

Kampen, 23 November 2002

W o r k g r o u p

Back to the Bible

Dear brothers, sisters, pastors and elders,

We mentioned in our last letter, dated 8th April 2002, that Rien van de Kraats was having serious medical problems. This was the reason why we weren't able to send out the "summer letter". It is now time for the "autumn letter" which you now have before you. As you can see it is not the regular letter but rather an announcement. Rien underwent, on the 17th of June, a heart operation in which he received 5 bypasses and the damage from an earlier heart attack was also restored. The operation went well, for which we are thankful. Unfortunately, at the same time, another illness began to trouble him. It is quite a rare illness, which effects the ends of the nerves, beginning with the toes and the fingers. It can lead eventually to paralysis. This illness was diagnosed thirteen years ago and has always been treated successfully, with medicine prescribed by the neurologist from the hospital in Groningen. Unfortunately the sickness has now come to a head and is hindering Rien so much that he needs to use a walking frame and a wheelchair. Although we trust that with the help of the neurologist his state will improve, we do need to face reality that he will most probably have to cope with a permanent physical disability.

In the light of these medical problems and the extra pressure this places on his wife, Dik, who has always had an important part to play in the workgroup, we have had to think seriously about the future of the workgroup. Perhaps you are wondering how one member's illness can have such an effect on the whole work. The answer is simple. Rien and Dik who are retired are the only full-time workers. The three other members have their own full-time jobs. There are also four supporting members spread over the country who help checking the contents of the letters. Problems effecting the full timers automatically effect the whole workgroup.

We have decided therefore, to limit our activities. We continue to exist as a workgroup. This means that from now on we will not be distributing any new letters. Since 1995 until April 2002 we have produced 24 letters covering very important matters. We are confident that they can be a source of reference and help for you in the future. Although the date on the letters could suggest that the contents are outdated, we are sure that you will discover that much of it is still applicable for today. If you can manage to disregard the out of date facts you will discover that you are left with a good source of information. This applies both to church leaders and all interested readers.

Because the workgroup is still in existence it is always possible, if so desired, to provide you with a missing letter.

The fact that we will not be producing new letters doesn't mean that we will be sitting idle. We hope to continue our work of collecting information by studying books, magazines and other materials. This means that you can still ask us questions and we will try to answer you to the best of our ability. This has to do of course with questions about false and unbiblical teaching. Questions about spiritual matters are the responsibility to your own church fellowship. This is not our ministry.

Communication via the telephone can continue as usual. Those who prefer to use e-mail can do this too. It goes without saying that regular letters are also welcome. If you acquire an article which you believe could be of importance to the workgroup then do please let us know or send us a copy.

How does it effect us to have to tell you all this? Downcast, disappointed, discouraged? No, certainly not. Of course we are sad to have to stop the publishing of new letters. Although it did cost us a lot of energy and time to produce the letters we also enjoyed the Lord's blessing in doing so. We will certainly miss this. We are grateful however, that the rest of the work will continue and the goal, Back to the Bible, remains the same. Our excuses for the rather ugly letterhead, it is meant to emphasise this goal. That is why the letterhead is different in this letter, in order to emphasise this.

Jesus speaks about two roads that we can take in this world, the broad road or the narrow road.

"Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it. Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. By their fruit you will recognise them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles?" (Matt. 7:13-16) We trust that our warnings throughout the years have helped our readers to stay on the narrow road. Our desire for the future is that you will continue on the narrow road. If we can help you in this it will bring us spiritual joy.

Business comment: We haven't included in this letter a giro credit slip. There are still sufficient funds available to finance the mailing of this letter and other bills. It isn't necessary therefore for you to send us money. If it is necessary in the future, we will let you know. We are thankful to all those who have helped in one way or another during the last years.

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