

Wildervank, February 1870

Dearly Beloved Son and Brother

By the grace of the Lord we have received your letter of December 31 in good health and we were happy to learn that you too may still share in the joy of being healthy. We have been expecting a letter from you and had intended to write you as well. Bramer (?) has written a letter to the Minister and he mentioned that you have made Profession of Faith. This made us very happy, because oh my beloved son, if we are worthy to proclaim the Lord's death in all honesty, how much praise and happiness will rise in eternity. The Father's eternal love and free grace have brought us to this point.

It now behooves us to exalt the Lord in thankfulness for His deeds; for this reason we need His indispensable spirit every day for direction and guidance.

Oh, if only our girls would come to this. May we pray a lot for each other. The Lord is present everywhere and this calms me on my way when our separation hurts so much. Oh my beloved Son, the changes and happenings in this life are so great at times that it causes many worries.

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Our Marchie is going with Detmer Dekker and might even get married this Spring. He has lost his ship this summer, but might get another one and then they might get married. And you may think that all this causes problems for me. But I regard him as a good person and I think everyone on his side are also in favour of the marriage. I hope to entrust this to the guidance of the divine providence.

Well, my beloved Son, I cannot help but inform you of this. May the Lord grant us that we accept His ways. You may think now, beloved, that everything turns into a different direction again and that often we cannot predict the future.

Boer, Metje Jans
Folder #1, Letter #1

I learned from your letter that work on the Mill and the Railroad has stopped and that you are now with a farmer in Holland. Well, my beloved Son, I cannot make a judgement about what is good for you; you yourself can see this better since you are there.

I hope that the Lord will grant you wisdom, desire and strength all in good health, and that the Lord will bless you in everything you do. And this means in whatever you do; it bothers me that I cannot mend your clothes.

Oh may the Lord grant that we will see each other's faces again in prosperity.

Everything here is of such short duration. A short while ago Meijen de Loon (?) dropped dead on the road while he was talking, and the shoemaker Harm Baas (?) here just as sudden.

Dubbelboon (?) and Nella Groen and A. Kientevoren (?) his wife at cityhall, have all died this year.

Kier Bos and his family have been in Rotterdam all during the winter; he is busy there with his lumber business. And when they sit here on a chair, they can talk real well. I cannot match him with words. I talked about this with Grandfather and he said that he too had serious concerns about that. You know that they are a quite easy-going.

Oh my beloved, may the Lord direct it so that you make it well. I cannot do anything about it, even if I really wanted to.

Give my regards to all the people whose greetings you conveyed to me. You have not stated clearly where we have to send this letter. I hope it will arrive safely.

Well my beloved Son, I have to finish because otherwise I fear this letter will become too thick.

Also, if you are able, do not wait so long with writing back.

Well, may the Lord grant that you will receive this letter in prosperity and that we may see each other's faces once more in the land of the living is the wish of your loving Mother.

Boer, Metje Jans
Folder #1, Letter #1

Many greetings from me and from many friends and acquaintances.

M.J. Boer

Wildervank, August 31, 1872

Dearly Beloved Son and Daughter

We received your letter of June 2 in good health through the undeserved goodness of the Lord, and we were happy to hear about the good health of all of you.

Beloved ones, I had wanted to write you earlier, but I just could not get going. The Minister has said that he also wanted to write you, but since his sickness in earlier years, his hands are uncomfortable when he has to write. He has also travelled a lot and I have not yet talked with him now.

We were fortunate to receive your letter. We sent you one with the portrait of our Augiena (?) enclosed. We don't know if it arrived safely or not, because you have moved to a different place.

Beloved, I also have to report to you that Grandfather Heije B. Rubing died in June. At this moment I cannot remember the date. Just before that time we had sent you a letter. He really did not have an illness, but his strength gradually went down. He was almost 86 years of age and till the very end one could not say that his feelings had changed. Beloved, may the Lord save us from such a fall into sin.

I wrote you before that his house was sold for 500 guilders and that small corner of a garden on the side of the house for 120 guilders; he went to Marchien Huisman's for room and board. He had to pay 3½ guilders per week. When his house was sold, almost all his money was spent, and the contents was one of the reasons why Uncle Hendrik Rubingh and Berend Rubing became his Executors when the house was sold. They seized the money of the house and paid Marchien every week; that was good, because he might not have had it for long. They had not expected this. He used to have quite a bit of money and if he had boarded somewhere else, he would have been able to give ample room & board money. However, he spent his money at first

Boer, Metje Jans
Folder #1, Letter 2

and did not invest it for interest. From the proceeds the costs of the sale had to be paid, and the doctor had quite a bill and then also the funeral costs.

Beloved, you may as well know that there is hardly any inheritance here. What is left over is not yet finalized, because Dirk Huisman is not at home and neither is our Marchien. And even if it is very little, they have to be there themselves and have to give a proxy.

Grandfather P.Bos has not been asked to join them. Being Executors they can handle the business and it is going quite well. Quite often they inform us of everything and everything is now being recorded. I think he might be part of it when it is finalized. Beloved, you will have to count on it that the inheritance will hardly be worth mentioning. The Lord willing we will write you the final outcome.

It is good, Beloved, to count on disappointments sometimes; at least it is not unexpected then. We hope that the Lord will give us the grace that we seek those things that moth or rust will not spoil or that thieves cannot steal by digging. We want to wear the clothes of salvation and want to be covered with the measures of the Lord's righteousness, and may our whole life be consecrated to his service.

Oh Beloved, I just cannot write you pleasant things very often, but we do have to always say that the Lord does not deal with us according to our sins.

This year is a very good crop-year, as far as I know we have not had this for some years; it was very warm at times.

I also thought of you very often; how things are with you. It is very fruitful, but it is

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Boer, Metje Jans
Folder #1, Letter 3

Do you ever meet acquaintances there, Beloved?

Oh, so often I am with you and the little Mettje in my heart and in my thoughts. Whenever we see Elsiena, we say so often, would that the little Mettje was here too for once.

Oh Beloved, oh Beloved, so often I think would that we could see each others faces one again. That would console us as well, Beloved.

I am not over all this all of the time; maybe you think that. May the Lord give all of us that we submit to His deeds. Only He can fulfil all our needs according to body and soul. He can also provide the light from darkness; may we daily realize our dependency on Him. May the Lord give us, Beloved, that we pray a lot for each other.

Well, Beloved, I hope that the Lord will provide us on both sides with counsel and guidance on all our ways.

I don't have much news to write.

Jurie Bakker died this spring. On the whole there is not much sickness among the people.

Well Beloved, I hope you will receive this letter in the best of health. I hope not, Beloved, that you think my waiting (with writing this letter) is not because of indifference.

I hope, Beloved, that if you have not yet sent a letter, you will do so very soon. If you can bring yourself to do this, then we will do it soon again too.

Well, Beloved, my very best regards to both of you. I wish you the Lord's indispensable blessing according to body and soul, and I call myself Your Loving Mother,

Mettje Jans Boer

P.S.

Special greetings from Hugiëna, and hoping that you will write us back soon.

Again: kindest regards, Your Mother M.J. Boer.

Wildervank, April 28, 1874

Dearly Beloved Son and Daughter

With this letter I am letting you know that all of us find ourselves in reasonable health through the undeserved mercy of the Lord, although lately I often feel my physical weakness and this is not getting any better these days. However, by the grace of God I am still reasonably healthy and I hope and wish, Beloved, that you will receive these my letters in the best of health.

For a long time, Beloved, we have been looking for a letter from you, but I'm afraid that you too have expected to receive a letter from us for a long time. Also from our Griet, but she has been weak for a long time. She wishes to write you herself now.

It is often so busy here; often there is not a moment left for myself. We are boarding the little Elsiena of our Marchie and Detmer. And our Heigiena has to do quite a bit these days too, and our Griet is sometimes with us as well, because she was not able to go along on this trip yet. She is in the room of Detmer and Marchien is in the room of Taaden (?).

This spring Marchien went along on board; last week we received a letter from her; they are in London and are healthy. They have to to Zoutkamp again. In case we would write you we had to give you their best regards.

During the last four weeks quite a few people from the canal have left for America. Hendrik Dekker and his wife and I believe also some adult children; he was the brother of Mrs. Dik's first husband. That man was already almost and she was already over sixty years of age. Her son left for America about five or six years ago. I cannot keep track of all this exactly. That old woman had two brothers living there as well. They have written that things are going well with them, but maybe they have gone another direction.

Boer, Metje Jans
Folder #1, Letter 4

Wildervank, April 3, 1875

Dearly Beloved Son and Daughter

Through the undeserved goodness of the Lord we have received your letter of February 28 in good health. We read with gladness that all of you are healthy too and on top of that we were very happy that the Lord has blessed you with a well-created Daughter with the name of Mettje. Oh Beloved, you are thinking that you would like to have me there, but consider how my Mother-heart is longing to be with you. However, Beloved, when I am thinking about this "I am a God near you and not from afar," so says the Lord.

Oh that the Lord grant us to be still and submissive about what we have to do without, and thankful with what we have and can enjoy.

Oh Beloved, whenever we see and feel a need, it is good to know that the Lord says in His Word: "Whatever you lack, I will grant you upon your request, in love and abundance." Oh, that we may pray for each other before the throne of mercy.

We would have written you earlier, but we also expect that our Marchien will be delivered this month and for that reason we had postponed it a bit. But since it takes a few more days, we took up the pen anyway, hoping that the Lord will gladden us soon with his deeds and we can send you the news.

Beloved, we sent you a letter in February and our Minister had enclosed one too. I had thought that you would have received it by now; I hope you will receive it as yet.

I do not have much news to write, other than that we have had a severe winter and that a lot of folks have died in this new year. Old Jans Rengers Brouwer (?) and Albert Joosten and quite a few other old and young ones.

Small Pox is found in several regions in our fatherland and it costs a lot of lives. We here in Wildervank, however, through the blessings of the Lord, have been spared thusfar.

Boer, Metje Jans
Folder #1, Letter 4

Well, beloved, I hope you will receive this letter while you may enjoy complete health.

I am glad that your Mother is with you.

Well, beloved, kindest regard from me and also from the Reverend and his wife, and from friends and acquaintances, too many to name.

I wish you the Lord's indispensable blessings according to body and soul, and call myself your loving Mother,

Mettje Jans Boer.

Beloved, I have to tell you some more: Our Marchien has been boarding here this winter; presently she is in the room of Mrs. Dik. She asked me to send you her greetings, and also from Mrs. Dik and Jantje.

Dekken has not been home this winter. He is in the Mediterranean - Cote, and the Lord willing he will come back to Amsterdam.

This time Grietje and Augiena send you special greetings. They hope to write you too in one of my next letters.

Again: a thousand greetings from me.

Your loving Mother,

Mettje Jans Boer

Boer, Metje Jans
Folder #1, Letter 5

Wildervank, June 13, 1875

Dearly Beloved Son and Daughter

Your letters of April and May 3 were received by us through the undeserved goodness of the Lord, but your news was sad, Beloved. We heard that our Beloved Son has been very ill during the last while.

You can imagine, Beloved, how bad we feel, and also because of the long distance. But what shall we say, Beloved, the Lord does not owe us an explanation of his deeds, but he acts according to his almighty will. Oh, may the Lord grant us his grace so that we (accept) whatever he sends us.

Oh Beloved Daughter, it comforts us that you and the baby are healthy. Oh may the Lord grant you patience and strength to provide everything in your circumstances. Are you lonely there? Oh, may the Lord fills that loneliness with his presence. Oh, may the Lord soon grant complete health and strength in order that you can support and strengthen each other.

Also, Beloved, you will have to especially take care of your body against cold air and cold drinks.

On this side we are dependent on the means (?). A lot of people have died here. Small Pox is serious in Holland, but only a few in Wildervank. Kier Bos has had them, but got better again, but his wife died suddenly last week on account of that sickness.

Yes Beloved, we experience that even the strongest is only vanity and the Poet says: Too bad that even the best of our days often gives us grief and often is the cause of scourge. Oh we wish that the Lord will clear up those dark experiences and that he will sanctify them to our hearts.

I have written your earlier that on Tuesday, April 25, our Marchien delivered a baby Daughter; her name is Elziena. All through her pregnancy the Lord has blessed her with good health.

Boer, Metje Jans
Folder #1, Letter 5

Detmer was home; his ship was in Amsterdam, but soon he had to get back on board again. He said that he wants to write you as soon as he is back in Amsterdam; but because of being busy he has not done this yet. They went to Groningen with the ship to load(?) and our Marchien with her baby went on board on May 23. They had to go to France and arrived there at Pentecost. I think they will write you sometime.

During this time the Minister has sent you a letter as well; he would mention in it one thing or another.

Oh Beloved, sometimes I have such a strong desire to see you yet in this life. But I also have to say at such times of despondency that we should not be demanding, but that we have to turn to the Lord who can and will fulfil all our needs according to body and soul for Christ's sake. And in case it might not happen here, we know that in the hereafter it will happen because then we will not be separated any more.

Oh Beloved, I am reminded of the words as spoken by our Minister this morning from Mark 5, verse 36: "Don't be afraid; just believe."

Yes, Beloved, I wished we practised this more. In the Lord Jesus all treasures are included according to body and soul and with Him is deliverance, even from death.

Well, Beloved, I hope that the Lord will grant that you will receive this letter in complete physical health.

I wish you the Lord's treasured blessing according to body and soul, and I call myself your loving Mother,

Mettje Jans Boer

Also greetings to you from uncle R. Vandeborg and aunt Nannechie. I have not been to many others yet.

I kindly request, that if you can, you write us back as soon as possible.

Boer, Metje Jans
Folder #1, Letter 5

Please overlook my poor writing.
Kindest regards again, and hoping that your health will
be restored,

Your loving Mother, M.J. Boer

Boer, Metje Jans
Folder #1, Letter 6

Wildervank, August 7, 1875

Dearly Beloved Son and Daughter

Through the undeserved Goodness of the Lord we have received your July-letter in good health. We were happy to read about the well-being of all of you, although it grieves us that you still have to cope with physical weaknesses. Because of this you will have to change your business.

Oh Beloved, may the Lord change these things into something more positive.

I think you should use some acid for the gall and some ground and once a day a ground orange-peel with a bit of water but I don't know if that is available there. You have to

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They had to go to Newcastle and then with coal to Rensburg. They are healthy. They hoped that very soon we will receive good news from you. If we would write to you, they asked us to give you their regards.

For the rest, I don't know if all relatives are still healthy. I don't hear much about sickness in this area, but still quite a few are unexpectedly pulled away from us by death.

Last week Remko de Jonge passed away and his sister Ika died two weeks ago; K. te Velde died 3 weeks ago.

Yes Beloved, death hounds us every hour, as we could see in the Westerman situation.

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at the moment he is busy going to Groningen en Pekela. Kind regards from him and his wife. At the first possible moment he wishes to write Revs. de Beer and Brouwer, and you.

Boer, Metje Jans
Folder #1, Letter 6

Regards from many friends and acquaintances who I visit sometimes, but I cannot mention them all by name.

For the rest, there are not many changes here.

Jans Rengers Brouwer has died. Maybe I have written you this already, but they too have big arguments. His wife is still alive. They say that he has bequeathed all his goods to Jake Schuringa and his wife has done the same to his wife Saartje. He (Jake) can manage everything as he pleases, and you can imagine that this has caused disappointment and arguments for many.

One can see that a lot of money does not guarantee peace and satisfaction for the heart. May the Lord grant us that also in this we deal in an upright manner.

Does the wife of Westenman still live close to you and your family? And are they well? If you have the opportunity, please give them our regards.

Well Beloved, in case you have not sent the money yet, you should reduce it by 10 guilders and buy some clothes for the little Mettje. Please give her a kiss from me.

Oh Beloved, would that the Lord grant that we could see each others faces in this life. Sometimes I am afraid that I hope too strongly for this, because the Lord reigns; however, He can direct everything to our well-being. May this happen for once; you can imagine how my heart feels about this.

Well Beloved, I hope that you may receive this letter in good health and strength.

I wish you the Lord's indispensable blessing according to body and soul, and call myself your loving Mother,

Mettje Jans Boer

Boer, Metje Jans
Folder #1, Letter 6

If at all possible, please write us back soon.
Please disregard my poor writing, because I sometimes do
this in haste.

Very best regards from me,

Mettje J. Boer

Boer, Metje Jans
Folder #1, Letter 7

Wildervank, December 5, 1875

Dearly Beloved Son and Daughter

Through the undeserved goodness of the Lord we have received your letter of October 8 in reasonable well-being; we were happy to learn about the good health of all of you.

Beloved, you may have been looking for a letter, but please forgive me. It is not, Beloved, because of forgetfulness, my heart and love for you are too strong for that, you can be sure. However, often times I just dread having to write. Often I am not able to get it all together and this is not getting any better. May the Lord grant us that we silently accept his works. Often my wish is to have all of you with us, or that all of us could be with you, Beloved, but then I think if it only does not remain wishful thinking. But the Lord says in His Word: "My ways are not your ways, and my thoughts are not the thoughts of you people." We experience this daily.

Our Hendrik and Griet are not home yet; they were in Dordrecht for fourteen days; they are in good health; they have a darling little boy. They asked us to send you their regards when we would be writing you. They want to write you too at the first opportunity.

Detmer has been home for a few days. He had a load of beans and this he has to take to London. However, the wind was not right and the winter came unexpectedly, and for those reasons he could come home again.

For 14 days already we have had severe frost; it was really cold here. But quite quickly the waterways opened up again and yesterday Detmer left to go on board again. He asked me to send you his best regards. He had not much time and could not write you at the present time.

Our Marchien is home now with her children; you can imagine how busy she is with them; when they are this little, she is going night and day.

Boer, Metje Jans
Folder #1, Letter 7

Elsiena, the eldest, has been sick. She had caught a cold and has had about 4 types of medicines. However, with the Lord's goodness her health has been restored and she goes to school again.

They are noisy but still very lovable; they talk so much. I often think: "I wished that your darling Mettje would be here too." Our Marchien also wanted to write you, but that means I would have to wait some more, and it would take still longer. Very soon, the Lord willing, we want to write you together. Her best regards.

Uncle Remming van der Borg died towards the end of October; he was 76 years of age. Maybe I had written you already that he had been in poor health for a long time. And Jan van der Borg has leased his farm and has bought the house of uncle Okke Pronk; he wants to retire now. They have inherited a lot of money from her Mother's Mother and also from her Mother's Brother, Jan Vegten, who also died.

And so we see, Beloved, that everything here is subject to change, and at the end of everything there is death. Well, Beloved, I hope that you will receive this letter in the best of health; I hope you will write us back soon about how you are and how your family is, and the little Mettje. Please give her a kiss from us.

Beloved, what do you burn in your stove when it is so cold there where you are?

Are your potatoes there as good as they are here in general?

Well, Beloved, I hope that the Lord will be Counsel and Guide for all of us on all our ways.

I wish you the Lord's indispensable blessing according to body and soul, and I call myself your loving Mother,

M.J. Boer

Boer, Metje Jans
Folder #1, Letter 7

Special greetings to you from our Heichiena (?). Very often she does not like to write.
Again: regards from all of us.
Please excuse my poor writing
If at all possible: write us back soon.

Boer, Metje Jans
Folder #1, Letter 8

Wildervank, May 9, 1876

Dearly Beloved Son and Daughter

Through the undeserved goodness of the Lord we have received in a reasonable state of health your letter and the money, and we have noted with joy that all of you are healthy.

It is so nice to hear from your letter, Beloved, that once in a while you can go and visit your parents. We are happy about that, but you can imagine how painful it is for me that both of us have to do without that. One can always still hope and wish, Beloved. This provides some comfort, but often things here are disrupted and subject to change. May the Lord grant us, Beloved, above anything else, that all of us will enjoy the comfort of knowing that in life and in death we may have the privilege of belonging to Christ. This in itself is not subject to change.

Our Marchien is back on board, Beloved; they are in Copenhagen at present; their health is fine. Last Friday we received a letter from them. They have their two smallest children with them.

When we would write you, they asked us to send you their greetings. The two biggest, Elsiena and Mettiena are with us again. Once in a while it gets to be quite busy; when one gets to be a bit older, it becomes a bit difficult, and especially when Heigiena is busy, all the works has to be done by me. However, sometimes they are very nice too.

If only you could be here sometimes with your lovely Mettje; that would be comforting.

Our Griet and Hendrik are on the new ship and have to take coal to Amsterdam. Their health is fine too. We usually do not get a letter, or they write and ask us that when we write to you that we send you their regards as well. They have a darling little boy too. Presently they don't come home here with us all that often, because there is quite a lot of freight. This way I have to experience that often the one is here and the other one

Boer, Metje Jans
Folder #1, Letter 7

is somewhere else. May the Lord grant us that we accept His way. We are still in the land of the living.

I can only give you sad news about Uncle Harm Boer. In February he was still here at home; he had his ship in London and Detmer was there too. But when he was at sea, it was storming every day and he has not been heard from since. There is no more hope left. Jan Jacob was with him too; it makes me feel so sad; I liked him a lot. They had 9 children.

Beloved, Aunt Jantje now has eight children with her, and the youngest one is only half-a-year old. Only last year and with a lot of trouble they started with a new ship. Such a large household; what can you say?

The deep-sea trade is not very rosy. Detmer's business is not completed yet, but he has not yet paid anything either. The lawyer tells them not to do this. But as long as it is still hanging, there are worries, because justice is often not done. May the Lord grant that this will be directed to our benefit.

It is a sad situation in the Church. Rengen Brouwer and Uncle Okke Pronk, I should not call him uncle anymore, and Aaltje Oukkes have been cut off the church. I believe I have written you a bit about this previously.

Aaltje lives in den Pekel at present and is expecting a child of Okke Pronk; together they have been to America, but last summer they quickly came back again. He could not settle down there. He now has to support her and his wife is with him, and she is satisfied with him and glad that he is back again. He also was an elder in the church. Our small congregation was doing so well in years past, but now it is in a terrible condition. The only thing is that the truth is preached there, and we cannot say a thing about the way of life and the actions of our Minister, but the

- end of letter -

Boer, Metje Jans
Folder #1, Letter 9

If I would follow the desires of the flesh, nothing would be too difficult to come to be with you. May the Lord grant that we are still and subject ourselves to His ways. And maybe He will direct everything yet to the good.

But our lives are but a vapour and death beckons every hour. We experience this on a daily basis. You know Bentum; last week he lost his life unexpectedly. While he was on the field with the tilt-cart he fell off the back and the next day he died of the results. I cannot tell you exactly how it has happened.

And Jan Tjakker Schuringa died because of fever; he was 82 years of age already, but it was still unexpected.

And Foppe Huisman also died last week, and Steensman from close by, died too. The wife of Beuker died too. All this teaches us, Beloved, that the time is very short sometimes.

I do not have much news to write. Most of it is the same as always.

Fourteen days ago we received a letter from Hendrik and Griet. They were still healthy at that time; in case we would be writing you, they asked us to give you their best regards. They had to load lumber for Utrecht and then they may transport sugar-carrots. They haven't been home for about 12 (?) weeks.

Well, Beloved, may the Lord grant that you receive this letter in the best of health.

When you have an opportunity, please write us especially how dear Mettje is and with all your family.

Our regards to all of them.

Well, Beloved, may the Lord be our Counsellor and Guide on all our ways.

I wish you the Lord's blessing according to body and soul, and I call myself your loving Mother,

M.J. Boer

In case you have not sent a letter yet, please write us soon.

Boer, Metje Jans
Folder #1, Letter 9

Dear Brother and Sister and Child

Although I know of nothing to write you, I still have to urge you with this letter to write us sometime soon. All summer long we have not received a letter from you at all.

How can that be? I would think, that regardless of how busy you are, you could still do it on Sunday. Even if it does not get to be a long letter, the most important part is that we know about each other's health.

We would like it very much, dear B. and Z., if you could write us back immediately about how you are and how your lovely Mettje is.

My very best regards.

Your loving Sister,

H. Rubingh

Boer, Metje Jans
Folder #1, Letter 10

Wildervank, November 28, 1877

Dearly Beloved Son and Daughter

Through the undeserved goodness of the Lord we have received your letter, written on September 15, in a reasonable state of health. We were happy to hear about your welfare and also that all of you this summer have been spared from sickness.

Oh Beloved, may the Lord grant us all that we will thankfully recognize all these blessings, in the light of the fact that frequently one or other is snatched from our side.

Aunt Derkie also died this summer; you know that she has always been weak, but as it seems, during the last while she has been quite active and she also came to accept the Light. But you will also know that in later years they made their last will and testament and everything was going to go to his side. We are not hearing much about this, but this is what we have heard. Aunt Derkie has given Yfke all her possessions plus a thousand guilders, and Uncle Berend has also given her a thousand guilders on the condition that she would stay with him for as long as he would live. According to what we heard, the inheritance of Aunt Derkie will amount to almost 12,000 guilders.

Well Beloved, I am writing you this in case you would think that you never hear anything; however, I cannot even write you this with certainty.

We do know that everything here is precarious, and there are plenty of daily disappointments.

Aunt Geesie also died this spring; I don't know if I have written you this already. And just now I came from Aunt Annechie; she is so weak. This is general deterioration and there is not much hope for recovery; the doctor says this too. It will not be very long anymore, however, she has a quiet hope and trust that she belongs not to herself but to Christ. During her life she gave proof of that.

Boer, Metje Jans
Folder #1, Letter 10

Well Beloved, as far as the shipping trade goes, this year things are pretty sad. The deep-sea freight has been poor for several years already, but this year the in-land freight business is also bad. The many steamships are taking the business and the war will also affect it.

Our Hendrik and Griet are presently in Rotterdam; they have loaded potatoes; their health is good. If we would write you they asked that we send you their regards. Since the time that we received your letter they have not been home yet.

Our Marchien has asked me to write a short letter for her this time. She is very busy with her small children this summer. She cannot go on board at the moment.

We have had the children this summer and all of them at the same time. One of them got the scarlet fever too, and now they all have a rash, it is an inflammation, not dangerous but it is a nuisance and keeps them very busy, as there are still 4 under the age of your little Mettje; otherwise they are real little darlings.

Albert, son of Hendrik and Griet had whooping-cough and scarlet fever this summer. Through the goodness of the Lord they have all recovered. Her little Mettien is gaining quite well and they have written that they might not come home this winter as they could not unload their potatoes; they will get demurrage.

At present Detmer might still be at sea; he has to go to England with A.....; the weather is still quite good. We have had hardly any cold weather; and that suits me fine, because I cannot stand that and this is not getting any better. As you know, here we have peat, but what do you use in the winter? Is it warm enough?

Please write us too. We were happy to see that little Mettje can write so well already; we can read it quite well; please ask her to write again soon.

Little Elziena wanted to write you too and so did our Marchie. But because of being busy this was postponed again, and Elziena is not all that quick.

Boer, Metje Jans
Folder #1, Letter 10

Well Beloved, I send you best regards from our Marchien; she hopes to write you pretty soon.

I now have to give you the sad news that Aunt Annechie has passed away; she had a quiet and easy death. I have written you about this before.

Writing this letter has taken quit a while, because there are many interruptions here for me, and the writing is often very difficult for me; I cannot do it as well as I used to.

Boer, Mete Jans
Folder #1, Letter 11

Beloved, in everything I am not as quick anymore and the and as one gets older the ups and downs do not get better.

Do you have a school close where you live? How are things there? Can they learn Dutch there or is it all English? Do your old folks still live close by?

Well Beloved, you will probably say that I have so many questions, and that you cannot wait to answer them all. I should stop now.

At this moment I have not much news to write you. Sometimes it is also without value.

I bring you kind regards from Grandfather and Grandmother, also from our Marchien and Heichiena. I would really like to write you too, but I cannot get that done.

Mrs. Zonneveld, we used to live across from her, has died and was buried this afternoon.

Beloved, I hope that you will not pay attention to my mistakes and the messes.

Well Beloved, May the Lord be our Counsellor and Guide on all our ways.

I wish you the Lord's indispensable blessing according to body and soul, and call myself your loving Mother,

M.J. Boer

Give your children a kiss for us.

If possible, write us soon, and also dear Mettje.

Boer, Metje Jans
Folder #1, Letter 12

Wildervank, August 12, 1878

Dearly Beloved Son and Daughter

Through the undeserved goodness of the Lord we have received your letter, written on June 20, in a reasonable state of health, and we have noted with joy that all of you are healthy.

Our Griet, however, has been very ill a few months ago; she suffered a tremendous nose-bleed, which almost could not be stopped. She also had a fever with it and at times we feared the worst.

During that time she had to live with us in our house, because they usually do not have a home on shore. Initially the Lord has granted healing for now. She has seen a professor in Groningen, who said that this was caused by her blood and that she is very weak. Right now she is on board again; they loaded flax in Groningen and have to take that to Holland. For 14 days we have not heard from her. Let's hope that the Lord will grant complete recovery soon. Whenever they write they ask us to send you their regards.

At present our Marchie is on board as well. While I am writing this we received a letter, Beloved, indicating that they arrived safely in Rotterdam. The Lord willing our Marchie will now come home again. She sends you her best regards; she wrote that in her letter.

Earning money in the shipping trade is presently so bad as it has ever been, both the in-land as well as deep-sea trade.

I am writing you this letter, Beloved, because in your letter of June 20 you wrote that shortly you would send us a small draft, and if we would then write you immediately upon receipt of it. You had not determined a specific time, but I thought that if nothing had prevented you, it would have been time. All this has caused quite a few worries, because you wrote that you want to leave home, and in the past you wrote once that where you live there is no bank. I don't know about these things.

Boer, Metje Jans
Folder #1, Letter 12

You have no idea, Beloved, how many worries rise up in my head; there is so much corruption in the world. One experiences this daily, and out there this will probably be the same.

Well, Beloved, forgive me if I have been too concerned, or if I have been premature. I know, Beloved, that with worrying one cannot add one cubit to his length, and that makes life so difficult for us, even so that we experience the opposite.

May the Lord give, Beloved that we will see each other face to face.

.....
.....

If I could be better in putting things on paper, I would be writing you more often, but I cannot do it the way you can.

Often I cannot get our Heichien to write.

Well Beloved, I have to stop. May the Lord grant that you receive this letter in prosperity; however, that upon receipt of this letter you will write us back immediately. Maybe there is a letter on the way and we have not received it yet. You can figure that out according to the date. The Lord willing I will write again soon.

Well Beloved, I wish that the Lord will be our Guide on all our ways.

I wish you the Lord's indispensable blessing according to body and soul, and I call myself your loving Mother,

M.J. Boer

Once again best regards from our Heichien.

Please give your little Mettje a kiss for us; my longings and thoughts are more than I can write you.

Boer, Metje Jans
Folder #1, Letter 13

Wildervank, March 13, 1879

Dearly beloved Son and Daughter

Through the undeserved goodness of the Lord we have received in a reasonable state of health your letter which was written on January 20. We were happy to hear that all of you are well.

I would have written you a bit earlier, beloved, but I could not find out the exact date that the Minister and his family would leave by boat; later on it had been postponed for a few days again. It has now been decided that on April 2 they will depart by boat from Rotterdam. Last Sunday, March 9, he preached his farewell sermon from 2 Cor. 13:13, "May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all!" The church was so full that not everyone could even stand in it; it was said that more than a hundred people had gone home again.

Dominie had asked me if I had a Brakel (?), but I did not have one, but otherwise I would have given it along, Beloved; he is still looking for one.

He will have brought book along; we have also included a booklet for the little Mettje. May the Lord grant that His truth will be instilled in her heart. She should write us if she can read already. At your school do they read Dutch or do they learn only English. Do they use the Bible as well?

May the Lord grant that Dominie and his family will arrive at your place in good health. We had preferred that he would have stayed with us, but if he had to leave, well, than we are happy that he is going to you. Beloved, I am thankful for the offer in your letter sent to us. If only I could, I would love to accept your offer, you can be sure of that. Beloved, I would love to be with you.

This winter I just did not feel strong enough. Dominie had also said that I should come along to you for a year and then go back again. He wanted to say that our girls

Boer, Metje Jans
Folder #1, Letter 13

would be here anyway. And that is true, if only the voyage would not take so long. And we all know that the costs are way too high.

If I had been about ten years younger, I might have been able to make a more positive decision. Oh Beloved, may the Lord grant that we submit to His ways.

Last Thursday Detmer has gone on board.

Hendrik and Griet are still in Pikel. It will be still another four weeks or so before their ship will be ready. They had to make changes with (the plans for) their ship, because otherwise they would not have been able get finished so well with it. The freight business does not look good.

Kind regards from all.

Dominie left on March 15; the remaining days we will spend with his relatives. About three weeks ago the father of Dominie passed away. And you might not have been able to imagine where they would have stayed during the rest of the time.

Our Marchien is here at home. Regards from her as well as from Grandfather and Grandmother and many others when they ask about you.

Presently I cannot write you any further news other than that they have made up a trio nomination: A vander Sluis of Sneek, E. Douma of Drachten and H. van Hoogen of Hoogeveen.

You have to overlook my poor writing.

Well Beloved, best regards to all your relatives when you see them.

Give the little Mettje a kiss from us. Would we ever like to see all of you again.

If possible, please write us back soon.

Well Beloved, may the Lord be our Counsellor and Guide on all our ways.

I wish you the Lord's indispensable blessing and call myself your loving Mother,

M.J. Boer

Boer, Metje Jans
Folder #1, Letter 13

At this time Hiechiena sends you her regards; they all prefer that I do the writing, but I cannot do it so well anymore either.

Boer, Metje Jans
Folder #1, Letter 14

Wildervank, November 8, 1879

Dearly Beloved Son and Daughter

Through the undeserved goodness of the Lord we have received in a reasonable state of health your letter of October 20, and have noted with great joy the Lord's blessings granted to all of you.

Your previous letter, Beloved, caused a lot of worry, because your beloved son had not yet recovered from the fever and you, Beloved Daughter, in your circumstances that have indeed since so many years have given cause for concern. And you even had to move because you had no place to live. It turns out that this is not so, because you have informed us that there is a place for you to live in the house of the people you lease the land from. It is almost winter now. Have you been able to sell your land satisfactorily or do you still own that other land? If at times you do not feel strong, it must be difficult to clear land right from the beginning. And you do not have immediately the easy use of equipment (?). You must not mind that I am writing you in this way. You have to realize that my thoughts are often with you and then there is often the desire to be with you. However, Beloved,

.....
May the Lord grant us truly thankful hearts for the fact that you have recovered from the fever, Beloved Son, and you, Beloved Daughter, that the birth of your baby went smoothly. May the Lord soon give back to you both the strength you have lost and may He grant that your small children will grow up in the fear of the Lord. That is my heartfelt wish.

We have not heard from Hendrik and Griet for fourteen days. The last we heard, they were in Holland and were doing well.

Towards the end of December it will be Griet's time to deliver; she is still on board, and that causes concerns again, Beloved.

Detmer left Koningbergen for England.

Boer, Metje Jans
Folder #1, Letter 14

Through God's grace we have a new minister again.¹ Reverend van Hogen from Hoge Veen. First impression is very good. Last Sunday he preached his first sermon and he was ordained by Rev. 't Holt.

Generally there is considerable surprise here that Rev. Kuiper married so soon, as you have written in your letter. However, there is a time for everything. The Ministers in general are a bit luxurious. These days they receive high salaries and also get presents from some. Those who are busy looking after themselves cannot do this. It is not always the right thing to do either. I do like to honour them for the type of work they do, and that is why I have always had Rev. Kuiper in high esteem. When you meet her please give her regards from our Jantje.

She is Detmer's sister; has never been married either, but still lived at home with her mother. You know that she lived next door to the Stoffen (?) sisters. She will marry the Minister from Urk. She is 53 and he is 63 years of age. He is a widower.

I have no news to write at the present.

Is there a school where you live? Are all your relatives well? Can your Mother visit you once in a while? Oh, Beloved, I just cannot get rid of the hope to see each others faces on this side of the grave just once more; this makes me feel bad

if it is the Lord's counsel that this will not happen, may it then happen in the here-after in eternal glory. Well, Beloved, may the Lord be our Counsel and Guide on all our ways. I wish you the indispensable blessing for body and soul, and call myself your loving mother,

M.J. Boer

If ever you can bring yourself to informing us soon how you are doing, (this would be appreciated).
Kiss your dear little children from us.

¹Leeraar = Teacher

Boer, Metje Jans
Folder #1, Letter 14

Please ignore if there is anything in this letter that
does not look right.

Again, kindest regards, Beloved,

M.J. Boer

Boer, Metje Jans
Folder #1, Letter 15

Wildervank, July 24, 1879

Dearly beloved Son and Daughter and Child

Through the undeserved goodness of the Lord we have received in a reasonable state of health your letter of May 26. We were happy to hear, Beloved, that all of you may enjoy good health and that you have received the goods in good condition as well. And that Dominie and his family have arrived safely. May the Lord give that we will thankfully acknowledge all these blessings, and as I sit here and write this down, the thought comes to mind about the far distance between us. Would that it pleases the Lord that we could see each other on this side of the grave once more, but I'm afraid that it will remain wishful thinking. Time goes so fast and on July 17 I became 66 years of age. I often wish this, but the voyage would be too difficult for me, otherwise I would consider it sometimes.

Oh, may the Lord grant that we submit to the way He directs us, but oh, often I feel quite incapable of doing this. May we often remember each other in prayer.

Uncle Hendrik Rubingh has died. Lately he had chest problems. This caused his death quite unexpectedly.

I have written you before that about eight years ago he married Mrs. Ligger. You probably still know her. She used to live upstairs close to us. In his Last Will and Testament he had stated that she could have his money as long as she lived, in usufruct.

Quite often it happens this way, Beloved, that if he had not married, it might have been better for all of you. She is 74 years of age, but quite spirited. When the Will was read, it was not figured out or added together. One could not know, nor was it announced how much there was all together. I don't know this yet. We think it will be about five or six thousand guilders. I cannot be more specific; it could be a little more or less. In the past it was said that there would be more (money), but that happens often, Beloved, because so much is deducted for the land and for the Notary. But for now it is fixed and

Boer, Metje Jans
Folder #1, Letter 15

that cannot be changed. It could have been that he had left everything to her.

There are 6 stakeholders, and you can figure that out: Boelma, Berend, Henderikus, Geugie, Henderieka and Annegie. I don't know if eventually I can write you more details.

All the heirs have to go yet to Zuidbroek to sign. His personal belongings could now be divided, and all of them have been together for that. All totalled this came to 72 guilders; every heir could get 12 guilders and for each one of you this will come to 3 guilders each; you can figure that out.

We have said to each other that if Dominie had still been here, he would have been able to take along his churchbook; that would have come to hardly 3 guilders; but that's past now, Beloved.

You will have to write now what should be done with the three guilders. I asked Grandfather if he would write, but he asked me to write this. I have to ask you to write him for instructions, and then he will write you also. To you his kind regards.

Grandmother is 81 years of age already.

We still do not have a Dominie here. We have received two rejections already. One from Dominie van der Sluis and one from Dominie Wielinga. It does not go as fast as people might have expected.

As far as I am concerned, we still miss Dominie Kuipers every day and there are other like us. However, the Lord reigns.

When you have the opportunity, please greet all of them from us. We are happy that you can talk to Dominie once in a while. The congregation will not be short changed with him.

Please, Beloved, write us about how your elderly Mother is doing, and how your other relatives are. Are they all right?

We have heard that Evert Bos is not very healthy there; is that true, or don't you know?

Boer, Metje Jans
Folder #1, Letter 15

It is true the way you write, people often cannot believe that things can be good there too.

As far as we know, all the relatives are all right.

Detmer is in Petersburg and Hendrik and Grietje are in Holland.

When they write us, they ask us sometimes to give you their regards. The shipping trade is still pretty bad.

..... among the Consistory members there is much to be desired. A son of Buskes (?) will marry the daughter of Ipke Nieboer, and a son of Bentum has married a daughter of Jelte de Jonge. Others in the Consistory noticed that the discipline is not enforced as strongly as it should have been. Such as was the case with Pronk (?); they had to be pressed. It should have taken place earlier. If the judgement has to come from the house of the Lord, things do not look very good. May the Lord prevent other problems.

Beloved, work (outside) is finished here now. For fourteen days the weather was good, but now we have a cold East wind every day; it's getting worse instead of better and it freezes every night.

Well, Beloved, I should finish now, because I am running out of time.

Our Heigiena is busy at the moment.

Please don't pay attention to my mistakes. Kiss our beloved Mettje for us. May the Lord grant that we will see each other sometime again on this side of the grave. With Him all nothing is impossible.

If you can, please write us back soon about your church and your own circumstances.

Well Beloved, a thousand greetings from me and our Heigiena, and may the Lord be our Counsel and Guide on all our ways.

I wish you the Lord's indispensable blessing according to
body and soul, and I call myself your loving Mother

M.J. Boer

Thank you very much for the money, Beloved.
Kind regards to all your relatives; I forgot this.
Beloved, once again: goodbye.

Boer, Metje Jans
Folder #1, Letter 16

..... get each other, oh Beloved, then I often think "could I only talk with her verbally;" but often the way seems so dark to me.

In the past I thought that there might be a way that I could go and see you, but this is now over for me.

Oh, Beloved, my longing is so strong at times to see you together. But, Beloved, the Lord reigns.

When I see your writing on the paper I right away feel happiness. May the Lord give us both that we submit to His ways. Sometimes I feel that I need to do this more. May the Lord grant us, Beloved, that we can put our trust on Him. This trusting is not easy, Beloved, because we have to do it over and over again. However, the Lord says: "Trust on Me, He will make it right."

As far as the church goes, it could be a lot better here; it is not because the sermons of Dominie are lacking. Attendance is less than when you were here. There is not even a sermon during the week, because hardly any people come.

Well, Beloved, I have to finish now. Kind regards from Dominie and Teacher and many relatives; too many to name them all.

I hope that the Lord will grant me the wish and the strength to write you again soon.

Please don't pay attention to the poor writing, and let us often remember each other in prayer.

Give your darling little Mettje a kiss from us. Please write back soon, because that is so nice.

Well, Beloved, may the Lord be our Counsel and Guide on all our ways, and may He often let us be close to Him.

I wish you the Lord's indispensable blessing according to body and soul, and I call myself your loving Mother

M.J. Boer

- continued on page 2 -

Boer, Metje Jans

Boer, Metje Jans
Folder #1, Letter 16

Beloved, this time receive sincere greetings from
Heiziena. This time she cannot write; it's getting too
late.

Kindest regards and write back soon.

Your loving Mother,

M.J. Boer

Boer, Metje Jans
Folder #1, Letter 17

May 5, 1882

Dearly Beloved Son and Children

We received your letter of April 29, and physically we are reasonably well; we also received both previous letters. We read with sincere sorrow and sympathy the sad announcement about your beloved Wife.

Beloved, this is also a great loss for us. We always loved to hear from her, or read her letters. But the loss is greater for you, and only one who has experienced this himself can begin to understand this. It is also so sad for those lovely little children. Also for her Mother and Sisters and Brothers; as I sit here writing this, I can imagine all the sorrow.

But Beloved, where is your home now? Are you away from your little children? Oh, may the Lord be your Counsel and Guide on your way. Every time there is a disappointment. Often times we experience things that we never thought about. But the Lord says in His Word: "My ways are not your ways and your thoughts."

Well, Beloved, may the Lord who has given you to understand that He is the faithful God who fulfils His promises, "I will not leave you nor forsake you," may He be your refuge and strength. May He fill your you the empty place of your beloved wife.

Wherever you find yourself, please write us again.

Well, Beloved, I will tell you about the money that you need to know about. It has to be paid out this May, and as I have written you, it is in the hands of the Notary, and half of it will go to Aunt Derkie's side. That family is very extensive, but they are all cousins, nieces and nephews and some of them even live in America. The Executor, Ligter has said that maybe in June the estate will be paid out.

However, Aunt Jantje who was married to Uncle Hendrik Rubingh, and about whom I have written you some time ago, she died about five weeks ago as well. You know that she

Boer, Metje Jans
Folder #1, Letter 17

had the usufruct of all his money. We have heard that when all this is sorted out, the pay-out will take place. Well, Beloved, what else shall I write you about this? One cannot say what will happen now. As far as I know, I have written you about this before, and have also mentioned that in the past people thought that they had more money. But there are a lot of deductions.

Eefke will receive two thousand (?) guilders and Aunt Derkie will get all she needs during her life. It sometimes happens that strangers receive the most. However, when Uncle Hendrik married again, he insisted that all his estate would eventually go to his side again.

It will be about halfway June before both settlements will be completed, the one of Uncle Berend and the one of Uncle Hendrik.

I think it will amount to about 5 or 6 hundred guilders from both. It will be a pleasant surprise if it is more. I just wanted you to know this; but we do not know at all

And I don't know anything else.

Our relatives are doing well. Our Marchie went on board a week ago Saturday. Detmer and his ship are in Hamburg. Hendrik and Griet are in Ulrum; we expect them home any day now. They have been away for 13 weeks already. The shipping trade is poor, both inland as well as on the high seas.

Well, Beloved, I have to finish now. I could not make out if during this time you had received a letter from us, but I think that by now you will have it. We will write you again before the money is sent, but we would like to receive a letter from you too.

If I was not as old as I am, I think I would come over to you. However, it would have been so much nicer if your dear wife would still be with us. But I don't want to stir up the sadness again.

May the Lord grant that we submit to His will; may He be for both of us Counsellor and Guide on all our ways.

Boer, Metje Jans
Folder #1, Letter 17

I wish you the Lord's indispensable blessing according to
body and soul, and I call myself your loving Mother,
M.J. Boer

Heichiena send you her special greetings.
If at all possible, please write us soon.
Kind regards from your Mother.
