

-TITLE-JOYCE MIEDEMA
-I_DATE-JUNE 6, 1988
-SOURCE-CHRISTIAN RESCUERS PROJECT
-RESTRICTIONS-
-SOUND_QUALITY-
-IMAGE_QUALITY-
-DURATION-
-LANGUAGES-
-KEY_SEGMENT-
-GEOGRAPHIC_NAME-
-PERSONAL_NAME-
-CORPORATE_NAME-
-KEY_WORDS-
-NOTES-
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01:00 The Reverend Pieter Miedema and his wife Joyce live in Ontario, Canada, but are originally from the Netherlands. Pieter, however, has never worked as a minister in Canada-- he could never find a steady position. His wife Joyce thinks that maybe some people are against him for what he did during the war.

02:00 Pieter became a teacher because he could not find a position as a minister, though he was very qualified. He taught high school Latin, Greek, Theology, French, and English (in northern Canada).

03:00 He had to take many courses to receive his teaching certificate, and as a result they moved around a lot. Though he enjoyed teaching, Pieter would have preferred to have a pulpit of its own.

04:00 On one occasion Pieter handed in a sermon that had all of the academic requirements; he told, however, that he should not preach too much theology and philosophy-- it was "over the heads of the people." Pieter was then unemployed for the entire winter.

05:00 One day a man came recruiting young ministers to Canada; Pieter felt this would be a good opportunity. In Canada he stayed with Joyce's brother and family; this arrangement was too crowded, so he moved up north to stay with a friend to cut wood. Three weeks later he sent for the family. The trip over was very difficult for the family.

06:00 Things were extremely difficult at first, but Pieter enjoyed the woods, away from a large congregation.

07:00 Eventually Joyce's sister and brother-in-law joined them in the woods.

08:00 Pieter was not used to hard manual labor, and would go to bed immediately after dinner, while Joyce helped the children with their lessons. The family lived in a small cottage in the north.

09:00 Both Pieter and Joyce were born in 1914. They met when they were fifteen. Pieter's father was a farmer; his mother, a teacher.

10:00 Pieter missed his mother a great deal when she died in 1948.

11:00 He a member of the Dutch Reformed Church.

12:00 Pieter had an uncle who was a minister; this influenced his own decision to become a minister.

13:00 He was a very good student; the school master suggested he go to a different school to become a minister.

14:00 There were not many Jewish people in their town growing up; Joyce knew some Jews who were businessman.

15:00 They both came from close families. He had three siblings; she had five. Both Pieter and Joyce the oldest children.

16:00 Venwouden is the name of the village they grew up in as teenagers.

17:00 Pieter moved to Venwouden after his father died. They lived near railroad so he could go to school. Venwouden was an agrarian village.

18:00 They first began to realize what Hitler was doing in 1935, but not to its full extent. Some people still thought Hitler was doing good; evil came later-- "people with power do crazy things"

19:00 One member of their congregation wrote a book arguing that the Fascists and the Frisians had a common goal: to erase poverty. He ousted for this opinion-- even his family was against him.

20:00 There were many misguided people during this period.

21:00 Joyce worked in a hospital and had one very sick patient who was obsessed with Hitler, becoming very angry and excited during his speeches.

22:00 Neither of them have received recognition from Israel. Pieter did not want it.

23:00 Pieter did get a letter from Eisenhower, but threw it away.

24:00 The couple kept in touch with the people they helped during the war, exchanging many letters.

25:00 One person they kept in touch with was Josef, a tailor from Amsterdam. After the was Josef married a Catholic girl.

26:00 They returned to Holland in 1969-1978 because Pieter needed a hip operation. They went back to Canada only because their children were there-- they did not want to.

27:00 The Miedemas feel they were born with the strength to do what they did. They had to "practice what they preach"

28:00 Christian faith also helped them make their decision--they believed that the Jewish people were special.

29:00 Many downtrodden people were jealous of the Jews.

30:00 Most of the Jewish refugees were from the west. The ones that the Miedemas knew were mostly from Amsterdam.

31:00 During the war they helped many Jews: about fourteen children and fourteen adults.

32:00 In all, the couple helped approximately fifty people, including resistance members and pilots.

33:00 After the war they saw one boy they had helped for about a year.

34:00 The boy wanted to thank them, but he heard (mistakenly) that Miedemas had moved. The boy went anyway.

35:00 The reunion with the boy was very tearful.

36:00 A strict curfew was imposed during the war

37:00 On one occasion a neighbor needed help hiding a young boy; they hid him for two years.

38:00 Joyce is very close to her sister; she visits often.

39:00 She has much to discuss with her sister.

40:00 Pieter would not be offended if he now got recognition from the Jewish people.

41:00 His feelings toward recognition have changed; he would now accept it.

42:00 Pieter used to work in a "terrible" chemical plant with immigrants.

43:00 Regrettably, he has gotten rid of any previous recognition (i.e. the letter from Eisenhower).

44:00 Joyce and Pieter still know where some of the people they helped live.

45:00 There is a possibility that a tree will be planted in their honor in Jerusalem.

46:00 They would like their children to see some of their recognition.

47:00 Some of the Jewish refugees still live in Amsterdam.

48:00 Fortunately, Joyce has saved a letter from Josef with his address on it.

.END.