

Van de Groep, Jacob (1885–1977)

MILTON HOOK

Milton Hook, Ed.D. (Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan, the United States). Hook retired in 1997 as a minister in the Greater Sydney Conference, Australia. An Australian by birth Hook has served the Church as a teacher at the elementary, academy and college levels, a missionary in Papua New Guinea, and as a local church pastor. In retirement he is a conjoint senior lecturer at Avondale College of Higher Education. He has authored *Flames Over Battle Creek*, *Avondale: Experiment on the Dora*, *Desmond Ford: Reformist Theologian*, *Gospel Revivalist* the *Seventh-day Adventist Heritage Series*, and many magazine articles. He is married to Noeleen and has two sons and three grandchildren.

Jacob Van de Groep was a pioneering literature evangelist Southeast Asia. He also worked in Australia for a short time.

Early Years

Jacob Van de Groep was born in Loosdrecht, Netherlands, on November 11, 1885, to Frederik and Dirkje (Piipers) Van de Groep. When he was twenty years old, he served briefly in the military training camp at Hilversum near his birthplace. He was raised in the Dutch Reformed Church and worked as a bamboo furniture maker. He had a younger sibling named Geertruida. Both Jacob and Geertruida attended Friedensau Industrial School in Germany. Jacob became engaged to Johanna Van de Hout prior to his departure for overseas mission service.¹

Book Salesman

Van de Groep first worked for the Seventh-day Adventist Church as a young man of twenty-three years of age in Singapore on his way to the Dutch East Indies as a literature evangelist late in 1908. It was noted that he could speak Dutch, German, and a little English.² From Singapore, he first went to Sumatra to sell books where he had moderate success.³ He then moved on to Batavia, Java, where it was reported he enjoyed much success selling the Dutch translation of *Coming King*.⁴ Travelling further east, he worked in Semarang with the Dutch translation



Jacob Van de Groep.

Photo courtesy of Job Van de Groep.

of *Thoughts on Daniel*,⁵ especially targeting the workers in the numerous sugar mills along the north coast of Java.⁶ He then married by proxy Johanna Catharina Van de Hout in Den Haag (The Hague) on August 18, 1909. The same age as her husband, she was born in Scheveningen, Netherlands.⁷

It was during these years, that the Australasian Union Conference had the oversight of much of Southeast Asia:⁸ Johanna sailed to Batavia to join Jacob.⁹ and, once again, Van de Groep obtained high sales figures.¹⁰ In September 1910, he entered Boeilelang, Bali's capital, and Macassar in the Celebes.¹¹ These were new territories for Seventh-day Adventist Church. He then returned to Sumatra to sell along the west coast, chiefly at Padang.¹²

Transfer to Australia

In 1911, Jacob and Johanna Van de Groep voluntarily moved to Australia in order to attend the Avondale School for Christian Workers. Their aim was to broaden their experience rather than graduate from any specific course. A daughter, Neeltje, was born at the Sydney Sanitarium, Wahroonga, on August 11, 1911, and later a son, Arie, was born into their family.¹³ At the end of the school year, Jacob was appointed to sell books among the German settlers in South Australia.¹⁴ A report for November 1911 notes he was selling *Christ's Object Lessons* and *Thoughts on Daniel and Revelation*.¹⁵ In mid-1912, he concentrated his efforts in Adelaide, selling *Thoughts on Daniel and Revelation* in addition to *Bible Readings for the Home Circle*.¹⁶

Return to South-East Asia

The General Conference invited the Van de Groeps to return to Southeast Asia in 1913. They sailed for Singapore on June 14, 1913,¹⁷ and Jacob Van de Groep began his work by selling books to Dutch sailors in Singapore harbor and assisting in an evangelistic crusade.¹⁸ Twelve months later he moved to the familiar city of Batavia to conduct a public crusade for Dutch residents.¹⁹ Then he moved to Soerabaya to assist the small mission team.²⁰ In Batavia a son, Arie Johannes Dirk, was born to the Van de Groeps in mid-1914.²¹ Prevalent disease and oppressive heat in Java was a perilous place to raise children and the family soon returned to the Netherlands. The last reference to Van de Groep in denominational English-language news reports places him in Soerabaya selling Dutch tracts in early 1915.²²

Back in the Netherlands

In his home country he established a religious book shop in The Hague.²³ Johanna passed away on November 14, 1946, in Delft, Netherlands.²⁴ Later in life Jacob married Hillegonda van Leeuwen in Gouda, Netherlands. Hillegonda was a member of the Assembly of Believers whose origins were among the Plymouth Brethren. It is believed that Jacob's membership lapsed with the Seventh-day Adventists, he preferring to worship with Hillegonda. Jacob passed away on January 1, 1977, in Gouda.²⁵

SOURCES

- "A letter has recently come to hand..." *Australasian Record*, December 14, 1914.
- Detamore, F[ordyce] A. "Batavia, Java." *Asiatic Division Mission News*, October 1, 1914.
- Detamore, F[ordyce] A. "Malaysia." *ARH*, March 18, 1915.
- "Having been invited by the General Conference..." *Australasian Record*, June 30, 1913.
- "Monthly Summary of Australasian Canvassing Work." *Union Conference Record*, October 3, 1910.
- "Monthly Summary of Australasian Canvassing Work." *Australasian Record*, January 8, 1912.
- Munson, R[alph] W. "A Month at Padang, Sumatra." *Australasian Record*, February 13, 1911.
- "Netherlands, Archival Indexes, Population Registers." Database. *FamilySearch*. Accessed June 12, 2019. <https://www.familysearch.org/>.
- "Netherlands, Archival Indexes, Vital Records." Database. *FamilySearch*. Accessed June 12, 2019. <https://www.familysearch.org/>.
- "Our readers will remember the note..." *Australasian Record*, November 13, 1911.
- Teasdale, George. "Canvassing in the Dutch Indies." *Union Conference Record*, March 1, 1909.
- Teasdale, George. "Java." *Union Conference Record*, March 15, 1909.
- Teasdale, George. "Singapore." *Union Conference Record*, January 11, 1909.
- "The *Van Linschoten* from the East Indies..." *Australasian Record*, March 6, 1911.
- Tunheim, P[etra]. "Batavia, Java." *Australasian Record*, June 8, 1914.
- Tunheim, P[etra]. "Batavia, Java, East Indies." *Asiatic Division Mission News*, June 1, 1914.
- Van de Groep, Jacob. "A Canvassing Trip to Bali and the Celebes." *Union Conference Record*, December 19, 1910.
- Van de Groep, Jacob. "Canvassing in Batavia, Java." *Union Conference Record*, May 30, 1910.
- Van de Groep, J[acob]. "Canvassing the Cities." *Australasian Record*, July 29, 1912.
- Van de Groep, Jacob. "From Batavia to Samarang (sic), Java." *Union Conference Record*, September 13, 1909.
- Van de Groep, J[acob]. "Singapore." *Australasian Record*, February 9, 1914.
- Van de Groep, Jacob. "Working Among the Sugar-Mills of Java." *Union Conference Record*, December 6, 1909.

NOTES

1. "Netherlands, Archival Indexes, Population Registers," database, "Jacob van de Groep," *FamilySearch*, accessed June 12, 2019. <https://www.familysearch.org/>; Job Van de Groep, email message to Milton Hook, August 8, 2023.
2. George Teasdale, "Singapore," *Union Conference Record*, January 11, 1909, 2-3.
3. George Teasdale, "Canvassing in the Dutch Indies," *Union Conference Record*, March 1, 1909, 3-4.
4. George Teasdale, "Java," *Union Conference Record*, March 15, 1909, 3.
5. Jacob Van de Groep, "From Batavia to Samarang (sic), Java," *Union Conference Record*, September 13, 1909, 3.
6. Jacob Van de Groep, "Working Among the Sugar-Mills of Java," *Union Conference Record*, December 6, 1909, 3.
7. "Netherlands, Archival Indexes, Vital Records" database, [Jacob van de Groef and Johanna Catharina van der Hout marriage], *FamilySearch*, accessed June 12, 2019, <https://www.familysearch.org/>.
8. See "Australasian Union Conference Involvement in Southeast Asia Before 1912."
9. Jacob Van de Groep, "Canvassing in Batavia, Java," *Union Conference Record*, May 30, 1910, 5.
10. "Monthly Summary of Australasian Canvassing Work," *Union Conference Record*, October 3, 1910, 6.
11. Jacob Van de Groep, "A Canvassing Trip to Bali and the Celebes," *Union Conference Record*, December 19, 1910, 2-3.
12. R[alph] W. Munson, "A Month at Padang, Sumatra," *Australasian Record*, vol. 15, no. 7, February 13, 1911, 4.
13. Job Van de Groep, email message to Milton Hook, May 11, 2022.
14. "Our readers will remember the note...," *Australasian Record*, November 13, 1911, 8.
15. "Monthly Summary of Australasian Canvassing Work," *Australasian Record*, January 8, 1912, 6.
16. J[acob] Van de Groep, "Canvassing the Cities," *Australasian Record*, July 29, 1912, 5.
17. "Having been invited by the General Conference...," *Australasian Record*, June 30, 1913, 8.
18. J[acob] Van de Groep, "Singapore," *Australasian Record*, February 9, 1914, 2.
19. P[etra] Tunheim, "Batavia, Java," *Australasian Record*, June 8, 1914, 4.
20. "A letter has recently come to hand...," *Australasian Record*, December 14, 1914, 8.

21. P[etra] Tunheim, "Batavia, Java, East Indies," *Asiatic Division Mission News*, June 1, 1914, 3-4.
 22. F[ordyce] A. Detamore, "Batavia, Java," *Asiatic Division Mission News*, October 1, 1914, 2; F[ordyce] A. Detamore, "Malaysia," *ARH*, March 18, 1915, 11.
 23. Job Van de Groep, email message to Milton Hook, May 11, 2022
 24. "Netherlands, Archival Indexes, Population Registers," database, "Jacob van de Groep," *FamilySearch*, accessed June 12, 2019.
<https://www.familysearch.org/>.
 25. Job Van de Groep, email message to Milton Hook, May 11, 2022.
-

encyclopedia.adventist.org is an official website of the [Seventh-day Adventist World Church](#)

© 2020 General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists 12501 Old Columbia Pike Silver Spring , MD 20904 USA 301-680-6000