

Leeuwarden, 17 Sept. 1949.
Fonteinstraat 18, Tel. 7737.

Dear family, friends and acquaintances.

Yesterday we received emigration visas for our entire family from the American Consulate. We have booked passage on the *Nieuw Amsterdam*, which leaves Rotterdam on 6 Dec. 1949.

For many this announcement comes unexpected and is possibly incomprehensible. We would like to give a small explanation.

Since 1945 we have been interested in and have taken steps towards being able to leave the Netherlands. Through family and friends we have tried to secure an existence elsewhere and to obtain the necessary help needed to enter another country. In 1947 a few attempts failed due to insufficient security and support, however through the special cooperation of a good acquaintance, who left for the U.S. in 1947, it is now possible for us to take the big step into the U.S.

How do we dare to take such a big and uncertain step? Because in all the plans and decisions of the past few years we have not relied on our own narrow field of vision, but have always asked ourselves: "Can we expect God's blessing if we decide to leave our country and build a new future elsewhere?"

In constant prayer we have submitted our emigration plans to God and asked Him for wisdom and understanding to help us make the decision that would not only benefit our material interests but not harm our spiritual interests.

Although we were very interested in emigrating, it was only very recently, on September 7, that we finally made our decision. We are convinced that this decision will have an enormous impact on the rest of our lives, that we will certainly have many difficulties in the first years and maybe even for a long time. But we are also convinced that the Lord, who rules the universe, will not withdraw His faithful Fatherly care from us, if we continue to trust in Him. And this trust in God, who is the same everywhere in the world and Whose omnipotence is not shortened anywhere, makes us look forward to the future in America with cheer and courage.

That the concern (not anxiety) for our children has been the greatest weight in the scale, need not be disputed. That the economic situation of our country, the whole situation in Europe, the disappointments we also experienced after the last war and many other factors played a role in our decision is understandable. You can be sure that the objections raised were not taken lightly. The biggest objection for us was the fact that no Christian School and not even

an Orthodox Christian Church exists at our destination. This fact made it very difficult for us to make a decision, but after careful consideration we decided to accept the help offered by those in that area as a means to enter the United States. If, after a few years, it should turn out that raising our children in a Christian way, as we believe we are obliged to do, would be too difficult and have possibly spiritually damaging consequences, we hope to be able to move to a place in America where there is more church life. We trust that God will enable us as parents to devote more care to Christian education within our own family when too little is received in public life.

Our first destination is Salt Lake City in the state of Utah. A friend lives there, who will initially receive us, provide work, arrange housing and has so far shown his willingness to assist not only with words but also with deeds. The intention is to earn our living by manual labor at first, until we have settled in sufficiently, and then to try to make a living in commerce. Whether it will succeed, we do not know, what we do know is that many difficulties and setbacks will have to be overcome. We hope that we will have enough support from each other to overcome the difficulties and we trust, however it may go, to be in God's hand.

The reason only a few people knew about our plans is that we did not want them to be discussed in general, since experience has taught us that "people" often know better than the people involved. It is for this reason that we are now sending this letter to all our relatives, friends and acquaintances at the same time, so that you may all be equally well informed.

We hope to be able to say goodbye to many of you personally or to remain in correspondence. The time before we leave is limited and many matters still need to be settled. Saying goodbye to all those with whom we have ties here will not be easy, but we will greatly appreciate your help in making sure it does not become unnecessarily heavy. If there are any people in our immediate surroundings who are willing and able to take over some of our household items for themselves or their relations, we would be pleased to hear from them soon. We cannot take furniture with us, but we will take clothes, blankets, crockery and the like with us.

We hope to continue with our normal daily work until shortly before our departure, while approximately two weeks before our departure we expect to begin to break things down so we can pack, ship and be able to visit some relatives in person.

Yours sincerely and with warm greetings,

E. Bultsma.