

Why I preach Christ

Autobiography by Johan Maasbach
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Why I wrote this book:

- *To prove to my generation that God's love has never changed; that God's Word is true yesterday, today and forever; and that nothing shall be impossible for those who believe.*
- *To inspire the faith of many.*
- *To help and bless those who love God.*
- *To establish that the Mighty Gospel of Jesus Christ which I preach is not merely a figment of my imagination.*
- *To testify to the truth of Jesus' own Words, when He said: "Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or farms, for My sake and for the gospel's sake, but that he shall receive a hundred times as much now in the present age, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and farms, along with persecutions; and in the world to come, eternal life" - Mark 10:29,30.*
- *To sound a warning that, through unbelief, we may miss out on the blessings which God has prepared for us.*
- *To glorify Jesus, Who alone is worthy to receive all glory, honour and praise now and throughout all eternity.*

JOHAN MAASBACH

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My Conversion

When I was a small boy living in West Rotterdam,

Holland, I used to be drawn to an open-air meeting held by the Salvation Army. I was particularly attracted by the rousing music. One thing gripped my attention more than anything else. It was a young boy, still in short pants, but dressed in uniform, standing boldly among the grown-up musicians, playing his heart out for the Lord.

Seeing him there caused a deep stirring and longing in my own young heart. I envied him and thought how wonderful it must be to be so young and already in the Lord's service. Somehow he reminded me of little Samuel in the Bible.

We moved to the center of the city. There I discovered a Gospel truck from a mission called the Fishnet which held meetings on the street corner. I used to go and listen from beginning to end. Once again, the happy Gospel songs blessed my young soul. A young woman would accompany them on a tiny collapsible organ with foot pedals, which she pumped with great vigor. Different ones would testify about how Christ had changed their lives, and a man would bring a short, rousing message about the salvation of sinners.

Even then, I felt a strange desire to do the same thing when I grew up. Preaching the Gospel seemed like just the right thing to be doing.

Our neighbours, living in the apartment below us, were evangelical Christians in the true sense of the word. Their little son, Arie, also played the pedal-organ. He was one of my classmates at school. I liked to visit these good people who loved to sing those lively Gospel songs.

When my friend and I came home from school, we often played 'open-air meeting'. I would place some old wooden chairs together to form a platform, just like the Gospel truck, while my friend Arie played the organ. Then I would lead the non-existent audience in songs, and preach up a storm from my chair platform, interrupting myself once in a while with a loud "Hallelujah!"

Before long I made friends with a lad at school who belonged to the Salvation Army. I would accompany him to every one of their meetings, morning and evening. By this time I knew that I also had to make a public decision to accept Jesus Christ as my Personal Savior and Lord.

I shall never forget the night when I decided that I ought to make my move for God. The Army officer gave the invitation for us to give our hearts to Jesus, but it was so very difficult for me to raise my hand. I just did not have the courage to do it. Fear took hold of me. My heart beat faster than normal and a lump appeared in my throat. I didn't dare respond, and, excusing myself, I thought, "Well, I can do the same thing when I get home".

That night, in the privacy of my room, I knelt at my bed and asked the Lord to forgive me. "Oh, come into my heart, Lord Jesus", I pleaded. "There is room in my heart for You".

But it seemed as though a small voice said, "For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, of him will the Son of Man be ashamed when He comes in His glory..." (Luke 9:26).

I just had no peace in my longing little heart. So I promised the Lord that I would confess Him in public the next Sunday. But the next Sunday my courage deserted me again. I just did not dare to let other people know that I had made a decision for Jesus.

Oh, the invitation hymn for sinners to come to Him made my heart beat faster again. The call of the 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, honestly, the Salvation Army with all those people looking on wasn't the only place where such decisions could be made.

But later, back home, the same thing happened as before. That soft, still voice was speaking to my heart, telling me I was chicken, that I was ashamed of Him Who had not been ashamed of me.

My search for peace went on fruitlessly until the following Sunday. I seated myself on the front row just to make sure, and I promised God there and then that I would not be ashamed when the time came.

The officer had barely finished his invitation when I jumped up and ran forward to kneel at the sinners' bench. Oh, what a relief it was! What a victory! How thankful I was to know that God had accepted me, a nine-year old boy, as His own child through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Not long afterwards I was confirmed as a soldier in the Salvation Army, standing beneath the banner of Blood and Fire. Presently, I found myself as the only representative of our family of 14 children (I was number 13) standing in my short-trousered Army 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 for Jesus in this way upon the streets!

My biggest problem for a long time were prayer meetings. Before rehearsals of the young people's band, for instance, we would all go to our knees and pray out loud, one after another. Each time I would get this lump in my throat. I could not pray out loud.

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! I can understand why the disciples asked Jesus, "Lord, teach us to pray" (Luke 11). And how wonderful that even little children can learn, for it is not easy.

I shall never forget the glorious times which I spent as a boy with the Salvation Army, nor the blessed conventions which we had. This was during the '20s and '30s when the fire of God's Spirit was burning high and many souls were coming to repentance.

GOD HAD A PLAN FOR ME

After finishing grade school, I attended the Technical School, as I intended to work in my Dad's business. My Dad owned a factory producing sunshades and awnings. Even though I really enjoyed this kind of work, there was also developing within me a great urge to go to sea some day. Like a typical Rotterdam boy, I spent hours down at the waterfront in the big harbor watching the traffic of ships of all sizes and from all nations. I was fascinated as these great ocean steamers lifted anchor and moved slowly towards the sea, and others moved in majestically to take their place.

I discovered that the only way for me to go to sea would be as a cook's mate. Even this, in those days, was not easy. A cook's mate had to be able, among other things, to bake bread. I went to work for a baker for the princely wage of fifty cents a week! As my only objective in this job was to learn as fast as possible how to bake bread, I was very happy there.

I had to work pretty hard for my fifty cents. Besides the thousands of bread tins I had to oil with a brush, I soon learned how to bake the bread itself. While I was learning, I was also applying to various shipping companies for a berth. Even as a 17-year old lad, I had a firm belief that God would get me on a ship.

It was a great day when my Dad came to the bakery to bring me the letter from a shipping company. That same week I left on my first trip to Hamburg. It was a miracle that my boss would let me go that same day, since I also had to deliver baskets of bread on my carrier bicycle. All this, just to learn how to bake bread!

My father and mother were very sad. It was a touching moment as I stood in the hall with my dufflebag, ready to go to sea for the first time. I shall never forget my Dad shaking me by the hand and saying, "Son, I brought you up in the Lord and have watched over you. Now you are going places where I can't watch over you any more. I commit you now into the hands of God Almighty, and He will watch over you, care for you, and protect you personally".

LIKE LITTLE JOSEPH

There are often sad moments in the lives of parents which they do not understand. However, a true Christian has that assurance that God is love, and that all things do indeed work together for good for those who love God. Often we do not see until later that the good hand of the Lord was on us and our loved ones, even when it seemed that we were walking through the valley of the shadow of death.

This was the case with Jacob and his son Joseph, from whose lives we can learn that even through seeming tragedy, the love of God is victorious. 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.

God's guiding hand stayed with me.

Before long, I began to work for a very capable chef who soon taught me the secrets of his profession.

For a long time I sailed a new freighter around the world. It was no accident, but a miracle of the Lord that I had a spacious double cabin all to myself.

It was during these long trips that I would read my Bible, whenever I was not writing to my mother or my girlfriend (who later became my fiancée). I also consumed all the spiritual literature which I could lay my hands on. My soul was hungering and thirsting after my Lord and God Who made the heavens and the earth, the birds of the air, the beasts of the field, and the fish of the sea, as well as all the beautiful flowers.

I developed a great love for the seas of the world and the great oceans. How mighty is their power! When a storm or a strong wind would blow up, I would realize how puny man is, and remember the power and authority of Jesus Who commanded the very wind and the waters to be still. And they obeyed His Word!

In the tropics, as the ship's bow cut through the tumbling waves toward her destination, I would look up for hours into the glories of the starry skies. I would watch in awe as some shooting star traced its fiery track across the firmament. The myriad stars would remind me of God and His promise to Abraham. He told him to look at the stars and count them if he could. So many, God told him, would be his descendants!

The ocean, the great whales, the jumping dolphins, the sky with its millions of stars, the rising and setting of the sun in its splendor of colors, the whole of 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 Ruler of the Infinite Universe had a personal interest in 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, or unregenerate man only lives in the visible world and only accepts what his natural mind and physical senses reveal to him.

But faith only considers, like Moses in Hebrews 11:27, the invisible, the testimony of our great Unseen God, the almighty Majesty in the highest, the great Creator of heaven and earth and all there is; Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End, of Whom the prophet said, "For the eyes of the Lord move to and fro throughout the earth that He may strongly support those whose heart is completely His" (2 Chronicles 16:9).

The Second World War

The war between Germany and England was not

without danger for those at sea. Especially in the English Channel where many a ship was blown to pieces by magnetic mines.

Once, while in Dover, we were delayed by the British authorities for cargo inspection and customs control. During the three days we were anchored there, every night at precisely 9 o'clock, German planes attacked the confined channel. Usually these attacks lasted about three hours. When it was all over, we were surrounded by eleven large sunken ships, each with only a small section of their masts or smokestacks visible.

Just before we were given clearance to leave, a small Norwegian freighter passed very closely by. With a sudden tremendous explosion which made us think that we had been hit ourselves, the little ship struck a magnetic mine. If I remember correctly, she was named: M.S. "Bravoere".

A few moments later there was nothing but steam, wood and smoke filling the air, and after two minutes only a tiny piece of the ship's stern remained above the waterline. Of the 24 crew members, only two survived. I witnessed the whole incident from barely a stone's throw away so I was so thankful to God for my own safety!

This was just one of very many ships whose crews went to a watery grave during those dark days, 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. If we had moved out sooner, that mine would probably have been ours!

Airplanes with huge horseshoe magnets under their fuselage were used to clear these mines. They would fly at very low altitude, skimming the waters' surface, triggering tremendous explosions and forcing spectacular fountains of water to shoot high into the air. The magnet would activate the mine, but the plane was long gone before the actual explosion.

If it had been a ship passing over the mine, of course, it would have been the end. These magnetic mines were treacherous gadgets. It was quite possible for a ship to sail blissfully over one, entirely unaware that the detonating mechanism had been fired. The metal of the ship's hull activated the works, and the result was usually fatal. The power and side effects were enormous! The pressure of the water ripped a ship open like a can of sardines.

Just after the destruction of the Norwegian vessel we received our final instructions to leave. Without a doubt the Norwegian, at the expense of 22 lives, had cleared the way for us to sail in safety.

That same day I watched another large freighter hit a mine. There was a tremendous noise and within just a few moments the ship stood straight up on end, with her stem thrust into the air like a dying monument. The lifeboats dangled uselessly, while many a seaman perished in the tumult. To this day, I am still humbly thanking God for His protecting hand upon my life, and for His love, mercy and grace.

The day Holland became involved in the war, I happened to be ashore. Seven of my shipmates were rushed to the front. The war broke out in Holland on May 10th, 1940. On May 11th, our ship was hastily taken out of its dock, and left Flushing (Vlissingen) to sail for Norfolk, Virginia by way of England, and from there to Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Early that morning we were under German air attack, but made it safely to the Atlantic Ocean. We were not yet out of danger, however, for there were German subs everywhere, and we were definitely one of their targets. The German warship "Graf Spee" had just been sunk at the River Plate. The war at sea was getting even hotter. In addition to the U-boats, there were armed German freighters which sailed in disguise. We called them "pirates". They had bases in

Argentina, and eventually we learned that the safest practice in those waters was to avoid any ship in the vicinity of South America.

IN HOSPITAL AT BUENOS AIRES

I didn't feel like staying on this particular ship and did everything I could think of to get off. The Chief Steward for whom I had to work was an old drunkard. He called me everything under the sun and apparently couldn't stand the sight of me, even though I was prompt and faithful in my work.

As I had had some persistent back trouble, I decided to see a doctor in Buenos Aires. Even though I complained about my back, the Argentinian doctor barely gave it a glance. 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 a throat operation. Personally, I couldn't see the connection between my throat and my aching back, but since I wanted desperately to get off that ship, I decided to go to the hospital at once.

I was eighteen years old, and had never heard about healing through prayer. I believed in God with all my heart, but I had no light concerning this great Gospel truth. This just seemed like my legal chance to jump ship.

At the hospital, they removed my tonsils. It was a year later when I actually discovered what kind of surgery they had performed. The first few days I could not eat or speak and had a lot of pain. When I became well enough to eat they did not give me much food. On the whole, the food was pretty dreadful. I noticed visitors bringing in food to the other patients. But I was a stranger. For about 12 days I just lay there, all by myself, alone in a strange country unable to speak the strange language. Spanish was like Greek to me!

The ship had gone up river to Rosario to unload, and by now it was due to return. The doctor came to see how I was doing. I tried to hang on there, because as long as the ship was in that neighbourhood I felt a little nervous.

But, alas, to no avail! Suddenly two nurses came in with my clothes, and sick or not, I had to get dressed. I was bundled into a taxi back to the despised ship. I had barely gotten on board when we sailed!

LONDON DURING THE BLITZ

While I wasn't happy about it at the time, I later saw the good hand of God in this. He had other plans for me.

Once we left Argentina, I was busy on board ship for a long period without a break. One day I told the Captain I really needed a vacation. I pointed out that it wasn't my fault that the war had forced me to stay with the ship so long. It seems that the Lord went before me in this, because when we docked in Barry, near Cardiff, Wales, I was the only one permitted to sign off, with the proviso that I go to London.

I arrived in the war-torn capital of England, and soon found a furnished room. I vividly remember the first night I spent there. Even in the blackout, the room was continually illuminated by exploding shells and gunfire aimed at the enemy planes. Often the whole house shook. I did not realize that I was the only occupant that night. Everyone else spent the night in the airraid shelters. Strangely enough, throughout the hectic years of 1941-42, I was never scared during the London blitzkrieg, nor before or after when I was in peril on the sea.

Nobody knew how long the war would continue. Some people said it would last for years, while others thought it could be over at any time. I decided to stay in London so that I could easily cross over to Holland once the war was over.

I found a nice room in the home of a Scottish widow who took good care of me. Every night I would be the only one at home. I would stay in my room, reading my Bible or Christian books.

Once in a while I would pause when the anti-aircraft guns began firing to listen for the planes. If you listened carefully, you could tell the difference between the Germans and the British by the throb of the engines.

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. Those boys had to fight, whether they wanted to or not. To me, friend or foe, they were all men with souls and loved ones who awaited their return.

However much other people tried to persuade me otherwise, I could not escape the fact that I felt safer inside the house than cooped up inside an underground shelter. The Lord was my shelter, and I always felt His wonderful presence.

Another young man living in the same rooming house tried hard to get me to go with him to a shelter one night. But I felt it was better not to go. I decided to stay home, and the next day he did not return. The shelter had taken a direct hit and he had not survived. Another large shelter, holding some 200 people, had also been hit, and many of those people had lost their lives. I am not decrying the use of shelters - obviously they saved many lives - it was just my personal conviction that I was safer remaining under the shadow of the Most High where He put me.

THE GRIP OF FEAR

My downstairs neighbour had asked me at least ten times to take one of her three daughters to the movies. I had always resisted, as I didn't feel a movie theater was the proper place for a Christian to be found in.

At long last, however, since I had no friends or acquaintances in London, I gave in. I shall never forget the experience! The show was interrupted by the announcement of an air-raid. Straight away, several people dashed for the available shelter.

Now I had never been afraid before, not even on board ship surrounded by angry enemy submarines. Yet here I found myself, walking on what seemed to me to be that broad road leading to destruction of which Jesus had warned us, and fear gripped my heart.

Walking home that night, the girl asked me how I had enjoyed the show. The music, I told her, had been beautiful. I avoided any comment about the movie, because I hadn't seen it at all. The only thing I had done was to pray with my eyes closed for mercy and forgiveness, and for the protection of His loving hand.

As best I remember, this was the last time I ever went to a movie just to pass the time. It was not my last experience with cinema buildings, however. More than 20 years later, I visited another theater, this time in Rome, Italy. To mark the occasion, I watched its last movie performance before its transformation into a Full Gospel Center. It was this theatre which inspired me, one year later, to buy the beautiful Capitol Theater in The Hague, Holland and make a similar transformation. See colour picture pages. I will write more about this magnificent and inspired experience in a later chapter.

While I am on the subject of motion pictures, let me say that I have nothing against the remarkable movie-making techniques of today. It is just that the vast majority of films produced these days are far from edifying for young and old alike.

So much of the content is sexually stimulating. Lessons are given in adultery, immorality, murder, crime and violence. The better movies are, sadly enough, few and far between. A movie theatre manager recently summed up his industry's dilemma when he complained, "Mr. Maasbach, if we don't show nude scenes and raw sex, who would go to the movies nowadays?"

I am convinced that a born-again Christian has no business whatsoever attending the average movie made to appeal to the jaundiced tastes of modern audiences. I don't say that you will go to hell for seeing a movie; but I do think that it is a sad reflection upon the spiritual condition of the Christian who feels he or she needs to feed upon these things.

What a blessing it is that we may personally experience the mighty hand of the Heavenly Father in our lives! I was in the habit of taking an evening stroll around eight o'clock each night. On this

particular occasion, I was just leaving the front door when my landlady called me back for some reason. I went back upstairs to see what she wanted. As we stood talking, we heard the bloodcurdling whistle of a falling bomb very, very close. She grabbed my hand and instinctively we crouched, waiting for the blast.

The whole house shook violently on its foundation. As the plaster fell from the ceiling, there was a muffled blow, the old house trembled as if with the palsy, and then all was quiet.

I ran downstairs to see what had happened. When I opened the front door there was the whole street buried under many feet of rubble. 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 to save me from certain death.

Strangely enough, not one window of my room was broken. Somehow, the air-pressure had been diverted in the other direction. Hundreds of windows across the entire neighbourhood had been shattered. Mine had been spared!

My one regret concerning this interlude in London is that nobody ever took me to church or to a Full Gospel meeting. In fact, I did not even know of the existence of such people as Full Gospel believers at that time. Otherwise I would have beaten down the bushes searching for them.

Alas, the bombs were not the only things that sought to disturb my little nest. Suddenly, I was notified by the authorities to sign on to another ship, or be transported to Canada for military training. If I refused, they intimated, I could go to jail, or possibly be executed.

Military service was against all my personal principles. The alternative was even less attractive, outside of shipping to sea again. I tried to postpone the whole miserable business. However, cooks were in short supply in the Merchant Marine, and I was ordered to sign on a ship of the Rotterdam-Lloyd Line leaving for Indonesia.

I refused. I did not want to go to the Far East.

I had prayed to the Lord that if I had to go to sea again, He would give me a ship bound for America. My eldest brother had left Holland for the U.S.A. when I was only six months old. This, I thought, would be a good time for me to get to know him!

God Leads the Way

Actually, I had not intended to leave England so soon.

I would rather have stayed close to home so that I could cross the Channel back to Holland as soon as the war was over.

It was almost impossible to get any news from my relatives there. The only thing I knew was that the centre of Rotterdam had been wiped out by German bombs. I could not imagine that anything serious had happened to my parents, knowing that both my father and mother walked with the Lord. I had no evidence one way or the other, but I was not concerned.

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 Holland 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!

Quite suddenly, I was notified that a ship of 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 and leave right away.

I felt I could not refuse this time. This might be the ship to take me to New York. Because my clothes were at the dry cleaners, I wanted to leave the following morning. 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. Even so, the blitz stayed with me much of the way. There were frequent halts during air-raids, when we could hear the German bombers directly above us. Happily, because of the fog, they were unable to locate the railroad tracks. The next morning we steamed safely into the great city of 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!

You can imagine that, having been forced to abandon my clothes at the cleaners and to suffer the discomfort of an all-night train ride under wartime conditions, I was more than a little upset.

Another crew member was due to join the ship from the day train which I had wished to take. He never made it. 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. Then I bawled like a baby, and thanked God for His mercy and love, and for His protecting hand once more moving in my behalf. I asked the Lord to forgive me for getting mad and for not listening to His voice too well.

I never cease to be amazed at how our gracious and faithful God keeps His almighty hand and all-seeing eye on our lives. We know from experience that our God is able to keep His own from danger and death. The lives of Joseph and David in the Bible are powerful demonstrations of His keeping power. It is, of course, the grace of God!

Truly I have every cause to affirm with the Psalmist, "The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear Him, and rescues them" (Psalm 34:7). It is wonderful to belong to Him!

There was a rumor on the ship that she was 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. Nobody could let the cat out of the bag in idle conversation at some dockside cafe. Sometimes, however, the cargo would give us a clue.

After I was settled on board, it seemed that I knew that this was the ship the Lord had given me in answer to prayer. To know things like that is often vitally important, especially in times of danger. **When we are in His will, we are always safe.**

Throughout the whole trip I had the assurance that we would safely reach our destination, whatever it was. Imagine how very grateful I was when, a few days out to sea, I learned that we were heading for New York!

The journey on the S.S. "Leerdam" progressed without difficulty. Our route was kept extremely to the north, and we were able to watch the splendor of the Northern Lights (the Aurora Borealis). Naturally, the weather was bitterly cold. We had about 100 crew members and 30 passengers to keep me busy all the time. My only help was a young college boy. There was no second cook and the baker had missed the boat!

The consul who had signed me on this ship told me that never during his entire career had he signed on such a young chef. I was only 22 years old, and I wanted to be sure that nobody complained about my cooking.

My faith in this connection was severely tested on one occasion. Among other things, I had placed a main course of fowl upon the supper menu for that evening.

Something which seldom ever happened to me took place that day: the game birds burned! This was the principal dish, and there was no time to prepare a substitute. I tasted it again and was convinced that nobody would eat a bite of it.

Filled with remorse, I rushed into the bakery which was next to the galley, and locked the door behind me. I fell on my knees in front of the dough trough and cried to the God of Elijah, Who is also my God.

I prayed, "Father, in the Name of Jesus, help me! I don't know what to do, so please change the taste of this game dish. You are Almighty. When the water was bitter You made it sweet" (Exodus 15:22-27).

I went back to the galley and began handing the dishes to the stewards. Much to my surprise, they kept coming back for more until every bit was gone!

That night as I was strolling on the boat deck the Captain suddenly approached me and complimented me. He said, "Chef, I have never tasted such delicious game. The passengers especially kept asking for more".

What else could I do, after this confirmation of the miracle, but to thank my Lord and God with tears of gratitude coursing down my cheeks! How often do we lack the courage to believe that we have received what we have prayed for? I had prayed and expected all the food to be returned to the galley, but instead I ran out of game and every bit had been eaten. And to crown it all, the Captain had thanked me for a delicious meal!

The Lord was pleased to do it for me, just to confirm the fact that He really does hear! We are so often inattentive and forget so quickly what the Lord has done for us.

It was a majestic and impressive sight as we sailed into New York's harbor. For the first time, I saw the fabled Empire State Building, over 100 stories tall, towering above its smaller brothers and sisters of only 40 or 50 floors high. All huge by European standards!

I saw the famous Statue of Liberty, with her arm thrust high as a witness to all nations of the freedom that finds a home in America. I admired the great hanging bridges, and wondered how I would ever be able to stay. I had prayed and said, "Lord, will You please help me and make it possible for me to get off this ship so that I can stay in New York?" But, being the only cook on board, it was not going to be any easy matter. An officer or a sailor might sometimes be replaced, but not so the only chef!

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 12 years old, answered the doorbell. I asked her if Mr. Maasbach was home, and she said yes.

Even though I was a complete stranger to her, she let me walk past her into the hall, up the stairs and into the living room. "Are you Mr. Maasbach?" I asked the surprised occupant of the room.

"Yes, I am", he replied.

"Then", said I in Dutch,

"I am your brother Johan!"

It was all very unexpected, and he had not recognized me, particularly as I had only been a baby when he left home. But soon we were exchanging family news. He had many questions, among the first of which was, "Johan, are you saved?"

MEETING THE PENTECOSTALS

I shall never forget the first time my brother took me to Ridgewood Pentecostal Church. Ridgewood is a suburb of Brooklyn. The meeting was held on the second floor. I thought I had arrived in the Upper Room at Jerusalem, where the Holy Spirit had fallen on the disciples (as recorded in Acts, chapter 2).

For the first time in my life, I heard people speaking in unknown tongues, just like it says in 1 Corinthians 12 and 14 and in the Acts of the Apostles. I heard people magnifying the Lord and praising His Holy Name 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 glorified the Lord with upraised arms and loud voices.

Tentatively, I raised my hands a little bit. Suddenly, my brother pushed my elbows up so that my hands were way up in the air. I needed that push. I was too timid to do it myself. I just hadn't been brought up that way!

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 don't have to listen to what they are praying. They are talking to God and He hears everybody. You pray yourself and you will be blessed too".

Indeed, I had yet to learn to magnify the Lord in the midst of the congregation. But I thank God that I did learn to do it. It brings one into closer fellowship with God and with one's brothers and sisters in Christ.

At Ridgewood, there were times of praise but there were also times of holy silence. At other times, somebody would be moved to stand up and tell what Jesus meant to him. On occasions, different ones would dance in the Spirit before the Lord in the middle of the congregation.

Later, there were times when I could scarcely keep my feet on the floor. Many people will not understand this manifestation, but King David must have had the same experience when the ark was brought into Jerusalem with shouting and the sound of the trumpet. David danced before the Lord with all his might (2 Samuel 6).

Knowing that the Ark of the Covenant is a picture of Christ, how much more should we rejoice in the presence of Him Who bought us with His own precious blood. Therefore I am not ashamed and I rejoice with those who exalt our Savior Jesus Christ with a liberty which sometimes results in dancing.

I can also understand those pastors who do not permit dancing in their churches. Dancing in the Spirit before the Lord is not a frequent happening. It can very easily deteriorate into a fleshly activity and have nothing to do with the Holy Spirit. The point I am making 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 Christ Jesus.

One more thing from my early experiences in Ridgewood is worth mentioning. One day, after the offering plate had passed, my brother suddenly inquired, "How much did you put in the offering?"

The question shocked me. In Holland, people don't ask questions 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 retorted, "Being single, you should be ashamed to give the Lord only one dollar. You ought to give at least five dollars each time. Did you ever give \$ 100?"

“What is he talking about?” I thought. Quickly I figured: in those days, \$ 100 was equivalent to 385 Dutch guilders. It sounded like a small fortune to be putting into an offering.

“Dutch people”, said my brother, “are misers. You will never experience God’s blessings if you don’t give first. They are proud, too”, he added. “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 we will miss the blessings God has for us, if we are not willing to lose ourselves in Him!”

I surely got my fill there! But I never regretted it. Eventually I learned to give with a glad heart, but only after first offering a feeble argument about a Bible verse which says that the left hand should not know what the right hand is doing.

“No wonder”, came the blunt reply. “For then your left hand would be deeply ashamed to know that the right hand gave so little!”

In the past I may have put only a few quarters in the offering. Today I wouldn’t dare to do that: I would only be short-changing myself. For God says, “By your standard of measure, it shall be measured to you” (Matthew 7:2b), “for the Lord 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, and that God sets the value upon our offering according to what we possess. I am very grateful to my brother for teaching me the secret of how to receive abundantly from God, especially how this secret relates to our giving. See Luke 6:38!

IN NEW YORK

One morning while we were still docked in New York, a Dutchman approached me. I was busy in the ship’s galley, and he asked me how I liked the ship. I soon discovered that he was a cook and, through illness, he had been forced to remain ashore.

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 gleefully that it was all arranged!

This was another milestone in which I saw God’s hand in a miraculous way. Nor had He finished helping me out. I had quite a lot of luggage to move. The day I was leaving the ship, a man came on board looking for someone. He couldn’t find his quarry, and I asked him if, by any change, he was going to Brooklyn. To my delight, he said he was.

He drove his car right in front of the gangplank where I loaded my bags easily into his trunk. It was the day after Christmas and very cold. At the dock gate he showed his pass and we were waved through immediately. During wartime, customs inspection in New York was even stricter than it normally is. Yet I never had to open one of my bags, and the man drove me right up in front of my brother’s home where, for the time being, I was going to stay.

Not only did God make these arrangements for me, but He caused the First Mate to pay me my whole salary, brought me ashore without meeting one immigration official, and I was not told to report anywhere. I got my wages, left the ship with all my luggage, 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 Holland because of the war, so I looked for a job in New York.

I spoke very little English at the time, so I took several laboring jobs to tide me over, until one day I found a well-paying job in a large restaurant. Once again, my God had supplied all my needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus - Philippians 4:19.

How God Healed Me

I had terrible pains in my back and could not walk

upright. My brother asked me what was wrong and I told him I had had these pains on and off for a long time and had been to several doctors for tests and treatment. Two years previously 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 did not readily accept such an accusation. I believed in God with all my heart and knew He could perform miracles and could heal me. Yet my brother insisted that I was sick because of unbelief.

He said, "If you would believe Isaiah 53:4 and 5 you would not accept your illness. Why bear that which Jesus has already borne for you?" While he was charging me with unbelief, I kept justifying myself by saying I did believe.

When I came home that night I opened my Bible and read Isaiah 53:4,5: "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed" - KJV.

I also read Exodus 15:26c: "I, the Lord, am your healer", and Deuteronomy 7:15: "And the Lord will remove from you all sickness; and He will not put on you any of the harmful diseases of Egypt which you have known", as well as 1 Peter 2:24c: "For by His wounds you were healed".

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

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, no matter how I felt.

At that time I was working for a contractor as a bricklayer's mate. I had taken this kind of job to start with because I could hardly speak any English. I shall 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 haul cement up ten flights of stairs because the elevator was not working. It was 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.

S o m e r e a d e r s m i g h t f i n d t h i s s t r a n g e , b u t I k e p t t h i n k i n g : "That old devil in my back has to give up". Often the pain forced tears into my eyes, and many times I prayed, "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. I felt like an Israelite in Egypt in the days of Pharaoh.

On Sundays I would go to the meetings. One day I asked the Pastor to pray for me. He rebuked the pain and illness 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 to believe.

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 2000 years ago, even so were our sicknesses paid for: for "by His stripes we ARE

healed". So I began to thank the Lord and said, "Lord, I believe You have healed me. Lord, I do thank you". While I was praying this, my back pains were excruciating.

Some time later, 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 off 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 thanked and praised the Lord, and with tears streaming down my face again, I magnified His Holy Name.

Kneeling at my bed that night, my Bible open in front of me, I thanked God that He not only had forgiven our sins, but had also healed all our diseases (Psalm 103:3).

One day I strained my back while lifting some-thing heavy, and immediately a hot pain stabbed me from behind. The old devil didn't lose any time, and whispered right away in my ear, "I told you you weren't really healed". I replied, "Devil, you are a liar. God did heal me, and what I feel now is only temporary and will go away".

How often the devil uses such circumstances to create doubts and to weaken our faith. When he hissed into my ear, "You are still sick", it was as if I heard him come to me walking on his wooden shoes (that's an old Dutch expression). But praise God, I could ignore that old lying devil (Lucifer) completely.

All this happened over 50 years ago, and I still humbly thank God that He healed me then. By faith in Him Who carried my diseases, I will remain healthy and healed by His love and grace. I know what it is like to be in pain and to pray for many years for healing. But so many of us have been taught that it is a cross God wants us to carry. Through ignorance, I had no knowledge of positive prayer. Sometimes I had prayed, "Lord, if it is Your will, please heal me". 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 learn to pray in positive faith. The victory for the things we are praying for has to be in our hearts already.

This kind of victory knows that we will receive what we are asking for. This kind of victory is not always there for everything for which we pray. Sometimes we have to pray and fast in order to be victorious in our faith, so that we can receive what we ask for. What amazing patience God has with unbelieving human beings!

Another lesson I learned was this: that I should seriously examine my personal life, searching out those things which were not pleasing to God. I found a few, which I eliminated from my life so that they would not stand between God and my healing. Yet I did understand that we are not healed because of self-effort or self-righteousness. Only because of the righteousness of Christ, Who bore our sins upon the cross.

The promise given by the Lord in Exodus 15: 26c: "I, the Lord, am your healer", was only valid to God's chosen people if they fulfilled the conditions attached to the promise: "give ear to His commandments, and keep all His statutes".

We have all failed in this. But that which we were unable to do, Jesus has done for us. 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 has done it for us, so that we would be justified by Him. Therefore, all the promises of God are yea and amen in Christ Jesus, including this promise: "I, the Lord, am your healer!"

Now I am a preacher of the wonderful Gospel of Christ, which really means: a preacher of the wonderful Good News of Christ. I am able to tell all the people that God *is* a good God, and that He forgives all our iniquities and heals all our diseases (Psalm 103:3).

The Bible says, **Today** is the day of salvation. Most Christians believe that. Why not also believe that **today** is the day for your healing?

Let us steadfastly believe that **today** He is the Rock of my salvation. And **today** He is my great and mighty Healer.

Sometimes it is a good thing to read and confess with a loud voice and believe it with your heart. These are not my words, but the words of Jesus Himself. "All things are possible to HIM WHO BELIEVES" Mark 9:23. You can read more about in my book HOW TO

RECEIVE HEALING FROM GOD. It is a practical book which gives you knowledge about divine healing. You know faith comes by hearing and hearing by The Word of God (Romans 10:17). And ... “Without faith it is impossible to please God, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him” (Hebrews 11:6).

A Battle

The war continued. I heard reports of the terrible

situation in Holland, 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, “For you have made the Lord, my refuge, even the Most High, your dwelling place. No evil will befall you, nor will any plague come near your tent. For He will give His angels charge concerning you, to guard you in all your ways”.

I worked with an American Jew, whose own son was fighting on the front lines in Europe, and in a way, I took his son’s place. I was living in a land of plenty and was working in one of Brooklyn’s busiest restaurants with an abundance of food.

On Thanksgiving Day, however, I chose to fast. This is an American holiday when everyone gives thanks for an abundant harvest and celebrates traditionally by eating a large turkey dinner. I also fasted during the Christmas season. When everyone else was eating their Christmas dinner, I fasted and prayed for my country and my countrymen. On such feast days, I humbled myself before the Lord, crying out for suffering humanity and especially for my kin in wartorn Europe.

A DIFFICULT DECISION

“The Lord gave and the lord has taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord” (Job 1:21b).

Every man or woman of God has experienced, or will experience the truth of this well-known scripture verse. These experiences seem to be necessary for the perfection of our life of faith and our walk with Him. More than once I have gone through this process myself.

I was still on my final journey which, since the war was preventing my return to Holland, 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. Would she be willing to follow me in whatever direction the Lord might lead me? he queried.

I couldn’t give him a direct 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. My life had been changed and had reached new depths through my contact with the Pentecostal movement. I was going through an inward battle.

My friend had said, “If your fiancée is not completely surrendered to the Lord as you are, you will never be able to serve Him one hundred per-cent. After you marry her, she’ll be like a weight, holding you back and slowing you down”.

The problem was that I was convinced that the Lord had given her to me to be my future wife. Many questions tormented me. Is it possible that God gives you something and then takes it away again? Does He allow you to first love something or somebody, only to take them 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. I think of Abraham and Isaac in Genesis 22, of the Shunammite woman and her son in 2 Kings 4, and of Jairus and his daughter in Mark 5.

God will give you something or somebody to love first, and then He may take them 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 apt to look upon things as our own possessions, even though the earth and the fullness thereof belong to Him. We forget so often that we are only the stewards of those good things God has shared with us. Perhaps it was because I loved my fiancée so much that I understood I would never make

her completely happy. I knew her too well, and realized that she would be unable to pay the price if the Lord would want to use me entirely for His service.

I prayed earnestly to the Lord and fasted, asking Him what He wanted me to do. Often, when I had fasted in the past, I would go without food or drink for three days, or if I fasted while I was working, I would take an occasional glass of water.

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 say unto you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or farms, for My sake and for the gospel's sake, but that he shall receive a hundred times as much now in the present age, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and farms, along with persecutions; and in the world to come, eternal life".

I finally made the difficult decision to write to her, explaining things, and breaking off the engagement. I shall 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 was driven to my knees, in need of added strength. How the devil fought me, whispering accusations that I wasn't fair, not honest. She had been waiting so long and had been faithful throughout my long trips and the war years. The devil will always try to make us feel sorry for the flesh. Suddenly he doesn't want to hurt anybody's feelings!

True faith, however, accepts that which is written. In 1 Samuel 15:22 it says, "Has the Lord as much delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams".

You may ask, "Brother Maasbach, did you ever regret your decision?"

My answer is, "**Never, no never!**" I am still grateful that I made the decision, even though I wouldn't like to go through a battle like that again. How many men and women called of God, have been handicapped in their ministry and have suffered in their 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 gave in to the weakness of their flesh.

Every Spirit-filled believer knows that we can never be happy or enjoy abundant peace with God, if we are not fulfilling God's calling upon our life. What a tragedy it would be if our high calling should be hindered by having the wrong partner!

There are Christians who have chosen their life's partner before their conversion. They can only trust God to work things out for them, realizing how different things could have been, had they accepted the Way, the Truth and the Life sooner.

How grateful I am for the wife God did give me later on, with whom I am now fulfilling God's calling for my life. How important it is for young Christians to wait upon the Lord for the right partner.

I made up my mind to leave this choice entirely up to Him Who knows our hearts. He knows what we are made of and He knows our innermost desires. Wouldn't our Father, through His Holy Spirit, lead and guide us in these important matters also? Of course He would! But are we willing to wait for Him and to pay the price?

Didn't Jesus say, in Mark 8:34,35, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it; and whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's shall save it."

Faith in Action

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 had no money.

For the past two years, I had used most of my income for the support of a missionary family. I often had to pray for a pair of new shoes, as every penny was going to the mission field. For years I had not bought a new suit. Yet I was always well-dressed. I knew a secondhand clothing store where, for \$ 5 or \$ 10, I could pick up used quality suits. Nobody knew I was wearing other people's cast-offs, 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 save this way.

I remember the time that I needed a new suit on one of my trips. A sailor on board ship had bought a very expensive suit the night before while in a drunken stupor. Sobering up the next day, he discovered it was several sizes too large for him, so he sold it to me for \$ 12. It fitted me perfectly, since I was much taller than he. I was amused and thanked the Lord for using a drunken sailor to get me a new suit.

There are people who will never know what it is like to pray for a pair of shoes or some clothes. They have plenty of money and just buy whatever they have need of. 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. Those are the people I want to understand and with whom I want to identify. I believe this is what Christ meant us to do: to remember the poor and the needy in their afflictions.

Now, as I said, I wanted to buy a car. I possessed the magnificent sum of \$ 1.25, but I believed that God meant me to have a car! So one day I went out to look for one.

I came to a used-car lot, where several hundred 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 Super 8 Packard. It was a beauty and in excellent condition. We settled for \$ 125,-. 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 give him \$ 25 next week. I would leave the car on the lot until the full amount had been paid.

The man looked at me dumbfounded. I was praying hard, still believing that the Lord wanted me to have that car. Finally, the salesman objected, "We don't deal this way. Anyway, I have never heard of such an agreement".

A Dutchman to the core, I told him that this was the only way I could buy a car. Miraculously, it seemed to me, he eventually agreed and placed a SOLD sign on the windshield. That week I worked extra hard, made some overtime, and was able to pay my first \$ 25. I shall never forget the happy moment I paid off the rest, stepped into the car the Lord had given me, and drove off the lot.

THE LORD GAVE ... THE LORD TOOK

Every born-again Christian believes that God is his Father. It is the Father Who wants to teach His children the way of 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 a shepherd boy and killed a lion

and a bear, he was in his Heavenly Father's school, preparing for the future when he would kill a bigger and more powerful enemy, the giant Goliath. At this time the Lord was teaching me, too.

One year later, my friend and I were going to buy a home. We certainly needed one and believed that the Lord would lead us. We agreed that the house had to be close to the railroad station, and somewhere on Long Island so that it would be easy to go to the meetings and to our jobs in New York.

We had no money at the time, but we had a big God. We believed He would help us to find a house. One day we got into our big Packard, drove through Long Island, and stopped at a large real estate office. I had \$ 25 with me, and my friend had two dollars. That was all we possessed.

Now here is an important lesson to learn for those who want to do business by faith. There is a faith which fails and there is a faith which never fails. There are people who want things, or want to go to other countries, for selfish reasons. The Holy Spirit gives them no guidance. Often their desire stems from jealousy. They want what others have. They want to do what others do, but they are not humble. They can't stand it when a brother or a friend has a nicer car or a bigger home or a better job. It is never of the Lord when we allow envious motives to guide our decisions (read Psalm 37:7).

There is a holy jealousy, I think, that is different. You see others having something that you don't have, but which is to the glory of God and which magnifies His Name. You desire to have the same. The motive here is to please God and not yourself.

Jesus said, "I do nothing unless I see the Father do it", or "I always do those things which please Him". We have to recognize the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Usually God Himself places the desire in the heart of His child for those things which He wants to give him.

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 God's servant, King David. He told Nathan the prophet that he wanted to build a house for the Lord (2 Samuel 7). Even the prophet thought that it was a good 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.

The thing which David wanted to do did not fit into God's scheme of things. David did not know the future. God does. It was his son Solomon's task to build the Temple for God.

Nevertheless, David did have the privilege of preparing for the building of the Lord's temple. King 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 Him and if we are allowed to do a great deal for Him, it is only by His grace that we accomplish anything. Our motives and the guidance of the Holy Spirit, then, are important in the successful completion of any step of faith, no matter in what area of life.

I remember the day that I needed an oil-burner for a heating unit. I didn't know a thing about burners, *but the Holy Spirit understands all things*. The salesman had two burners. 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 Holy Spirit clearly told me to take the old one. My common sense said the opposite. The salesman also agreed that the new one was much better. It cost \$ 50; the other one was \$ 22.

I finally bought the new one. A week later it broke down and we couldn't fix it. According to an expert, it was an old model which needed a new part. The part was \$ 20. Much to my surprise, they removed the two gauges and attached a new part which looked exactly like the one I had seen on the old burner I had failed to buy. I was deeply ashamed of myself and asked the Lord to forgive me for not listening more carefully to His voice.

How often does a child of God suffer spiritually or materially because he does not listen to the promptings of His Spirit? 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 leading of the Holy Spirit.

Let me return to my narrative: we had arrived at the realtor's office on Long Island.

He asked us what we were looking for. We told him exactly what we had in mind. When he asked our price range, we said that this was not important. The home itself and its location were our chief concerns. He showed us many houses, but there was none of which we could say:

"This is it!" or felt a witness of God's Spirit.

Some time later, the salesman mentioned a home in Springfield Garden, not far from the railroad station. It was large and had been vacant for a while. We both wanted to see it.

When we arrived and looked at it, we suddenly knew: This was it! The whole place had been boarded up rather unsuccessfully against vandalism. We entered through the back door. It was pitch dark and by the light of a match we vaguely outlined some of the interior.

We told the surprised broker that we did not need to see any more. We had decided to take it. 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 \$ 6000. The realtor said he would discuss it with the owner. He wanted \$ 200 cash for a down payment. I told him that I had \$ 25 and would give him that as a deposit for the \$ 200. So my twenty-five dollars got the ball rolling!

To make a long story short, I am happy to report that we got it for less than \$ 7000, with monthly payments of \$ 85. After we had fixed it up ourselves, it was valued at \$ 25000, a high amount at that time. This purchase would have been relatively insignificant if it had not been followed by a very important lesson.

Some people are unable to handle the luxury of God's gifts to them. My friend was an example. He began to covet the home we had bought between us and jointly owned, and which had more than tripled in value. Now he wanted to own it all by himself.

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. Unsuspectingly, and without any exchange of money, I went along with his idea and turned the title to him.

Then an incredible thing happened. After I had signed, I was evicted! I was young and naive, but the Lord began to teach me through this experience. I have never regretted this incident which has often come to mind on later occasions, when deceitful people have approached me with hypocritical religious blarney.

I wasn't even allowed to take out my personal belongings. No doubt, the Lord allowed this. Of course, I could have taken legal action, but I felt as though the Lord was saying to me, "Vengeance is Mine" (Deut. 32:35), and also, from the Sermon on the Mount, "Whoever hits you on the cheek, offer him the other also; and whoever takes away your coat, do not withhold your shirt from him either. Give to everyone who asks of you, and whoever takes away what is yours, do not demand it back" (Luke 6:29,30).

Of course, 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 we know that what a man sows, he will also reap. As Paul says in 1 Corinthians 6:6,7, "But brother goes to law with brother, and that before unbelievers? Actually, then, it is already a defeat for you, that you have lawsuits with one another. Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be defrauded?"

So, apparently without cause, everything was taken away from me. But it 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 manifoldly returned to me that which He allowed me to lose. Through it all I have come to appreciate Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 7:30, 31, "And those who buy (should be) as though they did not possess; and those who use the world, as though they did not make full use of it; for the form of this world is passing away".

The natural man continually attaches himself to earthly possessions, but the man who is born of God, the spiritual man, considers those things which are 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 for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God" (Hebrews 11:10).

Also we read about Moses in Hebrews 11:24-27, "By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to endure illtreatment with the people of God, than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin; considering the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he was looking to reward. By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured, as seeing Him who is unseen".

We do not always know why we have to go through some experiences. But the real believer knows that God makes no mistakes when 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 shall surely survive in victory!

Psalm 91:1-16

- 1 He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty.
- 2 I will say of the Lord, "He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust".
- 3 Surely he will save you from the fowler's snare and from the deadly pestilence.
- 4 He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart.
- 5 You will not fear the terror of night, nor the arrow that flies by day,
- 6 nor the pestilence that stalks in the darkness, nor the plague that destroys at midday.
- 7 A thousand may fall at your side, ten thousand at your right hand, but it will not come near you.
- 8 You will only observe with your eyes and see the punishment of the wicked.
- 9 If you make the Most High your dwelling - even the LORD, who is my refuge -
- 10 then no harm will befall you, no disaster will come near your tent.
- 11 For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways;
- 12 they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.
- 13 You will tread upon the lion and the cobra; you will trample the great lion and the serpent.
- 14 "Because he loves me", says the LORD, "I will rescue him; I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name.
- 15 He will call upon me,

and I will answer him;
I will be with him in trouble,
I will deliver him and honor him.
16 With long life will I satisfy him and
show him my salvation”.

Under His Wings

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. It says, “He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the Almighty”. In times of war and of danger I have often experienced not only the truth of this first verse, but of the entire Psalm. It is just as valid for us today as when it was written.

Once, during the war, I arrived in London and, since the hour was late, I checked into a large boarding house. The next day the proprietor asked me where I had been all night. I said I had been asleep in my room, even though at times it had been very noisy from the bombings and shellings around us.

The man was highly surprised and remarked that nobody ever stayed inside, but spent the night in the nearest shelter. I witnessed to him about Jesus and how He was my Shelter. The secret of resting is to abide in Jesus.

The war raged on and even though I had a good job in a large restaurant in Brooklyn, God spoke to my heart to go to sea again. 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, even as He did for those of old. I think of Elijah in Zarephath, Moses in the desert, and David in the cave.

From the moment God speaks and reveals His will, no born-again Christian will know real peace until he follows the direction God wants him to go. In Psalm 32:8, the Lord says, “I will instruct you and teach you in the way which you should go; I will counsel you with My eye upon you”. This scripture often spoke to me in a special way. Also Psalm 37:23, “The steps of a man are established by the Lord; and He delights in his way”.

Many people with whom I worked 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. But, because of my close walk with the Lord, I was allowed to remain in the shadow of the Almighty.

Now, however, I knew that the time had come for me to leave. I quit my job and began looking for a ship. This was not difficult. I soon found myself as chef aboard a Norwegian freighter, the S.S. “Solfon”, a 20,000-ton tanker loaded with airplane gasoline, headed for the Port of London in England.

I had plenty of choices on other ships, but I felt as though the Lord pointed directly to this one. Perhaps the devil thought I would get scared. But why should we ever be afraid if we know that we are walking in His will and that He, God Almighty Himself, is with us?

I believe some incidents on board ship will be worth mentioning. Though I was quite familiar with the Dutch and American cuisine, I did not know a thing about Norwegian food. But I did know that the Lord had put me on this ship. It is a good thing when we are in such circumstances that we can say with the Apostle Paul, “I can do all things through Him who strengthens me”. Through special circumstances, the chef whose place I took had not signed off, but stayed on board. 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 be drunk in the galley at an early morning hour. Neither was it unusual for him to drink over half a pint of gin before breakfast. One day I missed two bottles of lemon extract from my shelves. The craving for alcohol was so great that he would consume anything that contained even a smidgen of the stuff.

As we approached the English coast, we received word that German U-boats were in the area. Suddenly we were enveloped in such a dense fog that the Captain ordered the engines to be

stopped. Even though fog in the vicinity of England is not unusual, this particular fogbank was, without a doubt, the miracle provision of God.

Never before had submarines come as close to the ship. I happened to be on the bridge where I often spent my leisure time, and was casually scanning the surface for periscopes. I conversed with the Captain and found that he, too, was a believer. I asked him if he believed the Lord was able to help us in this situation and keep us safe. He believed it! Here we were, just drifting, with a highly volatile cargo. One torpedo or shell and the whole ship would go up in flames!

How beautiful to have a quiet and peaceful heart under all circumstances! I was never afraid. Almost all the crew members slept fully clothed, and most of them wore their life-vests as well. Some of them even slept on the boatdeck in case of emergency. I always slept in my pyjamas, with just a small dufflebag holding my papers and my life-vest at the foot of my bunk. I could not help but believe 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 protection. I always slept peacefully, and still do, even to this day. Some people have doubts about my conviction that God will protect 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. It is a blessing to know that Jesus Christ is our High Priest and Intercessor, Who is also praying for you and me (Hebr. 4:14,15,16).

Just before we docked in London, VE-Day was declared. The war in Europe was all over. However, this did not clear all ships from immediate danger. Mines that had broken loose or had been forgotten continued to inflict casualties on unsuspecting ships.

I MEET REVEREND ESTES

For six months I stayed with this ship, sailing mostly between Texas and Scotland. Whenever we were in Texas, I would visit a Pentecostal church. I shall never forget the first time I met Rev. G. Wilson Estes in Galveston. I found the address of the Pentecostal church which he pastored in the Yellow Pages of the phone book.

While most crew members went after liquor, women and dancing, my heart longed for the fellowship of those who loved and served the Living God.

Mr. Estes greeted me, asking me who I was and where I came from. 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 did it with a heart full of love, and the anointing of God's Spirit upon me. I could feel myself blossoming out after having dwelt with the living dead for so long alone on board ship.

After some community singing, the Pastor suddenly asked how many people would like the Dutch brother to sing a special. All hands went up, and I had no choice but to sing. My heart beat faster, but I had to go forward and do it, whether I wanted to or not.

Thank God that He **will** give us a song in moments like these. Such a song, under the anointing of God, is very different from an ordinary song. I clearly remember this one: "Where He Leads Me I Will Follow". I was mightily relieved and grateful to the Lord that He helped me through it. Much to my surprise, however, after the sermon, the Pastor once again asked the congregation if they would like to hear the Dutchman sing another song. And once again, all hands went up.

The big shock came, however, when Rev. Wilson Estes invited me to sing the following week upon his radio program. How could I refuse this wonderful chance to reach people for Jesus through a song?

I chose one of my favorites for the radio broad-cast, "**His Eye Is On The Sparrow**". The Pastor took the opportunity to announce that the singer was from Holland and would sing once more during the evening service at church. 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 honor and glory of His Name.

The greatest error made by pastors these days, perhaps, is the lack of opportunity which they give to their young people to express themselves in ministry and to develop spiritually. They seem to be afraid of the blunders which could be made, afraid for visitors who might not like it. Some are even afraid for their own sakes, sad to say, because a tinge of jealousy had crept into their aging hearts. For this reason a man like Saul could not stand young David.

Often I have noticed that some other pastors would not tolerate me because God's Spirit was upon me. I know and understand now what Joseph and David had to endure, and, to a much greater degree, Jesus Himself.

Faith, however, knows that "all things work together for good to those who love God and are called according to His purpose" (Romans 8:28). It will always work for our own good, but to the disadvantage of those who are fearful or jealous.

DIRECTIONS FROM GOD

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. For some reason, I could not see myself disembarking in Glasgow.

Both the Chief Steward and the Captain had told me that I had to sign off. The ship was going to stay in Glasgow for six weeks for repairs. Everyone had their luggage all packed except me. The Holy Spirit clearly told me that I would leave the ship in America.

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 Chief 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 New York, they said, I had to disembark in New York. And that was that.

When my assistant cook, (the one who drank so much) came to say good-bye, he could not contain his amazement that never once during our journeyings together had he ever heard me curse. The fact that I didn't drink or visit prostitutes was strange enough, but the fact that I didn't swear was altogether too extraordinary.

How closely the world watches and observes us when we are Christians!

Complete with a brand-new crew, we sailed for Houston, Texas, where I signed off without any problem. I spent a few wonderful weeks of relaxation with my friend and brother in Christ, Wilson Estes in nearby Galveston, before taking a long bus ride to New York.

This time I signed on to an American Liberty ship sailing for Bremen, Germany. She was a G.I. troop transport. Once again, I was chef. We carried an enormous stock of food, with all the freezers loaded to overflowing.

In Bremen, the first thing I did was to look for some brothers and sisters in Christ. In post-war Germany this was not easy, but I did find a Full Gospel church. The congregation had great needs and was very hungry. I had asked permission from the Captain to take some food to my friends. He told me to go ahead on my own responsibility.

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 because of the war, they had no handkerchiefs with which to dry their faces either.

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 Antichrist. How different Germany's youth would have been if the loving, living Christ had been preached to them. Every evening I brought food for His church. Does not the Lord say, "Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me" (Matthew 25:40)?

One incident I shall never forget. Even though I brought boxes of food night after night, one evening God's Spirit told me not to bring anything. The cook's mate who had helped me carry the load each night, asked if he might take a small package to his girlfriend.

So this night I went empty-handed, while he had a small parcel, very small compared to my usual delivery. At the gate we were stopped by a high ranking American officer and the cook's mate was severely reprimanded. He had to return everything to the ship. I heard him mutter, "Can you figure that out?" Then I knew why I had been told to leave the food on board that night!

The pastor in that Bremen church was Herman Dunst. He always called me "The Merciful Angel" who was used and sent by God to minister to them in their time of need

Now that the war was over, I longed to return to my family in Holland and to see what was left of Rotterdam. Back in New York, I tried to get a ship to Holland, but was unable to. Suddenly I thought I understood something the Lord was trying to show me, and I prayed, "Lord, if You want me to return to Holland I will gladly go, but if You want me to go to China or some other place in the world, I will go there. Where You lead me, I will follow!"

When I reached the shipping office next day, the clerk had a long list of available ships bound for all parts of the world. He moved his finger down the list and stopped at the S.S. Joseph Story.

"Would you like to take that one?" he asked. "She is going to Rotterdam".

"Sure", I said, my heart jumping, "that's fine"!

And to the Lord I said, "Thank You, Lord, thank You!"

Conditions after the war were not too rosy in Europe. In New York I had purchased several things which I thought my friends and relatives would need. When we arrived I asked my new Captain for permission to take some food ashore. His answer was brief and to the point: "As long as you leave the ship behind!"

We carried an enormous stock of food. Together with the Chief Steward, we "cleaned up" a few things. There was a great pile of canned pork which the Americans refused to eat because it had too much fat ... a few buckets of melted kidney lard they referred to as "axlegrease" - 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.

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

As it happened, we stayed less than 24 hours in Rotterdam. Not very long after six years of absence, but it was good to see my whole family alive and well. Most of them were still living in the badly bombed city Rotterdam.

It was a great privilege for me to have the joy of bringing many of my brothers and sisters in Christ some of the good things which they had missed for so long during the war. But the Bible surely exhorts us, "So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all men, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith" (Galatians 6:10).

Johan Maasbach in Jail

A strange idea kept going through my head. I wanted

to personally experience life in prison. It is no easy matter, however, to get to live at government expense without first committing a crime. I heard that Ellis Island in New York was full. At that time, Ellis was the prison where unwanted aliens, people without a proper visa and those waiting to be deported were detained. Seamen residing illegally in the U.S.A. could also find a resting place there.

One day I packed my bags and left for Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. I went to the Immigration Officer and showed him my permit which had expired. Would he please, I asked him, detain me? 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 difficult to convince him that I would rather be locked up than look for a ship. He suggested that I think the whole matter over, and go try one more shipping company.

I spent the night in a hotel, and the following morning reported to a shipping office where they told me there were no vacancies. Back I went to the Immigration Officer and advised him that I could find nothing.

Would he please, I asked him again, satisfy the letter of the law, since, after all, that was his job, and that was what the government was paying him for!

He made a phone call, and soon two detectives showed up. One preceded me, the other followed. The wheels of justice had been set in motion. 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 jailers didn't know what kind of a criminal I was.

They put me in an old cell, furnished with a bed, a table and a chair. There was a bare, concrete floor, whitewashed walls, and an open toilet. The heavy, metal door closed behind me with a loud clang of finality. The jailer locked it with a large, old-fashioned padlock.

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!

As I had no experience with this kind of accommodation, I had to wait and see what the daily program would be. Early in the morning we were awakened by a trumpet blast from the P.A. system, followed by radio music.

The prison building was three stories high. All cell doors faced a closed-in, inside veranda. In the center was an open space. At regular intervals the jailer opened the cell doors. We were allowed onto the veranda until the whistle blew, when we assembled to go to the dining room, which looked like a regular cafeteria.

I shall never forget the taste of the coffee. The first cup was impossible to drink. However, I watched the other prisoners draining their coffee mugs, so I decided that it would be better to make a quick adjustment and eat and drink just like them.

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. I just walked up and down and chatted here and there, taking these opportunities to make personal contacts with the other inmates.

In the cell next to mine was a short, stout man from Germany. Before long he told me his whole story. He was a professional bankrobber and had robbed quite a few banks. During one heist he had almost killed a bank employee. He was caught and 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 wasn't just a common burglar, he protested, for he never stole

anything from the poor. Only cowards would do that, he said. He didn't 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 America as soon as he finished his sentence. He was going to finance the deal with the loot from some future robbery. Then, he said, he would settle down as a law-abiding citizen. What a confused way of thinking! He was totally immune to the Gospel of Christ.

I heard quite a different kind of story from a 42-year old prisoner. When he heard that I was from Holland he came to see me, speaking half English and half Dutch. He was a Dutchman by birth and had been in prison for 20 years. He had been transferred from another more restricted prison, and had now almost finished his term.

He told me how he had killed a man during a fight while attempting to escape. He had been betrayed by another criminal. He himself had been involved in many crimes and had been sentenced to a total of 80 years in prison.

After serving three years, however, he told me, he had met a missionary and had been converted. The evangelist had told him that if he would break all his connections with the under-world, he would be a free man within 20 years. Some gang leaders keep in constant touch with their men when they are in jail, plotting escapes and planning future capers.

We would get together in my cell and sing hymns at the top of our voices and pray. My new friend said that he would be free in two weeks' time. The rest of his sentence had been rescinded on the condition that he would be deported to Holland. He said that he really felt like a free man both in God's sight and in the world's. In the world's eyes because he had paid for his crimes with 20 years in prison, and in God's eyes because Jesus paid for his sins.

Another man with whom I often talked and tried to persuade he was a sinner was serving a nine-year sentence. During a fight in a bar, he had killed two men with a beer bottle. He claimed it was self-defense, and never talked about his victims. But he did mention the judge, whom he thought had been unfair. Many other inmates had the same opinion. According to them, they were all innocent victims of an unfair system.

On Sunday, there was a service in the small chapel. Of course, I was always there and met a group of people who ministered in prisons. I watched the prisoners and quickly discovered that they always attended chapel whenever a woman was present in the visiting group. They were not there to hear the sermon. They went to watch the girls!

During the time I was confined to my cell, I usually read my Bible or sought fellowship with God. When anyone asked me why I was there, I would say that my case had not yet come up, and I wasn't allowed to discuss the details. I didn't want to lie, but I did want them to think that I was one of them, so that I might win their confidence.

I shall never forget one prisoner, a medical doctor who was very depressed. He was very worried about his family. He had messed around with drugs and was serving a one-year stint. I told him about the love of Jesus, and that if he would be converted and put his faith in God, He would help him in all his problems.

His eyes just lit up with joy as new hope entered his heart. I could imagine what it would be like to face life without the hope and assurance of the Gospel.

I also spent Christmas in jail, and I was glad for the opportunity to observe prison life during this season. The only difference was the fact that even though I was locked up in jail, I was still a free and happy man, whereas many people on the outside were bound and not free or happy at all. I must say that even in jail our Christmas dinner was, true to American custom, an abundant and delicious feast.

While I was in jail I learned through a friend that my father had passed away. I learned, too, how hard it is for anyone who is in prison under such sad circumstances.

My father had been a godly man. Even though he had not been brought up in a Christian home, he had a real-life encounter with God in an open field at the age of twelve.

He always told us that it was not necessary for him to be sick in order to die. One day he would just “pfft” blow out his last breath, he said, and that would be it. And so, they tell me, it happened just like that - according to his faith, so it was unto him! 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 round just to see Dad take his last breath.

Of course, she was shocked, but when she saw him during the wake, especially prepared in one of the rooms of our home, and touched his white hair, she suddenly realized, “How foolish to touch the fur of his travelgarment. He is no longer here. This was 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 one has to be sick first, in order to die. Maybe that is the reason so many people do get sick before they die. That is their faith and their expectancy. How much better it is when we are living close to God!

My father had just made arrangements to take a trip with my mother to America. He had signed everything over to my youngest brother, not knowing that the Lord was preparing him for his big trip to his heavenly home.

I believe that people who live close to God will nearly always live their full span of days as decreed by the Lord. Consider, too, the many instances recorded in the Bible where parents would bless their children and then pass peacefully away.

Shortly after this sad news, I was notified that there was a job available in New York on a ship bound for Amsterdam, Holland, via Saint John, Canada, and they let me out of jail.

Even though 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! It is good not to be bound or imprisoned, either by man or by Satan’s power, but to be released, freed by the liberating power of Jesus.

I was reminded of Isaiah’s words which the Lord spoke in Luke 4:18,19, “The Spirit of the Lord (is) upon Me, because He has anointed Me (the Anointed One, the Messiah) to preach the good news (the Gospel) to the poor; He has sent Me to announce release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind; to send forth delivered those who are oppressed - who are downtrodden, bruised, crushed and broken down by calamity; To proclaim the accepted and acceptable year of the Lord - the day when salvation and the free favors of God profusely abound” (Isaiah 61:1,2 Amplified Bible).

Journeys Full of Miracles

I left Philadelphia by train for New York, where I was

to join the M.S. Tabinta, bound for Amsterdam, via Saint John, Canada. One thing bothered me: I had little money and nothing to take to God's needy children in Holland.

The war had dealt a heavy blow to my homeland and prices were sky high. So I turned to God and 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, but now I have nothing. Help me, Lord, and speak to people's hearts".

I had not the vaguest idea how the Lord was going to help me, but I knew very well that He was still the God of miracles and able to do exceeding abundantly beyond all we ask or think (Ephesian 3:20).

We stayed a few days at Saint John, Canada, loading a new cargo. I went to a local Full Gospel meeting where I shared what Jesus Christ meant to me. I didn't mention my burden and wasn't even thinking about it.

After the meeting a woman approached me. She said she had quite a bit of spare clothing at home and would I mind taking some of it to Holland. I told her I had just asked the Lord to provide for this need and would be delighted to take it. She said that she would ask others as well, and that I should pick it up the next afternoon. Imagine my surprise the following day when I picked up 18 boxes, parcels and suitcases of clothing, all in excellent condition.

So often I see God's greatness in the little de-tails. The lady pointed and asked if they could use "those things" over there. "Those things" were five or six ladies' corsets. Being a bachelor, I really didn't have a clue. However, since they looked like new, I said, "Sure, I'll take anything", hoping that somebody in Holland would have need of them.

When we arrived in Holland I put the word around concerning the boxes of clothing. An elderly widow who had borne many children approached me and said, "I guess they didn't give you any corsets?" I knew then, of course, that the Lord had added these articles just for this lady. She told me that she had prayed for a corset because without this kind of support her body would ache all over.

How thoughtful our God is and how sweetly the Holy Spirit moves in all areas of our life. Corsets in those days were hard to come by and extremely expensive in Europe, yet I could say joyfully, "Take your pick!" Many a woman will understand what this meant to that widow. I learned later that not only was it a perfect fit, but that it was the most comfortable support she had ever had. **Doesn't God promise to be a husband to the widow and a father to the orphan?**

Those who walk with God know Him as their great Provider in the minor as well as the major needs of life. What a privilege to be used by God to deliver something of need to a widow in His Name!

On board ship, I had a seven-berth cabin which I shared with only one other man. During the trip I had the joy of leading this man to the Lord. Only five days later I noticed that he had quit smoking. When I asked him why he had stopped, he said, "For the same reason you stopped!" 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.

This man, whose name I have forgotten, was very worried about my large amount of luggage. He was trying to figure out how I was ever going to get it all from Amsterdam to Rotterdam (about 60 miles). 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 couldn't understand why I wasn't the least bit concerned. I told him that God would provide transportation, but he kept his mind occupied with what so many people keep worrying about: "HOW is God going to provide?" I knew without a shadow of doubt that God had given me all those clothes for His children. It followed, naturally, that the Lord would also arrange for me to transport them to their final destination.

When we arrived at the quay in Amsterdam, before we were even moored, I spotted a large truck. It stood there all by itself. My younger brother, Piet, was waiting for me at the quay. I yelled at him to find out where that truck was going, as I had a load of luggage for Rotterdam.

Before long he yelled back that the truck was going to Rotterdam, and that the driver could take both me and my luggage. I knew God had sent the truck. While the sailors were busy mooring the ship, my new convert joined me at the railing. I said, "Do you see that truck? God sent it to take me to Rotterdam with all my luggage". 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. When I come to think of it, I would have been very surprised if the Lord had **not** provided!

YOU SHALL BE MY WITNESSES

As I had only been home for one day since the start of World War II, I intended to stay in Holland for a while. It wasn't 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 meeting of this kind and began to take an active part in it.

A simple, uneducated laborer by the name of Neumeyer conducted the meetings. On Saturday night, a group of older people took a little pedal organ and held meetings in the open air on the Afrikaanderplein. Without realizing it, I was being put through a school where God taught me to submit to those He had placed in charge there. I shall never forget the prayer meetings we used to have every Friday night. They were held in some shabby old livingroom, but at times the glory of God would descend like we were in a temple.

Yes, people often look for God in places where He cannot be found, for they forget that He dwells among the simple, the humble and the poor. God never considers the beauty of buildings or the value of great homes. God only considers the heart, and wherever He finds a broken and contrite spirit, there He will stay and manifest His glory. These conditions are hard to find among the rich, which is why we frequently find God among the poor and uneducated.

In those small meetings I met several brothers and sisters (as we called each other) who had been baptized in God's Spirit and spoke with other tongues. My soul was longing for that experience too. I wanted to be baptized with the Holy Ghost.

Sometimes I heard them speak of dreams and visions the Lord had given them, and I longed for God to give me some as well. Often I prayed the Lord would give me some special revelation, but every time I did, it was as though the Lord said, "**Don't you trust My Word? Isn't My Word sufficient?**"

I believe that it is a natural desire for a born-again child of God to want to receive a special touch or a special revelation from his God and Father. Yet I sometimes wondered whether I had accidentally gone off on the wrong track, or maybe I hadn't completely surrendered to God. Later I understood why God didn't answer my prayers. He taught me that I should base my faith upon His Word, of which David said: "Thy word is a lamp to my feet, and a light to my path" (Psalm 119:105).

I used the money I had earned to live on and to pay my tithes to the house of God. After a while, I came to the end of my savings. I said, "Lord, will You give me another ship?"

Usually it didn't take me long to find a job on another ship. This way I was able to support myself and help those who were in need. God supplied these jobs often in miraculous ways. Many

times when I needed a berth, the American Consular secretary would call me personally to notify me that an American ship had a vacancy.

Since I could also work on deck or in the engine room if there were no openings in the galley, it was not difficult to get a job. I made enough taxfree dollars to work, at the most, six months a year, and spent the rest of my time in evangelistic work. I made many voyages and there has not been one in which I did not see the hand of God.

PEOPLE ON MY PATH

It wasn't always easy to leave the ministry at home and board another ship. I remember once being very unhappy as I started a fresh journey, saying, "Lord, how much longer do I have to work amongst the dead?" For that is the way it seemed to me. Most of my shipmates did not know the life that there is in our Lord Jesus Christ. How wonderful, however, is the strength which God gives us to stand firm so that we can be lights in the darkness!

I remember a man from Missouri who was al-ready drunk when he came on board in New York. He was hired as a steward, but never stopped drinking. 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 something dreadful and was trying to drown his sorrows and disappointment.

When time came to go to work, I had to shake him awake. I asked him why he drank so much. Did he not believe in God? I queried.

He looked at me startled, and slowly began to tell me his story. It seems that his wife, who was a Sunday School teacher, had had a brief affair with another man. The steward could not and would not accept the fact that God had allowed this to happen to him.

His wife, who was thoroughly miserable about the whole sad business, had asked his forgiveness, but he had refused and left her. When I told him abruptly that God had sent me to tell him that he was no better than his wife, that he should forgive her and be converted himself, then return to his wife and children, he was dumbfounded!

Such pride! How many people go around in this world condemning others for breaking one commandment while they themselves break all the others? The steward didn't stay on board, but I hope he came to his senses and made it back home.

Another time I was standing at the railing in Ras Tannurah, 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 born-again child of God. Obviously, he did not expect the ship's cook to ask such a question.

He got a little nervous, but then started his story. He had a praying mother and three older sisters, all Pentecostals, filled with the Spirit. 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 alongside him. With holy boldness, 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 God gave me the job of delivering the message.

The Blow God Used

The story of the people of Israel's journey through the

desert to the Promised Land is a great help to the Christian. It contains profound lessons for us in our journey toward the heavenly Canaan, and teaches us how to enter into the rest which God has prepared for us.

God went before the Children of Israel in a cloudy pillar to lead them in the way. When the cloudy pillar moved, the Children of Israel moved. When it stood still, they also had to stay where they were.

They were travelling a totally new route and they had to depend entirely upon God's guidance, because there were no existing roads.

When the Lord has delivered us from the Egypt of this world, we also find ourselves on new routes; ones we have not travelled or considered before. Praise God for the leading of His Holy Spirit! The Christians of today, however, are often not much different from the Israelites in the desert long ago. The Lord said they were stiff-necked, but so are we, who were delivered by Him from the power of darkness and translated into His wonderful light.

When we should stay put, we want to leave, and when we should leave, we want to stay put. How longsuffering and merciful is our loving God and Father. He teaches us the way we are to go. He guides us, and His eye is on us. Psalm 32:8 is one of my favourite verses.

The American Consul called and asked if I would take a job as chef on a ship returning to San Francisco via Saudi Arabia and Tokyo, 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 be signing on.

The important thing, however, before making any decision, is to ask the Lord. In this case, I failed to do so.

It certainly didn't turn out to be one of my better ships. In addition to the usual drunken crew, the Captain and officers were also heavy drinkers. Fights on board were frequent. A man whose berth was across from mine had his face ripped open by an Englishman who attacked him with a broken beer bottle. We happened to be anchored in some harbor in the Persian Gulf, so he could be transported to a hospital. Later I heard he needed over 23 stitches. Even the Captain was often intoxicated. No wonder the crew wasn't any better!

Personally, I didn't run into much trouble with any of them. Not until one day when one of my stewards, a former marine, suddenly could not stand me any longer. I guess I was the only one on board who didn't drink or swear - not that I walked around like a scribe, but somehow they just couldn't figure me out.

This man, who probably should never have been hired in the first place, would often mutter to himself as he wrestled with his murky thoughts. One day, I overheard him mumbling about me. As I bent over to get something from a low sink, he suddenly smashed his fist into my face, ripping my entire upper lip in two. We had left the Persian Gulf and were in the middle of the ocean, without a doctor on board. In a daze, I made it to the ship's dispensary, my entire face dripping with blood.

The Second Mate in charge of the first aid de-partment was half-drunk as usual. However, he sobered up quickly when he saw me coming. He laid me down on a stretcher, and 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 to the honor and glory of His Name again. I knew the Lord had called me to be His witness. My soul ached when I thought that I wouldn't be able to properly fulfil my calling. I choked at the thought of never being able to sing normally again in the midst of the congregation to the edification of the believers. I pleaded again, "Oh, Lord, forgive me for going my own way".

The Second Mate returned, holding a large, rugged, crooked needle, attached to a thick nylon thread. It looked like a sailmaker's needle! Without any kind of anesthetic, he stuck the needle right down into my lip and up the other side. He pulled the edges together and placed a double knot in the ends. This string, with two loose cut-off ends, held my lip together for the rest of the trip!

A doctor in Hong Kong told me later that the Second Mate had done an excellent job. He also assured me that I wouldn't have any kind of speech impediment. The blow the Lord gave me, or rather, allowed me to be given was not in vain. I knew the end of my sailing days was in sight.

ALL THINGS WORK TOGETHER FOR GOOD

I held the shipping company responsible for my injury and, without any fuss, they offered a very reasonable settlement. It was enough to buy a large campaign tent, together with a sound system, platform, chairs, the whole thing. Many people were to find a new life at the feet of Jesus in that tent.

The first tent meeting we held was in the center of the big city of Rotterdam, at the Kruiskade. Naturally, I wanted to cooperate with the existing Full Gospel churches. I had only one goal: to tell the world about the love of Jesus, His wonderful power to save, to heal and to fill hearts with His Holy Spirit.

There were two churches, but whenever one was ready to cooperate, the other was not. So I finally decided to hold the campaign on my own, together with a brother who held small meetings in a cellar somewhere in town.

I have never felt God leading me to spend time in discussing differences of opinion among brethren. "To his own master he stands or falls" (Romans 14:14a). The devil's biggest trick 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 fulfil. I only have one lifetime to give, which isn't long - and there is much work to be done. Millions of people have yet to be told about Jesus, the Mighty Savior and Lover of our souls. I never received a commission to waste time with jealous, narrow-minded people, who are proud in the bargain. Nehemiah never occupied himself with them either (Nehemiah 6).

Nevertheless, I rejoice with anyone who pro-claims Christ, and 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 heart of many a steward in God's Kingdom. My life-style would rouse them - then, they, too, would launch out. 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 just loves to have people occupy themselves with this idea. I wished that every street had a church where Christ is preached! Our unity is definitely not based on all of us worshipping under one roof, but it is based on our mutual respect and acceptance of one another, as Christ accepted us while we were yet sinners.

Some people have asked me why I don't work together with more other churches, and wonder if perhaps I am against them. Well, the fact is, I don't have a degree in theology or a Ph.D., behind my name. I never attended a university. But I did receive God's anointing when, as a little galley boy I roamed the high seas, just like young David received his anointing from the Lord while he tended his sheep.

It was not my own idea to become His witness. He it was Who called me and anointed me with His Holy Spirit. I am very grateful that I received and learned everything I know about God *from God Himself*. At a university in Holland, I would never have heard about the God Who still heals the sick today. I would never have heard that miracles of salvation and healing are for NOW; that today, in Jesus' Name, we can still cast out demons; that no change has been made in baptism by immersion; and that nowadays people still speak with new tongues.

I have never been against certain 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 of Calvary. The devil is a completely conquered foe through the Blood of Jesus. Our teachers nowadays are probably not aware of this and cannot yet see what it means to be "born again", just as, long ago, Nicodemus - a teacher himself - didn't see it. John 3:3: "unless a man is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God".

The sincere heart will see the light, and I believe that this is why there is nowadays such a movement of the Holy Spirit in denominational circles. My earnest prayer is, "Lord, fill all your servants with Your Spirit. Let the fire of Pentecost burn in every church!"

TENT CAMPAIGNS

I would like to return now to the after effects of the blow in my face, which God used for His purpose. It was quite a job before the tent was finally erected, advertisements and handbills printed, and posters for window announcements put up. I had only a few helpers and since I was not rich and had no outside support, I had to do most of the work myself. All I had was a warm heart for sinners and a great love for God through Jesus and a great faith in His wonderful Name while I held on to 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 and made me lie down. I felt some strength returning, but stayed down in bed until the meeting was due to start. After the service I immediately went back to bed, completely drained. Happily, the Lord got me back to normal within a week, for which I am eternally 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 came inside the tent for shelter. That night, in spite of the weather (or maybe because of it), sixteen people came forward to give their hearts to Jesus.

After Rotterdam, I moved the tent to the village of Vroomshoop at the invitation of a good friend of mine, who pastored a small congregation there. I will never forget the dramatic reactions of some of the people there. We 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. In consequence, many members of his congregation came over to investigate out of sheer curiosity.

I remember to this day a group of people from a very strict, so-called "black-stocking" church - such stern, severe faces. They all sat stiffly in a row. When I gave the invitation for sinners to come forward for salvation, they all indignantly got up and marched out. They would never go for that! It couldn't be that simple! Nevertheless, that night 14 people came and laid their burden down, and several chairs were wet with tears again. In spite of these oppositions, we had a successful campaign.

During these meetings, I also met the girl who later would become my wife. She was raised in Haarlem, and after graduating from high school, had attended a Bible school in Switzerland. Now she was a Christian worker in the Vroomshoop district.

Our next stop was the city of Haarlem, where we 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 those of different religious persuasions.

On one occasion, a fight broke out and the police got involved. We stayed out of it and didn't get into trouble. The message of deliverance through Jesus Christ still stirs up conflict and often creates a commotion among the people. This was true in Paul's day and is still true today.

One thing is for sure, however: God's Word will never return to Him void (Isaiah 55:11). It goes out to those He has spoken to. In the middle of all the commotion, God goes on with His work. This always amazes me and makes me realize His greatness. Right in the midst of all the limited

and imperfect doings of men, He continues to do a great work. In spite of all the failures of His own children, He steadily continues, His great love never changing, nor His strength nor His will.

He is the Great I Am and ever shall be, because He said, “For everyone who asks, receives; and he who seeks, finds; and to him who knocks, it shall be opened” (Luke 11:10).

The offerings taken at these meetings didn’t even begin to cover our overall expenses. All the money I had earned at sea was spent to bring sinners to the nail-pierced feet of Jesus, and I had very little left.

In the next chapter I want to share with you how God made it possible, in an unexpected way, for me to marry the sweet girl, Willy, I had met during the tent meetings in the village of Vroomshoop.

Our Wedding

Anyone familiar with Holland's post-war years will

vividly remember the acute housing shortage, especially in the inner city of Rotterdam, where the Germans had bombed away more than 50,000 houses. 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 in which to store the big Gospel tent with its 1000 chairs and other appurtenances.

I said to my youngest brother, "Peter, I believe the Lord is going to give me a warehouse in this area to store the tent".

So I went looking for the place the Lord would give me. Humanly speaking, this was like looking for a needle in a haystack. However, I believe in a supernatural and mighty God, our Father. That is why I like to exercise my faith and don't talk or think like an unregenerate, natural man.

In Zaagmolenstraat, Number 129, I spotted an empty store with a warehouse attached, 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.

Even though it didn't look very hopeful, I went to look for the owner to see if the building was to rent. When I found him, I explained why I needed this space. My brother wanted to store some rope there as well.

The owner asked me if I wanted to look inside the building first. I agreed, but thought, "Who cares what it looks like inside? If he'll let me have it, I'll take it, no matter what".

He told me that the old man had been living there for over 15 years and didn't want to move out, but that he definitely didn't want to keep 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 thought of the old man in the back didn't 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 didn't take me long to look the place over. 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-topped shelves behind it.

"Oh, dear, here we go!" I thought, when the man 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 my ears!

"Why don't you and your brother come over so we can make up a contract?" he asked. My brother Peter agreed that it sounded like a fairy tale. The rent was only 13.75 guilders a week, and the old man in the back had to pay me, the main tenant, his part of it.

After I moved in, the greengrocer from across the street came over to congratulate me.

"Well", he said, "so you're the lucky one. There have been a lot of people before you, but the landlord was kind of fussy and didn't just want to rent it to anybody. One guy even moved some of his stuff in, but he had to move it all out again".

I didn't tell him that I got the place without the slightest trouble. It was the Lord all the way. He had arranged the whole deal. 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 safely stored in a dry place. However, my funds had dwindled to next to nothing. I had only a few dimes and pennies left.

But, to return to the important subject of the sweet girl I had met at Vroomshoop: Willy Klumper and her girlfriend, Jo Baars had returned to their respective quarters after their faithful service during the tent meetings.

Suddenly, quite unexpectedly, the Lord showed me that Willy 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 had been stayed upon Him Who had recruited me for His service.

In 2 Timothy 2:4, it says, "No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier".

Even in these matters, I expected Him Who had enlisted me to point the way. Suddenly I knew that if I didn't propose to her soon, someone else would.

There are people who think they will always get what God has in store for them. However, I think that many Christians miss out on many of God's blessings because they don't put their faith into action at the right time.

Faith without action is definitely dead!

It is worth nothing!

This is something which we have to learn and, sadly enough, there are few preachers who teach their people how to take possession of the promises of God by putting their faith into action.

Willy, like me, was highly surprised when I asked her, and thought I was joking. Her girl-friend was even more incredulous. But when I sealed my proposal with a kiss, Willy began to realize that I was serious. I believe that when we walk with God and are filled with His Spirit, our values change and we don't act like natural, worldly men any more.

Besides my evangelistic work, I pastor several congregations where many people throughout the years 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. Marriage is a contract, signed for life before God and the world. We should never think lightly of this union. Only death can undo a marriage. At least, this is what God intended to be the case.

Space does not permit me to elaborate on this important subject of marriage and the relationship between the husband and wife. This would require another volume. To steadily date someone you really don't intend to marry is a dangerous game for the Christian. Many couples have become attached to each other this way without the sanction or intention of the Lord.

Faith never gets ahead of the Lord. Faith surrenders to God and is not anxious about the future. He who believes, puts his ideas on the altar. Faith says, "Lord, I'll take the one You give me. You know me best, because You put me together". How very important it is for us who walk with God to wait upon Him in every area of our life.

Knowing the Lord approved, and being myself already 32 years of age, we both decided to get engaged. We also acquired some living quarters, for the old man in the back of the store informed us that he had found a girl-friend also, and was going to marry a widow who had a home of her own.

Considering my financial situation, I realized I had very little to offer. I met Willy's parents, and her father had a slightly different view of the matter. He wasn't at all excited at the prospect of his daughter marrying a common evangelist with no formal education.

My logic, however, was based on what God says in His Word: "And my God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:19).

How wonderful to have a rich God and Father Who says, "Do not be anxious then, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'With what shall we clothe ourselves?' For all these things the Gentiles eagerly seek; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you" (Matthew 6:31-33).

GOD'S GENEROUS SUPPLY

It is glorious and wonderful to know the peace God gives when we put ourselves wholly in His mighty hand. The next day, I received a totally unexpected telegram from an American Captain, still at sea on his flagship, the M.S. Olympic Games, bound from Stockholm, Sweden to Amsterdam. He requested my presence on board at a certain time after arrival in Holland. "Vacancy for chef", the telegram read. "That's it!" I cried to Willy.

When I got on board, the Captain asked if I would please sign on because he had to leave his chef behind in Stockholm on account of illness. I told him I would like to help him out but only for three months.

The position of chef on these big American ocean liners was a well-paid one; especially after those dollars were converted into guilders. On top of that, they were tax-free because I was a foreigner, and the job included, of course, board and living expenses. So after three months at sea, I came home with 11.000 guilders in cash.

The following day we applied for our wedding license, and two weeks later we were happily married. (As we still are today).

Because we hadn't given our wedding much publicity and everything took place rather fast and unexpectedly, gossip soon had it that we had "had" to get married. A sad reflection upon the hidden thoughts of peoples's hearts! When our first little one finally arrived two years later, the Lord effectively wiped that charge from the slate.

I learned a long time ago not to be bothered by what people think or say. Walk with God and be true to Him and He will bless you and your seed. He will judge your enemies and the slanderous tongues and put them to shame, for "No weapon that is formed against you shall prosper; and every tongue that accuses you in judgment you will condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their vindication is from Me, declares the Lord" (Isaiah 54:17).

Willy is a very great help, spiritually and as a wife and mother.

It is better not to be married with the thought if only I was married, than to be married with the thought if only I wasn't married.

Our Thoughts Are Not God's Thoughts

After our wedding, I busied myself with evangelistic

work in Holland, especially in the southern part of Rotterdam. I assisted in open-air services, attended many prayer meetings and led the pre-service at the weekly 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 necessary and important lessons God wants to teach His children before He is able to use them. The natural man has an inborn desire to place himself above others. A child of God must learn to wait until God's hand moves 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.

Oftentimes we have our own ideas; we think we know exactly what to do and how to go about it, but to be a servant in the church of the Living God, we have to follow the blueprint of our 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 greatest harvest the Apostle Paul reaped during his lifetime was not because of his intelligence or skill, but because of 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 be anything at all in the kingdom of God we have to place all our human knowledge, all our own views and ideas, yes, our entire life, on the altar first.

Paul says in Philippians 3:7-9 (Ampl. Bible): "But whatever former things I had that might have been gain to me, I have come to consider as (one combined) loss for Christ's sake. Yes, furthermore I count everything as loss compared to the possession of the priceless privilege - the overwhelming preciousness, the surpassing worth and supreme advantage - of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, and of progressively becoming more deeply and intimately acquainted with Him, of perceiving and recognizing and understanding Him more fully and clearly. For His sake I have lost everything and consider it all to be mere rubbish (refuse, dregs), in order that I may win (gain) Christ, the Anointed One, and that I may (actually) be found and known as in Him, not having any (self-achieved) righteousness that can be called my own, based on my obedience to the Law's demands - ritualistic uprightness and (supposed) right standing with God thus acquired - but possessing that (genuine righteousness) which comes through faith in Christ, the Anointed One, the (truly) right standing with God, which comes from God by (saving) faith".

In Galatians 2:20 (Ampl. Bible) he says: "I have been crucified with Christ - (in Him) I have shared His crucifixion; it is no longer I who live, but Christ, the Messiah, lives in me; and the life I now live in the body I live by faith - by adherence to and reliance on and (complete) trust in the Son of God, Who loved me and gave Himself up for me".

In 2 Corinthians 3:5,6 (Ampl. Bible) he says, "Not that we are fit (qualified and sufficient in ability) of ourselves to form personal judgments or to claim or count anything as coming from us; but our power and ability and sufficiency are from God. (It is He) Who has qualified us (making us to be fit and worthy and sufficient) as ministers and dispensers of a new covenant (of salvation through Christ), not (ministers) of the letter - that is, of legally written code - but of the Spirit; for the code (of the Law) kills, but the (Holy) Spirit makes alive".

The world does not need a form of Christianity. We have enough religions, 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 say with the Apostle in 2 Corinthians 4:5-11 (Amplified Bible): "For what we preach is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves [merely] as your servants (slaves) for Jesus' sake. For God Who said, Let light shine out of darkness, has shone in our hearts so as [to beam forth] the Light for the illumination of the knowledge of the majesty *and* glory of God [as it is manifest in the Person and is revealed] in the face of *Jesus* Christ, the Messiah.

However, we possess this precious treasure [the divine Light of the Gospel] in [frail, human] vessels of earth, that the grandeur *and* exceeding greatness of the power may be shown to be of God and not from ourselves. We are hedged in (pressed) on every side - troubled and oppressed in every way; but not cramped or crushed; we suffer embarrassments *and* are perplexed *and* unable to find a way out, but not driven to despair; ... Always carrying about in the body the liability *and* exposure to the same putting to death that *the Lord* Jesus suffered, so that the [resurrection] life of Jesus also may be shown forth by *and* in our bodies".

"For we who live are constantly [experiencing] being handed over to death for Jesus' sake, that the [resurrection] life of Jesus also may be evidenced through our flesh which is liable to death".

We do not learn these things in a university or a Bible school. We learn them as we walk with God. Moses had his will shattered in the desert, Joseph during the persecution by his brothers, David had to go the same route, and even Jesus Himself had to learn this way, for "although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered; and having been made perfect, He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation" (Hebrews 5:8-9).

WHY THIS LESSON IS SO DIFFICULT

All living creatures, even nature herself, struggle to stay alive, while God says, "He who loves his life loses it; and he who hates his life in this world shall keep it to life eternal" (John 12:25).

Please don't think for one moment that I am opposed to universities or Bible schools. On the contrary! What I do say, however, is that those institutions have little value if their faculty members and students are not born-again Christians. The Kingdom of God is not built by human knowledge, but by faith, love, obedience, and self-denial. Even the fullness, the overflow, we only get by faith in Christ.

It grieves me to see the many theologians God cannot use at all because they hang on to their own insights, doctrines and traditions of man, while they have little or no knowledge of the Spirit or the prophetic wonder of the Word of God.

No wonder we read in 1 Corinthians 1:19-31, "For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the cleverness of the clever I will set aside". Where is the wise man? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater 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 come to know God, God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe.

For indeed Jews ask for signs, and Greeks search for wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block, and to Gentiles foolishness, but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

For consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble; but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong. And the base things of the world and the despised, God has chosen, and the things that are not, that He might nullify the things that are, that no man should boast before God.

But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption, that, just as it is written, 'Let him who boasts, boast in the Lord'".

Modern man has changed little since the days of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. A lot of people like to be good and devout in their own right, but do not seem to be familiar with what God says we are: sinners. When God confronted Adam with his sin (Genesis 3:11,12), Adam said, “The woman whom Thou gavest to be with me, she gave me from the tree, and I ate”.

Here we see a guilty man who, while excusing his own actions, accuses God instead: “The woman whom THOU gavest”!

But Adam was a sinner, even as we are sinners and have to realize that through sin we came under a curse. There is only one way to be freed from that curse, and that is by the offering of the body of Christ 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**. Everything we are in Him is **by grace**, so that no flesh shall boast, but that Jesus, in everything, will get the glory.

PRAISE GOD FOR THE OVERCOMING LIFE

Moses did not stay in the desert with his father-in-law, Jethro, but after graduating from God’s school of “knee-ology”, 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 self-denial. These supplied him with the courage to go and confront Pharaoh.

We read about Joseph in Psalm 105:17-22, “He sent a man before them, Joseph, who was sold as a slave. They afflicted his feet with fetters; he himself was laid in irons, until the time that his word came to pass, the word of the Lord tested him.

The king sent and released him, the ruler of peoples, and set him free. He made him lord of his house, and ruler over all his possessions, to imprison his princes at will, that he might 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 take them in, but Joshua, who is a type of Jesus, could lead them into the Promised Land of rest.

What a wonderful privilege to experience this close relationship with our great God as He leads us like a Father. He teaches and educates us in the way we should go. He blesses us. He says in Psalm 32:8,

“I will instruct you and teach you in the way which you should go; I will counsel you with My eye upon you”.

To be enrolled in God’s school and waiting upon Him does not mean that we sit still and do nothing. This is one of the devil’s greatest lies. Some young people feel that they first have to possess 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 and rules of the kingdom of God.

It is really not so strange that this form of pride asserts itself. The apostles themselves had the same problem. Even after walking with Christ for three years, they still did not know what it meant to be the least. Jesus, however, demonstrated this principle by washing their feet (John 13).

Some Christians think they have to wait until they have received some sort of a diploma before they can go out in His Name, and often the devil encourages us to believe this. Of course, while we are waiting, we do nothing useful at all. Many have wasted their early years in this way, and dissipated their energies until they were too old to start at all. We have to be active while we remain humble of heart, making the most of what we have, so that the Lord can entrust us with more.

I was always active, either in open-air meetings, the spreading of tracts and literature, in Sunday School teaching, or in other evangelistic work. And God used me even while I was still in His school of testings.

A DIFFERENT DIRECTION

I received no income from my evangelistic endeavors, even though I worked at them every day. I supported myself from my own earnings. In those days in Holland there were very few Full Gospel churches. There was no place available where I and my wife could work full time in a ministry and make a living. I made up my mind to go to America for five years, work hard and save, then return to Holland and 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. So, selling our possessions, we set sail on the S.S. American Producer for New York.

Once more in the States, I began working as chef in this first class restaurant in Summit, N.J. Soon we had a beautiful home, a brand-new car, and an excellent job. The strange thing was, however, from the moment we landed in New York from Holland, I missed the assurance of being in God's will. While I was doing work which I enjoyed, yet the Lord was working in my soul and speaking to my heart.

Every day I was busy preparing food for people's physical bodies. I was well paid for this. Would it be possible that the Lord would also provide if I should give the people the Bread of Life, so that whoever ate of that Bread should not die but have everlasting life? It became a battle in my soul, and I lost all my peace.

The great Almighty God Who looked after the sparrows in the field, would He not look after me in Holland? I wanted to work for the Lord in Holland, but found myself instead in the USA, trying to get the necessary funds. It was as if the Lord kept on saying, "The money is in Holland".

I began to be afraid that something would happen to me. My wife and I had just enough money left to get back to Holland. It was difficult to convince my employer that I must leave. He tried to understand, and suggested that I work part-time and evangelize part-time. He reasoned, "Whatever you want to do in Holland, you can do here just as well". I became more and more convinced, however, that the Lord wanted me back in Holland.

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 love so much, to return to the land which I only remembered as being flat and wet.

Our home in Rotterdam was occupied by another couple. We had no furniture or money left, but I had been on my knees and prayed, "Lord, I want to go where You want me to go: to Holland". It didn't matter any more what kind of work I had to do to make a living. I have the same principle as Paul, who said, "If anyone will not work, neither let him eat" (2 Thessalonians 3:10b).

What was my great mistake?

When I made up my mind to go to America to make money, I forgot to ask the Lord. If I would have asked the Lord, He would have said "Why go and waste your time. The money is also in Holland".

He just let me go like David in 1 Samuel 27. David forgot to ask the Lord.

How the Work in Gouda Started

When my wife and I returned to Holland, we moved

into the attic of my mother's house. It was 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.

Before our departure from New York, we went to a meeting conducted by Pastor Carl Steffens in Brooklyn. He laid his hands upon us in the middle of the congregation and prayed for the ministry that God would give me in Holland, 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. Both in the Old as well as the New Testament this ministry has an important place (Deuteronomy 34:9; Matthew 19:13; Mark 6:5; Luke 4:40; Acts 6:6; 13:3; 19:6). However, even the laying on of hands has little value, if it is not mixed with faith. For it is by faith that we receive, just as it is by faith that we walk and act.

That is why Paul said in 2 Timothy 1:6, "And for this reason I remind you to kindle afresh the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands".

Since I had no money left whatsoever, I started 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. Much of my spare time I spent in the ministry of the Lord.

Unfortunately, in those days there were no Pentecostal churches offering any kind of training course or where I could work full time in the ministry. Compared to the U.S.A., England or 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. 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.

I wanted to work in a town where the Full Gospel message had not penetrated at all, and decided to start in the city of Gouda, home of the famous cheese. I rented a small hall in the Groenendaal, and placed an ad in the local newspaper. My expectations were not too high, but when more and more people slowly filtered in until I counted a total of 35, my heart jumped for joy and I thanked God for His faithfulness.

The message I had for these people was that Jesus Christ is still the same, and lives and saves and heals today. That night many hands were raised for salvation and these people of the "religious" town of Gouda heard, for the first time, a new sound of the wonderful Name of Jesus. I took their addresses for further follow-up and started a weekly prayer meeting at the home of an elder brother. People were hungry and God performed wonderful miracles of deliverance and healing.

I shall never forget the girl who worked at a local hospital and had suffered from an open infected breast for a year and a half. Her mother attended our meetings regularly, but the daughter had ridiculed the whole thing. She said:

"Mother, if the doctors can't help me, that common preacher can't do anything at all".

However, her patient mother finally persuaded her to come to a prayer meeting and that very night she gave her heart to Jesus. She was ashamed of her attitude towards faith-healing and the work of the Lord, and so she didn't dare ask for prayer.

As time went on, however, she had no peace, and during one of the meetings she told my wife about her physical condition and showed her the infection. Her breast tissue was rapidly

deteriorating - part of it was beyond recognition I was told. When I learned of this, I went to her and asked her if she wanted to be healthy. She said she would like to, but confessed how she had ridiculed God's healing power in the past.

It is good that we can answer people with examples from the Bible. Often we think we are not good enough to receive from God, and the devil is always eager to point out our weaknesses and shortcomings. Healing, however, is never received because of our righteousness, but is received (as are all things from God) by faith in what Jesus Christ has done for us. "The blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin" (1 John 1:7c).

I anointed her with oil in accordance with James 5:14, and placed my hands on her for healing in Jesus' Name. I forgot about the incident until I saw her three weeks later and suddenly remembered her condition. I asked her how she felt. With a big smile, she said that she was completely healed, except for one little spot which still had a persistent discharge. I asked her what she was going to believe: would it heal or not? She gave me a puzzled look. I continued, "Sister, it shall be done to you 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 suggested that she pay no more attention to it, then, and let the Lord finish the job. That same week her breast was completely healed. Later she 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

It seems that one never has the same freedom in a rented building as one does in one's own place. When the Name of the Lord is exalted and praised as the Bible teaches it should be, there is often much resistance from landlords. The devil must have an absolute hatred of praise. He knows the secret of it better than some Christians. Praising God with all that is within us gives power, strength and victory. For God inhabiteth the praises of His people (see 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. I still lived in Rotterdam and traveled by train to Gouda, where I rented a bicycle.

I looked everywhere and often rang doorbells when I thought I had spotted something suitable. Finally, I reached No. 38 Zeugstraat. There was a small building which had been used for Gospel meetings for the past half a century or so. When I went in and looked it over, I thought, "This is it!" I couldn't imagine a more suitable place.

The caretaker, who lived upstairs, did not know whether it was for sale or not. I got back on my bicycle and found the Rev. Van Wijk of the Evangelical Free Church, whose congregation owned the building. They had moved to a former Jewish synagogue. The minister, a friendly man, told me I could buy the building for 10,000 guilders, but that a next door neighbor had an option to buy.

It so happened that this neighbor moved away and also filed for bankruptcy. Which put me next in line to buy. Even though I had no money either, I had faith in the Mighty God and Father Who said in His Word that nothing is impossible to those who believe (Mark 9:23). I couldn't help but believe that God would give me this building. So now I said, "Lord, the time has come. Now I need some money!"

Actually, we had no congregation yet. Not one of the brothers in that area dared to step out in faith with me and sponsor this venture. I was all by myself and had no money.

But I did have my God and Father!!

After service one day, I was standing in front of the Goudsche Courant newspaper building, which was also on Zeugstraat. I wanted to see how my ad had come out. Next to me stood a rather plain-looking woman who was also reading the paper. She looked me over from the corner of her eye and asked if I was the one who spoke at Groenendaal the night before. I said that I was, and we started a conversation. She said she didn't think that meeting place was very suitable. I agreed,

and mentioned that I had looked for something else and was interested in “Jeruel”, the former Evangelical Free meeting place (Zeugstraat 38).

She said, “If you decide on that building come over and see me. I live right near there and have a mortgage deed on the building. If you buy it, I can get you an 8000 guilder mortgage on it at 4% interest”.

My heart jumped 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 hadn’t even begun to search and God had sent this lady already.

A brother lent me the down payment. When we met at the lawyer’s office to sign the contract, I came alone. The minister and all his Board members were present, a total of about ten people, most of them in their traditional black suits with black pin-striped trousers. I had to ask the lawyer to provide witnesses. I was alone except for my God.

When the contract had been read and signed, I asked the lawyer if he minded if we asked for the Lord’s blessings on this transaction. The minister deferred and gave me the honor, so I thanked God that this building would continue to be used for the salvation of souls. They thought my behavior very strange, but I shall 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’m writing this, remembering that day. Our God is a good God and He hears and answers our petitions.

We still have wonderful regular 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 Zeugstraat to No. 5 Paradijs. Meetings there were led by faithful brothers and sisters, and souls still came to Jesus, the sick were healed and believers were baptized in the Holy Spirit.

In 1978, however, an even greater miracle has taken place in the 700-year old city of Gouda. Among its many beautiful buildings, including the 500-year old lovely City Hall, is the Gouwekerk, the Catholic cathedral. This magnificent neogotic structure has two steeples at the front, and one in the center which is the highest point in Gouda.

Who would have believed when I first negotiated for the old Free Church on Zeugstraat, that one day the authorities would plead with us to purchase the Gouwekerk to save it from destruction? Whenever you are in Holland you must certainly take time to visit this ancient city and see our wonderful Church. Our red neon Cross at a height of 80 meters dominates the skyline for miles around Gouda. In a later chapter I will tell you more about this great house of God in this great old city, known for its City Hall, the St. John’s Cathedral, with its famous stained-glass windows, Gouda cheese, Gouda candles, treacle-wafers, pottery and the Gouwe Church.

But, to return to my narrative, we were just beginning in Zeugstraat. People came from everywhere to those blessed meetings, even from Rotterdam. We held special healing meetings. 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 on the Veemarkt.

AN ABRAHAMIC SACRIFICE

In the meantime, the Lord had given us a little daughter whom we called Esther. After this we had another daughter, Gonnie. Our third child was a boy, a precious little cherub we named John-Henry. It was during this time that God was laying a foundation in my heart concerning the ministry of healing, of which the Bible has much to say.

One day, when I came home (we had moved in above the meeting hall in Zeugstraat, Gouda), my wife’s voice told me something was wrong, and I hurried upstairs. There was little Esther lying quietly in her crib. She had fallen down the stairs - 20 steps with metal edges - and hit her little head on the concrete floor. I laid hands on her and prayed for healing in Jesus’ Name, after which she went to sleep.

The next day she was perfectly normal, 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. At that time, I was preparing for a large divine healing meeting. 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 Willy, my wife, "If you want to get a doctor, it's all right with me".

I did not feel led by God's Spirit to consult a doctor myself.

I believe it is very important to pay close attention to the leading of God's Spirit.

On June 4th, 1958, when he was three years old, little John-Henry was taken home by the Lord. At the same time, God asked me if I still believed in healing. I had no choice but to reply, "Yes, Lord, for Your Word is truth". I did not know or understand why the Lord had taken John-Henry. Many were healed during my meetings through the laying on of hands and prayer, but John-Henry did not get well.

We had a wake downstairs in the meeting hall. I still did not understand God's purpose. 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 praising the Lord in our heavenly languages 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 had not desired to keep him 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 which we still have 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 Willy 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 — that is: Christ, the Rock of Ages. The illness of my sweet boy did not turn God's Word into a lie. I still believe what is written in Psalm 103:3, "Who pardons all your iniquities; Who heals all your diseases"; in Exodus 15:26, "I, the Lord, am your healer"; in Mark 16:18, "They will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover"; in 1 Peter 2:24, "By His wounds you were healed"; and many other similar Scriptures. Doesn't God have the right to take that which is His?

Are we not His creation, His creatures?

Strange as it may seem, my wife and I 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. All our roads are not the same, but one thing is sure: God refines all whom He wants to use: so that we may become pliable instruments in His hands.

We often pity the flesh, but God does not consider the flesh when He wishes to fulfil His purpose. He did not consider the flesh in Joseph's case until "the Lord tested him". Job had to learn his lesson, too: that all our prosperity and righteousness is nothing but grace from God. Faith knows that God will always remain the faithful God of love and mercy, no matter what trials lie ahead.

After John-Henry's death, the Lord gave us two more daughters, Helen Grace and Daniëlle, and three more sons - David, Robert and John. We now have a total of seven nice healthy children who, in the meantime, are all married. Moreover they all serve the Lord in His vineyard. The two eldest daughters are living with their families in the USA. Robert lives with his family in England and is a well-known pastor/evangelist. The rest are all - including their families - working for the

Lord in the Netherlands. David and John are both anointed servants of God who, in addition to pastoring a church, are in charge of the work of the Johan Maasbach World Mission.

MORE OPPOSITION

The ministry in Gouda wasn't always easy. It was, as we sometimes call it, "hard ground", with much opposition to the Full Gospel message. God Himself had taught me from His Word while I roamed the high seas 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 we should baptize those who are converted by immersing them in water. Happily, there are millions of people throughout the world who follow this commandment, but most of our churches in Holland look at it differently.

No wonder I met with much opposition!

The Bible also tells 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 when we are sick, that there is healing in His wings. The Bible teaches that Jesus bore our illnesses, and that we are to lay hands on the sick and they will recover.

I preached all these truths under much pressure. The devil hates the joyful children of God who love Jesus and honor and praise His Name. There is a tremendous power in praise for the Christian, and it pleases the Lord immensely to receive what the Bible calls "the fruit of our lips" (Hosea 14:2c; Hebrews 13:15) - a sacrifice of praise!

This truth also met with much opposition, but I was convinced that if we preached the truth God would bless us and give us a breakthrough by His Holy Spirit. And who can stop the Holy Spirit from working in the hearts of people? I figured: if people don't want to hear the truth, they are free to worship some place 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, because "where the Spirit of the Lord is", the Bible tells us, "there is liberty" (2 Corinthians 3:17), and this Spirit keeps working in the hearts of His children.

There are many religious people who, like Nicodemus, don't know what it is like to be born again. The new birth is necessary if we want to enter God's Kingdom (read John 3:16). Jesus said in John 3:3, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God". If one cannot see it, naturally one cannot enter into it.

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

One of the Greatest Moments of My Life

During this time news reached us that the American

evangelist T.L. Osborn from Tulsa, Oklahoma, was coming to Holland for a series of revival meetings. I knew the Lord was in this! I didn't know Rev. Osborn personally and had never had any contact with him. However, I had read about his revival meetings in Guatemala. The article had been a great inspiration to me. How marvelous are the Holy Spirit's workings. He will get one into contact with someone and suddenly one knows: this is of the Lord!

A committee was formed and preparations for the event got underway. Strangely enough, I was kept out of everything. Since I was absolutely convinced this would be a great revival, I placed some large ads about the campaign in the local newspaper and chartered a bus to transport people daily from Gouda to the scheduled meeting place in The Hague.

Before the campaign started, a preparatory meeting for pastors was slated in The Hague. I did not receive an invitation so I could not attend the meeting. Apparently some people did not want to recognize me as a pastor. A few days later a big meeting for pastors and co-workers was held in a big church. The church was crowded. There were at least 2000 people.

The big moment had come when T.L. Osborn was going to address the audience. It was difficult to hear the interpreter. Every time Rev. Osborn began to speak, someone from 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.

Again Rev. Osborn started to speak, and again people in the back of the hall couldn't hear. Suddenly, T.L. Osborn said, "If there are others here who feel they want to try to interpret for me, please come forward". Five hands were raised, but strangely enough nobody came forward. I did not for a moment consider going forward and I wouldn't have dared to raise my hand. In the first place, I didn't feel qualified, and secondly, there were much better men than me in the audience.

T.L. Osborn looked around and suddenly I heard him say, "Will that tall brother with the black curly hair try to be my interpreter?"

I still didn't realize that he was speaking to me, but my wife nudged me and said, "He means you!" I ducked behind the man sitting in front of me and didn't move, but Osborn called for me again. 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, "If you think you can use me, I'll try, but if not, please get someone else". My only thought was: this campaign **has** to be a success and the right man must be in the right place.

I believe a miracle happened, for as I started to interpret his words, those present felt a great peace of the Holy Spirit descend upon them. There was complete silence, nobody had another complaint, and we took off at top speed.

After this meeting, Rev. 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 said, "I can do all things through Him who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:13).

I mention this incident to show how committees, even pentecostal committees, can block the flow of the Holy Spirit.

Samuel said to Saul in 1 Samuel 15:22, "Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed (His voice) than the fat of rams". Man-made 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 as He spoke to Moses when He gave him the great commission to set His people free.

The committee had also informed Mr. Osborn that Bro. Maasbach spoke low Dutch, to which this man of God replied, "That's fine, I speak low English". Rev. Osborn is a true man of God. If he feels God has His hand in something, he will never criticize anyone, nor is he afraid to change his mind. He dares, like all great men of faith, to stand alone with God.

MALIEVELD CAMPAIGN

If anyone would ask me what some of the greatest moments of life have been I would mention two things: first, the moment I gave my heart to Jesus on my knees as a little boy of nine; and secondly, the mighty 10-day campaign on the Malieveld in The Hague. Later on in my life our Mighty God gave me some other unforgettably great moments, but these remain in my memory as the brightest of all.

Who could forget the sight, night after night, of thousands of hands raised by stolid Dutch people who wanted to give their hearts to Jesus. Many thousands of people felt the anointing of God's Holy Spirit, especially when everyone in complete unison prayed the sinners' prayer. How the angels in heaven must have been rejoicing at this mighty breakthrough. And every night there were many great miracles of healing.

Some people have tried to explain away all the miracles which God performed through His servant during those glorious days. In doing so they only expose their own unbelief. We only consider the facts of what God did then, and what He is still doing today.

The second evening of the campaign was also unforgettable. The skies darkened and it started to rain and thunder. A storm broke loose with a cloudburst, right over the Malieveld. That night I learned something I shall never forget and which I have often recalled in later years in my ministry for the Lord. During the storm, Rev. T.L. Osborn never stopped 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 very difficult test and trial of faith, as though God allowed Satan to use the elements of nature to buffet us. I still remember the scripture for that night, "For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return there without watering the earth, and making it bear and sprout, and furnishing seed to the sower and bread to the eater; so shall My word be which goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me empty, without accomplishing what I desire, and without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it" (Isaiah 55:10,11).

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 take another volume!

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 ensuing campaign days, a woman called. She didn't know anything about my suit situation. She had heard me interpreting and it had occurred to her that I could use an extra suit for meetings like these. Her husband, she told me, had rather a large wardrobe, and she asked me if I was interested. The next night a small suitcase was delivered containing a light tan suit which fit me perfectly. We think God is great because He created the heavens and the earth, the sun, the moon and the stars. But I have learned to recognize God's greatness in His concern for our smallest needs, like a suit or a pair of shoes. Doesn't the Bible proclaim that not one sparrow falls to the ground without our Father knowing it! "Therefore do not fear; you are of more value than many sparrows" (Matthew 10:29-31).

It was a wonderful provision, because plans were being laid to film the campaign over the weekend for a technicolor movie. If ever in my life a suit came in handy, it was this one. We looked like brothers! God's Spirit knew how important this movie would be and what far-reaching effects it would have. This motion picture, HOLLAND WONDER, has been a mighty blessing all over the world. Every year thousands of people are brought to repentance because of it. It has

been translated into many languages and dialects. Through modern techniques it has been made possible for me to interpret Rev. Osborn's message on the film in over 50 different languages.

It is a mighty "Holland Wonder" indeed! Modern movie-making techniques, placed at the service of the Lord, have proven to be an amazing medium for reaching the masses in far-off lands with the Good News. No wonder the devil was mad; he knew that this campaign would have a lasting effect on world evangelism. Over 100,000 people attended that crusade every night, with the exception of the stormy night. Our entire little country was stirred into action for God. When we remember that Jesus' contemporaries accused Him of being Beelzebul, the chief of the demons, it is not surprising that His present-day servants are accused in like manner. However, the Bible clearly states that we shall recognize a tree by its fruits, and the lasting fruits of this campaign are convincing evidence that Osborn is a man of God, who came on God's time to God's place..

This "Holland Wonder" also jerked the pens of secular, educational and religious commentators into action.

The opposition and jealousy of the brethren against me is nothing uncommon. When the hand of the Lord is on a person and the Mighty God wants to use him, he can expect those things. The same thing happened with David and Joseph and their brothers. The attitude of David and Joseph is a fine example for us to follow, and a perfect image of the attitude of Christ our precious Lord and Savior.

The reason I have related my "only suit situation" is to say that I rejoice in having gone through such difficulties and hardships. I know what it means to have just one suit or one pair of shoes and no money to buy with. I have never been unhappy about it. My happiness has never depended upon the material things of this world. My joy and happiness have always been in Christ my Lord, Who redeemed me with His own precious blood.

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. I don't think there is any other way for a man or woman who wants to be used of God. If you want God to fulfil His purpose in and through your life, then He will have to purify you like gold or silver. What a blessing and what a grace it is to be purified by God. Certainly it is not a pleasant thing at the time it happens, but I believe that it is the only way to bring forth Divine fruit.

"Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing" (James 1:2-4).

Always remember that it is better to suffer and be in the will of God, than not to suffer and to be out of 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.

So please never murmur 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 ye faithful and **never, never, never** doubt or let fear or doubt enter your heart. Fear and doubt are the greatest enemy of our faith. Only believe that He will be with you until the end. Be glad to know that if it is necessary God will even send His angel to strengthen you like He did with Jesus in Gethsemane. "No temptation has overtaken you such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it" (1 Corinthians 10:13).

Campaigns

All over Holland, doors now opened to the Full

Gospel message. After the campaign, I received a phone call from a brother, rather up in years, but still full of vigor and enthusiasm for the Lord. He asked me if I would be the speaker in Dordrecht if he organized a rally there. I agreed and the local YMCA building was rented. 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 shall never forget the crowds when I arrived at the Dordrecht “YMCA”. There were so many people that I couldn’t get to the door. Finally 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 healing and deliver-ance through Jesus. When the invitation was given at the end, at least one hundred hands went up to make a decision for Jesus. This hall proved to be much too small, so the next week we moved to a larger building. Even there a great number of people found standing room only.

During this rally, at least 500 souls came to Jesus. It was the beginning of a Full Gospel ministry which the Lord gave us in that area. Now we have a permanent congregation pastored by one of our co-workers. Hundreds of people have been baptized by immersion and many have been healed from all kinds of diseases and ailments. We have our own building now including a large bookstore and a permanent staff.

From this ministry other groups emerged, and all those people are doing their part in effectively spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ in those parts.

WATER BAPTISM

After the successful Dordrecht meetings where so many souls came to know Jesus, we organized some follow-up meetings. The first night, just before the service some workers asked me what I was going to talk about.

“Don’t you know?” I queried.

“No, how could we?” they said.

“I’m going to talk about water baptism!”

They were startled and afraid we would lose many of the new converts. How often do ministers make the mistake of fearing people more than God, and as a result fail to teach their flock the whole of God’s truth?

The message stirred them up all right! In the middle of my message, a woman got up who was an avid supporter of infant baptism. As she spoke, I felt she was very sincere in her convictions — a real Saul of Tarsus, so to speak. One thing I know for sure: the upright of heart shall see the light, because they are willing to be obedient to the Word of God. Before long this woman was baptized by immersion and gave a wonderful testimony.

I like people who are not blown by every wind of doctrine, but are humble enough to submit to God’s Word even though that may entail a change of convictions inherited from their forefathers. We, Dutchmen, have a tendency to cling to tradition and are ever reluctant to consider “new things”, especially in religious matters. After all, we were brought up with these things for generations, and it is very difficult for us to admit that we could have been wrong all this time.

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.

I have no problem in this area and have spent very little time debating it. Fortunately, the Bible does not say that salvation comes by baptism. It would be blasphemy to even think or suggest a thing like that. There is nothing, absolutely **nothing, nothing, nothing**, that will take the place of the precious blood of Jesus of Nazareth. By His accomplished work the veil which separated us from the Holy God was rent, and now we have free access to Him.

Paul says in Acts 4:12, "And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, 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 wake up from this false doctrine, but undoubtedly many thousands of believers from many denominations are being awakened in these last days in which we are now living to more fully obey God in all things.

God did call me to show sinners the way to Jesus, but He did not call me to argue with believers who do not care to obey. Let everyone be persuaded in his own heart. The most important thing is: do we know Him as our personal Savior and Deliverer?

ARNHEM

After Dordrecht, we had a two-day campaign in the city of Arnhem in the concert hall "Musis Sacrum". We could only be there for two days because the hall was not available after that. This short campaign was unforgettable because about 250 people came to Jesus. There was not only joy in our hearts, but also in Heaven. In Luke 15 I read that there is more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over 100 righteous people who need no repentance.

Not only did people accept 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 a friend. God healed her completely. We still meet people who received healing from God during those two days for such problems as deafness, asthma, migraine, headaches, and what have you!

Among those who came forward for salvation was a young girl, Els de la Croix, together with five members of her family. Who would have guessed that this young woman would become such a mighty instrument of the Lord, used to bring thousands of souls to the feet of Jesus? She is now a missionary and has an extremely fruitful ministry in Indonesia.

After this Arnhem campaign, we held additional meetings through which a permanent congregation was formed. For a long time I pastored this parish myself along with some of my co-workers. Later a pastor friend took the church over.

LEIDEN

For a long time I had a desire to go to Leiden. How different one city can be from another, even in a small country like Holland. But how great to know God's Word has the same power everywhere! The Bible says His Word is like a hammer, smashing even the hardest rocks. The Bible also mentions many times over that "nothing is impossible to those who believe". With this knowledge not only in our hands but also in our hearts, victory is certain.

I was warned that we would never succeed in Leiden, but this would only have been true when we had looked upon the circumstances. However, I only looked upon Him, Who I know loves all people and Who wants to reveal His power everywhere. So our first campaign in Leiden was a great success. Many souls came to know Jesus. Another Full Gospel parish was eventually established in this university city and God's Spirit moved in mighty ways.

A young woman came in contact with the Full Gospel message for the first time in Leiden. For seven years she had been an incurable patient in a mental hospital. Her vision was very poor, she

was partially paralyzed and she was a walking medicine cabinet. 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 about the healing and deliverance available 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 didn't really get a good look at her until Second Easter Day. (In Holland we celebrate for two days Easter and Christmas).

We were holding a conference in Dordrecht. It was a miracle that she made it to the meeting, for the devil had driven her several times to the edge of the canal, enticing her to throw herself in. The service was already over when she arrived, but she asked for a prayer. 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 the look in her eyes. She was a troubled human being, heavily bound by the enemy. She was determined that something had to happen, either for better or for worse.

Thank God that faith and a ray of hope had already entered her heart during the preaching of the Word in Leiden. WHAT DO PEOPLE LIKE THAT DO WHO HAVE NEVER HEARD THE GOSPEL OF SALVATION AND DELIVERANCE FROM SATAN'S POWER THROUGH JESUS OF NAZARETH?

A pastor friend from Haarlem and I took her into a small prayer room. We placed our hands on her in the wonderful Name of Jesus and simply believed what is recorded in Mark 16:17, "These signs shall follow them that believe, in My name they will cast out demons".

I shall never forget that moment. She was instantly delivered, and she who had been Satan's toy for so long became a radiant witness to the Living Mighty God. She who the medical profession had labeled hopelessly insane (and not without reason) was now pronounced completely cured and was discharged from the hospital without any further hesitation or probationary time. This quick release from hospital was, in itself, a great miracle, particularly to the medical profession. This dear woman is still a great blessing to many others and preaches the Gospel throughout Holland. Praise God that Jesus of Nazareth lives! Also in Leiden God gave us our own building. We renovated an old church - dated 1664! - the "Bethlehem's Church" with a rich history. Hundreds of years ago the church was a safe place for refugees from other countries. They received for instance bread (Bethlehem = House of Bread). After many years of neglect - the church was used as a store-house - again hungry people are coming from all over to be fed with the bread of life, Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior.

AMSTERDAM

For a long time the Lord had been nudging me to hold a campaign in Amsterdam, a city of almost one million habitants. Convinced as I was that God wants to reach people from all walks of life, I decided to rent the famous "Concertgebouw", even though this building is never used for evangelistic meetings. I didn't just make a snap decision on this, because when we undertake something of this nature we have to consider the cost and our ability to bring the operation to a successful conclusion.

I had indeed considered the cost, for it was God Himself Who had spoken to my heart by His Holy Spirit and had given me the peace to launch out into this venture. The natural man will have difficulty understanding these matters, but to those trained in the faith, it is perfectly clear. It is inexplicable to the intellect. Every Bible believer, however, knows that God's ways are best.

Hebrews 11:1 states that, "Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen". 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 whose delight is in the Law (Word) of the Lord, who consider it night and day.

"And", says the Psalmist in Psalm 1:3, "he will be like a tree firmly planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither; and in whatever he does, he prospers".

This campaign was no small venture, especially as we were aiming to reach outsiders. Over 100,000 handbills were printed, with more than 200 large posters, as well as several large ads inserted in the daily newspapers. Of course, there were many other things to organize, such as song books, ushers for the offering and seating, an organ and piano, and a well-stocked book table.

Even though it is often difficult to get the co-operation of the local churches and parishes for meetings like these, we encountered no such problems in Amsterdam. Several pastors and their elders were present and helped distribute literature. The large window posters announcing HEALING THROUGH PRAYER in bold letters caused a lot of commotion among the directors of the famous Concertgebouw. I suspect that they would not have permitted us to use the building if the contract had not already been signed.

Those five days became a very special blessing. God poured out His Spirit upon the meetings, and by His grace many were saved and healed. I remember Mrs. Kibeck who had been unable to sleep normally for 66 years as a result of a fall on her head from a stairway when she was four years old. After taking strong sleeping medication, she would manage two hours of sleep 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, Director B.P. Teeuw, together with his wife, was converted in the Congresgebouw. God relieved him of chronic headaches which he had suffered for 15 years.

I also remember Mrs. Pennings. She was deaf, had a cancerous swelling under her arm and two painful bumps on her shoulder. For years she also had an intestinal tumor which caused persistent diarrhea. She was a human wreck. Several times she had tried to kill herself. During one of our first meetings she was instantly healed of all her ailments. Her husband, who had been a spiritist for years, turned his life over to Jesus and was completely liberated.

A prominent Dutch newspaper, the "Haagsche Post" (The Hague Post), carried a full page report of this campaign. The reporter was Jan Vrijman, whom I had never met before. Every night he was there with his photographer. As a result of this campaign, he later made a documentary film called "Healing Through Prayer".

All expenses for these meetings were covered by the one free-will 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 didn't dare mention the total amount that was still lacking, but he said, "If you are short, I'll make up the difference".

Reluctantly, I murmured, "But ... that's about 5000 guilders".

The voice at the other end said, "I'll gladly take care of that for you". Praise the Lord!

Again we 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 there with a team of workers. After we had meetings in the well-known Grand Hotel Krasnapolsky for many years, the Lord gave us our own place to worship, the Calvary-church.

MIDDELBURG

Amsterdam was followed by many other cities. I remember Middelburg in particular, where we rented a 600-seat auditorium of "Het Schuttershof". Once again we had five unforgettable days, both for us and for the audience. "Het Schuttershof" was at that time the largest auditorium in the province of Zeeland. Over 100 souls came to Jesus, which is quite a lot for this part of the country.

We knew only a few brothers in Zeeland, and 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's very difficult here ... people are different".

This may be true, but they forget what God says, “My Word is like a hammer, smashing the hardest rock to dust” (Jeremiah 23:29). Praise God I don’t 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 power in heaven and on earth.

The brothers in Zeeland had been so convinced that this venture would be a disappointment, they prayed God would give me extra strength to take the shock. They figured that perhaps two or three rows in the entire auditorium might be filled. Their expectations were shattered when the Lord filled the entire building. One night all the seats were taken, and many people had to stand.

There were many ministers and elders from various denominations present. So, too, was the blessed Holy Spirit, Who convinces hearts of “sin, righteousness and judgment”. It appeared that very few people in Zeeland had believed that anyone there would raise a hand to receive Jesus, even less come forward to pray the sinners’ prayer. But up went the hands during that beautiful, anointed moment of invitation, and not only did they go up, but people went forward just as they had in Amsterdam and do everywhere else in the world where I am privileged to preach the Gospel. They went forward and prayed the sinners’ prayer with loud voices!

What is the secret that breaks into the heart of sinners and moves them to go forward? It is the Word of God and faith put into action through love. For I preach “Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block, and to Gentiles foolishness, but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God” (1 Corinthians 1:23,24).

THE HAGUE

Space does not allow me to mention all the other campaigns. However, I do want to relate the one in The Hague in the Arts and Science Building. Many people had inquired 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 bring this message of salvation, healing and baptism to all my fellow human beings. Few people ever dreamed that the impressive Arts and Science Building, with its 2000-seat auditorium, would become the center of revival for five glorious days. Proof that people were still interested in meetings like these were the 1500 to 1800 seats filled every night — filled with people who came to hear the beautiful Gospel message that Jesus Christ is still the same today as He was yesterday.

As before, the Lord confirmed His Word with signs and wonders.

Long before the services were scheduled to start, crowds of people were waiting outside to get in. Again, during this campaign the power of God was made alive by the Holy Spirit and a harvest of souls came into the Kingdom of God. Over 500 decisions were made by people who publicly came forward to pray the sinners’ prayer, not counting those who remained in their seats and made decisions. Only eternity will ever reveal how many did that.

Some of those who made decisions for Christ during those days are now in full-time service for the Lord. Many received their healing. Those were five heavenly days on earth!

God says that He will feed the hungry, refresh the thirsty, and comfort the sorrowful. This is also valid today. If we hunger and thirst after God’s righteousness, He will never put us to shame.

Needless to say, this campaign was very costly, but where the Spirit of revival moves there the Spirit of giving also moves even though I have discovered that God’s children in Holland often have to be reminded of this. I shall never forget the plain white envelope in one of the collection plates. It was anonymous and contained a total of 1500 guilders. Later I discovered that it had come from a humble widow. The Lord had spoken to her heart and she had obeyed.

How often does God use the lowly and meek like this dear widow? Could it be that the meek often have sensitive hearts and more love for Him Who loves us with an everlasting love and bought us with His precious blood?

The Bible says in Psalm 116:6, “The Lord preserves the simple”. It also says, “Your reward in heaven will be great”. Even here on earth, God will give us “good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over”. Even our descendants will be influenced by the way we live.

The life of an evangelist is not always simple and straightforward. I know that it is easy for a servant of the Lord to be put into bondage by “religious” people. Many will not understand this, perhaps, but those battling on the front lines of evangelism will know what I am talking about.

There is also much opposition from the secular world. One night, for instance, during the service, the Director of the Department of Health, Dr. In ‘t Veld came storming onto the stage. He was furious and demanded that I stop this deception immediately. Fortunately we still have freedom of religion in Holland, for which we should be grateful, so I took little notice of the man. Perhaps 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. The Bible says that “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 follow God’s compass. It was during this meeting that God gave me the boldness to announce a great water baptism service on the first Sunday after the campaign. This was to be one of the largest baptisms that we ever conducted.

Also in The Hague the Lord has given us a large parish. At a later time God gave us our own building, called “Capitol”. More about this in the following chapters.

Through the years many more campaigns are being held throughout all of Holland in large and small cities, villages and towns which are all being effected by it.

Thousands came to the Lord and many of them are now workers in the Kingdom of God and a blessing for our nation.

Literature, A Mighty Weapon

The written Word has always been a mighty weapon

against the enemy throughout the ages, and for the Full Gospel message this must be another valuable tool of great importance.

Most Christians, however, are not fully aware of this. Bible studies or suitable study books were almost impossible to find in Holland. Lack of finance was the biggest handicap in remedying this situation. However, this is never an absolute problem if we know that what we are doing is in the will of God.

Among the books which have greatly inspired and richly blessed me, enriching my knowledge of the kingdom of God are those by Andrew Murray, such as “The Power of Jesus’ Blood”, “Like Jesus”, “Jesus Himself”, “The Holiest of All”. These are masterpieces. I also think of C.H. Macintosh, a great man of God with a deep knowledge of the Scriptures, and his commentaries on the Pentateuch (the five books of Moses). I should not overlook E.W. Kenyon, that great man of God who put the spotlight on divine healing in his day and our good friend T.L. Osborn, who has a tremendous vision for the mission field.

Also John Osteen and Kenneth E. Hagin who especially teach about the power of the Holy Spirit. We can learn much from them.

Meanwhile we publish many books every year written by a new generation of godly men including my son, David.

None of the works of these man of God were available in the Dutch language. When we Christians receive a blessing from the Lord, we usually want to pass it on to others. Love always wants to share. This is one of God’s Laws and if the love of Christ is in us, we have no difficulty following this law. So my desire to publish these volumes in the Dutch language steadily grew stronger.

We never wanted to print any Christian literature from a commercial point of view. Our only purpose was to spread God’s Word so that Christ would be glorified and people would be enriched and blessed. To this day our motives are unchanged. When we sell books, cassettes, video’s and cd’s, our first concern is for the kingdom of God and His righte-ousness. For this reason, I am extremely grateful that the Lord permitted me to publish many faith-building books in the Dutch language.

Tracts are another great means by which to spread the Gospel to the masses. During the years when I roamed the oceans I gave away thousands of tracts in all kinds of languages. I shall never forget a brother from Rotterdam - Korporaal was his name. He was rather a strange man, an old bachelor living somewhere in an attic room. During the last years of his life he got a security job on the docks. Most people said that he had to be taken with a pinch of salt. However, I appreciated this man tremendously as 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 despatch them promptly, in any language. His little attic room looked like a warehouse. He literally slept between Bibles and tracts. It was a veritable ammunition depot against Satan’s power!

Some people thought it very strange that I ac-cepted this man so fully, but I just loved this peculiar fellow because it seemed that God couldn’t find anyone else willing to do this work. He sup-plied me with a lot of Russian Bibles, and once - like a forerunner of Bro. Andrew - he even

managed to get 1000 Bibles in one load through the Iron Curtain. Later it pleased the Lord to take him home, but the fruits of his Gospel seeds remained and have multiplied many times.

It wasn't always easy to get 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 to spread the Full Gospel. Nobody had ever pointed out the importance of reaching the masses with the Glad Tidings of the Full Gospel of Jesus Christ through literature. It was a burden on my soul as I started looking for a second-hand printing press.

We found a suitable one for 12,000 guilders, with a down payment of 6000 guilders. I signed the contract and the press was delivered. I knew through the Holy Spirit that this was of the Lord. It wasn't just my own desire and I wasn't acting in my own strength. I know when the Lord tells me to do something.

However, when the down payment was a week overdue, I still had no money. How wonderful, however, that we can always confidently say, "Even in the storm, when the waters fill our little boat, the Lord won't ever let us down". Faith knows it is not possible for God to fail us.

MIRACLE OFFERINGS

The following week, after a service, a woman wanted to talk to me. She said, "Brother Maasbach, please forgive me, but I have been disobedient. **Two weeks ago** the Lord spoke to my heart to give you a certain amount of money, but I did not do it. I know I was disobedient in this and will sign it over 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. Rather timidly, I asked her. When she mentioned the amount, I could hardly hold back my tears. I got that wonderful warm feeling that every servant of the Lord experiences when God confirms something. The amount this lady, a widow, mentioned was 6000 guilders — no more, no less! Just the amount I needed for the press. How precious of the Lord to even confirm the fact that He had spoken to her heart **two weeks earlier**. What a great privilege when our great God asks for something He needs. Will He not multiply it many times? What we give to God is the seed for our next blessing, and I know that the blessings in this lady's life have been plentiful.

I know that God often deals with people about giving and tithing. Throughout the years we have often received funds for our world-wide ministry from totally unexpected sources.

I remember a man who came to me years ago, saying he wanted to do something for the work of the Lord. He didn't attend our meetings but he wanted to do something for our ministry. Actually, the purpose of his visit was to find out how we would like to receive his gift.

Since my secretary had just informed me that we desperately needed 10,000 guilders for our checking account, I told him that he could make the deposit there. Again, I couldn't help but inquire how much he had in mind. When he said 10,000 guilders, you can imagine how I praised the Lord for His goodness and grace.

All these things were but the beginning of what God had promised to do for us. After all, He had said the money was in Holland, and that when we first seek His kingdom, we don't have to worry about the future.

Now it is nothing unusual at all for us to have a yearly budget of millions of guilders. We also buy machines: type-setting machines, printing presses, folding machines, computers, recorders etc. These machines often cost more than 100.000 guilders a piece.

After getting the printing press, we started to get paper by the ton. The first time this quantity arrived, it seemed quite enormous. Now it is not unusual at all for us to distribute three tons of literature in a week, or to order forty tons of paper at one time.

At the moment we are printing tracts in 40 languages, and we believe that this is only the beginning. I praise God for the small as well as the large 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.

Because of the many revival meetings I was having, there came a great need to publish our own magazine in order to have stronger ties with our faith partners and also to proclaim the wonderful things God was doing, and the testimonies of the great miracles He was performing. We printed 25,000 copies of the first issue of HEALING magazine, the forerunner of our present monthly magazine, NEW LIFE which currently has a circulation of often over one hundred thousand copies in Dutch. We have copies in English, German, French, Italian, Spanish, Indonesian, Albanian and Chinese.

Meanwhile, our printing room is extended and has the newest graphic machines and other equipment with which we print and fold all our printed matter including this book, which is published in several foreign languages.

How the Radio Ministry Started

For a long time the Lord had been urging me to take

advantage of the modern-day communications media to reach the masses with the Good News of Jesus Christ. This was to be another “step on the water”. Isn’t it great when we know that the Lord is speaking to us like Peter to put our foot confidently overboard and to step out? It was Peter, you recall, who cried in the middle of the storm, “Lord, if it is You, bid me to come to You on the water!”

The only answer he received was, “Come!”

That was enough for Peter to do the impossible. We never have to be afraid when we know the Lord is leading us. I know it was the Lord speaking to me about getting a radio program on the air. How often do we hesitate and wait before we take the first step? Yet, if we are filled with God’s Spirit, we can abandon all fears.

This proved true in my case. I knew the Lord had spoken and that it was His will for me to go on the air, so I set out to find a way. Once again, I had no money for this project either. We were barely able to pay our current bills, so we were hardly in a position to sign a firm contract with Radio Luxembourg, one of Europe’s most powerful stations with 600,000 watts.

A man of God, knowing the will of God, yet not walking in that will is the most miserable man on earth. It becomes a tremendous burden. I promised the Lord I would look into the matter, and said to my wife Willy, “The first thing I’m going to do Monday morning is to contact the sales manager of Radio Luxembourg”.

As soon as I got to the office I made the call. I had estimated a small initial budget - I jotted down on a piece of paper “3800 to 4000 guilders”. When I put the phone down, someone knocked at my door. A young man, Wim van de Berg, a gardener still in his workclothes and his heavy boots, came in and handed me a sealed envelope marked FOR RADIO BROADCASTS! He left so fast that I was not even able to thank him for whatever it was.

When I had finished counting all the bills in the envelope they totalled 3825 guilders! Tears welled up in my eyes. When I met the young man again, I asked him why he had given me that exact amount. He told me that while he was on his knees in prayer in his toolshed that morning the Lord had spoken to his heart and said that radio was the most valuable medium to reach those who were unable to come to the meetings.

He said that the Lord impressed on him to take all his money out of savings and bring it to me so that I could use it for the radio broadcasts!

I am glad he took the Lord at His word 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 never give EVERYTHING. Those kind are moved by unbelief. Why do some people still worry about the future when God has spoken to us so plainly? See what He said in the Sermon on the Mount:

“For this reason I say to you, do not be anxious for your life, as to what you shall eat, or what you shall drink; nor for your body, as to what you shall put on. Is not life more than food, and the body than clothing?

“Look at the birds of the air, that they do not sow, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they?

“And which of you by being anxious can add a single cubit to his life’s span? And why are you anxious about clothing? Observe how the lilies of the field grow; they do not toil nor do they spin, yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory did not clothe himself like one of these.

“But if God so arrays the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, will He not much more do so for you, o men of little faith?

“Do not be anxious then, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'With what shall we clothe ourselves?' For all these things the Gentiles eagerly seek; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.

“But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you. Therefore do not be anxious for tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own” (Matthew 6:25-34).

I realize some people will not agree with me for accepting this lad's entire savings. Faith, however, never argues. Faith knows that when we have the courage to put ALL we have on the altar, God will never let us down. I believe what God says in Luke 6:38, “Give, and it will be given to you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, they will pour into your lap. For whatever measure you deal out to others, it will be dealt to you in return”.

I am convinced that in the life of every born-again Christian the moment will come, as it came for Abraham when the Lord asked him for Isaac, when He will ask us for that which is most precious to us.

But how guileful is the heart of men, how inclined we are to admit a spirit like the one of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-11). This always proves our unbelief. There are few who dare take their chances with God. Most try to keep a backdoor open. But there is no greater security than a life with God, who has promised us that He will never leave nor forsake us.

I sincerely appreciated this young man's obedience, because it was an expression of faith. God has since richly blessed him for it in overflowing measure. I was glad to be able to show him my scratch pad with the 3800-4000 guilders estimate.

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. And He did just that.

In order to achieve the high quality of reproduction necessary for a station of Radio Luxembourg's power and outreach, I had to rent space in a studio which would cost many thousands of guilders a year. Therefore I wanted to buy professional tape-recorders and have a studio of my own.

The costs of the equipment and the costs of our broadcasts were in excess of US\$ 500,000 a year. Yet, bearing in mind that we reached many millions of listeners each year, this was still a comparatively inexpensive way to preach the Gospel.

Later Radio Luxembourg stopped with religious programs. God however opened other doors. We are still on the air in several countries.

As I mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, this venture into radio broadcasting in 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 too. I keep my eye on Him Who said, “The silver is Mine, and the gold is Mine” (Haggai 2:8). He it is Who speaks to hearts and inclines them to give.

As long as we stay in His will, we know that He will help and bless us. Winning souls is God's will. It was for this reason that Jesus shed His blood. I am on the air 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 and that the world is doomed to die. There is a way of escape, however: through the Ark of our salvation, our Lord Jesus Christ! “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life” (John 3:16).

National Expansion

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 minister peace and strength, just as much as a harsh one can bring grief and sorrow.

As a result of all our meetings, campaigns and our magazine, I was receiving many letters from people with deep needs, especially those who were physically ill or in desperation or ready to commit suicide. For me, answering such letters can never be just a mere formality, a form of politeness. God always seems to give me special words of comfort when I answer pleas for help.

Since our permanent office staff was expanding rapidly, our office space was becoming totally inadequate. It consisted of two rooms above the meeting hall in Gouda. Because my work in evangelism was not just confined to Holland, 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 funds available for a venture like this, I believed that God had a better place for us.

The Bible tells us that faith without works is dead. I went looking for a building because I believed God would give us one.

I received a phone call one day from a lawyer friend of mine. He had seen a For Sale ad in the paper concerning a multi-story building. The Lord had impressed on him, he said, that this could be something for our ministry. Without my knowledge he had responded to the ad and obtained the address and other details.

When I saw the building I knew right away that this would be just what we needed right then. The property was owned by the Dutch Reformed Church and I was afraid that if they found out what I wanted the building for they would refuse to sell it to me. Instead, 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. Later, in the lawyer's office, they openly admitted that they would never have sold it to me. This sounds incredible: they would rather have sold it to any worldly organization than to our ministry dedicated to the winning of souls to Jesus Christ!

Why should this be? I believe that it is because the organized church in Holland (with some exceptions) still does not realize that I, a preacher of the glorious message of Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world, have not come to break up churches, but rather to wake them up. Fortunately, many church people are not in harmony with such attitudes on the part of their leaders.

We purchased this building for a low price, since the interior had been grossly neglected. I shall never forget how the Lord sent a professional painter, who painted the entire inside while his son did the outside — all without charge! The day the official transfer was made, the Lord provided the needed funds. 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 don't you rent one?"

If the latter method was cheaper, then I certainly would not buy anything, but renting space isn't always profitable. It is often cheaper to buy property with a mortgage from the bank and to consider the interest on this as rent.

Within a few years even this new space became inadequate, and we did quite a bit of remodeling. We converted the small chapel into a Bible book-store. (I will relate how the Lord eventually provided a huge building where all the branches of our world ministry were brought together in Chapter 23).

We also built a large new structure in the backyard of the property. This added space eventually became inadequate too, and we had to buy another building directly across from our HQ, where our radio studio and printing plant found a home. Here we prepared our broad-casts and printed millions of tracts, handbills and other literature. But this new space too became inadequate.

God is the God of growth!

International Campaigns

It wasn't easy to free myself from the many activities in the ministry in Holland in order to respond to invitations from abroad. Time and convenience will always be a problem, for life is short, our mission is vast, and the laborers, as in Jesus' days, are few!

I discover this anew every day. As I look around me I keep seeing the need for laborers — people who are willing to pay the full price and put themselves on the altar for God. Perhaps when God calls people they always have something to do which is more important, just like it was in Jesus' time:

“But they all alike began to make excuses. The first one said to him, “I have bought a piece of land and I need to go out and look at it; please consider me excused. And another one said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to try them out; please consider me excused. And another one said, I have married a wife, and for that reason I cannot come” (Luke 14:18-20).

SPAIN

One of the first foreign countries I went to was Spain. 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 held meetings in an old hall in a small village. They were mightily blessed and the Lord built up His people and strengthened their faith.

What is needed in Spain, with its rigid traditions and religious ritual, is men of faith and courage. A university degree is of little value in taking possession of a land like this. We have to come in a demonstration of power and faith, reaching hearts, not heads, through the Holy Spirit. Spain, like other countries, needs men and women who do not look upon the circumstances. That is what spoiled the spies whom Moses sent out into Canaan (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. My daily prayer is, “Lord, give us men and women with a passion for souls”. Those who are unable to go themselves ought at least to support the work of others with their prayers and finances.

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

SWEDEN

Sweden is entirely different than Spain. It has had its revival and - like in all Western countries - although sin, because of the overall national prosperity, runs rampant, still the Gospel is preached from the rooftops. Pentecostal groups in particular meet in almost every city. Stockholm, the capital, had for a long time the largest Pentecostal church in Europe, seating 3500 people! It was my privilege to hold a five-day campaign in this fine auditorium.

After many years in the ministry, I am fully aware of the need for congregations to be strengthened in the faith from time to time. My task is not only to call out to those outside the church and to those who are deeply lost in sin, but also to revive those who have been saved for years, and to rekindle the fire within.

Many Christians need to be shaken awake. We are so prone to fall asleep. Praise the Lord for the opportunities He has given us, in Sweden and in other places, to be His voice and to cry out to the

people, "Wake up! It will only be a little while. Stay alert, you children of the Lord, for the Bridegroom will not tarry and will come. Prepare your lamps and keep them burning!"

EGYPT

During my seafaring days I visited Egypt at least 15 times, and even then I had a burning desire 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 of ministry in Cairo to bring the Good News.

Cairo was one of the cities where I discovered a great hunger for the Word of God. Bible history has made this country on the Nile well-known to us. It is the land where Abraham, Isaac and Jacob lived, and where we still find the 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, inheriting His wonderful grace. I shall never forget the Egyptian taxi-driver who was converted in one of the meetings. He understood English well. He drove me everywhere during my stay there and, no matter how I tried to pay him, adamantly refused to take any money, not even for gasoline. This was his gratitude for having heard the Good News of Jesus his Savior!

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.

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 Moslem in Egypt to convert to Christianity. More often than not, they lose all their possessions and are disinherited and considered dead by their relatives. Often they lose their job. A watchful heart and total reliance upon the Holy Spirit are absolutely essential for the survival of God's children in Egypt.

During this first campaign we have established permanent contacts with the believers in Egypt. We have had also after that several big evangelization campaigns, that is, 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 missionary journey. In the capital city of Beirut I was scheduled for a campaign in a neighborhood where the Moslems were very aggressive. These meetings were held in a large Gospel tent. There was a lot of rioting and whenever I preached the Word the noise would increase. We could feel the tremendous hatred and power of the enemy. My interpreter, an Armenian brother, had a difficult time. Perhaps he paid more attention to the circumstances than I did, and was more apprehensive. I saw the dangers but had perfect peace in my heart because I only reckoned with our Mighty God Who was with us.

The commotion around the tent grew louder and louder. The tent had to be watched constantly to prevent arson. One night, right in the middle of the sermon, a large rock flew right through the canvas like a meteor. It whizzed between two heads and injured someone's arm. I was grateful that the rock had not hit anyone on the head. It would have meant instant death. I praise God for all the men and women He has placed in Lebanon to preach the Gospel of Christ under such dangerous conditions.

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 prepared to drink that awful bitter cup of sin that wretched night when Judas betrayed Him and the disciples fled.

I remember Bethany, not far from Jerusalem, where I stood in the grave where once Jesus wept and said to Martha, "I am the resurrection and the life!" This was the place where they rolled away the stone of unbelief and doubt and where Jesus said, "Did I not say to you, if you believe, you will see the glory of God?" We find this story in the Gospel of John, chapter 11, where it tells how Lazarus came forth out of his tomb.

Bethany was a place where Jesus liked to be. I wonder how many places there are today where Jesus would like to be? I believe there are some, but I doubt whether there are many. I think Jesus liked Bethany because of the faith and love which He found there.

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 stood in the wall. Every born-again Christian will remember the red cord and how this fallen woman was saved, not because of her righteousness or religious attitude, but because of her faith and obedience to the living God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

Men have tried to rebuild the city on its old foundations, but have never succeeded because the Word of God declares, "Then Joshua made them take an oath at that time, saying, 'Cursed before the Lord is the man who rises up and builds this city Jericho; with the loss of his firstborn he shall lay its foundation, and with the loss of his youngest son he shall set up its gates'" (Joshua 6:26).

To be in Bethlehem at the stable where they say Jesus was born was a remarkable experience which God gave me. It really didn't matter to me whether or not this was the exact spot where He was born. 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 blessing when our faith in God and the resurrection of Jesus Christ becomes a personal experience. Everything looks different. Not only did I see the place where Jesus was born, but just outside the city walls of Jerusalem I visited the tomb belonging to Joseph of Arimathea, where Jesus was buried. The keeper of the tomb, Matthew, became a personal friend of mine.

In front of the exact spot where they say Jesus' body lay, there is a large iron gate. I had the privilege of opening this gate with a key. For just a moment I lay down upon the spot where Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea had placed our Savior's body. As I lay there with my eyes closed, I felt such gratitude in my heart and the words of Romans 8:11 came to mind, "But if the Spirit of Him who raised Christ Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Jesus Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who indwells you".

I remembered Jesus' own words in John 5:24, "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life".

This is my belief: that Jesus tasted death for us so that we would never have to taste it. I would never have wanted to miss the experience, nor the moment on the Mount of Olives on the spot where Jesus proclaimed, "...John baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now".

"And so when they had come together, they were asking Him saying, Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel? He said to them, It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority; but you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth" (Acts 1:5-8).

How wonderful to know that it will soon be fulfilled which is written, "Behold, He is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him" (Revelation 1:7). Fortunately, we don't have to work out with our human minds how this will take place. Faith accepts God's Word unconditionally and God, without the slightest doubt, will soon fulfil **this Word** as well.

INDIA

It would take another book if I were to relate all the other campaigns we have been privileged to hold. However it would be a grave omission if I didn't mention the massive crusade which we had in India. It was held in Kariampalve, a very small village somewhere in the bush 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 shall never forget the terrible oppression which I felt one night. While I was preaching a special message on healing it seemed as if all the demons of hell were let loose on me. In spite of this, however, the hearing of THE WORD by the Indians 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.

Such an experience proves that even preachers should never rely upon their feelings, but carry on ministering the WORD OF GOD in simplicity, of which it is written, "My word... shall not return to Me empty, without accomplishing what I desire" (Isaiah 55:11).

Unfortunately, I have been unable to respond to all the invitations we keep receiving from India to come over and help them.

My burden for them is great. I have often said, "If I had another life to live, I would give it to India". Yet even though I am unable to go myself, I am still glad that we can assist the missionary work in that needy and vast nation financially.

Since that first campaign, I have been back many times, holding indoor meetings and open air campaigns where thousands of people have been saved and healed of a multitude of sicknesses.

MADRAS CHILDREN'S HOME

On one occasion I visited several orphanages, and the things which I saw there really touched my heart. I saw small 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 the bare concrete.

The toilet facilities consisted of a hole in the floor with no flush. There was one cold faucet for many children and rags for towels. I cried inwardly when I saw the situation, and called upon the Lord. As a father of seven children myself, I was moved by the plight of these little ones who lacked the love and care of a father or mother or any family at all.

The food was usually rice and curry for every meal, without 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, "Dear precious Lord, give me a children's home in some of these cities where I can be an example". In our country of Holland, we have what we call model dairy farms. People come from all over the world to look and learn from them. So I said, "Lord, give me a model children's home".

Then I went out and searched for a suitable place. I had my eye on some nice premises, but felt no peace in my spirit to make a decision. There was one place which a Real Estate man told me I should see, but I never went. He told me it had 2 bungalows. In Holland, a bungalow is a single family dwelling, so it didn't sound large enough.

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 Indian 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 many times 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 — mansions — with a large piece of ground to accommodate a fourth house. The whole estate was surrounded by a high stone wall with a beautiful gate. It has 70 coconut palm trees and seven different kinds of banana trees.

I only had in mind to buy the last house with the extra ground. However, the owners would only sell the second house to begin with. Because I wanted the last house, I had to buy two houses, which I did, and for which I have never been sorry.

Within one year the third house, located on the main road, came up for sale. Now we own the whole compound: three big mansions built by a director of the second largest film production company 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 it seems almost unbelievable in my eyes that God would give me such a wonderful paradise for the children — No. 10 Arcot Road, Madras 600093, India, next to the well-known AVM Film Studios.

We use one home for our offices and the Welfare Center. In the other two homes, we have about one hundred children, both boys and girls, together with members of our staff. Needless to say, our Madras Welfare Center and Children's Home is a first-class example to many as to how an orphanage should be run. It is cared for by Indian and Dutch personnel.

We also have opened an evangelistic centre where people from the neighbourhood can attend the meetings.

God has indeed been good to us. Naturally also your help and support are always welcome. God has always special blessings for those who are kind to the poor (Proverbs 19:17).

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 minister in all the continents, over 50 countries - from the Faroer islands to Brazil, from Belarus to Taiwan - to proclaim the Gospel. Millions of people have been reached which has produced a great harvest of souls.

An Eventful Trip Around the World

For a long time I had an outstanding invitation to hold

a crusade in Paramaribo, the capital city of Surinam (formerly Dutch Guiana) in South America. Eventually the way was cleared, and Leo Hendrickx, one of our full-time workers, went over ahead of us to make the initial preparations. The largest theater in Paramaribo, the Empire, was rented for this campaign. For the last two days the large stadium was to be used. Folders, posters and handbills were printed, displayed and distributed, ads were placed and several radio stations made announcements about the meetings.

Just before my departure from Holland, I re-ceived a phone call from Leo saying 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 anyway.

I shall never forget the reception I got in Para-maribo. When the Customs Officer checked my passport and recognized my name, he almost choked. Twice he asked me, "Are you Mr. Maasbach himself?"

"As you can see from the picture, yes, it is me", I told him.

He asked me to wait in a private room. At the same time the KLM plane was ordered not to leave. A high-ranking Immigration Officer 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 for a reason, but he only said that the Governor had refused permission for me to enter.

The next plane stop was Curacao (an island of Dutch Antilles in the Caribbean), and since my ticket was for Paramaribo-Grenada, I had no desire to go somewhere in a totally different direction.

Since my police record in Holland is clean and I am a citizen of good standing, I was curious to learn the reason for their refusal. However, to this day, the authorities have yet to come up with 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 had no intention of leaving. The whole affair was taking quite some time and the KLM plane was still grounded because of me. In the meantime, the manager of the local KLM office had also arrived, since he was responsible for all the passengers.

I had no business in Willemstad, Curacao, and only wanted to go to my place of destination as shown on my ticket. They acted as though I was the most dangerous two-legged individual around. Many phone calls were made to the Chief of Police and other authorities, but Evangelist Maasbach, who had been heard for years every Sunday at 1 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 accepted their attitude, but to refuse a bona fide Dutch citizen to visit what was at that time a Dutch overseas territory where freedom of religion is the law, and where every tourist is permitted to land was hard for me to swallow.

When they realized that I had no intention of leaving, two armed Immigration Officers 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 evicted from Dutch territory like a common criminal.

The real motive for all this commotion came to me, unofficially, at a much later date. Apparently it was the laying on of hands and the praying for the sick that had caused my entry to be banned.

I didn't feel led by God's Spirit to take legal action or even to waste any further time on the matter. After all, my predicament wasn't half as bad as that of Paul and Silas when they were beaten and thrown into jail. I figured that there must have been some misunderstanding somewhere behind all this and as a man of God I believed that "ALL THINGS" - even this incident - would "WORK TOGETHER FOR GOOD FOR THOSE WHO LOVE GOD".

My campaign manager, Leo Hendrickx, successfully took my place during the campaign. We received many comments later about God's blessings and His closeness during this, Leo's first and rather unexpected crusade. 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.

Subsequently, some years later, the government did give me full permission to land and to have revival meetings in Surinam.

OUR IMPORTUNITIES ARE GOD'S OPPORTUNITIES

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. I was also instructed not to have any meetings of any kind. I had no intention of doing so, but did visit the local 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, how wonderful it is when one, as a servant of God, can place oneself under the direction of His Spirit in any circumstances.

After two days on Curacao, 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 a.m. when I inquired when the next plane would leave for Port of Spain. The answer was "9 a.m."

In a rush, I made reservations, called for a taxicab, and packed my bags. As I grabbed my suitcase, I felt more than before, the urge of God's Spirit to go. I didn't have time to cancel some appointments, but found a few minutes at the airport to do so. When at precisely 9 a.m., the plane was airborne, I heaved a great sigh of relief. I knew I was in the Lord's will.

There are moments in the life of God's servants when we have an absolute assurance that God has a special treat in store, and if we ignore His voice at such times, we miss out on a great blessing. Strangely enough, I had no contacts at all in Port of Spain, yet I knew that I had to go there.

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, because 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.

How exciting to walk 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, Bombay, Jakarta, Sydney or Reykjavik. It is such a comfort to know that He also goes before us!

I put down my baggage in front of a bank building at the airport and walked up and down to await further instructions from 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. One doesn't need to worry, not in the least, for one knows: the Lord is going to do something!

As I strolled along, a gentleman approached me and asked point blank, "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 uttered the words 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 and had not forgotten the incident. He also told me what he was doing at the airport. He was a missionary from San Fernando, about 45 miles from Port of Spain, and was here waiting the arrival of my good friend, the well-known American evangelist... T.L.Osborn and his wife!

When he said that, I knew why God had sent me to Port of Spain. Rev. Witlow invited me to accompany them. The day before, two missionaries had left, vacating a fully furnished apartment where I could stay. Needless to say, I gladly accepted the offer.

Ten minutes later, Osborn’s plane landed. The first thing he said when he saw me was, “What are you doing here, Dutchman?” He had hardly expected to see me so far from home.

I told him I was actually on my way to Grenada, and told him how the Lord had led me to Port of Spain. I shall never forget the Scripture which he quoted, “The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord” (Psalm 37:23, KJV).

I was privileged to watch the first few days of the Trinidad campaign and also witnessed the salvation of many souls and some amazing miracles. 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 me to observe this campaign to strengthen and build up my own faith. There are so few teachers and examples of what it is to be a man of faith!

GRENADA

Grenada is a small island not too far from Trinidad. All arrangements for the campaign were made: the banners, the handbills, advertisements and the renting of a large soccer stadium. It wasn’t easy on this island to get people to come to the meetings. Right from the beginning, I sensed a great wave of resistance and opposition that had to be broken. There can be a tremendous difference from one city to another. But God gives us the wonderful assurance that He will never put our faith to shame, and even on the first night He healed and blessed many people. News spread around and every night the crowds increased. Night after night, hands were raised even in Grenada, and decisions were made for Jesus.

Gratefully, I thanked the Lord for bringing this campaign to a successful end, resulting in a harvest of souls and many wonderful healings and deliverances.

From there I was scheduled to 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 which I shall never forget, and this was one of them.

That night I spoke on the taking of Jericho and of Rahab the harlot. 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. Even though I had never met the pastor, Rev. Espinosa, I was not a complete stranger to him, for he had translated the movie “Holland Wonder” into Spanish, and had seen me many times on the screen.

It was my longest mission trip - it took me 3 months. From there I went to Indonesia where I would have many campaigns.

INDONESIA

Also called the “Emerald Girdle”, this is an archipelago consisting of 3000 islands situated between Singapore and Australia and south to the Philippines with a population of 180.000.000.

I was the first Dutch evangelist to enter this country since their independence from Holland. At the Ministers’ Conference, I met many pastors from all over the country.

After some very wonderful meetings in Jakarta, we held large campaigns in Solo, Bandung, Surabaya, Bali and Makasar. Everywhere we went, the largest theaters and auditoriums were too small to hold the crowds. A great number of people accepted Jesus as Lord and Savior.

I was very aware of the massive display of communist propaganda all over Indonesia. All kinds of literature bearing the hammer and sickle insignia was on display everywhere. Almost nowhere did I see any Gospel literature. This really shocked me. I promised the Lord I would do something about this as soon as possible. Since then, I am happy to report, we have printed and distributed tons of Christian literature in the Indonesian language.

I have been to Indonesia dozens of times and had tremendous open air campaigns, especially after the coup d'état in 1965 when there was a great spiritual revival. On the island of Timor, 30,000 people gathered night after night. The same happened in Manado (on the island Sulawesi). In Semarang, Palembang, Surabaya, Ambon, Bandung and many other cities, tens of thousands of people came to the open air meetings to listen to the Gospel message. Thousands became believers and thousands more received healings of all kinds of diseases by the glorious power of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Since 1966 we had our Indonesian office in Semarang, situated in the heart of the beautiful island of Java. The name of our association in Indonesia is "Jati Margo" which means "The Right 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.

With the assistance of our faithpartners, the neglected children and orphans are received in the home and brought up in an atmosphere of love and faith and trust in God.

Yet the Lord still had greater things in store for us. Years ago God layed it upon my heart to build a whole christian village in Indonesia. An architect, a friend, had already drawn the blue prints. Not only for a large children's home, but also for an old-age home, First-Aid hospital, living quarters for co-workers, etc.

This dream is now becoming a reality. At the end of 1995 we were able to purchase a large piece of property with many buildings. (F.i. a meeting hall, a gymnasium, etc.) On this property (60.000 m²) we can fulfill the things God layed upon our hearts to do. As I am writing this they are busy building a new huge children's home. My son, David, and our co-workers there, all God fearing people, are in charge of this. Needless to say, we need all the help we can get. With God's guidance, your prayers and financial support this village will be established to honour Jesus' Name and be an extension of His Kingdom.

An Exciting Movie

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. Even though our dedicated staff takes care of a lot of things, I always prefer to take care of personal correspondence myself. It is like a special God-given ministry to me. I also receive a lot of mail when I am actually on the mission field.

Especially when I am away from home I often pray for the many special requests from the home front, bringing them to the throne of God. On the mission field I also pray especially for all our faith partners back home who make it possible for me to go to the heathen. During these prayer times I always experience God's powerful presence. I know He hears and answers my prayers for all our faithful contributors. Praise God for those faithful ones who pray and give and believe and also have a burden for lost 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. The Lord always blesses these gifts for world missions. His last great commandment to His disciples was, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation" (Mark 16:15).

Our whole ministry is mainly geared toward soulwinning - every branch and every outreach is directly or indirectly connected with this vision. Even our Welfare Center and homes for orphans and neglected children in India, Indonesia and West India are focused on winning souls. This is the main purpose of our Foundation, and this will always be our great endeavor so that one day we may hear His voice saying, "Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master" (Matthew 25:23).

HEALING THROUGH PRAYER

It is a true saying that a prophet is seldom 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 too much, as I feel that the publicity which we get from the worldly press is more important. Through these media we reach those whom we are after: the unconverted outsiders. We have never lacked publicity. God always sends reporters our way - I have never had to invite the press.

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 had covered our healing and salvation meetings in the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam. One of our Dutch T.V. stations wanted some documentaries and as the subjects were left up to him, he had chosen our ministry. And so the movie "Healing Through Prayer" came into being.

If ever a movie stirred up a lot of dust and publicity it was certainly this film "Healing Through Prayer" by Jan Vrijman about the ministry of Johan Maasbach. The T.V. stations did not want to show it without some commentary, since they felt that it could "induce the viewers not to take their medicines, which would be injudicious and irresponsible" and something they wanted to avoid.

They tried to neutralize the impact the film was clearly going to make by preceding it sometime before it was due to appear on television, with an interview by the hard-hitting reporter Joop van Teyl, after which the newspaper reporters were given a preview of the film. "But", and I quote

from the newspaper "Trouw", "Maasbach got the upper hand right away by opening the interview with prayer and asking for a blessing. Within a few minutes he had wiped out the reporter".

This well-known reporter of "De Haagse Post" had been instructed to "expose Maasbach" so that the film would lose some of its great influence. I don't doubt Mr. van Teyl's journalistic abilities, but he evidently overlooked the fact that he was treading on Holy Spirit territory. As a Jew, he should have known better, for the Jewish Scriptures say, "No weapon that is formed against you shall prosper; and every tongue that accuses you in judgment you will condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their vindication is from Me, declares the Lord" (Isaiah 54:17).

The movie became a sticky problem to this particular T.V. station. They decided to have it reviewed and approved (or otherwise) 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. All to no avail, because the station itself would not budge and still maintained that the production was too provocative.

If the film had been shown immediately, it would probably have only been in the news one time. As it was, the stubbornness of this particular station brought our work the greatest publicity ever.

When it was definitely decided that the T.V. station VARA would not air the film, Jan Vrijman, in an unusual procedure, bought his work back from them. He didn't want his creation to be shelved. Eventually he produced the film "On the Floor of Heaven" into which "Healing Through Prayer" was incorporated in its entirety.

This movie was finally shown to the public during the film festival at Arnhem, and had its official premiere in Amsterdam, where it ran for over six weeks. The press showed tremendous interest. Every kind of newspaper and magazine reviewed it, making mention of VARA's refusal to televise it.

"On the Floor of Heaven" was shown in theaters all across Holland, even in the smallest villages. Eventually, after several years, it was shown on television, both in Holland and Belgium. Meulenhof Publishers of Amsterdam covered this film of Jan Vrijman's in their special 100th Anniversary edition, and following this publication we received a flood of reactions. Many people were touched and healed while watching the film.

I appreciate Jan Vrijman's objectivity and approach as well as his courage in producing this film. He was used by God, consciously or unconsciously, to acquaint outsiders with Jesus Christ, our great Savior and Deliverer.

Another delightful event was the film by the well-known producer-actor, Louis van Gasteren. He was commissioned by the national telephone company to make a documentary celebrating Holland's telephone network's transition to full automation. 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, so long as I could clearly quote a Scripture somewhere in the film. He had no objections to this request, and wondered whether we could arrange for some loud "Hallelujahs" to sound during the meetings.

Anyone familiar with our services fully understands that this last request presented absolutely no problem whatsoever! In consequence, the great campaign in Barneveld was born, where Mr. van Gasteren 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 great number of problems this one simple line would create. When the film was completed, he discovered to his dismay that this Bible text was far too predominant. After all, it was supposed to be a documentary about the telephone company. The problem with this short sentence and its contrast to the rest of the script was this: the Word of God was uttered under the anointing of the Holy Spirit!

Perhaps the most important thing about this whole business was the exposure to the Gospel message of all those professionals involved in producing, writing and criticizing these movies. They got the message whether they wanted to or not!

I often pray for people involved in the movies and show business. They carry such a responsibility in deciding with what they will influence and occupy the minds of their vast audiences. I always pray that God will deal with their hearts.

I must not forget to mention the time that I received a phone call from the Roman Catholic T.V. station KRO. They were interested in shooting a 10-minute segment from one of our church services. They were making a documentary concerning the different denominations.

Our ten minutes turned out to be so dynamic that they returned to do some more filming in our meetings. The result was a full color film which lasted for an hour, which was concluded with an interview with one of their best-known theologians, Pater Grollenberg. The whole production was very much in our favor. It was telecast one Sunday night during prime time. This Catholic production has made a great impact for good on our ministry and churches.

Later another well-known Dutch film producer and director, Bob Rooyen, made a film for the AVRO (the largest station in Holland) entitled "Men for the lens". This movie, which was an hour in length, was shown on TV on Sunday night and we received hundreds of reactions.

All of this is remarkable, because in Holland it is impossible to purchase time on either radio or television for religious broadcasting. Yet we have always prayed and believed that the Lord would open an effective door for us to reach the people by way of radio and television.

I am relating these incidents to encourage those many Christian ministers on foreign mission fields who say, "Oh no, it is impossible to get time on radio or television our here". I know very well what they mean, but "with God", as I have recorded here, "all things are possible to them that believe". God is still the God of miracles!

Strongholds Against Satan's Onslaught

The leading of the Holy Spirit and the personal

interest of God Almighty in the lives of His children is truly a marvelous thing. This is beautifully illustrated in the lives of Abraham, Moses, Joseph, Daniel and many others. The Bible tells us how God prepared each of them for a special task and how the testings and trials in their lives were sent to establish them and to strengthen their spiritual stamina. When our trials are behind us, then we can often see their purpose.

Most Christians do not receive what God has prepared for them because they fail to pass the tests. The reason for this is that, often, they do not wish to go the way of rejection, humiliation and abuse. We have to come to the place where Moses was when he considered "the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he was looking to the 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 God could entrust them with their great missions. Moses, like all those others, was a man of faith who took God at His Word. He never doubted that "nothing will be impossible with God".

One day I found myself in Rome, Italy preparing for a campaign on the island of Sicily. There, in Rome, I met my friend, Rev. John McTernan on the very day he received the keys to the beautiful 1500-seater Marconi Theater which he turned into a Full Gospel church. At that time I had no idea that the Lord had led me to this place in order to strengthen my own faith for the project He had in mind for me.

Two months later, however, a realtor 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 Marconi Theatre in Rome, and said that, in spite of the price, I wanted to see the building anyway. Together we drove down to the Capitol Theatre at 222 Loosduinsekade in The Hague. This magnificent building is visible from a mile's distance and is built at the junction of seven main roads. The moment I entered the theater I felt God's presence. The thought came to me immediately, "If we do not take this place for the glory of God, the world will take it for its own purposes".

In my mind I saw a vast audience of hungry people being ministered to by Jesus. I saw them surrendering their hearts to Him and being wonderfully healed and delivered, instead of yielding their minds to the lowgrade movies for which this particular theater was well-known.

Outside again, I stared at this enormous building. 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 do great things. During one of our daily prayer meetings, God spoke to my heart about the price of this lovely theater. I stuck to the figure which He gave me while negotiations got underway with the owner, a Jewish lady. She persistently refused to consider the price the Lord had given to me.

For a while I didn't hear from her at all. Then suddenly, one day, her lawyer called to ask if I could meet them the next day in his office. The owner and her son, he said, 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. Bank mortgages were very hard to come by at that time, and a movie theater was not a popular investment at that time. At the time of negotiation we had no finances available, as every penny was invested in our mission work. The down payment was miraculously supplied the very day it was due.

Miraculously, too, the owners accepted the plan which the Lord had revealed to me for financing the rest.

There are 1000 seats in the main auditorium. We asked our friends who were interested in our soulwinning ministry to sponsor one or more chairs for 300 guilders each. God surely blessed this pact and many people sponsored more than just one or two chairs. It was also part of the agreement that the sponsors would pray for the salvation and healing of those who came and sat in their chairs.

Now of course it does not follow 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 cut rate. Some Christians are of the opinion that unless the seller will come down in his price, the deal cannot be of God. 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 troubled, because I had a much lower price in mind. But I have learned long ago that if people do not lower their price and the matter is really of God, then you must go up by faith. Otherwise you may miss the thing which God wishes you to have. Sellers have a right to hold onto their property for the correct price. You cannot wait too long in making your final decision, so learn to move with God. Always bear in mind: God is great. He is great and mighty and “able to do exceeding abundantly beyond all that we ask or think” (Ephesians 3:20).

HE CARES!!!

It was quite a job to convert this theater into a place of worship, but we relied on God’s Word which says, “Be anxious for nothing”. Even in the smallest details we saw the leading of God’s mighty Spirit.

For example, we needed neon lights to show the world what this great soulwinning project was all about. They needed to know that the building had changed its purpose. The installation was bound to be costly and I prayed that the Lord would lead us to the right company.

While I was still praying, the phone rang. It was the chief representative of the largest neon firm in Holland. He said, “Brother Maasbach, you don’t know me, but for a few months I have been a faithful listener to your radio broadcast (over Radio Luxembourg). I heard about the new Capitol building and figured you might need some help with your neon lights. Is there anything I can do?”

I invited him to come over right away and to give us an estimate. When he handed it to me, I asked him if it was a rock bottom 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”.

I knew that God had sent this man, and that I didn’t need to make any further inquiries. He was happy to do this for the Lord and for the furtherance of His kingdom. Strangely enough, although he had worked for this firm for many years, this was to be his last assignment. Shortly after its completion, the Lord took him home to glory. Just before he left, he grabbed my hand and repeated how happy he was to have been able to supply the neon signs for the ministry of the Lord.

I also remember the day that we needed 500 cups and saucers for our church restaurant in the Capitol. This story sounds incredible, but it is true. While I was trying to figure out where to get this chinaware at a low price, a man I had never met before approached me. He had come to deliver some clothes for our Welfare Center on behalf of his sister. He had already delivered the box to one of our workers when I chanced to see him and started a conversation. I asked him what he did for a living, and he said, “I sell snackbars”.

Scarcely believing my ears, I asked him if he knew a good place to buy 500 cups, saucers and teaspoons.

“Leave that up to me”, he said, “I’ll take care of it!”

That same week the man delivered a few large boxes with 500 china cups and saucers and 500 teaspoons. He said, "Brother Maasbach, I had saved up some money for the Lord. I didn't know what to do with it, but now I know what the Lord had in mind".

He smiled and went on, "You know, the devil tried to get at me for a moment. When I got the spoons they had cheap ones and stainless steel ones. I thought, "A present of 500 cups and saucers should be enough - I'd better get the cheap spoons", but at the same time I thought, "Why give the Lord something cheap? Why not give Him the best?"

The provision of offering bags was another remarkable incident. In order to lift an offering during the singing of a single hymn, we needed at least 30 bags. My problem was, how do we get them or how do we make them? I mentioned this to a staff member and suggested that he see a carpenter about frames and maybe ask some of the ladies to sew on suede bags. I figured that this would be the cheapest way.

He drily replied that one of the men in our Gouda congregation was a wholesaler in collection bags! I never even knew that such people existed in Holland. One brief phone call and two days later this man appeared with a suitcase full of samples. The order was delivered, custom-made and of first-class quality. We had no problem with payments either. He returned our checks in one of the collection bags!

It was very striking to me that my Heavenly Father had such care even for the offering bags. I wonder if Christians realize how important their offerings are in the sight of God. Jesus, remember, took note of the widow woman's two mites. What we give freely affects our whole lives and incomes. It is a big trick of the enemy, I believe, to convince people that we should not talk about money and giving in the ministry and in church services.

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!

For a while I had been wondering what souvenir to give to mark the occasion of our grand opening of the Capitol Evangelistic Center. It is not a simple matter to find something of lasting value which does not cost an arm and a leg. One Thursday evening, I said to our staff members, "Would you mind praying about a suitable memento to give away on the opening day?"

The following day, after a service in our church in Amsterdam, a man whom I had never met before, came up to me. He wanted to talk to me about some English songs he had heard on the radio. When this matter was taken care of, he said, "Mr. Maasbach, I have one more question. I am a director of a wholesale company 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 couldn't believe my ears. It is always so much better to deal with wholesalers than with retailers, because of price differential. I quickly asked him if he had anything particular in mind.

"Yes, indeed", he said, "a silver teaspoon".

Such a thought had never occurred to me. He continued, "At the top of the handle we could engrave a replica of Capitol. I am not suggesting that this would make a business deal. I want to do this for the Lord, and I figured that this would be a good investment in His ministry. We shall need a mold which will cost about 300 guilders. That will be my contribution. I'll also try and get a special price from the factory".

How sweet of the Lord to send a man my way who supplied mementos even below wholesale price! When I asked why he had chosen a spoon, he said, "I have been in the souvenir business for over 20 years, and throughout all those years a teaspoon has been the most desirable and popular memento!"

Now we have teaspoons that not only bear the replica of Capitol, but also carry the message: "Jesus Saves". Very exclusive!

Isn't God great? He Who creates the mighty universe, the sun, the moon and the stars, the beautiful trees and the flowers, the fowl of the air and the fish that swim in the ocean - this great God bothers with teaspoon souvenirs and sends a man with the necessary cups and saucers.

“He knows it all, yes, He knows it all, my God He knoweth all”. He also knows your troubles and trials and all your needs.

Someone once said to me, “Maasbach, don’t be so childlike”.

This is just the great trouble 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 knoweth all and nothing is too big or too small. He cares! He knows!

Let me say it once again: God is great!

It is great to be born again and to be His son or daughter. Like a father teaches his child, so God will teach you ... until you will truly know: ... nothing ... nothing is impossible with God for you that believe!

Beacons in the Storm

The Capitol has become a mighty stronghold against

sin and Satan's power. It stands like a lighthouse in a storm in The Hague, beaming its rays of light to all who will take notice. Since the opening day, not one week has passed without people finding Jesus there and surrendering their lives to Him.

Across the street from the Capitol Evangelistic Center there was another impressive building - a department store - five stories high and flanked on each side by apartment buildings. This whole structure was built two years after the Capitol, and was designed by the same architect, using the same kind of bricks and adhering to the same building style. When we purchased the Capitol I had no idea the Lord would give us this building as well, so that we could bring all the different branches of our ministry together in one location.

All of this is a living illustration of the Scripture, "Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard, and which have not entered the heart of man, all that God has prepared for those who love Him" (1 Corinthians 2:9).

Barely one year after the purchase of the department store building where our World Mission Headquarters are now established, we bought the entire block, complete with stores and living quarters on Apeldoornselaan, together with a few homes around the corner, directly behind the office building.

Anyone who cannot see God's hand in all of these provisions must be stone-blind. Those who don't know the Lord might conceivably call it luck or coincidence, but we who fear the Lord recognize His hand in these matters.

We were able to move in right away. The backyards of all those homes merged with our large backyard at Headquarters, making it one whole complex. The entire project was easily financed. God moved on hearts in strange and wonderful ways. During the last week of the final transfer, we needed to come up with over 500,000 guilders. We had it all except for 50,000 guilders. I knew the Lord would supply this as well.

That week, a Christian friend of mine and his wife came over for a visit and mentioned that they wanted to contribute something toward the work of the Lord. He said, "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 and prayed for wisdom - How could I tell somebody bringing a gift of 20,000 guilders 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'll increase that amount by 5000 guilders. That will make it a total of 25,000". 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 in front of me, saying it was a gift for the work of the Lord. The envelope contained 25 bills of 1000 guilders each. This completed the down payment which we needed for the following day.

I hope nobody will get the idea that our world-wide ministry is operated only on large gifts. On the contrary, it is mostly because of the smaller gifts, of 10, 50 or 100 guilders that we can do this great soulwinning work together. I know very well, also, that God values our offering according to what we possess. The two pennies of the poor widow found great worth in the eyes of Jesus, because she had given all she had. The Bible tells us that not many of the rich or the famous will follow Jesus Christ of Nazareth. It also says that it will be difficult for the wealthy to enter into

heaven and that not many will make it. Some though who give richly to God, will make it. Not because they give, but because they believe!

How poor are those who pin their faith on wealth, on their gold and silver. I hope they will wake up in time and realize that they should put their trust in the Lord, not in the perishable things of this life which will all vanish away. He who does the will of God will remain forever.

GOUWE-KERK

When our mission work started in Gouda and we found our first little church cum office building, who would have dreamed that one day we would become the legal owners of the “Gouwekerk”, the town’s beautiful Roman Catholic cathedral, as well as its large presbytery?

Just 30 minutes by car away from our Headquarters in The Hague, the Gouwekerk is a landmark in Gouda, the tallest of its three steeples being the highest point in town. At night you see the big red neon cross, which we placed there, for miles around. It is a valuable and monumental gothic style cathedral, built around 1900 by devout Catholics. How we obtained this magnificent place of worship for the Full Gospel testimony is another great story which must be told at some other time.

HAVEN-KERK

Just 20 miles from The Hague, in Schiedam, a suburb of the bustling harbor city of Rotterdam (the town where I was born), stands the lovely Church of John the Baptist. This former Roman Catholic church is known by the townspeople as “De Havenkerk” (The Harbor Church). It is over 150 years old and is probably the most beautiful Full Gospel Church in the world today. In danger of being condemned, this fine building was almost forced upon us by the authorities who begged us to preserve it. That the Lord has enabled us to do so is just another of the many miracles which He has performed for us in this ministry.

Entering this sanctuary, the worshiper is immediately reminded of Calvary by the huge painting above the main altar of Christ our Savior hanging between the two thieves at Calvary. Two other fine old paintings, one, depicting the Christ-child in the manger in Bethlehem above the left altar, and Joseph and Mary with the Infant Jesus in the arms of old Simeon in the Temple over the right altar, complete this striking panorama of religious art.

Life-sized colored statues of Paul and the Twelve Apostles add majesty and inspiration to the scene. The whole church is beautifully carpeted. The pulpit is a masterly example of craftsmanship and skill in carved oak, rarely to be found these days. Beneath the pulpit, also carved in oak, life-size, is the baptism of Jesus by John the Baptist, after whom the church is named.

This church has proven to be a great fishing net for souls.

OTHER CHURCH BUILDINGS

In Leiden we renovated a very old church of 1669 and converted it into a revival centre.

We were also given the opportunity to buy in the city of Utrecht, in the center of Holland, the beautiful “Emmanuel-Church”, which has already become a great Full Gospel Center, where many people have come to Jesus.

And also in Amsterdam, the capital city of Holland, known as the “Sodom and Gomorrah” of Europe (also a center of drug-addicts and drugsellers), we have been able to buy a magnificent church. This church, called “Calvary Church”, is, like the one in Utrecht, situated close to a speedway. It is a great, soulwinning center!

In the very heart of the predominantly Catholic South of Holland, in the city of Breda, we also opened the “Christ Triumpher-Church”, another Gospel Center for the glory of God.

In Dordrecht we bought and renovated a school building with a tower, which is unique to have. It always looked like a church and now it is one.

Let me invite you when you visit Holland to come and see these lovely houses of God. Just call our Headquarters **at any time** and they will give you all the information you need. Someone who speaks English will always be available to speak with you.

LAST WORDS

Don't let me close this book without emphasizing again that the aim of my life and ministry is not the gathering of buildings of wood and stone. These things are often needful in reaching the goal for which we are aiming, which is a spiritual building made up of living stones, a holy temple to the Lord. I am very grateful to the Lord for giving us the Capitol, the fine office and the other great church buildings, but my heart is not set on them. The day will come when these buildings will lie in ruins. **MY HEART'S DESIRES ARE UPON THOSE THINGS WHICH ARE ABOVE, WHERE CHRIST REIGNS, SEATED AT THE RIGHT HAND OF THE FATHER.**

I VALUE THE INVISIBLE THINGS MUCH HIGHER THAN THOSE THINGS WHICH ARE SEEN. 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! Yes, we even urgently need them to achieve the great objective: **TO REACH THE MASSES WITH THE GLORIOUS AND POWERFUL MESSAGE OF JESUS CHRIST OF NAZARETH!**

JESUS SAID HE WOULD MAKE US FISHERS OF MEN. The man who goes fishing needs a fishing pole, some hooks, line and bait, but everything has only one aim - the fish! This is exactly the same in this soulwinning mission which the Lord has given me.

The Capitol Center is not the most important thing, nor its neon lights nor our Headquarters nor the presses nor any other branch of our ministry. We only use these things like the fisherman uses his pole to catch fish - to bring precious souls to *JESUS*. Most important is He Who was born in a stable in Bethlehem and Whose name is Jesus. Everything revolves around Him. *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 desire anyone to be lost. This is the Jesus Whom I preach and adore. It is to Him that I have surrendered my life and of Whom I am not ashamed. Neither do I hide the fact of Who He is and of what He still does today. And for this reason I know that He is not ashamed to call me His brother.

That is why I have written this, my partial life story, trusting that others will be helped, inspired and instructed by it. Let me say in conclusion that it is my firm conviction that **MUCH MORE WONDER-FUL THINGS ARE YET TO HAPPEN.** I am just a fishing pole in the hand of the Lord. **SO LONG AS THERE ARE PEOPLE WHO DON'T KNOW JESUS, OUR WORK IS BY NO MEANS DONE.**

Which is why I appeal to you, dear reader, if you have been stirred and touched by what God has done, to become our partner in faith. Believe with me that God in heaven will enable us to tell the millions who Jesus of Nazareth is and what He will do for those who will believe.

It is impossible for me to do this great work alone. We desperately need you in order to go and preach Christ. Perhaps we cannot all go to the mission field in person, but each one can help someone else to go instead. Every penny and every article which we do not need for ourselves should be invested in missions and for the salvation of precious souls. All this will be easy if we first surrender our entire lives to Him. There is a great work yet to be done, and time is short. Dear friend and reader, let us together do what our hands find to do, and the Lord God will bless you abundantly and be with you until the end.

Be free to write and we will personally write you back.

Our address is: Johan Maasbach World Mission, Apeldoornselaan 2, 2573 LM, The Hague, Holland.

Note:

On September 18th 1997 Johan Maasbach went to the Lord, leaving a note: "I have finished the job You have given me to do".

The work of the Lord however is going on. His sons David and John together with all the co-workers continue lifting up the Name of the Lord so that people in our country and in the nations world-wide will see and meet the Savior of the world, Jesus Christ our Lord.