

Voorthuis, Frederik Johannes

(1904–1986)

REINDER BRUINSMA

Reinder Bruinsma, Ph.D. (University of London), is a retired church administrator, scholar, and author. From September 2011 to early 2013 he served as the interim-president of the Adventist Church in Belgium and Luxembourg. Since then he has returned to his status as a retiree but remains active in preaching, lecturing, and writing.

Frederik Johannes was an administrator, author, and radio speaker from the Netherlands.

Frederik Johannes (“Freek”) Voorthuis was born in 1904 in Warnsveld, near the city of Zutphen, in the Gelderland province of the Netherlands.¹ Both of his parents, Pieter Voorthuis and Elisabeth Carina

Heyntjes, were Protestants. They converted to Adventism in 1898, and Pieter Voorthuis became a colporteur. Voorthuis’ older brother Piet (1888-1960) ministered as an Adventist pastor, and baptized him when he was 13.

Voorthuis decided to follow in his brother’s footsteps and went to the Friedensau Seminary in Germany to enroll in pastoral training. In 1925 he began his ministry as an intern in Groningen, Netherlands. He was ordained to the ministry in 1942.

The Voorthuis family became close friends with Joseph Wintzen, an early Dutch Adventist leader, and his family. Voorthuis married Elfriede, a daughter of the Wintzens.

In 1931 Voorthuis was diagnosed with tuberculosis, which interrupted his ministry for about two years. One of his lungs was removed, and his health situation made him less suitable for evangelistic and pastoral work. His father-in-law was instrumental in moving him into editorial work, for which he soon showed a significant aptitude. Voorthuis became the editor of various Dutch Adventist periodicals and also developed as a gifted author, including 11 books. He was appointed manager of the Netherlands Union Publishing House in 1928, and remained in this position until he retired in 1974.



Frederik Johannes Voorthuis

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Voorthuis carried a number of other responsibilities as well. Beginning in December 1949, he hosted a popular weekly radio broadcast that aired over a commercial station in Luxembourg for more than 25 years.

Voorthuis also held a number of administrative positions. He served as treasurer of the Netherlands Union (1929-1930), and as its general secretary (1938-1947), and twice as the union president (1947-1949 and 1953-1971). Voorthuis' administration was characterized by numerical membership growth and a strong church building program. Perhaps most notable were Voorthuis' consistent, and largely successful, efforts to change the image of Dutch Adventism from that of an American sect to a reputable Protestant denomination?

Frederik Johannes Voorthuis was decorated by the Dutch queen in 1972. He died in 1986 in Switzerland, but was buried in the Netherlands.

SOURCES

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van Rijn, H. G. "Frederik Johannes Voorthuis, Biography." www.shana.adventist.nl.

NOTES

1. H. G. van Rijn, *100 Jaar Adventbeweging in Nederland* (Bosch en Duin: Advent Pers, 1987), 90. See the biography of Frederik Johannes Voorthuis at <http://shana.adventist.nl/biografieen-3/f-j-voorthuis/>.
2. R. Bruinsma, *De Daad bij het Woord* (Kampen: Uitgeverij Kok, 1994), 22.

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