 What faith can do

Buying a car

A close friend of mine, who had given me much spiritual insight, could not afford to buy a car for his big family. He had seven children. I decided, because I felt the time was right, to buy one myself. However, I only had one dollar and 25 cents in my pocket. (For the past two years, I had used most of my income for the support of a missionary family.) But I believed that God wanted to give me a car.

So one day I went out to look for one. I came to a place where about a hundred used cars were for sale. The salesman asked me how much I wanted to spend. That was no problem, I told him; it depended entirely upon the car. As I was looking around, I suddenly spotted the car of my choice: a large two-year-old Packard Super Eight. It was a beauty and in excellent condition! We agreed on the price of 125 dollars. The salesman said, "Come this way to the office, please." In those days, used cars were sold for cash only. I explained to him that I needed the car to take my friend's children to church, and that I would bring 25 dollars the next week. I would leave the car there until the full amount had been paid. The man looked at me in astonishment. But I prayed to the Lord, and I could do nothing but believe that I would have the car. The man muttered something like, "We do not deal this way. I have never heard of such an agreement either." I told him that this was the only way I could buy the car. Miraculously, he eventually agreed and placed a SOLD sign on the windshield. That week, I worked extra hard, for many extra hours, and



God Himself took care of Johan, who gave almost all of his money to a missionary family and people in need.

Brooklyn, New York – United States Johan learned at a young age not to live for himself, but to give. God taught him that He could provide his need for food, shoes, clothing, a car and a house, but that he should never set his heart on these material things. was able to pay my first 25 dollars. I will never forget the moment I paid off the rest, stepped into the car the Lord had given me, and drove off.

God's provision

During that time, I often had to pray for a new pair of shoes, as every penny I earned was going towards mission. For years I had not bought a new suit. Yet I was always well dressed. I knew a place where I could buy second-hand suits of good quality for only 5 or 10 dollars. Of course, no one suspected that I was wearing someone else's clothes, but this way I could invest more funds in the work of the Lord. It never bothered me. I even counted it a privilege to live this way.

I remember the time that I needed a new suit for one of my trips. Right at that time, one of the sailors on board had purchased a very expensive suit while he was drunk. Sobering up the next day, he discovered that the suit was a little too large for him, so he sold it to me for 12 dollars. It fitted me perfectly, since I was much taller than he. I was amused and thanked the Lord that He had used a drunken sailor to buy me a new suit.

"ALLOWING JEALOUSY IN OUR HEARTS IS NEVER OF CHRIST." Some people will never know what it is like to pray for a pair of shoes or some clothes. They have plenty of money and can buy whatever they want. I am grateful that the Lord guided me through these experiences. For even while there will always be people who can afford anything, there are also millions of others who cannot. And those are the people I want to understand and with whom I want to identify. I believe this is what Christ meant for us to do: to remember the poor and the needy in their afflictions. (Read Psalm 41:1; Proverbs 29:7; Galatians 2:10).

Guidance of the Holy Spirit

Every born-again Christian believes that God is his Father. It is the Father Who wants to teach His children to walk in faith and miracles. He does this in a loving and simple way, and teaches us to understand the voice of the Holy Spirit. When David was still a shepherd boy, he defeated a bear and a lion. He was being trained by his Heavenly Father to defeat an even more powerful enemy in the future: the giant Goliath. At this time, the Lord was teaching me also.

Now here is an important lesson to learn for those who want to do "business" by faith. There is a faith which fails and a faith which never fails. There are people who want certain things or go to other countries, just because it is their own desire. Not because they are being led by the Holy Spirit. Often their desire stems from jealousy. They want what others have. They are not humble. They cannot stand it when a brother or a friend has a nicer car, a bigger house or a better job. Allowing jealousy in our hearts is never of Christ. However, there is also a holy jealousy. I think this is not wrong. In other words, you see others having something you do not have, which is bringing glory to God and is magnifying His name. Our motivation should always be God's cause, not greed or selfish ambition. (Read Psalm 37.) Jesus said, "By Myself I can do nothing; I judge only as I hear, and My judgment is just, for I seek not to please Myself but Him who sent Me" (John 5:30), and: "I always do what pleases Him" (John 8:29). Therefore, we must be in line with the guidance of the Spirit of God.

Usually God Himself places the desire in the hearts of His children for those things which He wants to give them. The Christian accepts them by faith, and possesses them or performs them. However, not everything that comes to our mind is from God. We clearly see this in the story of King David, the man of God. He told Nathan the prophet that he wanted to build a house for the Lord. (2 Samuel 7.) Even the prophet thought it was a wonderful idea, and that the Lord would surely approve. But that same night, God revealed to Nathan that David's desire to do something for the Lord was good, but that David was not the man to do this particular thing. Neither had the right time for it yet come. Nevertheless, David did have the privilege of preparing for the building of the Lord's temple. King

Johan Maasbach:

"If we believe and do what God says, we will receive what He has said in His Word." David, the man after God's own heart, learned an important lesson here, and one we also have to learn: if we are used by God and are allowed to do a lot for Him, it is only by His grace. Therefore, our motives and the guidance of the Holy Spirit are crucial to ensure a successful completion of any step of faith, no matter in what area of life.

I remember how I once needed an oil burner for a heating system. I did not know a thing about burners, but the Holy Spirit understands all things. The salesman had two options. One looked brand new and had two gauges mounted on it. The other one looked old, worn out, and had no gauge at all. The first one cost 50 dollars, the other 22 dollars. The Holy Spirit clearly told me to take the old one. But my common sense said the opposite. The salesman also agreed that the new one was much better. I finally bought the new one. A week later it broke down and we could not fix it. According to an expert, it was an old model and needed a new part, which cost 20 dollars. Much to my surprise, the gauges came off and were replaced by a new element, which looked exactly like the one I had seen on the old burner. I was deeply ashamed of myself and asked the Lord to forgive me for not listening more carefully to His voice.

How often do God's children suffer spiritually or materially, because they do not listen to the Lord? I know there are people who do not know the Lord, who yet have similar experiences regarding what to do and what not to do. They may call it feeling or intuition. This, however, is not the same as the guidance of the Holy Spirit.



Brooklyn, New York – United States Important lessons were needed in order to grow in the Biblical principles of sowing and harvesting, of real faith and trust in God, and of discerning when God wanted to give or do something. Later in his life and ministry, these important lessons would prove to be of great value.

Buying a house

A year after I bought the car, my friend and I went to buy a house together. We certainly needed one, and both of us believed that the Lord would give it to us. We agreed that the house had to be close to the railroad station, somewhere on Long Island, so that it would be easy to go to the church meetings and to our jobs in New York. We had no money at the time, but we had a great God! We believed He would help us to find a house. So one day, we got into our big Packard, drove through Long Island, and stopped in front of a large real estate agency. I had 25 dollars with me, and my friend had 2 dollars. That was all we had.

The realtor asked us what we were looking for. We told him exactly what we had in mind. When he asked our price range, we told him that this was irrelevant. The house itself and its location and area were our main concerns. He showed us many houses, but not once did we feel, "This is it", or did we hear the Spirit tell us that God would give it to us.

Some time later, the realtor mentioned a house in Springfield Garden, not far from the railroad station. It was large, and had been empty for a while. We felt right away that we should see it. When we arrived and saw the house, we suddenly knew, "This is it!" The whole house was boarded up to protect it against looters. Nevertheless, it had been damaged quite a bit already. We entered through the back door. It was pitch dark inside. By the light of a match we vaguely outlined some of the interior. The man looked surprised when we told him that we had decided to take it, and that we did not need to take a closer look. All we needed to know was the price. I was convinced that we were going to get this house. We made a ridiculously low offer of 6,000 dollars, but the realtor said he would discuss it with the owner. He wanted 200 dollars cash for a down payment. I told him that I only had 25 dollars, which I wanted to give as a down payment to the deposit of 200. Those first 25 dollars did at least bring the whole process into motion.

To make a long story short, I am happy to report that we got the house for less than 7,000 dollars, with monthly payments of 85 dollars. After we had renovated it all by ourselves, it was worth a total of 25,000 dollars at that time.

This purchase would have been relatively insignificant if it had not been followed by a very important lesson. "FAITH KNOWS THAT NOTHING HAPPENS WITHOUT GOD'S PERMISSION."

An important lesson

Some people are unable to handle the wealth when they receive something from God. So it was with my friend. He began to covet the house we had bought together, which was registered on both our names and had increased enormously in value. Since I was still planning to go to sea again, he suggested that it would be a good idea for me to sign over the entire ownership to him. Then the unthinkable happened! After signing the paper, I was being kicked out of the house. And I was not even allowed to take out my personal belongings. I was young and naive, but the Lord began to teach me through this experience. I have never regretted this incident; because later, it often helped me when deceitful people approached me with hypocritical religious talk.

The Lord allowed this to happen. Of course, I could have taken legal action in order to protect my rights. But I felt as though the Lord was saying to me, *"It is mine to avenge; I will repay"* (Deuteronomy 32:35), and we read in the Sermon on the Mount: *"If someone slaps you on one cheek, turn to them the other also. If someone takes your coat, do not withhold your shirt from them. Give to everyone who asks you, and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back"* (Luke 6:29-30).

I know it is often very difficult to leave these matters entirely in the hands of the Most Righteous Judge Who will not hold the guilty innocent. But what a man sows, he will also reap. The apostle Paul says: *"But instead, one brother takes another to court – and this in front of unbelievers! The very fact that you have lawsuits among you means you have been completely defeated already. Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be cheated?"* (1 Corinthians 6:6-7).

So, without cause, everything was taken away from me. But this was only to purify me, for faith knows that nothing happens without God's permission. I have to mention at this point that the Lord abundantly returned to me that which He allowed me to lose. Through it all, I have come to appreciate Paul's words, *"Those who buy something, should live as if it were not theirs to*



Palermo – Italy, 1949 Johan along with a group of men from a local Pentecostal church. When Johan went ashore during his trips, he usually visited a church.

keep; those who use the things of the world, as if not engrossed in them. For this world in its present form is passing away" (1 Corinthians 7:30-31).

The natural man constantly clings to earthly things. But he who is born of God, the spiritual man, considers the things from above. To him, those invisible things are of far greater importance than the visible things which perish. Faith knows that these invisible things are lasting and eternal. For this reason, Abraham left his home, country and relatives, "for he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God" (Hebrews 11:10). I also read about Moses in Hebrews 11:24-27, "By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward. By faith he left *Egypt, not fearing the king's anger; he persevered because he saw* Him who is invisible."

We do not always understand why we need to go through certain tests. But the true believer knows that God makes no mistakes. Sometimes He allows things in our lives which are perhaps not so pleasant for the time being. But when we will stand the test by faith, as God lays it upon us, we will come out of the fire victoriously!

The greatest thing in God's sight still is a sinner who repents. I am one hundred percent aware of this fact. Everything we have, must serve that purpose. We must put everything at the service of God's Kingdom, so that as many sinners as possible can be saved.

Psalm 91:1-2 says, "Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the LORD, 'He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust." **"WE DO NOT** ALWAYS KNOW WHY WE NEED TO GO THROUGH CERTAIN TESTS. BUT THE TRUE BELIEVER **KNOWS THAT GOD MAKES NO MISTAKES.**"

CHAPTER 7 Under His wings

Jesus is our hiding place

It is a wonderful discovery and a glorious privilege to realize that the hiding place, which we read about in Psalm 91, is none other than Jesus Christ Himself. Verse 1 says, *"Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty."* In times of war and danger, I have often experienced the truth of this first verse and of the entire Psalm. It is just as valid for us today as when it was written.

The war raged on. Many people around me could not figure out how a European like me could have a job in America while the son of my colleague was fighting in Europe. It was my close walk with the Lord which allowed me to stay in the shadow of the Almighty. I did not stay in America because the war scared me and I wanted to hide, but because the Lord had brought me there and had given me a place to keep me safe, just as He did for His servants: Elijah in Zarephath, Moses in the desert and David in caves.

From the moment God speaks to us and reveals His will and makes His ways known to us, the born again Christian will have no real peace unless he follows the path God wants him to go. In Psalm 32:8 the Lord says, *"I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with My loving eye on you."* This verse has often spoken to me in a special way, just like the verse, *"The LORD makes firm the steps of the one who delights in Him"* (Psalm 37:23).



The second left is Johan, sous chef of a first-class American hotel.

During the many weeks and months at sea, Johan spent his time in his cabin. No family or friends around and no internet, TV or telephone, as we have today. No distraction and nowhere to go. He had plenty of time to study the Bible, pray and read books of great heroes of faith and writers, who have been called and anointed by God to help us understand His Word. While I was working in one of the busiest restaurants in Brooklyn, God spoke to my heart to go to sea again. Now I knew it was time to go. I quit my job and began looking for a ship. Finding one was not a problem.

On a Norwegian ship

I soon found myself as a chef on a Norwegian ship, *SS Solfon*, a tanker weighing more than 20,000 tons, loaded with aviation fuel, headed for London, England. There were plenty of other ships I could choose from, but it was as if the Lord wanted me to be on this particular boat. Perhaps the devil thought I would get scared. But why should we ever be afraid when we know we are walking in God's will, and that He, God Almighty Himself, is with us?

I believe some experiences on this boat are worth sharing with you. Although I was quite familiar with the American and Dutch cuisine, I knew absolutely nothing about the Norwegian. However, I knew that the Lord had given me this ship. How wonderful that, in such circumstances, through faith we are able to say with the apostle Paul, *"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me"* (Philippians 4:13 NKJV). Due to unforeseen circumstances, the main chef whose place I took, had not signed off, but stayed on board until we arrived in England. I clearly recognized the Lord's hand in this. He had sent the man to teach me.

Norwegian sailors are known to be heavy drinkers. It was not unusual for my assistant to arrive drunk in the galley at an early morning hour. Neither was it unusual for him to drink a pint of gin before breakfast. One day I missed two dozen bottles of alcohol-based lemon extract from my kitchen. His craving for alcohol was so great that he would consume anything that contained even a little alcohol.

When we approached the English coast, we received word that German submarines were in the area. Suddenly we were surrounded by a thick fog, and the captain ordered

"HOW WONDERFUL IT IS TO HAVE PEACE IN YOUR HEART UNDER ALL CIRCUM-STANCES." the engines to be stopped. Although fog near England is not uncommon, this heavy fog was without a doubt a miracle of God. Never had submarines been so close to our ship! I happened to be on the bridge where I often spent my leisure time, and was casually scanning the surface for periscopes. Meanwhile I was talking with the captain, who turned out to be a believer also. I asked him if he believed that God was able to keep us safe. He answered that he believed it. Here we were, just drifting in the sea, with our highly flammable cargo. One single torpedo or bomb could easily have set the entire ship ablaze.

How wonderful it is to have peace in your heart under all circumstances. This is the secret of our peace: to abide in Jesus. Andrew Murray, reformed preacher, describes this so beautifully in his book *Abide in Christ*.

Almost all the crew members slept with all their clothes on, and most of them wore their life jackets as well. Some even slept on the boat deck. But I was never afraid. I always slept peacefully in my pajamas, with a bag holding my papers and my life jacket at the end of my bed. I simply believed that God would give me enough time to get ready in case anything should happen.

I often thanked God on my knees for His wonderful hand. Some people have doubts about my conviction that God protected me as an individual, and would even spare a whole ship, just to save one man. But God waited to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah until Lot was safely out, because Abraham had prayed for him. And we have Christ interceding for us. (Read Hebrews 4:14-16; 7:24-25).

One day before arriving in London, the unforgettable Victory in Europe Day was declared. The war in Europe was over. However, this did not mean that danger at sea was over. Even after that day, many ships were destroyed by mines.



Galveston – United States

Meeting Rev. Wilson Estes

For six months I stayed with this ship, sailing mostly between the Gulf of Mexico and Scotland. Whenever we were in Texas, I would visit a Pentecostal church. While most crew members sought pleasure in drinking, women and dancing, my heart longed for the fellowship of those who loved and served the Living God.

I will never forget the first time I met Rev. G.W. Estes in Galveston. He was the pastor of a Pentecostal church. I had found the address of the church in a phone book. When I arrived, Rev. Estes greeted me, asking me who I was, where I came from, and what church I belonged to. He was very friendly and apparently had never had a Dutchman in his congregation before. He told the people he was very happy to have a Dutch brother visiting, and asked me to give a testimony. I was happy to do so. My heart was full of love, and the anointing of God's Spirit was upon me. It was wonderful to be among my brothers and sisters in Christ, after having dwelt with the "living dead" on board for so long.

After singing a song with the whole congregation, the pastor suddenly asked how many people would like to hear the "Dutch brother" sing. All hands went up, and I had no choice but to sing. My heart was racing, but I had to do it, whether I wanted to or not. How wonderful it is that God gives us a song in our hearts in moments like these. Singing a song under the guidance and anointing of the Holy Spirit is very different from just singing a song. I clearly remember that I started with the song, *Where He Leads, I will follow.* I was very grateful that the Lord helped me through it. But I was shocked when, after the sermon, the pastor asked, "Who wants the Dutchman to sing another song?" And once again, all hands went up.

After the service, I got an even bigger shock. Rev. Estes asked me whether I wanted to sing a song for his radio program the following week. How could I refuse this wonderful chance to reach people for Jesus through a song? I chose one of

Sweet are the promises Kind is the word Dearer far than any message man ever heard Pure was the mind of Christ Sinless I see He the great example is and pattern for me

Where He leads I'll follow Follow all the way Where He leads I'll follow Follow Jesus ev'ry day my favorite songs: *His eye is on the sparrow.* The pastor took the opportunity to announce on the radio that the singer was from the Netherlands and would sing again during the evening service at church. That evening we saw many new faces in the service. I am still very grateful for the unexpected but firm push which this brother gave me into the ministry. Since that time I have often sung in public to the glory of His name!

The big mistake made by pastors these days, is that they do not give young people the opportunity to develop spiritually. They seem to be afraid of possible blunders, or afraid that the congregation would disapprove. Maybe they are also afraid for their own sakes, because – strange as it may sound – the heart is jealous. For this reason, Saul could not stand David, upon whom the Spirit of God was resting. I have often experienced that brothers in leadership could not tolerate me, because the Spirit of God was upon me. I know and understand now what Joseph and David had to endure. Jesus Himself had to go through so much more than that. Faith, however, knows that *"in all things God works for the good of those who love Him"* (Romans 8:28). It will always work for our own good, but to the disadvantage of those who are fearful or jealous.

God's guidance

On our way to Glasgow we were notified that we all had to sign off. An entirely new crew was coming to Glasgow from Norway to take our place. Both the steward and the captain came to tell me the news. But the Holy Spirit had told me clearly that I would leave the ship in America. The ship was going to stay in Glasgow for six weeks for repairs. Everyone had already packed their suitcases, except me. In order to disembark, we had to go through customs. As we were preparing for this, I was instructed, much to the surprise of both the steward and the captain, that all but one crew member was to sign off. The one who was to remain on board was me: the only Dutchman in the crew! As I had embarked in Why should I feel discouraged Why should the shadows come Why should my heart be lonely And long for heav'n and home When Jesus is my portion? My constant Friend is He His eye is on the sparrow And I know He watches me His eye is on the sparrow And I know He watches me

I sing because I'm happy I sing because I'm free For His eye is on the sparrow And I know He watches me New York, they said, I had to disembark in New York. When my assistant cook (the one who drank so much) came to say farewell, he could not help expressing his amazement that he had never once heard me swear. The fact that I did not drink or visit prostitutes was strange enough, but the fact that I did not swear was altogether too extraordinary. This shows how the world closely watches and observes us as Christians.

This time we sailed with a brand new crew to Houston, Texas, where I signed off without any difficulty. I spent a few wonderful weeks with Rev. Estes in Galveston, before taking a long bus ride to New York. This time I signed on to an American Liberty ship sailing for Bremen, Germany, which had transported troops. Once again, I was chef. We carried an enormous stock of food. The freezers were loaded to overflowing.

In Bremen, the first thing I did was to look for brothers and sisters in Christ. In post-war Germany this was not easy, but I did find a Full Gospel church. The people had great needs and suffered from hunger. I had asked permission from the captain to take some food to my friends. He told me to go ahead on my own responsibility, because the ship was hired by the US government. When I went back to my friends bringing them eggs, bacon, flour, butter, two chickens, bread and delicious coffee, they could not hold back the tears. But they did not even have handkerchiefs to wipe them away. They were touched by the fact that a Dutchman, whose country had suffered so much from the German Nazi occupation, had brought them an abundance of food. But when we have the Spirit of Christ, there is no place for hatred. We know that those Germans who were filled with the Holy Spirit, were different from those filled with the spirit of Hitler; which was the spirit of the antichrist. How different would the youth of Germany have been, if the living, loving Christ had been preached to them? Every evening I brought food for His church. Does the Lord not say, "Whatever you did for



Bremen – Germany

one of the least of these brothers and sisters of Mine, you did for *Me*" (Matthew 25:40)? The pastor of this church was Hermann Dunst. He always called me the good, saving angel, who was used and sent by God to help them in their time of need.

One incident I will never forget. Although I brought boxes of food night after night, one evening, I felt led by God's Spirit not to bring anything. The second chef, who had helped me carry the load each night, asked me if he might take a small package to his girlfriend. I told him that he could do that, but at his own risk. So this night I went empty handed, while he had a small package compared to my usual delivery. This time however, we were stopped at the gate by a high ranking American officer. The chef got a severe reprimand. He had to return everything to the ship. I can still hear him say, "Can you believe this?" Then I knew why the Holy Spirit told me to leave the food on board that night!

Going home

Now that the war was over, I longed to return to my family and friends in the Netherlands, and to see what was left of Rotterdam. Back in New York, I tried to get a ship to the Netherlands, but it was not easy. Suddenly I realized something the Lord was trying to show me, and I prayed, "Lord, if You want me to return to the Netherlands, I will gladly go. But if You want me to go to China or any other place in the world, then I will go there. Where You lead, I will follow!" When I arrived at the shipping office the next morning, the officer had a long list of available ships going to all parts of the world. He moved his finger down the list and stopped at the *SS Joseph Story*. "Would you like to take that one?" he asked. "She is going to Rotterdam." Calmly, I said, "Sure. That is fine." But inside, my heart was jumping for joy. And I said, "Thank You, Lord! Thank you!"

Circumstances after the war were not very good in Europe. In New York I had bought a lot of things which I thought my "FAITH KNOWS THAT IN ALL THINGS GOD WORKS FOR THE GOOD OF THOSE WHO LOVE HIM." friends and family would need. I also asked my new captain for permission to take some food ashore. He replied, "Go ahead. As long as you leave the ship behind!" We had a huge stock of food. Along with the steward we cleared things up. There was a great pile of canned pork which the Americans refused to eat because it had too much fat. A few buckets, each containing about 50 kilograms of lard, they referred to as "axle grease." Yet how precious was a pound of lard in suffering Europe in those days! There were also 36 one-gallon cans of powdered milk which the Americans refused to use. They wanted only fresh or evaporated whole milk. It was as though the Lord Himself had placed them there just for me.

I have written this down to show how often the Lord works upon the hearts of people in authority to meet the needs of His own children. He caused the Persian king to release Nehemiah (who was also working as a steward) for the work He had for him in Jerusalem. Our walk with God is such a completely different life from the life lived without God.

We stayed less that 24 hours in Rotterdam. Not very long after six years of absence, but it was good to see my whole family safe and sound. Most of them were still living in bombarded Rotterdam. It was a great privilege for me to bring many of my brothers and sisters in Christ some of the good things which they had missed for so long during the war. The Bible says, *"Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers"* (Galatians 6:10).



Rotterdam – The Netherlands After being away for six years, Johan arrives back in Rotterdam in 1946.

Two other important things which needed to be confirmed deep in Johan's mind and heart were: 1) that he would be a man without fear and anxiety, and 2) that he would live a holy and pure life before the Lord. Johan had a lot of experiences, which he would never forget and in which he saw that God was with him. These confirmations would always remind him that God fulfills His plan, and they would teach him to walk in it.

BRIDE

1.E. 11'

CHAPTER 8 Johan Maasbach in prison

A strange idea

A strange idea kept going through my mind. I wanted to personally experience life in prison. However, it is not easy to get to live at government expense without first committing a crime. But then I heard about Ellis Island in New York, where unwanted immigrants were being detained; for example, people without a proper visa, or those waiting to be deported. Also seamen, who get caught while being illegally in America, were immediately put in custody in this place.

One day I packed my suitcase and left for Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. I walked into the immigration office and asked the official to arrest me for being illegally in America, since my residence permit had expired. He gave me the strangest look! He warned me that he would have to send me to the city jail, and strongly advised me to look for a ship instead. It was not easy to convince him that I would rather be locked up in prison than look for a ship. He suggested that I should sleep on the issue and go to a shipping company.

I took his advice and spent the night in a hotel. The next morning, I went to a shipping company, but they could not offer me anything. I returned to the immigration office with my suitcase and told the officer that I could not get a boat. I asked



Passport photograph.

him to be so kind to apply the law, since, after all, that was what he was being paid for by the government. After one phone call, two detectives entered the room. One walked in front of me and one behind me. At last, the wheels of justice had been set in motion.

Behind bars

Soon the heavy, ancient prison doors closed behind me. They took my suitcase, searched me and took my fingerprints. I had become nothing more than a number. The funny thing was that the prison guards did not know what kind of criminal I was. They put me in an old cell, furnished with a bed, a table and a chair. The cell had a concrete floor, whitewashed walls and an open toilet. The heavy, iron door slammed shut. The jailer locked it with a large, old-fashioned, iron padlock and disappeared. This was a totally new experience for me, but I had no regrets. Neither did I realize at the time that I would be behind bars for almost three months!

Since I had no experience with this kind of "housing", I had to wait and see what the daily program would be like. Early in the morning, we were awakened by a trumpet blast through the speakers, followed by radio music. The prison building had three floors. All cell doors faced inside-porches, which ran along the walls and doors. In the center was an open space. The jailer opened the cell doors at fixed times. We were allowed onto the porches, until the whistle blew. Then we all had to go downstairs, to the dining room, which looked like a regular cafeteria.

I will never forget the taste of the coffee. The first cup was impossible to drink. However, I watched the other prisoners drink their cup of coffee, and I decided it was best for me to adapt right away and to eat and drink whatever they were having.

During the time I was confined to my cell, I usually read my Bible and had fellowship with God. On Sundays, there was "I DID NOT REALIZE AT THE TIME THE TIME THAT I WOULD BE BEHIND BARS FOR ALMOST THREE MONTHS!" a church service in the small chapel. Of course, I was always there and met the group of people who ministered in prisons. I observed the prisoners and quickly discovered that they always attended whenever a woman was present in the visiting group. They were not there to hear the sermon. They went to watch the girls!

Conversations with other inmates

At certain times during the day, we were allowed to walk around the open space in the center of the building. But we were not allowed to form a crowd. So I walked back and forth and chatted here and there, taking these opportunities to make personal contacts with other inmates. When anyone asked me why I was in prison, I would say that my case had not come to court yet, and that I could not say anything before this happened. I did not want to lie, but I did want them to think that I was one of them, so that they would trust me and talk with me confidentially.

The man in the cell next to mine was a short, stocky German guy. Soon he told me his story. He had repeatedly robbed a bank. During one of those robberies he had almost killed a bank employee. He was sentenced to ten years, which, considering his past record, was not too severe. He kept telling me what a good man he really was, and how he always helped people in need - that is, with stolen money! He was not just a common thief, he protested, for he never stole anything from the poor. Only cowards would do that, he said. He did not see any harm in robbing banks, because nobody, he claimed, would eat any less because of it. The judge who had sentenced him was no good, he insisted. There was not a trace of remorse in this man for any of his crimes. On the contrary, he showed me a blueprint for a chicken ranch which he wanted to run in South Africa as soon as he finished his sentence. He was going to finance this with the money from some future bank robbery. Then, he said, he would settle down as a decent citizen. What a confused way of thinking! He was totally unreachable for the gospel of Christ. It was a very different case with a 42-year-old prisoner. When

"I TOOK THESE OPPORTUNITIES TO MAKE PERSONAL CONTACTS WITH OTHER INMATES."

he heard that I was from the Netherlands, he came to see me, speaking in a mixture of Dutch and English. He was a Dutchman by birth and had already been in prison for twenty years. He had been transferred from another more restricted prison, as the end of his sentence period was nearing. He told me how he had killed a man during a fight while attempting to escape, and had been betrayed by someone else. He himself had been involved in many crimes and had been sentenced to a total of 80 years in prison. However, after three years of imprisonment, he had met an evangelist and this criminal was converted. The evangelist had told him that, if he would break all his connections with the gang and the underworld, he would be a free man within twenty years. (Some of these criminals stay in touch with their gang, plotting escapes and planning future crimes.) We would get together in my cell and sing hymns and pray. He told me that he would be free in two weeks. The rest of his sentence had been absolved on the condition that he would be deported to the Netherlands. He said he felt like a free man towards God and man. Towards man, because he had paid what he owed humanity for his crimes, with twenty years of his life. Towards God, because Christ paid for his sins.

Another man with whom I often talked and tried to convince that he was a sinner, was sentenced to nine years. During a fight in a bar, he had killed two men with a beer bottle. He claimed it was self-defense, and he never spoke about his victims. But he did mention that the judge was not good. Many other inmates had the same opinion. If I had to believe the prisoners, they were all innocent.

I will never forgot that one prisoner. He was a medical doctor, who had messed around with drugs and gotten one year. He was terribly worried about his family and feeling depressed. I told him about the love of Jesus, and that if he would repent and believe in God, the Almighty God would help him out of all his troubles. His eyes lit up with joy, as new hope entered his heart. I can well imagine what it must be like to face life without the hope and assurance of the gospel.



Philadelphia – United States

I also spent Christmas in prison, and I was glad for the opportunity to experience prison life during the holiday season. The big difference was the fact that, although I was in prison, I was a free and happy man, whereas many people outside the prison doors were bound on the inside and not free and happy at all. I must say that even in jail our Christmas dinner was, true to American custom, an abundant and delicious feast.

The death of my father

In prison I received the news from a friend that my father had passed away. At that time, I got to understand what it is like to be imprisoned in such circumstances and not be able to be with family.

My father had been a God-fearing man. Even though he had not been brought up in a Christian home, he had an encounter with God in an open field at the age of twelve. He had always told us that it was not necessary for him to get sick in order to die. One day he would just "pfft" blow out his last breath, he said. This was exactly what happened. He was sitting at the table while my mother was playing *Soli Deo Gloria* on the organ. She heard a noise behind her as though someone had something stuck in his throat. She turned around just to see my father take his last breath.

We could never have imagined how our mother would handle the loss of our father. Obviously she was very shocked. But when she saw him during the wake and ran her hand through his white hair, she suddenly realized, "How foolish to touch the fur of his travel garment. He is no longer here. This is only his outer covering." From that moment on, he was no longer dead in her eyes. She knew he had preceded her and returned to God. I heard all this later from my brothers and sisters.

What a strange way of thinking most people have: believing they have to be sick first in order to die. Perhaps that is the reason why so many people do get sick before they die. They receive according to their faith, or, their ignorance!



Passport photograph.

It is so amazing to live with God. My father had just made arrangements to take a trip with my mother to America. He had handed everything over to my younger brother, not knowing that God was preparing him for the final journey to his heavenly home. I believe that people who walk with God, always live their full span of days as decreed by the Lord. We often read in the Bible how parents blessed their children before they passed away peacefully.

A free man

Shortly after this, I received news that there was a job available in New York on a ship bound for Amsterdam, the Netherlands, via Saint John, Canada. And they let me out of prison. Although I never felt like a genuine prisoner robbed of his freedom, I experienced a new sense of liberty as the prison doors closed behind me. How wonderful it is to be a free man! Not bound or captured, either by man or by Satan's power, but redeemed by the liberating power of Jesus!

I was reminded of the words of the prophet Isaiah, quoted by Jesus in Luke 4:18-19, "The Spirit of the Lord is on Me (the Messiah), because He has anointed Me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent Me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." "THE BIG DIFFERENCE WAS THE FACT THAT, ALTHOUGH I WAS IN PRISON, I WAS A FREE AND HAPPY MAN."

CHAPTER 9

Journeys full of miracles



As Johan stood at the railing, staring into the distance, he felt an increasing desire to tell the sea of people about the love of God and about Jesus, the Savior. Often during his prayer, he asked, "How much longer do I have to prepare food for the people? They eat it, but it gets digested within a day. When will I finally be allowed to bring the Bread of Life to the many people in need?"

Believing in a God of miracles

I left Philadelphia by train for New York to board the ship, bound for Amsterdam, via Saint John in Canada. One thing bothered me: I had little money and nothing to bring to God's children in the Netherlands, who were in need. The war had inflicted a heavy blow to my homeland and its people, and everything was still very expensive. So I prayed, "Lord, Your children are in need, and I have nothing to give them. You have used me in the past to supply the need of others. Help me, Lord, and stir the hearts of the people." I did not have a clue how the Lord was going to help me, but it is wonderful to believe in a God of miracles, who *"is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine"* (Ephesians 3:20).

We stayed a few days at Saint John, loading new cargo. I went to a local Full Gospel meeting where I shared what Jesus Christ meant to me. I did not mention my burden, as I was not even thinking about that. But after the service, a woman approached me. She told me that she had spare clothes at home and asked whether I would mind taking them to the Netherlands. I told her that I had just prayed about this need, and that I appreciated her offer very much. She said that she would ask others as well, and that I should pick them up the next afternoon.

The next day, I was greatly surprised when I saw eighteen suitcases, boxes and bags full of clothing, all in excellent

Johan learned how to act in business. However, he would have to leave the business in order to go into ministry. C

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condition, ready for me to take. So often I see God's greatness in the little details! The woman who gave me the clothes, held up five ladies' corsets and asked me if there were people in the Netherlands who could use "these things." Being a bachelor, I really did not have a clue. However, since they looked like new, I said, "Sure." I thought, They will sort it out in the Netherlands.

On my way to Amsterdam from Saint John, I had a cabin for seven, which I only had to share with one man! During the journey, I had the privilege of leading him to Christ. After about five days, I noticed that he had quit smoking. When I asked him why he had quit, he answered, "For the same reason you quit!" Earlier, I had shared with him that our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit and that God wants to deliver us from the addiction of nicotine. That is why I had voluntarily quit the habit: out of love for Jesus. However, I had never mentioned his own smoking habit.

He was very worried about my large amount of baggage, and wondered how I could possibly transport this from Amsterdam to Rotterdam. It was not possible to get it all into a taxicab, which, in any case, would have been frightfully expensive. There were hardly any trucks in those early post-war days. He could not understand why I did not worry about this at all. I told him that God would provide transportation. But he kept his mind occupied with what so many people keep worrying about: would God really provide and how? I knew without a doubt that the Lord had given me all these clothes for His children. Therefore, the Lord would certainly arrange for me to transport them as well.

When we arrived at the quay in Amsterdam, before we were even moored, I spotted a large truck. It was the only one. My younger brother, Piet, was waiting for me at the quay. I called to him to find out where that truck was going, as I had a load of baggage for Rotterdam. It was not long before my brother shouted back that the truck was heading for Rotterdam and that I could ride along with

"HE WAS TEACHING ME TO BASE MY Faith Upon His Word."

all the baggage. I knew God had sent this truck. While the sailors were busy mooring the ship in the dock, my new convert joined me at the railing. I said to him: "Do you see that truck right there? God sent it here to take me to Rotterdam with all my baggage." He could hardly believe it, but it was true.

The amazing thing is that the driver took not only myself and my load of baggage, but also my brother and his fiancée, and dropped us all off in front of our house for a price much less than our train tickets would have cost. This was not the only time the Lord provided in transportation. When I come to think of it, I would have been more surprised if the Lord had not provided!

God takes care of the widows

When I arrived in Rotterdam, I put the word around concerning the boxes of clothing. An elderly widow came up to me and asked, "You probably did not bring any corsets, did you?" I knew instantly that the Lord had added these articles just for this lady. Many women will understand what that corset meant to this widow, who had given birth to many children. She told me that she had prayed for a corset, because without this kind of support, she had severe pain in her body! How thoughtful our God is and how sweetly the Holy Spirit moves in all areas of our life! In those days, corsets were extremely expensive in Europe, yet Maasbach could say, "Go ahead and take your pick!" Later, I learned that not only was it a perfect fit, but that it was the most comfortable support she had ever had!

Does God not promise to be a Husband to the widows and a Father to the orphans? Those who walk with God, know Him as their great Provider in both the small and the big needs of life. What a privilege to be used by God and to be able to deliver something of need to a widow or someone else in need, in His name!



Amsterdam – The Netherlands

Serving in a Pentecostal church in Rotterdam

As I had only been home for one day since the start of World War II, I intended to stay in the Netherlands for a while. It was not easy to find Full Gospel meetings like the ones I had been attending in America. However, somewhere in an alley in the south of Rotterdam, down in a converted basement, I found a Pentecostal church and began to take an active part in it. A humble, uneducated laborer, called Neumeyer, was leading the meetings.

On Saturday night, we usually held meetings in the open air with a group of older people and a small pump organ. Without realizing it, I went through a school where God taught me to submit to those He had placed in charge there. I will never forget the prayer meetings we used to have every Friday night. Although they were held in some shabby old living room, the glory of God often descended in a powerful way.

Indeed, people often look for God in places where He is not to be found, because they forget that God dwells among the humble and the poor. God never considers the beauty of buildings or the value of great homes. He sees the heart. Wherever He finds a broken, contrite heart, there He will stay and make Himself known. These conditions are usually hard to find among the rich, which is why we frequently find God among the ordinary.



Besides being a chef, Johan could also work in the engine room or on deck, and he was employable as a steward.

In those small meetings I met several brothers and sisters (as we called each other) who had been baptized in the Holy Spirit and spoke in tongues. My soul was longing for that experience too. I wanted to be baptized with the Holy Spirit. Sometimes I heard them speak of dreams and visions the Lord had given them, and I longed for God to give me dreams and visions as well. Many times I prayed that the Lord would give me a special revelation, but whenever I did, it was as though the Lord said, "Do you not trust My Word? Is My Word not sufficient?" I believe it is natural for a born again child of God to long for a special encounter with God, or a special touch or revelation from Him. I often examined myself, wondering if I had gone astray, or if I had not completely surrendered to God. Later I understood why God did not answer those prayers at that time. He was teaching me to base my faith upon His Word, of which David said, *"Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path"* (Psalm 119:105).

Part-time in ministry and on board

I used the money I had earned to live off and to pay my tithes and offerings to the house of God. After a while, I came to the end of my savings. I prayed, "Lord, will You give me another ship?" Usually, it did not take long to find a job on another ship, since I could also work on deck or in the engine room. I made enough tax free dollars to work, at the most, six months a year, and spent the rest of my time in ministry. This way I was able to support myself and help those in need. It was amazing to see how God provided in everything. It often happened that I, just when I needed it, was notified by the US consulate that an American ship had a vacancy.

I made many voyages, and there has not been one in which I did not see the wonderful and powerful hand of God. But it was not always easy to leave the ministry ashore and board another ship again. I remember once feeling sad as I started a new journey, saying, "Lord, how much longer do I have to work among the dead?" For that is the way it seemed to me. After all, most of my shipmates did not know the life which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord. But how wonderful that God, in His grace, gives us the strength to endure. We are in the world to shine as lights in the darkness.

Several encounters on board

I remember a man from Missouri, who came aboard drunk



Ras Tanura – Saudi Arabia

as we were in New York. He was hired as a steward, but he was constantly drunk. I told him he was paid to work, and if he planned to keep on drinking this way he could pack his bags and leave. It seemed to me that this man had gone through some difficulties in his life and was therefore trying to drown away his sorrows and disappointments.

When it was time to go to work again, I had to shake him awake. I asked him why he drank so much. Did he not believe in God? He looked at me and told his story. It seemed that his wife, who was a Sunday School teacher, had committed adultery. He could not and would not accept that God had allowed this to happen. His wife had repented, but he did not want to forgive her and had gone off. When I told him that God had sent me to tell him that he was no better than his wife, that he should repent and immediately return to his wife and children, he was shocked. Such pride! How many people go around in this world condemning others for breaking one commandment, while they themselves violate all the others? The man did not stay on board. I hope he has faced the truth about himself and gone back to his family.

Another time, I was standing at the railing in Ras Tanura, a small place in Saudi Arabia, on the Persian Gulf. A young American employee of one of the local oil companies was standing next to me. I asked him if he was a child of God. Obviously, he did not expect this question from a ship's cook. He got nervous and told me his story. He had a praying mother and three older sisters, all Pentecostals, filled with the Holy Spirit. But he had gone to Arabia to get away from "all that religious stuff." Suddenly I realized that the prayers of his mother and sisters had brought me in contact with him. With boldness I told him that God had sent me. I told him that it was impossible to run away from God. God loved him, I said, and wanted to make him happy and free. Once more I was very grateful to God and counted it a privilege to be His messenger boy. The young man's mother and sisters had prayed, and Maasbach was used by

"I MADE MANY Voyages, and There has Not been one In which I did Not see the Wonderful And Powerful Hand of god."

God to deliver the message. *"I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with My loving eye on you"* (Psalm 32:8).

Isaiah 6:8

"Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, 'Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?' And I said, 'Here am I. Send me!'"

CHAPTER 10 The blow God used

God wants to show us the way

Every Christian can learn from the history of the people of Israel, wandering through the wilderness, on their way to the Promised Land. It contains profound lessons for us in our journey to our heavenly home, and teaches us how to enter into the rest which God has prepared for us.

By day, the Lord went ahead of the Israelites in a pillar of cloud to guide them on their way. By night in a pillar of fire, which gave them light and enabled them to continue traveling. Day and night, the cloud and the fire were always in front of the people. (Exodus 13:21-22.) They were traveling a totally new route, and they had to depend entirely upon God's guidance, because there were no existing roads. Once the Lord has redeemed us from the Egypt of this world, we also find ourselves on a completely new road, which we have not traveled before. Praise God for the guidance of the Holy Spirit!

However, Christians nowadays do not seem to be very different from the Israelites in the desert. The Lord said they were stubborn, but so are we, who were called out of darkness into His wonderful light. When we should stay, we want to leave, and when we should leave, we want to stay.



Hong Kong

How gracious and loving is our good God and Father! He

Johan Maasbach:

"I am only an instrument in God's hand, a signpost, pointing to Jesus Christ." instructs us with great patience and teaches us the way we should go. He guides us, and His eye is on us. Psalm 32:8 is one of my many favorite Bible verses.

A punch in the face

I got a call from the US consul, asking if I would take a job as chef on a ship returning to San Francisco via Saudi Arabia and Japan. I liked the idea, since I knew the company had to send me back as a passenger to Rotterdam, the port where I would sign on. The important thing, however, before making any decision, is to ask the Lord. In this case, I failed to do so.

This ship certainly did not turn out to be one of my best ships. Not only the crew, but even the captain and officers were heavy drinkers. Frequently, there were fights on board. A man whose cabin was across from mine, had his face ripped open by an Englishman, who attacked him with a broken beer bottle. We were just anchored in some harbor in the Persian Gulf when this happened, and he was lucky to be transported to a hospital. Later I heard he needed 23 stitches. Even the captain was often drunk. No wonder the crew was not any better.

I guess I was the only one on board who did not drink or swear. Not that I walked around like a scribe, but somehow they just could not figure me out. Personally, I did not run into much trouble with any of them. Not until one day when one of my stewards, a former marine, suddenly could not stand the Spirit of God in me any longer. (I later learned that this man should never have been hired.) He would often mutter to himself about something or someone. Suddenly, he also started mumbling about me.

One time, when I was not paying attention to him and was bending over to get something from a low sink, he suddenly smashed his fist into my face, ripping my entire upper lip in two. We were in the middle of the ocean, two days sailing from Hong Kong, without a doctor on board. With my face covered in blood, I made it to the ship's dispensary. The second mate,

"I WAS **GRIEVED TO** THE DEPTHS **OF MY SOUL** WHEN I THOUGHT THAT I WOULD NOT BE ABLE **TO ENTIRELY** FULFILL MY CALLING."

who was in charge of the first aid department, was half drunk as usual. However, he sobered up quickly when he saw me coming. He made me lay down on a stretcher.

At that point a wave of panic rose up within me. "Lord," I cried, "forgive me for going my own way!" I started to weep, because I thought that I would never be able to sing or speak normally again to the honor and glory of His name. I knew that the Lord had called me to be His witness. I was grieved to the depths of my soul when I thought that I would not be able to entirely fulfill my calling. I cried when I thought of not being able to sing well in the midst of His church, to build up the believers. Once again I pleaded, "Oh God, forgive me for going my own way."

The second mate returned with a large, crooked needle, attached to a thick nylon thread. Without any kind of anesthetic, he stuck the needle through my lip, from one side to the other side. He pulled the lip together and placed a double knot in the ends. I had to walk around with a string with cut off ends through my lip, until we would arrive in Hong Kong.

At the doctor's in Hong Kong, I was told that the second mate had done an excellent job. He also assured me that I would not have any kind of speech impediment. The blow, which the Lord allowed me to take, was not in vain. I knew the end of my sailing days was in sight.

My first tent meeting

I held the shipping company responsible for my injury, and, without any difficulty, the insurance company offered me a refund. I received so much, that I could buy a large campaign tent, together with a sound system, platform, chairs, et cetera. In this tent many souls would come to the feet of Jesus.

My first tent meeting was held in the center of Rotterdam. It was quite a job before the tent was finally set up, ads were placed, and brochures and posters were printed. I had only a

Psalm 32:8

"I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with My loving eye on you." few helpers, and since I was not a millionaire, who could have everything done by others, I had to do most of the work myself. All I had was a warm heart for sinners, a love for Jesus, a great faith in His wonderful name, and His promise to be with me.

However, when all was set and ready, right on the opening day, I collapsed physically. My strength was completely gone. When I bent forward, I blacked out. I went to see one of my sisters, who gave me a brandy eggnog. I felt some strength returning, and lied down in bed until just before the meeting. After the service I immediately went back to bed, exhausted. Happily, the Lord got me back to normal within a week, for which I am forever grateful.

Every night sinners came to Jesus. Often the chairs placed in front of the platform for people to kneel at, were wet with tears. During a thunderstorm one night, several people fled inside the tent for shelter. That night, sixteen people knelt down to give their hearts to Jesus.

Churches and committees

Naturally, I wanted to organize this together with the existing Full Gospel churches. I had only one goal: to tell the world about the love of Jesus, and His wonderful power to save, to heal and to fill hearts with His Holy Spirit. Unfortunately, these churches were divided into two groups. Whenever one was ready to cooperate, the other was not. So I finally decided to organize the campaign on my own, along with the brother who was holding small meetings in a basement.

I never felt led by God to spend my time trying to sort out the disputes among brothers. *"To their own master, servants stand or fall"* (Romans 14:4). One of the devil's favorite tactics is to keep God's people occupied in committee meetings to promote unity. I have never seen a soul saved by these activities. When we read the Bible, we know what to do. God gave me a great commission to fulfill. I only have one lifetime to give, and my time is short and there is much work to be done. Millions of



Johan brought the tent and platform by ship from the United States.

people have yet to be told about Jesus, the Mighty Savior and Lover of our souls. I never received a commission to waste time on people who have a jealous heart and a prideful attitude. Nehemiah never occupied himself with them either. (Read Nehemiah 6.)

Nevertheless, I rejoice with all those who proclaim Christ. It is my earnest prayer that everyone preaching the gospel will work very hard and bring many souls to the cross. Through God's grace I have stirred up a healthy jealousy in the hearts of workers in God's Kingdom. God used me to wake them up, and they have also started working.

Some people have the strange idea that all the different church groups and denominations signify that there is division among God's people. The devil wants them to focus on this. I wished that every street had a church where Christ is preached! Our unity is definitely not based on all of us gathering under one roof. It is based on our mutual respect and acceptance of one another, just as Christ accepted us when we were still sinners.

Some people have asked me why I do not work together with the traditional churches. They even wonder whether I am against them. Well, the fact is, I do not have a degree in theology or a Ph.D. I have not been to college. But I did receive God's anointing when I was a chef, sailing across the oceans, just like young David received his anointing while he was still tending his father's sheep. I did not appoint myself to be His witness. God called me and anointed me with His Holy Spirit. I am very grateful that I learned and received everything from God Himself. At college, I would certainly not have learned that God is still healing the sick today, and that miracles of salvation and healing are also happening now. That today, we can still cast out devils in Jesus' name. That the baptism by immersion still applies, and that speaking in tongues still happens. I have never been against churches. It only saddens me when I see their teachers withholding so many blessings from the people which are rightfully theirs because of the completed work on

"I HAD ONLY ONE GOAL: TO TELL THE WORLD ABOUT THE LOVE OF JESUS."

VOLLE EVANGELIE"TENT

Rotterdam – The Netherlands In 1948, evangelist Johan Maasbach started his evangelism work in a large tent in Rotterdam. These were difficult days for the Full Gospel, because of the strong opposition from the traditional church. But while the scholar ministers were watching, God began to work in a special and wonderful way through uneducated and simple people. Not in the beautiful cathedrals, but in tents and on the streets. Calvary. The devil is a completely conquered enemy through the blood of Jesus. Probably, many teachers have not fully grasped this yet and do not quite understand what it means to be born again, just as Nicodemus – who was a theologian – did not understand this. (Read John 3.) It is my earnest prayer, "Lord, fill all Your servants with the power of Your Spirit. Let the fire of Pentecost burn in every church!"

Tent meetings in Vroomshoop and Haarlem

After Rotterdam, I moved the tent to Vroomshoop. I was invited by a pastor, who was leading a small congregation there. I will never forget how some people were demonstrating against it! I had a large banner which said, "FULL GOSPEL TENT." A local pastor had warned his congregation from the pulpit that the meetings under that banner were not "Full Gospel" at all. As a result, many members of his congregation came that evening out of curiosity.

I still remember how a group of people from a very strict church came to one of our meetings. They had such stern, severe faces. They all sat stiffly in a row. When I made an altar call for sinners to be saved, they all indignantly got up and marched out. They could not believe that salvation could be so simple. Still, that very night, fourteen people came to the altar, and several chairs were wet with tears again. Despite all oppositions, we had a successful campaign.

During these meetings, I also met the girl who later would become my wife. She grew up in Haarlem. After graduating from high school, she had attended a Bible college in Switzerland. Now she was giving her life for the gospel in the Vroomshoop area.



Vroomshoop - The Netherlands

The next stop was the city of Haarlem, where I also had some unforgettable experiences. There was quite a commotion when we prayed for the infilling of the Holy Spirit, as we heard later from conversations among outsiders and people with contradicting opinions. On one occasion, a fight broke out and the police got involved. We stayed out of it all.

The message of deliverance through Jesus Christ still stirs up conflict and often creates a commotion among people. This was true in Paul's day and is still true today! One thing, however, is certain: God's Word, which goes out from His mouth, will not return empty, but will accomplish what He desires and achieve the purpose for which He sent it (Isaiah 55:11). In the middle of all commotion, God works out His plans. This always amazes me and makes me marvel at God's greatness; in spite of the failures and imperfections of His children, God continues to accomplish His great work! His love never changes, nor His strength, nor His will! He is the great "I AM." He says, *"For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened"* (Luke 11:10).

The offerings collected at these meetings, were far from sufficient to cover the necessary costs. All the money I had earned at sea was spent to bring sinners to Jesus' feet. And I had very little left. In the next chapter, I want to share with you how God provided in an unexpected way and made it possible for me to marry Wilhelmina, the girl I had met during the tent meetings in Vroomshoop.



At the age of 32, Johan got engaged to Wilhelmina, the young woman he would marry. He knew that, together with her, he could go God's way.

CHAPTER 11 Our wedding

Seeing Wilhelmina as my future wife

Wilhelmina Alida Klumper and her friend were about to return to their own places, after their faithful service during the tent meetings. Suddenly, quite unexpectedly, the Lord showed me that Wilhelmina was to be my future wife. I had never considered this possibility or spent much time on the subject, as I had definitely made up my mind to get established in the Lord's work first, before considering marriage. My thoughts were completely focused on Him, Who had set me apart for His service. 2 Timothy 2:4 says, *"No one serving as a soldier gets entangled in civilian affairs, but rather tries to please his commanding officer."* Even in these matters, I was expecting Him, Who had called me, to provide.

Suddenly I knew that if I did not ask her soon, someone else would. There are people who think they will always get what God has in store for them. However, I believe that many Christians miss out on many of God's blessings because they do not put their faith into action. Faith without action is dead! It is worth nothing! This is something we need to learn. Sadly enough, there are few preachers who teach the people how to take possession of the promises of God by putting their faith into action.

Wilhelmina, like me, was highly surprised when I asked her, and even thought I was joking. But when I sealed our meeting with a kiss, she started to believe that I was really serious. The latter I would never have done if I had not known that the Lord was bringing us together. I believe that when we walk with God and are filled with His Spirit, our values are very different from the world, and the natural man.



The highlight of Johan and Wilhelmina's wedding was the prayer for God's blessing upon their marriage.

On February 2, 1952, Johan married Wilhelmina Klumper in Haarlem.

Wait for the Lord

Besides my job as an evangelist, I have pastored several congregations throughout the years where many people have come to me with their marital problems. My first question is always, "How did you two get together? Were you led by the Lord?" Often their first mistake was made right there. A marriage is a contract for life, made before God and man. Therefore, we cannot take it lightly. Only death can undo a marriage. At least, that is how God always intended it to be. Space does not allow me to discuss the important topic of marriage and the relationship between husband and wife. It would end up as a book on its own. Dating someone you do not see as your future husband or wife, is a very dangerous game for the Christian. By doing so, many people married someone who was not the one the Lord wanted to give them.

I often say to young people who are impatient in these matters, "It is better not to be married and think, 'I wish I were married', than to be married and think, 'I wish I were not married."" Faith waits for the Lord. Faith never gets ahead of the Lord. Faith surrenders to God and is not anxious about the future. He who believes, lays his dreams on the altar. Faith says, "Lord, I will choose the one You give me. You know who I truly am, for You know all things." It is very important for us who walk with God to wait upon Him in every area of our life.

Finding a place to store my tent and equipment

Anyone familiar with the post-war years in the Netherlands will vividly remember the acute housing shortage, especially in the inner city of Rotterdam, where the German bombs had destroyed more than 30,000 houses and buildings. It was an impossibility to rent either living, storage or warehouse space. Nevertheless, I could not get rid of the firm idea that the Lord was going to give me a building in this area to store the big tent with its 1,000 chairs and further equipment. So I told my youngest brother about this, and I went around, looking for the place the Lord would give me. From a rational point of view, it was like looking for a needle in a haystack. However, I believe in the supernatural and mighty God and Father, Who wants to

"I HAD DEFINITELY MADE UP MY MIND TO GET ESTABLISHED IN THE LORD'S WORK FIRST, BEFORE CONSIDERING MARRIAGE." meet all our needs. That is why I train myself to speak and think in faith, and not to reason and think like someone who is not born-again.

I spotted an empty store with storage, an unusual sight in those days. I found out that an old man occupied the living quarters in the back, which consisted of two rooms, a kitchen and a yard. Although the whole situation seemed a bit strange, especially in those days, I went to look for the owner to see if the building was up for rent. When I found him, I explained why I needed this space. My brother wanted to store some rope for his company as well. The owner asked me if I wanted to look inside the building first. I agreed, but thought, If you will let me rent it, I will take it, no matter how it looks like inside. He told me that the old man had been living there for fifteen years and did not want to move out, but that he certainly did not want to have him as the main tenant. He mentioned that the rental of this space required a security deposit. This scared me a little, because in those days high deposits for an empty store were not unusual. I had little money left and no income. The fact that the old man was living behind the shop did not bother me. I figured that if the Lord was going to give me this place, He would find a solution for the old man as well.

It did not take me long to view the property. I told the owner that I liked it. There were new blinds in the windows, and inside the store was a large counter with some glass shelves. I got a little nervous when the owner mentioned the security deposit again. When he mentioned the very small sum he wanted as a deposit, I almost jumped for joy. I could hardly believe it, and silently thanked God! "Why don't you and your brother come over so we can make up a contract?" he asked. Even my brother thought it was a fairy tale. The rent was only 13.75 guilders a week, and the old man had to pay me, the new main tenant, his part of it.

After I moved in, the greengrocer from across the street came over to congratulate me. "So, you are the lucky one. Lots of people have been here before you, but the owner did not want to rent the place to just anyone. One guy even moved some of

Johan Maasbach:

"I am so grateful to God for the wife He has given me, with whom I can freely pursue my calling. Wilhelmina is an amazing help, not only as a wife and a mother, but also in spiritual matters. She is a great blessing and inspiration to me and many others."

Vo my Darling Willeke. Fram your Jahny. Le Haure 22 Mos. 1951. France. Ps. 32:8. het this mind be in your which was also in Christ Jesus! a dedicated spirit is : Wholy given to Gad To know Him To choose His will. To resemble His character. To trust His word. To love Him supremely. To glaryfy Him only. To enfag Him wholy. and to belong to Him utlerky. unreservedly and forever. Surrender It means Separation. It means sacrifice. It means self denial. It means death. a yielding to gad voluntary to lay and whole life on the altar. Christian life is a Christ life. It is not a immitation. But a incarnation,

During the last long trip Johan made as a chef, he wrote these words to his fiancée, Wilhelmina. Once again, he clearly stated which way he was determined to go. But also what he expected of her if they would walk together on the path that God had prepared for them. It is so important to be clear about these things, before you make decisions with lasting consequences. Otherwise, you will have a hindrance instead of a partner who is a blessing and an encouragement. This note is a prayer which also became their lifestyle.

his stuff in, but he had to move it all out again." I did not tell him that I got the place without the slightest trouble. It was God and no one else, who had destined it for me. I believed Him, and had put my faith into action, not considering the circumstances or listening to people's opinions. The tent, with all its belongings, was now stored in a secure and dry place. However, I had only a few dimes and pennies left.

How God provided

Knowing that it was the perfect will of God and that I had the proper age to marry (I was 32 years old), Wilhelmina and I decided to get engaged. The old man in the back of the store had just announced that he also had found a "girl" and was marrying a widow, who owned a house. We would therefore have a place to live.

I had to meet with Wilhelmina's parents. Considering my financial situation, I realized I had very little to offer my future wife. Her father had a very different opinion about finances. He was not happy at all that his daughter was marrying an evangelist, an ordinary guy with no formal education. My logic, however, was based on what God says in His Word, *"My God will meet all your needs according to the riches of His glory in Christ Jesus"* (Philippians 4:19).

How wonderful to have a rich God and Father, Who says, "Do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well" (Matthew 6:31-33).

The next day, I received a totally unexpected telegram from an American captain, who was still at sea, sailing from Stockholm to Amsterdam. He asked me whether I could come on board once they had arrived. "Vacancy for chef," the telegram read. "This is it!" I said to Wilhelmina. When I got on board, the captain asked if I would please sign on because he had to leave his chef behind in Stockholm because of illness. I told him I would like to help him

Le Havre – France, 1951

"To my darling Willeke. – from your Johnny,

Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus!

A dedicated spirit is: Wholly given to God. To know Him. To choose His will. To resemble His character. To trust His Word. To love Him supremely. To glorify Him only. To enjoy Him wholly. And to belong to Him utterly, unreservedly and forever!

Surrender

It means separation. It means sacrifice. It means self-denial. It means death. Surrender is giving up self, a yielding to God voluntarily, to lay our whole life on the altar.

Christian life is a Christ life. It is not an imitation, but an incarnation." out, but no longer than three months.

The position of chef on these big American ships was well paid, especially when you converted dollars into guilders. On top of that, my earnings were tax-free, and the job included room and boarding. So after three months at sea, I came home with 11,000 guilders.

Our wedding

The following day, we went to the town hall to apply for our wedding license, and two weeks later we got married in Haarlem.

Since we did not give our wedding lots of publicity, everything went rather fast and unnoticed by the outside world. Jealous, slanderous tongues said, "They probably had to get married." This is a sad reflection upon the hidden thoughts of people's hearts! When our first little one finally arrived two years later, slanderous tongues said, "Maasbach knows what he is doing." Fortunately, I learned a long time ago not to be bothered by what people think or say. Walk with God and be sincere in His sight, and He will bless you and your descendants. He will judge your enemies and the slanderous tongues, and put them to shame. The Lord said through the great prophet Isaiah, *"No weapon forged against you will prevail, and you will refute every tongue that accuses you. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and this is their vindication from Me" (Isaiah 54:17).*

Wilhelmina is a great help, not only as a wife and a mother, but also in spiritual matters. She is a great blessing and inspiration to me and many others. Proverbs 18:22 says: *"He who finds a wife finds what is good and receives favor from the LORD."*



Le Havre – France

CHAPTER 12 Our thoughts are not always God's thoughts



Johan Maasbach:

"I have to give my life to tell people the gospel, and I have to tell it in every possible way."

Submitting to God's will

After we got married, I spent quite some time evangelizing in the Netherlands, especially in the southern part of Rotterdam. I assisted in open air meetings, traveled everywhere to attend prayer meetings and led the worship at different meetings. Later I understood that during this time the Lord was especially teaching me to submit to those He had placed above me.

I believe this is one of the essential and most important lessons God wants to teach His children before they can be used by Him. It is in our human nature to place ourselves above others. A child of God must learn to wait, until the hand of the Lord lifts him up. Often we think we are capable of the task God has for us; but if we want to be used by God we have to be put to the test first. We must be tried in the fire. So often we have our own ideas; we think we know exactly what to do and how to handle it. But in order to be a servant in the church of the living God, we have to follow the blueprint of our omniscient heavenly Architect.

Sometimes the Lord will lead us on a road which we do not understand. Yet we know by the Spirit of God that we are in His will. The same must have been true for Joseph when he was in jail, and for Paul and many other men of God. The blessing on the great apostle Paul's work was not due to his intelligence or ability, but to his faith, obedience, love and self-denial. Paul put his ideals and talents on the altar. For many people this seems to be a difficult thing. But if we want to achieve anything for the Kingdom of God, we have to place all our human knowledge, our own vision, ideas and wisdom, yes, our entire life, on the altar.

Paul says in Philippians 3:7-9, "But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ – the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith."

In Galatians 2:20 he says, "I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, Who loved me and gave Himself for me."

And in 2 Corinthians 3:5-6 he says, "Not that we are competent in ourselves to claim anything for ourselves, but our competence comes from God. He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant – not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life." "A CHILD OF GOD MUST LEARN TO WAIT, UNTIL THE HAND OF THE LORD LIFTS HIM UP."



Johan was always looking for ways and means to preach the gospel. He had an eye for the media and how to use these for the gospel. The many countries he traveled, undoubtedly gave him many ideas of how to share the gospel with the crowds. In this perspective, he was unique in the Netherlands and many vears ahead of his time.

E ZOON DES MENSEN GEKOMEN OM TE TOEKEN

VERLOREN WAS

The world does not need a form of Christianity. There are enough religions in this world, all with their own doctrines. Christianity is not just another religion. Born again followers of Jesus carry the image of the glory of the Spirit of the Lord. God has called us to reflect this glory as we proclaim the gospel, the good news of Jesus Christ.

I can affirm what the apostle Paul says in 2 Corinthians 4:5-11: "For what we preach is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, Who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' made His light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God's glory displayed in the face of Christ. But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body. For we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that His life may also be revealed in our mortal body."

We do not learn these things in a university or a Bible school, but only by walking with God. Joseph learned these lessons during the persecution by his brothers. Moses learned to deny his own will and selfish desires when he was in the desert. David had a similar journey. Even for Jesus there was no other way, as we read in the letter to the Hebrews: *"Son though He was, He learned obedience from what He suffered and, once made perfect, He became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey Him"* (Hebrews 5:8-9).

Romans 1:16

"I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes."

Why this lesson is so difficult

All living creatures, even nature itself, struggle to stay alive. However, God says, *"Anyone who loves their life will lose it, while anyone who hates their life in this world will keep it for eternal life"* (John 12:25). Please do not think I am against universities or Bible schools. On the contrary! What I do say, however, is that those institutions have little value if the people are not born again Christians. The Kingdom of God is not built by human knowledge, but by faith, love, obedience and self-denial. Only through faith in Christ can we reach the fullness.

It grieves me to see that there are many theologians who cannot be used by God, because they hang on to their own insights, doctrines and traditions of man, while they have little or no knowledge of the Spirit and the prophetic power of God's Word.

No wonder we read in 1 Corinthians 1:19-31, "For it is written: 'I will destroy the wisdom of the wise; the intelligence of the intelligent I will frustrate.' Where is the wise person? Where is the teacher of the law? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know Him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe. Jews demand signs and Greeks look for wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength. Brothers and sisters, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. God chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things – and the things that are not – to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before Him. It is because of Him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God - that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption. Therefore, as it is written: 'Let the one who boasts boast in the Lord.""



On honeymoon to Paris.

Since the day Adam and Eve sinned against God in the Garden of Eden, man has not changed much. Most people want to be righteous in their own strength, but do not seem to be familiar with what God says we are: sinners! When God confronted Adam with his sin, Adam said: *"The woman You put here with me – she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it"* (Genesis 3:12). But Adam was a sinner. And we have sinned as well, and need to realize that through sin we came under a curse. There is only one way to be freed from that curse, and that is through the sacrifice of Jesus on Calvary. Those who have been freed this way and have accepted the finished work of Christ, will realize that they have received redemption by grace. All that we are is by grace, so that no flesh can boast, but that Jesus will receive all the honor.

Praise God for a victorious life!

Moses did not stay in the desert with his father-in-law, Jethro, but after graduating from God's school of "knee-ology" (as I like to call it), God was ready to use him to lead Israel out of bondage. God could use him because he no longer trusted in his own strength, but had developed faith, obedience, love and selfdenial. This gave him the courage to go and confront Pharaoh.

We read about Joseph in Psalm 105:17-22: "Joseph (was) sold as a slave. They bruised his feet with shackles, his neck was put in irons, till what he foretold came to pass, till the word of the LORD proved him true. The king sent and released him, the ruler of peoples set him free. He made him master of his household, ruler over all he possessed, to instruct his princes as he pleased and teach his elders wisdom."

The Israelites did not stay in the desert. God wanted them to possess the Promised Land, a land flowing with milk and honey. Moses, who is a type of the Law, could not bring them in, but Joshua, who is a type of Jesus, could lead them into the Promised Land of rest.

"BEING IN GOD'S School and Waiting Upon him Does not Mean To sit still And do Nothing." What a wonderful privilege to experience this close relationship with our great God as He guides us as a Father. He teaches us and shows us the way we should go. He blesses us. He says in Psalm 32:8, *"I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with My loving eye on you."*

Waiting does not mean to sit still

Being in God's school and waiting upon Him does not mean to sit still and do nothing. This is one of the devil's greatest lies. Some young people are convinced that they first need to receive some special divine power before God can use them. Usually this idea stems from some form of pride. They want to be great, successful, a "somebody." But the secret of being great lies in being small. We can be somebody, only if we are willing to be nobody. This is one of the principles in the Kingdom of God.

It is not surprising that this form of pride presents itself. The apostles were struggling with it as well. Even after walking with Christ for three years, they still did not understand what it meant to be the least. Jesus however, demonstrated this principle by washing their feet (John 13).

Some Christians think they must wait until they have some kind of degree before they can go out in His name. In fact, the devil encourages us to believe this. Many people have wasted the strength of their youth and are now too old to do anything. We have to be active while we remain humble of heart, working with what we have, so that the Lord can entrust us with more.

I was always active, either in open air meetings, in distributing Christian literature, in Sunday school work or in other evangelistic work. And God used me while I was still in His school of testing.



Johan and Wilhelmina on deck of the Holland America Line, the ship that would take them to New York.

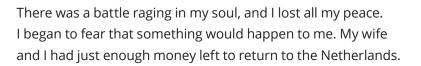
A change of direction

I received no income from my evangelistic work, even though I worked every day. I supported myself from my own earnings. In those days, there were very few Full Gospel churches in the Netherlands. It was impossible for my wife and me to find a place in a church or ministry, that would be able to financially support us.

I had an idea to go to the United States for five years, to earn some good money, save it up and then return to the Netherlands to evangelize. An American friend of mine, the owner of two large, first class restaurants, was very eager to have me as a chef in one of his cuisines. Several times he had urged me to come.

We sold our belongings and left for New York. And so I worked as a chef in a fine restaurant in Summit, New Jersey. We were promised a beautiful house, a brand new car and an excellent job.

However, from the moment we arrived in New York, I missed the assurance of being in the will of God. Although I had a job I loved doing, the Lord began to work in my soul and speak to my heart. Every day I was busy preparing food for people's physical bodies, and I received a good salary for doing this. Would it be possible that the Lord would take care of me when I would bring people the Bread of Life, so that those who ate it, would not die, but have eternal life? Would the great and mighty God, who cares for the birds in the sky, not care for me if I was in the Netherlands? I wanted to work for the Lord in the Netherlands, but thought that I first had to go to the United States to earn the money for it. It was as if the Lord kept on telling me, "The money is in the Netherlands."





New York – United States, 1952 As he arrived in New York, Johan lost the assurance that he was in God's will.

It was not easy to convince my employer that I had to leave. He tried to understand, and suggested that I could work half days for him and half days in the gospel. He reasoned, "Whatever you want to do in the Netherlands, you can do here just as well." However, in my heart I became more and more convinced that the Lord wanted me back in the Netherlands.

What was my big mistake? When I decided to go to the United States to make money, I forgot to ask the Lord if this was His will. If I would have asked the Lord, He would have said, "Why go and waste your time? The money is already in the Netherlands." He just let me go like David in 1 Samuel 27. David also forgot to ask God for advice.

And so it was that one fine day we packed our bags and left behind us a very good job, a beautiful home, a big new car and a wonderful country which I loved so much, to return to the land which I only remembered as being flat and wet.

Our home in Rotterdam was already occupied by another couple. We had no furniture or money left. But because I had gone on my knees and said, "Lord, I want to go where You want me to go: to the Netherlands," it did not matter anymore what kind of work I had to do to make a living. I have the same principle as Paul, who said, *"The one who is unwilling to work shall not eat"* (2 Thessalonians 3:10).

"WHAT WAS MY BIG MISTAKE? I FORGOT TO ASK THE LORD IF THIS WAS HIS WILL."

CHAPTER 13 The start of the ministry in Gouda



Johan Maasbach:

"If we want to achieve anything for the Kingdom of God, we will have to place all our human knowledge, our own vision, ideas and wisdom, yes, our entire life, on the altar. It grieves me to see that there are many theologians who cannot be used by God, because they hang on to their own insights, doctrines and traditions of man."

Back in the Netherlands

When my wife and I returned to the Netherlands, we moved into the attic of my mother's house in Rotterdam. It was all rather primitive, but I was back in the place where God wanted me. To be in the center of God's will gives peace and rest to the searching, restless heart.

Just before our departure from New York, we went to a meeting conducted by Rev. Carl Steffens. He laid his hands upon us in the middle of the congregation, and prayed for the ministry that God would give us in the Netherlands, and for a safe journey home. It was another milestone in my life that I will never forget. The laying on of hands in the name of Jesus is a God given ministry. This ministry has an important place, both in the Old as well as the New Testament. However, even the laying on of hands has little value, if it is not combined with faith. For we receive by faith, and we walk and act by faith. This is why the apostle Paul said to Timothy: *"For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands"* (2 Timothy 1:6).

Since I had no money left at all, I started to work immediately as a freelance rope and twine salesman and also began a small business in stainless steel articles. The Lord helped and blessed me in this. I spent my spare time in the ministry of the Lord.

38 Zeugstraat, Gouda – The Netherlands The building where Johan and Wilhelmina founded their first congregation. If you were standing in the doorway looking outside, you could see the 80 meter high steeple of a cathedral rising above the houses. Who would have thought at that time that Johan would later become the owner of that cathedral and use it as a gospel center?

10-10-0-

STREET, ST

GOD IS LIERDE

BETHLEHEM KERK

NELKOM

Unfortunately, in those days there were no Pentecostal churches in the Netherlands offering any kind of training course or a place to work full-time in the ministry. Compared to the United States, Great Britain and Sweden, we were at least 40 years behind with the Full Gospel message. We had no Full Gospel books, no training centers, no radio programs et cetera. What we did have was jealousy, shortsightedness and unbelief, while the few Full Gospel ministers we did have, did not always have the proper vision.

Our first meetings in Gouda

I wanted to work in a town where the Full Gospel message was not known of yet, and decided to start in the city of Gouda, home of the famous cheese. I rented a small hall, and placed an ad in the local newspaper. My expectations were not really high. But when people kept coming in until I counted a total of 35, my heart leaped for joy and I thanked God! After all, I did have a message for these people: that Jesus Christ is still the same, that He is alive, and that He saves and heals today! These people of the "religious" town of Gouda heard, for the first time, the wonderful name of Jesus being proclaimed in a new way! That night many hands were raised for salvation. I wrote down their addresses so I could visit them.

I started a weekly prayer meeting at the home of an elder brother. People were hungry, and God performed wonderful miracles of salvation, deliverance and healing.

I will never forget that girl who worked at a local hospital and had suffered from an open infected breast for a year and a half. Her mother attended the weekly meetings, but the girl was making fun of it. She said, "Mom, if doctors cannot help me, this common preacher certainly cannot." However, her loving mother managed to persuade her anyway to come along to a prayer meeting. That very first night she gave her heart to Jesus in tears. She was ashamed of her attitude towards faith healing and the work of God. She did not dare to ask for prayer. However, she could not get it out of her mind. During one of the next meetings, she told my wife about her physical condition and showed her the infection. Her breast was in a state of decomposition, part of it was beyond recognition. When my wife told me about this, I went

"I BELIEVED THAT THE LORD WOULD GIVE ME A PLACE FOR HIS WORK."

over to her and asked her if she wanted to be healed. She said she would like to, but confessed how she had ridiculed God's healing power in the past. It is so wonderful that we have examples in the Bible and therefore know how to respond to people's questions. Often we think we are not good enough to receive from God. The devil likes us to focus on our guilt and shortcomings. However, we never receive healing – or any other thing – because of our righteousness, but by faith in what Christ has done for us. *"The blood of Jesus, His Son, purifies us from all sin"* (1 John 1:7). Applying James 5:14, I anointed her with oil, and prayed with laying on of hands for healing in Jesus' name.

I did not think about this situation, until I saw her three weeks later and suddenly remembered her condition. I asked her how she was doing. She told me that the wound had healed beautifully, except for one very small spot that just would not close. I asked her what she was going to believe: would it heal completely or not? She gave me a puzzled look. I continued, "Sister, you will receive according to your faith. Now, do you believe it will heal, or do you believe it will stay this way?" She understood and said, "I believe it will heal." I gave her the advice to pay no attention to it any longer, and let the Lord finish His work. That same week her breast was completely healed. Later she got married and had two children. She told my wife that when she nursed her babies, her healed breast gave more milk than the other one.

Our first building

In a rented hall you do not have the same freedom as in your own building. Especially if you want to praise and worship God as the Bible teaches us, there is often much resistance. The devil seems to hate praise and worship. In fact, he knows the secret of worship better than some Christians do. Praising God with all that is within us, gives us power, strength and victory. For God inhabits the praises of His people (Psalm 22:3).

Even though I was told there was nothing suitable available in Gouda, I went to look for a building anyway, believing that the Lord would give me a place for His work. Since I was still living in Rotterdam, I traveled by train to Gouda, where I rented "Dear brother Maasbach,

I am healed of an ulcerated breast during one of your meetings in Gouda in 1955. For a year and a half I had been suffering with it, and it was a serious condition, causing terrible pains. I had to put on new dressings every day. The doctors did their best, but could not help me. Immediately after you anointed me with oil, according to James 5, God healed me so miraculously, that I do not even have a scar."

Mrs. T. Veltman-van Klaveren

a bicycle to get around. I looked everywhere and often rang doorbells when I thought I had spotted something suitable.

That is how I ended up in the Zeugstraat, at number 38. This was a small building which had been used for gospel meetings for the past 40 to 50 years. When I went in and looked it over, I thought, This is it! I could not imagine a more suitable place.

The caretaker, who lived upstairs, did not know whether it was for sale or not. Nevertheless, I went to do some research, and found the pastor whose congregation owned the building. They had moved to a former Jewish synagogue. The pastor, a friendly man, told me I could buy the building for 10,000 guilders, but that the neighbor had priority if he wanted to buy it. It so happened that this neighbor had gone bankrupt, and moved away. Which put me next in line to buy. I could not help but believe that God would give me this building, even though I had no money either. We had no congregation yet. And not one of the brothers dared to step out in faith with me and offer a warranty. I was all by myself. But I had faith in the Mighty God and Father Who said in His Word, *"Everything is possible for one who believes"* (Mark 9:23). So now I said, "Lord, the time has come. Now I need some money!"

After service one day, I was standing in front of the local newspaper building, which was also located on the Zeugstraat. I wanted to see how they had placed the ad. Next to me, a modest looking woman was also looking at the latest ads in the office window. She looked at me from the side and asked me whether I was the gentleman who had spoken during the evening meeting. I confirmed this, and we started a conversation. She said she did not think that meeting place was very suitable. I agreed, and mentioned that I was looking for another place and was interested in the hall down the street. She said, "In case you decide to buy it, come and see me. I am the mortgage holder of the building. If you buy it, you can have an 8,000 guilders mortgage with only 4 percent interest." My heart leaped for joy and gratitude. I felt like Eliezer when he went out to look for a wife for Isaac and the Lord granted him a successful journey by sending Rebekah to him. I had not even begun to search, and God had sent this lady already.



Johan and Wilhelmina loved to sing hymns.

Without any difficulty, a brother lent me what was still lacking to purchase the building.

When we met at the notary office for the transfer of the building, I came alone. The pastor was there, accompanied by the church board members, a total of about ten people. Most of them were wearing their traditional black suits with striped trousers. I had to ask the notary to provide witnesses. I was alone, but my God was with me. When the contract had been read and signed, I asked the notary whether we could spend some time in prayer, to thank God. When the pastor gave me the honor, I thanked God that this building would continue to be used for the salvation of souls. The others found it very strange, but I will never forget that moment. It was the first building that God gave me, because I believed He would. Tears well up in my eyes, even now, while I am writing this, remembering that day. Our God is a good God and He hears and answers our prayers.

Our ministry started in the Zeugstraat. People came from everywhere, even from Rotterdam, to attend the meetings. We also held special faith healing services. Many were touched by God and received their healing from all kinds of diseases and ailments. I also held my first campaign there in a large hall.

We still have wonderful meetings in Gouda. Some years later, the Lord gave us an even better place. We sold the old place for three times as much as I paid for it. We moved from the Zeugstraat to a beautiful building in Paradijs number 5. The meetings there were led by faithful brothers and sisters. Many souls came to Jesus, the sick were healed and the believers were baptized with the Holy Spirit.

In 1978, however, an even greater miracle has taken place in the more than 700 year-old city of Gouda. Among its many grand buildings, there is also a beautiful cathedral. This monumental, neo-Gothic building has two steeples at the front, and one in the center which is the highest point in Gouda. Who would have thought, during the time I was negotiating about that old church hall in the Zeugstraat, that



Gouda – The Netherlands

Gouda – The Netherlands Johan and Wilhelmina and the people from the church in Gouda were often singing and witnessing on the streets and squares of Gouda. Going where the sinners are, was the vision and strategy God had given them. Jesus said that He did not come for those who are healthy, but for those who are sick and need a doctor. Johan understood this principle all too well. Therefore he was always looking for ways to get to the places where his true "audience" was. With a heart full of love, he clearly and simply spoke the truth of the gospel. Now is the time for all people to get right with God through Jesus.



one day the authorities would plead with us to purchase that cathedral to save it from destruction? In a later chapter I will tell you more about this mighty house of God in this great old city, known for its more than 500-year-old Town Hall, Gouda cheese, Gouda candles, "stroopwafels" (waffles with syrup), pottery and beautiful cathedrals.

An Abraham's sacrifice

In the meantime, the Lord had given us a little daughter, whom we named Esther. After that the Lord gave us another daughter, Gonny. Our third child was a boy, a sweetheart whom we named John-Henry. It was right during this time that God was laying a foundation of faith concerning the ministry of healing, of which the Bible has much to say.

One day when I came home – we had moved to the Zeugstraat above the church hall – I could tell by the sound of my wife's voice that something was wrong. There was little Esther lying in her crib. She had fallen down the stairs (20 steps with metal edges) and hit her little head on the concrete floor. I immediately laid my hands on her and prayed for healing in Jesus' name, after which she fell asleep. The next morning she was totally fine, and has never since had any trouble with her head.

Some people may feel that this was irresponsible and would have consulted a doctor immediately. Let us leave everyone to his own convictions. Personally, it never occurred to me to run to a doctor, because my heavenly Physician was right there at the moment. It only makes sense to go first to the doctor who lives closest to you!

Then one day, our little John-Henry became ill. He grew thinner and paler. Right at that time, I was preparing for a large healing campaign. A group of believers were fasting and praying for three days. The Lord sent a word saying that He had already taken John-Henry by the hand. I interpreted this to mean that John-Henry would get well. Each time we prayed for him, there would be a temporary improvement. However, I told Wilhelmina, "If you want to get a doctor, that is all right with me." I did not feel led by God's



Gouda – The Netherlands, 1957 The Maasbach family: Johan and Wilhelmina, together with Esther (left), John-Henry (middle) and Gonny (right).

Spirit to consult a doctor myself. I believe it is very important to pay close attention to the voice of God.

While many were healed in the meetings by the laying on of hands, John-Henry got more ill. On June 4th, 1958, when he was almost three years old, little John-Henry was taken home by the Lord. We had a wake downstairs in the church hall. Then God asked me if I still believed in healing. I could only say, "Yes, Lord, for Your Word is the truth!" I did not know or comprehend why the Lord had taken John-Henry. I did not understand God's intention.

That night in bed, my wife and I were looking through the open garret window at God's starry sky. Suddenly the love of God surrounded us both in such a tremendous way as we had seldom experienced before. We both began to speak in tongues, and we were clearly aware of God's angels surrounding us. Instead of sorrow, an unspeakably deep peace settled in our hearts. The Lord spoke, saying that this had been a pleasing sacrifice to Him. We did not try to keep John-Henry for ourselves. A close friend who was staying at the house during the funeral arrangements told us that she, too, was continuously aware of the presence of angels during that time.

I am still very grateful that God desired something for Himself that was precious to me. John-Henry was permitted to make that great leap that we still had to make. He is already on the other side. God's angels carried him home.

It was later that I understood the great personal lesson which God was teaching Wilhelmina and me. Countless people base their faith on circumstances or even on personal experiences. God wants us, especially as servants of the gospel of Jesus Christ, to base our faith entirely upon His Word, which is Christ, the Rock of ages. The illness of my little boy has not turned the Word of God into a lie. I still believe what is written in Psalm 103:3, *"Who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases."* And in Exodus 15:26, *"I am the LORD, who heals you."* And in Mark 16:18, *"They will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well."* And 1 Peter 2:24, *"By His wounds you have been healed."* There are many other similar Scriptures.



John-Henry, Johan and Wilhelmina's first son, was taken home by the Lord when he was almost three years old.

Does God not have the right to take what belongs to Him? Are we not His creation, His workmanship?

Strange as it may seem, my wife and I have never regretted this incident through which the Lord led us. We felt no regret about the way we acted, nor do we regret the fact John-Henry was allowed to precede us. Our journeys are all different, but one thing is sure: God refines all whom He wants to use, so that we become a useful instrument in His hands. We pity the flesh, but God does not consider the flesh when He wants to accomplish His work. He did not do this with Joseph either, until *"the word of the Lord proved him true"* (Psalm 105:19). Job had to learn the lesson that even all our prosperity and righteousness is nothing but grace from God. Faith knows that, no matter what trial He takes us through, God will always remain the faithful God of love and mercy.

After John-Henry, the Lord gave us two more daughters, Helen and Danielle, and three sons, David, Robert and John. We now have a total of seven lovely, healthy children, who are all serving the Lord in the gospel. The two eldest daughters are living with their families in the United States. Robert lives with his family in England. The rest are all – including their families – working for the Lord in the Netherlands. David and John are both anointed servants of God and continue the work of the Johan Maasbach World Mission Foundation.

Opposition against Biblical truths

Working in Gouda was not easy. It was, as we sometimes call it, "hard soil," with much opposition to the Full Gospel message. God Himself had taught me from His Word, during the time I was sailing the great oceans, what we have to do after conversion. The next step is water baptism. Nowhere in the Bible did I read a thing about the sprinkling of children. But I did read that those who become believers must be immersed in water. Fortunately there are millions of people throughout the world who follow this commandment. But in most churches in the Netherlands, it was quite different. No wonder I met with much opposition.

"THE ILLNESS OF MY LITTLE BOY HAS NOT TURNED THE WORD OF GOD INTO A LIE."

The Bible also teaches us that God wants to baptize us with the Holy Spirit, and that speaking in tongues is not only a phenomenon of the past, but is still happening today. The Bible also tells us what to do if we are sick, and that there is healing under His wings. The Bible teaches us that Jesus bore our sicknesses, and that we are to lay hands on the sick and they will be healed.

I started to share these truths under much opposition. The devil hates it when God's children begin to rejoice in Jesus and praise Him. There is a tremendous power in praise for the Christian, and it is pleasing to the Lord when we offer Him *"the fruit of our lips,"* as the Bible says in Hosea 14:2 and Hebrews 13:15. This truth was fiercely attacked as well, but I was convinced that, if we brought the truth, God would bless us and give us a breakthrough by His Holy Spirit. And who could ever stop this breakthrough when God is working in the hearts of the people through His Spirit?

I figured: if people do not want to hear the truth, they are free to worship somewhere else. There are plenty of other churches of all kinds, where people can go and just sit quietly and "be themselves." Such places have a religious ritual, but God's Spirit is missing, for *"where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom"* (2 Corinthians 3:17), and the Spirit keeps working in the hearts of God's children. There are so many religious people who, like Nicodemus (John 3), do not know what it means to be born again. Being born again is necessary if we are to enter the Kingdom of God. Jesus said, *"Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again"* (John 3:3). Obviously, if you cannot see it, you cannot enter it.

In spite of all opposition, however, I believed without a doubt that God would give us revival in Gouda.



Gouda – The Netherlands, 1956 Johan Maasbach together with the Sunday school class of the church in Gouda.

CHAPTER 14 One of the greatest moments of my life



Announcement of the campaign with T.L. Osborn in the newspaper.

Preparing for the campaign with T.L. Osborn

During this time we received the great news that the American evangelist T.L. Osborn was coming to the Netherlands for a series of revival meetings. I knew this was God's hand! I did not know evangelist Osborn personally and had never had any contact with him. However, I had read an article about his revival meetings in Guatemala, which had truly inspired me! I had even published it in a small 4-page booklet, which I called "Pentecostal Sounds." It is wonderful how the Holy Spirit occasionally connects you with certain people and you just know that it is from God.

Since I was absolutely convinced this would be a mighty revival, I placed a big ad about the campaign in the local newspaper, and rented a bus to transport people daily from Gouda to the meetings in The Hague.

Holland Wonder!

The big campaign with T.L. Osborn in 1958 had a huge impact on the Netherlands. Johan Maasbach was the interpreter of evangelist T.L. Osborn. A committee was formed, and the organizers started preparations. Strangely enough, I was kept out of everything. Before the campaign started, a preparatory meeting for pastors was being held in The Hague. Since I had not received an invitation, I could not attend the meeting. Apparently some people refused to acknowledge me as a pastor.

A few days later a big meeting for pastors and co-workers was held in a church. The church was crowded. There were at least 2,000 people. Together with some of my co-workers, I found a seat in the audience. While I was driving to the meeting, I was not even sure whether or not I would be allowed in. However, God's presence and love were so tangible in the car, that I said to one of my co-workers, "I believe God is about to pour out a mighty blessing, and I do not care where He wants me. If He wants me on the platform, I will be there. If He wants me beneath the platform, I will be there."

The great moment had finally come: evangelist Osborn was about to speak to the audience. However, it was almost impossible to understand the interpreter. Every time evangelist Osborn began to speak, people in the audience shouted that they could not hear. They tried everything, and assumed in the end that something was wrong with the sound system. No matter what was tried, nothing improved the situation.

I walked over to Osborn to tell him that the problem was not with the sound system, but with the interpreter, and went back to my seat. Suddenly Osborn said, "If there are any other interpreters who think they can do better, please come to the front." Approximately five hands were raised, but strangely enough no one came forward. Not for one moment did I consider myself to be an option, and I would not have dared to raise my hand. In the first place, I certainly did not feel qualified, and secondly, there were much better interpreters than me in the audience.

Evangelist Osborn looked around, and suddenly I heard him say, "Will that tall brother with the black curly hair come and try to be my interpreter?" I did not realize yet that he was speaking to me, but my wife poked me and said, "He means

"I BELIEVE **GOD IS ABOUT TO** POUR OUT A MIGHTY **BLESSING**, AND I DO NOT CARE WHERE HE WANTS ME."

you!" I ducked behind the man sitting in front of me and did not move. But Osborn called me a second time. Finally I stood, not daring to look up. With my head down, I walked to the platform, still not realizing what was happening. I said to Osborn, "If you can use me, go ahead. But if not, please feel free to take someone else." My only thought was, This campaign has to succeed, and the right man must be in the right place.

I believe a miracle happened. As soon as I started to interpret Osborn, the audience felt a great peace of the Holy Spirit descend upon them. It became quiet, no one had another complaint, and we took off at top speed. After this meeting, evangelist Osborn asked me to meet him at 8 p.m. the following night on the platform at the meeting place, a great open space called "The Malieveld" in The Hague. That was the grand opening meeting of the crusade. Paul says, *"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me"* (Philippians 4:13 NKJV).

Evangelist Osborn was informed that brother Maasbach spoke "low Dutch." But this man of God replied, "That is perfect, because I speak low English." Evangelist Osborn is a true man of God. When he recognizes God's hand in something, he will never prejudice anyone, nor is he afraid to change his mind. Like a true man of faith, he dares to stand alone with God.

I share this particular incident to show how committees, even Pentecostal committees, can hinder the work of God's Holy Spirit. Samuel said to Saul in 1 Samuel 15:22, *"To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams."* Manmade committees often stand in the way of the Holy Spirit. God usually works through a man to whom He has revealed His plans. He speaks to him, just as He spoke to Moses when He gave him the great commission to set His people free.

The Malieveld campaign

If anyone would ask me what some of the greatest moments of my life have been, I would mention two things. First, the moment I bowed my knees before Jesus and gave Him my heart as a nine-year-old boy at the *Salvation Army*. Secondly,



Malieveld, The Hague – The Netherlands, 1958 This woman was healed of hernia during the campaign.

JEZUS CHRISTUS IS GIST

Malieveld, The Hague – The Netherlands, 1958 Night after night during the ten-day campaign with Osborn, thousands of people raised their hands to give their hearts to Jesus. Hundreds were healed by God. While Johan stood there and heard thousands loudly praying the sinner's prayer, the Lord brought to mind the vision He gave him years before, during one of his voyages.



the mighty ten-day campaign with evangelist Osborn on the Malieveld in The Hague. Sure enough, there have been many unforgettable moments later in my life, in which my mighty God revealed Himself. But these two memories are especially dear to me.

Who could forget the sight, night after night, of thousands of hands raised by Dutch people who wanted to give their hearts to Jesus. Many thousands of people felt the anointing of the Holy Spirit, especially when everyone in complete surrender prayed the sinner's prayer. How the angels in heaven must have been rejoicing at this mighty breakthrough. And every night there were many great miracles of healing. Towards the end of the campaign the number of visitors had grown to at least 100,000 people. Our entire country was in turmoil before God.

Space does not permit me to mention all the testimonies and names of those who were saved and healed during this revival on the Malieveld, and who are now faithful workers in the Kingdom of God. It would result in a book on its own.

The second night

The second night of the campaign was especially memorable. The sky became dark and it started to rain and thunder. A storm broke loose with a cloudburst, right over the Malieveld. That night I learned something I will never forget, and which I have often recalled in later years in my ministry for the Lord. During the storm, evangelist Osborn did not stop preaching, but continued with great power and authority. It was as though we two were melted into one person. We had to be one if we wanted to hold the attention of a crowd in open air of at least 35,000 people. It was a miracle that hardly anyone walked away.

It was a very difficult test and trial of faith, as if God allowed Satan to use the elements of nature to resist us. I still remember evangelist Osborn quoted from Isaiah 55:10-11: "As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, so is my



The deaf could hear, the lame and crippled could walk, the blind could see. God did great miracles during this "Holland Wonder." There were many testimonies of healing on the Malieveld.

word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it."

The people were soaked to the skin, but Osborn prayed that the Lord would prevent anyone getting sick. All who attended this campaign know that especially on that night, a huge number of people got saved and healed.

A new suit

The only suit I possessed was ruined in the rainstorm that Saturday night. Fortunately one of our faithful workers wore my size and lent me a suit. So the next day I appeared on the platform neat and fresh again.

During one of the following campaign days, I received a phone call from a woman, who did not know anything about my suit situation. She had heard me interpreting, and thought I could possibly use an extra suit for these meetings. Her husband had a rather extensive wardrobe. That same day, a small suitcase was delivered containing a light colored suit which fitted me perfectly.

To me these things reveal the greatness of God. We believe that God is great, because He created the heavens and the earth, the universe, the sun, the moon, the stars, and formed mankind. But I see God's greatness just as much in the fact that He, in His majesty, cares about the little details, like our need for a suit or a pair of shoes. Does the Bible not say that even a single sparrow will not fall to the ground without our heavenly Father knowing it. *"So don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows"* (Matthew 10:31). How much more will our heavenly Father take care of us!

The reason I tell you about this suit is to emphasize how grateful and happy I am that I have learned to go through such difficult circumstances. I know what it means to have just one suit and one pair of shoes, and no money to buy something new. Nevertheless, I have never been unhappy, because my happiness has never depended on the material things of this world. My joy and happiness have always been rooted in Christ, "For fifteen years I was a heart patient and was not able to work anymore. On the Malieveld God has healed me during that terrible rainstorm. I am now as fit as a fiddle. Hallelujah! An acquaintance of mine who lives in the same village, was miraculously healed of thrombosis, which she had throughout her body. She is 80 years old and is doing well again. We will never forget the meetings at the Malieveld. We are so grateful that now also in Leiden Full Gospel services are being held by brother Maasbach, which we are faithfully attending."

H.R.

my Lord, Who redeemed me with His precious blood.

The blessing came just in time, because they planned to film the campaign over the weekend. If ever a donated suit has been useful to me, it certainly was this one. Osborn and I looked like brothers.

"Holland Wonder" movie

The "Holland Wonder" movie would become a powerful blessing to the world and cause countless people to turn to Christ. The Spirit of God knew how important this movie would be and how many would be impacted. It has been translated into many languages and dialects. Through modern techniques it has been made possible for me to interpret Osborn's message in over 50 different languages. This is a mighty "Holland Wonder" indeed!

Movie-making techniques, placed at the service of the Lord, have proven to be an amazing medium for reaching the multitudes with the good news. All over the world this movie has been a great blessing. No wonder the devil was mad; he knew that this campaign would have a lasting impact on worldwide evangelism.

Opposition and jealousy

This "Holland Wonder" also set the pens of the secular, educational and religious press in motion. When we remember that Jesus' contemporaries accused Him of being Beelzebul, the chief of the demons, it is not surprising that His presentday servants are accused in the same way.

To me, opposition and jealousy of brothers is nothing uncommon. It is something you can expect when the hand of the Lord rests upon your life and the mighty God wants to use you. Both David and Joseph experienced this with their brothers. Their attitude is a fine example for us to follow, and a perfect image of the attitude of Christ, our precious Lord and Savior.

"TOWARDS THE END OF THE CAMPAIGN THE NUMBER **OF VISITORS** HAD GROWN TO AT LEAST 100,000 PEOPLE. **OUR ENTIRE** COUNTRY WAS IN TURMOIL BEFORE GOD."

I believe that in David's life his relationship with God was closer during the days of his humiliation than in the days of his exaltation. If you want God to fulfill His purpose in and through your life, then He will have to purify you like gold or silver. I do not think there is any other way for a man or woman who wants to be used by God. What a blessing and what a grace to be disciplined by Him. The time of purification in itself is certainly not pleasant, but I believe it is the only way to produce godly fruit. "Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything" (James 1:2-4).

Always remember that it is better to suffer and be in the will of God, than not to suffer and be outside the will of God. When Jesus suffered on that old rugged cross, He surely had joy and peace within, because He was in the perfect will of God.

Therefore do not complain when you have to go through your Gethsemane. There will be no one with you. You have to go through it alone with God. Be faithful, and never ever doubt or let fear enter your heart. God will be with you until the end. "No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; He will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, He will also provide a way out so that you can endure it" (1 Corinthians 10:13). If it is necessary, He will even send His angel to strengthen you, like He did with Jesus in Gethsemane.

Lasting fruits of the campaign

Some people have tried to deny the miracles which God performed through His servant during those glorious days. In doing so they only expose their own unbelief. However, we only consider the facts of what God did then, and what He is still doing today. The Bible simply tells us that we will know the tree by its fruit. The lasting fruits of this campaign are convincing evidence that evangelist Osborn is a man of God, who came to God's place in God's time.



Malieveld, The Hague – The Netherlands, 1958 This woman was deaf, but was healed completely during the campaign and could hear again!



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"Father in heaven, today on February 21, 1961, I make the sincere promise to serve You with all my heart, with all my soul, with all my mind. I surrender to You, to be Your servant. To live for You, and not for myself. To live pure and holy, honest and sincere towards You, oh holy God, and the people. I will be humble and give You the honor in everything, and move people to believe in Jesus Christ, Your only Son. Be merciful unto me, oh God, and lead me to Your counsel, in Your way, on Your path, according to Your will. Oh God, help me, I beg You. Amen."

CHAPTER 15 Campaigns

Campaign in Dordrecht

All over the Netherlands, doors now opened to the Full Gospel message. After the campaign with T.L. Osborn, I got a phone call from a certain brother who was not that young anymore, but still full of enthusiasm for the Lord. He asked me if I would be the speaker in Dordrecht if he organized a campaign there. I agreed, and he rented a local building. He printed invitations and placed ads in various newspapers. Little did we know that this would be the beginning of a revival in this area.

I will never forget the crowds when I arrived. There were so many people that I could not get to the door. Luckily, the janitor was kind enough to let me in through the back door. Long lines of people waited patiently outside. Many of them were unable to get into the auditorium, and listened to the service through open doors and windows. I preached the message of salvation and healing through Jesus Christ. When the invitation was given at the end, at least one hundred hands went up to make a decision for Jesus.

This hall was too small, so the next week we moved to a larger building. Even there, people kept coming in so that many had to remain standing. During this time at least 500 people came to Jesus. It was the beginning of a ministry which the Lord gave us in that area. Hundreds of people have been baptized by immersion, and many received healing from all kinds of diseases and ailments. From this ministry, other groups emerged, and all those people are doing their part in effectively spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ in that area.



The Hague – The Netherlands, 1959 Evangelism campaign in the Building for Arts and Sciences. Night after night many people came forward to receive Christ as their Savior.

The preaching of the gospel, as we read in the Bible book of Acts, was often accompanied by signs and wonders. Nowadays, laying on of hands and prayer for healing is quite normal in many churches, but in those days it did not happen. Therefore, there was fierce criticism when God started to reveal this forgotten truth to His servants. But the need of the people was so great, and Johan did not allow that criticism to stop him. Today we are still reaping the fruit of the boldness God gave Johan during those days, to break all opposition and unbelief.

For some time we rented various locations for our meetings in Dordrecht. Finally, the Lord gave us our own building: a beautiful school building with a tower. It had been empty for some time already. This building seemed to be destined to be used as a church. However, this did not come easily. The devil did not want us to get this building. A neighborhood committee was formed to protest against our arrival. They said there would be a parking problem, which would disturb the peace in the area. Ultimately the committee's plea was turned down. After a major renovation, this building has been functioning as a stronghold against Satan's power until today.

The baptism of believers

After the blessed meetings in Dordrecht, where so many souls came to Jesus, we organized some follow-up meetings. The first night, just before the service, some workers asked me what I was going to speak about. I asked, "Do you not know?" "No, how could we?" they replied. "I am going to speak about water baptism!" They were shocked at first, and said that we would lose many of the new converts. How often do ministers make the mistake of fearing people more than God! As a result, they fail to obey and preach God's truth.

The message caused quite some turmoil indeed. Right during the sermon a woman got up, who was a fervent supporter of infant baptism. She simply interrupted me in public. However, as I listened to her, I felt that she was sincere in her convictions, a real Saul of Tarsus you might say. One thing I know for sure: the upright in heart shall see the light, because they are willing to be obedient to the Word of God. It did not take long for this woman to be baptized by immersion and give a wonderful testimony. I like people who are not swayed by every wind of doctrine, but are humble enough to submit to the Word of God, even if that means letting go of doctrines and dogmas of their forefathers. We Dutchmen have a tendency to cling to tradition, and are very afraid to consider new things, especially if it has to do with religion. After all, we were brought up this way for generations, and find it hard to admit that we could have been wrong all this time.



Johan held campaigns everywhere in the Netherlands. During these meetings thousands of people were saved by Jesus Christ. These meetings were followed by baptismal services. Johan was heavily criticized when he started baptizing people by immersion. He fearlessly proclaimed this Biblical truth.

Worldly people have no problem with water baptism when they are converted. They say, "If the Bible says we have to be baptized, and God demands that I follow His Word, then I will be obedient." However, there are many unsaved "religious" people who, when converted, have a very difficult time with this doctrine.

Fortunately, the Bible does not teach us that we get saved by baptism. It would be blasphemy to even think or suggest a thing like that. There is nothing, absolutely nothing, that will take the place of the precious blood of Jesus Christ of Nazareth. By His finished work the veil that separated us from the Holy God, has been torn, and now we have free access to Him. Peter says in Acts 4:12: *"Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved."*

People who hang on to their convictions that either infant baptism or baptism by immersion will get them into heaven, will definitely be disappointed. The church will probably never fully wake up from this false doctrine. But undoubtedly many thousands of believers from many denominations will be awakened in these last days in which we are now living, to obey God more in all things.

I do not want to make a big issue of baptism, and I will certainly not spend a lot of time arguing about it. God did not call me to argue with believers who refuse to obey, but He did call me to show sinners the way to Jesus. Let every person be convinced in his or her own heart. The most important thing is: do we know Jesus as our personal Savior and Redeemer?

Campaign in Arnhem

After Dordrecht, I held a two-day campaign in Arnhem. We could only be there for two days because the hall was not available after that. This short campaign was memorable, because about 250 people came to Jesus. There was not only joy in our hearts, but in heaven as well. In Luke 15 it says that there is more joy over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous people who need no repentance. Not only did people accept "NOT ONLY DID PEOPLE ACCEPT CHRIST, BUT THERE WERE ALSO A REMARKABLE NUMBER OF HEALINGS." The Hague – The Netherlands, 1959 The five-day campaign in the former Building for Arts and Sciences and the big baptismal service after that in a swimming pool. A great time of revival in which unprecedented numbers came to true repentance, got baptized and were filled with the Holy Spirit. The picture shows only a part of the packed swimming pool.



Christ, but there were also a remarkable number of healings. A woman who was paralyzed on the left side of her body for ten years was brought by friends. And God healed her completely. Many received healing from God that evening, from deafness, asthma, chronic headaches and other things.

Campaign in Leiden

For a long time I had felt a desire to also hold a campaign in Leiden. Even in a small country like the Netherlands, one place can be so different from the other. But how great to know God's Word has the same power everywhere! The Bible clearly states that *"everything is possible for one who believes"* (Mark 9:23). With this knowledge in our hearts and minds, we are bound to be successful. I was warned that I would never succeed in Leiden. But that would only be true if I would focus on the circumstances. However, I focused on Him only, the One who loves all people and who wants to reveal His power everywhere. Therefore, the first campaign in Leiden was a great success, and many souls came to Jesus. A new church was founded, and there was a mighty breakthrough by the Spirit of God.

A young woman came in contact with the Full Gospel message for the first time in Leiden. Her vision was very poor, she was partially paralyzed and needed all sorts of medication. Mentally and physically she was a wreck. She was desperate and wanted to commit suicide. What a wonderful privilege it is to tell people like her that there is hope and deliverance through Jesus Christ of Nazareth, who is alive today! Her first visit was followed by others. She wrote me many letters about her various difficulties and problems.

I met her on a Easter conference in Dordrecht. It was a miracle that she made it to the meeting, for the devil had tempted her repeatedly to throw herself into the water, to take her life. The service was already over when she arrived, but she asked me to pray for her. She was one of many who had arrived at the end of their rope, feeling unable to hang on any longer. I will never forget that look of despair in her eyes; a troubled human being, heavily bound by the devil. She was determined that something needed to happen, either for better or for worse.

"WHEN WE KNOW THAT WE ARE IN GOD'S WILL, WE NEVER HAVE TO FEAR."

Fortunately, by hearing God's Word during the meetings in Leiden, faith and a ray of hope had entered her heart. What should people do, who have never heard the gospel of salvation, and of deliverance of Satan's power through Jesus Christ, the Son of God? Together with one brother I laid hands on her in the wonderful name of Jesus, and simply believed what is recorded in Mark 16:17: "And these signs will accompany those who believe: In My name they will drive out demons." I will never forget that moment. She was instantly delivered. Instead of a helpless victim of Satan, she now became a witness of the living, almighty God. She was previously labeled hopelessly insane by medical science, but she was now declared completely cured without any further hesitation or probationary time. This was a great miracle, even to the scientists. This woman has become a great blessing to many. Praise God that Jesus of Nazareth is alive!

Campaign in Amsterdam

For a long time the Lord had put it in my heart to hold a campaign in Amsterdam as well. Believing that God wanted us to reach people of all walks of life, I decided to rent a famous concert hall. Although the building was never used for evangelistic meetings before, they allowed me to go ahead. I did not just make a quick decision on this. When we undertake something of this nature, we certainly have to consider the cost and our ability to bring it to a successful completion. I had indeed considered the cost, because God had spoken to my heart through the Holy Spirit and given me peace about this.

The natural man will have difficulty understanding these matters, but to those trained in faith, it is perfectly clear. It is impossible to comprehend this with your natural mind. Every believer, however, knows that God's ways are best. Hebrews 11:1 says, *"Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see."* When we know that we are in God's will, we never have to fear that the things we undertake will fail. At least this is true for those who delight in God's Word, and meditate on it day and night. Psalm 1:3 says, *"That person is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither – whatever they*



Amsterdam – The Netherlands Many posters were placed throughout the city to announce the meetings that evangelist Johan Maasbach held for many years in the famous *Grand Hotel Krasnapolsky* in Amsterdam.

do prospers."

Those five days became a very special blessing. God revealed His power to save and heal in a wonderful way. I remember a woman who had been unable to sleep normally for sixty-six years after falling down the stairs when she was four years old. Even after taking strong sleeping medication, she slept only two hours a night. During the meeting her agonizing headaches, which were caused by a swelling on the back of her head, and an inflamed nerve in her arm, disappeared completely.

The secretary of our missionary foundation for many years, together with his wife, was converted here. God healed him from chronic headaches which he had suffered for fifteen years.

I also remember a woman who was deaf, had a cancerous tumor under her right arm and two very painful lumps on her shoulder. Apart from that, she had an intestinal tumor and suffered with diarrhea for many years. She was in a terrible state. Several times she had tried to kill herself. During one of our first meetings, she was instantly healed of all her illnesses. Her husband, who had been a spiritist for years, turned his life over to Jesus and was completely liberated from the powers of evil.

A prominent Dutch newspaper spent a whole page on this campaign. Every night a reporter was present with his photographer. I met the reporter there for the first time. Later he would become a film director. This campaign inspired him to make the documentary *Healing Through Prayer* some years later.

We had to cover all expenses for these meetings by one offering we collected each night. Just after this campaign, I received a phone call from a close friend who asked how things had turned out financially. I did not dare to tell him the total amount that was still lacking, but he said, "If you are short, I will make up the difference." I felt slightly uneasy as I said, "Thanks, but we are talking about 5,000 guilders." The voice at the other end said, "I will gladly take care of that for you." Praise the Lord! Again we



The Hague – The Netherlands, 1966 Billboard for an eleven-day campaign at the Malieveld.

see that God will never let us down when we obey Him, and that all financial matters will be taken care of, as long as we walk in His will.

Now we have a blossoming church in Amsterdam. After holding meetings for 23 years in the famous *Grand Hotel Krasnapolsky*, the Lord has given us our own place, the *Calvary Church*.

Campaign in Middelburg

Amsterdam was followed by many other cities. I remember Middelburg in particular, where we rented a 600-seat auditorium, at that time the largest in the area. We knew only a few Full Gospel brothers there. When they heard that I had rented this big auditorium, they panicked and said the same thing I had heard in every other city, "It is very difficult here. People are different." This may be true, but we should not forget that God says, *"Is not My word like fire, and like a hammer that breaks a rock in pieces?"* (Jeremiah 23:29).

Praise God I do not have to go to any campaign in my own strength; then I would be scared. But I go in the power of Him who called and sent me, and who has all authority in heaven and on earth (Matthew 28:18).

The brothers had been so convinced that the campaign would be a failure. They even prayed God would give me extra strength to handle the disappointment. They figured that perhaps two or three rows in the entire auditorium might be filled. However, their expectations were put to shame, when the Lord filled the entire building. One night all seats were taken, and many people had to remain standing. Praise the Lord!

There were many ministers and elders from various denominations present. And also the blessed Holy Spirit, who convicts the hearts of sin, righteousness and judgment. Few people would have believed that anyone there would raise a hand to receive Jesus, even less believed that they would come forward to pray the sinner's prayer. But the hands went up



Ghent – Belgium, 1963 Open air meeting. "Jesus saves. Do you know Him?" This message was always burning in the heart of the evangelist.

Amsterdam – The Netherlands, 1960 Johan Maasbach held a five-day campaign in the world-famous concert hall. Many people got saved and healed.

JEZU

The Hague – The Netherlands, 1964 Easter conference in *The Hague Zoo.* Christmas services were also being held in this beautiful hall.

GEOK



during that glorious, anointed moment of invitation. And not only that; people came forward to pray the sinner's prayer, just like in Amsterdam and other places around the world, where I have had the privilege of preaching the gospel of grace. What is the secret that breaks the hearts of sinners and moves them to come forward? It is the Word of God and faith put into action through love. For I preach *"Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God" (1 Corinthians 1:23-24).*

We had five memorable days. Over 100 souls came to Jesus, which is quite a lot for this part of the country.

Campaign in The Hague

There is not sufficient space to tell in more detail about all the campaigns. However, I should not forget to tell about the one in The Hague. Many people had asked about the possibility of having a campaign where the same Spirit of love and power would be present as in our other campaigns. I had a burning desire in my heart to preach the powerful message of salvation, healing, deliverance and water baptism to my fellow men. Who would have thought that an imposing building with its 2,000-seat auditorium, would become the center of revival for five days? Night after night 1,500 to 1,800 people came to hear the glorious gospel message that Jesus Christ has not changed. This proves that there was a real hunger for meetings like these. Just as it happened in other places, God confirmed His marvelous Word with signs and wonders!

Long before the services began, crowds of people were eagerly waiting to enter the building. Also during this campaign, the Word of God was made alive by the power of the Holy Spirit, and a harvest of souls was being brought into the Kingdom of God. Over 500 decisions were made by people who publicly came to the front to pray the sinner's prayer, not counting those who made a decision at the place where they were. Only eternity will show the actual number of people. Some of those



Rotterdam – The Netherlands

"In the theater in Rotterdam I came in contact with the Full Gospel. There I gave my heart to the Lord. God healed my son of polio. Before, he was not able to walk, and had to wear a corset and a bracket to keep his head up. Also my husband gave his heart to the Lord. We got baptized immediately, and were both filled with the Holy Spirit."

Mrs. J. from Rotterdam

who made a decision for Christ during those days, are now in full-time service of God. Furthermore, many people received healing through Jesus Christ. These were five heavenly days on earth! God says that He will satiate the hungry; He will refresh those who thirst for Him and comfort the afflicted. This still applies today! If we hunger and thirst for God and His righteousness, He will not disappoint us.

Needless to say, this campaign entailed enormous costs. But where the "spirit of revival" reigns, there the "spirit of giving" also moves, although I have discovered that God's children in the Netherlands need to be reminded time and again. I will never forget the time we found a white envelope in the offering. It was anonymous and contained a total of 1,500 guilders. Later I discovered that this money came from a widow. The Lord had spoken to her heart and she had obeyed.

God often uses ordinary people, like this widow. Could it be that the humble often have sensitive hearts and a deeper love for Him who loves us and bought us with His precious blood? The Bible says in Psalm 116:6, *"The LORD protects the unwary."* The Bible also says, *"Great is your reward in heaven"* (Matthew 5:12). Even here on earth, God will give us *"a good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, into your lap"* (Luke 6:38). Even our descendants will be influenced by what we do for the Lord during our lives.

The life of an evangelist is not always easy and uncomplicated. I know that a servant of God must be careful not to be tied down by "religious" people. Many will not understand this, perhaps, but those who are fighting on the frontlines of the gospel, will know what I am talking about.

Also from the secular world there was much opposition. One night, for instance, during the campaign, the head of the Public Health Service, came storming onto the stage. He was furious and demanded that I stop this deception. Fortunately, we still have freedom of religion in the Netherlands, for which we should be grateful. So I took little notice of this man. Perhaps

"FORTUNATELY, WE STILL HAVE FREEDOM OF RELIGION IN THE NETHERLANDS, FOR WHICH WE SHOULD BE GRATEFUL."

he was wise in the eyes of the world, but God says that such a man is foolish and does not know the beginning of wisdom. For the psalmist says, *"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom"* (Psalm 111:10). This man definitely did not have that fear.

How wonderful that we never have to be afraid when we are sailing on God's compass. God gave me the boldness to announce a great water baptism service on the first Sunday after the campaign. This was to be the biggest baptismal service we ever held in the Netherlands.

In The Hague, the Lord had given us a big congregation as well. Later, God gave us our own building, called *Capitol*. You can read more about this in a later chapter.

Through the years many more campaigns were being held throughout the Netherlands; in large and small cities, villages and towns. Thousands came to the Lord and many of them are now workers in the Kingdom of God.



Groningen – The Netherlands, 1963 Night after night many people came to the front to receive a blessing from God.

Every meeting was a special experience; there was always something happening. The Bible says that the people began to praise and worship God every time Jesus performed a miracle. This certainly is the mark on Johan's ministry. The meetings were real "Pentecostal gatherings," something very uncommon in those days in the Netherlands. There was life and lots of noise. People were clapping their hands or, at other times, lifting their hands to heaven in total surrender.

chapter 16 Reading material, a mighty weapon

Publishing books in Dutch

Throughout the ages, the written word has always been a mighty weapon against the enemy. It is a valuable and very important tool for spreading the Full Gospel message. Most Christians, however, are not fully aware of this. Bible studies or suitable study books were hardly available in Dutch. Of course, the lack of finance was a major hindrance in changing this situation. However, this is never an absolute problem if we know that what we are doing is according to the will of God.

The books by Andrew Murray have greatly inspired and blessed me, enriching my knowledge of the Kingdom of God. For example *The Power of the Blood of Christ, The Holiest of All, Abide in Christ, Like Christ* et cetera. These are masterpieces. I also think of C.H. Mackintosh, a great man of God with a deep knowledge of the Scriptures. He left us his commentaries on the Pentateuch (the five books of Moses). I think of E.W. Kenyon, also a great man of God. We have translated and published many of his faith-building books. And of T.L. Osborn, whose books contain



Johan Maasbach: "How can we reach people better than through technology?"

a powerful healing message. And not to forget John Osteen and Kenneth Hagin, who especially teach about the power of the Holy Spirit. We can learn much from them.

None of the works of these men of God were available in the Dutch language (except for some by Andrew Murray). If the love of Christ dwells in our hearts, we want to pass on the blessing we have received ourselves. Because love always wants to share. This is a divine law. If the Spirit of Christ dwells in us, we have no difficulty following this law. So my desire to publish these books in Dutch steadily grew stronger.

We have never published anything for commercial reasons. Our only purpose was to spread God's Word, so that Christ would be glorified and people would be enriched and built up in their faith. To this day our motives are unchanged. When we sell books or music, our first concern is always for the Kingdom of God and His righteousness. For this reason, I am extremely grateful to the Lord for allowing me to publish many faithbuilding books in Dutch.

Distributing gospel tracts and leaflets

Gospel tracts and leaflets are another great means to spread the gospel to the masses. During my years at sea, I gave away thousands of tracts and Bibles in all kinds of languages.

I will never forget a brother from Rotterdam. He was rather a strange man, an old bachelor living somewhere in an attic. During the last years of his life, he worked at the port of Rotterdam. Most people did not take him seriously. Some people found it strange that I had such high regards for this man. But I just loved this peculiar fellow, because I saw how God was using him. I could send him a rush order for tracts or Bibles from any part of the world, and he would send them promptly, in any language. He also gave me a lot of Russian Bibles. Once he even managed to smuggle 1,000 Bibles in one load through the Iron Curtain.

His room looked like a warehouse. He literally slept between stacks of Bibles and tracts. It was a real ammunition depot



In 1959 the magazine *Healing* was first issued. 60,000 copies were printed and distributed for free to all visitors of the campaigns. This magazine was the forerunner of *New Life*. The very first *New Life* magazine appeared in 1963. The first edition counted 25,000 copies. Since 1966 *New Life* appears monthly.



Letters from all over the Netherlands were coming in, with prayer requests and questions about many different subjects. Every letter was answered with love. Always faith building, always with a Bible verse or story, and always with simple, practical advice, which was easy to apply. Johan made faith applicable in everyday life. He himself came to know God in the practical reality of life. God's guidance, power and purpose were visible in Johan's walk with Him. He always taught people to simply walk with God and to trust Him in everything.

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against Satan's power. Later it pleased the Lord to take him home, but the fruits of his gospel seeds remained and have multiplied many times.

The purchase of a printing press

It was not always easy to obtain tracts in the Dutch language, and it was expensive to get these little paper messengers printed for free distribution. So I looked for a way to print them myself. In those days it was hard to get anyone interested in a project like this. No one had ever pointed out the importance of reaching the masses with the good news of Christ through reading material. It was a burden on my soul, and I started looking for a second-hand printing press.

We found a suitable one for 12,000 guilders, with a down payment of 6,000 guilders. (This was in the beginning of the sixties). I signed the contract and the press was delivered. I knew through the Holy Spirit that this was of the Lord. These were not just my thoughts. I know when the Lord tells me to do something. However, when the down payment was a week overdue, I still had no money. But it is wonderful to know: even when the waters fill our boat, the Lord will never let us down. Faith knows that this is simply impossible.

The following week, a woman came to talk to me after the meeting. She said, "Brother Maasbach, please forgive me. I have been disobedient. Two weeks ago the Lord spoke to my heart to give you a certain amount of money, but I have not done this yet. I know I have disobeyed in this. However, I will transfer the money to you this week." By this time I was two weeks overdue on the down payment of the press, and I was rather curious to know how much she had in mind. I cautiously asked her. When she mentioned the amount, I could hardly hold back my tears. I got that wonderful feeling that every servant of the Lord experiences when God confirms something. The amount this lady, a widow, mentioned was 6,000 guilders, no more and no less! Just the amount I needed for the press. How precious of the Lord to even confirm the fact that He had already spoken to her heart two weeks earlier.

"NO ONE HAD EVER POINTED **OUT THE** IMPORTANCE **OF REACHING** THE MASSES WITH THE **GOOD NEWS OF CHRIST** THROUGH READING MATERIAL."

After purchasing the printing press, we started to order paper by the ton. The first time this quantity arrived, it seemed quite enormous. Later it was not unusual for us to distribute three tons of reading material, or to order forty tons of paper at once.

Miracle offerings

Throughout the years we have often received funds for our worldwide ministry from totally unexpected sources. I know that God often deals with people about giving and tithing. It is a great privilege when the almighty God asks for something He needs. Will He not reward us abundantly? What we give to God is the seed for our next blessing. As a result, the blessings will follow in our lives.

I remember a man who came to me years ago, saying he wanted to do something for the work of the Lord. He did not attend our meetings, but he wanted to support our ministry. The purpose of his visit was to find out how we would like to receive his gift. Since I was just informed that we desperately needed 10,000 guilders on our bank account, I told him that he could make the deposit there. I could not help but ask how much he had in mind. When he said 10,000 guilders, you can imagine how I praised the Lord for His love and grace.

I praise God for the large as well as the small donations that come in. God values our offering according to our ability to give. That is why I appreciate even the smallest gifts and thank God for all of them.

This was just the beginning of what God had promised to do for us. After all, the Lord had said the money was in the Netherlands. When we first seek His Kingdom, we do not have to worry about the future.

Our own monthly magazine

Because of the many revival meetings I was having, there came a great need to publish our own monthly magazine in order to



The printing office where *New Life* and other gospel literature was printed. Many tons of paper were monthly being processed into books, magazines, tracts and leaflets. Everything was done manually: printing, folding, cutting, stapling, etc. Every month, a large group of loyal helpers worked hard to get the magazine ready for sending. have more contact with our partners in faith, to proclaim the wonderful things God was doing, and to share the testimonies of the great miracles He was performing.

During the campaign in The Hague we published our magazine *Healing* for the first time. This first edition counted 25,000 copies. This magazine was the forerunner of our current monthly magazine *New Life*, which has also been printed in many other languages.

Later, our printing office has been extended and been provided with the newest graphic machines and other equipment with which we print and fold all our material.



Johan was blessed with a talent for business. At that time he already had a global vision. He knew from his years at sea that some things were a lot cheaper in other countries. So he brought from America or the Far East technical equipment that was still unknown in the Netherlands. An addressing system, semi-automatic typewriters, wool carpets from Scotland for the churches, a printing press from Germany, cassette duplicators from Singapore, et cetera. For decades our headquarters was known as "the bread house", where you could get evangelistic tracts in dozens of languages for free. This extent of availability was unique in the Netherlands. What a blessing!

Koningstraat, The Hague – The Netherlands Many tons of paper were purchased to print tracts in 40 languages (for free distribution) and the New Life magazine. Johan and Wilhelmina were always grateful and happy when everything was ready to be sent out.

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CHAPTER 17 The start of radio broadcasts and expansion of the ministry



Over the years, evangelist Johan Maasbach had reached many thousands of people through his radio broadcasts. There are countless testimonies of salvation and healing.

How the radio ministry started

For a long time the Lord had been urging me to use the modern media to reach the masses with the good news of Jesus Christ. This was to be another "step on the water." It is so wonderful that when we know that the Lord is speaking to us, we can put our foot overboard and step out, like Peter did. Peter cried in the middle of the storm, *"Lord, if it's you, tell me to come to you on the water"* (Matthew 14:28). The only answer he received was, "Come!" That was enough for Peter to do the impossible. We never need to be afraid when we know that the Lord is leading us.

How often are we afraid and do we hesitate to take the first step. However, if we are filled with God's Spirit, we can eliminate all fears. So it was with me. I knew that the Lord had spoken, and that it was His will that I would preach on the radio. So I started looking for a way to do this. Once again, I had no money for this project. We were barely able to pay our current bills, so we were hardly in a position to sign a contract with Radio Luxembourg, one of Europe's most powerful stations.

A man of God who knows God's will but does not do it, is bound to have a hard time, because it becomes a heavy burden. I promised the Lord, however, that I would do it and I told my wife: "The very first thing I will do Monday morning, is to contact the sales manager of Radio Luxembourg." As soon as I got to the office, I made the call.

How the Lord provided

I had estimated a small initial budget. I wrote down 3,800 to 4,000 guilders. When I put the phone down, someone knocked at my door. A young man came in. He was the son of a gardener, and was wearing overalls and heavy boots. He handed me a thick, sealed envelope and said that it should be used for radio broadcasts. I opened the envelope, which was full of banknotes. When I counted them, it was an amount of 3,825 guilders! Tears welled up in my eyes.

When I met the young man later, I asked him why he had given me this specific amount. He told me that while he was on his knees in prayer in his shed that morning, the Lord had told him that radio was the most valuable medium to reach those who were unable to come to the meetings. He said that the Lord had told him to take the money from his savings account and bring it to me, so that I could use it for the radio broadcasts. I was glad to be able to show him my notes with the 3,800-4,000 guilders estimate. Again we see the perfect timing of God.

It is a good thing that he obeyed the Lord, and did not go to someone else for advice. They might have told him to keep something back for himself. There are always some who think we should not give everything. How deceitful is the heart of men; how easily we are inclined to allow "the spirit of Ananias

"I KNEW THAT THE LORD HAD SPOKEN, AND THAT IT WAS HIS WILL THAT I WOULD PREACH ON THE RADIO."

body more than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life? And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow *is thrown into the fire, will He not much more clothe you – you of* little faith? So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first His Kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own" (Matthew 6:25-34).

and Sapphira" in our lives (read Acts 5:1-11). This proves our unbelief. Most people always try to keep a loophole, while there is no greater security than a life with God, who has promised that He will never leave us. Jesus teaches us plainly, "Do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the

I realize some people will not agree with me for accepting someone's entire savings. Faith, however, will not argue that. Faith knows that God will never disappoint us, if we have the courage to lay all we have on the altar. I am convinced that in the life of every true Christian the moment will come when the Lord will ask us for that which is most precious to us. Just as the moment came for Abraham when the Lord asked him for his son Isaac. Few men and women dare to step into the true faith adventure with God. But I believe what God says in Luke 6:38, *"Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you."*

I have always greatly appreciated the act of this young man, because it was an act of faith. God has richly blessed him for it in overflowing measure.



Over a 1,000 broadcasts were heard on Radio Luxembourg. This station, especially aiming at countries like the Netherlands, Switzerland, Germany and Belgium, was reaching hundreds of millions of people. Entire families got saved through these broadcasts. Also, the broadcasting in Suriname, Curacao and Aruba were heard by thousands. Our broadcasts via Radio Sri Lanka had an estimated range of more than 1 billion people.

Winning souls through the broadcasts

The only available time on Radio Luxembourg was Saturday morning at 5:30 a.m. for 15 minutes! I grabbed this opportunity with both hands, believing that God would give us a more convenient time later on. The Lord has done this indeed.

For my radio recordings I rented time at a studio, which cost us many thousands of guilders a year. I therefore wanted to purchase professional tape recorders, and have a studio of my own. Because Radio Luxembourg broadcasted with a power of 600,000 watts – it was the strongest transmitter in Europe – the tapes had to be of the best quality. The costs of the equipment and our broadcasts were very high: 500,000 guilders a year. But every year we were reaching millions of people. For 23 years we have been broadcasting with great blessing.

As I mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, this branch of our world ministry was another step on the water. Many people wonder just how we are able to do these things, involving such huge amounts of money. My only reply is that I keep my eyes upon the Author and Finisher of our faith, Jesus Christ (Hebrews 12:2). I often go through storms, but Peter taught me not to look at the waves or listen to the wind. If I did, I would probably sink as well. I keep my eyes on the One who said, *"The silver is Mine and the gold is Mine"* (Haggai 2:8). He speaks to hearts and moves them to give. As long as we stay in His will, we know that He will help and bless us.

I preach on the radio and keep a staff of dedicated workers for only one reason: to win souls. I tell the world that our God is a good God, that this world is perishing, and that there is a way of escape: through the Ark of our salvation, our Lord Jesus Christ! Winning souls is the will of God. It is the reason why Jesus gave His blood. *"For God so loved the world that He* gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16).



"My husband suffered from a stiff neck, and I had a sprained foot for a month. On Sunday morning we sat and listened to you on the radio, we put our hands on the radio and prayed together with you. We were both healed. We cannot thank God enough for everything."

A new office building

A long time ago the Lord showed me that one of the main responsibilities of my ministry would be personal correspondence. We all realize how well a letter can bring comfort and encouragement, just as much as it can bring grief and sorrow. As a result of all our meetings, campaigns and our monthly magazine, I was receiving many letters from people in distress, especially those who were physically ill or ready to commit suicide. For me, answering these letters is not just a formality; God always seems to give me special words of comfort to write.

Since our administration was increasing, our office space was becoming too small. (It consisted of two rooms above our church hall in Gouda.) Because my work as an evangelist was not just confined to the Netherlands, but involved many other countries, I thought that a city like The Hague or Amsterdam would be more suitable for our permanent headquarters. So I started searching all over these cities for a suitable office building. Even though I had no money available, I believed that God had a better place for us. The Bible tells us, *"Faith without deeds is dead"* (James 2:26). I went looking for a building, because I believed that God would give us one.

One day I received a call from a notary in The Hague. He had seen an ad in the newspaper concerning a multistory building that was for sale. The Lord put on his heart that this could be something for our ministry. Without my knowledge he had responded to the ad and later gave me the address.

When I saw the building I knew right away that this would be just what we needed. The property was owned by the Dutch Reformed Church. I was afraid that if they found out what I wanted the building for, they would refuse to sell it to me. Therefore, I asked a close friend of mine, a businessman, to buy it on a temporary contract. Later, when the final contract was drawn up, he would sell it to me.

My suspicions that the Reformed Church did not want me to have this building were, unfortunately, not without grounds. At

"I BELIEVE WINNING SOULS SOULS IS THE WILL OF GOD. IT IS THE REASON WHY JESUS GAVE HIS BLOOD." the notary they openly admitted that they would never have sold it to me. Fortunately, I know that many church members disapprove of such an attitude. But this sounds incredible: they would rather have the building demolished or used by a worldly organization than sell it to evangelist Maasbach. Why? I believe it is because the church in the Netherlands still does not realize that I, a preacher of the glorious message of Jesus Christ, do not want to break up churches, but rather wake them up.

We purchased this building for a low price, since the interior had been completely neglected. I will never forget how the Lord sent a brother, who painted the entire inside while his son did the outside. On the day of the official transfer, the Lord provided the money for the building. During the same time, the Lord provided a large building for our ministry in Dordrecht.

Some people have asked me, "Why do you buy a building? Why do you not rent one?" If the latter method was cheaper, then I certainly would not buy anything. But renting space is not always profitable. It is often cheaper to buy property with a mortgage from the bank, and consider the interest on this as rent.

More expansion

Within a few years, even this new space became too small. Therefore, we soon had to start major renovations. We converted the small chapel into a Bible bookstore. We also made plans to build in the backyard of the property. This added space eventually became inadequate too, and we bought another building directly across from our office. There we housed our radio studio and printing office, where we prepared our broadcasts and printed millions of gospel tracts, leaflets and other literature. But even these spaces became too small. God is the God of growth!

In a later chapter you can read how the Lord later provided a large, suitable building in which we could accommodate all branches of our world ministry.



Koningstraat, The Hague
– The Netherlands
In 1959, the first Full Gospel
bookstore was opened in our
own building in Dordrecht.
Not long after, a second
bookstore, called The
Bible House, opened at 3a
Koningstraat in The Hague.
The office, which was first
located in Gouda, later
moved to The Hague.

CHAPTER 18 International campaigns

Invitations from abroad

It was not always easy to free myself from the many activities in the ministry here in the Netherlands, in order to respond to invitations from abroad. Finding time and opportunity will always be a problem, for life is short, the harvest is plentiful, and the workers, as in Jesus' days, are few.

I discover this anew every day. As I look around, I keep seeing the need for laborers – people who are willing to pay the full price and place their lives on the altar. Perhaps when God calls people, they always seem to have something more important to do, just like it was in Jesus' time. *"They all alike began to make excuses. The first said: 'I have just bought a field, and I must go and see it. Please excuse me.' Another said, 'I have just bought five yoke of oxen, and I'm on my way to try them out. Please excuse me.' Still another said, 'I just got married, so I can't come.''' (Luke 14:18-20).*

Spain

Spain was one of the first countries I went to. It takes only a few hours by plane or two days by car to get there. I was invited by a small group of people just outside Barcelona. Eight young people left ahead of me with loads of tracts. We had powerful meetings in an old hall in a small village. The Lord built up His people and strengthened their faith.

I soon came to realize that we need men of courage and faith



Kupang, Timor – Indonesia, 1970 On the mission field God did many great miracles. Many deaf were healed. Often they had to get used to hearing themselves and others for the first time.

Johan Maasbach preached Christ boldly and under the anointing of the Holy Spirit, in the Netherlands and throughout the world. in a country like Spain, with its strict traditions and religious ritual. A university degree is of little value in taking possession of a land like this. We must come with a demonstration of God's Spirit and power, reaching hearts through the Holy Spirit. Spain, like other countries, needs men and women who do not look upon the circumstances like most of the spies did in Numbers 13. We need Joshuas and Calebs who will keep their eyes on the unfailing Word of the living God.

We must make haste to reach the masses in Spain with the glorious message of the living, risen Savior. Therefore, my daily prayer is, "Lord, give us men and women with compassion for souls." Those who are unable to go themselves, should at least support the mission work with their prayers and finances.

I returned to Spain several times, once when that same group of Christians opened a new church building, which was partially made possible by the generous gifts of our own Dutch brethren.

"MY DAILY PRAYER IS, 'LORD, GIVE US MEN AND WOMEN WITH COMPASSION FOR SOULS."

Sweden

Sweden is very different from Spain. It has had its revival, and although sin runs rampant, perhaps also due to the prosperity, still the gospel is preached from the rooftops. Especially the Pentecostal churches have congregations in nearly every city. Stockholm had the largest Pentecostal church in Europe, seating 3,500 people! I had the privilege to hold a five-day campaign in this particular church.

Being a pastor for many years, I am fully aware of the need for congregations to be strengthened in the faith from time to time. This is important. My task is not only to call out to those outside the church and to those who are deeply lost in sin, and bring them at the feet of Jesus, but also to revive those who have been saved for years, and to stir up the fire within. Many Christians need to be shaken awake. People so easily fall asleep. I thank the Lord for the opportunities He has given us, in Sweden and in many other countries, to be His voice and call out to the people, "Wake up, people of God! There is little time left. For the Bridegroom will not tarry. He will surely come. Prepare your lamps and keep them burning!"

Egypt

During the years that I sailed the oceans, I visited Egypt at least fifteen times. Even then I had a burning desire in my heart to bring the wonderful gospel message to this country. I had spread many tracts in the Arabic and Egyptian languages, as well as in many other languages, as we made our journey through the Suez Canal. Now the Lord opened a door for me to bring the good news in Cairo.

Cairo was one of the cities where I discovered a great hunger among the people for the Word of God. Bible history has made this country on the Nile River well known to us. It is the land where Abraham, Isaac and Jacob lived, and where we find many descendants of Ishmael. After Joseph made the way, the children of Israel lived here for 400 years before God used Moses in such a mighty way to lead them out of bondage. It was here, in Egypt, that the Lord initiated the Passover Feast (Exodus 12). How marvelous that we can also tell the Egyptian people the Good News. Praise God, many are yet led into the faith of Jesus Christ, so that they too may share in God's glorious grace.

I will never forget the young Muslim taxi driver who was converted in one of the meetings. He understood English quite well and obviously spoke the Egyptian language. During my stay there, I had a private driver with a great car at my disposal. My biggest difficulty with him was that he refused to take any money from me, not even for gasoline. This was his gratitude for having heard the Good News of Jesus Christ!

Another young man, of Armenian origin, wrote to me years later saying he had been converted in one of the meetings and was now preaching the gospel himself.



Colombo – Sri Lanka, 1978 The lame and crippled started walking again. The people on the mission field often walked a great distance to the crusade, where they would sit for hours in the sun, listening to God's servant. God's love for all nations was compelling Johan Maasbach to preach Christ all over the world.

Malang, Java – Indonesia, 1973 Gospel campaign.

Johan Maasbach did a great work in this country. At least once a year he held one or several mass campaigns, where thousands came to Christ and hundreds received healing. The ministry opened an office and a bookstore in the country. Radio programs were broadcasted on a regular basis. The Indonesian edition of *New Life* (Hidup Baru) was being issued here, and also millions of tracts in the official Indonesian language and other local dialects.

Kupang, Timor – Indonesia, 1970 On this island a big campaign took place where 30,000 people heard the gospel.

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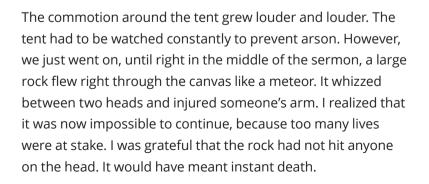
One Sunday alone, we had four large meetings, one after the other, in four different cities. During every service I saw the great hunger for the gospel. Many people would just grab my hand and place it on their head, asking for prayer.

It is hard for us in the Western world to understand what it can cost a Muslim in Egypt to convert to Christianity. Usually, they lose all their possessions and are disinherited and considered dead by their relatives. Often they lose their job. We need a discerning heart and total reliance upon the Holy Spirit at all times, especially in this country.

During this first campaign we have established permanent contacts with the believers in Egypt. Later we have held several big campaigns in Cairo, Port Said and Alexandria, and we distributed millions of tracts in those cities, in their own language.

Lebanon

Lebanon was our next stop on this mission trip. In the capital city of Beirut I was scheduled for a campaign, in a large gospel tent, in a neighborhood where the Muslims were very aggressive. We did indeed encounter hostility. Especially while I was preaching, the noise would increase. I could feel the tremendous hatred and power of the enemy. My interpreter, an Armenian brother, was struggling. Perhaps he paid more attention to the circumstances than I did, and was therefore more afraid of the dangers. I saw the dangers, but I had perfect peace in my heart, because I looked upon the great and mighty God, who was with me.



I praise God for all the men and women He has placed in



Announcement for healing revival meetings in Islamabad, Pakistan.

Lebanon to preach the gospel of Christ, sometimes under the most difficult circumstances.

Jordan and Israel

That same week, I visited Jordan and Israel, where God granted me some wonderful experiences. I knelt beneath the same olive trees in the Garden of Gethsemane where Jesus and His disciples had been so often, and where He drank from the cup of sin during that terrible night when Judas betrayed Him and the disciples left Him.

I think of Bethany, not far from Jerusalem, where I visited the grave where once Jesus wept and said to Martha, *"I am the resurrection and the life"* (John 11:25). This was the place where they rolled away the stone of unbelief and doubt and where Jesus said, *"Did I not tell you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?"* (John 11:40). We find this story in the Gospel of John, chapter 11, where it tells how Lazarus rose from the grave. The home of Lazarus, Martha and Mary in Bethany, was one of Jesus' favorite places to stay, because He received much love there. I wonder with how many of us Jesus would like to stay.

I visited the ruins of the old city of Jericho. The present city is not built on the old foundation. Walking among these ruins, I came to the place where Rahab's house was located on the wall. Every born again Christian will remember the scarlet cord and how the prostitute was saved; not because of her righteousness or goodness, but because of her faith in the living God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of Israel. Men have tried to rebuild the city on its old foundations, but have never succeeded, for the Word of God declares, *"Cursed before the LORD is the one who undertakes to rebuild this city, Jericho"* (Joshua 6:26).

Another remarkable experience that God gave me, was being in Bethlehem at the stable where they say Jesus was born. To me, it really did not matter whether or not this was the exact spot. When I stood there, I knelt down and thanked God for sending His Son in the flesh, not only because He was born in a stable in Bethlehem, but that He came to save my soul. What a "I SAW THE DANGERS, BUT I HAD PERFECT PEACE IN MY HEART." blessing when faith in God and the resurrection of Jesus Christ becomes a personal experience. When that happens, you start seeing and experiencing everything in a different way.

Not only did I see the place where Jesus was born, I also visited the tomb belonging to Joseph of Arimathea, the place just outside the city walls of Jerusalem, where Jesus was once buried. In front of the exact spot where they say Jesus' body lay, there is a large iron gate. I had the privilege to unlock the gate with a key. I really could not resist to lie down at exactly the same place where Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea had placed our Savior's body. As I was laying there for a moment with my eyes closed, I felt such gratitude in my heart, and the words of Romans 8:11 came to mind, "If the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of His Spirit who lives in you." I was also reminded of the words that Jesus spoke in John 5:24, "Very truly I tell you, whoever hears My word and believes Him who sent Me has eternal life and will not be judged but has crossed over from death to *life."* This is what I believe: Jesus tasted death for us, so that we would never have to taste it. I would never have wanted to miss this experience.

Neither the moment on the Mount of Olives on the spot where Jesus proclaimed, "For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.' Then they gathered around Him and asked Him, 'Lord, are You at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?' He said to them: 'It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by His own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:5-8). It is wonderful to know that it will not be very long before "every eye will see Him, even those who have pierced Him" (Revelation 1:7), and that "Jesus will come back in the same way you have seen Him go into heaven" (Acts 1:11). Fortunately, we do not have to figure out with our human minds how this will happen. By faith we accept the Word of God with all our hearts. And God, without the slightest doubt, will soon fulfill this Word as well.



Surabaya, Java – Indonesia, 1967 Healing during the campaign in Surabaya. This man was not able to walk, and now he was walking without crutches for the first time.

India

It would take another book, if I would describe all other campaigns. However, it would not be right to leave out the massive campaign I had in India. It was held in Kariamplave, a small village in the state of Kerala. Yet over 15,000 people gathered for the closing meeting. They came from many miles around, often bringing their entire families along. Many brought their cooking utensils and other meager belongings so that they could stay for the duration of the campaign. Throughout this time, they remained on the open field where the meetings were held, cooking their rice and curry in big pots on open fires.

I will never forget the terrible oppression which I felt on one of those nights. While I was preaching a special message on healing, it seemed as if all demons of hell came down on me. In spite of this, however, the hearing of the Word by the people built their faith to a high level. At the close of this meeting more people testified of healings of all kinds of ailments and diseases than I had ever heard in my life before. These experiences prove time and again that preachers should never rely on their feelings, but only need to bring the Word of God, of which is written, "So is My word that goes out from My mouth: It will not return to Me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it" (Isaiah 55:11).

Unfortunately, I have been unable to respond to all the invitations I keep receiving from India to come over and help them. The need of this country lies heavily on my heart. I have often said, "If I had another life, I would give it for the sake of India." Yet, even though I am not always able to go myself, I am still glad that we can financially support the mission work in this huge, poor country. Since that first campaign, I have been back many times, holding indoor meetings and open air campaigns, where thousands of people found salvation at Jesus' feet, and many received God's healing from all kinds of diseases and ailments.

Children's home in Madras (Chennai)

During one of my campaigns in India, I visited several orphanages. The things I saw there touched me deeply. I saw



Tari – Papua New Guinea, 1981 Also in Papua New Guinea, among the Headhunters, Johan brought the gospel. In 1981, in the town Tari, great meetings took place where hundreds of people had an encounter with Jesus and received healing.



Wabia – Papua New Guinea, 1971

"MORE PEOPLE TESTIFIED **OF HEALINGS OF ALL KINDS OF** AILMENTS AND DISEASES THAN I HAVE EVER **HEARD IN MY LIFE BEFORE**."

little children sleeping in a large room with dirty painted walls and a cement floor without any floor covering at all. They had no beds or mattresses, no pillows or sheets. They were sleeping on bare concrete. The toilet facilities had no running water, but consisted of a hole in the floor. There was one cold faucet for many children and rags for towels. The food was usually rice and curry for every meal, without any variety or change. Their clothes comprised two flimsy garments of cotton. I saw no toys, no dolls, no little cars to play with. Only poverty. I saw these things with my own eyes. I cried inwardly when I saw the situation, and called upon the Lord. As a father of eight children myself, I was deeply moved by the plight of these little ones who lacked the loving care of a father and a mother. I cried, "Dear Lord, give me a children's home in one of these cities, so I can set an example." In the Netherlands we have what we call model dairy farms. People come from all over the world to look and learn from them. In this way I wanted a model children's home.

In Madras, I went out and searched for a suitable location. I had my eye on some nice premises, but felt no peace in my spirit to make a decision. An estate agent knew a place for me and advised me to take a look. He told me that the property consisted of two bungalows. In the Netherlands, a bungalow is a single family dwelling. Therefore it did not sound large enough, and I did not bother to go there. However, not finding the place which I wanted, I decided I had better go look at these bungalows anyway. When I came and saw what large and beautiful buildings these bungalows were, I was astonished. Immediately, I knew: This is the place! It was magnificently suited in every way for the purpose which I had in mind.

How often do we think too small. How difficult it must be for God, our Heavenly Father, to enlarge our vision and faith for the things He wants to do through us!

There were three big houses – villas – with a large piece of ground that could accommodate a fourth house. The whole estate was surrounded by a high wall, with a nice gate that gave access to the beautiful yard. It has seventy coconut palm trees, different kinds of banana trees and other fruit trees. I only had in mind to buy the last building with the extra ground. However, the owner would only sell the second house to begin with. Since I definitely wanted to have the last building, I had to buy two houses, which I did, and I have never regretted it. Within one year the third house, located on the main road, came up for sale as well. Now we own the whole compound: three big mansions built by the director of one of the largest film production companies in India. This rich father had built these three beautiful homes for his sons. All the floors are tiled, several rooms are air conditioned, and there are fans in every room. In addition, it has a magnificent vegetable garden. Every time I visit the place, I can hardly believe that God gave me such a wonderful paradise for the children. It is located next to the famous AVM Film Studios.

Needless to say, our children's home is a first-class example to many as to how an orphanage should be run. Employees and staff are all locals. God has been very good to us. Of course your help and support are always welcome. God always blesses those who are kind to the needy (see Proverbs 14:21).

It would take too much space to tell about all the countries where I, by the grace and the power of the Lord, have held campaigns. There have been many. God made it possible for me to preach the gospel on all continents, over 50 countries, from the Faroe Islands to Brazil, from Belarus to Taiwan, and to see tens of thousands of people come to Jesus!



Chennai – India, 1977 Children's home Social Welfare Center, a safe haven for many neglected children.

CHAPTER 19

An eventful mission trip around the world

Suriname

For a long time I had an outstanding invitation to hold a campaign in Paramaribo, the capital city of Suriname in South America. Eventually the way was cleared, and one of our full-time workers went over ahead of us to make the initial preparations. The largest theater in Paramaribo was rented for this campaign. For the last two days the large stadium was to be used. Flyers and posters were printed, displayed and distributed, ads were placed, and several radio stations made announcements about the meetings.

Just before my departure from the Netherlands, I received a phone call from our worker, telling me that the authorities had refused permission for me to enter the country. Since my reservations were already made, as well as arrangements for a large campaign on the island of Grenada afterwards, and I could see no good reason why I should be refused entry, I left for Paramaribo anyway, intending to travel to Grenada from there.



Johan Maasbach: "Our supreme task: world mission."

Surabaya, Java – Indonesia, 1967 This man was healed during one of the evenings of the campaign. He no longer needed his crutches! I will never forget the reception I got in Paramaribo. When the customs officer checked my passport and recognized my name, he almost choked. Twice he asked me, "Are you Mr. Maasbach himself?" "I am indeed, as you can see from the picture in the passport," I replied. He asked me to wait in a private room. At the same time the KLM plane was ordered not to take off. A senior official of the Immigration Service informed me that I would not be allowed to stay, and must leave immediately on the same plane that had brought me. I asked him why, but he only said that the Governor had refused permission for me to enter.

The next stop of the plane was Willemstad on Curacao. Since my ticket was for Paramaribo-Grenada, I had no desire to go somewhere in a totally different direction. Since I do not have a criminal record in the Netherlands and have lived as an honorable citizen, I was curious to learn the reason for their refusal. However, to this day, the authorities still owe me an answer.

It is an international custom, when no connection is available and a passenger is unable to continue his journey, for the airline company to provide overnight accommodation. As the hour was late, I requested permission to stay overnight so that I could fly to Grenada, via Trinidad, the next day. However, this request was also sternly refused. I told them that I was not going to leave. The whole affair was taking quite some time and the KLM plane was still grounded because of me. In the meantime, the director of the local KLM office had also arrived, since he was responsible for all the passengers.

I had no business in Willemstad, and only wanted to go to my place of destination as shown on my ticket. They acted as though I was the most dangerous individual that ever walked on this planet.

"MORE THAN EVER, I FELT THE URGE OF GOD'S SPIRIT TO GO."

Many phone calls were made to the Commissioner of Police and other authorities, but evangelist Maasbach, who had been heard for years every Sunday at 1:00 p.m. on Paramaribo's radio stations, was under no circumstances to be allowed to stay in person to conduct revival meetings. If they would have forbidden the campaign, I would have had some understanding. However, I could not understand why they actually forbade me to visit an (at that time) overseas part of our Kingdom, where there is freedom of religion and where every tourist has free access.

When they realized that I was not going to leave, two armed officers of the Immigration Service appeared, announcing that they had orders to deport me peacefully or otherwise. They were here to perform their duty, they said, and would be very sorry if they had to use force. I repeated my story once again: my destination was Grenada, not Willemstad. When they grabbed me by the collar, I realized that further resistance was useless. It was too bad that nobody was around with a camera. It would have been quite a sight to see me being evicted like a criminal.

Later, the real motive for all this commotion appeared to be: the laying on of hands and praying for the sick. I did not feel led by God's Spirit to take legal action or even to waste any further time on the matter. After all, I had not been treated as badly as Paul and Silas, who were beaten and thrown into prison. I figured that there must have been some misunderstanding somewhere behind all this. However, as a man of God, I never doubt that in the end *"in all things* (even this incident) *God works for the good of those who love Him"* (Romans 8:28).

My campaign manager successfully took my place during the campaign. We received many testimonies later of how God blessed him and was with him during his first



Kupang, Timor – Indonesia, 1970 This girl, named Magdalena Rani, was healed of deafness in her left ear during a campaign.

Surabaya, Java – Indonesia, 1967 Gospel campaign. Every night over 20,000 people attended the nine-day campaign. Hundreds of people were healed of all kinds of diseases and ailments. The lame threw away their crutches, the blind could see, the deaf could hear. On the second to last evening, Johan laid hands on 8,000 people for healing.



and rather unexpected campaign. It also proved to be his last, for shortly thereafter the Lord took him home. I shall never forget this dear brother and all the work he did for our ministry.

Some years later, the government did give me full permission to land and to have revival meetings in Suriname.

Curacao

When I arrived in Willemstad, Customs and Immigration officers were already waiting for me. They informed me I could only stay one week and had to keep in constant touch with them about my place of residence and any possible changes. Moreover, I was instructed not to have any meetings of any kind. I was not planning to do so, but I did visit the *Church of God*, where the Lord allowed me to preach an anointed message and used me to bless the congregation.

I had intended to use this extra time in Willemstad to answer some of my great pile of correspondence. However, it is so wonderful that, as servants of God, we can be guided by His Spirit. After two days in Willemstad, the Holy Spirit clearly and urgently directed me to Port of Spain in Trinidad. I was in my hotel room at the time. It was around 8:00 a.m. when I inquired when the next plane would leave for Port of Spain. The answer was: 9:00 a.m. In great haste I ordered a taxi, and let someone call the airport to tell that I wanted to get on that plane. Anyone who is familiar with flying, understands that there was not much time. But more than ever, I felt the urge of God's Spirit to go. I did not even have time to cancel some appointments, but found a few minutes at the airport to do so. When I was on the plane to Port of Spain, which took off from Willemstad at 9:00 a.m. sharp, I breathed a sigh of relief. I knew I was in the Lord's will.



Kariamplave – India, 1967 During his trips to other countries, Johan Maasbach also baptized new converts by immersion.

As a servant of God, you have moments in your life, in which you know that God has a special purpose, and that you will miss a great blessing, if you do not respond to His voice. Strangely enough, I had no contacts at all in Port of Spain, yet I knew that I had to go there.

Trinidad

When we landed, the Immigration Officer asked me whether I had accommodations. If I did not, he pointed out, it would be better for me to continue on to another place, since every available lodging place in Port of Spain was filled to capacity for the big carnival which had just started. Also, all government and airline offices would be closing at noon. It is wonderful to know that you are walking with the Lord. I said that I had a good Friend in Port of Spain, Who I was sure would have taken care of my accommodations. The officer promptly stamped my passport and waved me through. No doubt the reader will realize that my good Friend was Jesus, Who is with me everywhere I go, whether it be New York, Mumbai, Jakarta, Sydney or Reykjavík. It is such a comfort to know that He is everywhere!

I put down my baggage next to a bench and walked up and down to discuss things with my Friend. This was by no means the first time I had waited on Him this way, conversing with Him about which direction to go and about what He wanted me to do. How blessed that just at moments like these a deep peace fills the heart. We do not need to worry, because we know that the Lord is about to do something!

As I was walking around, a gentleman approached me and asked, "Are you a servant of the Lord?" For a moment I froze, remembering my experiences in Paramaribo and Willemstad. But there was nothing I could reply but, "Yes, I am." I had barely answered, when he said, "I thought so. The moment I saw you, I said to my wife, 'I know that man!" His name was Witlow. He had met me once at the Oral Roberts University campus in Tulsa, Oklahoma (USA) and had not forgotten that meeting. He also told me what he was doing at the airport. He was a missionary from San "THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE GOT SAVED, AND THOUSANDS MORE RECEIVED HEALING OF ALL KINDS OF DISEASES." Fernando, about 40 miles from Port of Spain, and was here awaiting the arrival of the well-known American evangelist T.L. Osborn and his wife! When I heard this, I knew why God had led me to Port of Spain. Reverend Witlow invited me to accompany them. The day before, two missionaries had left. He now had a fully furnished apartment where I could stay. I told him that I would gladly accept the offer.

Ten minutes later evangelist T.L. Osborn arrived together with his wife. The first thing he asked me was, "What are you doing here, Dutchman?" I told him I was actually on my way to Grenada, and told him what I had experienced so far and how the Lord had led me to Port of Spain. I will never forget the Scripture he then quoted: "The LORD makes firm the steps of the one who delights in Him" (Psalm 37:23).

I considered it a privilege to be present during the first days of the campaign, and also witnessed some amazing miracles of healing. I have never regretted anything that happened to me during this trip, for the Lord did work all things together for good. It seems that the Lord wanted to use this campaign to teach me. There are so few teachers and true examples of men of faith.



Surabaya, Java – Indonesia, 1967 When cripple or lame people receive healing, they have great joy. They came running to the platform to testify of their healing.

Grenada

Grenada is a small island not far from Trinidad. All arrangements for the campaign were made: the banners, the handbills, advertisements and the renting of a large soccer stadium. But on this island it was not easy to get the people to come to the meetings. Right from the beginning, I sensed a great wave of resistance and opposition that had to be broken. One place can be very different from the other. But God gives us the wonderful assurance that He will never put our faith to shame. Right from the first night God healed people of their diseases and ailments. News spread around, and every night the crowds increased. Night after night, hands were raised even in Grenada, and many people made the decision to follow Jesus. Gratefully, I thanked the Lord for bringing this campaign to a successful end. The result was a great harvest of souls and many miraculous healings and deliverances.

Los Angeles

From Grenada I would fly to Indonesia via Los Angeles, California. It seemed a funny coincidence that one of the first meetings I held in California was in the *Trinidad Church* in San Fernando, a Spanish church close to Los Angeles. There have been many services that I will never forget, and this was one of them.

That night I spoke about the battle of Jericho and about Rahab the prostitute. It was as if the whole place was electrified by God's Spirit. Not only did many people fall to their knees in tears to give their heart to Jesus, but many were baptized in the Holy Spirit as recorded in Acts 2.

Although I had never met the pastor, Reverend Espinoza, before, I was not a complete stranger to him. He had translated the movie *Holland Wonder* into Spanish, and had watched it many times.

This was my longest mission trip, lasting three months. After Los Angeles a great campaign in Indonesia was waiting.

Indonesia

Indonesia is located south of the Philippines, between Singapore and Australia. I was the first Dutch evangelist to enter this country since their independence from the Netherlands. At a church leaders conference in Jakarta I met many ministers from all over the country. After a great campaign in Jakarta, I held large campaigns in Solo, Bandung, Surabaya, Denpasar on Bali and Makassar on Sulawesi. At all places, the largest theaters and auditoriums were too small to hold the crowds. A great number of people accepted Jesus as Lord and Savior.



Jakarta, Java – Indonesia, 1980 Thousands of Indonesians heard the gospel during a campaign in a stadium. The stadium was overcrowded. Many could not find a place and had to listen to the message via loudspeakers outside. God did amazing signs and wonders.



Jakarta, Java - Indonesia, 1980 Mass evangelism is an integral part of the calling and purpose of the Johan Maasbach World Mission Foundation. This has always been the heart and vision of Johan and Wilhelmina, based on the great commission of Jesus Christ to His followers. "Johan Maasbach has no followers," Johan used to say. "I point to Jesus, telling people to follow Him." I still remember how shocked I was to see the massive display of communist propaganda all over Indonesia. Stores were filled with all kinds of literature bearing the hammer and sickle insignia, but I hardly saw any literature about the gospel. That hurt me deeply. I felt ashamed as a Christian, and I promised the Lord that I would do something about it if He would give me the time. Now I am happy to report that since then we have printed and distributed tons of Christian literature in the Indonesian language. Our magazine *New Life* was also printed in the Indonesian language, entitled *Hidup Baru*. We have also sent thousands of Dutch magazines to Indonesia every month, plus many books, Bibles, tracts, cassettes and vinyl records.

Since then I have been to Indonesia many times and had tremendous open air campaigns, especially after the coup in 1965 when there was a great spiritual revival. On the island of Timor, 30,000 people came night after night to attend the services. The same happened in Manado (on the island of North-Sulawesi). In Semarang, Palembang, Surabaya, Bandung, Ambon, and many other cities, tens of thousands of people came to the large open air meetings to listen to the gospel message. Thousands of people got saved, and thousands more received healing of all kinds of diseases by the glorious power of our Lord Jesus Christ.

In 1966 we opened our office in Semarang, a city located in the heart of the beautiful island of Java. The name of our children's home in Indonesia is *Jati Margo*, which means, "The Straight Path". Alongside all the other mission work, we have a beautiful home for orphans and neglected children. A work that we may truly call unique. Through the years we had to expand, because the children's home was getting too small. With the assistance of our faith partners, the neglected children and orphans are received in the home and brought up in an atmosphere of love, faith and trust in God. Here they are well fed, dressed and cared for. We ensure that they get a good education, but above all, that they come to know the love of Jesus.

"WINNING SOULS IS THE MAIN PURPOSE OF OUR FOUNDATION. THIS WILL ALWAYS BE OUR GREAT ENDEAVOR."

Personal correspondence and prayer

During every foreign campaign, the mail at home just piles up. When I returned from Indonesia, stacks of letters were waiting for me on my desk at our headquarters in The Hague. Even though our dedicated staff takes care of a lot of things, I always take care of personal correspondence myself, which I consider a special ministry that the Lord has given me.

I also receive a lot of mail when I am on the mission field. Especially there, I pray daily for the many prayer requests from the home front, bringing them to the throne of God. I also pray for all our faith partners back home, who make it possible for me to go to the lost. Especially at the mission field I strongly experience God's presence. I know He hears and answers my prayers for all our faithful contributors.

Winning souls

The offerings of God's children are pleasing to Him and He always multiplies His blessings to them. I have discovered that the partners who support our ministry regularly, steadily increase their support as God blesses their giving. This should not surprise us, because world mission is the great commission. Jesus' last commandment to His disciples was, *"Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation"* (Mark 16:15).

Our entire ministry is set on winning souls. Every branch and every facet of our work is directly or indirectly connected with this vision. Winning souls is the main purpose of our Foundation. This will always be our great endeavor, so that one day we may hear His voice, saying: *"Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!"* (Matthew 25:23).



Semarang, Java – Indonesia In 1974 Johan Maasbach opened the children's home Jati Margo (The Straight Path) in Semarang, Indonesia. Since then, we have been able to raise many children in the love of God. They have come, received a loving upbringing, found their place in society and moved on.

CHAPTER 20

A movie that caused a lot of commotion



Johan Maasbach was a charismatic, well-known personality in the Netherlands. Newspapers often wrote about him. He was also invited in several TV programs. He always took his Bible along and only had one goal: preaching Jesus Christ!

Publicity

It is a true saying that a prophet is rarely honored in his own country. Perhaps that is why most Dutch Christian papers and magazines have avoided publicity concerning our ministry. This has not bothered me much, because to me it is more important to get publicity in the secular press. After all, in this way I can reach exactly the people I want to reach: the unsaved. We have never lacked any publicity. God always sends reporters our way.

The movie Healing Through Prayer

Rather unexpectedly, the well-known Dutch film producer, Jan Vrijman, wanted to make a movie of our meetings. I had met him earlier when he was a newspaper reporter. He then wrote an article on the big campaign we held in Amsterdam.

One of the broadcasting companies had instructed him to make some documentaries for television. He was allowed to choose the subject himself and had chosen our ministry. And so the movie *Healing Through Prayer* came into being.

If ever a movie stirred up a lot of publicity, it was certainly this movie *Healing Through Prayer* by Jan Vrijman about the ministry of Johan Maasbach. The broadcasting company was reluctant to show the movie, because according to them, "It could influence the viewers not to take their medicines, which would be injudicious and irresponsible." And they wanted to prevent this.

Then they tried to neutralize the deep impact the movie was clearly going to make, by preceding it with an interview by a hard-hitting reporter. "But," and I quote from a Dutch newspaper, "Maasbach opened the interview with prayer and asking for a blessing. By doing so, he had already won the fight. Within minutes he left the reporter quite speechless." This well-known reporter had been instructed to "expose" Maasbach, so that the movie would lose some of its great influence. Now, I do not doubt the abilities of this journalist, but he evidently overlooked the fact that he was entering Holy Spirit territory. As a Jew, he should have known better, for the Jewish Scriptures say, "No weapon forged against you will prevail, and you will refute every tongue that accuses you. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and this is their vindication from Me, declares the Lord" (Isaiah 54:17).

This movie turned out to be a "burdensome stone" for the broadcasting company. They decided to have it reviewed by a group of theologians. They also arranged some more special previews – one for physicians, one for the Amsterdam Movie and Screen Association, and others. However, the broadcasting company stood its ground and insisted that the movie was too suggestive.

If this movie had been broadcasted immediately, it would probably have only been in the news one time. But their stubbornness brought our ministry the greatest publicity ever.

When it was definitely decided that the movie would not be broadcasted, Jan Vrijman repurchased his work, which is something quite unusual. He did not want to leave his project "on hold." Eventually he produced the famous

"MANY PEOPLE WERE TOUCHED AND HEALED BY GOD WHILE WATCHING THE MOVIE AND PRAYING ALONG."

movie *On the Bottom of Heaven* into which *Healing Through Prayer* was incorporated in its entirety.

This movie was finally shown to the public during the film festival in Arnhem. It had its official premiere in Amsterdam, where it ran for six weeks. The press showed tremendous interest. Every kind of newspaper and magazine reviewed it, and it was always mentioned that the broadcasting company had refused the movie. *On the Bottom of Heaven* was shown in theaters all across the Netherlands, even in the smallest villages. A publisher in Amsterdam dedicated its 100th edition, an anniversary edition, to this movie.

Eventually, after several years, it was shown on television, both in the Netherlands and in Belgium. After the broadcast on television (at that time there were only few channels), we received a flood of responses. Many people were touched and healed by God while watching the movie and praying along. I appreciate Jan Vrijman's objectivity and approach as well as his courage in producing this movie. He was used by God, consciously or unconsciously, to acquaint outsiders with Jesus Christ, our great Savior and Redeemer.

A movie of the national telephone company

Another joyful event was the movie by a well-known producer-actor. He was commissioned by the national telephone company to make a documentary, celebrating the fact that every household in the Netherlands was now automatically connected to the telephone network. He called me, asking for my cooperation in this movie. I said that I would be glad to give him all the help he needed, as long as I could clearly quote a Scripture somewhere in the movie. He had no objections to this request. He wondered if I could make sure that there would be some loud "Hallelujahs" during the meetings. Anyone familiar with our meetings fully understands that this is not a problem at all!

Johan Maasbach:

"Do you not want to be criticized? Do not say anything, do not do anything, do not be anything."

As a result, the great campaign in Barneveld was born, where the producer chose to record his "Hallelujahs." At the same time he fulfilled my request, and I was filmed reading Hebrews 13:8, *"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever."* At that time he had no idea what a big problem this line would create. When the movie was completed, he realized that this Scripture was far too dominant. After all, it was supposed to be a documentary about the telephone company. The difference between this short Scripture and all other words spoken in the movie was this: the Word of God was spoken under the anointing of the Holy Spirit.

Perhaps the most wonderful thing about this was the exposure to the gospel message of all those professionals involved in recording, editing, producing and reviewing the recordings. They got the message whether they wanted to or not! I often pray for all those involved in the movies and show business. They carry such a great responsibility in the way they entertain people and influence their minds. I always pray that God will work in their hearts.

More documentaries

I must not forget to mention the time that I received a phone call from a Catholic broadcast company. They were making a documentary about the different churches and denominations. And they also wanted to make a ten minutes recording from one of our church services. Our ten minutes turned out to be so dynamic that they returned to do some more filming in our meetings. The result was a one hour, full color movie, which was concluded with an interview with a well-known theologian. The whole production was very much in our favor. On a Sunday night this movie had its premiere. This production has made a great impact for good on our ministry and churches.

Later another well-known Dutch film producer and director made a movie for another broadcasting company, called *Man in Front of the Lens*. This movie, that lasted an hour, was shown on television on a Sunday



"I am deeply touched by the broadcast from February 8th of the program *On the Bottom of Heaven*. I wish there were more TV shows like that. That evening, as I prayed with tears in my eyes, I felt as if a burden was lifted. I felt something I cannot describe. I went to bed wondering what was happening. My faith grew overnight. The next day, Wednesday February 9th, I had to go to see a specialist. To my surprise he told me that all was well, and that I no longer had to come back."

Mrs. J.B.-S. from Amsterdam

night. We received hundreds of responses.

All of this is remarkable, because in the Netherlands it is almost impossible to purchase time on either radio or television for broadcasting Full Gospel programs. Yet we have always prayed and believed that the Lord would open a door for us to reach the people with the gospel of Jesus Christ through radio and television. I have shared this to encourage those many Christian ministers on the mission field. I know very well what they mean when they say, "Oh no, it is impossible to get time on radio or television out here." But, as I have recorded here: with God all things are possible for those who believe. God is still the God of miracles! Never forget Ephesians 3:20, *"God is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine."*

Our own Capitol Television Network Studio

Although it was still impossible for us to get time on television, we decided to go ahead and set up a place in our office that could function as a studio, where recordings could be edited and duplicated. After all, it takes a lot of preparation before we can make professional programs to broadcast. You need a team for this. For example, you need people for the cameras, the lighting, the sound et cetera. After that, the recordings need to be edited, and provided with text, background music and commentary.

The next step was to purchase modern television and video equipment to fully furnish a studio. We got a great offer. It even included a fully equipped van for filming on site. We would be able to make recordings, not only in The Hague, but anywhere in the country. However, it really was a matter of much prayer and stepping out in faith. The costs for this project were very high: more than one million guilders.

We called it *God's Jordan Miracle Television Studio*, because for us it was a step of faith to put our feet on the water, as it was

"THE LOVE OF GOD URGED US. IN ORDER TO REACH THE MASSES, WE HAVE TO USE ALL TOOLS AVAILABLE."

for Joshua and the people of Israel, to cross the Jordan River and take possession of the promised land. However, the love of God urged us. In order to reach the masses, we have to use all tools available. Nowadays, radio, television, video and film are the most effective tools to fulfill Jesus' commission: *"You will be My witnesses ... to the ends of the earth"* (Acts 1:8).

This *Jordan Miracle* has happened. It absolutely was an answer to prayer. Partners from all around stood by our side to bring this adventure of faith, for the sake of God's Kingdom, to a successful ending. It was a wonderful moment when the keys to the vehicle were handed over. But even more glorious was the moment when we lifted up the keys before the throne of God and consecrated all equipment to His service.

Since then, our studio has become more and more professional. All devices are of excellent quality. A larger car was purchased. Doors have opened for local television broadcasts. We are looking forward to the time that doors will open for broadcasting on an international level.

How amazing to be able to use technology! So many bad images are filling the rooms. We want to spread the good news and make it as attractive as possible, so that people will be fascinated and captivated by God's love and grace.

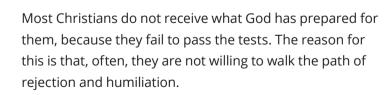


God's Jordan Miracle A complete recording equipment was bought to record and edit videotapes on site. A studio had to be built as well. Johan Maasbach called it *God's Jordan Miracle*. God provided the finances in a miraculous way. Thousands of video tapes, mostly sermons, were being produced.

CHAPTER 21 Strongholds against sin and the power of Satan

God's school of testing

The guidance of the Holy Spirit and the personal interest of the Almighty God in the lives of His children is truly a marvelous thing. We clearly see this in the lives of Abraham, Moses, Joseph, Daniel and many others. The Bible shows us how God prepared each one of them for a special task, and how trials were sent into their lives in order to test and strengthen their spiritual resilience. When our trials are behind us, then we can often see their purpose.



We have to come to the place where Moses was. *"He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward"* (Hebrews 11:26). Even Moses and other men of God had to stay for a long time in God's school of testing before



The *Capitol Gospel Center*, right at the busiest intersection of The Hague.



God could entrust them with their great missions. Moses, like all the others, was a man of faith who took God at His Word. He never doubted that "nothing is impossible with God."

Buying Capitol, a movie theater

I paid a visit to the city of Rome, Italy, to prepare a campaign on the island of Sicily. There I met my American friend, Reverend John McTernan, on the very day he received the keys to a beautiful theater with 1,500 seats, which he would turn into a Full Gospel church. At that time I had absolutely no idea that the Lord had led me there to strengthen my faith for the project He had in mind for me.

Two months later, however, a real estate agent called at my office in The Hague. He said that there was something for sale in which I might be interested. When I asked him what it was, he replied, "A movie theater!" The selling price was close to a million guilders. Immediately I recalled the theater in Rome, and said that, in spite of the price, I wanted to see the building anyway. Together we drove down to the *Capitol Theater* in The Hague. This magnificent building is visible from a mile's distance and is built at the intersection of seven main roads.

As I entered the theater, I immediately felt the presence of God. The thought came to me, If we do not take this place for the glory of God, the world will continue to use it for its own purposes. In my mind I saw sinners coming at Jesus' feet and the sick receiving healing, instead of yielding their minds to the low-grade movies this particular theater was known for. Outside again, I stared at this enormous building. To me it stood there like a Goliath. I could not help but believe that God was going to deliver this giant into my hands.

We know from the Bible that God uses little things to accomplish great things. During one of our daily prayer meetings, God spoke to my heart about the price of this beautiful theater. I stuck with it while facing the negotiators and the owner, a Jewish lady. She persistently refused to

"I COULD NOT HELP BUT BELIEVE THAT GOD WAS GOING TO DELIVER THIS GIANT INTO MY HANDS." consider the price the Lord had given to me. For a while I did not hear from her at all. Then suddenly, one day, I got a phone call and was asked to an accounting firm the next day. The owner and her son would be there to sign the initial sales contract. Naturally, I was asked how I was going to finance this building. I made a proposition which the Lord had laid upon my heart, even though it was rather an unusual one. Right at that time, bank mortgages were very hard to come by, and a movie theater was not a popular investment. At the moment of purchase we had no money available, as every penny was invested in our mission work. The down payment was miraculously supplied the very day it was due.

The Lord revealed to me how I had to finance part of this building. There are 1,000 seats in the theater. I asked people to sponsor one or more chairs for 300 guilders each. God richly blessed this idea. Many decided to finance one or more seats. The seat is never the property of the person who paid for it, but is made available for the salvation of souls! I asked the people to pray for the salvation and healing of those who would take their seats.

Always be guided by the Holy Spirit

Now of course it does not always mean that, because God arranged for us to purchase the *Capitol Theater* for a greatly reduced price, He always means His servants to get everything at a low price. Some Christians think a transaction can only be of God if the seller lowers the price. This is not always the case. We must be led by the Holy Spirit at all times.

For example, when I went to purchase our office building, the owner would not come down one penny in the price. I was really disappointed, because I had a much lower price in mind. But I have learned long ago that if something is truly of God, and the owner does not lower the price, you have to step up your faith. Otherwise you may miss what God wants to give you. Sellers have a right to hold onto their property for the right price. You cannot wait too long in making your final decision, so learn to move with God. Always keep in mind: God is great. And



In 1966 Johan Maasbach took a step of faith by purchasing the *Capitol* movie theater in The Hague. The theater, with its 1,000 seats, would function as a wonderful house of God. He is *"able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine"* (Ephesians 3:20).

God supplied our neon lights

It was quite a job to turn this movie theater into a place of worship. But we relied on the Word of God which says, *"Do not be anxious about anything"* (Philippians 4:6). Even in the smallest details, we saw the powerful guidance of God's Spirit.

For example, I needed neon lights to show the purpose of this great, soulwinning center. The people needed to know that this building had changed its purpose. The installation was expensive, and I prayed that the Lord would lead me to the right company.

While I was still praying, the phone rang. It was the chief representative of one of the largest neon firms in the Netherlands. He said, "Brother Maasbach, you do not know me, but over the last months I have been listening to your broadcasts on Radio Luxembourg. I heard about *Capitol* and figured you might need some help with neon lights. Is there anything I can do?" I invited him to come over right away and make me an offer, which he did. When I asked him if he had given me the best price, he looked me straight in the eye and said, "Brother Maasbach, I calculated this down on my knees. I kept it as low as I could. You may even deduct my commission if you like. I will try and get some more off, and will arrange for easy payments which you can name."



Evangelist T.L. Osborn spoke in 1966 at the opening of the *Capitol Gospel Center*.

I knew that God had sent this man, and that I did not need to make any further inquiries. He was happy to do this for the Lord and for the expansion of His Kingdom. It was very special that this turned out to be his last assignment, although he had worked for this firm for many years. Shortly after its completion, the Lord took him home in His glory. Just before He passed away, I still had the chance to meet him. He grabbed my hand and told me how happy he was to have been able to do this for the work of the Lord.

Cups, saucers and teaspoons

I also remember how I needed 500 cups and saucers for our church restaurant in *Capitol*. This story sounds incredible, but it is true. While I was trying to figure out where we could buy cups and saucers of high quality and at a low price, a man approached me. I had never met him before. He had come to deliver some clothes on behalf of his sister. He had already delivered it to one of our workers, when I happened to meet him and started a conversation. I asked him what he did for a living, and he said, "I sell snack bars." I could hardly believe my ears. I asked him if he knew a good place to buy 500 cups, saucers and teaspoons. He said, "Leave that to up me. I will take care of it."

That same week he delivered a few large boxes containing 500 high-quality cups, saucers and spoons. He said, "Brother Maasbach, I had saved up some money for the Lord. I did not know what to do with it, but now I know what the Lord had in mind." He laughed and said, "You know, the devil tried to get at me for a moment. When I asked for the spoons, they had cheap ones and stainless steel ones. I thought, A donation of 500 cups and saucers should be enough. Let me get the cheap spoons. But at the same time I thought, Why give the Lord something cheap? Why not give Him the best?"

Offering bags

Another remarkable incident was the supply of offering bags. We needed 25 to 30 bags in order to collect the offering during one song. My problem was, how do we get them or how do we make them ourselves? I suggested one of our workers to order the wooden frames at a woodworker and maybe ask some of the ladies to sew on velvet bags. I figured this would be the cheapest and easiest way. He casually remarked that one of our church members in Gouda was selling offering bags. Never in my whole life had I heard that such people actually existed.

One brief phone call and two days later this man appeared with a suitcase full of samples. I received them custom-made

"I WONDER WHETHER CHRISTIANS REALIZE HOW IMPORTANT THEIR OFFERINGS ARE IN GOD'S EYES." and of first-class quality. I had no problem with payments either, because he returned the total amount in one of the offering bags! It strikes me that my heavenly Father had such care even for the offering bags.

I wonder whether Christians realize how important their offerings are in God's eyes. As you remember, Jesus even noticed the two very small copper coins of the poor widow. Our giving affects our whole lives and incomes. It is a big trick of the devil to convince people that we should not talk about finances in the work of the gospel.

Souvenirs

The fact that God supplied our neon lights, cups and offering bags was great indeed, but the miracle of the souvenirs was certainly something very special as well! For a while I had been wondering what souvenir to give to mark the occasion of our grand opening of the *Capitol Gospel Center*. It is not easy to find something of lasting value which is still financially feasible. One Thursday evening I asked the staff to pray for a suitable souvenir to give away on the opening day.

The next day, after the Friday service in Amsterdam, a man approached me and introduced himself. He wanted to talk to me about some English songs he had heard on the radio. When our conversation ended, he said, "Mister Maasbach, I have one more question. I have a trade in souvenirs, and my wife and I have been wondering whether you would be interested in giving away some sort of souvenir at the opening of the Capitol." Once more, I could hardly believe my ears. It is always better to deal with wholesalers than with retailers. I quickly asked him if he had anything particular in mind. "Yes, indeed," he said, "a silver teaspoon." That idea had never occurred to me. He said, "At the top of the handle we could engrave an image of Capitol." He continued, "Brother Maasbach, I am not doing this to make money. I want to do this for the Lord, and I figured that this would be a good investment in His ministry. We will need a mold which will cost about 300 guilders. That will be my contribution. I will

"JUST LIKE **A FATHER TEACHES HIS** CHILD, GOD WANTS TO **TEACH YOU:** NOTHING. NOTHING, **NOTHING IS IMPOSSIBLE** WITH GOD, FOR YOU WHO **BELIEVE!**"

also try and get a special price from the factory."

How kind of the Lord to send a man my way who supplied souvenirs, even below wholesale price. When I asked the man why he had chosen a spoon, he told me: "I have been in the souvenir business for over twenty years. Throughout all those years a teaspoon has been the most desirable and popular product."

Now we have teaspoons that not only bear the image of Capitol, but also carry the message: "Jesus saves." This is something very exclusive. We also had keychains made, a popular gift for many as well, and also a nice souvenir for our foreign guests.

God cares for us

Isn't God great? He, the Almighty God who created the immeasurable universe, the sun, the moon and the stars, the beautiful trees and the flowers, the birds in the sky and the fish in the ocean – this great God also cares about small things like teaspoon souvenirs, and sends a man with the necessary cups and saucers. My God knows it all. He also knows your worries, problems and needs.

Someone once said to me, "Maasbach, you are so childlike." But this is exactly the problem with many people: they are not childlike. But for me, the great and mighty God who controls the wind and the ocean, He is my Father. He is never too busy to hear my prayer. My God and Father, He knows all things. Nothing is too big or too small. He cares for us. He is aware of everything! Let me say it once again: God is great!

It is wonderful to be born again and to be His son or daughter. Just like a father teaches his child, God wants to teach you, until you will truly know that nothing, nothing, nothing is impossible with God for you who believe!

"Praise the Lord for your act of faith to purchase the *Capitol Theater*! My husband and I believe that from there a TV broadcasting will be established."

A woman from Zaandam, 1966

chapter 22 Beacons in the storm

The purchase of our world mission office

The *Capitol Gospel Center* in The Hague is a mighty stronghold against sin and Satan's power. It stands like a lighthouse in a storm, beaming its rays of light to all who will take notice. Since the opening day, not one week has passed without souls coming at Jesus' feet, people being freed from Satan's power, and others being healed of their diseases and ailments.

Across the street from *Capitol* there was another impressive building, five stories high with apartment buildings on both sides. It was built two years after *Capitol*, and was designed by the same architect. It is made of the same kind of bricks, using the same building style. When we purchased *Capitol*, I had no idea that God would give us this place as well, so that we could bring all the different branches of our global ministry together in one location. This shows again that God is really able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine (Ephesians 3:20).

Barely one year after the purchase of our world mission office, we bought the entire block – complete with houses and stores – together with a few houses around the corner, directly behind the office building. The backyards of all those houses merged with our large backyard of the office, making it one whole complex.



One of the many baptismal services in the *Capitol Gospel Center*.

The legendary Capitol Gospel Center. It is an amazing place where millions of people have received God's blessing. During that time there were some large traditional churches in the Netherlands. But the situation was quite different for the Pentecostal church. It is a miracle how this movie theater came into the hands of the Johan Maasbach World Mission. Johan was an inspiring example of faith for many.

CAPITOL EVANGELIE CENTRUM



The Hague – The Netherlands, 1966 The Capitol Gospel Center. People listen attentively to evangelist T.L. Osborn, who came especially to the Netherlands for the festive opening service. Anyone who cannot see God's hand in all of these provisions, must be blind. Those who live without God, might call it coincidence or luck, but we who fear the Lord, recognize God's hand in these matters.

How God provided

The entire project was easily financed. God moved the hearts in miraculous ways. During the last week of the final transfer, more than half a million guilders had to be paid. We were still lacking 50,000 guilders. I knew that the Lord would provide this as well.

That week a friend of mine and his wife came to visit us. They mentioned that they wanted to do something for the work of the Lord. He said, "Brother Maasbach, you can count on 20,000 guilders. It is up to you how you want to receive it." At the same moment, the Lord spoke to my heart, saying that this man should not give 20,000 guilders, but 25,000 guilders! I was startled. How could I tell somebody, bringing a gift of 20,000 guilders, that it was not enough and that he should give 25,000 instead? So I prayed, "Lord, give me wisdom!"

When my friend and his wife got up to leave after we had prayed together, he suddenly said, "Maasbach, I will increase that amount by 5,000 guilders. That will make it a total of 25,000 guilders." Then I told him how the Lord had spoken to my heart about the same thing, and it confirmed his decision.

That same week, a woman came with a brown envelope, which she placed on my desk, saying it was a gift for God's work. The envelope contained 25 bills of 1000 guilders each. This completed the amount we needed for the following day.

I hope nobody will get the idea that our worldwide ministry is operated only on large gifts. On the contrary, it is mostly because of the many small gifts, of 10, 25 or 100 guilders

"SINCE THE Opening Day, not One week Has passed Without Souls Coming at Jesus' Feet." that we can do this great soul-winning work together. Also, I know very well that God values our gifts according to what we possess. The two copper coins of the poor widow found great worth in the eyes of Jesus, because she gave all she had.

The Bible tells us that only few of the rich and the famous are willing to follow Jesus of Nazareth. It also says that it will be very difficult for the wealthy to be saved, and that there will not be many. Not many, but there are some. And they are saved, not because they give, but because they believe!

How poor are those who have put their trust in their gold, silver and earthly possessions. I pray that they will wake up in time and realize that they should put their trust in the Lord, and not in the things of this life that will perish. Whoever does the will of God will endure forever.

Other church buildings

When our mission work started in Gouda and we found our first little church and office building, who would have dreamed that one day we would become the legal owners of the *Gouwekerk*, the city's beautiful, big cathedral. The church is only 30 minutes by car away from our office in The Hague. The tallest of its three towers (over 260 feet high) is the highest point in Gouda. It is a valuable and monumental gothic style cathedral, built around 1900 by dedicated believers. Beautiful, historic buildings, like this cathedral, bear witness to the faith and love of our ancestors. How we were able to obtain this beautiful house of God to spread the gospel is a wonderful story on its own.

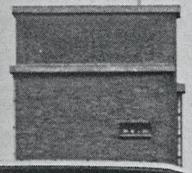
Also in Utrecht, Amsterdam, Breda and Dordrecht, we have been able to take over church buildings. With these transactions, hundreds of thousands of guilders were involved.



The Hague – The Netherlands

headquarters of the Johan Maasbach World Mission are located at the busiest intersection of The Hague. Seven roads cross each other here. You cannot miss it! Surrounded by clear, blue neon light borders and bright red colored letters, we see the influences of New York City's Broadway. "While the world openly displays everything, why should we hide the greatest news that was ever brought to mankind, somewhere in a dark alley?!" The Bible says we must put the light of the gospel on a lampstand, for everyone to see.

MAASBACH





The churches are being used at full capacity. All activities, including weekly meetings, prayer meetings, Bible studies, youth and children's ministry, and all kinds of special events are being held in these centers. In all congregations we have our elders and leading brethren, Sunday school teachers and youth workers. Furthermore, outreach activities are being organized here as well. The purpose of it all is the salvation of souls and to build up of the Church of Christ.



Our cathedral in Schiedam

Gouwekerk, Gouda - The Netherlands In the '70s, two remarkably large Roman Catholic Cathedrals were purchased: one in Schiedam and one in Gouda. Johan saw these monumental buildings as an open door to reach more people with the gospel.

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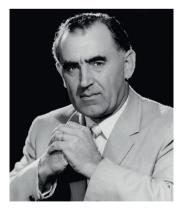
CHAPTER 23 And so much more

Bringing souls to Jesus

I could write another book to describe everything that has happened in the following years, both at home and abroad. But I would not like to close this book without emphasizing again that the purpose and aim of my life is not gathering buildings of wood or stone. These things are only necessary tools in order to fulfill the purpose we endeavor to accomplish, which is a spiritual building made of "living stones," a holy temple for the Lord.

I am very grateful to the Lord for giving us *Capitol*, the big office and other beautiful churches. However, my heart is not set on these things. The day will come when these buildings will lie in ruins. My heart is set on things that are above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of the Father. I value the invisible things much higher than the visible things. However, we may use the material things down here, and possess them as though not possessing them. It is important that they should not possess us. But it is a fact that we even urgently need them to fulfill the great commission: to reach the masses with the mighty, wonderful, glorious message of Jesus Christ of Nazareth!

Jesus said, "I will make you fishers of men" (Matthew 4:19 NKJV). A man who goes fishing uses a fishing rod, some hooks, line and bait, but in the end it is all about the fish! This is exactly the same in the soulwinning work which the Lord has given us. It is not about *Capitol*, the neon lights, our headquarters, the printing presses nor any other branch



Johan Maasbach:

"This is the message the Lord has given me for this world in need: God is love, and He wants to save the people before Jesus returns." of our ministry. We only use these things to bring precious souls at Jesus' feet, just like a fisherman uses a rod to catch fish. It is about the fish and about Him who was born in a stable in Bethlehem, whose name is Jesus. He is the Savior of the world. He is my Lord and my God!

This Jesus of Nazareth, God's only begotten Son, has a great compassion for souls. He does not want anyone to be lost. This is the Jesus whom I preach and love. I have dedicated my life to Him and I am not ashamed of Him. Neither do I conceal who He is and what He still does today. I know He is not ashamed to call me His brother.

This is only the beginning

That is why I have written this, (a part of) my life story, trusting that others will be helped, inspired and instructed by it and be built up in their faith. Let me say in conclusion that it is my firm conviction: this is only the beginning! As long as there are still people who do not know Jesus, our work is certainly not finished. "AS LONG AS THERE ARE STILL PEOPLE WHO DO NOT KNOW JESUS, OUR WORK IS CERTAINLY NOT FINISHED."

Johan Maasbach December 5th 1918 – September 18th 1997

It hel volbert het werk clert of The best popur

"I have accomplished the work You have given me."

God's work continues in the new generation

This book of the founder of the Johan Maasbach World Mission Foundation, evangelist Johan Maasbach, is filled with examples, stories, revelations and testimonies of the miracle working power of God, revealed through His Son, Jesus Christ. It has been translated into many languages and published in many countries, where it has had a great impact on hundreds of thousands of lives.

Our father always told us that he did not write this book for people to get to know Johan Maasbach, but for all to see what God can do in and through the lives of those who surrender to Him. Time after time God has proven through his life that He is alive and full of love for humanity.



Kinshasa – Congo, 2018 From left to right: Regina & David, John T.L. & Godelief Maasbach

With this book our father takes us through the heights and depths of his devotional walk with God, leaving us a legacy of faith. We have many wonderful testimonies of pastors and ministry leaders all around the world whose lives and ministries have been transformed through the reading of this book, from good to better and from better to best.

What makes this book very relevant and real for today, is the fact that God's work has not stopped as the older generation passed away, but continues in the new and upcoming generations. All our siblings and their families are actively involved in God's work in one way or another. All are able to bring the message of love, hope and restoration. And the great testimony of the Maasbach family is that now all grandchildren and great-grandchildren of Johan and Wilhelmina Maasbach are experiencing God's calling on their lives. Not only in the Netherlands but all over the world!

The headquarters of the Johan Maasbach World Mission Foundation is based in The Hague, the Netherlands, and has many different branches of ministry. The "mission factory," as Johan Maasbach used to call it, is always running at full speed and has become a large, worldwide mission work with branches in different parts of the world. Nowadays, the good news of Jesus Christ is being preached to more people and in more places than ever before, with the best means at our disposal. Here we name a few branches:

The Blessing Churches is the name of our church network and church plant program. It is the family of God, bound together in the wonderful name of Jesus. Always growing and expanding as Jesus, the Chief Shepherd Himself, is adding daily to His Body.

Maasbach Radio is our online worldwide Christian radio station. *The Blessing Family Music Station* provides nonstop uplifting music and quotes. And the *Message Station* offers 24/7 faith-building messages of many well-known preachers from all around the world.

We also reach many people through our television broadcasts and livestream, as well as through books, magazines, brochures, flyers et cetera.

Our *Global Prayer Network* intercedes daily for those that need a touch from God, with partners in more than 80 nations.

The *Harvest Time Training Centers* and *Zoe Bible College* are teaching, training and equipping people to grow in their personal life and in their ministry, serving God at their full potential.

"NOWADAYS, THE GOOD NEWS OF JESUS CHRIST IS BEING PREACHED TO MORE PEOPLE AND IN MORE PLACES THAN EVER BEFORE." *OASIS* is our non-profit charitable organization dedicated to help children and adolescents who are in a vulnerable situation. In their own community we give them a safe haven, an oasis, and offer them the opportunity to develop in a healthy way both socially and culturally. The activities are educational, recreational and sportive. The children learn to apply the mind and principles of Christ in all areas of life.

All Kids 1st is the children's ministry. We have developed our own curriculum, called *The Blessing Kids Curriculum*. Through telling Bible stories, prayer, praise and worship, games, mission items, crafts, workshops and other fun activities, the children grow spiritually and socially, and cultivate a heart for this world in need.

POINT is the teen and youth ministry. Every *Blessing Church* has a *Meeting POINT*, where they have weekly activities. Youth Managers are there to help them find their place in life, in the center of God's will. On national and international levels lots of activities are organized for them to bring them closer to God and each other.

The *MAP Band* - Make A Point - reaches young people through the powerful ministry of music. The band writes, sings and plays music, with the purpose to glorify God and tell others about Jesus. *MAP* has concerts all around the world.

Maasbach Worship produces worship songs in Dutch and English. The team has written and recorded several albums. Their songs are being used during worship in *The Blessing Churches* as well as in other churches. Find them on social media, Spotify, YouTube, et cetera.

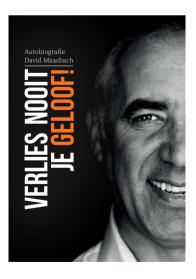
Daniel 4:3

"How great are His signs, how mighty His wonders! His Kingdom is an eternal Kingdom; His dominion endures from generation to generation."

Musicals have been one of the most effective tools we have used to bring the gospel to the unbeliever. Many who would never set foot in a church, come to see a musical where the Bible comes to life, bringing the powerful message of God's love. *NEWGEN SOCIETY* unites us as Christians and makes us stand strong as a new generation that will make His name known all over the world. By wearing NEWGEN clothing you automatically spread words of life to those around you.

The explosive growth and blessing which the worldwide ministry of the *Johan Maasbach World Mission Foundation* has experienced throughout the years, both in good and bad times, are a strong testimony of the living God, confirming the work and lives of His loyal servants. God has proven the power of His Word through signs and wonders, from generation to generation. It worked in the past generation, it still works in the new generation and will continue to work until Jesus comes again. Because He is the same yesterday, today and forever!

In faith and love, David Maasbach (President) and John T.L. Maasbach (International Missions Director) - sons of Johan Maasbach



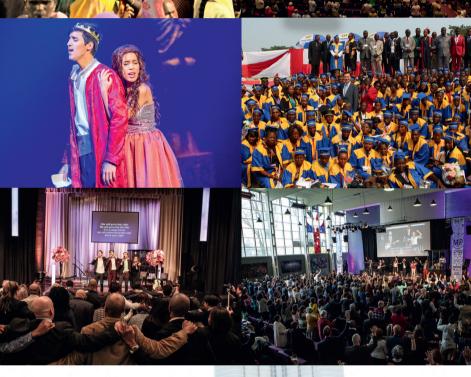
If you would like to know how the story continued, you can read the autobiography of David Maasbach, *Never lose faith.*





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worship



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