

Chapter 13

The New Land

What a beautiful sight with the sun shining on the houses on each side of the river! Church steeples mingling with red, blue, and green shingled houses. How different from Holland! Soon Quebec City came in sight. The crew had to do some unloading at the harbor there. We had the opportunity to go ashore for a while, which we readily did. We could not believe our eyes, saying to each other, "Wat een oude gebouwen zijn hier" (What old buildings we see). Our knowledge of Canada was so limited we soon discovered. We did not even know or think about that these people who were French Canadians. For as we walked into the streets with all kinds of stores on each side and discovered piles of oranges, I tried to use my little English. I was so hungry for oranges, which we had not seen for years. The people in the first store did not even seem interested in what we were interested in. I sought to buy oranges, but they just seemed to ignore what I was trying to express. A few stores further, it worked - and here we were with a dozen oranges! I believe Corrie ate one or two, but I do know I ate all the rest right then and there. And no, this wild abundance did not adversely affect me!

On our way home we even noticed that God had made the thunderstorm pass by. What an incredible evening. And an equally incredible Sunday. It indeed was a day of special thanksgiving and praise. We wondered about some Canadians, but we did not wonder about our God. He had proven Himself again here in Canada too! THANK YOU LORD!

Then on Nov. 28, 1948 began our first immigration work experience. There were some upsetting experiences, but also some good times. In all, it was a real eye opener in the new culture in which we found ourselves. Moreover, of course, it was my first experience to work for someone else! Leonard was a boss who tried to get everything out of the hired man he possibly could - and for as little as possible in return. This was something I had to learn. True, at my dad's place, I never received any monetary reward, but that was the tradition for all unmarried sons. I now also recall how we had heard somewhere in the middle of June that July 1 was a national holiday in Canada. We thought, "isn't that wonderful? A day off on my birthday!" Wrong. When I mentioned this in passing, they tried to ignore my talk and discussion about it. Our Dutch mind had reasoned that we would just milk cows and do chores together, but it just was not so. When I brought it up again a week prior to July 1, they said that on the farm it did not make any difference. There was no holiday, period.

In our letters back home we just never mentioned any of these kind of experiences. We did write that the boss and his sons were very hard workers, who did not care much about church. Also, that he demanded I should stay home from church when it was my day to do chores, and he had told us that bi-weekly we should attend the negro church in our neighborhood. But as to difficulties, this

is as far as we went. We did write weekly, without exception. And, indeed, there was so much to write - we had nothing but new experiences.

Corrie did mention occasionally that she was a bit homesick, but she really tried to minimize the whole homesickness ordeal. I thank God that I have never known what homesickness was all about. I only knew it from Corrie's experience with it.

On Nov. 30, 1948 a three ton fruit truck of the Broadwood Brothers drove on our yard. It was 7:30 a.m. One of the men who been working for them for about eight years, Harold Pain, was our mover. It did not take long before we were on our way to our new house - all three of us in the cab. I did my level best to keep Corrie from helping too much, but this was not so easy. She was as excited as I was to start new. When we drove on the Broadwood yard and down the hill where our little house stood, I thought, "so this is, God willing, the house where next month, I will be bringing back Corrie with our new baby."

Tom Broadwood was in charge of the work in the orchards. Dunk, his brother, was the head of the business and the money man. He and his wife did not live on the same yard, but just a little way up toward Blenheim. Tom and his wife lived just off the highway and right on the yard. Across the lane way, lived their son, John, with his wife and their baby. Then further down the lane way lived the market and apples salesman, Bill Russink, and his wife and children. This was the son of our former neighbor at Giffens. Half way down the hill lived Bob Humphrey with his wife and, I believe, five children. I know one other was born while we were there. And then, finally, all the way down the hill was the place where we were going to live. There were fruit trees everywhere. We did not know yet how indescribably beautiful it was to be by time everything would be in blossom next spring. But we did thank God, over and over again, for giving us this new place to live and work. It did not take long before we got used to our electricity in the house. And our outhouse was right in the orchard. And what a relief to Corrie: no snakes!

Also, no more problems with being forced to work on Sundays! And as if these were not enough blessings, neither did I have to milk any more cows and do chores every other week. This was good indeed. Even Toni's wife attended church every Sunday. This was different. Also John's wife went along with her. And off and on, Tom and John as well. Bill Russink's wife went occasionally too. Surely, it was not that all attended church, but at least some did. And it made us feel good.

On Monday 1 December I walked up the hill at five minutes to seven to find out what I was to be doing the first day. Well, what I was to be doing this first day, was also what I was to be doing every day: pruning trees. All the men with whom I was to work were already there. I soon found out that they all gathered at the shack just up hill, between Bill Russink's and Bob Humphrey's places, at 6:50 a.m. At that time Tom would be there to give instructions as to where the pruning

was to be done. Ordinarily, he would say, "Just keep on going where you left off." Harold Pain was somewhat our foreman in the orchard. Certainly, it wasn't the boss' son. Then there was one other man besides these, I have forgotten his last name. He was quite crippled up and his first name was Reg. One disappointing thing that struck me at the outset was the swearing done by just about all of them, and worst of all by the crippled man. And neither was I ready for the immoral talk going on while the five of us were pruning all day long. After a week or so, having gained a little more confidence in myself, and as I thought building up some trust between these four men, I carefully sought to mention to one of them this swearing which they did. We were a little further away pruning a couple of large old apple trees. He told me, I better get used to it, for this is how it always been.

A few weeks later, I tried to talk about it to John, the boss' son. He was far more open to what I tried to convey. And indeed, thereafter he did not swear as much when I was around him, but when we were all together, it did not make any difference. They always took a bit of a coffee and tea break. They all had their thermos bottle and a few cookies with them. For the first little while Corrie brought mine during the morning, but we decided it would be wiser to no longer do so. The men would almost be taking turns to sit on their knees, looking whether "John's Wife" already was on her way with coffee and cookies. As soon as Corrie came near all the dirty talk and swearing stopped. At one time, I asked them why they did this? They simply replied, "John, here in Canada, you just don't swear when a woman is around." Well, swearing was new, but so was this concept. A few times I tried to tell them that God was always present and heard all their swearing and dirty talking. It did not make any difference. In fact, I soon found out that the more I tried to say about it, the worse it became. One morning, I decided to count how often Reg would use our Redeemer's Name in vain. By coffee time my count stood at number 75. I was so appalled and so ashamed: God and the Lord Jesus Christ meant so much to us! What had not altogether dawned on us was that the Holy Spirit was making us feel this way.

Otherwise, we must say that we liked the work, and the people were helpful. Of course, in my writing I recall how things were for me, this while Corrie is doing it all from her point of view.

And so, now it is time for me to share about the arrival of Murray. For whatever reason, the time set by Dr. Hoffman just wasn't the baby's time, and therefore not Corrie's time either. It was a long, long wait for her and for me. When we had arrived we had asked Bill Russink whether he would be so kind to drive Corrie and me to the Chatham hospital. He was happy to do so. He also said that in case he would be at the market in Windsor with fruit, his wife would be happy to drive us there. And if she too would be away, there were all kind of others on the yard who would be ready to do so. We could not believe our ears. How different this response was from the one we had received earlier. Well, at last Corrie happily announced, yes, this was the day. But in the meantime, it was no longer the end of December, the time our baby was due; it now was January 12! Bill was home and we soon were on our way to the Chatham St . Joseph's Hospital.

If everything was new, this was newer than everything. And first and foremost, the time it took for Corrie to deliver her (our) baby! There are things we have never forgotten, but this one stands out more than most other experiences. And the reason being that after many hours the head nurse told me that things were not right with Corrie. And as to our baby, she did not know how it would further develop. All the while, I was already upset that here in Canada, it was not allowed for fathers to be at the side of their wife. We just could not understand how such a thing was possible! This really was the one and only thing that I held against our newly adopted country. We felt it was unnatural and unwarranted.

I was so humbled by all of Corrie's screaming. I was feeling so helpless! I was again crying out to God like during the most threatening hours of the war, except this time not for myself but for Corrie, and the baby which was to be born. Two other fathers were there too, also nervously pacing the hallway. One had come even later than us and they already had their baby. Soon thereafter the doctor came around to tell this father that they had a healthy baby. But Corrie was still calling out for help. I do not know how often I went up to the door, telling these "barbaric people" in there, i.e., in my heart of hearts, they had no business to keep me, the husband and father, to stay out! "Hey, you people in there, don't you know this is my wife? Don't you realize that this is part of me that is to be born? I insist to be there! To hold her head, her hand, and whatever else I can help with. I have been at all kinds of other difficult births! Not of people, but at least I know something about life trying to come into this world!"

Something else I knew. My presence with Corrie may not be of the greatest physical help, but I knew it would be of the greatest psychological and spiritual help. My presence with her would be a real morale booster. I knew her and they did not.

At last the head nurse came to tell me that I should be prepared for a disappointment. I could lose either Corrie or the baby or ... The rest she did not say. She just left. It was right then and there that I went on my knees right in the corridor of the hallway and again cried out to the Lord. I do not know the prayer I said. Maybe it wasn't even much of prayer. I just cried out, over and over again, until at last I was able to vow to the Lord the following: "God, if You allow us to keep one another and the baby, this baby is Yours and You can have our baby, wherever You might want him/her. If it be in Russia or dark Africa, we will let it be that way. Our baby is Yours and You can do with him/her whatever You want. To the very best of my recollection, this is exactly the kind of vow I made to the Lord, following my crying out to Him.

At this time, I no longer heard Corrie scream. I was so alone. Words cannot describe how I felt inside except to say that I did nothing else but pray and pray. How long I was there I have no idea, but it was until the doctor arrived and informed me that the baby was born and the nurse would come to tell me when I could see my wife. It was incredibly good news. God had spared Corrie

and the baby. We had a son! Now I just kept on thanking God for hearing prayer. I also remembered my vow. And that I now had to share this sometimes with Corrie.

When at last the nurse came to let me "see" Corrie, I immediately saw how hard it all been on her. She was emotionless. I had never seen her this way. It always had been the opposite. This had been too much on her, but I did not know to what extent. I just held her hand and again prayed and prayed. When I tried to talk with her, she barely responded to anything I said or sought to convey. At last, I asked her whether she was not glad the baby had arrived and lived? Again, barely a response.

I left her for a while since she fell asleep and went to see our son. He was quite blue on much of his face and little body. He was taller than I would have expected him to be. So this was our Marinus God had given us. Thank You, thank You, Lord.

It was not until the next day that Corrie began to respond somewhat. Later on, we found out some more about this difficult, difficult birth. How and why it was so hard we will never know; we can only raise questions. Had the extreme seasickness anything to do with it? Had the hard time at Giffen's something to do with it? Was the whole immigration just too much for the carrying of a baby? We do not know. It was very disappointing when Corrie told me shortly afterwards that her doctor professionally really had let her down. He came too late and wasn't altogether sober. Within a year, he had lost his license to practice medicine. To us it was no loss to exchange him for another - Dr. Pickering.

The first thing I did after leaving St. Joseph's hospital was go to the Chatham telegraph office to send the news to Holland. It was wired to the Moerman family; they were the closest to the town of Schipluiden. The telegram at that time would go to the post office and from there on to the addressee. We later on were told that Andrew's wife, Nel, relayed the news by bike to the Van Leeuwen family at It Huis ten Dorp. Mother Van Leeuwen wrote in her letter of congratulations that Nel was ringing her bike bell all the way while driving onto the yard. This is how excited she was. And we know that in Holland our parents and all the others had become concerned about the three weeks overdue of this first pregnancy of Corrie's.

In spite of the difficult birth, Corrie was allowed to leave hospital in record time. This was also due to the fact that one of our neighbors had insisted that we come for two weeks to her place. In Holland this lady, Mrs. Viersen, had been a midwife and so she was an experienced caretaker of young mothers like Corrie. This tipped the scale at St. Joseph's to let Corrie and our new son leave earlier than normal.

Corrie and our little son, Murray, had the best of care at the Viersen home. There were things we would like to have seen and experienced different, but we made the best of it. For example,

Corrie's wishes and desires did not enter into consideration at all. It was "this way, or no way". Mrs. Viersen's methods were the old fashioned ones. Corrie had learned things differently prior to our marriage when she had taken a course in pregnancy and baby care. But to Mrs. Viersen, these things were all wrong. It was good to leave the hospital and it was good at last to be in our own home together. What a joy and thanksgiving this was - God had been good to us! God had heard our prayer. God had given us a healthy son. God had given us an increase money could not buy.

And when home, did we take pictures! Ordinarily, the first baby gets the most. With us it was no different. (Come to think of it, how can it be any different, when there is only one to give attention to?) All of this extravagant picture taking was mainly to compensate for something we were missing here in Canada. Corrie and I were not in the position to show our new baby to our parents, our own family, our relatives, our friends and neighbors. We knew this would be so if God would bless us with children. We had talked about it when we were struggling with leaving for Canada, or staying in Holland. But now we were actually here, our joy was being limited by our being in Canada. We did not hear our parents say something like: "hey, Murray - baby, this is your grandpa/ your grandma." And now we are the proud grandparents of so many wonderful grandchildren, we have been feeling for more than twenty years what our grandparents missed during these early years. We thank God that we have been able to visit Holland in 1958 and also for the visits of my parents during 1953, even as Corrie's mother in 1965, 1971, and 1977. But of course, none of this was known when we had our first baby in 1949. There was one additional blessing which the birth of our first child brought: Corrie's home sickness slowly but surely started to leave her.

And now back to the life and work at the Broadwood farm. The Broadwood Brothers Fruit Farm was one of the larger ones on the gravel ridge extending East and West of Blenheim. We pruned fruit trees of every kind: apples, pears, sweet and sour cherries, and peaches. The pruning season began immediately following the finish of the picking and cultivating. This ordinarily was in the beginning of November. When I had arrived on November 1, it was the first day of pruning. The only short interruptions were when we had to help sort apples when Bill Russink had made a big sale. The fruit was always stored in the Blenheim Co-op Storage facilities. Pruning finally stopped when the first blossoms began to appear and the first weeds began to grow.

I learned to drive tractor there. But it wasn't with an old John Deere any more. They only had these low Ford tractors (8N model). Disking had to be done under low hanging branches, and when this was in progress, for hours one would sit bowed low along side the steering wheel.

It was also during our time at Broadwood that I obtained my truck driver's license. Occasionally I had to help out with driving fruit to the cool storage in Blenheim, or during winter and springtime to bring it back for sorting. During these days, and especially with the man in Blenheim who gave these tests, it wasn't too difficult to get a license. I had taken driver's training in Holland in 1947

and obtained my license on April 15, 1947. When I told him I was a Dutch immigrant and worked for Broadwood Brothers, he merely asked me how many years I had been driving. Thereupon, he had me drive one block around his office, and that was it - I received my chauffeur's license!

The following year I began to give Corrie driver training lessons. By then, we were living in Cedar Springs. The only time we had available was on Sunday morning prior to our going to church. And so sometimes thereafter, on a Saturday evening, I took Corrie to town to see whether she could make it. But I first must tell you something we had found out after I had obtained my chauffeur's license. The official who was responsible for licenses in Blenheim hated rain. And so when a person would come when it was raining rather hard, he would not even bother to take a driver's test with the individual. Now, we had not done this on purpose, for when it was raining, Broadwood would let his men off when something for the family needed to be done. Just the same, when we went for Corrie's license, it was pouring rain! And guess what? Yes, without any problem, she received her driver's license. He said, "This is no weather to go outside. Do you know how to drive?" The answer was, "Yes, I do." And that was all there was to it. (Corrie often said that this is why she became such a "good" driver!

Besides fruit, the Broadwood Brothers also grew asparagus and rhubarb. This too, Bill would sell each Saturday morning in Windsor. He always left at 4 o'clock in the morning and sometimes he would take additional help from among us along. The next week this individual would do nothing but tell stories about how great it was to be in Windsor at the market. These stories ordinarily were embellished with more dirty talk and swearing.

The rhubarb was grown in cellars built half way in the hill and along side of our lane way. From our house we looked right at it. In the fall we would plant them and during the wintertime we would heat the place with a little bit with wood. It was a dark stinky place, but the rhubarb grew unbelievably well.

One morning, shortly after I had arrived, we were waiting in the shack, fixing and sharpening whatever needed fixing and sharpening. Slowly, a skunk was walking around the yard. I had never seen a skunk and I thought it to be a very nice animal. I asked what it was. Jokingly some of them told me it was a Canadian cat. The way they laughed about it when they told me made me question the reliability of what they said. Yet, I was anxious to find out what this animal was. They told me to go and look for myself and see that it indeed was a cat. I went and was about to chase and catch it when they all shouted to come back. And just was in time, too. What a smell! I had learned another lesson.

Our old bank account passbook from 1948 tells us that we withdrew on Jan. 19, 1949, \$125.00 from our total of \$236.75. This was for a brand new washing machine! What a feast this was for

Corrie. And how thankful we were that this was possible in the short while we had been here. Yes, we did turn over, so to speak, every penny, nickel and dime, before we considered it to be handed out for something. I clearly remember when I had lost two afternoons working because it had rained. I had the additional problem of having lost on the yard 50 cents. I could not possibly see how and looked for it over and over. I went home with tears in my eyes, telling Corrie about this loss. We accounted for every penny to be saved and every penny to be used. This is how we ran our budget in those days.

By this time, it was becoming true what our elderly and long time Dominee J.J. De Vries had predicted to take place: I was becoming more and more involved in the work of Christ's church. The first half year or so we attended regularly the Christian Reformed Church services. But when more and more immigrants from the Hervormde Kerk began to arrive, the situation began to change. Most of them refused to attend worship services in what the CRC was called by these immigrants "De Gereformeerde Kerk". The 1881 split in Holland of the Gereformeerde Kerk from the Hervormde Kerk wasn't exactly fresh in our mind anymore, however, it was a different story to the immigrants' parents back in Holland. And their feelings about this separation had been passed on to the next generation. My mother was far from sympathetic to Gereformeerde people. Corrie's parents were not at all, nor was my father.

Anyhow, this was the historical fact we faced in 1948-1949. The Hervormde Synod had taken up contact with the United Church of Canada, requesting them as their ecumenical counterpart to care for their members in Canada. They were more than eager to do so. Some of the Hervormde immigrants did try worship there, but came away with empty hearts and consequently negative reports. We actually never did worship in any United Church of Canada church. Somehow, we had not been impressed by those who were members of the UCC. They hardly ever seemed to attend services. Our former boss and his family too were members of the UCC and so was the Broadwood family and most of the hired people and their families. But again, they either attended very, very irregularly, or never.

We also looked at the few other immigrant families who had come to Canada prior to the last World War. And they had become known to us as "mensen zonder God of gebod" (people without God or God's laws). We surely did not want to see this happen to us recent Hervormde immigrants.

The above was a matter we prayed about a lot and discussed a lot. We corresponded about this with the Hervormde Synod. I still have a letter about this. It would take too long to deal with this matter here, suffice it to say that we had become fully involved in this matter. I was also getting correspondence by this time from the RCA. And some secretary must have concluded from my letters and involvement that I was a minister. Tom Broadwood always received our mail in his box, for we did not have one. Corrie always picked up the mail from his house. When one of

these letters was addressed to the Rev. John Moerman, obviously Tom had broadcast this all around on the yard. The next day I had to hear something and the men called me "Reverend John". They also reached hurried conclusions as a result of this. They said, "So, preacher, this is why you don't like us saying what we are saying, right?" These and other remarks I had to hear for quite some time.

In spite of the fact that nearly 100% of the immigrants were opposed to being integrated in the UCC, the Dutch Synod pushed us on trying to do so. Soon though, the minister, Rev. Leon De Bruyn, whom they had appointed to lead the worship services, saw the folly of their way and thereafter sought to become part of the work the RCA was about to undertake. He came to Chatham every three weeks and ordinarily stayed with us during these Sundays. (He also had a much better camera than we had and took some pictures of the proud parents and their first born!) While still working for the Hervormde Synod and the UCC, he had arranged for a church service to be held in the United Church in Chatham for Dutch immigrants, to be on radio in Holland. We were all very excited about this; and all the more whereas Murray and a three year old girl were to be baptized during this service. Our parents and family in Holland had been informed about this, too. However, when the Dutch Synod found out that in the meantime Rev. L. Bruyn had began leading services for the RCA, at the last moment this worship service was cancelled. Anyhow, this way Murray became the first child to be baptized in the newly-to-be-formed RCA churches in Canada.

Soon thereafter, in the same spring, we had a meeting in Cedar Springs with three delegates of the RCA who lived in and around Grand Rapids, They were the Revs. Jacob Brouwer, Nicolas Roozenboom, and one other whose name I have forgotten. What a meeting of historical significance this was! I just felt it in my heart of hearts. There was almost more prayer than discussion. This meeting set the stage for the organization of the RCA church in Chatham, later on in October.

During the summer months more immigrants began to arrive. We soon began to hold church services each Sunday. Most of the time when there was no minister, so I would read a sermon from the weekly series. Only evangelical ministers were asked to submit sermons to this series of published sermons. The Dutch Reformed Church had ministers of four different persuasions: Confessional, Conservative-Orthodox, Evangelical-Pietistic, and Liberal. The Synod was strongly ecumenical and tried to sail somewhat a middle course.

The Chatham Church was organized October 11, 1949. Again, a very unforgettable evening. We only had a handful of charter members. Consequently, there was little to choose from as far as Consistory was concerned. I had just turned 27 and was elected to be an elder. I informed the people, "Ik ben nog maar een paar jaren van de Jongelings Vreniging af! Dit kan ik niet

aanvaarden!” (I have barely left our Young Peoples' Society! I can't accept this). After the meeting, the RCA committee members (the same ones who were at our spring meeting in Cedar Springs) strongly advised and encouraged me to go home and pray about the decision. They said, "You cannot decide this tonight." (A report on this meeting and their discussion with us was shortly thereafter published in The Church Herald. Also, see the 10th Anniversary of this organization of the Chatham and Hamilton churches in The Pioneer).

For two years, between the worship services we always had lunch in church basements. The first half year in the Christian Reformed Church and thereafter the UCC which we were able to rent for our worship services. These few hours between services were wonderful times of fellowship and socializing with one another. Baby Murray spent practically the whole day in church. He liked the car rides and the spoiling during that day, but when Monday came around he let us know that he liked the Sundays much better. As a result, Monday for Corrie was a trying day.

Looking back, all these experiences God used to prepare us for what was to come: full time Christian ministry. But at that time, this was completely unknown to us. We now look upon it much like the new Christian who was living in the world: the Holy Spirit was already moving, nudging, prodding him along to come to see and hear His voice. All of this only comes out into the open later on.

Already there at the Broadwood Farm, as good as it was in so many ways, there was something empty and unfulfilling inside, but I did not know what it was. Sure, both of us hated the swearing and dirty talk going on there, but as for everything else what more did we want? God knew, but we didn't.

In the meantime, we had sponsored Joe and Coby Waardenburg. Joe had been in hiding during the German occupation years in Schipluiden, where his uncle Piet lived. Part of this time he spent at our place. They had a baby a little older than Murray. It was very crowded to live with the six of us in this small house. Actually, Joe was more able to socialize with the men working on the Broadwood farm than I was. His background in the city Gouda had no doubt brought this about. Dunk Broadwood had told me, "as soon as there is another house available, it is for you folks."

During the fruit picking season, Corrie would take our baby in the Dutch buggy we had bought (second hand) and pick fruit. This was extra income for us. She would also discreetly breast feed the baby right there in the orchards. Climbing ladders has never been Corrie's favorite though, and this gave her difficulties at times. She just could not pick only the lower branches clean and let the others do the higher part. After work, I would at times pick what was too dangerous for her.

During the height of the picking season two trucks would drive out to bring in pickers from Blenheim and a negro settlement northwest of Charing Cross called Boxton. Corrie made friends

with a widow from there. She was very kind and understanding and helped her sometimes too with some of the branches. When she found out we were involved in church work she invited us to come to her church one Sunday. This we did. What an experience this was for us, who had never attended anything but a Reformed church. She was a Pentecostal lady. They were the real "holy roller" type. Of course to us, this was strange to say the least. There was a feeling of uneasiness, yet combined with spiritual reality. These people meant business with their Savior! We always thought we did too, but we never expressed it the way they did. Our upbringing was "The Lord is in His holy temple, let all the earth keep silence before Him." This "silence" was to stand out as God's people entered the House of God. Moreover, this holy reverence of our Holy God was to be expressed throughout the entire worship service.

But then, what was this here in this negro Pentecostal church in Boxton? These people at a given moment all stormed to the front of their auditorium and kneeled in front of a chair and started to pray our loud. Actually "loud" is an understatement. They cried and screamed at times, and holy hallelujahs filled the air. We were the only two who stayed behind. And I must add: very much dumbfounded. What was this?

After the "worship" service, we were invited to her home for dinner. Again, another clash of cultures. Had Dolly not cleaned her house for the last half year? What was all this mess around everywhere, inside and outside? A gun laying on a chair, clothes everywhere on the floor, dogs running in and running out, mud, a pig begging for food at the door, etc. I had no problem eating there, but this was not so with Corrie. The next day during cherry picking, Dolly asked Corrie how she had liked the worship service. It took some time for us to culturally digest this mentality, and also to spiritually work through what we had seen and heard. Was this how negro Christians worshipped God? It was our first exposure to negro spirituals. We had problems with Dolly's life style and worship expressions, but she questioned the whole summer whether Corrie and I were really Christians! We could sense that she wondered in her heart how a man like I could be a church elder!

A house had become available in February, 1950. Corrie and Coby went there toward the end of the month to do some cleaning. It was an old and big house, located in Cedar Springs and 500 yards from the road to Charing Cross. We moved there on March 1, 1950. It was here that Corrie in earnest began to take driver's lessons from her "instructor". The previous year, Nov. 9, we had purchased our first car - and a brand new one at that! It was a Prefect, a Ford type of English car. The Broadwood men had a lot to joke about with our vehicle. They called it the "puddle jumper", but this was fine to us: we had a new car to drive! The total price was \$1,200. We had \$410.35 in the Bank and about \$250.00 in cash at home. The year was coming to an end and Mr. Pook wanted to sell as many old models as possible. This gave me the opportunity to ask him to drop \$150.00 off the price he had set. I offered him \$600.00 down and \$100.00 per month for the next half year. He asked what I was making. He felt that we could never accomplish this. We told

him that for the last six months we had been doing exactly that with Corrie earning money as well. Anyhow, with God's help, we continued to live on what Corrie was making and the rest went for paying off our Prefect! Mr. Pook was greatly surprised when a half year later it was all paid for!

The swearing at Broadwood was beginning to bother me more and more. This combined with Joe and Coby and baby living with us for more than 10 months already, and now Corrie expecting our second child! As to organizational responsibilities and cleaning up after oneself, Corrie and Coby were very different. All these things combined made me start looking for another place of employment. We also had decided that we should go back to dairy. This appeared to be a better future for us and our growing family than the fruit business. I found a place in Guilds. It looked like a good place. But the house had to be moved from its present location. The boss said this was no problem; he would have it all in order at a certain time. When the deadline came closer and closer, the house had indeed been moved but as to the plumbing - nothing had been done yet. It was clear that he planned to have us move in with the house like this and do the plumbing later. We had seen enough of this type of procrastination in the way other immigrants were treated and it was enough to make us cancel the arrangement.

I already had given my notice of termination of employment at Broadwood and we had just one week left. But within a day or so, we found another dairy farm for employment - at Roy Warwick.

It was on May 1, 1950 that we moved to the ultra modern dairy farm of Mr. and Mrs. Roy Warwick. They not only were in the dairy business, they were also millionaires with a large lumberyard in Blenheim and a seed corn plant. They were also heavily involved in construction. A herdsman ran the dairy business and I was the dairy's hired man. Besides the two of us, there were another two hired men who were responsible for the general farming operations. The house we were to move into was not vacant yet and so we had to move temporarily into an old house on another one of his farms just down the road.

Looking back now on this third move made me see that there more more than the three reasons given previously for moving. Actually there was a fourth as well, except this one was still buried out of sight - a subconscious effort to satisfy my still unfulfilled feeling inside.

Dairy farm work calls for early rising and this we did at 4:00 o'clock. We milked 30 Holstein cows with the two of us. The herdsman was from Nova Scotia. Again we were on a farm where we were the only family who attended church regularly. The only other one who occasionally went to church was Roy's wife.

The herdsman had an office in the large barn. He loved spending time there "doing office work". In the afternoon, however, he would show up just before milking time with his hair all messed up and grooves in his face from lying on his pillow. He certainly was better at cattle fairs, showing

registered cows and bulls and dealing with prospective buyers than with working by hand. He was an outstanding talker! The other hired men used another phrase similar to: "bull shooter". He also had a very short temper, both with cows and people. Milking and feeding cows was the only work he did in helping me.

We rolled our own oats for the cows. Perhaps Murray, who was walking by this time, can still remember this. He was fascinated by the noise of stirring the rolled oats. And his inquisitiveness almost cost him his finger! He was known by all the families there as "curly blondie", and he just loved sitting on his tricycle, watching everything. We may have been over-protective in warning him too much about the cars, trucks and tractors around the farm and on the road.

Every morning when I came into the barn and switched on the lights, large rats were seen to be flying off in all directions. They loved the sugar beet pulp and rolled oats. We were not successful with trying to poison them. We did kill some of the Warwick's precious cats though! These complaints hindered us in our endeavors to get rid the pesky rats. Their numbers just kept multiplying. One day, I came up with the idea to trap some of them. The boss kept half of the sugar beet pulp in the lorry. I asked him in the afternoon whether I could fill up the lorry with just enough for that time. After explaining to him what I had in mind, he agreed. My intention was to fill the lorry in the evening partways with water to the level where the pulp normally was. After doing so, I sprinkled sugar beet pulp on top. And as to the bin upstairs where we stored the oats to be rolled, it too was always nearly full. It was a bin that was wide on the top and very narrow at the bottom. And to make the oats slide smoothly down, the wood inside was over laid with tin. In the afternoon, I just about emptied this bin. From a nearby beam the rats always jumped in for their nightly feeding.

I was rather excited to go in next morning and see whether I had been successful with my plan. I was! When I opened the door, I already heard the rats upstairs frantically jumping at the sides of the bin, trying to get out. I took a pitchfork and started hammering away. I had to watch a bit for them not run up the pitchfork handle and jump to my arms, but by time my butchering was finished I had taken the lives of 23 good sized rats, and still some of them managed to get away.

Thereafter, I went down to find out how it was with my lorry trick. Again, a pitchfork was my best bet to determine what success I had here. Not as many, but when I was finished "fishing," I had 17 good sized rats lying at my feet. The next day, I tried to do it all over again. Guess how many I caught the next morning? None! Zero! I had figured they would be smart, but I was disappointed to find out they were this smart!

In order to keep the barn smelling decent, we used a lot of lime. It was very effective. At the same time, it was very unhealthy for the one who had to spread it around. And that someone was me! After doing this for half a year, I began to lose a lot of weight. Toward the end of the six

months, I had lost 30 pounds in just one month. We decided I had to go see Dr. Pickering. He checked me out and found nothing wrong. He asked me about my eating habits and my place of work. When I had explained it all, he asked me one further question: "are you doing any other work besides your full time job at Warwick?" I thought for a while and said, "Well, no, well yes, I am involved in church work." "How much?" was his question. When I told him ' I was actually surprised myself about how many hours I did put into church work along side of my full time farm job. There were consistory meetings to attend and new immigrants to be helped. As vice president of consistory, "huis bezoek" (visiting members in their homes) stood high on the agenda. A couple times I traveled to vacant churches to be "preek lezer" (sermon reader), etc. Then and there in the doctor's office, I also remembered how one evening I drove home from a consistory meeting rather late at night, drove the Prefect into the garage, and stepped into the kitchen, without remembering at all that I had driven home.

Dr. Pickering analyzed the dilemma and said, "Mr. Moerman, you have to drop either your farm work or your church work. Then, he sternly added, "you cannot do both any longer."

I suppose this should not have come as a shock, but it did. When I got home, we talked much about it. I looked at Corrie. She looked at me. The difference was that she looked into my eyes, and I was looking at her rapidly growing tummy. There, I "saw" our second baby "sitting". We prayed much the next few days. During these days, we also had a boarder staying with us, a friend of mine from Schipluiden, Len Waardenburg. He had a job in Chatham as an architect's apprentice.

Whatever decision we needed to take was going to be hard. It would be much talked about. It would have far reaching consequences. If I would quit my job at Warwick, where would our financial support come from for our growing family? No, this could not be done; this was out of the question. But quitting all the church work, which I loved doing, that too would have repercussions. Rev. Herman Maassen was looked upon in the eyes of the people of First Reformed Church of Chatham as "onze dominee" (our pastor), but John Moerman was "ltzijn rechterhand" (his right hand). At last, I bit the bullet, so to speak, and informed Rev. Maassen of our dilemma and our decision. He was shocked. And when the decision was announced the following Sunday to the consistory and congregation, they were shocked too.

The reaction was this: "Moerman resigning? Moerman no longer doing "huis bezoek"? Moerman no longer "preek lezen"? He can't do that! He can't let us down!" Well, I had too! I had no other choice. I had a wife and a baby I loved. We had another baby on the way! It was good to be home every evening with Corrie and our little family. It was good to be able to go to bed on time. It was good to no longer "rush like crazy" on Sunday to drive out to London, Exeter, and Leamington leading church services for our new immigrants. But still, I was forced to drop something I loved doing. And it did not help the "strange feeling" I had on the inside either.

Somewhere during this time, there was a daughter of Nauta, who for some reason or another at times came to visit us. We knew of her large family, but that was all. The parents had 17 children, though one or two had died early. It was during the half year Len Waardenburg was with us. She began to visit us more regularly. Corrie and I really did not know why. At last I said to Len that if she would come again, he had to excuse himself for we felt she wanted to talk with us about something. This suggestion came too late, for a few days thereafter, we received a call from the hospital in Chatham that Joan Nauta was there and had a baby, and that she wanted me to come and see her. When I went there that evening, she informed me that our friend Winus Sonneveld was the father of the baby. All at once a light was switched on. "Oh, was this why Winus no longer ..."

"Well, do you know where he is?" was my inquiry. "All I know is that he is somewhere way up north in Cochrane. I don't know for whom he is working, but would you try to reach him and tell him that I have a baby?" I assured her that I would do my best. We had promised his mother on the day of our wedding that we would be Winus' guardian.

Following her release from hospital Joan and the baby came for the time being to live at our house. And the day after this I picked up Winus from the station at Chatham and brought him to our home to meet Joan and the baby. Not long thereafter they were married and their son was named John, after me. Winus and Joan have been friends of our family ever since.

It did not take very long before I found myself doing some of the same church activities as before. They simply happened. Witness also the experience of our involvement with Joan and Winus. Yet, I also was watching myself very much and, I must say, Corrie was watching my involvement even more.

Another thing that was impossible to stop was the lime problem on the farm. This continued to be a source of irritation. According to our doctor, it was definitely a health problem for me. But what was I to do about it? In comparison with the former doctor, who looked after Corrie when carrying our first baby and so disappointed us with the delivery of Murray, Dr. Pickering we held in high regard. He was a man with good insight and a great conscience. We had asked him to come to our house for the birth of our second child. He concurred, but added, "I will only help you at home when I am sure you will have a normal and rather easy delivery.

We prayed very much that Corrie would not have such a hard delivery this time. I felt so strongly that after what she had endured with the birth of Murray, she more than deserved a very easy one this time! And I felt so sure that my reasoning should stand, as well. It didn't. After Dr. Pickering spent a few hours with Corrie, he decided that it would be wiser not to proceed with a home delivery. It was big disappointment to both of us. Between 10 and 11 o'clock, I drove Corrie to

the hospital. We prayed all the way up to Chatham. Dr. Pickering was waiting for her in the hospital. And again, to our big disappointment we were kept separate from one another. I kept myself busy with prayer. It did not take long this time. At 1:00 o'clock, Dr. Pickering came to tell me that we had another healthy son and that everything went well with Corrie too. What a relief and thanksgiving! Now we were blessed with two sons! It was a joyful father who drove home that afternoon.

By this time, I was back again in consistory, though as to house visitations and leading services, I limited myself considerably. Lime continued to be a problem. Why I had never talked about dust filter protective gear with my boss, I don't know. Maybe these things were not in use yet. Certainly, Dr. Pickering had never mentioned it.

The rats kept on multiplying, so much so that, toward the end of the year when I would turn on the lights early in the morning, waves of rats moved away in every direction. These pests now had become a plague. Everyone was informed to keep their cats inside or away from the barns for we were going to poison all the rascals. Well, we did not poison all of them, but the massive amounts of poison helped a lot.

The herdsman had an argument with Mr. Warwick and left. For a few weeks I tried to run the business with the help of one of the other men. I was glad when Roy hired a new herdsman. But this man was no improvement over the first as far as I was concerned. Each of them tried to take advantage of me in various ways. And surely, I was no exception. Farmers often did this. The reasoning was that there were so many Dutch farm-immigrants wanting to come to Canada, they could always get another one. At first, we all had to learn the hard way over a considerable number of years. But then, more and more got "wise" and began to speak up against this kind of abuse. Sometimes it helped, sometimes it didn't. If it didn't help, the immigrant left and a fresh one from Holland took his place. The Government had hired quite a number of fieldmen in Southern Ontario to find sponsors for immigrants. Basically, they just re-supplied these farmers with another Dutch immigrant. All of life had been a learning school, but this was a learning school of a different fashion. What happened though was that immigrants who had gone through this learning school shared their experience and "wisdom" with these new ones. Consequently, they began to be "wise" from the outset. This brought somewhat of a change in the whole farm-immigrant situation.

Also, factories began to eye Dutch immigrants as good potential workers. A considerable number of farm immigrants switched occupations. Other businesses began to employ them as well. Our good friends Rien Veenman and Joe Waardenburg left the farm for this reason as well. We now began to handle our English somewhat better and this became an additional benefit. Others began to look for opportunities to buy or rent a farm. Our thoughts moved more in the latter direction. The more we thought and prayed about it, the more something of this nature began to appeal to us.

The intermediate step for people thinking this way was first renting a house separate from the place where a person was employed.

Thus, not long afterward we began to inquire and look around for something like this. The big Nauta family, who already had purchased their own farm, informed us that he had an old house which they would be willing to rent out to us for \$15.00 per month. It sounded too good to pass up. I would have no problem finding work at McQuigan, the largest fruit farmer around Blenheim. He also had land where he raised beef cattle. He was an M.P. in Ottawa and his son ran the business. I had talked with him and several Dutch immigrants who were employed there and liked working for the McQuigans. Besides looking for more freedom and independence, now we had two sons and we very much had their well being in mind. We did not want our children to be forever under the watchful and ruling eye of the boss either.

And one other thing entered into our leaving Roy Warwick and renting our "own" house: my oldest brother, Andrew. Andrew let us know that he and his family would like to emigrate to Canada as well. This came as a big surprise to us. My youngest brother, Jaap, whom had been drafted to serve in Indonesia was about to come home. We knew this, but expected that if any one else would emigrate, it would be him because he was still single. We said to one another, "Andrew and Nel with their children leaving the farm in Schipluiden? This is going to be a nail in mother's coffin!" Their four children practically lived in my mother's hoffie. She could not let them go. In writing to Holland we were always very careful, and even selective, as to what we wrote. Under no circumstances would we want to be party of trying to get Andrew and his family torn away from the farm in Schipluiden. But, yes, here it was in black on white: would I sponsor Andrew and his family to emigrate to Canada?! Indeed, we read the news with mixed emotions. In one way, we were excited, but conversely, we found ourselves in somewhat of a bind as well. What would mother think and say of us? Would she think we were behind this move? We decided to write Andrew about our problem. By return mail, he informed us that it was entirely his decision and that he would take the responsibilities as far as mother was concerned. Being grand parents for such a long time already, we sensed our parent's pain in letting Andrew and his family go as well. Nel was very, very dear and close to my mother, and so was Andrew and the grandchildren.

There was no way we could put Andrew to work and sponsor the family of six. But since now we had our "own" house, we were able to meet the sponsorship requirements half way: we would offer them to live with us for the time being. This was acceptable to the immigration authorities. Now all we needed was someone who would be willing to take the other half of the responsibility and sign Andrew up for employment. Since I now was employed at McQuigan, the logical way was to request Jim McQuigan be the other half of the sponsor. When I approached him with the request, he asked me, "John, is your brother as dependable and hard a worker as you are?" I

assured him that as to dependability, yes, and as to being as hard a worker as I was, that Andrew could beat me. He laughed and without further question signed the needed papers.

Thus, in a little less than three years, Corrie and I had some of our own family in Canada. And what an experience it was just to welcome them and show them our own two children! They also had one child whom we had never seen, Jack. And of course, the older three children of Andrew and Nel we had not seen for three years. We also had asked Nauta whether it met his approval to have Andrew and his family for the time being live with us in our small house. He raised the rent very reasonably, now to \$20.00. And, yes, it became a very crowded place when all ten of us tried to find our place in the small four-room house.

Every day, Andrew and I would go with our Prefect car to the McQuigan farm. At first, it was hard to believe that now, here, two of us Moermans from Schipluiden, were here in Canada, driving by car to work! Realizing our background and situation, this had to be God's doing! As far back in time as it now is, God forbid we shall ever forget this and thereby begin to take it for granted. It can't be taken for granted, not anymore than our forefather Willem Pz. Moerman Van Blankenburg could take it for granted that God helped him move from Blankenburg, Belgium, to Rozenburg, Holland. If God chose us in Christ before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in His sight, and in His love predestined us to be adopted as his sons/daughters through Jesus Christ in accordance with His pleasure and will, then all of life is under His Sovereign direction! (Ephesians 1:3-10)

And, perhaps, here I should illustrate this further by relating an episode which could have gone differently if the above would not be so. One evening, we were with the four of us nicely enjoying an evening together. It was winter and terrible weather outside. The wind was howling, freezing rain was coming down and there was some lightning. The stove was beginning to make it comfortably warm. It was a huge stove the Nautals had used in the barn when stripping tobacco. Big pieces of wood fitted through the door opening. Corrie and Nel were knitting and talking together while Andrew and I were reading Dutch and Canadian newspapers.

Already a couple of times Corrie had mentioned this. I am sorry to say I more or less had ignored the remark. I knew she hated lightning and thunder, but this was nothing to worry about. Then Andrew mentioned it too, but somehow, no thunder followed. All at once, Andrew jumped up, ran to the window and said; "Mensen, het huis staat in brand! (Hey, the house is on fire!)" In no time at all, the four of us were outside determining what was going on - flames were shooting out of the chimney! Within a minute or so, Nel was filling pails at the tap and Corrie brought them outside. Andrew stood on the ladder and lifted pails to me halfway up the roof. From there I worked myself up to the chimney on the slippery roof. In the attic the fire had already started on some wood there, but it did not take us long to extinguish it. But it was a frightening ten minutes! We had six small children in the two bedrooms. And yes, we had a big mess to clean up. We had

just a rough wooden floor everywhere and no carpets. When we told Nauta the following day what had happened, his reply was, "Oh, dat gebeurt in dat ouwe huis wel meer. (Oh that happens in that old house from time to time)" Of course, it would have been nice if he had told us this before. The fury of this wind could have blown me off the roof and leveled the house in no time at all.

There were very few days we were off when it would rain. Somehow, Jim McQuigan kept us working and sent home the others, even when they had been there much longer than us. The reason being that they hated cleaning up in the barns. It is not that we loved it so much, but at least we kept on earning money. Jim had a Dutchman, Adrie Koenen, in charge of all the work at the fruit farm. His salesman was also a Dutch immigrant, Henk Schalk. And he put me in charge of the haying and looking after the steers. We had a good time there. We were appreciated. Corrie and Nel took turns working there off and on as well in the summer.

In the meantime, someone else from Schipluiden asked us to be sponsored - our first mate from the SS Hedel, Cor Van Atten. We did it the same way as with Andrew and Nel. But it was with the understanding that Cor would immediately have to start looking for a house of his own. We were already crowded enough! But, then, for the first few days we would have to shelter them. This brought the number to fourteen individuals in our house. By now, it was looking a bit like It Huis ten Dorp during the occupation years. It took Cor three weeks to find a place for his family to live. They were very appreciative people, and actually, we all had a good time these three weeks. There was plenty of room to run around on the Nauta farm. And they themselves knew what it was to have children around. The kids just had a whale of a time. (Especially when they discovered that there were snakes around the place!)

Though Jim McQuigan had signed for Andrew, in relation to work availability he was easy going for us when it concerned being there to work or not. Moreover, when he signed the work part of the immigration papers, it was with the understanding that perhaps he would not regularly each day have work for both of us. This was OK to me for it would leave us some freedom as well.

So when during the early spring of 1951 a 12 acre parcel of land was offered to grow tomatoes on share, we decided to go that way. It was another step in the direction of greater independence. And this is what I had my eye on from the beginning. Andrew and Nel were all in favor as well. Our cousin Peter had made major headway by growing tomatoes, and we saw this as something for us as well. Of course, it was all new and we needed to learn a lot, but the farmer was ready to teach and show us. They were from Belgium having immigrated to Canada during the great depression.

The only times we missed working for Jim during the spring and early summer time was when the planting was to be done, and occasionally we didn't go to the McQuigan farm so we could weed

our tomatoes. Most of the weeding though, we did during the evening hours. It was real fun because we were partly our own boss. It was only during the full tomato pick that we stayed home. When the full pick was on, the whole family was there, including the little ones. We had the playpen in the field and Murray was good at feeding his baby brother his ration of milk and whatever else was his due. When the pressure was on we stayed in the field during the noon hour too. The tomato contract was with the Libby Company in Chatham.

That summer, we picked 144 tons of tomatoes and we each cleared a little over \$1,000.00. You can imagine how blessed we felt and how grateful we were. The next summer we did the same thing, but we did not do as well because of inclement weather. Furthermore, we had some blight in our tomatoes as a result of the weather. Mind you, we were not the only ones, everyone was having the same problem.

Living at Nauta meant a lot of driving to Chatham and other places trying to reach new immigrants. Their numbers kept increasing in southwestern Ontario. Consequently, we sought to win the Dutch Reformed immigrants to the First Reformed Church of Chatham. By this time, being in a much healthier environment, I was back in full swing as a consistory member. I loved farming, but doing the work of the Lord in a church setting was also dear to my heart.

When the tomato harvest ended that first year, we talked with Jim McQuigan whether he would mind if Andrew and I sought work elsewhere. We mentioned that at the Thomson Company in Blenheim they were looking for workers, offering more than fruit farmers were paying. Jim did not mind at all. When he saw his way clear to make more money, he did it. So he actually encouraged us to do the same. So during the fall and winter of 1951-52 we worked at Thomson's mill. It was a plant that bought, cleaned, bagged and shipped beans and corn. All of this was grown locally. There were also other farmers who worked there during the winter. It was there at that place that I first heard about professional football. We could not believe that the workers around there did nothing but talking about these games. This was totally new to us. And the other way around was true as well. If because of our background and bias we thought these people were odd, they in turn thought the same of Andrew and I. They could not understand that we couldn't care less about these games.

The Thomson Company had a slack few weeks and we were laid off. It was only for two weeks though. These were the only weeks in our lives we were "unemployed". Actually, it might have been only one or two days without work, but no more. We found work about ten miles from the place we lived. A farmer needed a number of oak trees cut down, and a trench dug for his water lines. He paid us 50 cent per hour. He was glad and we were glad. The cutting down of the oak trees was by crosscut saw. They were big trees and excellent wood. We used wedges to have the trees fall where we wanted them to fall. The water trench I dug needed to be six feet deep, all done by shovel.

The rest of our three weeks we spent shoveling snow off theatre roofs in Chatham. During one of these trips back home, we saw a "For Sale" sign on a house in Charing Cross. The house was still under construction. We stopped by and looked around and through the windows. It was obvious that they had been using a lot of second-hand wood. We found lots of beer bottles around too. We began to draw a few conclusions. Before we left, the owner of the house came back. He had seen our car and inquired whether we were interested in buying the house. Talking further with the man, our suspicions were confirmed: he had drinking problems that spilled over into his family and finances. He was stuck and said so. I told him that I was interested in buying the house. I also informed him that I wanted to talk with my wife about it. His main interest was cash. Well, at this time we had a little cash on hand. Not much, but some. He said that if we would be able to come up with all the cash, he would be willing to sell the house, as it was, for \$2,500.00. We did not know much about house prices, but this sounded too good to be true. I told him I would be back the next day in the afternoon with my wife to have a good look inside. Before leaving, I asked him whether the materials were included in the asking price. He said they were. I made sure he saw that I wrote down all the building materials which were lying around. And thereupon, two excited men drove home. Living together with the ten of us went very well all along, but, nevertheless, it wasn't the ideal situation. When we arrived home and told everything, we found our excitement to be contagious. We all were overjoyed.

In the evening I went over to Nauta and talked things over with him. Also, I used his telephone to inquire of some people who knew more about house prices than we did. It became clear that the asking price was a very good price and that we better be over there as soon as possible before some other immigrant found out about it for this was perfect for an immigrant to buy. And so the next day when Corrie, while looking around in the house began "dreaming" how to go about living there and finishing it, we decided that the house was to be ours. We settled for the asking price. We felt it would not be honest trying to get it for less. He was happy and so were we.

All of this meant that the remaining "unemployment days" were to be spent here in Charing Cross. Andrew worked with us for a few days until he was called back to Thomsons. I informed them that I would not be coming back for a while. Thus, in March 1952, we once more went on our own and moved to our new place in Charing Cross. We had been living together with Andrew and Nel and family for about one year. How we thanked God for His marvelous provisions. And what was so special all around: there was no driving involved and no being away from Corrie and our two little children. This was great. Basically, for the time being we just lived in one room. Murray and little Cornie (as he was called during the early years) enjoyed it to the full as well. The children in their way and we in ours. Murray had a few of his own boards to hammer nails in, and Cornie carried small pieces of leftover wood from one place to the other.

But then, a time of trial and testing entered our lives. And since trial and testing is always connected with our faith in God and His promises, these were special days in an altogether different way. Serious and critical illness in our family we had never experienced. Cornie (Jack) had just started to walk a little bit. We were so happy. We were such a proud and thankful young couple. Murray and Cornie began taking turns in bringing the Bible to me for reading it following our evening meals. When it was Cornie's turn again, he used one leg to more or less walk, while with the other, he crawled. We thought that in his way, he was trying to show off a bit. And so, we did not think anything of it. But then at night when we had gone to bed he did nothing but cry. We did everything we knew how to keep him quiet and make him comfortable, but nothing helped. All night long we were up with him, sitting down and walking around, but nothing brought improvement. During the night, we noticed that he had pain in the leg he had not used when bringing us the Bible to the table. As soon as the doctor's office opened, we were at the office. Dr. Pickering checked out as much as he could, but advised us to bring him to the hospital in Chatham for further examination.

Altogether, it was a long and very difficult day for our poor little baby. He had been crying and even screaming for such a long time already, and there was no let up in the hospital. At last, we were informed that he had to stay there because they had found something very serious in his knee. When we asked what it was, they were unable to tell us. They only repeated that it was very serious. We asked whether it was polio. The reply was that it was worse than polio. It was so difficult to leave our baby behind. But by this time they had given him something to fall asleep. Murray just could not understand why his baby brother did not come back home with us. He said, "We can take care of him here at home!"

That evening when sitting down at the table, Corrie and I took a very long look at one another, prayed, cried, and just held each other. Just before this, we had brought Murray to bed all by himself and I tried to comfort him being all alone. But now we, his parents, stood in desperate need of help, hope, and comfort. Our faith was being tested. This was a trial we had never even thought about. We came to see that when a couple has much, they can lose much. At last, I spoke to Corrie these words of being tried and tested. I said, "How often have I as an elder sought to encourage people in their troubles, but now the Lord is asking me whether I will be able to pass the test. Now God is trying me." Corrie's answer was, "Us together." We spend the whole evening and part of the night in prayer for God's miraculous healing of our baby.

Visiting him in the hospital was almost a trial in itself. The doctor had both legs in traction. The rest of his body rested on the bed. And neither could he move to the side or anywhere for that matter. And all the crying he did when we went away was not only too much for him but also for the nurses. When we returned the next day, we were informed that he cried for hours on end after we left. They told us if it would continue this way that we should not show ourselves anymore to him. We should stay away for a week. Well, he cried again the same way. We were called by

telephone that they would keep us informed about his situation. They advised us that it would be far better for our baby to remain away. On Sunday after church, we would go there and ask the nurse to see whether he was awake or asleep. If he was asleep we would peek around the corner. Otherwise, we would go home again without seeing him.

Our families in Holland were praying for our baby, and so was the entire Chatham congregation, and others. It was so hard to surrender him altogether to the Lord, but I believe we came very close to doing so. Toward the end of his stay in the hospital, a cast was put on his legs. His legs were spread out and held apart by a splint. I don't know how often we heard the remark, "Poor little fellow". Daniel prayed three weeks before at last there was reply from the Lord. Well, whether the devil was holding back our angel with a reply as well, we don't know. But we do know that after three weeks we had our sick baby back home. Now he could be taken care of at home, though he was not over it yet. It was a further time of waiting upon the Lord. Murray too was so happy to have his baby brother back home again. Every time in his own way he prayed that Jesus would make him better and let him come home again.

We had no medical or hospital insurance. And these bills were very high. I was making 70 cents per hour at the Seed Corn Plant of Ernie Warwick. We paid off as much as we could. Ernie also had a lumber yard and a construction business and for quite a while he had me working at one of the large houses he was building near Chatham. Whenever this was the case, he would pick me up and drop me off to clean up inside and outside. The latter took by far the longest, for I had to do all the leveling in both front and back yard by hand. My only helpers were a pick, wheelbarrow, shovel, and rake.

Since I was the only one of the crew working at the Seed Plant who was picked out to do all this heavy work and since we desperately needed a little more money, I mustered the courage one day to walk into his office and ask him for a raise. I explained to him our predicament with our baby's illness and the bills that had been piling up. I wanted to have him pay me 80 cents an hour instead of 70 cents. He told me that there was no way he could do so whereas he had men working there for many years who had also received 70 cents per hour. It would not be fair to the others. However, he did promise me to bring up our problem at the next meeting of the Rotary Club. I had no idea what this had to do with my request for a raise in wages. In fact, I had no idea what a Rotary Club even was! But when he asked me what the total bill was and they might help us out with our payments, I thanked him very much for trying to do whatever he could. The week later he informed me that the Rotary Club had decided to pay our whole bill. At first we had a hard time believing the good news. He asked me to bring the bills in the next day and they would take care of it. How grateful we were! What a thanksgiving we had that night!

The way our doctor explained the illness was that a cold virus had traveled from his throat through his body and settled on the growing part of his knee. The illness is known as meningitis. The

danger was that the "traveling" virus might go to his hip for this would bring even greater damage. Also, a worst case scenario was mentioned as well: the virus could travel to his brain. Altogether, the cast was on for six months. Each month the doctor had to take it off and put on a new cast. This was sheer mental torture to our little Cornie. The noise of the saw made him go hysterical. When it was done and he could come with us home again, it took quite some time to get him over all the things he had to endure in the hospital.

I should also mention here that all of this took place when father and mother Moerman had come to visit us. This was such a surprise. When we left Holland, we never for a moment had given it any thought that this would sometimes be possible. They came in July 1952 and left in June 1953. So, here we were, thankful and proud to show them what God had enabled us to accomplish in these short four years – and now, without warning, this! It was as if in a way, the bottom had begun to fall out on our lives. This was the test I referred to earlier. "Lord, are You saying something to us we have not been hearing before? And if so, what is it?"

Father and Mother shared their time between Andrew and Nel and us. During the time of Cornie's illness, they spent most of their time at Andrew and Nel's. However, when they were over at our place, they did a lot of walking with Murray and Cornie with his little wagon. Perhaps, Murray still remembers the daily trip to the post office in Charing Cross with Cornie on the little wagon.

We tried our level best in various ways to keep little Cornie out of his favorite play spot - the sand box. When sand came in between the cast and his legs, it was torture to him and getting it out was next to impossible. His legs would itch unbearably and his skin would peel off with great pain. But after four months or so, he had trained himself to get around so well using only his hands and arms that it was surprising. He could get up and down the stairways at the church in no time at all. The people would just stand there and watch him with delight and unbelief.

When we went back after six months for another change of cast, the doctor told us his little leg had grown somewhat. It is difficult to tell what feeling of hope suddenly overwhelmed us. This was more than good news. This was God's doing! This was God's healing taking effect in our son. What gratitude and what blessings came upon us. We drove home praising God. And our parents' thankfulness was beyond description as well. The next thing we did was send a letter with the good news to Holland to all those who been praying for our baby and us out there in their homes.

For a number of months, the house fixing was interrupted. And this was not only because of the extra time needed in relation to our baby's care and well-being, but even more so because of the unexpected financial burden coming upon us. So instead of working all day at home on the house, I went back to work. This time, I found myself a job at Ernie Warwick, Roy's brother, also one of the leading businessmen in Blenheim. In fact, Ernie Warwick, business wise, had more going on than Roy did. Ernie was the big wheel in the lumberyard, but also had his own seed cleaning corn

plant in Blenheim. He also was heavily involved in the construction business. It was the latter I was hired for. Not for the building trade itself, but for the cleaning up in and around houses afterwards. He also had me work at his seed corn plant whenever this was needed. And this is also how he helped us by way of the financial support from the Lions Club of Blenheim. After working for a few months, I asked him for a 10 cent raise. I was making 70 cents per hour. I explained to him that because of the illness of our child, financially we were getting into a big bind. He could see this all right, and he sympathized with us. But he explained that he could not give me 80 cents per hour, having worked for him only three months, while others who had been working for him seven years already were still receiving 70 cents per hour. I understood his logic all right, but it was of no help to us. It was then that he offered to bring us help by way of the Lions Club (Amos 7:14-15).

Whether it was because of the experience of this illness in our family that the spiritual unfulfillment of my employment kept on surfacing, I do not know for sure. I have a feeling it did. It was such a strong voice: "Count your many blessings, money cannot buy. Your reward is in heaven, your home on high."

During this time living in Charing Cross, we had become acquainted with Peter Lugtigheid's in-laws: his father and mother, and also two of the Russell's sons. They were all God-fearing people and we held them in high esteem, even as from the beginning we regarded our cousin Peter as a very fine Christian. We had always remembered his first word of advice: "Corrie and John, don't be concerned how much money you can make in the first few years, rather build yourself a good name among the Canadians." Of course, this was the thing we had been brought up with. But to hear our cousin say this in our newly adopted country and, for us, still a strange land, this sounded both so familiar and so wise. Subconsciously, we must have been trying to work all of this through in our lives. All along, we had been building up our "good name". And we found this to be normal and easy.

So, during the fall of 1953, Mr. Goldy Russell stopped by to tell us there was a farm for rent in his neighborhood and that he would be willing to speak a good word on our behalf to the owner, whom he knew well. We took all of this very seriously, all the more so as Mr. Russell also offered us to help us financially. It almost sounded too good to be true. We prayed about it for a day or so and thereupon, we visited the owner who was retiring. We had a good impression. It all sounded positive. We were elated. He talked about the rent for the entire farm, when the house would be available, the contract, and so on. We in turn would try to sell our house and get other finances in order. The approximate date for the signing of the contract was agreed upon.

But then, after a few days, all at once and out of a clear blue sky, the renter told us that the deal was off. Actually, we went there to ask him a few further questions when he informed us. It was a big, big disappointment. And, yes, we knew that God is infinitely wiser than any and all of us,

but still we wondered, "Why Lord, why? What are you trying to teach us through these two experiences?" We had read Romans 8:28, "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose", but what was "the good" that God sought to work out for and in us?? We did not know. As yet, we had no answer and no clear direction.

When God's people have grown much older, like we now have, we have the opportunity and privilege to look back from a long distance. And we thank God for all of this. We realize there are many people living today, also in the same age bracket like us, who are unable to do so. Therefore, we count this opportunity, indeed, a great privilege. And now, looking back from a distance, we see that "the good" God works for us in all things is pointed out in verse 29. "God was conforming us more and more into the likeness of His Son!"

We are sorry to say that, for most of us, it takes many, many years to arrive there. I feel that I have to point this out here in order that all younger ones who are reading this shall come to see it earlier in life than we did.

TRIBUTE (The London Free Press, by Mike Roolotsen)
(publication date unknown)

Migrants say thanks to their welcomer. Peter Lugtigheid was awarded a knighthood by Holland for helping post-war Dutch immigrants settle in Kent County.

CHATHAM - It wasn't much - a few words in Dutch and a firm handshake. But Peter Lugtigheid's greeting reassured post-war immigrants from Holland as they stepped off the train in Chatham in the late 1940s and early 1950s. "Hartelyk welkom in Canada (a hearty welcome to Canada)," the Harwich Township farmer would tell them.

A Dutch immigrant to Canada in 1927, Lugtigheid helped hundreds of the estimated 1,000 Dutch families who came to Chatham and Kent County after the Second World War.

So it was only fitting that friends, local dignitaries and family members gathered in Chatham on the weekend to help Lugtigheid celebrate his knighthood and to say thank you. Lugtigheid, 87, was awarded a knighthood by Queen Beatrix of Holland and the Dutch government at a recent ceremony in Toronto.

"The honor is given to only 100 people throughout the world each year," said Harry Verburg, a retired Chatham banker whose family benefited from Lugtigheid's generous nature. "It is in recognition of distinguished services in the interests and well-being of citizens of Holland or Dutch nationals."

Lugtigheid, son of a Dutch dairy farmer, has served on the Dutch immigration board, as a founder of the First Christian Reformed Church in Chatham, an organizer of the Ontario Cream Producers Marketing Board and actively on several area agricultural boards and associations. His other accomplishments live on in the memories of those he has helped. Verburg remembers the day his mother, father and siblings stepped off the train in Chatham in 1949. "Peter was right there at the station, waiting for us. He took us to a farm and got us settled. He even went back to the train station and loaded the furniture we brought with us. "He was there to interpret for us and tell us about Canadian customs and the way of life over here. He was just a very unselfish man. He has literally touched hundreds of lives of Dutch people in the area."

Lugtigheid is modest. "I really don't think I earned it (the knighthood)," he said. "It was just a time when there were so many people in need. I've never been sorry for anything I've done." Lugtigheid's wife Edith plants a kiss on his cheek. "That's just the kind of man he is."