

# MEETA PAPSDA-ITE

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# MEET KEES

**Tell us your name?**  
Kees van den Bosch.

**Would it be OK to ask you your date of birth?**  
10 October 1934

**Where were you born Kees?**  
In Amsterdam, Netherlands. Some say Holland, but this is not accurate as Noord Holland and Zuid Holland are only two of the provinces of the total of twelve provinces.

**Was your childhood typical? Tell us about your family?**  
My childhood was not very typical; as my mother, who was Jewish, married my father who was a Gentile. She cut herself off from her family through this action. I remember very well several instances of her making approaches to her Maternal and Paternal relations after my father abandoned our family the day after the Dutch Government capitulated to the Germans, although with her married name-change came the blessing that she survived the threat of deportation to the gas chambers, where her entire family ended up during the war. My mother's Jewish maiden name, 'Ruwell' was eliminated from all living records in 1983 when she passed away. She was able to go right through the war obtaining food rationing cards, because of her Solid Dutch Name.

**Tell me what an average day was like for you?**  
When my brother, born in 1933, and I were living on the streets of Amsterdam for the first three years during the German occupation we became very skilled at pilfering various German food and equipment supply depots. Two young children, very adept at blending into their surroundings and looking totally innocent and when necessary, helpless, were able to be very cunning and manipulative in scrounging something to eat or trade. We built up quite a lucrative 'business' stealing locomotive fuel from the railway yards and trading this for other goods or money. There was a four-story YMCA Youth Hostel standing in its own park like grounds all locked up and shuttered, to which Bob and I found a way into and slept in during the first winter of the war. During the winter of 1943 we started removing interior timbers to sell as fuel to our extensive clientele who didn't have a clue where we got it from. It took us about 18 months to reduce the interior to a near empty shell, with only token stairways remaining. When we ran out of all removable interior timber, we took off one set of green timber shutters to sell. When we returned from that particular sale, we found the building swarming with people getting their hands on whatever timber was left; the result being that the whole building collapsed the next morning into a heap of rubble, injuring some people trapped inside.

**How did you get an education?**  
I started school on October 10 1939. What I remember most about my preschool time is related to my brother learning to read well enough to read the children's section of the daily newspaper, lying on his belly on the floor and chuckling over the 'funny' bits. It made me most frustrated and very impatient to have to wait that whole year before I could catch-up. Little did I know that my education would be rudely interrupted by WWII in 1940. But although my schooling stopped, my further Education was to continue. Because I could now

read, I literally became a book worm. I started frequenting the second hand book market under the arches of the Ryksmuseum every cold, windy or wet day, picking a book at random from a cart and reading it until the owner of the cart told me to buzz off, then repeating this as often as I could elsewhere. One day an elderly soft spoken man started a conversation with me, in which he told me that he had been observing me for some time. He told me that in exchange for some help with his library, I could read to my heart's content in a nice warm library not far away. He took me to the manse of a large Church in Amsterdam where the Library took up 50% of the ground floor. There were bookshelves around all the walls leaving only room for the rear window and a small fire place. In exchange for me re-covering the books, I could spend all my time there which I did for several years. He frequently gave me books to read, saying things like, "I think you will like this book", or, "this might take you a bit longer, but I think you will find it worth your while". When I got nabbed by the welfare people in late 1943 and placed in an Orphan's school, I became the teacher's pet with my knowledge of 'The Classics' the old Librarian had fed me.

**What did you do with that education? Where did you find your sense of purpose?**  
Being brought up without parents, as I was, would be an excuse for many to be misfits in society. The inclination to follow that line of thought was never part of my growth, because the values one obtains from accepting Truth when it presents itself and recognising it as such was imbued very early in my life. At the age of ten I remember asking myself the question, "Why am I here?" and vowing to myself that I would find the answer to that question as soon as I could. I can state unequivocally, I found that answer in 1973.

**When did you move to NZ and why?**  
I came to New Zealand during 1956, mainly because my fiancé's older sister was already living in New Zealand since 1954. I was a Sergeant Engineer in the Dutch Navy and used to spend my furlough time with Tina my fiancée by sitting next to her in her 'ticket box' on the tram. One day during our conversation she mentioned that New Zealand was inviting engineers and tradesmen to apply for assisted passage to New Zealand and that service personnel would be exempted military duty for this as well. I jumped off the tram when we neared the NZ Consulate to go talk with them. Two weeks later we boarded the Liberty Ship Waterman on our way to the promised land, New Zealand, where we landed in Wellington on Wednesday 1 September 1956.

**How did you come to know God?**  
My second marriage, to Shirley, a beautiful Christian woman, introduced me to a living example of true Christianity lived out in family life. She had three teenage children when we met, two girls and a boy at twelve years old, who was the youngest but very aware of his place in the pecking order having been the sole male for several years. It took considerable time to get him to accept me. We had very meaningful discussions as a family, with me very much on the defence as a non Christian with preconceived ideas about the hypocrisy I had experienced from the hands of professing Christians. These kids were very self assured and loving towards me and caused me to attend their Presbyterian Church from day one of my relationship with Shirley. We were married about three months later. Because I have a reasonable singing ability I was invited to join the Church Choir. During 1974, three denominations, Anglican, Presbyterian and Baptist, decided to have a joint Evangelical Outreach Week. The combined Choir

prepared for this by meeting at six every morning where I complied with everything they suggested, because I didn't want to stand out. But I felt totally out of my depth and wondered what I was doing with life. On the second day of the actual outreach, David Durie chose the reading, Psalms 139:1-16. When David finished this reading, a beautiful voice entered my head and proceeded to present me with a PowerPoint like presentation of my life right from the earliest memory I had of being in a pushchair as a two year old, right up to the present and what He had in store for me. I never heard David's sermon, but when he invited people to give their lives to our Saviour I was catapulted out of my seat to rush forward and invite Jesus Christ to be Lord of my life. Even now, each day brings new ways to serve My Lord and Saviour.

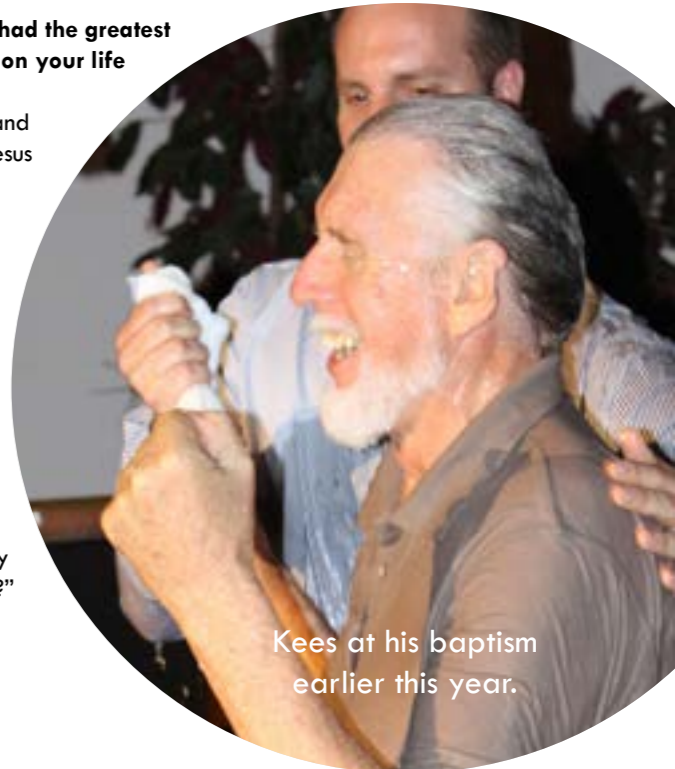
**How did you come to join us here at Papsda?**  
Because my Christian walk is one of staying close to the guiding of the Holy Spirit, He brings me along one step at a time. He made me respond to what sounded at the time almost like an admonition from the Church's pulpit; "If you love me, keep my commands." When I responded to that admonition I discovered the Sabbath and its unalterable importance in the eyes of God having initially been misled by the Sunday worship of the reformed churches.. So I am now a Seventh-day Adventist, keeping it holy and sanctified from Friday night sundown to Saturday night sundown, not asking anyone for service of any kind and totally abstaining from work of any kind.

**What does your family look like now?**  
I loved Papsda from the first moment I walked in and truly rejoice at the young people all fired up for their Lord. I love the Bible Studies and the Church interaction. I look forward to sharing more of my early and present walk with God, my Saviour and the Holy Spirit.

**If you were guaranteed to succeed, what would you want to do for God's kingdom on earth?**  
Spread, SPREAD and SPREAD the GOOD NEWS.

**Who has had the greatest influence on your life so far?**  
My Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

**Tell us about a defining moment in your life?**  
When I found the answer to that, "Why am I here?" question!



Kees at his baptism earlier this year.