

# **Levensschets van Ds. J. I. Fles**

Not Without a Struggle:  
Lifesketck of Rev. J. I. Fles

by Kenneth Fles

As nineteenth century Dutch immigrants to America progressed from pioneering in fields and woods to becoming settlers, their Midwestern cities grew around them. The post-Civil War era saw more industrialization and easier travel. And new ideas flourished. Tightly knit Dutch communities were conflicted; could they stay close to God while modernizing and becoming more American, or should they resist change and keep their traditional ways? Their devout religious beliefs led to many doctrinal disputes between themselves.

Jan Isak (anglicized to John Isaac) Fles was a converted Rabbi's son and a minister who once had a key role in an early Christian Reformed Church (CRC) evangelical mission that spread the Christian gospel of salvation among Jews. Fles's support for the Chicago Hebrew Mission and its influential leaders was significant, but his role is barely remembered now. This paper is not only a biography; it also attempts to show how beliefs about the end times were once part of the dramatic, complex relationships between the Reverend Fles, the CRC, and the Chicago Hebrew Mission.

Fles and other ministers, usually from Protestant denominations other than the CRC, understood the Bible literally by taking the Scriptures "in a realistic manner." They studied Bible verses describing how the Jewish people would someday return from exile to live in the land God once gave them. Those ministers advanced a theology which said the Jews will recognize and accept Jesus Christ as the Son of God, the Messiah and Savior, on the day when they see Him coming again. Then Israel will be restored and Christ will reign in His glorious Kingdom for a millennial thousand years. Rev. Fles's faith was shown through his words and in his life.

These premillennial ideas reached even more people in the twentieth century, and then another religious belief system, Fundamentalism, sprang from many of those same roots. Controversial doctrines once divided individual churches and the denominations to which they belonged. Today, similar Christian Zionist beliefs about the Jewish homeland are still debated. Modern Christians and Jews still wonder if historical and current events show Biblical prophecies about Israel are coming true. Views on premillennialism continue to split churches and influence political policies.

Fles was my grandfather's grandfather; born in 1842 in Aalten, Gelderland, the Netherlands. Of Jewish descent, his recorded ancestors go back to his forefather David Markus (1683-1763). Markus was from Wesel, North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany; then he moved to the Netherlands and settled in that village by 1715.<sup>1</sup> The Jews in Aalten established a synagogue there in 1767 and again in 1857 as their

numbers grew to about 85. Markus's grandson, Jacob Fles (1753-1829), was a leader of the Aalten Synagogue. Jacob's son, Isaac Fles (1799-1876) became a Rabbi at age 30. According to a family story, Rabbi Fles passed by a Protestant church one winter Sunday and went in when he heard singing. The sermon was on Isaiah 53 which he knew well, and then he was immediately converted. However another account from 1894<sup>2</sup> said Isaac heard a sermon at a Reformed church "explaining that Jesus was the promised Messiah" when he was eighteen during a visit home from his rabbinic studies in Elberfeld, Germany.<sup>3</sup> Afterwards he returned to his studies, and to "ponder over this weighty matter." He was given a copy of the New Testament and "became impressed." Then later, perhaps four years after becoming a Rabbi, "He had no peace, his heart was heavy and conscience awoke to the fact that he was a poor sinner. He had no ground upon which hope could be built. The Jewish religion, ritual and laws did not give it to him. In this painful struggle, he read his New Testament and prayed that if Jesus was the true Messiah he should hear his prayer and save him. Such was the result. He felt himself reconciled to God alone through the atoning blood of the Redeemer." When Isaac renounced his "Israelite faith from the pulpit of his synagogue, ... his enraged congregation drove him out" and the police had to be called. And "great enmity" led to a Jewish "plot with the intention to take his life," which doesn't appear to describe the same fracas. Isaac's brother(s) and sisters tried to hold him back at his Christian baptism. Historian Peter Lurvink said (in Dutch), "It was the first and only time that such a thing happened in Aalten." Yet another account has said Rabbi Fles may have converted "through the ministry of Rev. De Cock, the leader of ... the [CRC] secession," which also happened in 1834. Did Isaac seem to have premillennial beliefs? Apparently so, since he often told his family that "the promises of God are unchangeable," and he "desired so heartily the conversion of Israel." This line of thinking had been present in parts of the Dutch Christian society for a long time, and it was held by some of the CRC Seceders. De Cock was a conservative religious reformer who did not share those beliefs.

In 1837, two years after converting, Isaac Fles married Everdina Geurink, a young Christian girl. At that time he worked as a merchant; her family called him an "eggs seller." They had several children including John (Jan) Fles, who was baptized and then made profession of faith at a "special revival" when he was fifteen years old in 1857. He was home schooled at night, along with his siblings and many others. His father taught John the Hebrew language and both testaments of the Bible. He participated in the rapidly developing Dutch Christian Reformed Church's studies and activities. On the proposal of many, he took charge of Bible exercises. They were so popular that the youth group had to rent a meeting house. The minister and

church elders came to see and hear and gave their approval to this work. At the age of nineteen John was selected by lottery to become a soldier. He served in the army of His Majesty William III for 18 months at the garrison in Maastricht where he came into contact with an evangelist who roused John's enthusiasm for Christian service. Initially he wanted to become an evangelist. Once back home he consulted with his pastor, Rev. Derk Breukelaar of Aalten, and continued to study under him.

The 23 year old Mr. Fles went with Rev. Breukelaar to the Classical Assembly (or the Synod) at Varsseveld and was called upon to speak before the gathering. He chose Romans 8:1 for his text. Rev. Jan van Andel, who was already controversial after a premillennial 1863 sermon, and who would later become a noted theologian and writer, was one of the ministers there. The occasion was "something he will never forget," Fles would later recall, "I hardly knew where I was and what I said, and later Ds. van Andel came with me and gave me his hand and assured me that it had gone well." He was embarrassed and didn't know what to say to the minister. Next Fles was assigned to serve at the church in nearby Winterswijk on Sundays, beginning on Ascension Day in 1865. He even preached from the pulpit although he had not been trained or ordained yet. He walked for hours on alternating weeks to also receive instruction from Rev. J. Bulens, who was already a curator for the Kampen seminary. Fles often walked through the beautiful area to scatter the seed of God's Word. "Many a grain fell into earth prepared by God's Spirit and brought forth fruit." Was this bucolic scene amidst farms and fields truly tranquil? No, it was not.

Chiliasm was up for a vote by the separated new denomination in 1863. A decision of "Netherlands Christian Seceder Church" Synod said, "no one is permitted to teach it or spread it," namely, "the doctrine of the return of the Saviour to reign visibly and bodily on earth for 1000 years." Revs. Bulens and Breukelaar objected to their denomination's ruling. Ministers chose differing (often opposing) "directions" and argued with each other to uphold their churches as rationalism and new "scientific" studies of the Bible affected their beliefs. In 1864-65 there was a "pamphlet war ... about election and modern theology," soon resulting in modernist ministers being voted out of office - locally. If Fles was attending Bulens' 1865 preaching sessions from inside a barn in Varsseveld, then he would have been right in the middle of it, perhaps even assisting Rev. Bulens when the minister denounced modernism within the Church. Different Varsseveld area [evangelical meetings on Sunday](#) became much more popular than sparse attendance at the town's modern Reformed church. The 1866 Synod voted on the same matter again (the Seminary's President wanted it to change). However their vote ended with a tie, so the earlier ruling stayed in place.<sup>4</sup>

Winterswijk experienced similar strife; a “Confessional Association” was established (in 1863-64) for those who were against “deviations both in the pulpit and in the church,” and they (along with the Friends of Truth) had a department there. Ds. Kuenen, a Modernist professor teaching the historical-critical study of the Old Testament, helped to establish the “Assembly of Modern Theologians” in 1866. The Separated Church’s minister from 1867 - 1895, after Ds. Breukelaar had gone there to teach catechism for seven years and Fles had guest preached there, was a Chiliast. Ds. Sipkes fought against a modernist attempt “to strip Biblical prophecy of its supernatural character.” He wrote an 1891 book about Chiliasm that is still in Calvin’s library. Ds. Stroes ([see a picture](#)) was an orthodox teacher who lived in Winterswijk, evangelized in 1872, met in groups in 1887 to read from [Jeremiah 23](#) on the “decay of the sunken church,” and left the older denomination to join a new one.

Fles began his studies in 1867 at the Dutch CRC Church’s seminary in Kampen, the Netherlands. A professor from Gelderland who had once been involved in their denomination’s secession went too far at an evangelical conference that August, but the local church council decided not to punish him. A premillennial minister spoke at it, and published a textbook in 1872 which was later removed from their curriculum. The CRC ended their affiliation with another chiliastic Gelderland minister in 1869. A Committee advised against letting that minister and his followers attend the 1872 Synod, one of its members also joined with van Andel and Bulens in Synod’s next vote that year on whether to tolerate premillennialism. No changes were passed.

I’ll add another (translated) summary to perhaps give the “zeitgeist” From Kampen’s “Years 1868-1870,” by J. van Gelderen in his [1987 source article](#):  
"It is our young men in particular who can no more be withdrawn from the influence of the spirit of the times than they can protect themselves from it. ... Therefore we considered it necessary that we should also be allowed an organ in which the truths of the Gospel ... are explained and defended, and the ... Scripture maintained against the attacks of the unbelief and the half-faith ... " “Also in view of the many religious directions which may attract our young students (... the Evangelical, the ethical, the Irvingian, the Darbitic)” ... We seceders should “dare to” “get involved in the struggle(s) of our days.” These statements were quotes from a contemporaneous publication, DE GETUIGENIS, editors H. De Cock (the son at Kampen) and J. Bavinck. A 1904 source says in Dutch, “There is one direction [‘sociale en moderne theologie’] whose increasing power I make no secret of ...”

The author of a recent biography of Herman Bavinck, J. Eglinton, said Bavinck's father was also a CRC minister – one who was “anti-modernist” and “orthodox.” Additionally, he has used the [same quote](#) (I'd found it myself before I realized that). Bavinck went to Kampen in 1873, the school year after Fles graduated. Eglinton joked that it was “A national controversy: teenager leaves conservative seminary for liberal university!” when Herman left a year later to go to the seminary at Leiden. He was conflicted when he met Prof. Kuenen, but soon learned the “critical” approach. David Engelsma wrote [a 2012 article](#) with a story on Rev. Bulens' examination of him. Kuenen published his “polemical” book “against those who rest theological dogmas on the fulfilment of prophecy” (descriptions from [Wikipedia](#)) the next year (1875).

John married Johanna Harmina Bokhorst in January 1873. He kept evangelizing after he graduated that year until they emigrated in the fall, sailing for six stormy weeks on the *SS Rotterdam* of the newly formed Netherlands-America Steamship Company<sup>5</sup> with their baby Anna, and Johanna's mother, Anna Heebink Bokhorst.

Fles had accepted a call from the Cedar Grove, Wisconsin Holland Presbyterian congregation where they knew him.<sup>6</sup> Choosing to serve at a Presbyterian church was unusual or even unprecedented for a Kampen graduate. It was more evangelical, conservative, and premillennial than other ones in the main Dutch denominations. The church “was at first a small, struggling congregation”<sup>7</sup> whose members held “divergent ideas.” The dissension caused some to leave and begin a Dutch Reformed church in 1856. Later under the leadership of Fles, the congregation “enjoyed a remarkable development. Mr. Fles was a young man from the Netherlands with the qualifications and tact requisite for the accomplishment of such a work.” A local minister from the period noted the church was prominent since it had the largest membership among many in the area and because of its “historic associations.”<sup>8</sup>

The hard-working Dutch cleared and fenced the land, raised cattle and sheep, and developed a fishing industry. “After the building of the [steam] railroad ... in 1872, the growth of Cedar Grove increased ... A grist mill with three run of stones was built in 1876 and a [grain] elevator in 1878. ... A cheese factory was in operation in 1880.”<sup>9</sup>

Rev. Fles preached and wrote in their native language. He published a catechism, *The Doctrine of Salvation* in 1878, and a [booklet “Three Bible Lessons”](#) in 1879.<sup>10</sup> Two of the texts in his lessons were from Matthew 24: 29-36, so its topic was about Christ's second coming. The first was titled “The Sign of the Son of Man,” and the second told of “Israel's Restoration.” And from Isaiah 21 was “Night and Tomorrow.”

Fles's catechism book referred to the resurrection of believers and asked, "Will the Lord Jesus during the blessed time of these thousand years reign physically on Earth on David's throne in Jerusalem?" His answer (approximately - Google translated) said thoughts on that were very different but one not decided could still speak about it. Fles's catechism also explained, "Spiritual and material blessing will flow as mighty rivers,"<sup>11</sup> likely showing he meant God's blessings will happen on Earth.

Fles must have read other premillennial writers,<sup>12</sup> and perhaps he knew of William Blackstone by then. Blackstone also wrote his book, Jesus is Coming, in 1878. It was "one of the most widely-read books of his time"<sup>13</sup> and has sold over a million copies.

Dutch folk were certainly interested in discussing the subject. Dr. E. William Kennedy's *"Prairie Premillennialism: ..."*<sup>14</sup> depicts Iowans in Pella meeting during the winter of 1865 – 1866 to study biblical prophecy and a book about the Apocalypse. Conversely, there was a "public declaration made by the Pella Christian Reformed Church in 1872, stating as its first reason for separate existence that it opposed 'the teaching and introduction of Chiliasm, an opinion so commonly permeating the ministry and membership of the Dutch Reformed Church in America.'" Rev. Ede Meinders was the minister at First C.R.C. of Wellsburg, IA, and wrote an amillennial book that year about the Kingdom of Jesus Christ based upon Genesis 49:10.

Iowans from a Pella church asked Fles to send them some of his sermons. Then, after six and a half years in Wisconsin, Fles accepted a call from Pella, Iowa to preach in the church once begun by Rev. Hendrik Scholte (1805-1868), the well-known community founder who led their original group of about 850 people to America. The history of this church is hard to follow; a schism had once led to another offshoot, some branches may have reunited, one branch became a Dutch Reformed church, and then the congregation was independent when Fles arrived. An article from that time said, "This church organization was formed but very recently, the date of organization being June 10, 1880. ... Rev. John Isaac Fles is the present pastor; the membership numbers eighty. The Sunday-school numbers about one hundred and twenty five pupils. The church was originally known as the Fourth Reformed Church."<sup>15</sup> Another article said Rev. Fles was "The Hollander who located his imported parishioners and ... built the Holland Pres. Ch. of Pella, in '81."<sup>16</sup> Fles came there under the "condition that they would join" a Presbyterian denomination. Many questions about those times remain unanswered.<sup>17</sup> Fles left their church in 1882<sup>18</sup> after he received an "earnest and pressing call from Zeeland."<sup>19</sup>

The Fles family had added a boy and two more girls by the time they moved to Michigan. Johanna had already had a child who did not live long, and was pregnant when they moved. That baby girl died of TB a month after her birth. Johanna (she was called Minnie) “shows herself to be a true mother and with her husband does all to bring up their children ‘in the fear of the Lord,’”<sup>20</sup> as the Church required.

The American CRC had begun in 1857, later than the one in Holland, when many people left the Dutch Reformed Church (in both countries). A history of the CRC written by Rev. Henry Beets (1869–1947) explains they once believed, “fellowship in Secret Orders is incompatible with membership in our churches ... even at the cost of losing the cooperation of brethren accepting the same fundamentals.” And he said, “These things led to much unpleasantness, and finally to open rupture.”<sup>21</sup>

What did Rev. Beets mean by “Secret Orders,” and why were they so controversial? The Freemasons and other fraternal organizations required their members to take oaths of secrecy before joining. The CRC denomination’s representative ruling body, the Synod of 1900 said making the oath “obligates ... the concealment of all possible evil” leading to an “irreconcilable conflict” between lodge and Church.

Rev. Henry Dosker, one time Professor of Historical Theology in the seminary at Hope College, described how North Street Christian Reformed Church began: “[In] the dreadful storm of the anti-Masonic agitation ... another church was born. It was wrenched from the mother church, in those days when the Reformed Church in these parts appeared to be rocking to its very foundations; when things were in a continuous state of eruption; when all was unsettled, and the very existence of our Reformed, ecclesiastical life appeared a complicated question, by no means easily settled. On March 17, 1882, forty-four members of the Zeeland Church, offended at the treatment which Masonry received at the hands of the old consistory, organized themselves into an independent church. Later on they joined the old seceders. They now number 200 communicants, and have property valued at \$3,200. They [were] ministered unto ... by Rev. J. I. Fles, formerly of the Presbyterian Church, and since his departure two years ago by the Rev. J. Riemersma, the present incumbent.”<sup>22</sup>

North Street C.R.C.’s records indicate its original members left their community founder, the Rev. Vander Meulen’s (1800-1876) First Reformed Church and began meeting in 1881, and then they organized and applied to join the small but growing CRC in 1882.<sup>23</sup> Then there was another doctrinal controversy when Fles arrived.



The Henry Beets CRC history said, “In 1883, when the Rev. J. I. Fles was admitted to the denomination, he had to retract certain views connected with Chiliasm, expressed in his aforementioned catechism. Drs. A. Kuyper and H. Bavinck had condemned Chiliasm repeatedly as Judaistic.”<sup>24</sup> Chiliasm was an early form of dispensational premillennialism, a doctrine that examines what Biblical prophecy foretells will happen when Christ returns. (Masselink’s 1930 book<sup>25</sup> calls it Jewish.)

The CRC does **not** think Christ will reign on Earth for a thousand years. One of North Street’s first Elders, Hessel Yntema said (see a [saved image](#) published in 1958) that he read sermons from Spurgeon when their pastor was absent. The famous evangelist had believed Jews would return/be restored to their land in a “political restoration” (per an [1864 sermon](#)), and experience a national conversion to Christ. Fles was probably as close as the Zeeland congregation could get to those teachings.

The denomination’s official Acts of Synod from each year were all translated into English and are available online. Those original CRC documents from The Acts Of Synod in 1883 said, “A letter from the Church at Pella, containing a protest against the pastorate of the Rev. J. I. Fles, as the minister of the Zeeland Congregation, because of his expressed opinions not in accord with Holy Writ, in connection with some points of Eschatology, in his Question Book, which after being printed was made public, and these opinions have not been retracted. The decision: The Rev. Fles has satisfied the Classis Holland in this respect.”<sup>26</sup> His Zeeland church was part of Classis Holland at that time. Fles was admitted into the CRC ordained ministry.

“Chiliasm even threatened to bring on a pen-battle in the summer of 1884 between Rev. L. J. Hulst and Rev. J. I. Fles,”<sup>27</sup> according to another Beets history. Fles brought the matter up in a Christian publication early in June. Rev. Hulst, an important CRC minister from Grand Rapids and the President of the 1884 Synod, followed with an article in De Wachter (a denominational periodical) on June 25 saying, “I have not in the least labelled the men who are committed to Chiliasm as unreformed, but I have considered Chiliasm to be contrary to the Reformed theological position.” He also acknowledged Chiliasm had “famous theologians as supporters.” Beets said Hulst “condemned Chiliasm because it taught that Jesus would sit on a literal throne in Jerusalem (not denied by Rev. Fles).”

At the 1884 Synod session, which was held during that same time period, Rev. Fles responded to another objection made against him. He affirmed “that he is in hearty accord” with all the Confessions and Articles of the Church, “and rejected that which

was in conflict with this.” The Synod said his explanation was acceptable, so “it lets the matter rest, as in accord with Classis Holland. The South Holland Consistory, however, continues its protest.”

Then in August that year, “a debate was threatened in De Wachter but within a short time so many articles about ‘the future’ were received by the editor that he deemed it wise to close its columns to this subject.” Some of the writers must have supported Fles’s position. And for some reason the denomination decided its Synod sessions would become biennial, therefore they didn’t need to hold one in 1885!

Even as the voting about him continued for a while, Fles wasn’t exactly lying low during the following year. In August of 1885 he visited and preached at his old Presbyterian church in Pella, Iowa. Soon after, the church inquired to see if he would consider becoming their minister again. In the fall, Fles wrote about an issue that had appeared in the CRC’s De Wachter periodical which said it was “unholy” to be “participating with other church societies in praying with each other, preaching for each other, etc.”<sup>28</sup> The CRC Church was the most insular of all the Dutch denominations, but Fles was definitely an ecumenist. “I want to be able to pray with all the believers, whoever they are, [even] to Baptists and Darbyites [followers of John Darby, the Plymouth Brethren].” It was “marvelous” to talk about salvation with people who might disagree over “small partitions.” (Brummelkamp, the Gelderland professor had once said something similar, and van Dijk, the chiliastic minister from Gelderland who’d been deposed in 1869, considered “substantive affinity” more important than “formal ecclesiastical boundaries.”) Fles may very well have done just that in Pella, since there were not any Brethren in Zeeland. He then said, “We pray with our Congregation for blessing not only for us but for all three of the Church denominations in Zeeland ... that there may be peace and love among the people.” Then several letters to the paper commented about Fles’s article and cited Bible verses either for or against it.

In June, 1886 the same consistory from South Holland, Illinois appealed the decision again, this time saying, “One of his three lectures uses an expression which might lead to the conclusion on non-recognition of the divinity of Christ ... all such expressions [are] out of order, and dangerous besides, and though they were not meant to be taken amiss, they were nevertheless stated so they might be.” This Synod replied, “Since the Rev. Fles has even stated very clearly at this session, that he believed in the divinity of Christ with all his heart, and as his preaching has always shown; the Consistory of South Holland should now rest in this explanation.”<sup>29</sup> The

minister who objected, Rev. Ede Meinders, and his church decided to leave the CRC denomination soon afterwards, though he continued to dialog with his opponents.<sup>30</sup>

Fles published an article about the restoration of Israel in the popular *The Volksvriend* Iowan newspaper on July 8, 1886, right after that Synod session.<sup>31</sup> *"Israel's Present and Future"* was on Jeremiah 30:17 and said, "Israel will be so despised by the nations that it will not be looked after to help them out: no one cares for her. ... From there she will come to light in prayer, confess, believe and walk. You see, the Lord will do to Israel, as He does to every human being ... It will be saved from unbelief and all sin. It will come to the faithful embrace of Jesus Christ, the only Savior from sins. It will be restored in national freedom and as a people." Another one in September was on 1 Thess. 5:20. *"Do not treat the prophecies with contempt."* Prophetic Scripture gives strength to faithfully endure this world and it points to a blissful future; "Christ's Church will rule with Christ on a renewed earth." In December was *"This world is going to perish"* from 2 Peter 3: 5-9. Fles warned against "those who believe the Bible, but took away the promises of His future. They also do not seriously conduct Scripture studies about these revealed truths."

The next 1888 Synod considered collaborating with the United Presbyterian Church and sending a missionary to Egyptian Muslims. Rev. J. Kruidenier (a Dutchman) "went thither in 1889," supported financially by the "Gereformeerde Zending" committee (perhaps involving the Reformed Church too) of which Fles was President, along with church elders as the secretary and treasurer.<sup>32</sup> The CRC's support and Fles's group were soon ended, although the mission continued. The CRC also formed another Missions committee in 1888 (regarded as the origin of their World Missions), but wouldn't send its own missionaries overseas until much later. The Reformed Church denomination already had missions in a number of countries.

The seven years at North Street "flew by" and were "most blessed and enjoyable."<sup>33</sup> Their youngest child Benjamin was born in 1884. The congregation installed a clock tower and engraved bell in 1885. It still rings every Sunday (with a pull rope). Fles wrote a nice sermon for Zeeland's 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary memorial celebration in 1887.<sup>34</sup> Anna Bokhorst died and was buried there in 1887. A family story thought Rev. Fles also preached on street corners to Zeeland's general public. He didn't want to leave; "Not without a struggle [it probably means in his heart], he took this call" to serve as a pastor in Muskegon next. Other denominations, including a breakaway evangelical church, had also sent calls. All three of Rev. Fles's postings later asked if he might return to their churches, which Beets considered "quite remarkable," likely because

they were so different from one another. The three churches that Beets listed must have recognized and largely agreed with their minister's premillennial beliefs.

Dominie (as clergymen were called) Fles preached the "Gospel of the Cross" at First Muskegon C.R.C. from 1890 to 1908, and very many came during these years to the confession of faith. The most memorable event that occurred was the great fire throughout the city on May 16, 1891. The church, the parsonage, and the school were reduced to ashes in the inferno, but by God's good hand were soon rebuilt.<sup>35</sup> In 1892 after the fire, "The congregation consists of 350 families, a total of about 1,300 persons."<sup>36</sup> Their new church building was "beautiful and large."<sup>37</sup> Although three other CRC churches were added nearby afterwards, the First C.R.C. membership continued to grow. The congregation was later called the largest in the city and one of the largest within the entire CRC denomination as well.<sup>38</sup>

Church records show Rev. Fles used to preach three different sermons on Sundays. During the first month at their new church building, one Sunday included "Jacob's Peril" in the morning, "The Christian Prayer" in the afternoon, and "Transfiguration of our Lord, Jesus Christ" in the evening. Another one from that October, "Jehovah the Light, Salvation, and Strength of His People against the Enemies" could have been from Psalm 27. A couple of those sermons appear to have had Old Testament prophetic themes telling what will happen to the Jewish people.

Fles believed Jewish salvation to be so significant, and so necessary for God's plan that he helped persuade the Christian Reformed Church to begin a mission to the Jews. His CRC obituary said, "Himself belonging to the chosen people of God, he believed firmly in their future, and aroused much interest in the cause in the hearts of many of our people." Henry Beets said Fles "pleaded touchingly for the cause."<sup>39</sup>

Historian Robert Swierenga says, "The Christian Reformed Home Mission Board, through the agency of the Rev. John Fles, head of the Jewish Mission Board, contributed \$500 – 2,500 annually to the Chicago Hebrew Mission." (This end note also goes back to Holland.)<sup>40</sup> Actually Fles was the treasurer of the CRC Jewish Mission Committee from 1892 – 1920,<sup>41</sup> and its support for the Chicago Hebrew Mission began then as well. Henry Beets said of his CRC, "The Chicago Hebrew Mission is largely supported by this denomination."<sup>42</sup> And the CRC says of him, "Rev. Beets was highly committed to mission work and was an ecumenist."<sup>43</sup>

A Methodist layman, William Blackstone (1841 – 1935) had founded the ecumenical (of different church denominations) Chicago Hebrew Mission in 1887. He helped Dwight Moody establish a Bible Institute nearby around that same time.<sup>44</sup> Then Blackstone visited Palestine in 1889, held a conference for Christians and Jews in 1890, and petitioned President Harrison in 1891 (McKinley signed it) and later also President T. Roosevelt when a wave of pogroms broke out in 1903 and President Woodrow Wilson in 1916 for “sympathy with the oppressed Jews of Russia” ... “and to consider ... the possibility of opening a way for their restoration to Palestine.”<sup>45</sup>

Rev. Scott Hoezee and Chris Meehan’s book, Flourishing in the Land: A Hundred-Year History of Christian Reformed Missions in North America, says, “It seems odd that the Jews, hardly the most obvious among potential targets of evangelism, captured the imagination of the denomination” especially since it was “one of the earliest mission interests” when “the denomination was itself quite young [with] precious little missionary activity,” acknowledging Fle’s “significant early voice.”<sup>46</sup>

The Synod of 1892 document<sup>47</sup> said (Fle’s) Classis Muskegon initiated a request “to support the above mentioned Mission” and “to stir up the Congregations to collect for Jewish Mission Work,” and “to name a Committee” which would receive and distribute the donations coming in for this purpose. Then the Committee was formed; its members all came from that Classis (group of local churches). Fle was named the Treasurer, “... and any monies for this fund should be sent to him.”

Fle spoke for CRC Jewish Mission Committee (it “reports thru the Rev. Fle”), and his report back to the next 1894 Synod had this account written in the third person; “The Treasurer has given addresses here and there, in connection with the work among the Jews, about the darkness in which they find themselves, about the Mission work among them, so difficult, but also so full of blessing concerning God’s promises, which leads us to expect great things from Israel.”<sup>48</sup> “We are giving attention to the needs and the miseries of the people of Israel.” First Muskegon C.R.C. organized a five cent “Society for Israel.” Fle wrote an “earnest petition” in the CRC’s periodical, “informing all the Congregations of this project.” But how did they react to it? “Because of the neglect of larger Congregations,” the Mission Committee also accepted donations from various societies such as the Young Men’s society, and from individuals – some of whom belonged to the Reformed Church denomination. The Committee supported Jewish missions in NY, Chicago, and two in the Netherlands. A Jewish former Rabbi who had converted in 1891 and led another mission in Boston was among those requesting information from the Committee.

The Chicago Hebrew Mission described Fles's contribution this way; "His activities were a boon to the little struggling mission in its early days when friends were few and funds were scanty." And he secured both for the Mission with "his pleasing personality."<sup>49</sup> He gave them "comfort and cheer in the pioneer days of our Mission." They said his letters and prayers "greatly encouraged us ... to press on and do greater things [than] we have yet done to bring the light to blinded Israel."

Fles did more than offer encouragement and financial support. The Chicago Hebrew Mission's quarterly journal, *The Jewish Era* mentions the Revs. Fles and Riemersma each gave a testimony about Jesus there for the mission on or around Sept. 12, 1893. Fles probably took the train from Muskegon; railroads reduced rates for ministers. Riemersma had transferred to the nearby First Chicago C.R.C. church. That issue described an "opening session of Jewish congress"<sup>50</sup> with Rabbi Kohler. Kohler spoke at the Parliament of Religions held then in conjunction with the famous Chicago (Columbian) World's Fair.<sup>51</sup> The big conference was held "center stage," as part of "the most elaborate display of religious cosmopolitanism yet seen on the continent."<sup>52</sup> Kohler sought to "prove how close Judaism and Christianity stand to each other." Assorted conferences at the Fair discussed many serious new issues.<sup>53</sup> D. L. Moody held huge revival meetings under a circus tent. The Fair also showcased fantastic exhibitions and futuristic inventions. I bet Fles went to the World's Fair, but have seen no evidence to suggest they rode on the first Ferris wheel<sup>54</sup> while there!

Professor Yaakov Ariel calls the Chicago Hebrew Mission, "The largest mission to the Jews in America during the 1880s to 1910s."<sup>55</sup> He says, "The impetus for the establishment of the mission and its explicit theology was the dispensationalist messianic belief and its understanding of the Jewish people and their role in history. This was unmistakably revealed in ... its journal, the *Jewish Era*. The magazine regularly published articles on the emerging Zionist movement and the development of the Jewish settlement in Palestine, which it interpreted as 'signs of the time' indicating the present era was ending and the messianic age was at hand."<sup>56</sup>

The CRC had been distributing their offerings among several Jewish missions since 1892.<sup>57</sup> The CRC Acts of Synod in 1896 relates that the Rev. Marcusson, a Jewish convert to Christ and the Superintendent of the Chicago Hebrew Mission, spoke to them in person quoting John 4:22, "Salvation is from the Jews" and adding, "They have rejected the Lord, but at some time they shall again worship Him. Therefore help us to bring Christ to the Jews."<sup>58</sup>

Synod's reply said their President "thanks him" ... "and assures him of our support [hearts] and our prayers. This is according to the prophecy ... that God will fulfill his prophecy." The Dutch version of this section makes its meaning plainer, "according to the Prophecy, God will even fulfill His promises to Israel." But then later the Synod said why their support was qualified, "Our Church would be more in sympathy with his [Marcusson's] work if it were conducted along more ecclesiastical lines."

Rev. Riemersma said the CRC Jewish Mission Committee was "appointed to labor in Israel's behalf." But the Henry Beets history gave several somewhat different Biblical and historical reasons why the CRC thought it was their duty to perform the mission work; one was, "God's decree also embraces a number of Jews, Romans 11:25-28."<sup>59</sup> Premillennialists interpret this profound passage more prophetically and reach a broader conclusion than Beets since verse 26 says, "And so all Israel shall be saved."

Beets' summary of the CRC's amillennial view reflected their reaction to the events told later in this story, and it is still their Church's position; "Pre-millennial premises almost inevitably lead to developments out of line with sound Calvinistic principles." He elaborates on the following page, "the Pre-millennial view, a literal interpretation of prophecy, is subversive to the Christian Creed ... dividing what God united ... His one people, of the Old as well as of the New Testament dispensation, His one Vineyard although in charge of different keepers; His one Olive Tree."<sup>60</sup>

Fles replied for the Committee to the Synod, "Permit us to recommend the [Chicago] Mission among the Jewish people very strongly." And, "Your Committee hopes and prays that the good will in this among our people shall in no way diminish, and the advice to the Synod is that it continues the course it has been following." Then he repeated the verse from John 4 and referred to Romans 11, "Although ... [the Jews] now are broken off because of unbelief, nevertheless God's promises and his calling remains unchanged, and they will again be grafted into one olive branch." And, "The time will come when the Lord will direct his aid to his Zion, and at that time the cities of Jerusalem shall be rebuilt, and He will then return His people to His land and they will settle there, and then He will be a God to them, and they, His people. Tell the Brothers, Ammi, [from Hosea 2:23 and is in Romans 9:25, Hebrew for 'My people'] and the sisters, Ruchama, ['Who hath –or shall- received loving mercy'] that they will surely be fulfilled. But therefore must the Gospel be preached, so they may learn to know him, who was the hope of the fathers, the wish of the Heathen, who is the Saviour of the world, our Lord Jesus Christ."

In an article he wrote that year (1896) for the Chicago Hebrew Mission's journal, *The Jewish Era*, Rev. Fles said, "Jesus ... wishes that the church, the believers of the Gentiles, shall know and never forget that the Lord shall yet do great things for his chosen people." And a main point, "We preach and pray and labor to save some of them, but they are only the first-fruits of the great coming harvest. To convert the people, the nation, is the work of Christ, the Anointed One of the Father. He shall convert Israel to Himself." Fles ends by saying that The Lord will ever bless these missions "until all His promises are fulfilled. The powers of darkness will be destroyed, the church glorified, Israel brought to Christ, and the whole earth be filled with His glory, and the conclusion of David's Psalms will reach its fulfillment: 'Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord. Praise ye the Lord.' Hallelujah!"<sup>61</sup>

The next CRC Synod continued to voice their concerns in 1898 by repeating what they had said previously about churchly "ecclesiastical lines," and adding "the [Mission's] Committee was informed of this." At that time "The Committee consisted of W. E. Blackstone, the Rev. J. Riemersma, and the Rev. E. P. Goodwin, D.D."<sup>62</sup> Rev. Riemersma had been North Street Church's minister after Rev. Fles left. The Synod added Fles and another CRC elder from Chicago, Mr. Simon Dekker as Board members or trustees of the Chicago Mission in order to "use their influence for a gradual change into our type of ecclesiastical life." The Synod drafted a doctrinal statement for the Mission Board to use as a declaration of faith.<sup>63</sup> Then they noted the Mission "has consented."

Hoezee and Meehan's missions book said Rev. Fles pled to do something for the 100,000 Jews in nearby Chicago in 1897, before "it was finally decided ... to focus [all] the support on the Chicago Hebrew Mission" in 1898. The Mission apparently had to agree with the CRC's requests in order for that to happen. Their book also said, "some voices recommended ... [the Church] withdraw its cooperative efforts from Christians with such dubious theological credentials."

Fles and the Jewish Mission Committee told the Synod in 1898, "It is our firm conviction that the Church was in harmony with God's will, and acted according to God's Word, when she assumed the work of this branch of God's Vineyard. Hence we whole-heartedly continue to recommend and call Synod with all the earnestness that is in us: Brothers, don't forget Jacob's dispersed, don't forget the Jews! He who blesses Israel, shall be blessed."



Fles quoted from Ezekiel 34:6, Isaiah 54:7, and Romans 11; the passages all fit together to assert that “Jacob's straying children” have been scattered like sheep, but Jehovah with great mercy and compassion will gather her in again. “Jerusalem shall not always be as a forsaken one. ... The fullness of the Gentiles shall come in, and so all Israel shall be saved. This is believed by our people, and therefore they with their prayers add their free-will offerings,” he said while attempting to persuade the CRC church leaders to consider the legitimacy of what some in the laity believed. Rev. Fles’s church had heard the same prophetic Bible passages when collections were raised specifically to support Jewish missions, but who knows how many other churches received similar teachings from their own minister.

Other Dutch denominations’ congregations donated to the CRC Jewish mission again that year; Rev. Hulst’s old church (that was before their 1882 split – it didn’t take long for him to become a President of CRC Synod), the Fourth Reformed of Grand Rapids congregation contributed, so did a Holland Presbyterian church in Baldwin, Wisconsin and the First Reformed Church of Orange City, Iowa.

Dr. E. William Kennedy has written several Orange City histories<sup>64</sup> that show some members at First Reformed Church had premillennial beliefs. One leader, “Dominie Antonie J. Betten, [was] a premillennialist, biblicist Scholte disciple, who had come from Pella to retire in Orange City.” Betten had come to America with Scholte, later he went to and occasionally preached at the First Reformed Church there, and “[he] had frequently published pieces in De Volksvriend and elsewhere promoting dispensational premillennialism.” In one of his articles from 1888, Betten objected to the “spiritualizing of biblical prophecy.” He was responding to a local minister’s long amillennial series. Betten’s son was the editor of the newspaper from 1885 – 1891. An 1895 retrospective from the same popular Orange City newspaper said Fles’s contributions were “gladly read,” and that he had been “a help.” Kennedy said his articles “presented world, national, and church related events from a prophetic perspective.” They undoubtedly prompted donations from sympathetic supporters.

The arrangement between the CRC denomination and its Jewish Mission Committee required renewing at every Synod session, at least at first and maybe throughout the mission’s existence. Therefore Rev. Fles regularly prodded the CRC in his distinctive way, asking them to continue supporting the Chicago Hebrew Mission throughout the years as the Jewish Mission Committee made their report each time the Synod met, with Fles sometimes solely signing it as Treasurer.<sup>65</sup>

Meanwhile back in Pella, Iowa, one of the churches where Rev. Fles once served previously had re-claimed their old name and denomination by 1897. Rev. Zeilstra's church history says that was when "the withdrawal of 109 members from the Fourth Reformed to the Second Christian Reformed amounted to between one-half and two-thirds of the membership of Fourth Church."<sup>66</sup> It repeatedly says how "the influence of Scholte" had shaped this church, and that Scholte's beliefs once included dispensational premillennialism. A history of the Fourth Reformed church said, "The doctrinal validity of this theory appears to have been the single most potent issue leading to the 1897 schism in the 4th RC."<sup>67</sup> The Sunday school teachers were the faction that taught premillennialism. The group led by the church elders felt harassed when the teachers began to press their "unsound views." Discord grew, "enmity broke loose," and then conflict included a court injunction and an incident where "Scholte's followers" locked the church to keep out the elders' "dissident group" one Sunday morning! That group voted to secede and they joined the CRC upon agreeing to reject the "fellowship of the lodge." The rest found another pastor, Rev. J. Poot, who had served with some Reformed Church congregations and also ministered the same breakaway evangelical church which Fles once turned down.

"Rev. Poot seems to have made efforts to influence the religious divide in Pella [concerning Darby and Scofield's premillennial theory and "timeline of events that will occur"]. A year later, on August 14, 1899, Rev. Poot was the main speaker at a local conference. He requested all preachers to attend ... His subject was 'The Millennium.'" This source speculated about what Rev. Poot believed and may have said at the conference, and then it says, "The RCA preferred not to take a stand on this conflict, claiming there were no clear guidelines in Reformed Church doctrine about this theory." Poot soon left the Pella Fourth Reformed Church in 1900, perhaps because of the discord or due to his "evangelic leanings." "[He] thought highly of Mr. Moody." I wonder if he attended another Chicago Hebrew Mission (C. H. M.) [Prophecy Conference](#) at Moody's church in October of 1899?

Miss Minnie Fles, age 20, played the First Muskegon church's new pipe organ to open a young people's program in 1901. Rev. Fles prayed, and then the choir sang "Zion Awake, Thy Strength Renew."<sup>68</sup> Two student preachers who had roomed at the Christian Reformed Calvin Seminary together both married into the Fles family in Muskegon in 1905. Cornelius De Leeuw married Hermina (Minnie). John Hiemenga married Everdena (Dena). Oldest son Isaac moved back to Muskegon to help his brother run a clothing store near the church. He married Lutena Boonstra in 1906,

and my Grandpa John Fles was born in 1908. Benjamin married Della Haan in 1909; his father officiated (per FamilySearch).

In 1901, the Dutch Reformed Church (in America – the RCA) denomination decided they would begin a mission to the Jews. “Our people are disposed to contribute for this work.”<sup>69</sup> Soon after graduating from their seminary, Rev. Cornelius Kuyper was the main one of two ministers who would receive, disburse, and account for donations toward those missionary efforts “according to their best judgment.” The RCA mission became official in 1906 when receipts were \$740 and \$579 was sent to Jewish missions in New York, Brooklyn, Pittsburgh, and Chicago.

The 1902 CRC Synod had representatives who saw a need “to have [a] better confessional [or doctrinal] basis in ... [the Chicago Jewish mission] work.” Synod still intended “to guide [them]” and “to have one of our men placed on the [C. H. M.] Administrative Committee.” However if the CRC’s Jewish Mission Committee found that to be impossible, they said, then “it is instructed to devise a plan for a mission of our own church, with our own workers, or to cooperate with another Church of acknowledged Reformed Confession.” Fles thanked the other two Dutch denominations that had donated - the “Reformed and Presbyterian Churches, who have so unequivocally shown their cooperation.” His response included this admonition; “Brethren, do not forget Israel, and Israel's God will not forget you.”<sup>70</sup> The CRC Jewish Committee was not focused only on Chicago; they also sent two New York Jewish missions three hundred dollars, the Cleveland Hebrew Mission fifty, and thirty to a converted Jew who had gone to Kampen Seminary when Fles was there. The Rev. Eliezer Kropveld’s Jewish Mission began in the “Separated” CRC in 1875, and was eventually supported by both denominations in the Netherlands. I don’t think the Committee ever devised a plan like the one that Synod requested.

Fles spoke in Dutch on “Our Mission to the Jews” at the 50<sup>th</sup> Jubilee Anniversary of the CRC in April of 1907. He reminded the audience how respected Dutch Protestant theologians like the pietist Wilhelmus á Brakel and many others had long advocated that “Israel's future is always great.” He said, “It is almost incomprehensible why other churches don’t show more interest.” Then he gave details of how the work at the Chicago Hebrew Mission was going “exceedingly well.”

He showed real empathy and a desire for the Church to improve social conditions as he explained at the Jubilee Anniversary how the converted “Jews who believe” faced “difficulties” with their neighbors and relatives, and were “fired from their

jobs,” leaving them in “misery and poverty.” “Out of the ten cases, there are nine where this happens.” So to “not ...continue to help [them] ...would indeed be merciless ..., yes cruel.” Fles pleaded to the large audience of CRC leaders and church goers, “However, this is where our influence is felt and appreciated by all who have ... come. Please do it ...” (Quotes translated via Google.) The publication<sup>71</sup> said Fles was “in many respects the soul of this work in our Church.” Rev. Groen, who was the minister of the large Eastern Ave. C.R.C. in Grand Rapids, Henry Beets, theologian Louis Berkhof, and other familiar names from the CRC past also spoke.

The 1908 Synod session was held in Muskegon, Michigan at Rev. Fles’s church, possibly to offer support or even to show concern. Louis Meyer, a Jewish convert and the field secretary of the Chicago Hebrew Mission, attended it and spent two weeks there that summer. Perhaps that was when Meyer said to Fles, “The Chicago Hebrew Mission ... has grown and grown even though she stands under adversity and contempt.” Rev. Hiemenga was on the 1908 Synod’s pre-advice Committee which counseled exerting as much influence as possible to lead Jewish Missions in “the Reformed ecclesiastical stream.” Fles’s three page report<sup>72</sup> to Synod included financial figures of receipts and disbursements, declared “a mission of our own is not feasible,” warned the Church that withdrawing their support would be a “calamity” for the Mission, and expressed the surety that “All Israel shall be saved,” and from Isaiah, “For the Lord will have mercy upon Zion, and He shall yet choose Jerusalem.”

“Ds. Fles was climbing in years [He was 66], so after consulting with church council and receiving their approval he went to take a well-deserved rest, saying farewell to the congregation in Nov. 1908,”<sup>73</sup> said the Muskegon CRC history (in Dutch). His farewell sermon included a verse from Acts 20: 27, “For I have not hesitated to proclaim to you the whole will of God.” In September ’08 his church said, “Several years ago Mr. Fles nearly suffered a breakdown and many of his congregation advised his retirement as they feared his health might give way.” In other words he didn’t retire when he experienced the earlier warning. In 1908 the CRC periodical printed a description of First Muskegon, “This church has always been very loyal to the denomination. May it stand and flourish till the Master comes.”

Rev. Fles “filled local pulpits a number of times” in Grand Rapids during his emeritus retirement period, and then in October of 1911 he preached at Coldbrook C.R.C.’s new building to say “farewell to his Grand Rapids friends”<sup>74</sup> before moving to Pella, Iowa. Rev. Hiemenga was Coldbrook’s minister, so Fles and Johanna (?) probably stayed at the parsonage with Dena and their granddaughter. Fles had

accepted a call for them to return to Pella and the same strife torn (in 1897) church they left in 1882. Their daughter Minnie had just moved to Pella. Her third child, also named Hermine, was born Oct. 1910. The church members must have known what Fles had been advocating; thus it appears they didn't have a problem with him.

The history of Pella's Second Christian Reformed Church said of their minister, "His ministry was richly blessed of the Lord. He labored with devotion and in an able manner. The membership once more increased. It was also during his ministry that interest was awakened in the cause of Christian education." Fles was one of the author/editors of the joint CRC and RCA missionary magazine from 1912-1915, which was based in Orange City, Iowa at that time. Fles wrote a column and other articles in it about Jewish missions and "the conversion of the Jews," presenting powerful arguments (one from Dr. Bavinck recognized the Jewish mission in Amsterdam was fulfilling prophecy) and asking both denominations for financial and moral support.<sup>75</sup>

In the 1912 session held in [Roseland Chicago](#), the CRC Synod first expressed (through Rev. Groen) a desire for "the welfare of Zion" and Jerusalem, then they considered beginning the CRC's own Mission to the Jews because "a mission that proceeds from a society never gains the full support of our people. And, if this work is done by our own Church, then it proceeds along purer lines, and then there will be more sympathy gained among our people for this cause." And so they advised, "In Chicago attempt to take over the Northwest Branch of the Chicago Hebrew Mission."

A separate "Committee With Reference To Jewish Missions" had influenced that decision. Was Rev. De Leeuw on it? He didn't sign their six page statement (p. 97), which described the CRC's motivations. Reason number three was this: "The big question is whether the work is carried on in a Reformed spirit or in a more unreformed, and this depends to a great extent upon the question what personnel is working in this field of missions. As long as we do not have our own mission, it will be impossible to **control** the mission personnel, and we shall have to be satisfied to offer our support to the efforts that are more Methodistic and Baptist than Reformed." That statement may require analysis, but were they comparing those denominations' premillennialism to the Mission's message about "the promises"?

Then Fles responded to the other advising Committee by noting the Chicago Hebrew Mission's success and asking, "Why should anyone want to disturb this work? What gain would there be to move this work elsewhere? ... Your Committee

earnestly requests the support of the Church for the Chicago Hebrew Mission.”<sup>76</sup> He was the sole signer of his committee’s objection.

Rev. Louis Meyer of the Chicago Hebrew Mission was an influential premillennial evangelist for Jewish “acceptance of Christ and restoration to Divine favor.”<sup>77</sup> Meyer spoke in Grand Rapids at an ecumenical local conference of more than one hundred ministers and at Rev. Beets’ English-speaking LaGrave Avenue C.R.C. either before or in 1907. A local Rabbi attended both events. Fles probably went to that conference. Meyer spoke at a landmark 1910 missionary conference in Scotland where Lord Balfour was its President. “It would be a strange reading of the New Testament that would exclude the Jews from the sphere of missionary work,”<sup>78</sup> their magazine (likely it was he) said. Meyer also went to the dramatic 1912 Synod session, speaking on the Mission’s behalf and heartily thanking the CRC for supporting them. (So he apparently didn’t object when the denomination attempted to change the Mission!)

Meyer edited both the *Jewish Era* and most of the essays in The Fundamentals, which was called “the important literary project defending orthodox biblical faith” (from an increasingly popular “Liberal Protestantism”) at his Centennial Memorial. The essays were published in Chicago from 1910 through 1915. Meyer died in ’13 from meningitis,<sup>79</sup> although some blamed “overwork, constant travel, and his desire to overcome attacks and criticisms from so many quarters.” Revs. Beets and Fles eulogized him in the *Jewish Era*.

Former Calvin College professor, Dr. George Marsden’s history of Fundamentalism said the essay books kept premillennial teachings in the background “in order to establish a respectable and self-consciously conservative coalition against modernism.”<sup>80</sup> The books came to “represent the movement at a moderate and transitional state before it was reshaped and pushed to extremes by the intense heat of controversy.” They later became an important symbol for the “emerging movement.” The CRC was affected by those on both sides of the theological spectrum, but often sought to follow a way between them, which included moving back and forth on some issues.

The CRC began to solely support another Jewish mission in New Jersey in 1913. Then in 1914 the Synod (again meeting at the church in Roseland, Chicago) said, “It is not possible to obtain part of the Hebrew Mission in Chicago, since the Board rejected the request.”<sup>81</sup> Rev. Hiemenga was on the CRC’s Jewish Mission Committee in 1914. Rev. Fles’s son, Isaac Fles, examined the “Heathen Mission” (a separate CRC

mission to Indians) financial books. Disbursements for that mission were over \$31,000. The CRC gave \$3,000 to the Chicago Hebrew Mission, and \$1,025 to the New Jersey Hebrew Mission. The Synod said they should appoint someone who could “devote all his time” to all of their missions.

Fles said to the 1914 Synod, “For twenty years ... the love of Christ pressed me not only to pray for this people ... but also that I might do something towards their salvation. It was a work of love. The gratification was the faith in the promises of Jehovah, that he has chosen this people and not cast them off, and that once again he shall make himself glorious in Israel. ... Herewith your Treasurer in a happy frame of mind, places his work in the hands of Synod, trusting that the Gospel proclamation to that ancient people prayerfully shall be prosecuted with joy and zeal.” He recited a verse from a hymn on Psalm 130, “He shall redeem His people, His chosen Israel.”

Fles met Rev. Harry Bultema (1884 - 1952) in Pella around 1913 or so. Bultema said in his autobiography<sup>82</sup> it was then that he first began to question the standard views of the (Christian) Reformed Church with respect to the future of the nation of Israel.

“When I was in Peoria, the Rev. Fles was in Pella for at least the first two years. We once had a pastoral conference at the home of his son-in-law, the Rev. De Leeuw. [De Leeuw was then the minister at First Pella C.R.C.] ... They had asked the old patriarch to give conclusive proof that Israel would be restored. His father, having been a Rabbi in Holland, knew Israel’s past, present, and future as few others did, and he believed and preached and taught Israel’s future, though always in a general and never in a specific way. I was convinced at the time that God was not all through with Israel, as many believed, but I did not know how, why, when, and wherefore. I was greatly interested to hear what our revered Father Fles would say on this important theme, so close to his own heart. He quietly read the brief chapter of Hosea 3 ...” then he explained Israel had broken their covenant by once worshipping other gods and after that by rejecting “Calvary’s perfect Lamb,” and Fles’s lesson continued until he said, ““Now listen then, brethren, to the Word of God in verse 5. ... Afterward, i.e., after this long period of Israel’s desolation, which is still going on, the children of Israel shall return, and seek Jehovah their God ... When? In the latter days, the day of Christ’s coming and Kingdom.’

After the venerable old man was through, his son-in-law tried to tear his presentation all apart. Taking the figure from [Abraham] Kuyper, he exclaimed, ‘Israel is the fire-hose, and when God has quenched the burning world, then He

burns the hose.’ All the other preachers agreed with Rev. De Leeuw and all agreed that Israel had sinned so terribly that God, in wrath, had put Israel forever aside. Christ was the end of Israel and His Church had now fully and finally taken Israel’s place in God’s plan.” Then Bultema responded, “‘It is not at all to the point what Kuyper, Bavinck, and Warfield may have said, but the point is what God has said in this Word right here, eloquently brought before us.’ ... They said the exegesis was wrong, but not one made an attempt to prove it wrong.

Rev. Fles was grieved, and said ... ‘You preachers gladly believe in Israel’s past and present sins and miseries, but you will not believe in God’s future mercy for them. I take both as equally true and righteous altogether.’ Soon after that he laid down his ministry in Pella and became an honored member of his former charge in Muskegon where he had labored for eighteen and a half years.”

The CRC ministers were applying an interpretation that Dr. R. Kendall Soulen calls “the ‘punitive’ version of supersessionism,” one which said the Jews “had forfeited their covenant because they had rejected the Messiah, Jesus.” Soulen explains the general version taught, “After Christ came, however, the special role of the Jewish people came to an end and its place was taken by the church, the new Israel.”<sup>83</sup>

I am not sure of the exact timing that year, but Fles was condemning the CRC’s (and other denominations’) viewpoint in his 1913 study of Romans 11: 5 -10 from this [missionary magazine article](#).<sup>84</sup> His words had turned sharper, “... those so-called Christian churches and congregations, leaving and losing the truth ... concealed confused ... the form kept, but the content changed ... there are so many who hate such words of David and Paul ... Woe, woe to those chaff, and happy will be those who are His grain.” (A Biblical metaphor; the saved and unsaved will be separated.) His column the following month opposed supersessionism’s replacement theology, “Canaan supposedly means Heaven. ... Israel supposedly means the church, etc.” The missionary magazine also covered political Zionism in 1913; one ancillary section by Fles was titled “Palestina voor [for] de Joden [Jews].” It cited London’s Jewish Chronicle’s quotes from early Zionist Nahum Sokolow’s speech in New York that fall. Another article told of Jerusalem at the beginning of the war and asked if prophecies in Deuteronomy are being fulfilled; you can read the article’s answer in the end note.

An important “Prophetic Conference” was held in Chicago at the Moody Bible Institute in February 1914, “on the eve of World War I.” “William B. Riley [elsewhere called ‘the chief executive of the fundamentalist movement’] specifically referred to



the Zionist movement ... [it] was 'the beginnings of fulfillment for ... prophecies.'" Rev. Cyrus Scofield was there as well, saying, "In every prophetic description of the Kingdom, the re-gathering of dispersed Israel is prominent."<sup>85</sup> Dr. James Gray and Rev. A. Gaebelien were other noteworthy leaders there. One historian said, "At no previous conference had the details of dispensationalism been laid out so explicitly and dogmatically,"<sup>86</sup> likely referring to their ten point statement of belief. The addresses preached were also published. Beets said Fundamentalism began there.<sup>87</sup>

Rev. Henry Beets took over as the author/editor of the Jewish mission section of the missionary magazine after Fles left in June, 1915. Written in Dutch, his first column's rhetorical style used hyperbole – contrarian, exaggerated statements from a fictional character in a popular Christian book. "I want to share some of my objections," said Uncle Bartel," who then presented pointed arguments about ineffective missions to Jews (with an example from a CRC booklet), described punitive replacement theology, said Jews could find Christ in the Old Testament if they read those "dear places," and suggested Reformed people didn't care about those missions. (Topics the original character did not address.) Beets answered in a more restrained manner, explaining why there was "relatively little sympathy among the leaders of the Reformed people, a fact which is not in their favor as the Bible speaks of the loved ones for the fathers' sake," giving Bavinck's numbers of converted Jews, mentioning the "great blessing" converted Jews had been in Dutch history – an additional page was glued in holding names and details, the large number of Christians who had Jewish blood in them, and recognizing Isaiah 66:9 and Zechariah 8: 20-23 verses indicating there "will be a more widespread meaning [for Jews] in the last days" than the CRC usually thought.

That fall *The Jewish Era* states there was another interesting "Conference on behalf of Israel held in Chicago November 16-19, 1915, under the auspices of the Chicago Hebrew Mission. The meetings were held in the great New Moody Tabernacle."<sup>88</sup> Several thousand people attended each day. The focus was "looking to the restoration of the land to Israel in the final adjustments at the close of the war; and the desperate spiritual needs of this people not only now, but in the future, when this country should become the home of multitudes of the 'tribes of the wandering foot.'" Blackstone and Scofield were both on the program but were too ill to attend. I do not see Fles being present; however Henry Beets did speak there. His topic was "Our indebtedness to Israel."<sup>89</sup> Another speaker was described in the journal similarly, as one "who for many years has emphasized the Christian's obligation to the Jews." Rev. Cornelius Kuyper, the Reformed Church pastor in Cedar Grove, WI,

treasurer of their Jewish fund, and member of the Chicago Hebrew Mission's Board of Trustees spoke on "The Development of the Spirit of Antichrist."

Both Rev. Beets and Rev. Kuyper were then put on the board of The International Committee for Christian Work Among the Jews, with William Blackstone as its honorary president. "It [that Committee] was born ... without the ... premeditated plans of men ... by the prompting and guidance of the Holy Spirit."<sup>90</sup>

Rev. Fles served again in Pella for four years of "greatest harmony" (doubtful if it really was). "Due to his advancing age and the failing health of his wife," he retired from the ministry in 1915. Daughter Dena Hiemenga died from a sudden illness in New Jersey in 1915. They had a little girl, Hermine. Rev. Hiemenga remarried the following year, and he became Calvin College's first President in 1919.<sup>91</sup> John and Johanna returned to Muskegon where their two boys' families still lived, and stayed in Isaac's home. Then Rev. Fles "received a keen blow" when [Johanna died](#) in 1916.

Rev. Fles was a pastor emeritus at his old church, First C.R.C., and when they needed a new minister in 1916, "he made a speech on behalf of young Bultema of Peoria. He evidently had not forgotten the interesting debate at the home of his son-in-law."<sup>92</sup> Many asked Fles to preach one more time at Bultema's installation. Bultema said, "He preached with fire a stirring and unforgettably beautiful sermon on Daniel 12. I still hear him paint the firmament and the shining starry worlds."

The CRC Synod of 1916 "decided not to consider the request to sign a memorial presented by Mr. Blackstone, requesting the government of the United States to work out a plan that Palestine be placed at the disposal of the Jews."<sup>93</sup> Blackstone's Memorial inspired the Jewish Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis to ask President Wilson in 1917 if he would support the Zionist Movement.<sup>94</sup> Soon Wilson did.

World War I brought an apocalyptic interpretation of how current events were fulfilling the prophecies in Matthew 24. Premillennialism became popular and tore through the CRC yet again. Rev. G. Spykman later said it spread like a "prairie fire."<sup>95</sup> The Balfour Declaration<sup>96</sup> was published in 1917, expressing British support for a Jewish home in Palestine. After the document was signed, Brandeis thought that it should be "a good time to get the Blackstone crowd to cheer." Fles must have been overjoyed to see his expectations were coming into being. But the CRC's next response wasn't to celebrate; the Church felt threatened and was mainly concerned whether its members were following its doctrines.

Both Scofield's revised Reference Bible,<sup>97</sup> an influential dispensational commentary, and Rev. Bultema's book Maranatha were published in 1917. Maranatha said (in Dutch) that Christ's return was imminent. Many in the CRC agreed, in 1918 the President of that Synod, Rev. Idzerd Van Dellen said, "Brothers, the Lord is coming! Everything points to this event. The signs of the times tell us ... [and] the bloody field of war speaks of it." But the CRC's official [position on eschatology](#) (a study of the end times) declares Bultema's "views to be contrary to the confessions of the church." Elsewhere the 1918 Synod said, "The difference with the brother does not concern the point of the Thousand Year Reign, Twofold Resurrection, the Return of the Jews to Palestine. It does, however, concern the Unity of the Church of all Ages," and the belief that "Christ is King, but of Israel, not of the Church."<sup>98</sup> The CRC website explains what they believe regarding those two points. So it was "In response to a theological challenge to its underlying eschatology" that the Synod demanded the First C.R.C. church's consistory discipline their pastor. In 1918 when the church refused, a legal story said the CRC Classis "appointed a committee to persuade the consistory to do so."<sup>99</sup> That committee had "four [other] ministers and five elders." The consistory would not suspend their minister and Bultema would not retract his statements about those "two points," contending that his reasoning was Biblically based and stating he "wholeheartedly accepted all Creeds." So later, "the existing committee ... [was] instructed to execute the decision of classis and to perform the duties of consistory." In 1920 Isaac Fles was voted to be an elder on the "new consistory." Bultema's autobiography included Isaac in a list of seventeen "Classical brethren." They "were the plaintiffs, and my consistory and myself were the defendants."<sup>100</sup> Would the son have acted against his father's wishes? It appears quite possible. Dr. Kennedy suggests Rev. Fles may have become more conciliatory, "[He] tried to exercise a moderating influence in this controversy."

The 1918 Acts of Synod listed a committee of three: Rev. H. Hoeksema, Rev. J. Dolfin of Bethany C.R.C., Muskegon, and Rev. Volbeda from the Calvin Theological Seminary. One Sunday the CRC sent Rev. Volbeda to the church in Rev. Bultema's place. Newspaper boys patrolled the streets screaming, "Will Bultema preach?" He took the pulpit early and preached quoting John 9, "And they cast him out," said his autobiography. Rev. Bultema and most of the church's consistory were deposed (removed from office) at the end of 1919. Most of the congregation followed them, but "forty families (including two consistory men) ... had decided to remain faithful to their denomination."<sup>101</sup> There was an unpleasant lawsuit adjudicated in Michigan's Supreme Court for possession of the church property. Bultema defended

his beliefs while on the witness stand before a packed courtroom. One of the judges compared “the classical men” to lizards, but ruled the CRC owned the building.

Soon afterwards Eisse Woldering, a CRC ministry student from the Netherlands, wrote, “I preached in Muskegon, where Rev. H. Bultema was deposed by the classis. Two hundred families left with him, and only one hundred remained in our denomination. I preached to these one hundred. It was the largest church I have ever preached in, but the pews were not filled. On that occasion a Jewish minister, the elderly Rev. John Fles, was also in attendance.”<sup>102</sup>

Why did Rev. Fles decide to remain within the CRC denomination? Family obligations had to be part of the reason. Both of his sons also stayed with their denomination; Benjamin was at the English speaking Bethany C.R.C. in Muskegon in 1920.<sup>103</sup> And Isaac soon taught at Hartford Christian School, which was closely associated with the First C.R.C. church. Both of Fles’s minister sons-in-law were granted new responsibilities in the CRC in 1919. I’m sure Fles followed God’s will and design for him – to preach among churches with different thoughts on the Bible. My impression is that even though Fles’s beliefs were closer to Bultema’s eschatology than to the one the CRC espoused, he didn’t leave his denomination because he was so invested in CRC history, and was still too involved in their present, and since he remained hopeful about the future course of the Christian Reformed Church – it might yet change or at least look for a way towards common ground.

Rev. Bultema and most of his congregation went on in 1920 to found the Berean Reformed churches. “In 1920, Muskegon’s newspapers declared that every Dutch church in western Michigan was affected by the stir which Bultema caused,” said Thomas Boslooper, a Reformed Church minister likely influenced by the movement. Several CRC and other churches were also divided, and some joined the Bereans.

Rev. Herman Hoeksema was Bultema’s “chief antagonist.”<sup>104</sup> Later Hoeksema became involved in other doctrinal controversies, was also deposed from the CRC denomination, and then formed the Protestant Reformed Church.<sup>105</sup> Both Bereans and the PRC still exist today. The First Christian Reformed Church of Muskegon closed their doors in 2013 for the final time after 146 years of ministry (see [picture](#)).

In 1918 the CRC Synod also decided to end their support for the “interdenominational” Chicago Hebrew Mission and to begin a different “ecclesiastical and confessional” Chicago Jewish Mission “of our own Church.”<sup>106</sup>

They probably meant its eschatology did not conform to their creeds. The Beets history explained, "Most of the Jewish mission activities had been carried on by independent societies, without specifically Reformed tenets."<sup>107</sup> Berkhof said that Blackstone was "guilty of twisting Scriptures," in a 1918 book on premillennialism.

Rev. Elias Newman was there to speak on behalf of the Chicago Hebrew Mission. Fles and the committee once again made several arguments to defend the Mission. Their report pointed out that other CRC supported missions were "not ecclesiastical" and were "much less under our influence than the Chicago Hebrew Mission" and asked, "Why should we then refuse to support the Chicago Hebrew Mission because it is not church related?" And they asked the Synod, "whether we want to assume the responsibility that a noble work in God's kingdom, for the salvation of that aged people of promise, would without necessity ... suffer damage by us" if the Church terminated its financial support.

The Synod decided Jewish missions would no longer be represented by having a delegate to the Synod. Fles said, "The Committee for Jewish Missions has entered a new phase." He noted the number of its members had been reduced, and its disbursements as well, then he asked what its mandate would be. In 1920 Dr. Henry Beets, who was installed as the first Secretary of Missions connected with the Board of Heathen Missions would also speak for Jewish Mission interests.

And lastly in 1918 the Jewish Mission Committee said, "As in the past 24 years, the lion's share of the work fell on our President-Treasurer, Rev. J. I. Fles, who, despite his age and physical weakness has always continued to perform his work cheerfully." They closed with Psalm 53:6, "Oh that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion! When God bringeth back the captivity of his people, then shall Jacob rejoice, and Israel shall be glad."

Fles had still been writing a little summary or comment in the section of that missionary magazine after where it reported the Jewish mission contributions each month, separate from Beets' regular column. The last reported CRC receipts were in May 1919; then the magazine stopped reporting those numbers. The CRC Classes that contributed the most; Orange City IA - \$334, Sioux Center IA - \$280, Zeeland MI - \$146, and the total was \$1,038. Nothing came in from Muskegon Classis, which had usually been among the top contributors before their break up. That month (during the break up) Fles wrote, "Thank you, gentle donors. May the God of Israel bless you."

J. I. Fles Muskegon, Michigan

and to finish was a poem (it likely rhymes in Dutch, maybe I should get it translated):

“Israel! The lid is still in place  
On your unbelieving heart,  
It will be taken away from you one day;  
Oh, you obey your sorrow,  
Yes, your eye will see Him.  
Killed by your leaders;  
That's how [or why] you're bitter,  
Call to Him in your distress,  
Then you will have your King again,  
He's your Savior, God and Lord.”<sup>108</sup>

However in spite of Fles’s warnings about the lack of CRC support causing financial damage, Blackstone’s “evangelistic organization” had possessed a “tremendous cash endowment” in 1917. That was when Blackstone asked the Jewish Supreme Court Justice L. Brandeis, “If the Rapture does come, and you are not among those who participate in it” (i.e. perhaps he will someday find himself left behind) would he then disburse that money “for the benefit of those [Jews] who may be by the Rapture, convinced, and who will thereby be led to ... believe the Word.”<sup>109</sup> Justice Brandeis agreed to do so. Blackstone’s “Rapture Will” would have disbursed “millions of dollars”<sup>110</sup> during the Tribulation - a time of doom.

The Chicago Hebrew Mission became more involved with the other Dutch denominations after the CRC relinquished its support. In 1919 their Superintendent Norman Camp went to Cedar Grove, WI to speak in Rev. Cornelius Kuyper’s church, another nearby Reformed church, and in the Presbyterian church there (Fles’s former church). Two years later, Kuyper wrote a letter in the Jewish Era looking to the time when Christ will return in glory and the brightness of His coming will consume the Antichrist, and “inaugurate a reign of glory such as this world has never seen before, when the fullness of the heathen shall enter into the Kingdom of God and all Israel shall be saved.”

In 1920 Rev. Fles “requested Synod not to re-appoint him” to the Jewish Mission Committee. They granted his request “with gratitude for the many, long, and faithful years he has served.”<sup>111</sup> And the CRC made plans to give \$20,000 for a new building to their new mission, the Chicago Jewish Mission,<sup>112</sup> later called the Nathaniel Institute. Rev. John Rottenberg, a converted Dutch Jewish CRC minister (see my

other [story about him](#) or possibly try [that same story here](#)), and Rev. Elias Newman, another converted Jew, were two of its early leaders. There was also a protest that year from some “brothers” regarding the “Maranatha Question,” saying they had acted “too quickly.” Rev. Gordon Spykman later agreed with that assessment, and CRC historian James Bratt has said the Synod acted “tactlessly.”<sup>113</sup>

Fles visited his daughter Minnie and Rev. De Leeuw’s family in Iowa that winter.<sup>114</sup> He died suddenly in 1921 at age 78 while spending Easter at his daughter Anna and Peter Zuidema’s house in Kalamazoo, Michigan.<sup>115</sup> They are all buried in Zeeland Cemetery.<sup>116</sup> Inscribed upon the family monument is the Old Testament verse, Isaiah 26:19 which says in Dutch, “Thy dead shall live, they will rise.” The next verses in the Bible show this passage is part of another premillennial prophecy.<sup>117</sup>

B. K. Kuiper, the editor of the CRC De Wachter publication wrote in a 1921 article about Fles, “He had done more than anyone else to awaken interest in mission work among the Jews. Whatever our church does in that regard today is due in large measures to him.”<sup>118</sup> It is hard to gauge what the impact of Fles’s ministries was during his lifetime. Their effect since then may well reach further than we’d guess.

A family story said when Rev. Fles was permitted to join the CRC he told the Church that he would never preach about his own opinions and premillennial beliefs, but would follow the CRC teachings in his sermons and catechism teaching. Does the story actually tell more about the family than about Fles? Rev. Riemersma’s 1894 biographical article said when company’s conversation turned to theology, then Fles could talk “for hours” about God’s promises to Israel that are yet to be fulfilled. Next Riemersma described his friend’s preaching; “he is very biblical and proves his statements from the Word.” This rather circumspect portrayal reminds me of Bultema’s description; Fles’s preaching was always general and never specific. Did any of the thousands of sermons<sup>119</sup> my ancestor preached ever broach premillennial topics that would have made some in the CRC uneasy? It seems clear he followed his heart and his catechism book which advised, “Still speak about it.” Once the CRC’s 1883-1886 inquiries finished, I don’t think the Church ever asked Rev. Fles to withhold from preaching how the Bible prophesizes that Israel will be restored.

Premillennial beliefs remained a key part of the thinking in some Christian Reformed Fundamentalist circles for years, according to James Bratt and Gordon Spykman, who said, “It was even tolerated officially as long as its advocates avoided agitation.”<sup>120</sup> Premillennialism and fundamentalism became more closely associated

with each other and spread across denominations because they were in “opposition to liberalism”<sup>121</sup> and modernism within the Church – which were often considered to be a greater threat to their faith. Amillennial eschatology had also spread in other denominations. Bratt’s Dutch Calvinism in Modern America<sup>122</sup> says there was a “harsh liberal attack [not from CRC] on dispensational premillennialism” that began before 1920. Swierenga’s Dutch Chicago<sup>123</sup> says “friction arose” in some CRC churches over “the rising premillennial movement,” probably after 1920.

Blackstone donated at least \$38,500 to the RCA from 1920 - 1927. An RCA minister, Rev. Hospers, argued for premillennialism and was part of their “battle for the Bible” then and later. Here in Grand Rapids, Michigan (the CRC’s headquarters), Rev. M. R. De Haan was deposed from the RCA (it has a nearby college and HQ) in 1929 over his premillennial (and other) teachings and founded the Calvary Undenominational Church.<sup>124</sup> Another Chicago Hebrew Mission trustee, Rev. J. C. O’Hair, and Rev. Bultema both spoke at completely full inaugural services in that church.<sup>125</sup> Also in the 1920s and 1930s, O’Hair and others advanced Fundamentalist and dispensational doctrines<sup>126</sup> and began the Grace Movement, which is still active with a college here.

Yaakov Ariel says that in the 1930s and 40s the Chicago Hebrew Mission was reluctant to join the International Missionary Council and its Committee on the Christian Approach to the Jews.<sup>127</sup> Some Fundamentalists were suspicious of ecumenical organizations like it that represented mainline and liberal Protestantism, even when “such organizations advocated the cause of missions to the Jews.” Those mainline advocates did not share the more conservative ones’ “prophetic worldview, in which the evangelization of the Jews had a very special meaning as part of God’s plan for human salvation.” I’d put the CRC among them. The conservative concern was that mainline churches might soon “be convinced by the liberals to abandon the mission work among the Jews altogether, a scheme that eventually happened.”

I have not found enough CRC history to confirm whether that scenario is really what happened to finally end the evangelical mission which Rev. Fles helped begin. However, Rev. Hoezee and Chris Meehan’s missions book suggests “this current age of relativism”<sup>128</sup> was a factor. One great analysis from 1973 by J. Rozeboom<sup>129</sup> said the Church’s “motivation was gone.” The CRC’s missions to Jews lasted until 1965.

Rev. A. J. Hoolsema, a premillennial Baptist minister and missionary with the AMF spoke at a prophetic Bible Conference in Zeeland, MI Oct. 30 - Nov. 6, 1960 (and again in the spring too) at First Baptist Church. (Per the [HOLLAND CITY NEWS](#)). So



his preaching then was from the original Chicago Mission to Zeeland Christians! The Chicago Hebrew Mission continues and has never stopped their evangelizing. Now called [Life in Messiah International](#) or AMFI, they are “America’s oldest independent outreach to the Jewish people.”<sup>130</sup> The Lord has truly blessed them!

And what has become of the belief system that Rev. Fles once supported? Its teachings remain similar to what they were over a hundred years ago. Yaakov Ariel says, “Although the international political situation has changed radically since 1916-1917, the current fundamentalist-premillennialist attitude toward Zionism is very much in keeping with Blackstone’s understanding of the role and place of that movement in God’s plan for humanity.”<sup>131</sup>

The CRCNA’s Office Of Social Justice has said, “Dispensationalist Christians centered in North America actively hinder prospects for a just peace between Israelis and Palestinians by promoting a radical form of Zionism that alarms us.”<sup>132</sup> The RCA denomination says, “The ideology of Christian Zionism and the theology of dispensationalism that undergirds it ... [is] a distortion of the biblical message and an impediment to achieving a just peace in Israel/Palestine.”<sup>133</sup>

Hermeneutical and ideological debates about Romans 11 have been going on for many hundreds of years and continue today. Those thoughts on premillennialism and prophecies concerning Israel will always affect religious beliefs and political opinions. To support my assertion, read this description from Chapman’s [2021 book, Christian Zionism and the Restoration of Israel](#); “We are dealing here with the most **bitter and protracted conflict** of the last 150 years; and the way we interpret the Bible has profound political consequences.” (See Dr. Burge’s endorsement [on back](#). In 2017 he transferred from Wheaton to the faculty of Calvin Theological Seminary.) Its pages 97-98 say, “Historians believe they can explain Zionism and the process leading to the Creation of Israel without resorting to supernatural explanations ... in a thoroughly **rational** and convincing way.” (My bold.)

A 2023 book edited by Porter and Kurschner, [The Future Restoration of Israel: A Response to Supersessionism](#) (see [an image](#) from it), defines supersessionism as claiming that “God has no future redemptive plan for national Israel.” I agree with Porter’s view, which argues for such a plan. Another of its articles by Jewish missions expert and the President of Chosen People, Mitch Glaser, says that supersessionism has been and always will be the “chief enemy of Jewish evangelism” because the historical missions “believed the second coming of Christ was inextricably linked to

the salvation of the Jewish people” by Romans 11. (p. 643-653. This aligns with what Rev. Fles said.) He focuses on three theologians; Sizer, Chapman (but does not mention his 2021 book), and Burge (from “Calvin University”) for examples of “Christian non-Zionists.” A 2012 source from the [ICEJ](#) calls those same three men “strident critics of Israel and of Christian Zionism.”

Here is Dr. Burge’s “[Why I am not a Christian Zionist](#)” from 2019 in The Banner. Contrast that with what former CRC Seminary Professor of systematic theology, John Bolt said in 2022 as he attempted to discern what the Bible and Romans 11 means in this article; “[Why I Am No Longer A Christian Anti-Zionist](#).” He finishes it with, “... all I ask of those who read this is that they consider the possibility that our covenant God may have had a redemptive as well as providential purpose in Israel acquiring nation status in 1948.” Yes, I do wish that he would have said more on the topic.

The end notes tell more about Calvin University’s current situation, but for now this [2024 JPost article](#) explains why young American Evangelicals don’t support Israel as much as their predecessors once did; “Israel is portrayed as the aggressor while the Palestinians are victims.” And another reason is their “amillennial theological views, which see the Jewish people and the state of Israel as no longer necessary in the fulfillment of God’s plan for the second coming ...”

All of these events have been part of the same struggle; from Prof. Kuenen’s spiritualized, amillennial “Modernism” as shown by his “The New Testament is antiChiliastic” in the [1875 book](#), through times when churches divided into two parts as they reacted against the encroaching modernism, until now.

My dad’s parents belonged to LaGrave C.R.C. (their [self-description](#) now). My parents and I left the CRC in the seventies. Rev. Fles’s old church in Wisconsin<sup>134</sup> and my parents’ church in Grand Rapids, Oakhill,<sup>135</sup> have both split away from the Presbyterian (USA) denomination and joined the Evangelical Presbyterian Church<sup>136</sup> after their old denomination voted to divest their investments away from some companies in Israel, although those two churches may have also had other reasons to leave.<sup>137</sup> Oakhill’s Rev. Jeff Carlson is a strong supporter of Israel, and he has led nine tour groups to the Holy Land. Next 2023 will include a chance to [go there](#) again! If money is an object, then you will just have to wait for the “free trip” opportunity during the Millennium. Rev. Carlson preaches that the Nation of Israel will turn to Christ one day and often says he eagerly anticipates Jesus Christ will return soon.



Mount Zion by William Bartlett, 1847.

Micah 4:1-4; In the last days ...

<sup>2</sup> Many nations will come and say,  
“Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD,  
to the temple of the God of Jacob.  
He will teach us his ways,  
so that we may walk in his paths.”

The law will go out from Zion,  
the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

<sup>3</sup> He will judge between many peoples  
and will settle disputes for strong nations far and wide.  
They will beat their swords into plowshares  
and their spears into pruning hooks.

Nation will not take up sword against nation,  
nor will they train for war anymore.

<sup>4</sup> Everyone will sit under their own vine  
and under their own fig tree,  
and no one will make them afraid,  
for the LORD Almighty has spoken.

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The many end notes had sources and additional context, but the links won't work in a hardcover print (if you have one) and those extra almost 100 pages may not be needed at all? So there will come a point when I've shut down my website, therefore readers may not be able to easily go to my sources, often original documents and books. Search for those notes with links in the [Wayback Machine's](#) most recent copy or in their (other) [Internet Archives](#), in any of those versions. This paper is a compromise – I have moved some details from its end notes to the main text. And as for my idea to store pictures of research process and more? I think it will work. The supplementary image and pdf files are also stored there now. If a link gives the "proxy server" error, and if you see it's url address, then you could try to cut-and-paste the whole link directly into web browser.

Author's note: Thanks to everyone who contributed their help. I hope my prefacing summary and all descriptions accurately reflect Fles's beliefs; both in meaning and in the order of the sequence of prophesied future events. Fles's words should be taken at face value, but they might be overly abbreviated, not presented in the correct context, or not always identified as Biblical quotes. I'm only an amateur historian. I cannot read his published work, and have depended upon automated translation. I've undoubtedly allowed my own thoughts and preconceptions about premillennialism to show through. (They've changed during the several years it took me to research and write this paper.) Are my contentions persuasive? Or do you think they are not sufficiently shown?

I should tell how a distant cousin, Charles Fles, joined Bultema's church in the seventies (they still remembered Rev. Fles), went to their (undenominational? <https://ggfusa.org>) Grace Christian University in Grand Rapids, and directed his former professor, Dr. Dale DeWitt towards this paper. My thanks to both of them; Dr. DeWitt advised me regarding this paper and has written a book on dispensational theology, <https://www.amazon.com/Dispensational-Theology-America-Twentieth-Century/dp/0912340118>. His Mid-Acts dispensationalism has also been called "grace theology" per a [2020 Cory Marsh paper](#), describing a Phillip Long essay in [Discovering Dispensationalism](#).

And here is more from William Bartlett, T. Nelson and Sons, 1863 - [Jerusalem Revisited](#) - 202 pages.

Readers using MS Word can double click right on the superscript numbers to instantly go back to main text (and back down to here). But it doesn't work for me within the pdf type of file.

I was not necessarily scrupulous with copyright issues; for instance I may have used cut and paste for images and quotes from some pretty recent books. Sorry, but at least there is no profit. The collaborative Wikitree site says, "Any work you create with copyright is for the lifetime of the author plus 70 years. Works before 1978 have different rules depending on when created." I may make more changes, so any earlier downloads will be out of date (just download again and overwrite any previous version while its development is still in progress).

o Two belief systems collided; true in the Netherlands since John Calvin said, "There is no continuing corporate election of Israel [as God's people], only election of individual Israelites who accept Christ" (per link below). He thought Jews would not all receive the future promised to them in the Bible. I suspect, but haven't researched, that his quote was based on a supersessionist theology saying that prophecies had been and would be fulfilled through Christ. [Gerald McDermott tells](#) the "Dutch Interpretation" too, but didn't note their view became institutional afterward; the "Further Reformation" began about 1600 (more on it later), the [Sephardi synagogue](#) was completed in 1675, and their Amsterdam community spread messianism to Ashkenazi Jews and to Christians (per [L. Pelham's 2019 book](#)), and then several of the Dutch Reveil leaders in the 1820s were also chiliast (i.e. they were premillennialists. That information is according to the American dean of Dutch history, [Robert Swierenga](#)).

<sup>1</sup> Peter Lurvink. "David Markus En Zijn Nakomelingen. Een Joodse Familie In Aalten." Misjpoge, 1989. <http://www.nljewgen.org/Misjpoge1-5/Algemeen/Jaargangen/1989/8901/8901-18.pdf>. Link might not work. A saved copy is now on the Internet Archive, the following is mine: [lurvink\\_aalten.pdf](#). Has a picture of town. It's one of the pictures collected on the main web page here: [http://www.stickysystems.com/Fles\\_pictures.html](http://www.stickysystems.com/Fles_pictures.html). Lurvink also wrote [a book in 1991](#) about the Aalten Jews. It was one source for the following link, which is in English! <http://dutchjewry.org/drieluik/aalten/aalten.shtml>. Abridged by Hans de Jong. Lurvink said Markus was

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wealthy (he described his sources), which provides a clue to go back even further. He noted that [Gompert](#) (my direct ancestor) was also wealthy. In 1813, one of his sons called himself van Gelder. (Some of his descendants are in a picture of a Winterswijk [WWII Holocaust Memorial](#).) A [family history document](#) in German by Prof. Dr. David Kaufmann (published 1907 – did Fles ever read it? See this [image from it](#). See a pdf of [a translated section](#). See a [biography about the main author](#).) One genealogy site has quoted from it and said David Vos (Markus's grandson) inherited from Jacob Cleves' estate. "It was above all thanks to Jacob Cleve [Gomperz] that he [a certain Duke of Prussia] became King Friedrich I. [That happened in 1701]." (p. 47 of Kaufmann's 1907 book).

An introduction to a [well-known memoir](#) written around 1700 by a Jewish woman from that circle, born a generation or two before Markus, emphasized their "fervent belief in and conviction of the Messianic Redemption of Israel." "Glückel's parents-in-law sent two large casks to Hamburg. One was filled with food, the other with linen and clothing; and they were to be kept until the summons came to set triumphant sail from the port of Hamburg to the Holy Land." They were prospective followers of a "false Messiah" from the Ottoman Empire. Pages xi and xii. Her memoirs popularized some of the Gomperz families' highs – like a [big wedding](#) of her daughter into their family [ [Zipora](#) was Kosman's wife] – and low points. Kaufmann also edited her autobiography in 1896.

Markus may have decided to leave the area after the events told in a [2013 article in German by Peter Rauscher](#), "The Fall of Oppenheimer and Gomperz 1697." Court intrigues and/or princes unwilling to repay their loans led to accusations of Jacob Cleves' famous brother [Ruben Elias](#), and then to charges and his imprisonment again in 1702. Was Samuel Oppenheimer related to him, per Rauscher? See [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Samuel\\_Oppenheimer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Samuel_Oppenheimer). Both of those families are included in the good [Forgotten Fragments](#)®; this link is just an [image from its appendix](#). Pages 80 - 93 contain a first person account written in 1738 of two Behrens brothers receiving torture in 1722 – 26, their father had been married to Siese, daughter of Elias Gomperz of Cleve (p. 25). Here is one more link to Stern's [1950 book, The Court Jew A Contribution...](#) which is available from the Internet Archive.

<sup>2</sup> The Jewish Era. Rev. Jan Riemersma. July, 1894. His source for the conversion story had to be J. I. Fles. Here is a link for more context and [supplemental information](#) on the different sources that go into it. This pdf cites a 1943 source saying, "The very foundation for premillennial teaching is the Jewish restoration." <https://archive.org/stream/amfmonthly1518amer#page/n357/mode/2up/search/%22John+Izak+Fles%22>. p. 70. The article in that issue right before the biography of Fles was by Blackstone; [he notes Apostle Paul's conversion](#) was through Christ's [supernatural] appearance and quotes Romans 11:26. My family has not been aware of this specific biography, and had lost many of their vague memories of Fles through time. Quotes from this source appear throughout this paper. The "enraged congregation" quote was from the First C.R.C. in Muskegon's 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary publication, and "the police" is from a family story. The "brothers and sisters" quote was from the 1894 story; presumably that is the most authoritative version. Isaac replied to them, "I cannot ... [go back, but instead] go ye with me." Two branches of the family (descended from the different children of John and Johanna) told stories which said Isaac's father Jacob was still alive when Isaac converted. However his father died in 1829 and his mother Sara died in 1825 at age 61. Perhaps those stories meant to describe a disagreement between his brother(s) and sisters (not between his parents) over whether or not to send money to Isaac after he converted and quickly left town? Did his family really "sit shiva" (from another family story, it is a Jewish mourning ritual, typically held after someone died) when he converted? <https://www.dutchjewry.org/genealogy/duparc/7954.shtml> Girls and boys once took father's name as middle one. <https://www.heerlijkheidbredevoort.nl/documenten/Joden1783.pdf> transcribed in Dutch by Y. Hoitink. [https://nljewgen.org/pdf\\_boeken/0520\\_joden\\_in\\_gelderland\\_oost\\_ijssel.pdf](https://nljewgen.org/pdf_boeken/0520_joden_in_gelderland_oost_ijssel.pdf) p. 5 shows them with only 2 sons. This is a main [Gelderland archive](#). You can search from that website [here](#). Following an 1812 Napoleonic edict, this population register lists Aalten's Jews at that time; the Markus family had separated into at least four different branches. See the Lurvink story and the Gelderland pdf above that refers to it as well as to Kaufmann for sources.

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The article begins with Isaac explaining a Bible story to his nine year old son John. The boy had asked what the Jewish Passover meant and was told by his father, "The Exodus of Israel out of Egypt is conveying the idea of the coming Messiah." He could not understand his father's explanation (and its deep meaning). This discussion may have occurred between Isaac and his father (one generation earlier than I thought), depending on which person the pronoun "he" referred to. In fact similar conversations must have happened within each family in every generation. Regardless, they sang, "In every generation someone tries to eradicate us," on every Seder night.

The number of Elberfeld Jews was reported to be 56 or 87 in 1810-12, and joint prayers were held privately in various prayer houses at the beginning of the 19th century. Per Wikipedia (translated). I haven't found the names of any Rabbis yet, but Dr. Ulrike Schrader has written (in German) about the Jews of Elberfeld, so I'll keep looking. <https://www.alte-synagoge-wuppertal.de/en/memorial/>.

I wonder what happened to the Bible given to Isaac by a young Rabbi in Elberfeld? Isaac first served for two years as a Rabbi "in a small field" in Germany before going back to Gelderland (per Riemersma's bio of J. I. Fles).

Isaac's other children and their cousins mostly remained in Aalten, and some of their descendants still live there. A 2010 WWII paper (copyrighted) in Dutch by Hans de Beukelaer and Jessie Jongejans (available online here; <http://www.synagoge-aalten.nl/phocadownload/zij-waren-aaltenaren-als-wij.pdf>) described the percentage of Jewish ancestry held by some of the Fles family then - one quarter. And, "They have paid their legal fees." p. 34. Which meant the one guilder cost to register as a person of Jewish or mixed race. Hermanus Fles (<https://www.genealogieonline.nl/stamboom-schans/l9059.php>) and his brothers were obviously included on the register, but I don't know if his daughter Johanna was also forced to identify the race of her ancestors. [Johanna Hoitink-Fles](#) (John's brother's granddaughter; 1912 - 1974), along with her husband Johannes, is listed among the "Righteous Gentiles" at Yad Vashem. Johanna was a distant cousin of Eveline Leeser-van Gelder (1910 - 1988), the woman whose family, which included an eight-year-old boy, she saved by hiding them. A Dutch [archive source](#). I wonder if Johanna and Eveline knew each other before the Germans invaded? Both Eveline and her husband had siblings who were killed in the Sobibór camp (per de Beukelaer and a genealogy website). Both sets of their parents were also murdered. <https://collections.yadvashem.org/en/righteous/4043251>. Yad Vashem site.

Separately, here is another related Fles (Isaac's brother's granddaughter); Antje Woudstra-Fles (1872 or 1873 – 1943) was killed at the Auschwitz concentration camp in 1943. Her husband Isaac Woudstra (he made pastry, a banketbakker) was killed in Amsterdam in 1942. <https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:QP7J-8YY4> Antje and Isaac's record in FamilySearch. [http://yvng.yadvashem.org/nameDetails.html?language=en&s\\_lastName=Woudstra&s\\_firstName=&s\\_place=&itmId=4312268&ind=66&winId=-3453405256685868464](http://yvng.yadvashem.org/nameDetails.html?language=en&s_lastName=Woudstra&s_firstName=&s_place=&itmId=4312268&ind=66&winId=-3453405256685868464). See a picture from this history, which also confirms the registration cost, <http://histclo.com/essay/war/ww2/hol/neth/holc-nethm.html>. The Aalten Synagogue was defaced with Nazi swastikas during WWII; this picture of it, [desecrated Synagogue](#), came from de Beukelaer's paper. "Attempts were made" during the war to set fire to the Aalten Synagogue (it doesn't say who made them); <https://jck.nl/en/page/aalten>. The synagogue is now mostly a museum. Their website: <http://www.synagoge-aalten.nl/>. A local war museum; <https://www.tracesofwar.com/sights/118145/War-Collection-40-45-Aalten.htm>. Area map of the liberating forces [here](#). This picture of the [Aalten holocaust monument](#) includes the Van Gelders. Here is a story about them from the commemorative [stolpersteine website](#) and [another one](#). I liked this collected [information about them](#) (in a pdf).

Surprisingly, the Netherlands was the worst West European country for Jewish survival during the war; over 100,000 Dutch Jews were killed (per Tzvi Marx in <http://jcpa.org/article/christian-jewish-relations-in-the-netherlands/>), over 70 percent of the prewar Jewish population (per a recent Mosaic magazine article citing M. Gerstenfeld that also said, "Twenty-four thousand Jews went into hiding. Of these, 16,000 survived.") Aalten Christians rescued a large percentage of the Aalten Jews; 51 of 85. [The Righteous: The Unsung Heroes of the Holocaust](#) by Martin Gilbert, p. 349. "At one time 2,500 Jews and non-Jews" (many from Amsterdam) were



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hidden in Aalten, per an online Yad Vashem encyclopedia, and I think their source was the Dutch book of memory about the Resistance, “Het Verzetwerk In De LO En LKP” which said in Dutch, “Aalten also showed itself hospitable to the Ancient People.” (from <http://lo-lkp.nl/> in HGGII-H1-3-48.pdf, page 8 and on p. 17 is its picture of [a Netherlands concentration camp](#)). Individuals from the Dutch CRC – only a small percent of their total population – have been credited with a quarter of all Dutch rescues, per Lawrence Baron. One Dutch CRC woman said that “she protected Jews because they were God’s chosen people and had to be saved as a contribution to the rebirth of Israel after the war.” Walter de Gruyter, *The Nazi Holocaust. Part 5: Public Opinion and Relations to the Jews in Nazi Europe*, Vol. 2. 1989. p. 620. Wikipedia also contains some of this information (I did not put it there).

Rev. J. Snoek’s 1969 “Grey” book (see end note 90 for source) covers anti-Semitism, history, and theology. You can see I haven’t included very much history in this paper, but here is something interesting about the Nazi occupation in Holland; “Thereupon the Germans offered a concession. They declared their readiness not to deport Christians of Jewish origin” if the 1942 Dutch Reformed Church did not publish their protest about Christian Jews not being allowed to worship. Dutch Christian leaders were torn and tempted to comply; the Dutch Reformed Church did, but “None of the other Protestant Churches [not sure if it was the Dutch CRC] followed the example.” Per pages 119-134.

Rev. Michael Borgert, a minister formerly with First Muskegon C.R.C., did the recent research. His article, “Harry Bultema and the Maranatha Controversy in the Christian Reformed Church” was published in the *Calvin Theological Journal* 42:1 (2007), p. 90-109. (That Journal also had an article on the Holland Pres. Church.) Most of its details are already included in this paper. I’m going to ask him about his source which said “converted through the ministry of Rev. De Cock,” since I didn’t know this rather awesome possibility. He has not found that source. Not sure when, how, or if this detail aligns with the 1894 version of his story. A quick google search doesn’t show any clear links between De Cock (born soon after Isaac Fles, 1801 –1842) and Jews; although he was once a clerical disciple of Bilderdijk (when was that?), according to J.T. McNeill’s history of Calvinism. Gerrit TenZythoff’s *Sources of Secession ...* says De Cock adopted Bilderdijk’s teaching, (p. 74). Marvin Kamps’ biography of De Cock (1834 is in English) disagrees but said, “It would be wrong to demonstrate no appreciation for the men of the Reveil regarding the Secession of 1834. T. F. de Haan, one of the disciples of Bilderdijk, later joined the Secession churches, and very early in the history of the Secession he and De Cock gave ‘parsonage training’ to would-be pastors. In 1854 De Haan became a highly qualified professor of Hebrew in the Secession seminary at Kampen.” (p. 24-25.) In 1840 De Cock founded a German Afscheiden congregation in Bentheim, per G.J. Beuker. End note 40 has the TenZythoff link and more on Bilderdijk. Willem Westerbeke points to a 2009 dissertation in Dutch by Harm Veldman which says that De Cock believed Revelations refers to an era with a glorious millennial church realm/state ... where Jews and Gentiles will then be together more than before. (*Hendrik de Cock (1801–1842) op de Breuklijnen van Theologie en Kerk in Nederland*. It is Google translated. Another source from Westerbeke within the following link, *Het Chilasme in het licht der historie*, describes more of De Cock’s “expectations” – he seems to have had conflicting ones. This source also includes more about other Dutchmen in this regard (e.g. Tris). Melis te Velde said De Cock was “definitely not [among the] ‘Gelder-ish [group].” *Breuklijnen* and *Het Chilasme* are in this comprehensive listing; <https://theologienet.nl/israel-en-toekomst/>. De Cock’s son at Kampen wrote his father’s biography (in Dutch). It tells about 1834, but doesn’t mention I. Fles. More about his son and Kampen Seminary follows in other end notes.

<sup>3</sup> Which is 70 miles from Aalten. Elberfeld’s interesting religious history included being a premillennial “focal point,” before or possibly even while Isaac Fles was there. According to <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elberfeld>.

The "Missionsverein Elberfeld" was founded in 1799. J. Van Lonkhuyzen’s (he is in a later end note) book about Hermann Friedrich Kohlbrügge, a member of the Reveil, said Protestant Rev. Gottfried Daniel Krummacher went to Elberfeld in 1816. Krummacher led a Pietist revival / evangelical movement. Another Reveil minister, De Clercq, once walked to hear Krummacher, and when he saw the glorious nature around Elberfeld, felt a conviction of the

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faithfulness of the preachers who preach here, "to take from it an idea of the glory of the Church during the Millennium." per pages 147 – 151 of his 1905 book in Dutch (Google Books glimpse through [its common words](#)).

[H.F. Kohlbrugge](#) knew Isaac Da Costa and Capadose; a source I mention later whom I've contacted, Jos Westerbeke, a Dutch historian interested in premillennialism, suggested to me that Kohlbrugge "probably would have known such a figure as [Isaac] Fles," possibly because Kohlbrugge lived in Elberfeld. But I don't see that connection in Van Lonkhuyzen's book.

<sup>4</sup> [Henry] B[eets], "*The Late Rev John Isaac Fles*," Yearbook of the Christian Reformed Church (Kalamazoo; Dalm Printing Co., 1922) 165-166. The CRC obituary for Fles. Another bio in Dutch by Beets is in end note 33. <http://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015071425303;view=1up;seq=162>. I'm not so sure he was correct with this "received instruction ... at Winterswijk" since the source from van der Sluis on Bulens suggested it was "in Varsseveld." Link in end note 40 on page 66 now. My description, "youth group", was "gezelschap" in Dutch – it's about fellowships (including visitors from the older Hervormde/ Reformed denomination). I am not sure which days were his alternating weekly visits to nearby Varsseveld for instruction (search for "barn" in end note 40 for an interesting possibility), but it was likely just on Sundays when he left at 6 o'clock in the morning, taking two "full" hours to get to Winterswijk and then to the church pulpit by nine. The church didn't have a regular minister for "12 years", so Rev. Breukelaar ([a translated bio](#)) also went there weekly to teach catechism on Wednesday nights from 1860 - 1867, per this translated original source = image. [Source article from De Bazuin](#) = The Trumpet. It doesn't mention Fles. Rev. Sipkes was that church's next minister afterward from 1867 -1895. His 1867 "opening sermon was on 1 Corinthians 3 verse 11." "The [Winterswijk] congregation rejoiced: 'Great is the grace given us.'" It is still there, a professional historian whom I've been in contact with told me, "Some of my ancestors went to this church and I've been there many times." That [source article in Dutch](#) said the Revs. Sipkes and Stroes had conversations about a potential reunion between the denominations. More on them follow later in my end notes.

Ascension Day of 1865 was May 25. The American Civil War had ended, and Lincoln was shot on that Good Friday. Giving the story details are two accounts from Henry Beets, this one and the other account in Dutch (link in end note 6). There is the 1894 account (end note 2), and another one from the First C.R.C. in Muskegon's 125th Anniversary publication (per pdf scan from First CRC Muskegon [source](#)). The Muskegon account said van An del was a "noted theologian and writer." He was already controversial, more follows on that. "Merchant" is in Dutch marriage records, and it was still the same when John was born; "eggs seller" is from an online Geurink genealogy. Beets' account in Dutch specifically said John did not go to the public school, but the 1894 account said he did. "Government schools" did not teach the Bible, per an 1878 source describing the CRC. The first orthodox Christian schools were recognized, but not yet financially assimilated into public education in 1848. That Beets version is the most detailed; it said Isaac's night school (did that translate correctly? perhaps it meant after the regular school) became very busy. Another source said Breukelaar (1814 -1891) was the founder of the first Christian school in Aalten (another one: Bulens helped too). How many schools were there? Beets also said Ds. Breukelaar's "special revival" (translated term) encouraged John to profess his faith when he was 15. Some of my sources thought this occasion meant John converted at that age. I'd better note that the "Second Evangelical Awakening" "began in 1857" too (per [J. Orr](#)). Breukelaar served the Dutch CRC in Aalten for 42 years. And Beets names the evangelist, Van Veen "of the Evangelical Protestant Society." Was that the same society as the one in end note 40? It seems likely. Was he the author S. D. - a Professor of Church History and Christian Archeology, University of Utrecht (per the 1953 Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia)? Sietse Douwes van Veen was born in 1856 - 1924. He wrote about Van Oosterzee, but he couldn't really be the same evangelist. His father was born in 1829, and founded the "Association for Christian National School Education" in 1863, but resigned in 1880 due to an "increasing Reformed signature." <https://www.spanvis.com/>. He might have been the same person? End note 27 has some of the other details here, a Confessioneele Vereeniging link is in end note 40. I also checked the London Society for Promoting Christianity Amongst the Jews evangelists (like Pauli) around 1834, see [picture of source](#), but didn't find any clear connections to the Fles family.

King William (Willem) III ruled there from 1849 - 1890. Here is a [drawing of old Maastricht](#).



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Historical maps of the area <http://www.atlas1868.nl/ge/aalten.html>, <http://www.atlas1868.nl/ge/wisch2.html> show the towns Doetinchem Varsseveld Aalten Winterswijk along a road going from west to east; each of them had a premillennial minister at some time around then whose stories are within later end notes. I've shown a part of this map while looking at the Walvoort/Walvoord family in the long end note 128. Prussia borders on the south.

A 1975 article by Prof. Kamphuis in the Delpher archive said in Dutch that Aalten was once "the reformed center of the Achterhoek" region, and one reason was that they "are praying places, accompanied by fasting, to implore the effect of God's Spirit."

The beautiful area around Winterswijk was where Piet Mondrian painted many scenes from 1888 – 1896. Perhaps you can picture Fles walking down this "[Lane with sheaves of rye](#)". Here is another image of one of his paintings in the town; <http://www.stickysystems.com/pics/mondrian3.JPG>. I am not sure if this was Fles's destination: a CRC church building, or if it's the older, other Reformed denomination's building in Winterswijk.

There was an air of revival. "In the enlivening the youthful Fles had more than his share." (This shows a lot!) Next the translated Beets account continued with, "On the proposal of many" and it had the "gave their approval" sentence and "Scattered the seed of the Word" which "brought forth fruit." Beets' other version said Fles was "active in evangelistic efforts" in Winterswijk. Fles didn't say (or possibly Beets didn't record – unless I've missed it) whether the Jewish community in Winterswijk (which was larger than the one in Aalten, it had a Synagogue there) might have been Fles's intended audience, perhaps in a way similar to some of the evangelism later in his life. If so, then what role might his extended family have had? The source articles about Fles from Beets don't say whether any of his instructors or anyone else (such as any organized evangelical societies or missions) encouraged or helped Fles's evangelizing – however some of them probably did (see end note 40). I put a possible complication for that endeavor i.e. "no one is permitted to teach it or spread it" into the main text. End note 34 finishes Beets' sentence. The long end note 40 quotes from a Dutch book about Judeo-Christian relations in the Netherlands which cites Ds. M. Sipkes (1830-1895), the minister of Winterswijk Christian Reformed Church (in the Netherlands), which had begun in 1840, per <https://www.archieven.nl>.

In Zalsman's yearbook from 1870; note Fles and E. Kropveld were students, and that the town of Doetinchem in Varsseveld's CRC classis did not have a minister (the seat was empty, a story why that happened follows) in 1870; [https://books.google.com/books?id=EbW6fOqDLvUC&printsec=frontcover&source=gbp\\_ge\\_summary\\_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q=Classe%20Varsseveld&f=false](https://books.google.com/books?id=EbW6fOqDLvUC&printsec=frontcover&source=gbp_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q=Classe%20Varsseveld&f=false). JM Stroes was listed in it as a Christian school teacher. [See image of another source](#) with chapters on "Strijd [struggle or battle] for the Church" by Dr. Gerrit J. Vos Az., a minister of the older "Nederlandsche Hervormde Gemeente." Page 141 of this history says that Stroes was a teacher who fought the "evil spirit of the times" - as taught in their public schools? It shows more of the conflict in a proposed (or actual?) "evangelization" in Winterswijk (or that area) which would "undermine" the Reformed church there, see [page 124](#) (image includes the translated version of it.) For more along these lines, see end note 27 –it has a link that refers to a "revival" and note that J. Kuiper's "History of Christian primary education in the Netherlands" referred to an "attack ... in Wintersijk" (probably later) on its p. 180. A link to it is provided later.

Vos Az. was a "Friese Reveil-predikant," per yet [another source on that subject](#) that has an 1864 beginning of the Confessionneele. A Dutch source above called Stroes an "evangelist" who was in the Confessionneele Association. Rev. Sipkes wrote in Dutch about premillennial eschatology, in 1877 -see following, and [one book from 1891 is in the stacks at Calvin's Hekman Library](#) - last owned and apparently last read by Henry Beets. Sipkes could have known Fles, either the older Isaac (not much more is known about him) or his son who'd walked to Winterswijk.

"Pamphlet war" was from pages 81-82 of a [2008 thesis](https://annemariehoukes.nl/werk_studie_publicaties.html) ([https://annemariehoukes.nl/werk\\_studie\\_publicaties.html](https://annemariehoukes.nl/werk_studie_publicaties.html)) in Dutch by A. Houkes; 'The Spread of Truth: Evangelism The Formation of Orthodox Protestant Communities (1853–1875).' In its section on the Modernists and the Confessionals it mentions several well-known, "well-matched" ministers who wrote "against" each other then. Groen van Prinsterer was the de facto Reveil leader of the group for orthodoxy, saying "We ... always oppose liberalism and rationalism, against modernized Christianity"

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(per J. Kuiper, a [longer quote](#) from the book linked above said religious liberalism led to strife that would “wreak havoc”), and de la Saussaye was a Modernist (or Ethical) leader.

I wonder if J. I. Fles could have had any opportunities to meet Groen? That would have been quite a meeting! (A Christelijke Basisschool of Groen van Prinsterer still exists in Aalten.)

Ds. Nicolaas Bakker, evangelist of the Friends of Truth visited Winterswijk (and other cities) in 1864 with an intent to advance the Further Reformation, per his great-grandson in [De Waarheidsvriend](#) (which still exists). That group, the Confessionalists, the Further Reformation, and the Reveilers all shared some common characteristics, history.

Kampen and other colleges often included preparatory (“voorbereidende”) or high school (“hoogeschool”) levels. Bouwman said, “The Preparatory School taught Latin, Greek, Hebrew, the modern languages, and the regular school subjects.” The students also met at the home of a teacher (Brummelkamp used to host the Gelderlanders in Arnhem), and had discussions with coffee. Here is a list of the professors at Kampen in 1873, interesting that Fles’s earlier instructor, Ds. J. F. Bulens (1820 - 1889) was one of them. He was one of the school’s curators (per Rev. J. van der Sluis, and Prof. Kamphuis added Secretary of the college), and I think he may have also taught missionaries, because his title included “zending”? He must have understood Fles was evangelical, and he probably knew Fles emphasized chiliasm/millenarianism. Professors kept track of things like that! Bulens knew what the theological weak points were for a different student and probed into them at the person’s exam. Bulens sympathized with Fles’s views, as end note 40 shows. This archival link shows him to be a professor in 1873. <http://www.hetutrechtsarchief.nl/collectie/archiefbank/indexen/akten/zoekresultaat?mivast=39&mizig=210&miaet=39&miaet=1&micode=73&minr=836138&miview=inv2&milang=nl>.

Fles also “did some preaching during his student days.” Per a 1914 biography from Pella, IA – it is in Heritage Hall. I picture him preaching [in the area churches](#), but I’m not sure if that was common for seminary students. I think it depended upon their teachers; W.A. Kok ([a bio](#)) sent his students out to the churches. Or that may have occurred back in Gelderland. Other end notes give more context to the 1866 Synod - where the school’s president hoped he could change its decision, and to the evangelical controversy that first year of school in 1867. Did he think the (presumed) next vote after 1866 would overturn and change the prevailing theological direction? Did local Gelderland churches or the seminary think so too? What decisions – like Fles’s to go to the seminary, or other events may have been affected by that belief? Possibly Sipkes deciding to be the minister in Winterswijk in 1867? The 1869 Ds. van Dijk events would presumably be another result.

“Brummelkamp and the Provincial Assembly of Gelderland made efforts to involve [Reveil leaders] Da Costa and Groen van Prinsterer [and others]... in the school [at first],” said Dr. H. Bouwman (he wrote “The concept of justice in the Old Testament” in 1899, and became a Kampen professor in 1903) in Dutch here; <http://www.neocalvinisme.nl/dv/bouwman/ovh/ovh01.html>. Has an 1869 drawing. Bavinck sources start in 1881. <https://sources.neocalvinism.org/> is the same organization’s reformatted web address, search for same article?

This neoCalvinism website seemed to be from W. van der Schee. Bouwman’s history might’ve been published in 1924. Rev. De Cock’s son was a professor at Kampen who wrote a history of the school in 1879. In it (also noted by Bouwman) he said that Isaac Da Costa (a converted Jew born in 1798 – see end notes 27, 40) was a great poet; Not sure if he wrote the verse on the same page. Translating to English loses a bit, since its original lines rhymed. “... the mood [at the school’s beginning in 1854] was first sung  
That Israel trust in the Lord,  
Building its hope for God’s mercy,  
And silently resides in His policy,  
From now to all eternity!”

I should check the Dutch word for mercy to compare it to the Dutch word for grace – I think both can sometimes be the same word, ‘genade.’ End note 31 has an article/sermon/verse using it (grace) in the title. I found a sentence in Fles’s study of Romans 11:11-15 with that word, and then it gives another one, ‘ontferming,’ which

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suggests there were different connotations. The verse above used ‘ontferming.’ Feel free to look into the differences between the two words in English!

Then another of Bouwman’s historical notes (substitute ovh03.html into that url, and translate it from Dutch to get <https://translate.google.com/translate?sl=nl&tl=en&js=y&prev=t&hl=en&ie=UTF-8&u=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.neocalvinisme.nl%2Fdv%2Fbouwman%2Fovh%2Fovh03.html> (see [an image](#)) and this other history cites him, <http://www.dboverijssel.nl/archieven/2876>) also told about Kampen Seminary in the “first years” of 1857 – 1882, in other words these events (“friction between the existing schools of thought”) happened before, during, and after Fles was there. “Professors and students expressed keen interest in what was happening outside their own circle. The writings of various Dutch and foreign theologians such as J.P. Lange, Van Oosterzee, Doedes, Scholten and others were discussed in the lectures and in student study circles. This was a joyful sign, but ...” the students weren’t prepared and had issues with early scientific thinking, which influenced their doctrinal thinking.

Fles would later cite Lange (his poetry, not his dogmatics). Those other theologians were also premillennial (but not Scholten, a Modernist leader). “Furthermore, the Assembly [‘Vergadering’ or the Synod] wants the Teachers to [go back again and] recommend the works of Johannes à Marck [lived 1689 -1731, he was perhaps a Dutch preterist who thought a millennium has already occurred, per non-chiliasm Rev. C. J. Meeuse (but his Dutch website has also claimed chiliasm “think that it is not necessary to preach the Gospel to the Jews.”) A Scottish founder of the Evangelical Alliance said in 1861 à Marck didn’t require a “restored Jewish nation.” David Brown’s [Source looks at Romans 11](#) -see [an image](#).], D. le Roy and A. Francken as a guide to the study of the doctrinal Theology.” Teachers had to sign an “action letter” agreeing to follow the new rule. “Dogmatics was taught on the basis of the Compendium by Johannes à Marck.” Brummelkamp had to make changes. De Cock’s son saw “the disastrous consequences that the rule of science may have on the simple faith of the church.” I’m not sure what to make of this use of the word ‘scientific’ (“wetenschappelijk” has also been translated as “scholarly”). Houkes suggests Biblical miracles were the target. There are a few research papers which study ethical modernism and “scientific activities” then, one linked below is in English, but eschatology is only implied in them. Still, it seems clear that even in the 1860s-70s scientific or modern thinking was opposed to traditional or premillennial doctrines. This quote from Bouwman – more associated with the denomination - may help to understand; “The need for broadening and deepening of the study of Theology was very prominent at this time. It was felt that the church had a calling to be a light in the modern age, not only to preach the old gospel in full purity, but also to imagine the great problems and to shine the light of the truth of God on every field of life.”

(See [image of that section](#) in source. It seems to be referring to the 1870s.)

An [1868 book by Professor H. De Cock](#) (when Fles was a student there) said something similar/same about the prior à Marck, et al. “direction” (richting), and a pdf from its pages 61-65 are in [a translated excerpt](#) (is next? in the document) reviews the 1866 Synod decision which had resulted in a tied vote.

[I told a Calvin Seminary Professor](#) about this fact in 2021.

The Calvin Theological Journal –possibly in 2004 review? [said](#), “The emergence of new scientific and philosophical schools associated with Copernicus, Descartes, and, then, Spinoza presented ...challenges to ... [Dutch] orthodoxy.”

I like Bouwman’s definition of scientific, but consider this timing; “[Charles ] Darwin worked for twenty years until, in 1856, encouraged by others, he began work on his [On the Origin of Species](#). He finished it in 1859 and it was an immediate success. The first edition was sold out in a few months, and by 1872 six editions had been published.”

per Prof. Herman Hanko here, <https://sb.rfpa.org/pages/charles-darwin-and-evolutionism/>.

The Protestant Reformed Seminary (is nearby) professor also wrote about “Higher Criticism’s Attack On Scripture” and the rationalist influence.

“The National Reformed Church in Holland, in the second half of the 18th and in the present century, fell more and more under the predominant influence of rationalism.” Published in 1870.

<https://www.biblicalcyclopedia.com/H/holland>. A Dutch source says it came out of the Enlightenment period.

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"Higher criticism" and critical analysis of the Bible are similar; defending against them eventually lead to the growth of fundamentalism, per <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Protestantism>.

This (translated) summary giving the "zeitgeist" From Kampen's "Years 1868-1870," by J. van Gelderen in 1987 is in the main text! (And to my wife, no this shouldn't be compared to a certain movie series about a wizard school); "It is our young men in particular who can no more be withdrawn from the influence of the spirit of the times than they can protect themselves from it. ... Therefore we considered it necessary that we should also be allowed an organ in which the truths of the Gospel ... are explained and defended, and the ... Scripture maintained against the attacks of the unbelief and the half-faith ... " "Also in view of the **many religious directions** [same word as above, it could translate to the 'modalities'] which may attract our young students (... the Evangelical, the ethical, the Irvingian, the Darbitic)" ... We seceders should "dare to" "get involved in the struggle(s) of our days." These statements were quotes from a contemporaneous publication, and next the author gives his conclusions and thoughts (e.g. "Was there such an influence?" as those types listed). Houkes' thesis said the "directions" were "tegenover elkaar [in opposition to each other]."

[https://translate.google.com/translate?sl=nl&tl=en&u=https://www.digibron.nl/viewer/collectie/Digibron/id/tag:DNK,19870901:newsml\\_23446709d18922e2679ccb48eda1ec1b](https://translate.google.com/translate?sl=nl&tl=en&u=https://www.digibron.nl/viewer/collectie/Digibron/id/tag:DNK,19870901:newsml_23446709d18922e2679ccb48eda1ec1b). Source: DE GETUIGENIS, in its 'objective' section. Edited by H. De Cock (the son) and J. Bavinck (the father). The only contributor I've mentioned was L. Lindeboom. See another description of this [same quote](#) by Bavinck's biographer. The ethicals had an "experiential, existential faith" - per Mietus and Janssen, Scotsman Edward Irving may have known Darby, and as for Evangelicals - they "preferred revelation from the Gospel of the New Covenant" (which is per Rullmann's Kerkherstel [book](#) in 1917, p. 6 - it doesn't mention Bulens.)

Here is a description/explanation and another direction. <https://www.biblicaltraining.org/library/groningen-school>. They suggest it is different from scientific modernism. I've got another [source from J. Kuiper](#) (pub. 1904, [on p. 159](#)) that says in Dutch, "There is one direction ['sociale en moderne theologie'] **whose increasing power** ..."

Van Gelderen wrote in his article; "Gispen is aware of the Church's guilt towards Judaism." Rullmann's [1933 bio of Gispen](#) p. 105-107 said Gispen joined Bulens' protest in 1866 (but from other sources: he did not vote for the chiliast doctrine in 1872), and in 1875 he wrote, "While one [view] looks forward to the Millennial Kingdom, the other looks back to a time when the Church set the tone in the whole area of the social moment. Both of these schools of thought, at least among the Protestants, seek their strength in the prophetic word. Which will be right?" He continued on with his thoughts; salvation, not the Millennium, is the most important aspect of Paul's message.

Ds. H. Bavinck finally replaced Ds. H. De Cock in 1883. At his confirmation, he "spoke of 'The Science of the Holy Theology.' Thus strengthened by new forces the School of Churches came forward, flourishing and growing through the Lord's help and spreading everywhere and bringing rich blessing all over the world." per another (online) history of the Seminary by A. C. Wijkhuizen, written a few years after Bouwman's. See end notes 24 and 75 for more about Bavinck. End note 27 examines what other Kampen professors thought and did about prophecy and premillennialism around this time.

Another history by Rev. I. Van Dellen ( see end note 107) said (in English), "Before Bavinck came ... there had been a decline. In Kampen, for instance, Van Oosterzee's works were used for textbooks. Many ministers followed his exposition of the Heidelberg Catechism. When Kuyper and Bavinck arose, they made it very plain that Van Oosterzee and Doedes [of the orthodox Utrecht School, and others]... were not trustworthy leaders, and that we were in danger of drifting into the waters of Ethicism." p. 43. I'll add Jos Westerbeke's description of what happened then (first end note cribbed a part of it. Link in end note 27), since I'm afraid the story isn't easy to find in denominational histories. "There two worlds **collided**, the world of Further Reformation and Reveil on the one hand, and that of the Doleantie in 1886 on the other, in other words... the world of expectation for Israel, and the world of Israel's replacement [the state church said it has inherited and is receiving the prophetic expectations]."

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Another Dutch source (<http://www.ssnr.nl/>) confirms the connections he made: "In [Dutch Reformed] Pietism, the firm expectation of a future conversion of the Jewish people, which would follow the demise of Roman Catholicism and Islam, resurfaced time and again. Chiliastic ideas also appeared."

Here is a [section](#) from the 1879 Evangelical Magazine and Missionary Chronicle describing Dr. Van Oosterzee's textbooks. It said his writing style expressed genuine emotion. Did Fles study them as a student? He must have. Did H. Bavinck study Van Oosterzee's books as a student? He enrolled at Kampen for a year in the fall of 1873. (Per J. Bolt's biography of him.) Next it was "A national controversy [but not really?]: **teenager leaves conservative seminary for liberal university!**" (Per Bavinck biographer J. Eglinton's [website](#) – it notes Prof. Donner's influence).

Brummelkamp accused Bavinck's father Jan of "delivering his son to the lions." And Bavinck learned his critical approach at Leiden are per H. Van Den Belt's excerpted chapter 6 of his 2008 book on "The authority of Scripture" (which is "the cornerstone of Reformed theology" -available online), it cites another source by Landwehr. I ascribe the other half of the sentence to W. de Wit later in this paper.

The less-advanced text by van Oosterzee was published in two parts, during 1870 –72, per Wikipedia. (It is available online at [archive.org](http://archive.org).) It discussed "the general conversion of the Jews" and the reign of Christ on Earth, per W. Masselink. Wikipedia's next source from H. Orton Wiley: Christian Theology said it referred to 1 Thess. 4:17 and that "[Christians] caught up to meet Him in the air, must certainly be conceived of as then returning with the heavenly host again to the earth. They form an escort to the King, who personally comes to this part of His royal domain. Simultaneously with the coming of Christ takes place the first resurrection. The believers, who live to witness this appearing of Christ upon earth, are without dying, by an instantaneous change, made meet for the new condition; and the departed who are ripe for the life of resurrection, live and reign with Christ on earth."

Van Oosterzee was the "premillennial minister" at the fifth general conference. See end note 40 for the rest of that story. His eschatology said, "Through the doctrine of the Restoration all things were decided." Instead of parsing that translation, see Acts 3:21, Matt. 19:28. Van Oosterzee wrote a paper on "The Gospel History and Modern Criticism" for the sixth general conference of the Evangelical Alliance (per online book [from that conference](#) at [archive.org](http://archive.org)), in New York, October 2-12, 1873 (which was before Fles got there). It asked "when will that great universal Sabbath [a 'seventh day of comforting and refreshing rest'] break forth for the struggling Church, for the **whole creation** that now groaneth?" (See the Future Glory section of Romans 8). Wikipedia also says, "In 1877, with the passage of the law forbidding the theological faculty [at his different University of Utrecht] to lecture on Biblical, dogmatic, and practical theology, Van Oosterzee was compelled, against his will, to teach the philosophy of religion, New Testament introduction, and the history of Christian dogma, in which he gave instruction until his death." A Dutch Wikipedia article says he "was ousted by the emerging 'neocalvinist' and younger 'ethicals'." That first group has a descriptive link above. The latter group "aspired to reconcile faith and philosophy," per another Dutch source, J. C. Rullmann. David J. Bos in 2011 [described](#) them as "the [irenical] middle ground between the orthodox and progressive camps." p. 137. Van Oosterzee was "one of the most distinguished divines in the Reformed Church of Holland" (American Presbyterian Review). Search for "Dosker" below to see source for minister in the Netherlands on the Committee who voted differently.

<sup>5</sup> According to a ship passenger database at Calvin's Heritage Hall. Picture of the SS Rotterdam is from a history of the H.A.L.; <http://www.hollandamericablog.com/holland-line-ships-past-and-present/1872-the-s-s-rotterdam-i/>. The description of their unusually long voyage was from an article at Heritage Hall. "They came on a sailship - which took six weeks - a stormy passage." Arrival Date: 21 Nov. 1873, Ship accommodations: Steerage/lower deck (per Ancestry.com, which credits Swierenga). If destination =WI, <http://wigenweb.org/shawano/immigration.html>. Here is an [image from Engelsma's biography](#) of Bavinck, it includes having Bavinck preach a sermon on Matt. 15:4. More on Bavinck from Dr. John Bolt, [this introductory pdf](#) includes some biographical and theological material; the author notes, "[a] tension in Bavinck's thought between the claims of modernity— particularly it's this-worldly, scientific orientation—and Reformed pietist orthodoxy's tendency to stand aloof from modern culture."

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<sup>6</sup> Henry Beets. De Gereformeerde Amerikaan; 1897-1904. Compilation of monthly articles published 1918. Article appears to be from May, 04. Their page 227. Picture on p. 192.

Cedar Grove had many people from Aalten area in historical record, within the congregation is assumed, Fles's maternal relatives were already among them, per genealogy websites. Also see this [translated website from the area](#). Beets called Rev. Zonne, who was the founder of Cedar Grove and of its church, "one of the path-breakers," in p. 56 of his CRC history in Dutch, link in end note 11. This is Beets biography of Fles in Dutch. Later end notes look for more detail, <http://books.google.com/books?id=N9lnAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA229&lpg=PA229>.

Before I move on, let me note that the next article here after this one is about the Friends of Truth; "If one heard the friends, the secessionists, the hated elites, were much more to be feared than the modernists and Groningers." Which might suggest that Fles and Bulens were not involved with this group? (Later I guess they may have been.)

Another account from the First C.R.C. of Muskegon's records said, "[Fles] was doing evangelistic work the same year when he was called by the Holland Presbyterian Church at Cedar Grove, Wis." Denomination described in end notes below. It seems likely the congregation would have already been aware of his desire to speak out when they contacted him.

I wonder who he evangelized to and what his message was in those early days when he had gone back to the Gelderland area. Did he have any contact with Sipkes, Kropveld or the other Jewish mission? See later end notes.

<sup>7</sup> Rev. Hoffman, The Wisconsin magazine of history. Published in 1919. Their p. 465. He was a historian who recorded recent events. This refers to the Rederus history. <http://content.wisconsinhistory.org/cdm/ref/collection/wmh/id/1304>. Did their "divergent ideas" vary between themselves or between denominations? The group which left may have all joined the church together a year or two before. Following end notes keep looking. Rev. Fles told this same story about his church to a CRC minister and missionary "serving the west" [which included a church in Classis Pella], M. Borduin in another article from De Gereformeerde Amerikaan: 1904. Borduin said (is translated), "Rev. J. Fles, ... already serves our [CRC] church for years with honor and who was so kind to give me the above information." Rev. Zonne had studied for the ministry under Rev. Brummelkamp back in the Netherlands (per Robert Swierenga). So had Rev. Breukelaar (per Smilda) and A. C. Tris. Fles did too. End notes 27 and 40 have more about Brummelkamp.

<sup>8</sup> Rev. Sipko Rederus. The Wisconsin Magazine of History, "*The Dutch Settlements of Sheboygan County*". Published 1917. p. 263. [This nice history](#) is in English. Rederus was a minister at the [Dutch Zion Church in Alto, WI](#) from 1879-1885. He wrote more about the Presbyterian churches near there than he did the other ones, but he "did not go to the Presbyterian denomination," instead leading his church to join the Congregationalists. See end note 30 for that source, and more about Alto later. The First Holland Presbyterian Church membership was about 200 in 1881. The Dutch settlements were also called colonies or enclaves. They didn't necessarily intend to become Americans. Another large source is similar: History of Northern Wisconsin: Containing an Account of Its Settlement ... 1881. (is online at archive.org).

<sup>9</sup> History of Sheboygan County, Wisconsin, past and present, Volume 1; By Carl Ziller, S.J. Clarke Publishing Co.; Publ. 1912; [http://genealogytrails.com/wis/sheboygan/history\\_towns.html](http://genealogytrails.com/wis/sheboygan/history_towns.html). Has an undated picture of the church on p. 267. <http://books.google.com/books?id=H7laAAAAYAAJ&pg=266>. Also from Rederus's history.

The Fles family's first Wisconsin winter was harsh, and travel had to wait until spring's muddy roads dried. Only in mid-May could Fles finally go ("he was taken," probably by horse-drawn coach or carriage) to become ordained. According to a biographical article from around 1913 or '14 that is not online. It didn't identify his destination, but see below. He was given the exam and soon confirmed "by the teachers Ds. Huyser and Ds. Van der Las," said the Beets bio in Dutch. I look at Rev. Huyser or Huyzer in later end notes. The next winter was also memorable for more severe weather. Isaac was born on Sept. 11, 1874; and died Aug. 14, 1947.



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Some of this research can and probably will go into the main text eventually, however for now this fits here pretty well chronologically. James De Jong, former President and Professor of Historical Theology at Calvin Seminary, lists some Kampen graduates from Fles's era, but the list doesn't include Fles. "Its graduates who emigrated pretty much decided where they belonged before emigrating and stayed with their decision. The number of Kampen graduates who came was not large, but they were very formative for both [of the Dutch American] churches." The school had 67 students there in 1869 (per Bouwman, see link above in end note 4). Another 1870 listing also exists. Does De Jong's analysis of the topics covered by *De Hope*, a major Dutch Reformed journal, in the late 1870s and early 1880s provide a clue to Fles's choice? "[The journal] focuses a great deal of attention on Presbyterian matters, the preaching of Dwight Moody and Ira Sankey that was the evangelical rage." His next sentence also refers to the (separately described) "conservative" Presbyterian denomination.

<http://www.azrefs.org/reassessing-1857-overlooked-considerations-concerning-the-birt.html>. Link doesn't work. That subject is mentioned [here](#), at the Theil-Nyenhuis Research Center. I don't see it within Hekman Library. Dutch speaking Presbyterian churches clearly had a different emphasis than the other two main Dutch denominations. Not sure if they were usually also revivalist. Moody was already hosting revivals, but hadn't become a premillennialist yet in 1873 when Fles immigrated. See end notes 40 and 53.

De Jong referenced Rev. Gerrit Bieze's unpublished manuscript on The Holland Presbyterian Churches in America, c. 1850-1925; it's at Calvin's Heritage Hall. Bieze calls Wisconsin the "heartland of Dutch Presbyterianism," and reviewed several of their churches. One of his sources, M. Borduin said there were a dozen of them in 1904, explaining (in Dutch) "they represented a freer position" with fewer "binding" rules of worship (his article lists examples) than the other two main Dutch denominations. It "let them believe what they want." (Source is in end note 7.) Rev. Zonne had also organized other H. P. churches nearby. Bieze suggests there were theological and other disagreements between the denominations, but neither he, Borduin, Ziller, nor Rederus said anything about premillennialism. He tells several familiar details about Fles. Rev. B. van der Las was from one of the Holland Presbyterian churches in Milwaukee and Rev. G. Huyzer (Gerrit Huyser?) probably from one in Oostburg, WI, so either of those cities could have been where Fles was ordained in 1874. (p. 17). I don't think all of the churches Bieze mentions were oriented toward premillennial (but still Reformed) beliefs since it would've been more noticeable and known now, even though that denomination was a small one which gradually dissolved away (or became English speaking Presbyterian churches) by the 1920s. Instead, like the other denominations, it was probably comprised of both amillennial and premillennial churches and/or church members. The likelihood of having either belief system did vary between denominations.

William Walvoord's [Windmill Memories: A Remembrance of Life in a Holland-American Community before the turn of the Century](#) pub. 1979 is about Cedar Grove. It speculates why that church originally became Holland Presbyterian (in 1853 per Bryan Winter, who has more on this topic), and not a Reformed one. Walvoord thought it may have been for reasons similar to those at Scholte's Pella church, i.e. ones possibly related to premillennialism, as well as to church polity (government). Rev. Zonne had been suspended back in the Netherlands by Rev. Van Raalte, another founder of a Dutch community in Holland, MI. End note 30 has a different example of a similar church.

<sup>10</sup> Calvin College's Hekman Library, in Heritage Hall. Both of his booklets are there. Did Fles read Prof. Kuenen's 1875 book about prophecy and the "Fall of the Jewish State"? Probably, since dividing lines so clearly drawn may have been impossible to avoid. If so, then his work (and specifically his 1878 catechism book) actually may have been due to their conflicting ways of (rules for) interpreting prophecy!

The Three Bible Lessons cost thirty cents. And Fles wrote another one in German in 1892 on part of the Heidelberg Catechism. I wonder why he wrote that one. Its translated title: Thou shalt not abuse the name of the Lord thy God. Lessons on the 36th Sunday of the Heid. Catechism, which seems more a matter of piety than premillennialism. <http://ulysses.calvin.edu/eg/opac/results?qttype=keyword;query=John%20Isaac%20Fles>.

Are these the only copies still in existence? No, a distant relative has contacted me and possesses one of the catechisms. This catalog listing says the catechism is not available anywhere else. I might still see about taking

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pictures of the pages and post them somewhere. (I came upon this [booklet](#) by CRC founder, S. Van Velzen.) [https://www.worldcat.org/search?q=J.+I.+Fles&dblist=638&fq=dt%3Abks+%3E+ap%3A%22fles%2C+john+isaac%22&qt=facet\\_ap%3A](https://www.worldcat.org/search?q=J.+I.+Fles&dblist=638&fq=dt%3Abks+%3E+ap%3A%22fles%2C+john+isaac%22&qt=facet_ap%3A).

<sup>11</sup> Beets. De Chr. Geref. Kerk in N. A.; Zestig Jaren Van Strijd En Zegen. 1918. The title means Sixty Years of Struggle and Blessing. This Dutch history is longer than his English one. <http://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015022381456;view=1up;seq=235>. Their p. 231. Fles's answer to his catechism question is hard to translate. Calvin's Hekman Library has a translated version of Beets' book, p. 244 includes this double negative, "It was stated that opinions varied widely, and no one could not speak too definitely on this." (Different views on the end times were tolerated.) I'll stick with Google's translation here which translates the word "spreken" as "still speak." Another try: one should not speak too decisively about (against?) it. His mighty rivers line was probably derived from Isaiah 66:12. The next verse 13 says it will happen "in Jerusalem." See more from this section of Beets' history in end note 27. Fles envisioned the "Lord's garden" on earth, in end note 128.

<sup>12</sup> Especially if Fles could read English. I am not sure if it would have been common among Dutch ministers then, but am leaning towards yes. He's written in German. The Zendingscommissie history on page 51 of paper said it was taught at Kampen to missionaries. Here is a prophetic book from 1847 by Horatius Bonar. [https://books.google.com/books?id=f-sDAAAAQAAJ&dq=horatius+bonar&source=gbs\\_navlinks\\_s](https://books.google.com/books?id=f-sDAAAAQAAJ&dq=horatius+bonar&source=gbs_navlinks_s). He also wrote *Israel's Song of Hope*. English archaeologist Charles Warren wrote [1870s books](#) about the Holy Land.

One of the earliest Bible conferences was in Chicago in 1875, and its attendees included N.W. West, J.H. Brookes, F.H. Revell, and P.P. Bliss.

And there was an early [magazine cover](#) showing how interest increased in 1876-1880; its articles about prophecy emphasize Israel and the Jews. One headline was "Increasing Probability of the Return of the Jews." The publication had a series of articles from Seiss' Apocalypse book. A similar magazine is shown in end note 31.

The 1878 headline read "Revival of a neglected doctrine" (in caps) and its story was about the "Conference of believers in the pre-Millennial advent of Jesus Christ." This 1879 publication of the interdenominational First International Prophetic conference held in NY on Nov. 1878, quotes from Acts 3:19 – 21; "... until the time comes for God to restore everything, as he promised long ago through his holy prophets" which is "pre-intimating the conversion of the Jews." Rev. Nathaniel West. p. 371. <https://archive.org/stream/secondcomingof00unknuoft#page/371/mode/2up/search/%22acts+3%22>.

The Second International Prophetic Conference was held in Chicago in November, 1886 (so it was after Fles's Synod hearing that year). Blackstone, E. P. Goodwin, and Nathaniel West all spoke. Dr. A. Bonar sent a letter from Scotland. Pierson's topic was "The Lord's Second Coming - A Motive for World-wide Evangelization." Rejecting replacement theology, Ernst Stroeter spoke against those who were "ready to simply spiritualize away all that is prophesied to the political Israel and to the geographical Palestine of restitution ... and to appropriate quietly to the Gentile church all there is predicted of Blessing To Israel." p. 17. (According to David Rausch in his book [Communities in Conflict](#), p. 42-43.) Yaakov Ariel's [An Unusual Relationship ...](#) p. 69-70 says Congregational minister William Erdman interpreted Romans 11: 25-27 and spoke out against Christian "conceit" that thought, "because of the fall of Israel, there was for them as a nation no future of special blessing and preeminence." Prof. Franz Delitzsch from the Univ. of Leipzig attended; he was a leader of Jewish Missions, wrote about Messianic prophecies (the essay is online), and is still known for his translation of the New Testament into Hebrew in 1877. <https://ia601409.us.archive.org/35/items/propheticstudies00amer/propheticstudies00amer.pdf>. The publication.

Blackstone's 1890 conference in Chicago is described in end notes 44 - 45.



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S. Goldman's 2018 book on Christian Zionism, *God's Country*, has a section on Blackstone that looks at how his views followed a trend at the time to 1. Get actively involved and 2. Put Jews in Holy Land before mass conversion. It has several sources that I've used (my paper was finished before [I checked it out](#) from Calvin's library in 2023).

Some (apparently) premillennial books were written in the Netherlands in the 1870s. [Gerrit Jacobus Flier](#) wrote [one](#) on the topic (not sure what he said) citing John Darby (who had visited Holland in 1857) and H. C. Voorhoeve (he belonged to the Confessional Association – more follows about that interesting group). The Revs. J. van Oosterzee (1817–1882) and his colleague J. Doedes were other Dutch premillennialists and renowned scholars and writers. I already looked at this topic in end note 4 and will again in later end notes.

I saw but did not save a source that said early Dutch immigrants felt comfortable with American religious fervor and evangelistic revivalism. Unger's thesis paper said premillennialism "was compatible with Calvinist orthodoxy." "Earnestly contending for the faith: The Role of the Niagara Bible Conference ..." (available [online](#)) 1981. p. 200.

<sup>13</sup> Paul Charles Merkley. *The Politics of Christian Zionism, 1891-1948*. Published London: Frank Cass, 1998. p. 60. It is (or was?) available [from Google Books](#). I think Blackstone's book (it cost a quarter) is available online, but I haven't tried to go there or [read it yet](#). It is still in print and is available at Barnes & Noble bookstore. More about him and his beliefs follows later.

<sup>14</sup> Chiliasm is very similar to premillennialism. Amillennialists (and the CRC) think premillennialism is not correct. This Kennedy article is a great source for my paper. Read it! It is subsequently mentioned in several end notes. *Prairie Premillennialism: Dutch Calvinist Chiliasm in Iowa 1847-1900, or the Long Shadow of Hendrik Pieter Scholte*, <https://repository.westernsem.edu/pkp/index.php/rr/article/download/1214/1310>. Published 1992. One attendee at that Bible study was "Huibert Muilenburg, the center of a very influential ... family." (p. 10) Muilenburg was glad his pastor "had preached that Israel will be restored and brought to Palestine by God." Kennedy's paper ends with several questions to look into, and suggests it might be the basis for an eventual book. I don't think he wrote it? What might a book look like if I tried to write one? Ways faith spreads through families to cities to regions to ... What were the beginnings or sources of the Dutch Reformed interest in those doctrines? Some have said American revivalists influenced Dutch Christians. My end notes above indicate Dutch Seminaries and other sources in the Netherlands also contributed to Biblical interpretations. As does Beets in end note 27.

Kennedy said the lowans were reading and translating one of the prophetic books by the American Lutheran preacher, Joseph Seiss. Seiss believed in a Jewish restoration, according to David Larsen's book on the topic. The Apocalypse is available from Google Books; [https://books.google.com/books?id=-K0CAAAAQAAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs\\_ge\\_summary\\_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false](https://books.google.com/books?id=-K0CAAAAQAAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false). Dr. Joel Beeke wrote about Rev. Meinders, source is available from the link in end note 30.

<sup>15</sup> *The History of Marion County, Iowa: ...* by the Union Historical Company. Reprint of the 1881 edition. It is available [from Google Books](#).

Here is the 850; [http://www.newnetherlandinstitute.org/history-and-heritage/dutch\\_americans/hendrik-scholte/](http://www.newnetherlandinstitute.org/history-and-heritage/dutch_americans/hendrik-scholte/).

<sup>16</sup> Joseph Welton Hubbard. *The Presbyterian Church in Iowa, 1837 – 1900: History*. Published Superior Press 1907. The book is [here](#). Their p. 190. And see p. 139.

The Henry Beets biography written in Dutch (link in end note 33) had the "condition" quote. Bieze and Kennedy probably used it to make the same observation. It seems straightforward enough, but what conclusions are justified? Fles wanted to preach in a denominational church.

By 1880, the population of Pella stood at 2,430. Per this surprisingly detailed history from the National Register of Historic Places. <https://npgallery.nps.gov/nrhp/GetAsset?assetID=73e5abc2-dfa1-42b7-bc2f-51d868cf479c>. It has "Scholte's sons" (and widow) went to the Brethren church - it apparently began in 1872 (per Oostendorp's bio).

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I wonder if they wrote anything? End note 28 tells of likely interactions between Fles and that church, and end note 64 describes premillennial types of interactions between other different Pella denominations.

<sup>17</sup> Rev. Zeilstra's church history, "The Origins of Pella II" - link is in end note 66. He said there are "unanswered questions" in the footnotes on its p. 6. More from his story follows, but he didn't specifically mention Fles and I've omitted the few details he gave from this time period. End note 64 has the link for Kennedy's paper on premillennialism which mentions Fles in Pella in 1880. That paper and my other end notes and supporting documents show doctrinal discussions, theological changes which even affected ministers, and conflict had already been brewing in Iowa.

The Volksvriend newspaper had a short mention of Ds. Fles in Wisconsin sending sermons in 1880 to the church where Ds. Scholte once served in Pella IA.

A 1911 article by P. Dillingh has 1880 voting on Dutch pastors and "conflict" between "directions" – notes 40, 117.

<sup>18</sup> [http://www.calvin.edu/cgi-bin/lib/crcmd/search.pl?ID=684&prevmode=name&termid=700&act=show\\_details](http://www.calvin.edu/cgi-bin/lib/crcmd/search.pl?ID=684&prevmode=name&termid=700&act=show_details). CRC minister database.

<sup>19</sup> From Rev. Riemersma's biographical account in the 1894 Jewish Era, link is in end note 2. p. 72.

If I knew the reasons why the Zeeland congregation chose Fles to lead them during challenging beginnings, then I would have included what they had heard about him! Practical reasons might have included his ability to grow membership numbers or his experience in Pella at leading a congregation which joined a different denomination, although it had not been to the CRC of course. Fles's strong leadership, powerful preaching, and devout belief were probably what those Christians in Zeeland wanted for their new church. It's possible that premillennialism was considered a part of that whole. I'm not sure how important it was to them, or whether it served any other purposes. Like what? Believing Christ was returning soon encouraged evangelism and godly living. (Noted a Dutch Reformed minister at the 1878 International Conference.) Maybe they hoped to study the Bible literally or to oppose religious liberalism. They must have wanted to support Jews either in the person of Fles or as a group. My translation of Fles's 1879 "Three Bible Lessons" shows that he already had an appreciation for Jewish missions. My conclusion and history from an original elder is in main text; the first consistory was per a migenweb.org page.

<sup>20</sup> From p. 73 of the biographical account in the 1894 Jewish Era. This specific CRC requirement for parents was mentioned in at least one of their Acts of Synod not long afterwards. Zeeland citizens had contributed their own money to build a train depot in 1878. Isaac was eight when they moved in April, Dena and Minnie were both a couple of years younger. Fles began as the pastor in May. The baby was born on June 20 and died from scrofula in July. Page 9 of this paper tells about the CRC Synod hearing when it met at the end of May. Johanna was called Minnie is from census records.

<sup>21</sup> Henry Beets. The Christian Reformed Church in North America ... (history in English). [p. 117](#). Published by Eastern Avenue book store, 1923. I didn't provide a citation for the quote that follows from the 1900 CRC Synod, but the document is available from subsequent links in these end notes. The Dutch Reformed Church had allowed membership in fraternal organizations. The issue of secret societies came to the Netherlands in 1879 (Swierenga).

<sup>22</sup> Historical and Business Compendium of Ottawa County, Michigan. Dosker, et al. p. 106. Copyright 1892, Published 1893? <http://books.google.com/books?id=wTwVAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA106>. Herrick Library in Holland, MI has an old copy. Jacob Den Herder's first person account, "Life Sketch of Myself" mentions freemasonry but not premillennialism. <http://www.macatawa.org/~devries/JacobDenHerder.html>.

<sup>23</sup> <http://ottawa.migenweb.net/towns/zeeland/fstref.html>. It had an old picture of First Reformed church – not available now. <http://www.migenweb.net/ottawa/churches/christianref/zenorthCRC.html>. Wayback Machine keeps an old version of that website. There were about six churches leaving the Dutch Reformed denomination and joining the CRC Secession of 1882. One was Rev. A. Zwemer's (the father of Samuel - and two of his siblings

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were also missionaries) [congregation in Graafschap](#), near Zeeland (per Swierenga). “During his pastorate a revival took place.” (Per history linked here.) He was also the moderator to manage North Street’s move to the CRC. Swierenga’s *Brothers’ Quarrels* suggested the RCA (and Beets) thought the CRC’s resulting missionary movement was from their new “progressive element” then. [http://swierenga.com/BrothersQuarrelsBook.html#\\_ftnref211](http://swierenga.com/BrothersQuarrelsBook.html#_ftnref211). This point might be obvious, but premillennialism is not usually considered to be a reason for the CRC separations! Gijsbert Haan originally gave eight reasons for them. I wrote a history for North Street’s church magazine; then their church history [web page](#) mentioned its Jewish roots. Their web page has changed. And now I’ve noticed that this Baptist church history in Zeeland is similar; <https://fbczeeland.wordpress.com/about/our-church-history/>. They had “roots in Bible studies conducted in homes, often discussing prophetic themes.” Was that church also influenced by Fles? The next sentence says people “from Muskegon” came in the late ‘20s to investigate the demand for more Bible study. See a historical item about this church in end note 130; I’ve put it into the main text – it shows an eventual outcome.

Here are some numbers that show how many CRC ministers (23) and congregations (48) existed then; <http://www.migenweb.org/kent/churches/christianref/events100th.html> – is not available now.

<sup>24</sup> Henry Beets. *The Christian Reformed Church in North America ...* p. 116. This is his history in English pub. 1923. An [image of source](#) has spoilers. (My version: “Never popular”? Hmm, but it *had* occasionally been popular “in Calvinistic circles” and the “Pre-millennial view” was penalized by the CRC (in 1869), as Bulens had feared in 1863.) They were the “two prominent Reformed anti-chiliasts,” in roughly that same period, per E. William Kennedy’s “Prairie Premillennialism,” cited below. Presbyterian theologian B. B. Warfield (his 1904 [article](#), “The Millennium and the Apocalypse” said it had no clear Biblical foundation) gave them as his only examples of amillennialists in 1915, per former CRC minister K. Riddlebarger’s 1996 eschatology study. (It is online [here](#), and also analyzes Presbyterian theologian C. Hodge (a [brief bio](#)), who published his theology in 1872-73, including “the question as to whether or not the Jews are to be literally restored to the land of Palestine.” Walvoord called him postmillennial.) Beets probably meant that their objections became more known after 1883. A. Kuyper (1837-1920), a major figure in the Dutch Reformed (in the Netherlands) Church- the State church said, “The fundamental question of Chiliasm is whether Christ will return to Jerusalem in this dispensation or in the new heavens and the new earth.” According to William Rutgers’ 1930 dissertation, *Premillennialism in America*. (Is in English.) Rutgers cited Kuyper’s *Dictaten Dogmatiek*, and other works. p. 26.

Dutch Reformed (in the Netherlands) theologian Dr. H. Bavinck (1854 -1921) said Chiliasm was “one with Judaism.” On p. 662 of his *Reformed Dogmatics*. It has more on premillennialism, but I’ll put off adding a Google Books link to it. First published from 1895-1899. Bavinck’s book, *The Last Things ...* was originally its eschatological section and says, “Old Testament concepts [should] shed their external, national-Israelitish meanings and become manifest in their spiritual and eternal sense.” ... “The community of believers has in all respects **replaced** carnal, national Israel.” Per premillennialist Dr. Barry Horner in *Future Israel*, p. 171 (p. 206 online, link in end note 128). Fles certainly would have read what Bavinck was writing while Bavinck taught at Kampen from 1883 to 1901, and at the Free University after that. See end note 75 for more on that.

<sup>25</sup> “The Chiliastic hope of an earthly kingdom is an importation of the eschatology of the Jews.” From an article taken from Chapter IV of *Why Thousand Years?* by William Masselink, published by Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1930. p. 5 of the document. He was a Christian Reformed minister. More from him in end notes 4 and 60. [https://www.the-highway.com/chiliasm\\_Masselink.html](https://www.the-highway.com/chiliasm_Masselink.html). Calling chiliasm “Jewish” goes back to Christian fathers Origen and Augustine, both of whom used typology to spiritualize the Bible. Dispensationalism divides history into different spiritual periods, each of them having a covenant with God.

Another CRC theologian, Dr. Geerhardus Vos, an exponent of neo-Calvinism (per G. Harinck – he has a [history of Kampen](#) that I haven’t read), also published his analysis of Paul’s eschatology in 1930, see end notes 84 and 128. George Marsden is a CRC historian who defined dispensationalism in a similar way. More from him in end note 60.

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<sup>26</sup> Acts Of Synod Of The Christian Reformed Church.

[https://www.calvin.edu/library/database/crcnasynod/1883acts\\_et.pdf](https://www.calvin.edu/library/database/crcnasynod/1883acts_et.pdf). p. 10 of the document.

The Pella C.R.C (which was not the same church where Fles had ministered right before then) evidently knew what Fles had written previously and/or probably preached in his church when he was there. They were against premillennialism, see the next end note. The Beets biography of Fles in Dutch said Fles moved in April and then was confirmed by Rev. L. Rietdijk. That source doesn't mention the Chiliasm controversy. I assume his confirmation happened after the 1883 Synod session.

<sup>27</sup> The "pen-battle" and "debate was threatened" quotes are from a different Beets history in Dutch, *Sixty years of Struggle (Strijd) and Blessing*, p. 244-5 of the translated manuscript at Calvin College's Hekman Library. The untranslated version's link is in end note 11, and see his English history in end note 107. Beets didn't directly note anything from Fles's article. He might have been using Fles's 1878 catechism as a source for his "not denied" observation, or maybe it was derived from the 1883 Synod's "not been retracted." This section gives the quotes from Fles's catechism included now on pages 6- 7 here. It also covers some of their history of the premillennial controversy by stating an 1863 decision from the "Netherlands Christian Seceder Church" Synod, see main text. The controversy began when Rev. P. B. Bähler was invited to Schwartz's Scottish mission for Israel in Amsterdam, and gave an hour long prophetic prayer about Isaiah 11 and 12. When his peers heard it, they found it "so strange ... they shuddered to receive it." Per Dutch sources in Delpher archive, link in end note 40, p. 5.

I am not sure if that decision could have affected Fles then - but it suggests an intriguing contrast with the image of when he "scattered the seed" a couple years later. I've emphasized this contrast after I found another source – about Breukelaar as well as Bulens. Beets mentioned, in a back and forth sort of way, an 1872 "unfavorable discussion in the church paper" (p. 244) on the topic within the American CRC. His similar comment on p. 136; "There seemed to be a desire to imitate the Netherlands by branding the teachings of millennialism as a heresy." Later they affected Fles, but I haven't found much to indicate whether he may have been assailed for his beliefs.

A 2009 dissertation by Roelf Janssen on Confessional Subscription in the Dutch Reformed Tradition since 1816 (available online) confirms there were several declarations made by the CGKN (I call it the CRC in the Netherlands) against any "word and writing" about "the millennial reign and the dual resurrection ... as the teaching of Scripture." p. 183. The dual resurrection refers to resurrecting the righteous saints first, and then unrepentant sinners after the 1000 year reign. Which Bible verses supported this doctrine? I'll skip that question; unless I can find Fles's answer (he must have cited the book of Revelation). The "Prayer for Israel" Dutch history says Synods of 1863, 1866, 1872 and 1879 discussed the general issue, and "In the synod of 1879 where 39 delegates were gathered, it is also Ds. van Andel who makes the proposal for further study of the prophecies. Finally, this proposal is rejected, [with] 23 against and 16 for." He had to retract a statement saying that "one day they [the Jews] will become a people again" at a later Synod in 1896 (also per the same source, link below).

Rev. Gispen began teaching at Kampen by 1875. The 1879 Synod [said about Chiliasm](#) in a letter from Gispen, "You see, then, that we do not tolerate any doctrinal deviation [afwijking], however slight." Rev. Bulens addressed that Synod too (more about it later). The vote could very well have been the same session mentioned in end note 4. Revs. Lucas Lindeboom and J. H. Donner were other prominent ministers who were for tolerating it. Both were also Kampen professors in 1873; Donner was associated with mission work, and became the CRC in the Netherlands mission director in 1877. Kennedy notes his "mentality" was of the Gelderland type. Rev. Donner was against replacement theology ("Geenvervangingsleer") and Prof. Lindeboom was said to be "fiercely engaged in evangelism," and one who would debate "against modern ministers and against socialists." (Per Jos Westerbeke in this Prayer [Gebed] for Israel website, so its text translates in one click, or 'translate' can be in the web address; <https://translate.google.com/translate?hl=en&sl=nl&u=https://gebedvoorisrael.nl/2013/03/19/de-verwachting-israels-en-het-keerpunt-in-de-kerk/>. The Expectation of Israel - And the Turning Point in the Church).

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Another of its interesting stories: “Kropveld ... was publicly reprimanded by synod advisor Kuyper” to remove the word ‘Israel’ and substitute ‘Jews.’ A different history (an [online 1936 publication / compilation](#)) of the school said in Dutch, “In 1888, Prof. dr. L. Lindeboom already talks about the predominance of philosophy over theology.”

Was there any connection between the Netherlands declaration in 1872 and the US dispute that same year? There was also a reorganization of the General Mission Committee in their Netherlands denomination that year. This archival link partly goes to English, and has an explanation of the Zendingscommissie origins – but it doesn’t say Reveil; <http://resources.huygens.knaw.nl/zendingoverzeesekerken/RepertoriumVanNederlandseZendings-EnMissie-archieven1800-1960/gids/organisatie/1145895760>. An NGZV missionary (?) “was taken over by the mission committee in 1884 so that, after much struggle, Soemba was obtained as a mission site.” I wonder what that period from 1872 through 1879 was like? Premillennialism was well known, and controversial. How closely was it associated with evangelism? With Jews? How involved in the missions, and in the controversy, was Fles? Per an online Dutch archive; Het Utrechts Archief, “Generale deputaten voor de zending” (try [this shortened link](#). Note: Zending can be wrongly translated as ‘shipment’). End note 40 takes another look, not sure if those sources are better than this one. This says the Dr. C. Schwartz mission to Jews was the origin of the Nederlandse Gereformeerde Zendings Vereniging (NGZV) or the Dutch Reformed Missionary Association. “The members of the NGZV originally came from the Reveil movement ...” [the next half sentence says that Kuyper “usurped” those “ecclesiastical missions” – perhaps readers could check if this story is told within the [neo-Calvinism web page](#).] The Amsterdam mission was transferred to the later version of their Church in 1894. It was considered interdenominational from the beginning (per Partonadi Sutarman) and see W. Westerbeke’s paper in Dutch, link in end note 2, on Messianic-confessing Jews for more on Brummelkamp’s role and how the mission began in 1861. Interactions – tea time– occurred before that; Brummelkamp met with the Scottish (UPC’s John Henderson started the E.A.) in the 1850s, per te Velde. Here is translated link of source. [https://translate.google.com/translate?sl=nl&tl=en&u=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.dbnl.org%2Ftekst%2Fveld009anto01\\_01%2Fveld009anto01\\_01\\_0024.php](https://translate.google.com/translate?sl=nl&tl=en&u=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.dbnl.org%2Ftekst%2Fveld009anto01_01%2Fveld009anto01_01_0024.php). (This section mentions the town of Lochem, where Johanna was from.) “Not such a wonder, when one considers, it is in the tradition of the Further Reformation [which] had always been the strong link with the Scottish Reformed [Church].” (The quote is at the end of p. 372.) Brummelkamp, Bulens, and van Andel were “kindred spirits” (from its note 6, here is a [picture of it](#)) regarding 1863 and preaching “the truth” even outside of your own church or denomination (John 17:21 was “the starting point”), which was Fles’s approach too; they were all ecumenical, irenic, and/or nonsectarian.

Brummelkamp’s dealings with these various groups was important, he met with members of the Reveil, “the men of the revival, including ardent Chiliasters, among others Da Costa.” (Per article on topic in Delpher archive, link in end note 40.) I haven’t quite determined if te Velde’s biography (see previous link) thinks Brummelkamp’s beliefs were premillennial or not, but see this translation of p. 383 (or an [image of the full quote](#)): “In Varsseveld and the surrounding area, Brummelkamp’s student J.F. Bulens and others [managed] to steer the revival in the right direction. ... The meetings were now a new sign of life in the church. One had to visit them, fight the evil [from] in [inside of] them and cultivate and promote the good. ... [Brummelkamp] was inclined, especially initially, to appreciate the revivals positively.” Source’s note 45 said, “Brummelkamp himself spoke in 1878 in Varsseveld in front of 2000 people.” (I think those revivals may have been the exact same events as the ones held by the Confessional Association in Varsseveld, especially if Bulens was involved with those as well as with the church one.)

Bouwman chronicled (in link above) the 1857 Synod said, “It is well known that there are two directions in the church, which also exist among the Teachers ... but that the direction [richting] of the Docent Brummelkamp has had a harmful effect on some students.” They disapproved of the “fierce polemic that [has] disturbed the peace of the church.” (Disagreement then was over “the doctrine of the Covenant” or the confessions– Calvinist issues, not premillennialism?)

[https://www.calvin.edu/library/database/crcnasynod/1884acts\\_et.pdf](https://www.calvin.edu/library/database/crcnasynod/1884acts_et.pdf). p. 8 of the document has the Synod quotes. It says Fles also wrote another different article in De Wachter. Synod decided the magazine should be not

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be used to publish religious disputes, but it could still present “fraternal” exchanges of ideas and Hulst’s apologetics. p. 9-10. Hulst’s reference to (or reply to Fles about) “famous theologians” must’ve meant a Brakel and other seventeenth-century Dutch theologians who developed precursors to dispensationalism and premillennialism. Meinders called the people who still liked to read a Brakel (he was including himself) “old codgers,” per Beets.

<sup>28</sup> The contemporaneous newspaper articles from the Grondwet (link follows) clearly assumed readers knew the story’s context; there was an election “last week” in January 1885 with “71 votes on Rev. Fles of the Second Holl. Christ. in Zeeland [North Street Church’s original name].” But it didn’t get the necessary two-thirds percentage for an appeal “to Pella” to apparently overturn the prior decision, so they anticipated holding a re-vote. The reason and chronology for another vote at that time is tough to fit together, it sounds similar to the earlier decision. I could try to find all the details and dates sufficient for a timeline, but what I’d really like to understand are the motivations and interplay between the participants.

Fles didn’t use the present-day terminology, “not ... lying low,” however he did say in Dutch, “I have not stood still on that [ecumenical] point of view [of his].” A prior part of his article showed a wider perspective; but the sentence (and other ones not included here) might be tricky, I’ll try not to insert my own assumptions. “One can hold to his confession very well and pray with God’s children for the administration [or support – the word is also found in Phil. 1:19] of Gentiles and Jews, Turks [Muslims], Roman Catholics and Protestants until [they come to?] the faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Yes, pray with each other for salvation for our own churches.” It did use the word ‘voor’ twice at its end. I paraphrased the “small partitions” sentence which was immediately after the preceding’s “pray with all the believers.” **Brummelkamp once said something very similar**, “Small differences are not taken into account” when cooperating with the Evangelical Alliance. Omitted from Fles’s sentence was this translated section; “we do not think about everything for the same reason,” since I thought it could’ve meant the Baptists and other groups do not all think the same *things*. In saying “all three of the Church congregations [‘Gemeenten’],” Fles likely meant the city held three denominations, or their local parishes. What was the third one? Not sure, I looked for more again later. End note 34 has a sermon from Fles in Zeeland with a similar theme. One of the follow up letters from someone else mentions the possibility of the Reformed Church and the Christian Reformed Church rejoining each other, and then that person brought up his premillennial beliefs. I’m not sure if that person thought a differing eschatology was an obstacle to a potential reunion between the denominations?

Rev. Fles visited Pella and preached in Pella’s Holland Presbyterian Church again on the Sunday after 13-08-1885, per the Volksvriend newspaper. Then a different newspaper, the Grondwet, told how Fles seemed to have enjoyed preaching to Darbyites. Scholte’s sons belonged to the Brethren church, not sure if they were there in 1885. They probably were, Rev. Wm. Zeilstra’s history said the Grace Brethren bought the church building from that same First Presbyterian in 1884.

Both the Baptist (I’m not sure if this was the same Berean one on Main St. today) and the Brethren church in Pella were mostly comprised of Dutch people. You could find familiar names from this paper among their ranks; Kruidenier, Betten, Kuyper – not sure if they were related or not.

Here is a [link to the Grondwet page](#). A series of letters between or about the Revs. Fles, Meinders, and Hulst was also ongoing in the paper, so their “pen-battle” apparently did occur. Ds. Meinders wrote “Short Criticism” [here](#), but it doesn’t appear to discuss Fles. I’ll keep looking for examples. I don’t think the De Wachter paper is available online. Update; I am getting involved in the project to digitize the old missionary magazine, as a somewhat unofficial contact person.

<sup>29</sup> [https://www.calvin.edu/library/database/crcnasynod/1886acts\\_et.pdf](https://www.calvin.edu/library/database/crcnasynod/1886acts_et.pdf). p. 8 of the document.

<sup>30</sup> In June – it’s likely the appeal process began before then.

Dr. Joel Beeke. [https://dutchamericans.files.wordpress.com/2017/03/2003\\_04\\_beeke.pdf](https://dutchamericans.files.wordpress.com/2017/03/2003_04_beeke.pdf) (new link). Rev. Meinders had moved from his previous church in Iowa to another one in Illinois. The “dialog” was through articles



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in the *Grondwet* newspaper, p. 55. Rev. Fles is mentioned on the same page. That newspaper is archived online, in the same Dutch Delpher archive that contains the other American newspaper I've been looking up. See previous end note for a link. So I can perhaps continue to find most of these articles, and then try to capture the text to run through Google Translate which usually gives the gist of their discussion.

On p. 50, Rev. Gerrit Bieze describes an early disagreement with the preaching of Rev. Seine Bolks - here not called premillennial, but Bolks is described that way in end note 64. Rev. Bieze has written about that South Holland church in *Origins* (1989, Spring) as well; "splits, splinterings, and secessions [were] ... common." The issue has other nice articles; <https://www.calvin.edu/hh/origins/Spring89.pdf>. On p. 27, Elton Bruins wrote about churches in Alto, WI. He said the Reformed church there had "dissidents" originally from the Aalten area who formed a "Hollandsche Gereformeerde Sion [Zion] Kerk" in 1858. Another *Origins* article by Swierenga in 2009 mentioned it too. Grand Rapids also had similar (denominational?) churches. Bruins said of that church, "It does not appear likely that there was a division along theological or ecclesiastical lines," since some families "apparently took a dislike" to their new minister, Rev. Stobbelaar, who later went to Cedar Grove in 1865. But perhaps both occurred? (The "controversial" Stobbelaar also went to the Zeeland and Pella (in 1873) Reformed churches, causing people to break away in each town. Bieze was also a source for that story.) Another story by Rob Kroes said on p. 21 that schisms later occurred within many Dutch communities as the result of "a clustering around doctrinal positions [of election and of special grace] seen as the true teaching of the church."

<sup>31</sup> That first sermon/article here is also similar to Lamentations 1:1-8 (an acrostic poem). Let me know if you want to see the original Dutch version, or a (mostly) finished, complete version. The *Volksvriend* is online, see end note 38, and you can download text, but the OCR results will still need to be cleaned up, and run through Google Translate. I won't be able to summarize every article from Fles. I see some people think that verse from First Thessalonians refers to the Holy Spirit's gift of prophecy, but Fles didn't seem to agree. Either the first one or the little sermon-like article of his on Thessalonians was "reprinted from" a Dutch periodical. Article [identified the missionary periodical](#), which was edited by Rev. Korff from the Amsterdam Jewish mission, a copy was likely sent to Fles, but it really must have given or reflected Fles's own views. Periodical articles led to a different group, a search found an 1889 [Christian magazine](#) in English (is not the same story, link is just the picture, here is the [whole tract](#)). [Their page 15](#) "Our Platform" in 1889 wanted "Palestine as the country in which to re-establish a Jewish commonwealth" (that location was not yet an acknowledged, established idea.) Obviously they were Zionists.

There were two more articles in July and in September, 1886, both on 2 Corinthians 12:9-10. The first, "**My grace is enough for you**" didn't seem to discuss the Jewish people. The second one, "**Weak and Mighty**" said: The Bible is a miraculous book ... because in it is the holy land ... and people we call "saints" ... who are the signs and wonders of the Lord of Hosts, who dwells on Mount Zion, Isaiah 8:18. Fles said that the Apostle Paul was for many inexplicable, yet he preached so clearly "*no distinction* [my italics] is to be retained between Jew and Gentile because they have [both?] sinned," then there was possibly an allusion to Ephesians 3, and finally that section ended by saying, "and yet the Savior will come out of Zion, and all Israel will be saved." Next he went on to verses from other books of Paul's such as Galatians 6:14 ('May I never boast in anything but the cross') and 2 Corinthians.

In December of 1886 was yet another [article](#) from Fles on 2 Peter 3: 5-9. "**This world is going to perish.**" Fles showed a nice change in tone, going from accusing to acknowledging mercy to awestruck. He began by describing unbelievers, forsaking and contradicting the Bible; "For this is unknown to them." ... A little later he said this affects not only the unbelievers, but "also those who believe the Bible, but **took away the promises of His future**. They also do not seriously conduct Scripture studies against [about] these revealed truths. Ignorance is the best means by which the prince of darkness can hold onto the men of truth." Then he wrote about the Flood described in Genesis, and said the Lord's judgements of the wicked and scornful in the future will be like it was then; "whoever seeks their salvation in this world will perish with her." Next was an illegible section or two, then his article cited a key passage from Acts 1:7 about the timing of restoration before finishing, "But there are still those who have been known by Him to come to repentance. Would they be lost? No, that is not possible. They must be drawn from the power of Satan to God; that they may partake of the glory that awaits us. They belong to the

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chosen Bride of the Lamb. As soon as the last member is added to the body of the Lord, He will come to reign as King, and His Bride with Him in glory." The Church (probably including Israel in this case?) is the Bride of Christ. End note 34 has a sermon from the following year with a similar representation of the "day of glory."

Rev. Fles believed preachers are preparing the way for the Lord to return, as would anyone who took the next verse twelve literally, since 2 Peter 3:12 says, "Looking for and hastening unto the coming of the Day of God."

At the end of the newspaper page (after two other possibly related religious articles) was a somewhat similar poem by Rev. Robert M'Cheyne, The World goes Beyond (it may have been "She Has Chosen the World"). He also wrote the Songs of Zion (one from Psalms was "Thy Word is a Lamp unto my Feet"). How did they translate poems into another language and still keep the rhymes? He also wrote "Our Debt to Israel." Here is an 1845 biography of him by his friend Rev. A. Bonar with the verse; it is available [from Google Books](#).

M'Cheyne (1813 –1843) was a premillennial, Reformed minister of The Church of Scotland. He and A. Bonar visited Palestine in 1839 (and later) and then said, "We have an unprecedented opportunity to bring the Gospel to the Jews right now," (per FAI Studios, The Great Rage – same group as in the following link). Then they began missions to Jews both there and in Europe. He experienced (or initiated) a spiritual revival that affected many Jews and Scots. Other premillennial believers and Jewish converts in England worked through their mission, so it was considered a forerunner of the Mildmay mission in London (per Thompson's 1902 Jewish Missions book, which counted 90 of them -per Wikipedia). More than one of the Jewish converts mentioned in this paper assisted with or were converted through Mildmay (e. g. Newman). Link for [more information available](#) on Mildmay mission. A description of FAI = "We are a missions organization ... mostly in the Middle East, bringing the urgency of the 'Day of the Lord' [[separate definition](#)] connected to the Great Commission." (Per Devon Phillips, Stephanie Quick).

Adolph Saphir was converted through M'Cheyne's Church of Scotland Jewish mission in 1843. He was a friend and mentor to David Baron (mentioned later in the story; Fles referred to him – and likely did the same for all of these Hebrew Christians and evangelical mission leaders). Here are a few things he wrote in 1898 on the "Mystery" of Israel, <https://juchre.org/saphir/add1.htm>; he cites the same verses in Hosea 3 as Fles did (see end note 82). Some people still repeat quotes and sayings from both he and M'Cheyne, e.g. "God chose Israel, and made an unconditional covenant... Mark this, because upon this rests the whole Gospel." - Saphir in 1898. More of his writings were edited by Baron, and published in 1911 as *Christ and Israel*; an excerpt is at <http://www.covenantandcontroversy.com/in-writing/2016/12/1/jesus-christ-still-weeping>.

I'm not sure if Fles had been waiting until the series of CRC hearings were finally ended before writing those articles; Kennedy's premillennialism paper said, "Fles had just found a new outlet" for his articles when H. P. Oggel moved there, "in Pella." see end note 64. I've already noted the Second International Prophecy Conference was in Chicago that November, in 1886. See end note 12.

<sup>32</sup> This paragraph about the mission to Egypt is particularly interesting since world-wide evangelization was part of the 1886 Prophetic Conference. D. L. Moody held a big 1886 summer conference in Massachusetts that led many students to become foreign missionaries. It was the beginning of the SVM missionary movement. Dr. Arthur Pierson came to speak there. Per this M. Parker article. <http://www.christianitytoday.com/history/2009/august/mobilizing-generation-for-missions.html>

Kruidenier went to Hope College and then to the New Brunswick Dutch Reformed Seminary, but withdrew in 1888 to join the United Presbyterian Church and go on this mission. "Rev. J. Kruidenier and wife arrived in [Asyut] Egypt on December 12, 1889." What about that other denomination? They were mostly Scottish, and had sent a representative to the 1888 Synod. From the Acts of Synod in 1888 of the CRC and of the Reformed Church. It is online; <https://archive.org/stream/actsproceedin16refo#page/526/mode/2up/search/Kruidenier>. p. 253 and 527.



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The Zending mission only happened “after a prolonged discussion.” The CRC Church first tried “to persuade Mr. Kruidenier very strongly to consider a field in this country.” The actual p. 11 of the 1888 Acts, [https://www.calvin.edu/library/database/crcnasynod/1888acts\\_et.pdf](https://www.calvin.edu/library/database/crcnasynod/1888acts_et.pdf). (And Brummelkamp died that year.)

Why did they make him the President? Perhaps since he was already familiar with the UPC? Had he known them from visiting their Amsterdam mission? Fles must have somehow shown he supported the mission as originally planned, although his presumed arguments were not provided by the source materials. Fles’s committee gave \$400 annually. The UPC’s Rev. W. Moorehead reported to the 1890 CRC Synod on Kruidenier’s progress. The CRC’s committee supporting foreign missions ended by 1892, which was about when one of those elders, T. Keppel, protested that the “Synod has decided to confine its Mission endeavors within the bounds of the United States.” From the 1892 Acts of Synod. The Beets’ church history in Dutch said Prof. G. Boer was initially against supporting the Mission, and then in 1892 Rev. Smidt (likely referring to Keppel in Holland) wanted to “unanimously unite behind Classis Holland (in support of Ds. J. Kruidenier)” because Mohammedans might understand Calvinist beliefs better than American Indians. However the CRC Theological Seminary’s first Professor, Boer then used an idiomatic argument to say that would be like “carrying water to the sea.” p. 203 and 286 of original document is same as p. 303 of the translated version. Later Kruidenier planned to return to the CRC Synod, in the hope of “awakening a much deeper interest among his Holland brethren in our foreign mission work.” From the 1896 Minutes of the General Assembly of the United Presbyterian Church of North America (is online). That year Kruidenier and family went home for a furlough. The UPC spokesman to the CRC Synod said their denomination still wanted a “union” with the CRC, and thanked the CRC churches that gave gifts to the mission, and Kruidenier sent a letter asking to preach in some CRC churches. He undoubtedly did so. I’ll bet he went to Muskegon - and they passed the collection plate around a second time for his mission!

Did Fles help begin the funding for a major foreign mission? A 2006 thesis by Christopher Montrose, [http://scholarworks.gsu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1019&context=history\\_theses](http://scholarworks.gsu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1019&context=history_theses), said Cantine, Phelps and Zwemer were from the same Reformed Seminary as Kruidenier (who is not mentioned here). They all went to Egypt and/or Syria. Not sure why Phelps, the son of Hope’s first President, never went; see p. 141 of Rev. Lewis R. Scudder’s 1998 book *The Arabian Mission's Story: In Search of Abraham's Other Son* – which still does not mention Kruidenier. Scudder came from a line of Reformed Church ministers and missionaries. “With the blessings, but not the financial support, of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Reformed Church, the Arabian Mission was ‘inaugurated independently on April 1, 1889.’ It had to raise its own finances, and was given the status of non-denominational so that it might raise funds outside the Reformed Church.” Montrose, p. 75-76.

Another source said, “The Arabian Mission was fully organized in August, 1889. Although it was deemed best to organize the work on an undenominational basis, its missionary staff and a large majority of the number of its supporters, the Arabian Mission has from the first been the child of the Reformed (Dutch) Church. The actual parentage became apparent and confessed when, by the concurrent action of the General Synod and the mission, the latter, in June, 1894, was formally placed under the care of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Reformed Church. The first missionaries were Rev. James Cantine (sailed in 1889) and Rev. Samuel M. Zwemer (1890).” Quote is from the 1895 Missionary Review of the World.

#### **THE ARABIAN MISSION**

FOUNDED, 1889. INCORPORATED, 1894.  
ADOPTED BY R. C. A., 1894.

Zwemer was a preacher’s kid, went to Hope College and the New Brunswick Seminary a year after Kruidenier, was recruited by and remained a part of the SVM, was ordained by the Reformed Church in Orange City, and has written about his missions to Egypt and Mesopotamia/Iraq. He helped the British Mildmay Mission to the Jews (p. 198 of Thompson’s history), and has been called the “Prince of Missionaries” and the “Apostle to Islam.” He later became a prolific author and a professor at the Presbyterian (with general Reformed beliefs) Princeton Seminary. And he was a photographer (in the 1910s)! <http://www.natgeocreative.com/photography/samuelmzwemer>.

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Zwemer's 1900 book, *Arabia, The Cradle of Islam* describes the Arabian Mission's beginning. Page 357; "In view of the fact that this mission is of necessity undenominational in its personnel and working, contributions are solicited from any and all to whom this may come, without reference to denominational adherence." They sought five year pledges from donors in amounts from two to five hundred dollars. (I'm still trying to guess if Fles's committee gave them money. And if it did contribute, I'd like to know why CRC ministers might've been divided on giving support.)

An influential figure for those three (and it had to be all four – it is not clear why Kruidenier wasn't grouped with the others) of the students who would later become missionaries was their O.T. and languages professor, John Lansing. He was the son of an American U. P. (p. 321) missionary to Egypt, and would himself later join his students there. Lansing, his father, Zwemer, and Kruidenier knew each other in Egypt and later back in the US. The Lansing family would be another interesting area to study.

There were several other contemporaneous articles about Kruidenier's mission in the *Missionary Review of the World* to use as sources. Kruidenier cited a promise in the Bible about Egypt's salvation and blessing (it was from Isaiah 19), the verse is considered to be consistent with premillennialism, although amillennialists have also analyzed it. Zwemer was postmillennial, as he spelled out while noting the different positions in an (online) article. Those missionaries were trying to "Christianize" the world and bring about a golden age before Christ's return. They anticipated things will become better. That *Missionary Review* article seems premillennial ("... and the way opened for His coming in all the glory of His millennial reign.") See end note 71. When did that journal begin? Volume V January-February, 1882 is online at <http://guides.library.yale.edu/c.php?g=296315&p=1976908>.

On June 18, 1888, the Synod of what would later be known as the Christian Reformed Church in North America appointed a different five-member committee to lead the denomination in cross-cultural missions. The committee's name was translated as "The Board of Heathen Missions." From the CRC 125th Anniversary of World Missions; [http://www2.crcna.org/site/uploads/uploads/crwm/Anniversary/WM\\_125th%20Anniversary%20Book\\_Sample.pdf](http://www2.crcna.org/site/uploads/uploads/crwm/Anniversary/WM_125th%20Anniversary%20Book_Sample.pdf). Fles isn't mentioned in this abridged version (if there is a longer one, I haven't checked it). This link might not work now. It has/had a picture of the 1888 Synod that I've re-used.

And then skipping ahead several years ...

Mrs. Rev. J. I. Fles (as they called her) donated five dollars to the Reformed Church foreign missions fund in 1897, per their records. I wonder if there was an interesting story or event as the basis for that gift?

"The Married Ladies' Society of the Reformed Church" of Zeeland Mich. donated to the Chicago Hebrew Mission (mentioned later in paper) in 1896 and again in March – June, 1897. The Mission had another prophecy conference later that year. If their society got that issue of the Jewish Era, then ... see end note 64 – the women could've read about Herzl and the events considered being the beginnings of Zionism. Would they still have donated had it not been for Fles? How can we know the answer? It likely only resulted through his advocacy, even though they were from a different denomination. Was their church premillennially inclined before North Street split off? Now I'm trying to guess if they debated amongst themselves before agreeing to send their hard earned money! (The source follows here [from Google Books](#).) The Jewish Era in 1897 is online.

The older Reformed Church already had several foreign missions in China, Japan, and India. From various sources, here is a [1908 picture from their Synod that year](#).

End note 84 and note 93 of this report takes a look these missions again in 1913 and in 1916 – the end notes are more or less chronological.

<sup>33</sup> Henry Beets. *De Gereformeerde Amerikaan: 1904; 1897-1904*. May, 1904. Their page 227. <http://books.google.com/books?id=N9InAAAAAJ&pg=PA229&lpg=PA229>. His biography of Fles is an article.

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Google translated from the original Dutch. This link repeats the one in end note 6. The previous paragraph was from a different source, the Beets history in Dutch (using [babel.hathitrust.org](http://babel.hathitrust.org)), p. 203.

<sup>34</sup> Anna E. Heebink Bokhorst was 81 when she died.

Fles's sermon in Zeeland on 2 Chronicles 30:26 began, "There was great joy in Jerusalem during the Passover feast ..." It was published and is kept at Calvin's Hekman Library, see [a picture](#) of my sister. Someone there once translated its beginning on the fly for me, reading aloud in his Dutch brogue. My note says the sermon described "a heavenly reward for believers who had suffered." Its themes were quite similar to ones in his other work. This is a translation of the last section that I've reworded a bit. Let me know if you want to see it in full or the original as a pdf. Fles mentioned and cited two 19<sup>th</sup> century European poets/songwriters/theologians in it.

Our forty-year [anniversary party](#) was a happy time here in Zeeland, Michigan in August, 1887.

People flowed in from all sides to the celebration, arriving by train,  
and by horse-drawn wagons and buggies.

Everything was offered through benevolent hearts and hands;  
welcoming the thousands of festive party goers.

Hosts and guests eagerly gave and received their gifts.

What a mixture of people. How they hugged each other heartily!

Many had not seen each other in a long time, some in the whole  
40 years. Much, very much was there to tell, stories and good tidings,  
and many spoke of the good fortunes given to us by our God.

And they asked not each other: with whom or where do you go to church?

Church and ecclesiastical matters were not taken into account,  
instead people spoke about God's mercies that He had abundantly shown.

And this was the soul of the party. They were as one people once again.

They remembered back in 1847, as a people who were only recently  
victims of scorn and ridicule, suffering fines and prison.

They had escaped the drivers' whip [religious repression] by immigrating to the United States.

Like the tribes of Israel [were named] who had their reunion during a Passover feast long ago,  
people pressed each other once again warmly, and felt their strong ties again:

and they realized we are actually one people,

and they heard each other; this was the soul of our party.

...

I hope God may give the Servants of the Gospels among we  
Dutch people cause to think and see how well, how blessed  
it is when the people are one before God.

...

Christian! applaud, your festivity comes. Your Lord,  
your Savior comes, we expect Him from heaven, without sin.  
He will be seen by those who expect Him to bring salvation.  
That will be a party.

...

Our loved ones will be there again, ... adorned in festive garb.

A community having discussions about God's mercies  
with a fully brightened eye, enlightened mind,  
perfect memory, and perfect love.

No death, no mourning, no more rudeness;  
endless joy in the New Jerusalem with hosts of Angels,  
in communion with Him that bought us with His blood,

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with whom we shall reign as priests and kings in unity,  
giving thanks to the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit  
for all the richness of His eternal love, His free grace for all eternity.  
Day of glory, how does our Soul go to You!  
O eternal Jerusalem, how we desire to enter Your gates;  
how our hearts go to the fountains that are within You!  
Come, Lord Jesus! Get Your desiring Bride,  
Your passionate Church to You,  
for Your coming is [as] the One who gives us perfect salvation.  
Amen.

Do you think he was describing a physical or a spiritual Kingdom? Did he mean bring the Rapture? Was his “no death” describing the millennium or eternal heaven? See Isaiah 25: 6-8, Revelation 21:4. End note 86 has his “... forever and ever.” I searched on his terms to find this evocative Bible verse. Jerusalem’s gate of the fountain was built by “the wall of the pool of Shiloam by the king’s garden, and unto the stairs that go down from the city of David.” Neh. 3: 15. The pool of Shiloam was where Christ healed a blind man.

<http://www.bible.ca/archeology/bible-archeology-pool-of-siloam.htm>. A video visit to the ancient area with CBN News; <https://www.facebook.com/JerusalemDateline/videos/1947773865259282/>.

I wouldn’t be surprised if the family story, told to me by my mother – who typically heard them from my Grandpa’s sister, got some details wrong. There couldn’t have been very many unbelievers in that town with churches on almost every block. Were they scheduled meetings or studies? Possibly held outside? Perhaps the family’s memories really meant to recall a different time when Fles may have witnessed/evangelized outdoors (like at a revival) or on street corners, or were they possibly from reactions to the sermon at that anniversary celebration? Most ministers would not deign to step down from the pulpit and onto a wooden box. It is especially hard to picture a minister being scorned within the community, as the family story implied. Usually they were respected. If it’s true, then a negative reaction suggests his message may have included controversial topics. But then wouldn’t a public pronouncement like that leave more of a trace today?

End note 4 has the Beets quote about Fles’s early success in spreading the gospel, then Beets said something like, “... and to date, which also witnesses, in America,” although he probably meant Fles’s preaching from the pulpit was fruitful. End notes 124 and 130 have more on premillennialism in Zeeland. The town was once described as being very political. It is between Holland, MI and Grand Rapids.

My “must have ... agreed” conclusion is based on several pieces of specific evidence (Jewish Era attributed an 1893 anonymous direct donation from Zeeland, MI), and more generally upon sources studying the relationship between a congregation and their minister. One example was from William Walvoord, see source in end note 9. Janet Sheeres noted how CRC congregations’ elders used to show their approval of their minister’s sermon by shaking his hand afterwards, from her article in the fall edition of the 2015 CRC history magazine Origins.

“*De Grondwet* [The Constitution] is the oldest Dutch newspaper in the United States and was established in 1860;” and it was based in Holland, MI. The quote is from a 1923 *Onze Toekomst* (Our Future) article. [http://flps.newberry.org/article/5420781\\_1\\_0433](http://flps.newberry.org/article/5420781_1_0433). Link doesn’t work, although site still exists. The article is available in Holland, MI at the RCA archive; [https://digitalcommons.hope.edu/collection\\_registers/1732/](https://digitalcommons.hope.edu/collection_registers/1732/). And their link for the Grondwet didn’t work, try this Dutch archive instead; <https://www.kb.nl/>.

Gerrit Bieze said in his source noted in end note 9, “in the July 27, 1886 issue of *De Grondwet* an announcement, which stated that the ‘Vrije Evangelische Gemeente’ [The Free Evangelical Church] of Kalamazoo [MI] had affiliated with the Presbyterian Church and was calling the Rev. J. I. Fles, Christian Reformed minister at Zeeland, Michigan.” They probably heard him preach; the timing seems like their call may have occurred right around the 1886 Synod session – or three weeks after his article about Israel. There were other Midwestern churches from that small

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denomination of independent churches (affiliated groups took on the name in 1880, the Zending (or Sending, translates to Mission) churches were “off shoots of the old Afscheiding movement,” Bieze p. 10); its similarly-named parent denomination in the Netherlands – and in neighboring Bentheim, Germany - was once known as the Old Reformed Church, and was influenced by the Reveil, the movement led by premillennialists like Da Costa. (Per Wikipedia, and from other articles). The 1902 Acts of Synod p. 81: “Even our mother, the Christian Reformed Church in the Netherlands, mistrusted us,” said a representative from that denomination in the Netherlands (or a group containing it). Bavinck’s father was also a CRC minister – **one who was “anti-modernist” and “orthodox”** (per Eglinton) or possibly sympathetic to a more premillennial doctrine; his family came from Bentheim and had once belonged to the Old Reformed Church. Here is a [1911 article H. Beets wrote](#) about that denomination.

Page 149 of De Gereformeerde Amerikaan linked above had a story by the First Kalamazoo C.R.C. minister in 1901-1908 that said the Free Evangelical Church in Kalamazoo was started by Ds. de Best. There was a “prolonged and profound fraternal strife” and “great division.” Were they related to premillennial controversies and/or the conflict with church Modernists? To answer probably, I went to [another GJ Kok article](#); “... evangelistic work should come from the local church as much as possible. It was also judged logical that **weak churches** [ones where the Gospel was **not ‘accurately brought’**] should be supported by a provincial fund. At that time, Tilburg, NL was the center of evangelistic work in the provinces of North Brabant and Limburg. Rev. C. de Best (1837-1919) was employed there in the years 1875 and 1876...” Soon in Kalamazoo, MI in 1879 the first source said, “Rev. de Best made his last sermon in our church and the next week he set up a Free Evangelical [the Synod’s story below said ‘independent;’ it was also called ‘Rehoboth’] church a block away. ... so that the **evil rumors** were confirmed.” Twenty families went with him, and forty families remained. The 1880 CRC Synod said their inquiry received a “not totally favorable testimony” from the Netherlands CRC “about the doctrine and life of Rev. C. de Best.” One conclusion might be that they’d look more for other issues with ministers when **differing theologies** didn’t agree? He had previously left Kampen Seminary in 1863 (before Fles enrolled, but he might have known van Anandel) to become one of the first missionaries in Islamic Suriname (Jews and Muslims were both considered “civilized pagans”, per Maryse Kruithof’s online paper, “Shouting in a Desert ...”) and then at a Belgian mission (see end note 27). He was still associated with Varsseveld Classis in 1870, see end note 4. The former mission was through the “Netherlands Association for Israel” (was that associated or together somehow with the “NGZV”?) Per Robert Young’s 1884 [Light in Lands of Darkness](#), see my other end notes (such as end note 27 and “Soemba.” Jacqueline A.C. Vel has more about the Indonesian island that she calls Sumba.)

Beets’ history in English mentioned this church’s “secession” and his longer history in Dutch did too. He listed three splits; if you include this one then Fles was connected to each of them. That small denomination did not gradually dissolve apart; I think they eventually joined another non-Dutch evangelical denomination with a similar name, then the denomination became “fully identified with the fundamentalist movement,” per Joel Carpenter’s book on Revivalism and Fundamentalism, p. 156. More on this denomination is in end notes 40 and see end note 67 for more on that particular church.

I didn’t include each and every time Rev. Fles was called by some church. Another instance from the Delpher archive of De Volksvriend was the “Gerefoormed Kerk” Bethel church “by Pella” in 1884. I’ll try googling all those terms to find what denomination that was! Van Der Zee’s 1912 history suggests it was probably a Reformed / RCA church, “Hollanders were numerous enough in the district north of Pella to build a house of worship near the Skunk River: Bethel Church, which has been maintained since 1866.” Other sources say it was south of Pella.

A Holland Christian Reformed church in Grand Rapids called on Fles at Zeeland to see if he would come to serve them in January, 1887. (per The Volksvriend from Delpher archive.) The “East street” address identifies it as what would become Eastern Avenue C.R.C. They must have known Fles was an outspoken evangelizer, see end note 31 for his articles from right before then. Rev. Sevensma, their new minister began in 1887, and Dr. Swierenga tells a story about how that minister warned teenagers of an “Awakening” and a revival at that time sponsored by a Reformed church in Grand Rapids. Participants were filled with emotion, but the CRC minister considered it

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“subjective.” Possibly held at Fifth R.C. (and other Reformed churches), which was pastored by missional minister Rev. Joldersma. <http://www.swierenga.com/frankdoezemafamilyhistory.html>.

Today Eastern Ave. C.R.C. is considered to be one of the more liberal CRC churches in Grand Rapids, but what did they think in those earlier times? See end note 71 and note 105 for more on that church.

<sup>35</sup> De Eerste Christelijke Gereformeerde Gemeente, 1867-1917, Muskegon, Michigan. Grand Rapids, Mich., The Cargill co., 1917. <http://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015071424587;view=1up;seq=19> quoted. <http://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015071424587;view=1up;seq=12> His picture. Buildings on p. 4 and 6. Google translated from the original Dutch. This church history explained why Fles came to shepherd them; “The Supreme Lord ruled it.” Muskegon is 40 miles northwest of Grand Rapids, by Lake Michigan.

<sup>36</sup> <http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~mimuskeg/AdvMusk5.html>. Former Muskegon MIGenWeb Project.

<sup>37</sup> Christian Nation. Volume 49. p. 6. 1908. A story about that Synod session. Also see end note 72. It is available [from Google Books](#).

<sup>38</sup> By Thomas Boslooper (p. 26 of subsequent link) who also said there were 1,300 people in each of 3 Sunday services, and by Rev. Bultema who said it was 1,500. Rev. Fles’s had “over 1,600 souls” in Heritage Hall article. I’m not sure if it actually was the largest CRC church. Jacob’s Peril was likely referring to [Jeremiah 30:7](#), a significant prophetic verse. End note 119 says this again.

The point about three new churches is mentioned in a couple sources. They ended up in the Muskegon classis, and therefore interacted with First Muskegon Church later.

Fles wrote another article in the Orange City, IA newspaper, The Volksvriend, on April 9, 1891. I can’t tell if he had visited the nascent Chicago Hebrew Mission yet, but I doubt the timing was a coincidence. Blackstone’s letter to President Harrison was dated March 5, 1891. The Volksvriend printed an article about his Memorial on March 26 which favored Blackstone’s “important petition ... born from a conference of Jews and Christians” in Chicago. The petition said, “According to God’s division of the nations, Palestine is their home, their inalienable heritage, from which they [the Jews of the first and second centuries] were driven out by force ... so cruelly robbed [of the land] by our Roman ancestors.” Authored by H.P.O. of Orange City, clearly the paper’s owner and editor, Henry P. Oggel. He and Fles knew each other, see end notes 31 and 64. This shows how I researched what Oggel knew at the time: [transcribed, translated text](#).

Fles’s article from April is basically a sermon on Isaiah 26:14-16 entitled **God’s Intention**. “Israel has gone astray for centuries to experience how you are a righteous God.” ... “What Israel did not do for centuries, it does now. ... confess with a sincerely faithful heart. Truly, in the Lord our God is the salvation of Israel.” The tense seems to change from the present to the future, after that another section finished with, “And God’s discipline [or correction] will one day bring the whole people to justice. From the deepest sense of powerlessness and sinfulness and through faith in His eternal loyalty, they will cry out and call on Him from whom faith rejoices: ‘Totally helpless until they flee to Him, He will be their savior.’” This common Biblical theme is not dissimilar to the one from van Dijk’s sermon on Jeremiah 3, see a following note. More about Fles’s 1891 sermons is in end note 119.

Here is the original article with it, and another about Blackstone’s Memorial in Dutch, but I haven’t gotten a good enough translation yet. Well, here is a [picture of the article](#) downloaded from Delpher. The Volksvriend article’s source is from the [Delpher archive newspapers](#) section. See an [image of my search](#). Moorhead’s “Father of Zionism” document has the original text, see end note 45.

Another interesting event that occurred in April of 1891 was the first round of formal heresy accusations against Charles Briggs by the Presbytery of New York. He was the Presbyterians’ own “most prominent biblical scholar”



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(p. 361 of Dorrien's 2001 book on The Making of American Liberal Theology ...). Briggs was a proponent of critical analysis who was "disturbed by the crude literalism and ahistorical exegesis of the premillennialist movement" (p. 345) which said Christ would return to Jerusalem. Proceedings continued until he was excommunicated in 1893.

Dr. Bavinck addressed the first 1891 Christian Social Congress in Amsterdam (per Professor John Bolt's <https://www.thefreelibrary.com/Herman+Bavinck%27s+contribution+to+Christian+social+consciousness.-a0255655781> and Bolt's Bavinck on the Christian Life: Following Jesus in Faithful Service; one of his resolutions sought to "oppose the accumulation of capital and landed property") in November, and he became known beyond the Dutch borders in 1892 speaking at the Alliance of the Reformed Churches holding the Presbyterian System (per <https://banneroftruth.org/us/resources/articles/2001/dr-herman-bavinck-1854-1921-theologian-of-the-word/>).

And one could argue a Protestant liberal [social gospel](#) began around this time as well; Rev. Washington Gladden was a delegate to the international congress of Congregationalists in London in 1891. The Catholic Church's *Rerum novarum* [appeared that year](#). Were the different movements reacting to each other, or to other common causes?

In 1891 A. Kuenen (one [bio](#), and see [in wikipedia](#)), [professor of historical-critical OT](#) study on the Leiden faculty (Bavinck [was conflicted](#) when he met him – per W. de Wit), delivered a commemoration speech on the 25th anniversary of the "Assembly of Modern Theologians." He'd "made extensive contributions" to its establishment in 1866, they'd met every year, and he had "direct influence ... on the development of the modern direction in the Netherlands." Humanism and "social issues played a role [in that speech of his]," per Buitenwerf-van der Molen, pages 29, 35 of thesis – but the link doesn't work now? She also has a book on it with a section available online. His 1875 book (called "culturally important" in 2015) was "specially directed against those who rest theological [dogmas on the fulfilment of prophecy](#)."

The [translated in 1877 version's](#) introduction shows from the first page the battleground was over eschatology: "... the alleged fulfilment of the predictions contained in the prophetic writings of the Old Testament ... are regarded by modern apologetical writers of the orthodox school as being established. ... such supernaturalistic views ... [skipping ahead]... remain as yet unaccomplished. Their **spiritual fulfilment in Christianity** [my bold] is something quite **different** from what the prophets contemplated." See an image of [this section](#) here. In it, the author (or Muir) seems to argue that prophetic truth was in doubt since Jewish "restoration" had not yet "been realized" and the amount which had occurred so far wasn't important. Had he read Ezekiel 39:27 = xxxix? Yes, on p. 506 where he says it first was realized at Pentecost in Acts 2:17-21 in the NT. If I understand him, then he goes on to the new covenant of Jeremiah 31:32-33, which is when they are seen(?) as the "Christian community the regenerated people of God." [p. 509](#) has NT "is antiChilastic" and "the promise made to Israel is transferred". But if this theology was based on events, shouldn't it have been rethought after facts changed in 1917 and 1948?

1892 was also when the German J. Weiss wrote "Jesus' Preaching of the Kingdom of God," whose theology was basically liberal when he developed [form criticism](#). He later advised someone similar, R. Bultmann - and that person ended up teaching [interesting students](#), who may have basically disagreed with some of those premises. Schweitzer's 1906 book linked in end note 71 has more; see its chapter about eschatology's "struggle" (conflict).

More from 1892: American premillennialist A. J. Gordon gave a series of six lectures at the RCA Seminary in New Jersey and acknowledged "great indebtedness" to Van Oosterzee's theology (per Scott Gibson's biography of him).

More from after that: I haven't studied much about the likelihood that church modernism got going around then. Note the Catholic Church's 1910-1967 battle against it! [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oath\\_Against\\_Modernism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oath_Against_Modernism).

<sup>39</sup> op. cit. Henry Beets. The Christian Reformed Church in North America ... (history in English). [p. 158](#). One emotional plea given by Fles in 1907 might have been the basis of Beets' description. It's quoted later in the paper.

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<sup>40</sup> Robert Swierenga. Dutch Chicago: A History of the Hollanders in the Windy City. p. 140. Swierenga's family had belonged to Rev. De Leeuw's Douglas Park C.R.C. per his Swierenga Family History. It is available [from Google Books](#).

Bruins and Swierenga's "Brothers' Quarrels in the Dutch Reformed Immigrant Churches in the Nineteenth Century," and Swierenga's "Iowa Letters" say Dutch Réveil leaders like Bilderdijk once taught premillennial doctrines. <http://www.swierenga.com/FamilyQuarrelsFrontMatter.html>. This page is actually different. More from him at; <http://www.swierenga.com/pubs.html>, and see his Van Raalte and Scholte paper and his church secessions one.

Another Swierenga article or two describes "followers of De Cock in America [who prized orthodoxy over unity]." Bilderdijk directed Isaac Da Costa, a Jew, towards "the prophecies, to the promises given" to the Jewish. Then Da Costa converted in 1822. Later Da Costa taught Scholte. Per Gerrit TenZythoff's Sources of Secession: The Netherlands Hervormde Kerk on the Eve of the Dutch ... p. 74–96 (link below) and other sources. Spalink also noted that Da Costa influenced several of the CRC's original leaders in the Netherlands. The two most prominent Kampen professors who had been leaders of the secession, Anthony Brummelkamp (1811 - 1888) and Simon Van Velzen, both belonged to the "Scholte Club," said Swierenga. That was at the University of Leiden, before Scholte became more premillennial in 1842, when he wrote a prophecy ("voorspellingen" in Dutch) book translating John Darby. Darby had come there and met Scholte. It is online at Google Books. Scholte said he is in "complete agreement" with those ideas (p. 137 of Oostendorp's biography) and propounded his premillennial views for a few years before his group emigrated in 1847. Brummelkamp and Van Velzen were not usually associated with premillennialism. Nor was De Cock, but I will try to study his theology more (see end note 2). Many of these end notes were written before I learned that De Cock possibly knew Fles, and so it could mean other CRC ministers in the Netherlands did know about Isaac Fles. I'll keep looking for corroborating evidence!

Geert van Klinken said in Dutch Jews As Perceived by Themselves and by Others: ... (Brill, 2001. p. 126. Is not linked to here), "Interestingly, many Afscheidenen [Seceders] included the Jews among the chosen. God would be true to His promises He had given to Abraham. In the view of many Afscheidenen this meant the Jews would convert in the latter days. After that great event, the land of Canaan would be restored to them." He cites Sipkes' "chiliastic" 1877 book on "The future of the Lord or the doctrine of the last things." That book was mostly verses "more about Israel" than anything else, and was "published in connection with the appearance of a modern pastor Rev. S. Lulofs, who gave a few lectures in Winterswijk in the Winter of 1877 on 'Israel's prophets.'" Sipkes engaged in a struggle against the modernist attempt "to strip Biblical prophecy of its supernatural character," per Holtrigter article, linked below. An excellent [GJ Kok series](#) (see [an image from source](#)) from the gereformeerdekerken.info website mentions Rev. Sipkes' "chiliasm" or believing "a paradise will be established on Earth" and shows their "strange collaboration" with the "Friends." "He also spoke about it frankly in the classis and without [too much] opposition from the classis."

I've already noted that the Secession (Afscheiding) was in 1834, about the same time Isaac Fles converted; (however the Secession had "less rapid progress and also had to deal with more difficulties," so it took another ten years before that movement finally reached Aalten. Per Prof. J. Kamphuis in an interesting 1975 Delpher article in Dutch. Another archive (linked later): "The Christian Secession Congregation in Winterswijk was founded by Rev. Wildeboer of Varsseveld" in 1841. A different source said he was "evangelical" when he preached, even in barns).

Isaac Fles had to have been aware of the premillennial influences within their Dutch society then. I wonder if he met Brummelkamp, who was from the same area? G. Keizer's book, Uit de geschiedenis (history) der Gereformeerde Kerken: Vuren, Herwijnen, Ommeren ... said on p. 108 (Google translated) that the Revs. Brummelkamp, Breukelaar, and Bulens all apparently travelled together in 1839 to Zutphen in order to obtain important church records from the Classis Arnhem. Of course they would later come to know Isaac's son John, as told here. Breukelaar was from Varsseveld. Bulens was too (Brummelkamp was his teacher while a student at Kampen). However some sources might be referring to a more general classis name - Classis Varsseveld.



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Jan van Andel (1839-1910 – only three years older than Fles – warning, there may have been more than one person with a similar name, e.g. his father. Another was “chairman” of the Jewish Mission from 1872-1878, per van Gelderen) went to Kampen Seminary, was rejected in 1860 at his admission exam to become a minister because they “did not trust his orthodoxy,” then “most suspicion was taken away,” so soon his appeal was approved, but tensions reverberated in response to a sermon by van Andel in May 1863 – it was probably about Heb. 4: 8–11 (per Lindeboom’s bio below), which may have been connected to the ban on teaching premillennialism previously noted. Another bio by Block and Molhuysen said in Dutch, “His chiliastic ideas ... and evangelical disposition ... brought him into difficulty with the more sharp Calvinists.” De Cock thought he was a “Remonstrant.” He married Brummelkamp’s daughter in 1861, was recommended by Rev. Bulens, then admitted by the Varsseveld classis and made a pastor in Zutphen. (Per a 2014 book in Dutch by Melis te Velde about Brummelkamp, is online, [https://dbnl.org/tekst/veld009anto01\\_01/veld009anto01\\_01.pdf](https://dbnl.org/tekst/veld009anto01_01/veld009anto01_01.pdf), pages 283-285. Bouwman’s history and the one from van der Sluis were among its sources, J. van Gelderen was too.) The footnotes for this section of the book don’t seem to make his premillennialism very clear; here is a Google translation, “The objections against van Andel concerned the following dogmatic points: the two natures of Christ, the covenant of works, the election of angels, the fall of man and the meaning of natural theology.” The “ultra-orthodox” Elder G. Vos (he was not Geerhardus, on p. 281) in the Kampen area was one of those who pointed out its flaws. “His performance against van Andel was a necessary battle for him [and for another CRC leader then in Michigan who “complains” in an 1868 letter] against the ‘Brummelkampian’ direction in the church.” (More about that later.) However, “In later years van Andel enjoyed general trust in the churches.” He was made a curator of the Theological School in Kampen. He was also “one of the most prominent men in the Christian Social movement” and was associated with the 1891 Social Congress. Per the C. Lindeboom [biographical article in Dutch](#) in the Delpher archive, “Short life message from Ds J. van Andel” in 1932, this notes his chiliast eschatology. Scholte was an influence. More from van Andel is in end note 64; “Israel shall not perish.” In fairness, [an uncredited 1933 Dutch source](#) (found by searching in Delpher archive), did say “Rev. J. van Andel and his followers, who, despite their pre-Augustinian standpoint, **retained full freedom of speech and writing.**” I am glad that those voices were not silenced (although I’d say their views were marginalized by the Reformed denominations).

Rev. Harry Bultema’s book, *Maranatha* said, “Rev. Bulens of Varsseveld and Rev. D. Breukelaar of Aalten stood at van Andel’s side as **convinced Chiliasts.**” p. 346. He also referred to an early Synod session in the 1860s. I’d guess Fles was his source for that observation, although it might have been a matter of record available somewhere else. Bultema studied the history of premillennialism; *Maranatha*’s Appendix 3 used a non-bibliographic citation format. I’ll show this description was likely true for Bulens, and now I’ve found the following (translated) quote after the 1863 decision which said “no one is allowed to teach”, and it does include Breukelaar; “Report on the teachings of... [a later minister] ... on the Millennium and the Dual Resurrection ... When this proposal was accepted, a protest was raised by Rev. JF Bulens, Rev. D. Breukelaar and Elder GJ Hendriks. When we read this protest, it is clear from it that these Brothers did not desire that this teaching might be spread, but that the church would have patience with this teaching and that they feared that **disciplinary actions** might wrongly result from the decision taken. [A valid concern!] [Next other names were also listed (see another [image](#) of the Synodal Report), so then J. Bavinck was in the group who apparently did NOT want to tolerate (by amending prior ruling) Chiliasm in the church.] ... Rev. Bulens [previously?] filed a separate protest and Prof. Brummelkamp joined the objectors.” Search for “Bulens” there. Search on “Bavinck” to form your own conclusion about his actions. The article was authored by “Deputies”, including J. van der Schuit. (He also wrote a similar [document in 1917](#) with its “Het [1879’s 19<sup>th</sup>] artikel verklaart alleen het **grof** [coarse] **zinnelijk** [carnal] **chiliasme.**” The above documents showed their denomination’s “struggle against chiliasm” when/while they examined different persons’ -such as Rev. Gispen’s beliefs about it, also denominations’ and types BUT note the 1879 CRC in the Netherlands Synod said it “makes no distinction” between those various types of Chiliastic beliefs.)

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Here is a translated link to the 1933 retrospective, “Rapport over de leer van Ds. A.M. Berkhoff betreffende het duizendjarig rijk en de tweeërlei opstanding” <https://www-stickysystems-com.translate.goog/pics/Rapport-over-de-leer-van-Ds-AM-Berkhoff.htm? x tr sch=http& x tr sl=en& x tr tl=nl& x tr hl=en& x tr pto=wapp>

Rev. Bulens lodged a separate protest and Prof. Brummelkamp joined the objectors. "The undersigned feel compelled, now that no further explanation has been given to Article 16 of the Synod of Franeker according to their wishes, to join the protest already submitted in the Synod of 1863 by Rev. Bulens et al., because also in their opinion, by the feeling of the physical return of Christ none of the main truths of the Reformed Doctrine are overthrown; as such no infringement is made on the regularity of faith; and that nevertheless the interpretation of the article could give rise to an incorrect application of church discipline..."

The digibron archive has another document from 1932 called, “Het **chiliasme** op de synode van Franeker (1863)”, with more details and quotes from the 1866 decision that could fit in here. I did check this other original 1866 source –cited elsewhere here;

[https://www.google.com/books/edition/Handelingen\\_van\\_de\\_Synode\\_der\\_Christelij/2LBcAAAAcAAJ](https://www.google.com/books/edition/Handelingen_van_de_Synode_der_Christelij/2LBcAAAAcAAJ).

[This longer article in the Delpher archive](#) from 1930 by L. Holtrigter is similar. The minister being accused then said, “I will now be called a heretic ... because I preach about Rom. 11: 25-27 or on Ezek. 37: 21-28.” p. 8.

The only biography I found about Bulens (and the prior minister Wildeboer), written by Rev. J. van der Sluis of Varsseveld in 1912 in Dutch, is at Heritage Hall - owned and read by Beets. “God’s work ...” is [online at Delpher](#), the actual [page 34](#) has a section that translates to: “Modernism was supreme in the Herv. church in those days [about 1865-1866]. Two modern ministers [did they belong to that actual group?] took turns preaching, while their ideas were spread even more by a scripture, ‘New Life.’ Rev. Bulens pitched in the barn in the field, which was unused during the winter months [and later was accused of its being too close to the Herv. church building]. Rev. Bulens went each Friday night on a regular basis to deal with [or to study] the Prophecies of Isaiah, which were discussed in ‘New Life’ at that time. This caused so much sensation that the building was filled long before the meeting started. Modernism was clearly denounced in its untenability. Rev. Bulens read, among other things, Isaiah 53 according to the modern interpretation; ‘But the devout [or pious] Jews were wounded for our transgressions, the devout Jews were bruised for our iniquities, the punishment that brought peace to us was upon the devout Jews.’ So it resounded throughout the room. The ridiculousness of the modern view was made tangible to everyone in this way. This performance of Rev. Bulens has for many in the Hervormde church [which was the state Dutch Reformed Church] opened its eyes to the dangers of Modernism. An association was founded ... The men of secession have waged a vigorous campaign outside of its own ecclesiastical territory.”

Bulens influenced each of the two main denominations – and other ones (he was considered “Brummelkampian”). A “Confessional Association” was established (originally in 1863-64) for those against “deviations both in the pulpit and in the church.” (But who didn’t want to join the Separated Church denomination.) “That association soon appointed an evangelist, Mr. Jellesma, who for many years preached in the school in Varsseveld and worked under the Reformed Church. And it happened that the two modern ministers were replaced by orthodox ones.” (Which is per van der Sluis). (It happened ‘after the introduction of the ecclesiastical elections’ – Houkes, [P. Dillingh in 2011 said](#) in his ‘Prelude ...’ that they began in the 1867 Dutch Reformed Church]. This part is independently verified; “deviations /afwijkingen” on p. 3 of the pdf from this original (“important,” per [scholars](#)) document; Verslag van de vergadering der [Confessioneele Vereeniging](#), gehouden te Utrecht door leeraren en leden der Nederlandsche Hervormde Kerk [Dutch Reformed Church]. Kemink, 1875. ([Image](#): “Evangelization” meetings had 600 attendees, and “held in Utrecht” is a town with an ‘orthodox’ University, said van Gelderen – so was it also a Seminary?) More from this source: “[A certain modern church in Blokzijl], in which the contents of the Gospel have been abandoned more and more, so that the members cannot distinguish truth from falsehood, and their hearts are alienated from all real religion”. Another section is referring to their other evangelizations: “... in many ways

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benevolent ministers and members of our church — misunderstand the intentions of our Association. There are still those who believe that the Church is harmed by evangelization. People are filled with distrust, although the evangelization has already been withdrawn several times, as soon as a believing teacher [one that preaches the truth] stepped up and associated himself with the covenant congregation [and then it withdraws]. Prayers for the unity and unanimity of the believers are most urgently recommended to each of us.”

I will repeat here how the Modern ministers were also organized into an “Assembly;” it’s in an earlier note too. Did John Fles go to Bulens’ meetings? The time and place appear to match where he said he’d received instruction.

In 1867 the Confessional Association membership had increased to 3000 (per J. Kuiper’s history) - even though it no longer included “ethicals,” (per [archieven.nl](http://archieven.nl)), and they (te Velde said these? secessionists were a group for “kerkherstel” restoration in de Hervormde Kerk – p. 24) wanted traveling evangelists and traveling pastors “to meet the need for the preaching of the truth ... in such congregations where modern Preachers stand, and thus can be considered vacant.” (Per the same Kemink, 1875. p. 16). This rather combative (“political,” per te Velde) emphasis seems different than my milder first impression of what evangelists would once do! Did Henry Beets see the calmer version of events like we do now, or was he aware of probable connections between those evangelists and the Friends of Truth? The Association had a department in Winterswijk too, but how do these pieces fit together? Stroes began? there in 1872, Fles was there in 1865 and perhaps in 1873, the popular “Evangelizations” before and an area-wide revival/prayer gathering there after... And then “After 1872 the cash of the [Confessioneele] Vereeniging declined sharply.” (Per the Dr. Gerrit J. Vos Az. biography of van Prinsterer, linked earlier, in a section which mentioned P. Jellesma.) The [oudwinterswijk website](#) says this in Dutch; “In 1858, disaffected Reformed people founded their own classroom.” Later the ‘Association of Friends of Truth’ “became the Dutch Reformed Evangelization Association.” Much of this strife = “strijd” in Dutch happened in the 1860s.

Was Fles ever a part of this group? I think so, even though any evidence is indirect; Houkes’ thesis (above) said on page 87 these groups (adding in the Dutch Friends of Truth) would send “evangelizers and catechists without ecclesiastical status into the congregations.” She said such evangelizing in the 1860s was thought to be “too radical and aggressive a method for the Frisians [an area of many farmers who had their own, similar branch].” Houkes also noted, “[Eventually] the disapproval of the local community for those who joined the evangelization was strong ... .In IJsselstein, fences around the evangelization room were pulled down and thrown into the water. In Aalsmeer, the barn where the meetings took place was broken into and the burglars tore up the Bible.”

Since Rev. Breukelaar - a catechist- was also trekking (or riding) along the same pathway to Winterswijk, he had to have also been directly involved (end note 4 has this source from the Netherlands, here is the [picture of it](#) again).

In Dutch its “Waarheidsvrienden” = search term that got this quote from a translated [H.M. Luning 2011 article](#) about Rev. W. Lubach, an evangelizer (in another province) of the Confessional Association for the Reformed Church in 1871: “‘Truth and Confession’ was [an orthodox] counterpart of the liberal group ‘Light and Freedom.’” Lubach finally came to the US and Oostburg, WI. The Dutch Reformed Church there had a big split where over half of the congregation went to the Presbyterians in the early? 1880s. Eschatology is not mentioned in these articles. [More dates](#). Houkes was a source for Luning; this [2009 overview by T. Osinga](#) also refers to her research but says, “not much is written [about those ‘evangelizations’] by church historians.”

Fles said Rev. Bulens “believed in the future of Israel, of the Church, yes of earth and heaven, just as the Bible says.” (Google translated from Bulens’ January, 1890 De Wachter obituary/article at Heritage Hall; see the [handwritten citation](#) in book). And more of this is in gereformeerde kerken [translated history of Varsseveld](#).

Rev. Bulens was “quite broad in Doetinchem” and inclined towards “Reveil-orthodoxy” (or “the orthodox Reveil”), per an [H. M. Stoppelenburg article](#) in Dutch, online at [digibron.nl](http://digibron.nl) (So it might be reformatted, go directly to it and search there instead). Another by G. A. Wumkes said Bulens belonged to a “very tolerant group in the Christian Reformed church of his days, according to his attitude in the disciplinary case of Rev. J. van Dijk Mzn. in [nearby]

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Doetinchem.” A different source translated online here, <https://translate.google.com/translate?hl=en&sl=nl&u=http://www.ruimzicht.nl/2018/02/over-ds-van-dijk-mzn/&prev=search> by Theo Rougoor in 2018, said that other minister began as a traveling evangelist. “Van Dijk was a gifted speaker and preached wherever he was invited. What is special is that he did not reject the 'old' church. He hoped that the Reformed Church would return to its orthodox principles. For him, 'substantive affinity' was more important than 'formal ecclesiastical boundaries.' ...[Interesting! He also had] sympathy for Chiliasm, the doctrine of the Millennial Kingdom of Peace, which was also a thorn in the eyes of the separated church [CRC].”

The following section is from the original, primary source on the previous page, the CRC (in the Netherlands) Synod in 1866.

Page 12, They began by praying, “[God] grant that the counsel of Your Assembly may lead to the salvation of Zion!” Page 25 had the “Protest” from Bulens, with an imposing group of ministers (N. H. Dosker had begun in the denomination in 1850, and listed next was the Kampen school President Kreulen) joining the protest of the 1863 decision and saying, “[‘feeling’ that ‘Christ will personally be on Earth before the final judgment’] is not an infringement [‘inbreuk’ in Dutch] ... of faith.” However the prior 1863 church decision “remains in force due to the tied vote.”

Then on page 40 was this:

“The Synod take knowledge of the content and spirit of two speeches by J. van DIJK, pastor in Doetinchem, about Jacob. [James] 1:25 and Jerem. 3: 21-23

[ “A cry is heard on the barren heights,  
the weeping and pleading of the people of Israel  
because they have perverted their ways  
and have forgotten the Lord their God.

22 ‘Return, faithless people;  
I will cure you of backsliding.’  
‘Yes, we will come to you,  
... surely in the Lord our God  
is the salvation of Israel.’”]

and explain whether the doctrine and honor of our Church therein be **assaulted** or not.

The Frisian representatives provide an explanation and state the cause, leading this demand by their Province to the Synod is called.

Furthermore, the question is raised whether the treatment of this matter falls within the competence of the Synod.

The judgment of the Synod is that the handling of the case of Ds. J. VAN DIJK belongs to the Church Board, including ZEw.

falls under, and therefore **seriously arouses** the Varsseveld Classis [Klasse] to deal with that matter promptly.” (My emphasis added.)

Van Dijk condemned modernism at its “peak” - likely before 1867, “he was especially a strong proponent of rapprochement between Orthodox Reformed and Secessionists and proceeded to exchange pulpits,” (per Stoppelenburg), he published his thoughts on a reunion between the two denominations for the Evangelical Conference, and gave another “controversial” sermon in 1867 to the other denomination – see following here. Van Dijk tried to clarify his position at the regional Classis Assembly in Winterswijk; “[It was] to general satisfaction, although the classis would have preferred to hear a revocation.” (per J. P. de Bie et al. [Biographies](#) of “Protestant theologians in the Netherlands,” part 2, p. 684). (Jacobskerk there has Old Testament texts carved before the Reformation saying in low German, “‘Even now,’ declares the Lord, ‘return to me with all your heart.’”) A few weeks later on June 21, 1869 the General Synod relieved him of his teaching duties; Rev. Bulens wrote another “serious” [protest](#). The congregation formed a semi-independent (my description) Dutch Reformed “Missionary”

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church (possibly could be same as the NGZV?) in 1871-1874, one where "Every member... must become thoroughly acquainted with this (internal) missionary [and training] work and therefore must participate in it ... with missionary zeal." "[Van Dijk] trained more than 200 pastors [or missionaries] for the Reformed Church." ([Source](#) = 1997 Dutch Bible Study Center, NBC, p. 17.)

The first [page](#) of the 1872 Synod noted it, "Congregations in Gelderland, **with the exception of a few ... from the Classis Varsseveld**, are legally known to the Government as Congregations of our Church." Their Committee (the Revs. Donner, Gispén, and N. H. Dosker) refused a request that followers of van Dijk be invited to attend (p. 90). So some ministers remained against Chiliasm, but the Gelderland delegation and Dosker still wanted the church to tolerate it more at the 1872 Synod - source is van der Schuit's 1933 pagina 78, see link to document. Since understanding that (anti-chiliasm) source is tricky, I'll double check a snip of this original [1872 Synod document](#). From Stoppelenburg, "In addition, a special religious revival took place in this region around 1879." Resulting services in named houses led to starting an Old Reformed Church, which was supported by Reveil people such as Groen van Prinsterer (he'd feared attempts to "realize a rationalist heaven on earth," per a Calvin prof. James KA Smith [article](#), and he died in May 1876.) Evangelists from the Confessional Association contributed to the church's beginning. There is an [1879 book \(translated\)](#) critical of Van Dijk by D. Thierry. A published reply by Van Dijk quoted letters and findings. Mr. Thierry had been fired as a teacher, and the community institutions still supported the mission and the school. "The Lord blessed it." You can visit the [Villa Ruimzicht](#). The same [1888 church](#) existed until the 1980s? It was described as "Geen doleantiegemeente" = "Not a doleance group", or basically non-Kuyperian. And they were [called](#) "contrary to churchism - developed out of community life" actually "gezelschap." Swierenga's Brothers' Quarrels (an [online history](#) of Dutch religious friction) describes the term as a conventicle = secret or unlawful religious meetings (he even said in barns), typically of people with nonconformist views, e.g. like the way the seceders had gathered in earlier days as a result of church apostasy. However, read what Matthew 18:20 says. Fles must have paid attention to the case, and perhaps he was aware of the "vehement polemic waged against Mr. Van Dijk" (per Thierry, p. 200). A 1975 online article in the Delpher archive still described Rev. van Dijk's "non-ecclesiastical independent attitude" as "harmful." Doetinchem also had a Jewish community with its synagogue; See <https://www.dutchjewry.org/drieluik/doetinchem/doetinchem.shtml>. And <https://jck.nl/en/page/doetinchem>.

Bultema listed Rev. Sipkes as well. Bultema used Sipkes' teaching as an example of "full-fledged" premillennialism (per W. Rutgers source in end note 24, p. 36). The 1933 source (link above) said he was "worse than others." The Winterswijk C.R.C. in the Netherlands was an early example of Fles (guest) preaching at a church, and then later being followed by another Chiliasmic minister. [Maranatha](#) often cites Ds. J. van Anđel. Bultema's book enters into this story later. It doesn't mention Fles. Nor does the book on Bulens or the ones on van Dijk and Brummelkamp.

<http://www.worldcat.org/wcidentities/viaf-298354815>. His books, but not the book in the next paragraph though. Many of van Anđel's books are available through hathitrust.org. His exegeses were called beautiful and original.

Rev. Henry Dosker (son of N.H.) said in the 1889 Homiletic Review journal (available online), "Rev. J. van Anđel of Leeuwarden, a splendid orator and an author of growing fame, whose 'Manual of Sacred History' has recently received the most favorable criticisms in the Netherlands." One Dutch reviewer said of his 1882 book [From Adam to Abraham](#), and the Mosaic Law, "The style of Mr. van Anđel has, in the course of years, become more sober, and remained strong." Y. P. De Jong's 1920 book (link) in end note 104 discusses Ds. J. van Anđel's beliefs.

Here is another story about Brummelkamp from Yvette Hoitink's genealogy website specializing in that area; <http://www.dutchgenealogy.nl/anthony-brummelkamp/>. J. van Anđel was listed there too. Historian E. M. Smilda is also from the Aalten area; he said Brummelkamp "greatly influenced" families in that area to secede around 1835. This story of Smilda's also mentions Ds. Breukelaar. <http://www.geocities.ws/cooner85/SmildaChapter.pdf>. John Fles's 1896 Jewish Era article said Da Costa, Capadose (who read early Christian Justin Martyr, converted through Isaiah 53, and wrote "The future of the Lord as King of Israel and as the head of all creation" in 1848) and

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(converted former Rabbi, Dr. Carl) Schwartz began a "Protestant Society" in the Netherlands "about 25 years ago," or sometime around 1871. Schwartz had already started a publication, *De Heraut*, in 1850. [It referred](#) to "Israel's King, Head of the Church." All three of them did begin a missionary college in 1852. Brummelkamp met with Schwartz, per Jos Westerbeke and te Velde. However Da Costa died in 1860. Schwartz and Capadose started the Interdenominational(?) Jewish Missionary Society in Amsterdam in 1859, it expanded in 1861. (Also see end note 27). Van Oosterwijk Bruyn's 1900 Dutch book, *From the Days of the Reveil*, described both of Capadose's goals; producing evangelists and converting Jews through Schwartz (via the UPC church and/or the Free Church of Scotland). The Evangelical Alliance (Evangelische Alliantie), "a fruit of the spiritual movement of our century ... which counts its divisions throughout the Protestant world" met in Amsterdam in August, 1867, with an address from Rev. Prof. J.J. van Oosterzee, and one from Prof. Doedes. More below on that conference (it is online [here](#), and here is the [link to the US delegation's report](#)). The evangelist Van Veen who influenced Fles in 1861 or so had belonged to a similarly named society, but I'm still looking for connections. I've found a good source here; [on Google Books](#) about the Dutch "Evangelical Protestant Society" that was related to the international "Alliance" in an 1855 publication, *Evangelical Christendom* by J.S. Phillips in 1857. Dr. Capadose was its Secretary, and the article lists participants of that "beautiful movement." They included members of the Reveil such as Da Costa and Schwartz (but not Van Veen); Van Oosterzee was also a supporter. Capadose was in the other (I think it was associated with the older denomination) Confessional Association as well.

There is a section of the Brummelkamp biography by te Velde in the same link provided elsewhere here on the Evangelical Alliance; Brummelkamp was in sympathy with it but elder G. Vos of the church in Kampen was not. Brummelkamp said, "Men of 'moral improvement' [presumably like Vos] and modern Christianity can never unite with it [with the E. A.] and its advocates." "The brothers [in the CRC] were very shocked at ... [a 'communion celebration' at the E. A. fifth conference in Amsterdam in 1867 – here is [a picture](#)], which coincided with some controversial sermons in the Reformed Church and in the Scottish Mission Church by Rev. J. van Dijk Mzn. [see above] and [Brummelkamp's son from Tiel, who had also presided at the Scottish zendingkerk in 1865– the church council of the local Christian Secessionist Church was 'not at all happy' with that either, per following source ] Rev. J. Brummelkamp." Vos registered an objection in Kampen "with thirteen others against [the father] Brummelkamp, because he [and his wife] had celebrated the Lord's Supper with followers of Arminius," and Vos sometime resigned his office of elder in protest. The local councils and/or consistories in Kampen and Amsterdam decided not to discipline Brummelkamp. Of course Fles went to the school around that time, and would have discussed the "strong reverberation" in Kampen with other students. (I've noted the book doesn't mention him). See pages 377-378, I used articles in [www.gereformeerdekerken.info](#) for more detail about Brummelkamp's son. He was born in 1837, and had visited Scotland already for training paid for by J. Henderson. In 1870-1872, he "left for Neuwied, Germany ... [and] became a teacher of the Prince von Wied, betrothed to Princess Maria of the Netherlands." He transferred to the Reformed Church at some point.

Did Fles leave in time to visit the 1867 Amsterdam Conference? I can only guess that he'd have wanted to see the closing "... open air missionary meeting, 10,000 [to 20,000] people in the fields and under the shadow of the great trees" in a nearby village park, with an orchestra "and grand old psalms." Conference attendees, other visitors "rich and poor" – some in local costume, and at least ten missionary societies such the one to Jews were all there. (See the two links above for sources.) Did Fles ever visit that Amsterdam Mission while he was going to seminary? It seems likely – he later supported it financially. End note 4 observed that he did some student preaching as well.

Fles said Van Os and Korff were missionaries of the Society. In a 1912 *The Jewish Era* issue, Meyer listed The Netherlands Society for Israel which began in 1861 in Amsterdam; F.W.A. Korff was the secretary. A 1911 *Directory of Missionary Societies* said of that mission: "(NOTE: The Society was reorganized in 1876.)" [Apparently its "chairman" remained after that?] F.W.A. Korff & A. van Os (Eds.) published a [1911 Dutch book](#) about God's great deeds to Israel; it was a 50th anniversary commemorative history of the Mission, per J. van Gelderen, 1982. (Likely source of quote "from Dr. Bavinck".) It appears their Jewish Mission was tied into or affected by the 1863 ruling – see that in other end notes. Dr. Schwartz joined the London Mission to Jews in 1864, and died in 1870.



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Even Vincent van Gogh was involved in the Jewish mission in Amsterdam (in 1877, per [a 2020 article](#) -with picture). There is a painting of his ... I'll let readers have the fun of finding it, and what it meant to Vincent and his ancestors.

One source in Dutch from 1884, contemporaneous to van Andel's book (see above), also mentioned this book; Songbooks for Christians waiting for the salvation of Israel. Songs and poems (by Da Costa) with a view and a heart for Israel.

That online source, TO VOICE [STEMMEN] IN FRONT OF TRUTH and PEACE- an evangelical Protestant magazine, is 1,362 pages of articles, some authored by Dr. A. W. Bronsveld. He studied under Doedes, who also wrote in here. He might have been premillennial (he described himself as a modern Orthodox and Ethical-Irenic, "A direction that was more in line with the impulses from the Réveil" – per van Gelderen), and I think other authors like Gerrit Wildeboer might have had similar beliefs; his theology has been described as "historico-critical." He was a pastor of the Dutch Reformed Church and an OT professor who wrote The Prophet Micah and his significance for the understanding of prophecy published in Israel (1884) and *Prophecy in Israel in her land, significance for Christianity and theology*. Another person published in that magazine was author S. D. van Veen, who in 1885 said in it, "Even more than the Reformed Church (from previous centuries), which at least made efforts to improve, our present-day Church is guilty towards the Jews, because as a body it does nothing for the 'Mission to Israel.' Per beginning of 1982 article by J. van Gelderen about the missions to Jews in the Netherlands;

[https://translate.google.com/translate?sl=nl&tl=en&u=https://www.digibron.nl/viewer/collectie/Digibron/id/tag:DNK,19820401:newsml\\_7bbf55bfb15f630240ae8fc3ca8e4a82](https://translate.google.com/translate?sl=nl&tl=en&u=https://www.digibron.nl/viewer/collectie/Digibron/id/tag:DNK,19820401:newsml_7bbf55bfb15f630240ae8fc3ca8e4a82).

This article does not mention Fles. It says, "good biographies of people who worked in this field are lacking (Schwartz, but especially also of Da Costa)." I don't think any exist yet. Schwartz wrote about Da Costa in 1860. Kromsig's 20 pager written in 1936 about Hoedemaker and Kerkherstel (see before here) described interesting 1885 events ("so just before the doleantie"), but I've kept them mostly out of this paper – it is probably elsewhere.

See end note 61 for a link to missionary David Baron's 1896 firsthand account. Meyer also listed a Dutch CRC mission to Jews that started in 1909. Why then? Was it due to or otherwise associated with Kropveld's Mission? Had their denomination's circumstances or opinions changed? I wonder if the "International Jewish Missionary Conference (IJMC)" held in Amsterdam in 1906 was a factor. Delitzsch was the visionary, Louis Meyer spoke at it (per Glaser, he wrote Isaiah 53 Explained and is president of Chosen People Ministries – note 128 has a debate).

Sources of Secession: The Netherlands Hervormde Kerk on the Eve of the Dutch ... by Gerrit J. TenZythoff. Published 1987. It is available [on Google Books](#). It has a chapter on The Dutch Reveal: Protest and Renewal.

Another history (written in English) *Handbook of Dutch Church History*, 2014. Herman Selderhuis, editor. p. 479 said chiliasm "experienced an upswing" in the early Church in response to biblical criticism (analysis) which "severely hindered prophetic interpretations, as well as to an enlightened Christianity, which rejected immediate divine intervention and inaugurated an optimistic belief in progress." Then it mentions Da Costa and Capadose. (Side question: Did the non-prophetic, supersessionist group join forces with another socially progressive one?)

I'm not sure if Fles knew any of these writers, founders or missionaries personally. It seems he must have corresponded with some of them. He probably had extensive correspondence, and I picture him keeping those letters. I wonder if any of his old letters could still exist? I don't have any of his old material.

What about that other Jewish convert Fles mentioned in 1907, Ds. E. Kropveld (1840-1920)? He read Isaiah 53 often, and á Brakel's work helped to shed a lot of light when he converted in 1862. He may have had relatives from Aalten. He also went to Kampen, and graduated in 1870. Fles had to have known him. His Christian Reformed Jewish Mission began in 1875, and was defunct by 1911. By then, Kropveld was "feeling heavily the burden of old age." (per Meyer in the 1910 Jewish Era.) His retirement may have been involuntary, per a previously mentioned Dutch source. In a 2007 book in Dutch ed. by A. Houtman, De ander als geheim: ... G. van Klinken said on p. 175, Kropveld was a "cause celebre," and his premillennial Mission emphasized prayer more

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than evangelization. He refers to the new denomination ("Afgescheiden") on this page. "Many dissenters [in the breakaway CRC]" thought the "blissful" millennium will include converted Jews, then these "experimental ideas gradually became less tolerated." (Google translation.)

G. van Klinken also said in his article [Dutch] Jews as Perceived by Dutch Protestants, "The Jewish Mission of the Afscheiding was a small-scale affair. It was more important to stimulate the eschatological hope of the Christians that to confront the Jews with Christianity." However, "Protestant opinions about Jews were an amalgam. ... Eschatology, aggression and love were widely different ingredients" motivating their Jewish Missions. p. 127-128. Van Klinken and J. van Vliet have another 2022 article out on Jewish Missions and Neocalvinism – it is [online here](#). It notes, "Kropveld and Van Andel believed in the restoration of the people of Israel in the end times. In Jan van Andel's case this was also accompanied by a moderate chiliasm." Why do they measure it's intensity so often?

A 1902 book on the history of world-wide Jewish Missions by Albert Thompson (below) offers some details about Kropveld's Mission. Thompson also mentions Dutchman Abraham Tris's United Presbyterian Jewish Mission in Albany, New York. I wonder if Fles might have visited it while passing through NY on his way to Cedar Grove, WI? Fles doesn't seem to mention donating to this mission. Tris (1817-1907) converted through Rev. Budding, knew Da Costa, left the Netherlands around 1851 because Dutch CRC amillennialists (and Budding – per JH Gunning) didn't agree with his 'Scholtian' premillennialism, came to America and joined the (Scottish) Presbyterians, was a minister and was active in Jewish mission work, and wrote a book saying, "If Israel is a nation; its restoration to the land of their fathers may be expected." (last per J. Gurock's 2014 book on American Zionism: Missions and Politics ... p. 144. Sizer also used that quote, and said Tris influenced dispensationalist James Brookes.) Thompson's book's introduction is by Blackstone. His book said four other NY missions began in 1892, including A. Gaebele's (with Prof. Stroeter) The Hope of Israel Mission. Page 246-247 said: "The one existing Mission in Brooklyn left ample room for other laborers among the 100,000 Jews of this great suburb of the American metropolis. In 1894 the Brownsville Mission to the Jews, 331 Rockaway avenue, and two years later the Williamsburg Mission, 13 Manhattan [Ave.], were opened by Rev. Leopold Cohn." <https://archive.org/details/centuryofjewishm00thom>, by Thompson. This book shows the origin of the Chosen People ministry.

Van Rikxoort's paper asks what role Kropveld's Jewish ancestry and upbringing had upon his writings. The answer appears to be not very much! He tells this story (Google translated): In 1880, "Samuel Davidsohn (1850-?), Candidate rabbi was in Winterswijk [working as a] Jewish religion teacher and cantor. At some point, he began 'to look seriously for the truth in Christ (...)' . Through the local pastor, the Rev. M. Sipkes (1830-1895), he had ended up with Kropveld in Minnertsga." The Mission was there.

Van Rikxoort said there was an 1889 "zendings" day where H. Bavinck spoke (see end note 24 for his amillennial beliefs) and next, "The second reading was from Rev. van Andel, talking on: 'Israel, in the Apocalypse.'"

That must have been interesting; H. Dosker praised both ministers in the same sentence, see above.

The same debate is mentioned in a Dutch history from this website; <http://www.gebedvoorisrael.nl/>. That translates to Prayer for Israel, a contemporary group formed from different Reformed churches in the Netherlands. See end note 27 for one of its notes on van Andel. Their history says Bavinck and A. Kuyper shared the same beliefs which "ended the Old Covenant's special place and meaning of Israel." It has this interesting but strange sounding comparison, "Kuyper's influence and charisma was much more powerful than the vision of van Andel." It refers to when the two denominations reunited in 1892 under Kuyper (van Andel was a "deputy of the Afscheiding churches," per Hendrik Bouma's book on it). Kuyper was elected to Parliament and then became Prime Minister. This paper won't dig much further into the political/religious situation in the Netherlands then.

Kropveld's mission is also mentioned in end note 57.

<http://www.theologienet.nl/documenten/Rikxoort,%20L.%20Eliezer%20Kropveld,%20leven,%20werk.rtf>

<http://www.freewebs.com/leovanRikxoort/elizerkropveld.htm> Here is a likely source for that conversion story; De Vrije Kerk, Volume 7 by D. Donner, 1881. The article is by Rev. H. Beuker, the editor of the paper and a theologian who was on the Church's Commission for Kropveld's Mission, then he went to preach at the Old



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Reformed Church in Germany, and later he came to America and the CRC in 1893. He was the “moving force behind” the Gereformeerde Amerikaan paper in 1897. Per De Jong’s 2007 CTJ article on ecumenical tension. The Beets’ longer church history in Dutch has a couple paragraphs on the magazine and its ministers on staff that could fit in here. The “brothers” (fellow Christians) apparently could not find agreement, and one bought the magazine in 1906. I think the above group said Beuker wasn’t premillennial, but did take certain actions that may have been surprising, for instance he voted along with L. Lindeboom and J.H. Donner – see the Gebed for Israel link in end note 27. Beuker joined Kropveld in 1875 on “the Church-related Israel work of the Separated Churches,” (per below). “Kropveld was the first secretary (treasurer) of the Commission of the Christian Reformed Church for missions under Israel [Commissie der Christelijk Gereformeerde Kerk voor de zending onder Israël]” (per Rikxoort). [https://translate.googleusercontent.com/translate\\_c?depth=1&hl=en&prev=search&pto=aue&rurl=translate.google.com&sl=nl&sp=nmt4&u=https://www.kerkenisrael.nl/vrede-over-israel/voi25-6g.php](https://translate.googleusercontent.com/translate_c?depth=1&hl=en&prev=search&pto=aue&rurl=translate.google.com&sl=nl&sp=nmt4&u=https://www.kerkenisrael.nl/vrede-over-israel/voi25-6g.php), just search for Beuker. <https://books.google.com/books?id=ppcVAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA280&lpg=PA285&ots=6CVquldrQE&focus=viewport&q=Minnertsga+kropveld&output=text>. Has articles on the Afscheiding, the Reveil, and on the Vrije Evangelische Kerk in Elberfeld, Germany.

The beginning of Donner’s compilation of journal articles was published in 1876. De Vrije Kerk, Volumes 1-2, page 42-43 here, <https://archive.org/details/devrijekerkvolu01unkngoog>, has an article by H. Beuker from 1876 on revivals in England, in “our country,” and in America which looked at Moody. It more-or-less said Moody’s theology came “nearer the systems of some less healthy writers of the 17th century” such as Brakel and others, since Moody (or his revivals) had a “lack of covenantal” emphasis. Beuker raised his objection very early in Moody’s career. They may have known him more directly after he visited and evangelized in England and the Netherlands around 1873. CRC amillennialists continued to apply the same point for years, actually they still do.

Likely a little later than the story from the earlier article, page 81 has letters between Sipkes and Beuker arranging a “week of prayer” which would include both the CRC in the Netherlands (was it also with the Reformed Church?) and the Friends of Truth. The area (Winterswijk, Aalten, and surrounding towns were included) “revival” received “a large crowd” “that is seriously searching” ... “and came to the knowledge of Jesus.” Rev. Stroes, “Evangelist of the Society” (which was the Friends of Truth, but the Evangelical Association were also organizers -said te Velde), see [image of town](#), had proposed their “joint prayer meetings” each night during the annual event. This source said the CRC there was “not hostile” to the Friends of Truth. Sometime later a group of orthodox Reformed who had remained members of the Reformed Church, met separately – but in the same church building. On August 9, 1887 the first meeting of the Nederduits Gereformeerde Gemeente (a third Reformed denomination) read from Jeremiah 23 about “decay of the sunken church.” Their first minister in 1888-1889 was JM Stroes, former evangelist of the Friends of Truth, Winterswijk-hg 1872 (last is per dominees.nl, I think abbreviation stands for the denom.) The timing indicates he could have known J. Fles. He went to another church of same denomination in 1890. Their Synod, <http://kerkrecht.nl/sites/default/files/ActaNedGK1890.pdf> said there was a long “struggle against the Remonstrant faction.” “This was the result of years of unrest in the [Netherlands] Reformed Church.” In 1892 the Reformed Church of Winterswijk was created when the Secessionists and Dolerenden were unified. Per translations of archival sites at [archieven.nl](#) and [gereformeerdekerken-info](#).

<sup>41</sup> The Jewish Era. Published 1921. It is available [on Google Books](#). Their obituary of the “unique” Rev. Fles. It has details and descriptions not presented here. However the section about “when he was but 15 years of age” is misleading. A link to [a timeframe for Fles and Riemersma](#).

<sup>42</sup> <http://www.ccel.org/s/schaff/encyc/encyc09/hlm/vii.xcvi.htm>. Likely from his “Viftigjarig Jubileum” in 1907? And let me add this source from ccel.org; the section on chiliasm. [Schaff's History of the Christian Church](#) Schaff identifies which direction those individuals were among. He was a signee of the 1891 Blackstone Memorial.

<sup>43</sup> <http://www.thebanner.org/about-us/history>. And Michael Douma’s historical dissertation on “The Evolution of Dutch American Identities ...” said Beets was called “the leader of the CRC” by some.

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<sup>44</sup> Yaakov Ariel. *Evangelizing the Chosen People: Missions to the Jews in America, 1880-2000*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000. p. 28. Ariel also wrote about the “neglected” Blackstone Memorial. The 1891 petition refers back to Blackstone’s 1890 Chicago conference, “That the Memorial is really an outgrowth of the Conference between Christians and Jews recently held in Chicago.” It also looked at the same passage from Isaiah we studied at church: “That there seem to be many evidences to show that we have reached the period in the great roll of the centuries, when the ever living God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, is lifting up His hand to the Gentiles, (Isa. 49:22) to bring His sons and His daughters from far, that he may plant them again in their own land, Ezk. 34, &c.” [https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Blackstone\\_Memorial](https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Blackstone_Memorial). I don’t see anyone from the CRC in that list of over 400 signees, but there is a Dutch newspaperman from Iowa (and he possibly had ancestors from Winterswijk) with an undetermined denomination – H. J. Huiskamp. The next end note has more on this subject.

<sup>45</sup> [Picture of 1916 letter from Brandeis to Blackstone](https://archives.wheaton.edu/repositories/4/resources/799), from Wheaton’s Buswell Library Archives & Collections. <https://archives.wheaton.edu/repositories/4/resources/799> Collection (not online) has Chicago Hebrew Mission annual reports, audio tape, correspondence, legal documents, log books, minute books, newsletters, photographs. I emailed them in Jan. 2022. Their archivist answered, “I have looked into your question regarding Rev. Fles and William Blackstone and found no direct mention of Fles in the guide to the Blackstone collection.” Jonathan Moorhead. *The Father Of Zionism: William E. Blackstone?* 2010. Their p. 788-789. My Blackstone quote is actually from a different petition of his made after the 1890 conference. Its themes and those two points were repeated – not verbatim – in the famous Blackstone Memorial petition. [http://www.etsjets.org/files/JETS-PDFs/53/53-4/JETS\\_53-4\\_787-800\\_Moorhead.pdf](http://www.etsjets.org/files/JETS-PDFs/53/53-4/JETS_53-4_787-800_Moorhead.pdf). Read this case that says yes to its title’s question. Its quote was made by Elias Newman who is mentioned later in the end notes 93, 94, and 112. Timothy Weber said, “No American dispensationalist beat the drum for a Jewish state more than William E. Blackstone.” *Christianity Today*, October 5, 1998. p. 3. <http://www.icjs.org/sites/default/files/Weber%20on%20How%20Evangelicals%20Became%20Israel%27s%20best%20Friend%20from%20Christ.%20Today.pdf>.

After Blackstone returned from Palestine, in 1890 he organized and hosted a conference of Christian and Jewish leaders in Chicago, the “Conference on the Past, Present, and Future of Israel.” *Standing with Israel* by David Brog; p. 99. And the Moorhead article above. The conference papers are available online from this archive; <https://ia902308.us.archive.org/34/items/jewgentilebeingr00confrich/jewgentilebeingr00confrich.pdf>. Hundreds went to the conference, but Fles is not mentioned here. There is no doubt he would have wanted to attend had he known how similar the introductory song, based upon Isaiah 21, was to topics in his Three Bible lessons; “Watchman, tell me, does the morning of fair Zion’s glory dawn; Have the signs that mark His coming, Yet upon my pathway shone?” And the C. H. M. was renamed and then incorporated in March, 1891. (Per archived material; <http://www2.wheaton.edu/bgc/archives/GUIDES/546.htm>.) When was Fles first aware of Blackstone’s Chicago mission? The answer is not clear, but the C. H. M. obituary says he “became interested in the Chicago Hebrew Mission soon after the organization of the Jewish Mission Society of his Church.” That timeline seems different from the 1892 Synod’s timeline on page 13 here. I don’t think he went to the 1890 conference. End note 38 has an article from Fles right after the 1891 Petition. End note 93 says what happened regarding the 1916 Petition and has more on Blackstone. See [a Wikipedia article](#) about the Blackstone Memorial.

<sup>46</sup> Scott Hoezee and Chris Meehan, *Flourishing in the Land: A Hundred-Year History of Christian Reformed Missions in North America*. Publisher: Christian Reformed Home Missions, 1996. p. 48 - 51. Perhaps the authors needn’t have sounded somewhat surprised, since Missions to Jews were quite common then.

Dutch acceptance of Jews has been attributed to their religious beliefs based upon OT prescription, per more than one author of the articles in *Dutch Jews as Perceived ...* edited by Brasz and Kaplan, pub. 2001. The book includes a Catholic example as well as Protestant ones.

<sup>47</sup> 1892 Acts Of Synod. [https://www.calvin.edu/library/database/crcnasynod/1892acts\\_et.pdf](https://www.calvin.edu/library/database/crcnasynod/1892acts_et.pdf). p. 11.

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<sup>48</sup> 1894 Acts Of Synod. [https://www.calvin.edu/library/database/crcnasynod/1894acts\\_et.pdf](https://www.calvin.edu/library/database/crcnasynod/1894acts_et.pdf). Page 31 (actual, not using its odd pagination). Here is an [image](#) of that section. He said the “matter of Missions among the Old covenant people” began in 1891; the Synod sessions usually referred back to what had happened in the previous one or two years. Fles was referring to the Jews in a way that distinguished or compared them to the New covenant people – the Church. I omitted his mention here of one often repeated motif, it referred to the Jews as “blind.” Similarly, he said they had been and were currently behind a veil, under a lid, or in darkness. I should check if Fles referred to Isaiah 6:10, an OT verse often quoted in the New Testament re the blinded Jews.

Note the possibility that “Congregations” could’ve meant denominations, see end note 28. Other societies were also listed, they appear to be CRC ones. Other ones mentioned but not listed were from the RCA. P. Heeres led the five cent society at Fles’s church in 1894. That example is from a different source, Beets “Sixty years” history, p. 432 of the translated from Dutch version. Page 291 of that same history in Dutch and then translated by myself with Google provides this:

“Especially by the persistent career of the treasurer, Ds. Fles, who continually advocated the matter in the church magazine, took action for this mission in various congregations, associations and Sunday schools, and in 1894 Synod was able to report revenue of \$ 915.16.” During a serious recession that amount was equivalent to at least 25 thousand now, and it matches the figure in Fles’s Synod report.

Jewish Life in Small-Town America: A History, Lee Shai Weissbach, Yale University Press, 2008, p. 211. “Earlier, in 1891, Rabbi Samuel Freuder had resigned from his pulpit in Davenport, Iowa. An 1886 graduate of HUC, he had lost interest not only in the rabbinate, but in Judaism itself. Following his resignation, Freuder converted to Christianity.” He was baptized at the new Chicago Hebrew Mission, they read Isaiah 53 at his service (per Dana Kaplan, I used a [link](#) that isn’t available now, so try the following one instead). The first C. H. M. volume said Freuder had already visited “incognito,” which was when they gave him “McCaul’s Interpretation of the 53rd of Isaiah.” Then on the Day of Atonement they invited the local Jews to the service (in response, one brother “was struck in the face”), gave a sermon on Hosea 3:5, and had Freuder’s baptism. Rev. Scott performed the sacrament and Rev. Curtiss and William Blackstone were there. “We were glad to see a number of [other] Christian friends present.” I wonder if Fles was there or ever met with him in person, possibly at the C. H. M. when Freuder soon joined them. Freuder was the one requesting information – as reported to the 1894 Synod session. D. Kaplan’s biographical articles of him explain how important “[Protestant premillennialism](#)” was to evangelicals and to Jewish missions “in the last quarter of the nineteenth century.” (p. 48-49.)

Louis Meyer met Rev. J. C. Smith at a Cincinnati, Ohio mission to Jews, converted and was baptized in 1892.

<sup>49</sup> The Jewish Era. 1921. p. 129. Fles’s obituary. Link above in end note 43. Separately, in 1895 the Jewish Era on p. 37 said Fles’s “letters and prayers” “encouraged us.” I’m not sure if those letters were written in English or in Dutch and then translated. Elsewhere in the magazine that year, donations from the “Holland Christian Reformed Churches of North America” and from the “Holland Reformed Churches of North America” were both listed as being “through Rev. J. I. Fles.” He also collected, sent, and credited donations from both denominations in 1896.

<sup>50</sup> The Jewish Era, October 1893. It is available [on Google Books](#). See their p. 247 & p. 233. Did Fles meet Blackstone in 1893? The article doesn’t say, but Blackstone did make comments on Kohler’s speech. Rev. Sprunger and Prof. H. M. Scott were there, and Rev. Bernard Angel wrote the story. They were the C. H. M. President and its next two Superintendents before Rev. Marcusson. I don’t really know if Fles ever met Blackstone, however if he had been to the Amsterdam mission, then that earlier experience might’ve made the later one likely. Fles must have wanted to talk with Rabbi Kohler. Blackstone was a member of the World’s Columbian Commission for the Chicago Fair, and met with President Grover Cleveland in that role. (p. 174 of Robert O. Smith’s 2013 More Desired than Our Own Salvation: The Roots of Christian Zionism. He has an available [article on the same topics](#).)

<sup>51</sup> <http://www.messianicgoodnews.org/rabbi-kaufmann-kohler/>. Rabbi Kohler had signed the Blackstone Memorial (per Ariel) and was regarded at that time as the “foremost exponent of Reform Judaism.” The website

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says, "The subject of his address was 'The Synagogue and the Church,' in which he was seeking to prove how close Judaism and Christianity stand to each other." It continues by quoting a section of his address about Jesus.

<sup>52</sup> Eric J. Ziolkowski. ... The Literary Prefiguration of Chicago's 1893 World's Parliament of Religions.

<http://dspace.lafayette.edu/bitstream/handle/10385/926/Ziolkowski-JournalofReligion-vol72-1993.pdf?sequence=1>. Other religions like Hinduism were represented there too.

One description of the Parliament from a 2006 book by Umar F. Abd-Allah about an American Muslim who spoke there said, "At center stage [of the World's Fair] stood one of the great events of the nineteenth century: the First World's Parliament of Religions. ... It captivated enthusiastic audiences with lectures on the world's [religions] ... by adherents." p. 1.

Another description: "The World Parliament of Religions was one of the best-attended and most talked-about conventions of the exposition." Sundays at Sinai: A Jewish Congregation in Chicago, by Tobias Brinkmann. p. 214.

<sup>53</sup> Charles Lippy. Introducing American Religion— the eBook.

<http://www.jbeonlinebooks.org/eBooks/american/documents/chapter-11.pdf>. Their p. 179. Also shows some zeitgeist of the era, says about Moody's evangelism, "there was an eschatological or apocalyptic undertone to the movement; taking the Christian message throughout the world would hasten the arrival of the kingdom of God on earth." Other end notes here say the same thing. (Moody called the Parliament of Religions "dangerous.")

The Evangelical Association (later the Evangelical Church) also met near there on September 19-21, a publication is here; <https://archive.org/details/EVwmCongressOfTheEvangelicalAssociation>. It was associated with the World's Parliament of Religions (which opened on Sept. 11). This group was not the same as the other Association that had met in the Netherlands. Their origin was Pennsylvanian Germanic Lutheran; their eschatology was more liberal and amillennial. p. 104.

Swierenga said, "Moody found Chicago so hospitable to his ministry that he established a church and missionary training school there (Moody Bible Institute), which has deeply influenced Dutch Reformed believers to the present day." A Tale of Two Congregations: ... <http://www.calvin.edu/henry/ISSRC/Images/swierenga.pdf>. p. 1.

Moody held large gatherings at the Chicago World's Fair in his church and for 18,000 people under a circus tent. Rev. J. Wilbur Chapman, D.D. The Life & Work Of Dwight Lyman Moody. Originally published in 1900. <http://www.biblebelievers.com/moody/17.html>. The circus tent was right outside of the Fairgrounds. Per Thekla Joiner's *Sin in the City: Chicago and Revivalism, 1880-1920*. p. 83- 88 has a [picture](#) of their "Gospel Wagon", 2013. Eminent premillennialist Rueben Torrey helped Moody there, and was also head of the Bible Institute (per a bio).

More Moody: Moody had met John Darby (1800 –1882), who was often credited (or blamed) for originating dispensationalism; Darby definitely spread it to the new world, and he also popularized the rapture doctrine. Tim Gloege's interesting book, *Guaranteed Pure: The Moody Bible Institute, Business, and the Making of Modern Evangelicalism* said Moody began viewing premillennialism favorably in 1876 after his huge Chicago revival. Some experts think Moody was influenced by Darby sooner than that. Almost 2 million people signed Moody's guest register at his big rallies during those six months of the Fair. Darby left America in 1877 (per Wilkinson's brief bio).

More of the Fair: Perhaps Fles wanted to go see the 332 paintings from Dutch artists – both old and new masters – (per Hans Krabbendam's 2003 paper, [http://www.hope.edu/vri/docs/dutch\\_identity\\_politics.doc](http://www.hope.edu/vri/docs/dutch_identity_politics.doc)) or to find a tasty Dutch snack at their exhibit! He could have brought some of the very first mass-produced Cracker Jack back home.

I wonder whether Isaac might have accompanied his father there? Isaac went to the Reformed Church's Hope College Preparatory School, possibly in 1893 but certainly by 1894. Isaac played 3<sup>rd</sup> base on the college's team, they played against the "Holland City Base Ball Club," and then Fles and another fellow joined the semi-pro team. The city built a new fenced-in ball park for their local team that year. They charged men a twenty cent admission,

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boys fifteen, and girls & ladies were not charged. (But then later Isaac ... well, that's a different story!) Sources from an original Hope College publication, *The Anchor*, (is online) and Michael Van Beek's 2003 article, *Baseball Arrives in Holland:...* tells about the new ball park.

(<http://digitalcommons.hope.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1039&context=jaquarterly>). Did Johanna ever pack a lunch and then bring the girls and ten year old Benjamin to go see Isaac play ball? I say sure, of course they did!

Isaac also played football, and was called "one of the best football players that Hope College ever turned out" years later, in a 1906 *GR Herald* newspaper article that said his father preached against the violent sport. Why? There were up to 20 deaths attributed to the sport in 1905, some reported in the *Chicago Tribune* at the time, including perhaps one "Miss Decker." Rule changes were implemented in 1906. Per a 2014 online *Deadspin* article by Aaron Gordon. <http://deadspin.com/did-football-cause-20-deaths-in-1905-re-investigating-1506758181>.

<sup>54</sup> See the fascinating non-fiction story of the Fair, [The Devil in the White City](#) by Erik Larson. It says the Ferris wheel was in full swing that fall. An entrance ticket cost fifty cents, twenty-five for children. The Ferris wheel cost another fifty cents. About one quarter of the country's population went, over 21.5 million paid visitors. (According to <http://xroads.virginia.edu/~ma96/wce/history.html>.)

You can return to the World's Fair and even see a mosque on the Midway in one section of the long end note 112.

<sup>55</sup> Op. Cit. Yaakov Ariel. *Evangelizing the Chosen People: Missions to the Jews in America, 1880-2000*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000. p. 25. There were many Jewish missions in US and foreign cities.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid. Yaakov Ariel. p. 25. It is available [on Google Books](#). Published in 2000 (or before)?

Here is a definition by Dr. Harold Rhode (from a 2017 paper he wrote on Modern Islamic Warfare): "Zionism is the belief that Jews have the right to return to their ancient homeland and the re-constituted entity that their ancestors lost 2,000 years ago." End note 94 has more on what Zionism and the Zionist movement means.

<sup>57</sup> Henry Beets. *The Christian Reformed Church in North America ...* (history in English). [p. 158](#). Also Fles's 1907 anniversary article (link in end note 71) mentions the Church sent money (\$70 in 1898) to Rev. Kropveld's Dutch Reformed (Fles didn't specify the Dutch Christian Reformed denomination, but it was probably supported by both) Jewish mission in the Netherlands. That amount is mentioned in the 1898 Synod document. They also sent donations to Mr. Stoové at the other interdenominational Jewish mission in the Netherlands. The Presbyterian Hebrew Mission in New York received the same \$460 amount as the C. H. M. But Fles said they withdrew that support due to a financial scandal occurring at the NY mission under Mr. Warszawiak.

<sup>58</sup> [https://www.calvin.edu/library/database/crcnasynod/1896acts\\_et.pdf](https://www.calvin.edu/library/database/crcnasynod/1896acts_et.pdf) p. 5, 6, and lastly on p. 48 of the pdf. The translation omitted the word "Israel" that is in the Dutch version - *eens Zijne beloften aan Israël vervullen*. I used the exact words from Google Translate, only moving the word "will" from the end. The Dutch version said "our hearts and our prayers." Offering hearts is an important theme within the CRC.

Fles's quotes were frequently based upon Bible verses; here the last part of his speech to Synod was based on the premillennial OT chapter of Ezekiel 36, verse 28 which says, "Then you will live in the land I gave your ancestors; you will be my people, and I will be your God." That verse and the ones next to it tell the covenant God made to the Jewish people. The end of the next chapter 37 repeats those same words and calls the covenant "everlasting." This verse shows why premillennialists considered a Jewish return to the holy land to be so important - because they are prophesied to be there during the last days. These verses got a Dutch minister into trouble in the 1930s, another period when the Dutch Church was against the "duizendjarig rijk" (millennial reign).

<sup>59</sup> J. Riemersma, *Jewish Era*. 1894 biography of Fles, their p. 73. Link is in end note 2. [The front](#) of their "Jewish Era" said the same thing.

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Rev. Riemersma spoke on "The Claims of Israel Upon the Christian Church" at an 1896 Chicago Hebrew Mission conference. This topic came up often, see p. 24 and end note 89. Riemersma emphasized Biblical and moral reasons; ending his talk by saying mission work will "hasten the fulfillment of the promises respecting Israel."

op. cit. Henry Beets. The Christian Reformed Church in North America ... (history in English). [p.158](#). Beets was referring to those Jews who had converted to Christianity. End note 87 shows Beets going back and forth about whether there will be a large scale conversion of Jews; he apparently concluded the number saved might be large.

Fles wrote about this Bible passage, see page 24 of this paper for a link to that supplemental document. More about Romans 11 is in end notes 71, 75, 124, and end note 128 has a link to Dr. John Walvoord's summary; "Romans eleven deals with the question, 'Did God cast off His people?'" He was clearly answering no, I'm sure he must have been aware of specific charges that claimed the opposite perspective. Every Christian should read this New Testament passage. <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+11%3A25-29&version=NIV>. Kaiser's article in Porter's anthology (see end note 132) says that the "replacement view" is an incorrect analysis and notes the importance of Rom. 11 verse 29, "... for God's gifts and [H]is call are irrevocable." Therefore, instead of "replacement by the church ... there would [I'd rather say will] be one united 'people of God.'" Porter, Stanley E.. The Future Restoration of Israel: A Response to Supersessionism (McMaster Biblical Studies Series) (p. 96). Pickwick Publications, an imprint of Wipf and Stock Publishers. Kindle Edition. Next, let me add the link to Kaiser's [defense of premillennialism](#), "the everlasting promise of God made to [H]is people Israel." (I should throw in the Mishkan 21 article, from his end note. It has Replacement theology, Jewish evangelism, Romans 11. Page numbers of this excerpted quote might vary, I hope it is understandable; "The point ... both Hoekema and Berkhof missed was that Romans 11:27 linked this 'and so' with 'this is my covenant with them when I [God] take away their sins.' This was ... a reference to the new covenant (Jer 31:31-34) ..." See the Caspari Center for Biblical and Jewish Studies in Jerusalem and their [great resources](#) for Jewish evangelism, with their articles from scholars such as Kaiser and Yaakov Ariel.)

<sup>60</sup> op. cit. Henry Beets. The Christian Reformed Church in North America ... (history in English). [p.119](#).

George Marsden says, "Dispensationalism was essentially Reformed in its nineteenth-century origins and had in later nineteenth-century America spread most among revival-oriented Calvinists." (As noted by the premillennial Dr. Thomas Ice). George Marsden, "Introduction: Reformed and American," in David F. Wells, ed., Reformed Theology in America: A History of Its Modern Development (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1997), p. 8.

The CRC generally teaches a non-literal or symbolic interpretation of most of the Bible's prophecy, except for those regarding Christ's first coming. It is often called a spiritualized one. CRC Rev. William Masselink said, "If all prophecy must be interpreted in a literal way, the Chiliastic views are correct, but if it can be proved that these prophecies have a spiritual meaning, then Chiliasm must be rejected." Masselink, "Why Thousand Years" (Eerdmans, 1930, 31. Another search on ["chiliasm" went to Judaic scripture](#). [C.Hills' 2007 article on the subject](#). Masselink quoted by the premillennial Dr. John MacArthur in his lesson on "prophecy and premillennium," but that link doesn't work now. He also noted the next quote and another one by Bavinck that I haven't repeated here). L. Boettner, called either an amillennialist or a postmillennialist, said something similar (not sure if it was in his 1958 book, The Millennium), "It is generally agreed that if prophecies are taken literally, they do foretell a restoration of the nation Israel in the land of Palestine with the Jews having a prominent place in that kingdom." (As noted by the premillennial K. Neill Foster, MacArthur, and others). Boettner said "true meaning can be brought out" by spiritualizing "prophetic texts predicting a future glory for Israel" (per Grenz on p. 78-79 of his 1992 [The Millennial Maze](#)). Grenz goes on to explain the basis for such beliefs, and cites several CRC theologians. Amillennial supersessionists often refer to "types and shadows," typology, or recurring Biblical themes, and they still cite P. Fairbairn's [The Typology of Scripture](#), originally published in 1852 and again in 1900 (available online - it was also advertised in the same 1882 publication that had an ad for J. P. Lange and Van Oosterzee's work).



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He was a Scottish Presbyterian, <http://www.theopedia.com/patrick-fairbairn>, who changed his mind regarding the prophetic prospects of the Jews and moved toward an amillennial, spiritualized theology.

End note 128 has more on the two peoples of God. Search for the word “replacement” to find more on that belief.

<sup>61</sup> The Jewish Era. Rev. J. I. Fles. 1896. Article is (meant to be) titled *Israel's Veil*, on 2 Corinthians 3:13-16. p. 85. It is available [on Google Books](#). Translated by Riemersma. Quotes from this source appear throughout this paper. In 1907 Fles also gave the CRC that same reason for evangelizing to Jews, “We labor that the firstfruits [“eerstelingen”] be brought unto the Lord, believing that the full harvest of restitution ... will follow.” (“Wederaanneming” in Dutch might’ve meant re-adoption.)

See Psalm 150:6 “Praise ye the Lord.” Israel is described as the “firstfruits of God’s harvest” in Jeremiah 2:3. While I’m recommending related verses, here is one near and similar to Hosea 3:5; you should read Hosea 5:15-6:3 too.

Along with his lesson in 1896, Fles told Chicago’s immigrant Jews and/or the converted Jews about the Dutch missions to Jews; both the one begun by Da Costa, Capadose, and Schwartz, and the one begun by Kropveld. Then he mentioned that (David) Baron and Rabbi Lichtenstein (both well-known Jewish converts to Christ) were currently lecturing in the Netherlands “in behalf of the Jewish mission work.” Go to this great firsthand account from Baron’s *The Scattered Nation* in Google Books! It was possibly connected to [Schwartz’s periodical](#) that began in 1866. End note 40 has more on those missions. Baron (1855 – 1926) wrote prophetic commentaries, and said “prophetic events [are unfolding] which center around the land and the people of Israel.” He also spoke against “the allegorizing principle of interpretation, by which all references to a concrete kingdom of God on earth, a literal, national restoration of Israel, and the visible appearing and reign of Messiah, are explained away.” (per the Jewish Era, Penney, and elsewhere). It is available [on Google Books](#).

<sup>62</sup> [https://www.calvin.edu/library/database/crcnasynod/1898acts\\_et.pdf](https://www.calvin.edu/library/database/crcnasynod/1898acts_et.pdf). p. 19 – 20 of the pdf document. The Committee’s response with “the Church was in harmony with God’s will” is on p. 109.

In the 1898 Synod session’s “first matter to be discussed,” Classis Muskegon (Fles’s, although he wasn’t one their six delegates) requested, “The Synod will consider using Committees on Pre-Advice as little as possible.” Synod decided (likely by vote – I’m not sure of their process) that they would not change their customary system, but agreed to Classis Iowa’s proposal, “[Those Pre-Advice committees] shall serve the Synod with reports which are thoroughly worked out, in which **reasons and motives are clearly stated**, as well as reasons for the advice they give, and then that they be given plainly and completely.” p. 9- 10. Those types of Committees would affect later events, it might be possible to track the names and find enough to draw more conclusions about them.

<sup>63</sup> That statement was mentioned in a booklet in Calvin’s library; *Twenty-five years of blessing: historical sketch of the Chicago Hebrew Mission, 1887-1912*. Published 1912. p. 14 – 15. They said, “It was deemed best that we should set forth a declaration of our faith.” They added “Scriptures ... commanded to preach the gospel to the Jews” to the Apostle’s Creed. <http://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uiug.30112037757421;view=1up;seq=18>, or try this link; <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/100157059>. The booklet is online. [Walmart is selling](#) a reprint! The Jewish Era p. 29 said Rev. Fles was re-elected as a trustee, probably later than that period (in 1913- 1916). Rev. Cornelius Kuyper and Rev. Marcusson were also trustees at that time. Blackstone stayed involved and was often on the Board. Fles was re-elected to another term of office every two years. Riemersma was on the C.H.M board in 1895-1898. His personal problems became public around then, and he was deposed from the Church for non-doctrinal reasons (or for doctrinal reasons not given) in 1899. However, he continued to preach. (per Swierenga’s *Dutch Chicago* p. 135-139.) Rev. W. Heyns was their next minister after Riemersma left.

Rev. C. Kuyper, born in 1866, was the pastor at Grand Rapids Fourth Reformed Church from 1904-11 before he went to Cedar Grove, which was after that church donated to the CRC Jewish Mission in 1898. They could have



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been premillennial, although this nice 1891 history by Albert Baxter doesn't say so. <http://www.migenweb.net/kent/baxter1891/31churches.html>. His [original source](#) had a picture. Kuyper was originally from Orange City IA and/or Chicago, graduated from Western Theological Seminary (Dr. E. Winter taught him Systematic Theology), he might already have been premillennial by then, and he married Berendina (Bertha) Walvoord, daughter of William O. from Aalten, NL. They were married in 1901, she could have belonged to the Reformed Church of Cedar Grove's Women's Missionary Society (?), and eventually one of their children, Everdine DeJong and her minister husband became RCA missionaries in Kuwait and India.

Jews (and others) were emigrating to America and Chicago by the thousands each year, many from Germany. Fles could probably speak to them in German and/or Yiddish.

Fles visited the C. H. M. other times, but I didn't notice anything else occurring in the area then. The Jewish Era mentions the booklet in the Mission's report for 1912. The article begins on their p. 30. It is available [on Google Books](#). A lot more Jewish mission history including Blackstone's own writings. Says the C. H. M. annual income was \$4,700. The CRC usually disbursed about \$3,000 per year. Published in 1902.

<sup>64</sup> E. William Kennedy histories; [https://dutchamericans.files.wordpress.com/2017/01/1985\\_8\\_kennedy.pdf](https://dutchamericans.files.wordpress.com/2017/01/1985_8_kennedy.pdf) (new link). The "premillennialist, biblicist Scholte disciple" on p. 104. Kennedy's *A. J. Betten: The Other Pioneer Pella Dominie*, is also online. His "[spiritualizing of biblical prophecy](#)" (or the non-literal allegorizing) is on p. 111. One end note (63) from that paper said a different (RCA) journal, *De Hope*, sought "to avoid controversy on eschatology, [and] rejected an article ['on the future'] by Betten in the fall of 1876." I could look up his source. The end note says Betten and other authors who wrote "chiliastic material" became more widely published; it was like "a flood from the mid-1880s to the early 1890s in *De Volksvriend*." Betten's son was the editor of the newspaper at that time (from 1885 – 1891, per this end note and Robert Schoone-Jongen's article; <http://ir.uiowa.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1449&context=annals-of-iowa>). The weekly newspaper was not a church publication, but its articles reflected the readers' interest in religion. It is available online, see end note 108 for a link to search instructions, and some interesting results in end note 38.

Stellingwerff's Iowa Letters ... on p. 132 show Jan Hospers learned from Scholte and Betten before they emigrated. He was likely an ancestor (see <http://assets.nwciowa.edu/library/public/content/findingaids/HenryHospers.pdf>) of Rev. Gerrit H. Hospers, whom Dr. Bratt described as an (Pella) Iowa-born (in 1864) RCA pastor that wrote (in English) *The Calvinistic Character of Pre-millennialism* in 1915 "and reiterated its themes in the *Leader* during the early '20s." The booklet is at Hope College's Joint Archives; p. 5-6 said "True Calvinism must wrestle loose from every insidious attempt of resorting to questionable hermeneutic methods to bolster up preconceived opinions," citing Rev. 20 and Romans 11. It called the term 'A-millennialism' recent, so that was before a 1930s origin some have suggested. I had to transcribe it; see [his article here](#). He wrote *The Principle of Spiritualization in Hermeneutics* in 1935 (per Hesselink and MacArthur reprinting Walvoord in 1951 on the topic). All of whom cite Pieters, M. J. Wyngaarden, and W. Hendriksen, the last two were amillennial Calvin Seminary professors, more about Dr. Hendriksen later. Wyngaarden's 1934 book about the spiritualized Kingdom of Christ included that same quote above by Hospers on its p. 23. He changed the content of an RCA Western Seminary [prophecy class](#) in 1938, per my analysis of class descriptions from [The Theology](#). Hospers was an optimistic premillennialist who argued against liberalism, modernism in the Church, and their eschatology of "implicit postmillennialism" (per end note on p. 267 of Dr. Bratt's book sourced here many times). "Objecting vehemently to the 'spiritualization' approach, Hospers [in his 1935 booklet] sought to refute Wyngaarden's ['modernistic' in 1934] argument point by point." (per Hesselink paper on *The Millennium in the Reformed Tradition*; see end note 124.) I might continue to look at [this](#) turbulent time. Wyngaarden's book was [published again](#) in 1955. Hospers was in Muskegon at Second R.C. from September 1892 - 1894 – when Fles was also in that town a few blocks away. Fles was communicating with Reformed Church persons during this important time; see page 13 of this paper. Hospers was the Principal of the RCA Cedar Grove Academy in Wisconsin from 1905-1908. I think he would have had some contact with Fles, but cannot find any evidence to support my assumption.

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I wonder if he knew Blackstone? Or if he knew Rev. De Haan (who graduated from Western Seminary in 1925). Fles preached at Second R.C. in 1906 (the same year their Jewish mission began disbursing its financial support), see end note 70.

Kennedy's "*Prairie Premillennialism ...*" said, "The midwestern, immigrant RCA, especially in Iowa, was receptive to premillennial teaching." On page 1 of article. He said the Rev. Seine Bolks of the First R. C. in Zeeland and then in Orange City was another "widely revered" Premillennial pioneer. (p. 163.) Another church history said, "The preaching of Rev. Bolks was markedly evangelical." Dr. A. Pieters' 1929 or 1930 article "Jonah, the Whale, and Dr. M. R. De Haan" agreed Bolks was premillennial, and it also said, "Dr. Egbert Winter **became** a pre-millenarian [while preaching at First R. C. in Pella, Iowa from 1866-1884], and many years later, his position on this subject being well known, was elected Professor of Theology in our [RCA] Seminary [in 1895 - 1904] which shows how little hostility there was to such views at that time." p. 9-10. This source in the joint archives of Holland and the RCA's Hope College doesn't say when or how Dr. Winter's theological change occurred. I've put a part online; a link is in end note 124. Kennedy's article mentions Winter, but doesn't seem to note that Winter changed his beliefs while in Pella. Rev. Zeilstra's history said the First Reformed Church in Pella also experienced premillennial discord, apparently brought about by its Sunday School teachers, (see his footnote 9). End note 124 has more on Pieters.

B. B. Warfield's *The Presbyterian and Reformed Review*, Volume 6 (1895) said Rev. Winter "has come to be in touch with all the churches there" in "the West [i.e. Iowa]." See [picture of source](#). He probably had some contact with Fles. Doesn't this source suggest Dutch premillennialists were more ecumenical than other Dutch Christians?

Kennedy's recap of Fles's story is on p. 160 of his document, p. 8 of the pdf. He said the "maverick" Fles was friendly with H. P. Oggel M. D., who was also premillennial. Oggel was the brother of "Pella's first Reformed minister," and was an editor of different Dutch publications. He began one in Pella in 1880 – about when Fles arrived, and then went to Orange City's *The Volksvriend* in 1891. Oggel (and/or his son) also published the *Heidenwereld* missionary magazine, and AJ Betten (the junior one) was on its board (commissie).

Oggel "promoted RCA-CRC mutual understanding," and encouraged Fles "to contribute a column commenting on world, national, and church events, particularly from the perspective of (premillennial) prophecy (i.e. to the effect that things are getting worse)." Fles related "current events to eschatology," which has always been how premillennialism is popularized. Kennedy's article also said, "Jan van Anandel, a Secession minister in the Netherlands," contributed to the paper. I've looked up one article of his from 1888, titled "Israel is a support for the faith" that says in Dutch, "And under adverse conditions, it remains. ... God has said that Israel shall not perish, and should Israel sink now, that word would be lost first. Israel remains because the word remains; Out of the firmness of the word alone declares the fastness of Israel."

Another article by van Anandel was titled "Israel will see his Messiah," and it ended by quoting from Isaiah 59:20, "The Redeemer shall come from Zion, and shall turn away the wickedness of Jacob. (Maranatha.)"

Van Anandel was probably not referring to the very early beginnings of Jewish emigration to the Holy Land. But once it did occur (as expected), then Kennedy notes how the Church reacted.

Church periodicals from the RCA and "even the CRC's *De Wachter*, reported regularly and extensively on this almost miraculous restoration ... of the children of Israel to the promised land. This suggested to many minds a literal fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy, and that other Old Testament prophecies about Israel should be interpreted literally, too, and not spiritualized and applied to the Christian church as had been the common practice. Besides, there had been some notable Jewish conversions to Christianity (e.g., among the Dutch, Da Costa, Capadose, the elder Fles), which might be the firstfruits of a great (millennial?) harvest," said Kennedy on page 164. (That last part makes me wonder if he read the Jewish Era article by the younger Fles? It's in the main text on pages 15-16.) Other quotes from Kennedy's source are interspersed within my paper. End note 74 cites his paper regarding the same Orange City church. I've met with the Reformed Church's Dr. Kennedy, and thank

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him for providing an interesting view of Fles and his teaching style – he got along with everyone in each denomination. Dr. Swierenga brought me into his office a year later, and we had a very interesting conversation!

Fles's "contributions" is per <http://iagenweb.org/sioux/Newspaper/Volks/rembrances.htm>. Fles must have known about the split at Fourth Reformed/Second Pella C.R.C. in 1897, as this story tells next. It is hard to speculate what interactions occurred between them, since Fles obviously remained on good terms with that church later. If any Dutch Iowans read "The Jewish Era" then they were aware of Herzl and the international events occurring in 1897. End note 32 has a link to that issue.

Fles must have preached and written about those events too. See end note 94 for more of that history.

<sup>65</sup> Rev. S. S. Postma was President of the CRC Jewish Mission in 1898, and W. Heyns was the Secretary - then and later (both had been there from its beginning – but was Postma originally from Muskegon classis?). Rev. Heyns was soon appointed to be a theology professor, and wrote on covenant theology. Beets' history in Dutch, p. 229 has more on what Heyns believed, English translation is p. 242. There were two schools of thought regarding the Covenant of Grace, and the matter was heavily debated. Several of the ministers mentioned in this paper had strong opinions on it. Heyns was on the more liberal side – he said it was unconditional; Volbeda critiqued his Doctrine of the Covenant (per J. Mark Beach article that is online. Another summary of various views on this topic is from the Free Reformed Church; <http://frcna.org/messenger/messenger-articles/item/7430->). Heyns became Head of the Department of Church Government at Calvin College (per Boslooper). The family file for him at Heritage Hall has most of Fles's material in it.

[http://libguides.calvin.edu/crcna\\_synod](http://libguides.calvin.edu/crcna_synod). Links to all of the CRC Acts of Synod.

They don't contain many strong pleas from ministers besides Fles, and none that were given every time the Synod met over so long a period.

<http://libguides.calvin.edu/content.php?pid=16333&sid=114998> for more. Another good starting point.

<http://www2.crcna.org/site/uploads/uploads/resources/Index%201857-2000.pdf>. Index of Synod decisions.

<http://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/003295243>. Some CRC Yearbooks of 1914 - 1922.

<sup>66</sup> The Origins of Pella II by Rev. Wm. Zeilstra.

<http://pella2crc.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/originsofpella2-2005.pdf>. But now that link doesn't directly connect to it; I should look elsewhere online for it (so the same thing doesn't happen when I let my website go). I don't see a readable copy here or elsewhere (I hope to eventually bring them my printout copy for their records), <https://herrickdl.bibliocommons.com/v2/search?query=%22Zeilstra%2C+William%22&searchType=author>.

My saved copy of it: <http://www.stickysystems.com/pics/originsofpella2.pdf>. Zeilstra said, "The Holland Presbyterian church, for unknown reasons, joined the Reformed denomination once again in 1894." Its page 6.

J. De Jong's history, link in end note 9, said Scholte's "party [group] ... had Darbyite, or premillennial tendencies."

M. Douma's history of Dutch identity notes Scholte thought the Church rejected God's covenant with Israel. p. 36. The nearby Peoria Iowa C.R.C. also experienced some type of unspecified but likely related "turmoil ... between the opposing factions" in 1896. Two families disagreed with a mediated resolution and left the church. (per Marilyn Vander Linden, 1994. [Click here to read the full text](#). p.8 has quote.) D. H. Kromminga was their minister 1922- 26.

<sup>67</sup> [https://www.jrpoot.eu/Poot\\_to\\_Poot\\_Engels/index.html](https://www.jrpoot.eu/Poot_to_Poot_Engels/index.html). W. Allison's family story might not be available there now. Rev. Poot "was well known as a powerful speaker and as someone who always brought many new members to a church." This history of Pella from the Poot family defines the term "evangelic leanings," then and now. In an unnumbered reference – see its sixth page, but with a word search on quotes why still count pages? Here is a picture of [Moody's church](#) (and [more](#)) from another one of the Poot papers. Moody died a few months after that 1899 conference. Another of his Poot family histories has that story, and a picture of the World's Fair lit at night.

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Rev. John W. Poot came to the Kalamazoo Presbytery's "Holland Church of Kalamazoo" "from the Free Evangelical Church of Holland [MI.], Oct. 10, 1887." (per the online Minutes of the ... Annual Meeting[s] of the [Presbyterian] Synod of Michigan). Let me know if anyone ever finds anything about that church! I haven't checked [this archive](#).

The unpublished Gerrit Bieze source said on p. 10 in 1891 Rev. J. W. Poot led this same Kalamazoo church already mentioned in end note 34. The Presbyterian Church on E. Dutton St. congregation had "seceded from the Presbyterian Church and again re-organized themselves as a 'Vrije Evangelische Gemeente.'" (Group is abbreviated V.E.G. in the book about Brummelkamp.) An [1891 letter](#) (in Dutch- Google some terms to find the link, or just ask me for it) to the Netherlands is interesting, but it doesn't seem to clearly say whether the church's doctrinal beliefs included premillennialism. The letter said De Best had some problems (and left town per an 1882 newspaper article), and then the church "appealed for a time to another minister [Fles], but flowering [bloei] did not come." Bieze used a different source to note the congregation had requested that Fles come to be their minister in 1886. They instead went with the evangelistic Poot a year later, as seen from that letter and Bieze's paper. Their church was still Presbyterian in 1890. The 1891 letter describes what happened during the next denominational change:

The church had become "more serious," grown, and rebuilt its buildings,  
"so that the work of Rev. Poot was indeed blessed." However ...  
"Overall, [personal and doctrinal disputes] had been smoldering  
for some time, and now the flame started to break out." Soon ...  
"Rev. Poot was without the formality of a church [denomination?],  
and was followed by the majority of the congregation,  
they rented one room and finally a house,  
and thus began his services for a not inconsiderable  
number of listeners to continue in the old way.  
The congregation will be reorganized,  
but shall henceforth be standing by itself,  
and its prosperity will likely depend upon  
the zealous and policy fulfilling work of her teachers.  
Yet recently Rev. Poot tried to bring new and earnest  
life in his town by holding revival meetings,  
the results have not become known to me.  
Many serious thinkers hope for the best,  
and wish that a good example will be given  
to many other congregations through this church,  
since it is seen from her own point of view."  
(signed by) "W"

Then Poot left and became affiliated with different Reformed or possibly other churches (in Grand Rapids, to Hudsonville, MI Reformed Church in 1895, and then to Chicago's Gano Reformed Church per another document from the same family papers) before he went to the old Scholte church in Pella. Many of the ministers that Bieze wrote about – like Rev. Gerrit Huyser (whom Fles knew), also an evangelist or minister for a segment of that same Kalamazoo church at one time – moved from one denomination to another. That Kalamazoo church then became Reformed after that – Fourth Ref. "Rev. Poot may have given a referral" to someone he knew in Iowa, Rev. Troost, who went to preach there in 1904. Fles might have preached there as a visitor, see end note 115. The Fourth Reformed Church in Kalamazoo built a [new building](#) in 1909, they experienced another apparently similar issue in the '30s (according to a 1940 book by RCA Rev. J. Burggraaff), and then the church disbanded in December 2012. [Picture is in missions book linked here](#).

The source on Poot above has a picture of the "old Scholte Church building." Second C.R.C. bought their building in 1897. Jacob Van Der Zee's [Dutch Reformed Church in Iowa](#), p. 297 said, "Fourth Dutch Reformed Church, the

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members of which sold their parsonage and church property at auction in September, 1909, and in January, 1910.” 4th Reformed church disbanded in 1910. Many of its congregants re-joined Second Pella, which was one reason Second Pella grew so much when Fles returned. It may have been that more-premillennial group who wanted and asked Fles to return. Scholte’s pulpit from the NL was sent to Pella around then, but it “seemed to possess no sentimental value to the citizens of Pella.” The building was demolished in 1916, according to Rev. Zeilstra. Here is Heritage Hall’s [picture of Second Pella](#). Sources include; The Hollanders of Iowa, by Jacob Van Der Zee, published 1912. The book was published that year too.

[http://www.iagenweb.org/sioux/books/hollanders/hollanders\\_36.htm](http://www.iagenweb.org/sioux/books/hollanders/hollanders_36.htm)

<https://books.google.com/books?id=Rb1DAQAAMAAJ>. His book has plenty of historical context.

A son of Hermine De Leeuw Terpstra gave me a picture of the parsonage from around 1911-12. The big home was nice (see its picture from Terpstra on my main website). He thought the house might have been Scholte’s once. Is that possible? Zeilstra’s history said, “Within a year [after the 1897 split], the congregation had bought a parsonage on two lots, two blocks south of Union Street.” The parsonage apparently existed already when bought. Did Scholte have a house that wasn’t a parsonage owned by the church? I don’t know what Pella’s Scholte House Museum shows.

<sup>68</sup> The Minnie played a “voluntary” in the spring of 1901 story was told in Heritage Hall’s new collection of records from First Muskegon C.R.C. Box 10, number 3: History is a bound booklet with diary-like entries. They also have the book with Bultema’s legal proceedings. The choir song’s second verse, “Soon shall thy radiance stream afar, Wide as the heathen nations are: Gentiles and kings thy light shall view, All shall admire and love thee, too.” William Shrubsole (1759 – 1829). Surely its premillennial message was based upon several chapters in Isaiah such as 49, 51:9, 52, and 60. I’d guess that Bartlett’s picture on page 34 also was inspired by those chapters.

Miss Minnie Fles also played the Wedding March at a wedding her father officiated in May, 1903. The GR Herald.

Rev. De Leeuw and Minnie soon moved to Chicago. He preached or witnessed at the C. H. M. during those five years, 1905-10. He was also a trustee there along with Rev. Fles and Rev. Kuyper (mentioned in my paper next), per the Jewish Era.

<sup>69</sup> “according to their best judgment” is on their p. 640.

[https://books.google.com/books?id=rOUQAAAAIAAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs\\_ge\\_summary\\_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q=according%20to%20their%20best%20judgment&f=false](https://books.google.com/books?id=rOUQAAAAIAAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q=according%20to%20their%20best%20judgment&f=false). Published 1901.

<https://www.genealogieonline.nl/stamboom-kuyper-en-scholten/154.php> Has “[A]pproximately \$75,000 [total] in appropriations from the [Reformed] churches were distributed through his [Rev. Kuyper’s] office.”

“Our people” was from the later date, not sure if the delay was significant for some reason or not. On p. 71 of book. I’m not sure if it referred to their familiarity with missions in general or if it indicated friendliness towards the Jewish one and a premillennial proclivity. Kennedy noted the RCA “was receptive to premillennial teaching,” source in end note 64. Of course some of that teaching had been from Fles. Other persons and potential sources in America then that used Dutch to describe premillennialism are mentioned or suggested in this paper, such as the translation of Darby and books by Rev. Sipkes in the Netherlands. There were others – did Rev. Elijah Craven (1824 - 1908) speak Dutch? He was a Dutch Reformed pastor in NJ in the 1850s, then went to the UPC, spoke at the 1878 Prophecy Conference, and taught at Princeton Seminary. He “was a strong Calvinist who fought against the rising tide of liberalism... [and] made premillennialism synonymous with evangelicalism.” (per Russell Penney’s An Introduction to Classical Evangelical Hermeneutics). Those issues must have been discussed at the CRC Calvin Seminary and the RCA Western Theological Seminary in Holland, Michigan. Perhaps Dr. Bratt or other modern experts would say that certain families from the more conservative areas of the old country still tended to support local ministers who may have preached similar themes. I think articles like the one from the young businessmen’s group in the Gereformeerde Amerikaan journal in end note 34 and in 70, and the ones from Fles played a big role then. Most RCA ministers probably allowed their congregations to study and express “vocal premillennialism,” per p. 133 of Bratt’s Dutch Calvinism history (although that was well after the turn of the century). CRC pastors

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probably warned their congregations about those types of articles (something some of their ministers still do, which you can occasionally hear in online sermons. Second Pella C.R.C. had some examples not long ago. They do not have a church history web page now, but here is their main page <http://pella2crc.org/> .)

It is available [on Google Books](#). Published 1906. Or maybe it became official the prior year in 1905. [http://digitalcommons.hope.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1795&context=collection\\_registers](http://digitalcommons.hope.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1795&context=collection_registers) is a listing of a few sources at the Hope College archives. Swierenga's Dutch Chicago, p. 143 gives an overview of periodicals. Rev. Moerdyke's "Chicago Letter" in the *Christian Intelligencer* appears to have been written in English.

In 1899 a converted Jew was invited to Grand Rapids, he met with a few of the CRC ministers (and probably Fles), and was invited to attend Calvin Theological Seminary. Mr. Braun was financed by the CRC as he did so for eighteen months before he left to attend Moody Bible College. They gave him traveling money too. Fles mentioned him again at the next Synod session, which isn't sourced here otherwise, and also said, "Wherefore the apostle Paul says The Jew first. The labor engaged in with this people of old is not futile. Many among them are learning to know Him, the Hope of the fathers, and the Expectation of the gentiles."

<sup>70</sup> 1902 Acts of Synod. [https://www.calvin.edu/library/database/crcnasynod/1902acts\\_et.pdf](https://www.calvin.edu/library/database/crcnasynod/1902acts_et.pdf). Actual p. 14. uses "have better confessional basis" before it said "have one of our men." I haven't really tried to identify if the latter goal may have come about or not. Another decision; "Synod [will] annually provide \$1,200.00 for the support of the Chicago Hebrew Mission." They might have been attempting to keep the amount donated from going over that limit, as can be seen in several other years too. The Revs. Fles, Heyns, Postma, and elder S. Dekker were reappointed to the committee. Rev. L. J. Hulst was the chairman of the "Committee of Pre-Advice for Domestic Missions and Jewish Mission." Fles's response was on actual p. 96 is their p. 98. Henry Beets gave a report directed to the RCA asking for "further information why the Rejection of Errors of the Remonstrants was not included in the Standards of their church [namely, The Reformed Church of America]." p. 106 (108). I'm not sure whether that topic was connected to premillennial vs. amillennial theology. (It was probably grace vs. law, see Galatians.) There was also a long report on labor "unionism."

The following sources could be included with other similar end notes about theology and/or later events, but are instead presented here in chronological order.

A Rev. H. Van Hoogen (who was not premillennial, according to Dr. James Bratt) Gereformeerde Amerikaan article, "For Young Persons Societies Researching Scripture" (translated) considers prophecies in Ezekiel 36:28 through 40-48, the Jews, and chiliastic theology on p. 30 – 35 of the pdf linked in end note 34. Van Hoogen was arguing against a literal interpretation of prophecy. "The superficial reading of Ezekiel's prediction of Israel's future has led many to imagine an outward prosperity that would be bound to the return of the people to their God. ... Has the purpose of the Lord been to make it clear to Ezekiel that the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob would live again in Palestine? ... whether it is indeed the people of the Lord in Palestine who will enjoy that prosperity? ... Is that true? Certainly not. ... And to the question of what is to be understood of the picture of Israel's return in Canaan and the restoration of the [Jewish] temple and religion, it seems to me [there is] no better answer than this: The prophets have painted under the guidance of the Spirit, the congregation of the New Testament, as they would after the coming of the Messiah, in images taken from the church of the Old Testament. The natural seed of Abraham is the image and substructure of the Church in the Last Times, which will be extended by the nations to spiritual sons and daughters of Abraham over the whole surface of the earth. ... The grafting of believing Israel [he meant into the church] will take place, Rom. 11; but **not** to stand as a special people. The fullness of the Gentiles and all Israel are partakers of the same promises." (Translated with Google Translate.) Written in 1903, about when he left Central Ave. C.R.C. in Roseland, IL. He was also an editor of the publication.

Revs. Beets and M. Bosma (1874 - 1912), who once was part of that "Awakening" in end note 34 and was later associated with the CRC mission to Jews, wrote a children's catechism (written and translated in 1903, is online)



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which included these question and answers:

6 What did God establish with Abraham and his seed?

The covenant of grace. (Gen. 17: 1, 2, 7.)

7 Who are Abraham's seed?

They who believe in Christ. (Gal. 3:7.)

That last [Bible verse](#) (and the similar Gal. 3:16 and Gal. 3:29) is sometimes cited by people who've taught replacement theology, but the following verse nine says, "So those who rely on faith are blessed **along with** Abraham, the man of faith." This verse (in the NIV) and corresponding ones (Eph. 3:6) have been analyzed by theologians of all stripes, but I won't link to any here! Read the rest of Galatians 3, particularly verses 17 and 18 (suggested Rev. De Haan's book).

Rev. Fles preached at a couple local churches in 1903, as he probably did most years. One CRC church was near Charlevoix, perhaps a nice vacation spot that August. (But I'd guess he got involved in something more than he got away from it.) Per the GR Herald newspaper and see it; <http://chxhistory.com/charlevoix-historic-photos/hotels/>. The 1906 article in end note 53 about football said Fles was the pastor of a different, RCA church - Second Holland Reformed Church of Muskegon. He was probably just preaching there, and 1,000 people were at that evening service! I'm still looking for connections between Fles and Rev. Gerrit Hospers, a premillennial minister who had previously been a pastor at that church; see end note 64.

The Second R. C. of Muskegon minister, Rev. A. Karreman, preached or spoke at the Berean tabernacle soon after a September, 1920 CRC breakaway (per Boslooper). See a picture of the Berean church, probably after it was rebuilt on the same street as First C.R.C. <https://library.calvin.edu/hda/sites/default/files/hh1131h.jpg>. Link doesn't work.

Barry Horner's "THE ALLEGORIZATION OF THE BIBLE" by Abraham Heschel (no longer online) references a source which relied upon another one to say (like Fles did in 1907, see main text) that Israel's future is "great." The 1903 source's (by Andrew Bruce Davidson, see a [Wikipedia biography](#), published posthumously, is in English) chapter, "The Restoration Of The Jews" is [available online](#), and many of its pages show that we must study Romans 11 to understand and answer those questions. See a short [snippet from it](#).

The Gereformeerde Amerikaan publication had a 1906 article

(<https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?q1=Fles;id=mdp.39015074643720;view=plaintext;seq=106;start=1;sz=10;page=search;num=96>) in Dutch on CRC young people's societies that mentioned Muskegon and Fles. The article seems perhaps vague, but it does say Fles "closed with gratitude saying the collection [money] was intended for the internal mission of our church [which could well be the CRC Jewish mission], "God bless the League." The article calls one general aspect: "A difficult subject also because of the mixed character [found in some of?] our young people's societies." Local churches had societies, which were likely grouped into larger associations. Churches from nearby towns like Grand Haven were included or thinking of joining what apparently were various groups.

<sup>71</sup> Henry Beets, editor. Published 1907. Gedenkboek van het vijftigjarig jubileum der Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerk. It is available [on Google Books](#). p. 159-162. Once available at (possibly published by) the 347 East St. church bookstore? The celebration was held in Grand Rapids. I'm quite sure Fles spoke in front of the audience. Article has a picture of Fles, and "de ziel" (the soul) is at the end. Google translation, but a better one might make his entire "Zending" speech more understandable. His "other churches" probably meant other, more liberal denominations. He listed some of the details with a few other names of workers at the C. H. M. which are not included in this paper.

I tried to see if any of the other ministers voiced related thoughts, and I think Rev. J. Groen's (his [CRC bio](#)) talk on "Our Call and Proceedings for the Future" addressed some of the controversy. I hope he wouldn't object to this translation! I haven't tried to look at his entire, lengthy article. He began by noting on p. 213,



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"Much should be said in a short moment, and the saying of which may last for centuries after this time. " One of his main points: "The humanism of our century ... tends to tear off all bonds of higher authority and seek the highest authority in the will of man, in social agreement. This modern, sinful principle has been applied to church life in many ways, trying to make the Church what they wanted [it to be]. Collegialism urged the Church into strong action in our century and sought to make a social democracy of this spiritual kingdom. Never let us forget it; the Church has a calling, which is definitely determined by her King, [and] that alone, rule over Zion, the mountain of God's holiness. This will be made known to us, not always curious to ask the question: What would Jesus have done? Not by the mystical tendency of our minds, neither alone in the Sermon on the Mount, nor in the New Testament alone, but in all Scripture, the infallible Word of our God."

Perhaps Rev. Groen sounded as if he was against the Church's activism, however an Eastern Ave. C.R.C. history said Rev. Groen "championed" "Christian social [causes] actively," and it gave examples such as women's suffrage. He "stood almost alone in these years." See the church's history here;

<http://www.migenweb.net/kent/churches/christianref/easternHistory.html> – not available. Groen is considered an early activist by other CRC sources, like JoMae Spoelhof in 2005, who said, "On a Tuesday evening, April 1, 1913, against this background [of heated debate], Rev. Groen spoke to a large gathering in support of women's suffrage." The Grand Rapids Herald had a [front page article](#) (linked here) on his speech at the church. And this retrospective said there was a vote on the amendment that year; [http://www.mlive.com/news/grand-rapids/index.ssf/2014/04/100-year-old\\_grand\\_rapids\\_pres.html](http://www.mlive.com/news/grand-rapids/index.ssf/2014/04/100-year-old_grand_rapids_pres.html). Historian James Bratt classified Rev. Groen to be in the same category as Henry Beets, and said Groen "advocated bold innovation, [but] he also praised 'The Old Paths' [Pietism] of Reformed theology." Dutch Calvinism in Modern America, p 54. I've seen that quoted descriptive phrase used elsewhere.

Rev. Hiemenga was also in that same "Positive, Neo-Calvinist" category. I don't think Fles fits into one of Bratt and Swierenga's "Mentalities" of Chicago Dutchmen, but he did belong to another of Swierenga's classifications in *Brothers' Quarrels* – the Southern "Geldersche" (Gelderland) group. End notes 40 has the link to the article and note 113 for Bratt's book, and 118 has more about the types. See more about Groen in end note 76.

If any readers want a higher level analysis of Dutch Neo-Calvinism's history and beliefs, see this paper with its "shalom [oriented] neo-Calvinists have held that history and nature are moving horizontally towards restoration," by William Denison; <http://the-highway.com/neo-calvinism.pdf>.

Albert Schweitzer wrote *The Quest of the Historical Jesus* in 1906 (is online [here](#)). It criticized liberal rationalism (or Scepticism) and emphasized late Jewish apocalypticism. Per Paula Fredriksen's 2002 anthology about Christian Anti-Judaism (an [image of recap](#)). I wonder if Fles read it, perhaps in its original German (an English translation was released in 1910).

Religious liberalism in the form of a social gospel had taken a big step forward that year in 1907 (apparently before the CRC Jubilee), when Rev. W. Rauschenbusch (not from the CRC) wrote *Christianity and the Social Crisis*. His book talks of injustice and social oppression, and it said the Church could transform the world before Christ came. Rauschenbusch's book is online; <https://archive.org/details/christianitysoci00rausiala>. Pages 61-66 cites Matthew 8:10-12, "But the children [sons] of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness"; and it asks if the Kingdom "has in one sense already" become a "present reality" instead of an eschatological "Jewish [national] hope." Critics of the book, such as Presbyterian J. G. Machen in the 1920s, claimed that pursuit would leave "little for the Redeemer to do" (per J. Bottum in a [2014 article](#)). More Machen, "In trying to remove from Christianity everything that could possibly be objected to in the name of science ... the apologist has really abandoned what he started out to defend." Per his 1923 book, *Christianity and Liberalism*, a forceful rebuke of modernist Protestantism. Another source (a webpage about prophecy) has said of the 1920s; "the German school of higher criticism invaded American seminaries and undermined the authority of the Scriptures." (Again matching the 1860s Netherlands.)

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Improving social conditions was controversial among most conservative theologians. For premillennialists (except perhaps missionaries), that was mainly true because they didn't expect a golden age before Christ comes, instead they saw or predicted worsening conditions. Premillennialists thought the Church was becoming more apostate towards the end – e.g. W. B. Riley called Biblical literalism and pre-millennialism "antidote[s] to the present apostasy" in 1913. The 1914 prophecy conference also denounced the church's unbelief. Fles agreed that the CRC was in danger; see his "Woe!" on page 24 and the link to his 1913 missionary magazine article for the omitted parts. Fles's desire to help downtrodden Jews was probably an aspect of evangelizing with which many liberal Christians agreed. Some evangelical Protestant denominations began to withdraw from supporting social causes. (Which was called the "Great Reversal," per Kennedy's paper.) See end note 106.

Chicago's most famous social settlement mission, Hull House began in 1889. The C. H. M. worked from the same building with the Hull House in its early days before political differences increased; said Ariel's Evangelizing the Chosen People... p. 26. The C. H. M. provided many types of assistance to Jewish refugees, including medical aid. Dana Kaplan said the Chicago Hebrew Mission had "a staff of twenty-three people conducting preaching services, mothers' meetings, a kindergarten, house-to-house visitation, and literature distribution." (In end note 48.) The CRC began their "Helping Hand" mission to the poor in 1915 near their First Church in Chicago. (per Swierenga's Dutch Chicago.) I don't know if there were any debates or disagreements over the decision to be more involved. In Grand Rapids, the non-denominational evangelist Rev. Mel Trotter had run a mission for the poor since 1900.

Fles also listed Brakel's contemporary, (Herman) Witsius. Witsius interpreted Romans 11 this way, "we are to expect the general conversion of the Israelites in time to come, not indeed of every individual, but of the whole body of the nation." The Restoration of the Jews: An Extract from Herman Witsius (1806) p. 16, as noted by the Puritan Hard Drive website. Fles quoted from a poem by "Old Father Groenewegen," another minister from the same era, to the 1898 CRC Synod. It wasn't translated. Dutch theologian Henricus Groenewegen (1640-1692) published a work in 1677 on the salvation of Israel. From a source by J. Van den Berg; Eschatological Expectations Concerning the Conversion of the Jews in the Netherlands during the 17th Century in a book edited by Peter Toon. I spotted Van den Berg's book while roaming through Hekman Library. Here is more [theology on/from Toon](#).

Dr. Joel Beeke noted on someone else's website that à Brakel wrote around the year 1700 about the "future conversion of the Jews." <http://www.abrakel.com/p/testimonials.html>. Brakel said the entire Jewish nation will "come to repentance" and convert; "[T]here will most certainly be a restoration of the nation, not only in a spiritual sense, but also in a physical sense." p. 526 of The Christian's Reasonable Service Volume 4. Brakel said elsewhere (per Buys) most theologians in his times "confessed" (perhaps it could be translated better) to chiliasm. Rom. 11 is the only chapter in the Bible that a Brakel addressed in its entirety, but he also said, "We deny that the temple will be rebuilt," per Maljaars in 1978.

Citing à Brakel is still a reasonable way to show how some Dutch Reformed Pietists once believed in a future Jewish restoration to the Promised Land. Dr. Gerald McDermott has done the same thing nowadays that Fles tried to do then. McDermott, et al. The New Christian Zionism: Fresh Perspectives on Israel and the Land. 2016, p. 61-62. And see his "Dutch Interpretation" section in <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/reformed-tradition-israel-diverse/>. As did Dr. Barry Horner in his book, Future Israel. p. 153-154 (185-186).

Chapman's 2021 book about Christian Zionism is also available [on Google Books](#) -see the last page of my main text. In it, he cites Rev. A. Hoekema's Amillennialism to agree with it, and [critiques McDermott's book](#) in disagreement. Image is from its p. 95. And "Whose Promised Land?: The Continuing Conflict..." updated version published 2015.

This quote might be somewhat out of context and hard to understand, but the translated version of Beets longer history said Pietism had a "shady side." He had similar opinions about the Reveil. p. 19. In the Gereformeerde Amerikaan (in an article by Beets on First C.R.C. of Pella – likely Kennedy's source for his note about them in 1872), he referred to the "peculiarities of this powerful religious movement." He was probably referring to Brakel's and

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other Dutch theologian's Further (or Nadere in Dutch) beliefs that said the Reformation didn't go far enough. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nadere\\_Reformatie](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nadere_Reformatie).

Quite a few critics have accused Christian Zionists of not caring about individual Jews, only for the Jewish people as a whole. In Fles's case, we see here it was not true. Another accusation has said concerns for the group were motivated more by Christian hopes than ones for the Jewish people. What I have found shows the opposite; poems and songs, prayers and prophetic sermons, all expected that God would bless Israel and the nations too. Many Dutch people had a sincere heart for Israel.

<sup>72</sup> 1908 Acts of Synod. [https://www.calvin.edu/library/database/crcnasynod/1908acts\\_et.pdf](https://www.calvin.edu/library/database/crcnasynod/1908acts_et.pdf). p. 30-31 has their pre-advice to "influence." You can use control F to search for the response with "all Israel" on p. 72. I didn't intend to suggest that the financial figures led Fles to conclude the CRC couldn't afford their own mission. "The invitation of the Muskegon Transit Co. for a streetcar ride through the city at 7:00 p.m. was accepted."

The next 1910 session of Synod was held in Muskegon again. Rev. H. Bouwman attended from the Netherlands (and he published a book in Dutch about his trip). A representative from Orange City, IA proposed "that no collections be requested from the churches for the Chicago Hebrew Mission," since other denominations also sponsored it. The Committee for Jewish Missions noted there were fifteen members on the C. H. M. Board who were "of Reformed persuasion," therefore Synod should and then did decide in favor of continuing their typical level of financial support - \$3,000. Fles remained in his usual role and said, "Receipts are increasing. ... We must work together with others. And surely that can and may be done?" One of his reasons pointed out Jews were coming from European countries which had churches in Chicago. Then he noted, "Nations and peoples who have shown hostility and aversion [the ones who don't bless Israel], have not been particularly fortunate." That last observation, and the times when other people once said something similar, could merit more attention.

The Jewish Era /A.M.F. Monthly, Volumes 15-17. It is available [on Google Books](#). Louis Meyer's visit doesn't give the details I was hoping for! He spoke at other churches too, and was a guest at the "Christian [Reformed] and Dutch Reformed" member's homes. Meyer didn't include either John or his father Isaac Fles in his list of Eminent Hebrew Christians of the nineteenth century, but did include several names which are in this paper too.

Meyer was in Grand Rapids in early May, 1908, also attending the Reformed Church Synod session that year. They had several speeches for their Missions, including one from Rev. Samuel Zwemer. Meyer told them the C. H. M. had good attendance at its meetings, and many Jews were baptized. Per the GR Herald.

Meyer joined the C. H. M. in 1906, but had seen it before then. Fles recalled in a May 1914 missionary magazine, *De Heidenwereld*, article back during the Mission's early years when "after a few years, Dr. Louis Meyer said to me" ... with the quote in the main text, which was translated via Google. He likely meant contempt from local Jews, examples are given here. However he must have been aware of the disagreement within the CRC regarding its support. I wish Fles had spelled out who he knew and what they once said more often! Meyer might have said it at the 1907 conference he went to (not the Jubilee). I could include this whole section, but more from this source follows later.

Meyer subscribed to the missionary magazine in 1909 (it listed the new subscribers). Could he read Dutch?

<sup>73</sup> op. cit. The link is in end note 35. An article from Heritage Hall's minister files said, "His advancing years [were] making it difficult for him to do all the work required in a congregation of over 1,600 souls." His work included performing many baptisms, marriages, and funerals. He helped with one baby girl's adoption process and baptism around then. Her granddaughter has contacted me. And the following quotes are from a Pella newspaper and the First C.R.C. of Muskegon's 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary publication. The last quote about their denomination is also from box 10 of the First C.R.C. records at Calvin's Heritage Hall, it was printed in *The Banner* in June 1908, likely during the Synod session in Muskegon. Fles's farewell sermon was described in *The Volksvriend* on Nov. 12, 1908; but it only mentioned the Bible passage, it did not provide that specific phrase within the passage.

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<sup>74</sup> Second C. R. C. called Fles “hither” (alhier) in August. He said “farewell” is from The GR Herald, Oct. 15, 1911. A link is in end note 71, the site has a search bar. Rev. L. J. Hulst’s thirty year term at Coldbrook church preceded Hieminga’s, which could show the congregation wasn’t premillennial. Then Y. P. De Jong succeeded Hieminga in 1913, he surely preached sermons against it. See end note 104 for more on him. S. S. Postma was an elder there in 1890, my theory is that he was more premillennial than some since he was on the Jewish Mission Committee.

My “must have known” conclusion was based on several points mentioned throughout this paper. What did the Second Pella congregation think before they called for Fles? I’m not sure if many were premillennial (likely people returning after Fourth Reformed Church disbanded), or if the subject was considered secondary to his other qualifications. Gerrit Bieze noted some of the members from before could’ve been there still and remembered Fles, on p. 5 of his source noted in end note 9. Kennedy’s “Prairie Premillennialism” p. 163 gave a reversed example by saying First Reformed of Orange City apparently didn’t put a priority on their premillennialism since they later went with an amillennial pastor in 1898.

<sup>75</sup> Calvin’s Heritage Hall minister files; article collection. Van Der Zee’s history from 1912 said, “The Hollanders have subscribed \$3000 for a school at Pella.” So Fles must have been advocating for a local parochial school. Community disagreements had prevented local Christian schools from being established earlier. Another CRC description of him said “Rev. Fles promoted the challenging yet visionary work of Christian Education.” That was another tough battle, fought locally in each community (it seems that way from several descriptions)!

The missionary magazine was also supported by the Reformed Church, per Kennedy’s article on premillennialism. He says it was “one of the few ways in which the RCA and the CRC joined hands in those days.” Actual p. 11, their 163. I’ve been looking at the magazine and am still transcribing some interesting articles that contain theology! See end note 84. The “conversion” quote was from Rev. Riemersma’s article about Fles.

Both the CRC’s Rev. M. Bosma and the RCA’s Rev. C. Kuyper were writing the Heidenwereld magazine’s Jewish mission column before Fles came there in 1912 (of course he was already involved); other authors such as the Revs. Kropveld (who wrote about the converted Rabbi Lichtenstein) and Korff from the Netherlands also contributed or were reprinted. Fles wrote little notes by the contributions area every so often. He likely authored unattributed articles as well, e.g. a dispatch on a speaker at the Aalten Ned. Herv. (Dutch Reformed state) Church (about missions in the East Indies). The magazine reported each of the two Jewish missions’ contributions separately. See a [picture](#), and this example from December, 1909:

It was a good month [of contributions. His church’s Young persons group gave \$11.50, and their Dorcas society for ladies gave \$20.71. The CRC Classis of Orange City, IA – see opposite intentions (“no collections”) from there in end note 72 – gave \$46, and the total was \$307] for the ancient people of Jehovah, the people whom He knew before and did not reject. In our time miracles take place, which fill the believer’s heart with joy. Never since the apostles’ time have the children of Israel been so disposed to hear the gospel as now, and never have so many professors come forth in his name as now. It is not many years ago that a so-called Christian minister preached in the Jewish temple without, oh shame! without mentioning the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. What was the outcome? That the Jews themselves mocked such a Christianity. And now, now they come under the sound of the eternal gospel. Brothers, sisters, we thank you very much for your moderate gifts. Let us labor with encouragement. Praying, oh, If God’s children still think of dying [moribund] Israel, the God of Israel will hear the prayers. He blesses you all!

Muskegon, Mich. J. I. Fles.

Here is another early column from when Fles first began as the editor/author. He seems to have asked Dr. Bavinck to write a [column](#) – or more likely it was reprinted from a fiftieth anniversary *Gedenkboek* of the Mission for Israel. Bavinck: “The Jews are a nation that, proud of all suffering and pressure, persists because they [and their nation]

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still occupies a place in the fulfillment of God's counsel. Therefore God's promises to the Jews will always become fulfilled."

Then after that Fles's reply went somewhat like this:

I will add very little to the above. As the reader sees, it is a word from Dr. Bavinck from Amsterdam, at the Free University. There are some who think that in order to be particularly Calvinistic and truly Reformed, one should not expect anything regarding the future of the Jews, and even now hardly need to let us in with them, and to preach the Gospel to them. That's why we have Dr. Bavinck speaking, to see that someone learned and Reformed can at the same time believe in Israel's future. The Doctor also recognizes that the Christian Society for Israel [the Dutch Mission founded in 1861] is entitled to existence, even if not everything there is closed within the ecclesiastical system, if one wishes it. And then some think [or act] as if the labor among the Jews were useless and fruitless, but it is not so; God Blesses! that work richly. Therefore let us go on in the name of the Lord, because the God of Israel is God.

Pella, Iowa J. I. Fles.

Bavinck published "Inleiding in de Zendingswetenschap" or The Science of Missions in 1954. It cites Bible verses, but then it tends to follow with 'however,' and goes on to refer to other verses like [Matthew 21:43](#), for example. About Romans 11's "all Israel" he said, "The chosen of Israel will be converted. More than this we dare not say." (per Robert Decker).

The RCA Jewish Mission's donations for the fiscal year of 1912 were over \$1231; expenditures = \$1151 to the C. H. M. and \$12 for other. Chinese Christians (Native Church) from Amoy, China sent \$51. I wonder who'd preached there? Was there a connection with the RCA's mission that began in Amoy in 1842, and worked with other denominations, was perhaps autonomous for a while, then ended in 1951? Or Blackstone's evangelizing in China, or with Taylor's CIM mission? The Boxer rebellion attack on native Christians and missionaries happened in 1900.

<sup>76</sup> 1912 Acts of Synod. (Which met soon after the above column by Bavinck came out.) [https://www.calvin.edu/library/database/crcnasynod/1912acts\\_et.pdf](https://www.calvin.edu/library/database/crcnasynod/1912acts_et.pdf). Rev. J. Groen spoke at a Roseland C.R.C. on Revelation 12, and the next day he addressed the assembly; leading singing and citing Psalm 122, then saying, "The welfare of Zion should especially be the heart's desire. ... this outpouring is preceded by an accurate cognizance of God's house, Jerusalem." on p. 4-5. He goes on to warn that "Collegialism ... undervalues the autonomy of the local congregation," again, see end note 71. Is that "welfare" a Biblical quote? Is it from Jeremiah 30:17? "Attempt to take over" is on p. 13. Fles asked, "Why" on p. 84. The Report of the Committee with Reference to Jewish Missions on p. 92 – 97 with "the big question" on p. 94. Dr. Meyer spoke on behalf of the Chicago Hebrew Mission on p. 36. The RCA had a representative there too. "Responded" might be a bit of a stretch, if Fles submitted his reports in writing, but even then there could have sometimes been ways to find out what was happening during the Synod session so far, and to react to those events and prevailing thoughts.

That Committee said on p. 93, "The words of Paul that 'the gentiles are co-heirs' may never be changed **by us as?** [to be] the only heirs." Were they against replacement theology or just [quoting from Romans 11](#)? Was some part of the CRC already focused on rebutting what the premillennialist mission workers were saying? Fles ended on p. 85 with another restatement about "the promises," that the [Jews'] "day of acceptance [of Christ] shall appear."

<sup>77</sup> Paul Rood, "Louis Meyer: A Jewish Evangelist in the Church." Copyright April 15, 2011. He acknowledges David Rausch's work. <http://www.lcje.net/High%20Leigh/Wednesday,%20August%2010/4%20Louis%20Meyer-%20A%20Jewish%20Evangelist%20in%20the%20Church%20in%20the%20beginning%20of%20th%2020th%20century%20by%20Paul%20Rood.pdf>.

Lausanne.org's main website on Jewish Evangelism is migrating? I'll keep the link, [here is a shorter link to the article](#) about Grand Rapids, it is from a Presbyterian periodical.

So the large local conference must have had representatives from that denomination, other ones mentioned were Unitarian and Baptist. Rabbi Kahn was from Temple Emanuel in Grand Rapids. I wonder whether premillennialism was pretty obvious. Well, that theology probably wasn't mentioned much at the LaGrave C.R.C. evening service.

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<http://www.migenweb.net/kent/churches/christianref/laggraveCRChist.html> – not available now. LaGrave Avenue C.R.C. history. My Grandma Fles's ancestor, Dennis Schram, was among the original founders there. He ran a newspaper that was written in Dutch.

Rev. W. P. Lovett, a premillennial Baptist minister from Detroit, MI, preached "a special sermon in behalf of the Jews" at the Wealthy Ave. M. E. Grand Rapids church in 1905. "God's word also says that a great future awaits His chosen. A literal return to Palestine is probably an empty dream ... but a great spiritual mission is yet possible for them as a people." Per the GR Herald newspaper.

<sup>78</sup> The Missionary Review of the World, Volume 33. p. 653 (at end). Meyer was an editor of this publication. <https://books.google.com/books?id=rpzNAAAAMAAJ&pg=PA653&dq=%22it+is+a+strange+reading+of+the+New+T+estament%22&hl=en&sa=X&ei=e3SwVNvTNZKfyATBookQBg&ved=0CBQQ6AEwAA>.

"Landmark" was a description of the Scotland conference from The Institute for the Study of American Evangelicals. <http://www.wheaton.edu/ISAE/Projects/Changes-in-Missions>. Samuel Zwemer also went to this conference. (Per C. Montrose.)

A 2014 book by Philip Jenkins, *The Great and Holy War ...* is about "the religious and apocalyptic aspects of the First World War." He notes the Scotland conference "raised hopes of converting the entire world to Christianity ... thereby creating the conditions for Christ's coming." p. 140. The book's chapter 9, A New Zion ... tells the Blackstone/Brandeis/Wilson story that I later include here.

Dr. Andrew Pierce's "Millennialism, Ecumenism, and Fundamentalism" (2006, *Expecting The End*, ed. Newport and Gribben) said The Fundamentals were a reaction to the 1910 World Missionary Conference and its ecumenism at least as much as to religious liberalism.

<sup>79</sup> <http://www.messianicjudaism.me/yinon/2013/08/19/dr-louis-meyer-centennial-yahrzeit/> Rabbi Joshua's blog. "criticisms from so many quarters" was from Paul Rood's "Louis Meyer: A Jewish Evangelist in the Church." p. 8. Link is above in end note 77.

Fles's eulogy, "What sad news it was that our beloved brother, Dr. Louis Meyer, died. God's will be done. We have to kneel and be still, and more than that, we shall go on and do the work of our Lord till He calls us home, too."

More about religious liberalism will follow, and see end note 71.

<sup>80</sup> George Marsden. *Fundamentalism and American Culture: The Shaping of Twentieth Century Evangelicalism 1870 – 1925*. Oxford University Press, 1980. p. 119. However Sandeen thought millenarianism had shaped the movement. <http://books.google.com/books?id=9swPktfLJigC&pg=PA118#v=onepage&q&f=false>.

My conclusion (I don't know whether Marsden agrees) is supported in several end notes; see 106, 120, 122. Dr. H. Ockenga's introduction to Dr. Carl Henry's book on "uneasy" fundamentalism in 1947 said, "If we [neoevangelicals or the CRC?] vacillate between Fundamentalist isolationism and cooperation with the World Council of Churches, it is because we cannot be fatalistic on ethical problems" ('social ethics', per Payne). p xxi. It seems Fundamentalists retreated from ecumenicalism and outreach into an isolationist attitude in the face of religious and cultural opposition. I'm not going to make a video, so here is VeggieTales Phil Vischer's Evangelical history; <https://youtu.be/NiiRnO7UTTk>.

<sup>81</sup> 1914 Acts of Synod. [https://www.calvin.edu/library/database/crcnasynod/1914acts\\_et.pdf](https://www.calvin.edu/library/database/crcnasynod/1914acts_et.pdf). p. 20. p. 104 & 105 said Isaac Fles. p. 108 has "work of love." p. 109 has "joy and zeal." (Beets also used that phrase to describe Fles's preaching.) p. 82 lists members of the Jewish Mission Committee. Dr. Bratt said of one 1914 Committee member, "There was no one more important than H. J. Kuiper in shaping the Christian Reformed Church as it moved out of its immigrant phase in the second quarter of the twentieth century." Bultema married Kuiper's sister.



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p. 106 shows their intention to eventually appoint a Secretary of Missions.

It was the whole [verse of a song](#), not just this one line. Psalm 130:8 says, “He himself will redeem Israel from all their sins.” The salvation verb in Hebrew is *padah* (ransom, redeem), per Dr. Dale DeWitt article; Salvation in the Old Testament, *Journal of Grace Theology* 4.1 (2017): p. 13 (is online). He notes both redemption and restoration are national.

Another interesting note from Fles to the 1914 Synod is in end note 129, on page 116 (unless pagination changed).

<sup>82</sup> I’d better get the page numbers for this section in his book. I used the following; it didn’t include the last paragraph with “God’s future mercy for them.”  
Pastor Bryan Ross. Grace Life School of Theology. *Grace History Project* quotes Valiant and Diligent for Truth: An Autobiography. By Harry Bultema. Their page 2.  
<http://www.gracelifebiblechurch.com/SundaySchool/ChurchHistory/2012/121612/Lesson%2084%20Early%20Mid-Acts%20Leaders%20of%20the%201920s,%20Harry%20Bultema.pdf>.

I omitted a section of Fles’s speech which might be hard to understand but it is one of the few places that might show - mainly by implication - what Fles believed the Jewish role would someday be during the millennium. “Then [Rev. Fles] went on how Israel now sits without a God-given King and without a royal prince of their own choice after their rejection of King Jesus. Hence, he said the royal people have no King, neither God given, nor self-chosen. Further, the priestly people have no sacrifice after their rejection of Calvary’s perfect Lamb. Neither do they have an image or idol-statue. God cured them of their former idolatry. ‘Finally, brethren, there is a third important reason,’ he said. ‘The Prophetic people have no ephod, this standing metonymically for the urim and thummin, God’s revelation, but neither has Israel now any teraphim, or methods and tokens of false revelation. Hence the royal people are without a King, the priestly people without an offering, and the prophetic people without a revelation. This is Israel’s present-day desolate, orphaned period. Ichabod, the glory is all gone! That Israel is Lo-Ammi, not My people, and Lo-Ruhamah, having no-mercy, you all admit as an undeniable fact.’”

I am not sure if Fles thought all Jews would fill one or more of these roles one day. Those living at the time would all have been converted. Henry Beets once noted Fles’s catechism taught resurrected Christians would rule “as kings.” It likely did, see end note 34.

Pastor Ross also quotes Boslooper. This story is what I call his short version, pages 24-30 (gives his resources); <http://www.calvin.edu/hh/origins/Spring91.pdf>. More from Boslooper in end note 101. More on the doctrine in end note 128. Note 131 contains the rest of their conversation about it.

Michael Borgert said, “Bultema engaged in ... many lengthy discussions with Rev. Fles and Rev. De Leeuw while he was serving in Peoria.” p. 99 of his article cited in end note 2. It probably used Bultema’s biography for a source.

<sup>83</sup> Various Forms of Replacement Theology, Dr. Michael Vlach, 2009. p. 59. A new [link for document is here](#). The New Christian Zionism ... 2016. Dr. Gerald McDermott. p. 34. Both premillennial theologians cited Soulen. They were referring to Soulen’s 1996 The God of Israel and Christian Theology, whose summary on p. 175 says, “Redemption is for the sake of consummation [of the God of Israel’s divine purpose],” not the other way around. Notice that Soulen seems to disagree with Rev. Gispén’s opinion about which of these two aspects of God’s plan, His Providence, is the most fundamental, as shown in end note 4, page 42. McDermott and Vlach explain what that concept means, and why it is so beautiful. Fles agreed – salvation yes, and then the rich harvest in all of its fullness and beauty will be the fulfillment of God’s purpose, both meant to be expressed, even enacted through the Jewish people, as history unfolds. I think a single person, with just one idea, can affect world history. To support my last conclusions, see the missionary magazine article available for downloading in the next paragraph, “God has held [the Jewish people] in reserve [for] Himself, even now in this time according to His good pleasure.” (Possibly based upon 2 Samuel 7:23?) Fles’s contemporaries were often more specific when they made the same point.



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Kaplan and Cantz' [2014 paper](#) on "The psycho-political projection of Christian and post-Christian supersessionism" [into a political realm which misunderstands Israel "as an aggressor and occupier"] is quite similar to this one. I'm still reading it (now, in 2023) but will note that they also mention Soulen's forms of supersessionism, etc. Is it available online? Yes –the doi.org is used in citations, but paper is formatted in a way that's tricky to cut and paste.

Dr. Soulen is President of this Society "that affirms God's irrevocable covenant with the Jewish people as a central and coherent part of ecclesial teaching." I am one of their Friends, in full agreement. <https://www.spostst.org/>. Here is a similar website with accessible papers; <https://www.post-supersessionism.com/essays--theses.html>. A new movie gives similar testimonies, instead of describing it, watch <https://www.enduringwitness.com/watch/>.

<sup>84</sup> If you, the reader had a problem downloading and opening that Word document, then [here it is as a pdf](#). This source is from De Heidenwereld July 1913, in Calvin College's Heritage Hall. You can see how I've only included those words which don't pertain to the preceding paragraph's "poisoned ... table" analogy / the hardening of Israel (which is still relevant). Threshing grain – the process where one part of it is saved and the rest is cast off – is another biblical metaphor for God's Day of Judgment. See Matthew 3:12 – the chaff is burned. Fles must have included this vital aspect of theology in his sermons more often than most Protestants do these days. The next article was on Romans 11: 11-15, an awesome passage. (Horner notes an amillennial RCA theologian didn't analyze it on p. 133 of his [Future Israel](#), and also see end note 87.) It needs more work, but for now here is an abridged section; "And if their [the unbelieving Jews] fall is the riches of the Gentiles, how much more their fullness! What has made the world rich? What was the result? [Already] giving the world civilization, wisdom, morality? ... [And] scientific discoveries, inventions in almost every area? By the Gospel, by the Bible God's Word taught man and still teaches him. Israel threw away the Christ of God's Word. Yes, they retained the scrolls [or the Tanakh] still, but that word is not the Christ, [it is] powerless. That was their downfall. It was sent to the Gentiles, which was their wealth, glory, salvation will be discussed [known?], as a time of fulfillment, ... for God's counsel, He will turn again to His chosen people, ... [Then it will] truly be the **heyday**; the blessings, external and internal, physical and mental, being immensely greater than now. You can find those promises in all the prophets, in the Psalms. ... See a single text: 'In the days to come Jacob shall take root, Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world.' Isa. 27: 6. And read Psalm 72 and 85 etc., etc." Spurgeon's description from prophetic passages was similar, as noted in Horner's book's chapter on him; "May that happy day soon come! For when the Jews are restored, then the fullness of the Gentiles shall be gathered in; and as soon as they return, then Jesus will come upon Mount Zion to reign with his ancients gloriously, and the **halcyon days** of the Millennium shall then dawn..." This last part from Fles also reminds me of some modern ministers who defend the New Testament's unity with the OT. Dr. Vlach notes Psalm 72 "anticipate[s] conditions in a coming earthly kingdom." (Link doesn't work now), its p. 212. Fles's article had a sentence referring to God's grace and mercy, and ended with a verse from Psalms, not with a jeremiad against the Church. I have added a section of Fles's November column on Romans 11:25-29 to the attached paper! I'll probably attempt to give Fles's entire exegesis of Romans 11 (he did that whole chapter in successive articles), or maybe my thoughts on it, but might have to study up yet. CRC theologian (with a "Princetonian" eschatology, per Danny Wyatt) Geerhardus Vos had already written in 1911 an article on "The Question of Chiliasm in Paul" (in Dutch). It was later included in his book (in English), [The Pauline Eschatology](#). The article (published by the [PrincetonTheological Review](#) in 1960, is online at <https://issuu.com/rapalculict/docs/geerhardus-vos---the-pauline-eschatology-and-chili>) doesn't seem to mention Romans 11 and ends by noting Col. 1:13 calls the "present order of things the kingdom of Christ," and the rescuer is "God [rather than Christ]." I looked through it at all of his Colossians verses, but no Col. 3:4. The link from Horner in end note 128 says Vos called pre-millennialism an "evil." That section of Horner's book is titled "Israel and anti-Judaic Hermeneutics in History."

Fles's "Canaan [adding supposedly was part of my translation] means heaven" reminds one of Erich Sauer's "Who gives us the right to take Jews to mean Christians, Jerusalem to mean now only the church, and Canaan heaven?" From Eternity to Eternity, Paternoster Press, 1954, p. 122. Fles went on to say, [If this amillennialism is correct,]

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"There remains then nothing for Jacob's descendants to hope, nothing to expect. Fortunate it is that God's counsel and Word does not change, that on Israel, God did/does not comply with *the opinions and views of men* (my italic). God did/does not create Himself. He introduced Himself. ... He works all things (including with His ancient people) to the counsel of His will." Fles thought views proclaiming that the promises made by the prophets no longer applied to Jewish people as a group (or to national Israel) were a hindrance from spreading the Gospel to them.

[From another of his articles](#) when Fles was in Pella: "Salvation is of the Jews.

And He will also set His ancient People free from all iniquities.

How would Satan rejoice, if the people from whom He [the Lord] took on flesh and blood, were let go forever. Where would those hundreds of promises [made to them in the Bible] be then?

What then would He do to His great Name? [See Micah 7:18-19, Psalm 130:8, 1 Samuel 12:22. Verses were not specifically cited. And here is a [current claim](#).]

We close with a few verses from [Isaac] Da Costa, from his song, entitled, 'Israel.'" ...

"Thy wrath will vanish ... Rejoice, Israel! ... The times of restoration are approaching!

The verdict will soon be passed, Who must be glorious, who despised:

The philosophers of these days, or Jacob's suffering progeny!"

[This picture](#) shows some interesting work going on at that bi-denominational missionary magazine. The Reformed Church's Arabian Mission had a notice on the top of the page. It said; "O, that **Israel** might live before thee!" But that was probably a mistake; their motto from the beginning was a quote from Genesis 17:18 "O, that **Ishmael** might live before thee." See commentaries on this passage; <http://biblehub.com/commentaries/genesis/17-18.htm>. Other pages say the Jewish mission collected monthly funding from individual classis (but not from all of them), churches, and from individual "friends," sometimes totaling as much as a thousand dollars. Donors were named. The income was separated into those receipts from the Reformed Church, in the care of C. Kuyper, and the larger ones from the CRC. Fles and Rev. Kuyper may have worked together here. Fles's CRC Jewish mission was still collecting donations and disbursing that money, so this appears to be another accounting of the same two missions. The receipts from Jun 1, 1912 to May 31, 1913 were \$4,856, and the disbursements were \$4,066, as noted here on page 22. I'd have to total the Heidenwereld's monthly receipts (just those from the CRC) to compare the two sets of figures. Also see page 29 of this paper (or right after there).

End note 93 has a history of the Balfour Declaration from Mosaic magazine that said, "Sokolow is the entry point into the fuller story of the Balfour Declaration." This Wikipedia article shows how important Sokolow was, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nahum\\_Sokolow](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nahum_Sokolow).

Here is the whole section, printed right after Fles's regular column in the Heidenwereld (translated via Google):

In a large assembly of Zionists in New York, Mr. Sokolow spoke about the future of Palestine. According to the Jewish Chronicle he has among other things said: "If Palestine will be opened for the civilization, the Jews by tradition and competence are the most appropriate people to develop it, because they bring that love and that respect into the country, which is necessary to carry out pioneer work. Although the [Ottoman] Turks are brave warriors, they are not settlers. There is no other nation that is willing to occupy Palestine. Although it is revered by most nations, Palestine has in its entire history never seen a people who were willing to settle. The attempt by the German Templars has been weakened year by year. The only people that not only honors [the land] but is eager to build on it, the Jewish nation, which has proved his competence and self-sacrifice as well as his tenacity in sticking to his traditions in relation to the country."

One short section from that same time period with no given author that I can see cited Rev. D. M. Panton, a premillennial English author. The source could well be The Jewish Era (A.M.F.) – see end note 93 for link. The next section with no given author was titled **Is Palestine for sale?** It said, "There are those who wish wealthy Jews to buy [land in] Palestine and then transfer it ..." It referenced Dr. Max Nordau, President (or Chairman) of the Zionist Congress. It said, "... thus asks the Jewish Era" and then went on to list or cite many Bible verses about the land of

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Israel (so the author was very likely Fles). Boaz Neumann said in his 2011 Land and Desire in Early Zionism; “[Nordau] maintained that the central purpose of Zionism was to purchase the Land of Israel for the Jewish people.” That Google book page isn’t numbered.

Fles’s subsequent columns in 1914 and 1915 had similar reports and observations about events and people then. Here is one from 1914, at the beginning of the Great War. It first referred to a newspaper account on I. Zangwill, who had (supposedly) once said Palestine is “empty and derelict,” then later realized it was in fact inhabited.

**Jerusalem is in misery.** Jerusalem is like an Asylum filled with Christians, Jews, and Muslims. Among the Jews are 60,000 refugees who have come “from all four corners of the earth” [the prophetic words in Isaiah 11:12], old men and women are impoverished, sick, tired. Grandparents hope to die in Zion; it is their daily prayer. Hundreds of orphans who escaped from pogroms in Russian cities are wards kept and taught by monks and nuns, supported by love gifts from Europe and America, but now cut off from the world since August.

The Holy City is an armed camp. Twelve thousand Turkish soldiers are billeted inside the walls, with many more stationed between Jerusalem and Jaffa, where they are joined by Bedouins along the waters. Liberated from the Turkish, many Arabs and Syrians have chosen to join the German soldiers and fight against the allies, but German officers can’t control the fanatical troops. Thousands of people have fled to Egypt, and four times as many wait to leave.

Is it the fulfillment of the last verses of Deuteronomy 28? We do not know, but the states [or nations at war] show us the Prophecies; and we give heed, as to a lamp that illuminates a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in our hearts. [Last part is from 2 Peter 1:19. Verse 21a: “For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but ...” He repeated another sequence in which darkness ends when day begins, likely from Deuteronomy 28, finishing ...] And then the full light [will come]. (Although not directly referred to here, in Revelation 22:16 Jesus says He is the bright morning star.)

One part of Deuteronomy 28 says the Jewish people will suffer, be persecuted, and “will be left but few in number.” The curses were fulfilled 900 years later, in the Babylonian captivity – read 2 Kings 25. Fles was apparently referring to this part of verse 68: The Lord will send you back in ships to Egypt on a journey I [Moses] said you should never make again. This section is often thought to have already happened, but the end of the book (which is at the end of the five books of the Torah) is prophetic in nature.

<sup>85</sup> David Rausch. Prot fundamentalism’s Attitudes Toward Zionism, 1878-1918. Editor Jeffrey Gurock. It is available on Google Books. Published 1998. p. 15 (139). The article was based on Rausch’s earlier book, Zionism Within Early American Fundamentalism, 1878-1918. Published 1979. Of course Fles’s career spanned across those very same years. Rausch’s book covers some of the same ground this paper does, e.g. Blackstone, Moody, Meyer, and the C. H. M., but it doesn’t mention Fles. Rausch said Sandeen thought the “peak” of the millennial movement was 1895-1915, when “millenarians were within the mainstream of the American culture.” I haven’t read that historian yet, so I’m not sure if he says the movement diminished or if it left the mainstream when opposition arose and/or it changed when fundamentalism arose.

<sup>86</sup> Mark Sarver. <http://www.graceonlinelibrary.org/eschatology/dispensationalism/dispensationalism-part-iii-the-development-and-spread-of-dispensationalism-in-america-by-mark-sarver/>. A picture of it can be found at <http://proecclesia.net/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/torrey09.jpg>. CRC Prof. D. H. Kromminga’s 1945 book, The Millennium in the Church said one of the ten articles in their statement was, “We believe in the visible and imminent coming of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, to establish His worldwide Kingdom on the earth.” p. 232. He also said commentary writer, J. van Andel – that same minister/theologian the 23 year old Fles met, was an example of someone who combined a “Premillennialism which is not judaizing” with the “biblical doctrine of the Covenants.” p. 100. Kromminga also tried to bridge the difference between the two positions. He had to have influenced Carl Henry (I should check his autobiography). Van Andel was once accused of Arminianism, possibly

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having “denied ... the irresistible operation of the Holy Spirit.” Per Melis te Velde’s article in Dutch – see earlier end note for a link. See following note for another description of that tricky concept about predestined salvation and whether it can be denied.

Kennedy’s “Prairie Premillennialism” suggests van Andel’s chiliasm influenced Fles, and said Fles advocated a less extreme (than Rev. Bultema) version of dispensationalism that was more acceptable to the CRC. I don’t know what evidence Kennedy used, but we can see Fles emphasized God’s mercy for the Jewish people, and for the individual Jew and Christian as well. So I think Fles may have avoided saying there were two separate peoples of God, but did say that Jews were still included in God’s plan (i.e. “grafted into one olive branch.” p. 11). In an 1897 *De Gereformeerde Amerikaan* article (from library, not sure if it’s in the compilation), Fles first had a main point with a rather standard doctrine, but then he finished by saying, “Only after the battle will be completed, [and] the victory won, and the great King of the Kingdom of Light has brought down all the powers of darkness, then it will be a feast for **all** the callers of the name of the Lord forever and ever.” Rev. Borgert said Fles believed “in the distinction between the old and the new covenants.” Look at end note 48, and end note 128 tries again to examine what Fles said. End note 127 has more on Kromminga. End note 132 has more on Carl Henry.

The “Coming and Kingdom of Christ” booklet from the 1914 prophetic conference later helped to convert John Mitchell (see the last end note for more about him), per the biography in end note 84. [hathitrust.org link; https://hdl.handle.net/2027/uva.x000362889](https://hdl.handle.net/2027/uva.x000362889).

Rev. Charles Blanchard, President of both Wheaton College and of the Chicago Hebrew Mission spoke on “The Times of the Gentiles ... The Times of Israel” at that conference.

<sup>87</sup> Joseph Hall. “The Controversy over Fundamentalism in the CRC 1915 – 1966” Th.D. dissertation published 1974. p. 15-16, (is not online). Beets said it in a *The Banner* article from 1923 that asked if the Church should join the Fundamentalists. He said Fundamentalist premillennialism that interpreted Biblical prophecies literally would lead in a direction where “Reformed people don’t like to be led.” Beets meant towards an Arminian (or a conditional) doctrine of salvation. Hall’s paper goes a bit deeper into that theology; the CRC was generally “very ambivalent” about Fundamentalism since it didn’t refer to the Calvinist doctrine of unconditional election of the saints and that was “to Beets an affirmation of ‘free will.’”

In the main text’s next paragraph, my transcription of the original Dutch and the whole article are available, but not posted online yet. I think Beets used the character to be interesting or funny, and to show that many families were divided. It started right out with the only mention of Fles – from the character. “So, so, and would you first write in the ‘Heidenwereld’ about the Jewish Mission, instead of our Rev. Fles for the sake of insanity in his family?”

This sentence and Beets’ answer why there was not much sympathy might still need more work! “... it is explained to some extent because of the fact that so many other things happened in the last half century that lay so much on the heart of those who were closer to home than we needed and obtained more of Christian attention more naturally.” The number of converted Jews was 220,000 according to Bavinck and Pastor LeRoy, and others said 300,000 were baptized in the 19th century (I assume most were in Europe). The glued in half page – did they do it with all of the issues? – mentioned names of converted Jews already in this paper, adding Ds. Van Ronkel (who was born in 1829, a son of a rabbi, and converted in 1855. He was influenced by the Reveil, but didn’t join it.)

CRC Rev. Beets made his views plain by saying, “First of all, you must keep in mind that the Jews as a people have lost their significance to the kingdom altogether. With them, God decides. Their kingdom has been delivered to the Gentiles as **punishment** (bold is mine) for their rejection of Christ.” But he also suggested his views may have changed occasionally; “When I read [those verses from Isaiah and Zechariah], then I **often** think that there will be a ...” The sentence actually said “ruimer beteekenis,” perhaps better translated as “wider significance.” Beets used this word several times, including in a back-and-forth debate with that character. Wider than what? “... than our Kantteekenaren indicate.” This tricky (but great) Dutch word is probably similar to hermeneutical tools or methods

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that exegetes use to understand the Bible, likely regarding teekenen – which means prophetic signs or portents. In the end note 64 quote, Rev. Hospers went on to say that kant-tee-[k]eningen (or kanttekening) were “side-notes” (or end notes) and Kuyper and Bavinck had criticized ones in the “Dutch Bible” concerning the book of Revelation. “In these marginal annotations millenarian beliefs were discussed and rejected,” said E. Van Der Wall on the topic. Beets was apparently trying to predict how many Jews will accept Christ and receive salvation. I would like to determine if Beets’ subsequent columns shed much light on his views, or possibly say what took place in the CRC from then through the wartime period, but the copying of fragile source pages, the transcription/OCR process, and a language barrier might all be too formidable for me to do it. See end note 108 for my hopes in that regard.

I should have noted when it was that a Beets column gave A. Kuyper’s exegesis of Romans 11: 25-29, but his ideas are probably available in English. I’m not sure if they are in this amillennial [study of the verse](#) by Dr. C. Venema of the CRC/other Reformed denomination; it begins by saying eschatology and the future of Israel has been a “controversial and lively topic” of debate. In 2002 Dr. Venema signed a religious and political statement initiated by Knox Theological Seminary regarding Israel; proposition 6 says, “These promises [made by God to Abraham in Genesis] do not apply to any particular ethnic group, but to the church of Jesus Christ, the true Israel.” <http://www.bible-researcher.com/openletter.html>.

In contrast, several Baptist churches currently say, “The modern nation of Israel is the chosen nation and will be used in fulfillment of prophecy.” Per Dr. Randy White and his Dispensational Publishing House.

Modern Dutch theologian, C. J. Buys’ 2003 book on Romans 11:15 defines chiliasm as the 1000 year reign of Christ, gives the opposite view too, and then says, “Maar Dr. Kuyper doet de Schrift toch geen recht” (But Dr. Kuyper does not do justice to Scripture), p.18. I may try to distinguish current authors by putting them into later sections here. [https://translate.google.com/translate?hl=en&sl=nl&u=http://www.theologienet.nl/documenten/Buys\\_Israel.rtf](https://translate.google.com/translate?hl=en&sl=nl&u=http://www.theologienet.nl/documenten/Buys_Israel.rtf).

<sup>88</sup> The Jewish Era. It is available [on Google Books](#). Published 1915. Political Zionism was definitely under the aegis of the C. H. M. at that 1915 conference.

That new Moody tabernacle seated five thousand people. <http://www2.wheaton.edu/bgc/archives/GUIDES/330.htm>.

Timothy Weber’s book, *Living in the Shadow of the Second Coming American Premillennialism 1875-1982*, said there were 17,000 spectators there. p. 143. Like other authors, Weber doesn’t mention the CRC’s support of the Chicago Hebrew Mission. p. 77 tells about William Borden from Chicago. He was part of the SVM missionary movement, joined Zwemer in Egypt (per Thomas S. Kidd), was influenced by Moody Church and Institute, died young in 1913 and bequeathed \$100,000 to Moody Bible Institute and \$50,000 to the C. H. M. The missionary magazine in Dutch had an article on him too. Wrigley began his [chewing gum company](#) in Chicago in 1891.

<sup>89</sup> Beets’ speech is contained in the booklet from the conference, *Israel: past, present and future*. A copy of it is at Calvin’s Hekman library (among the stacks.) Rozeboom’s dissertation (mentioned later here) listed its main points. The speech didn’t bring up controversial or premillennial topics. The Rev. C. Kuyper description came from the Jewish Era article that is also used in end note 110. It has the link.

<sup>90</sup> *ibid*. The Jewish Era, page 17. Other people were also on their Committee. I see no further mention of that Committee, although there were other similarly- named international committees and councils. For example, J. Snoek’s 1969 [The Grey Book: ...](#) describes several, but typically they were later than this. You can search for its section: “INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS OF CHURCHES”

I wonder if Beets explained at the Conference how or why he did not share their beliefs (as can be seen in end note 107). I should try to check if Beets wrote anything in the missionary magazine about the conference. Obviously Rev. C. Kuyper was reading those articles, and I wouldn’t expect to find Beets describing any dramatic

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confrontations! On the other hand, I wouldn't be surprised if Dr. Beets mentioned this conference or even the Committee with Blackstone in his missionary magazine articles.

<sup>91</sup> "A Bit of Holland" by Cyrenus Cole, published 1922, is another Pella history that is online at [https://ia800109.us.archive.org/18/items/souvenirhistoryo00unse\\_0/souvenirhistoryo00unse\\_0.pdf](https://ia800109.us.archive.org/18/items/souvenirhistoryo00unse_0/souvenirhistoryo00unse_0.pdf), p. 26 has:

When [Rev. Vander Berg] accepted a call from the Reformed Church in Killduff, Iowa, it again left the 2nd [C.R.C.] Church[of Pella] without a Pastor.  
At a congregational meeting it was decided to issue a call on Rev. Fles, which was accepted.  
He served the congregation with ability and devotion  
for a period of four years, during which the greatest harmony prevailed and the Church was built up and strengthened under his Pastorate.  
Owing to the failing health of Mrs. Fles and the advanced age of the Pastor, he was compelled to ask for his release, which was granted. His departure was the occasion for deep regret on the part of the entire Congregation.

The next very similar quote was from a Second C.R.C. church history, see the beginning of end note 75.

I'd guess either the author or someone else assumed that harmony prevailed after the split had occurred in 1897. But I have my doubts if it really did. Their congregation could have agreed to disagree, but during times of increasing general religious dispute how do you think they reacted as former members probably wanted to return - since the Fourth Reformed church disbanded before that time? Cole doesn't mention Rev. Poot.

Letter from Hermine Terpstra, in her De Leeuw family story at Calvin's Heritage Hall. [http://www.calvin.edu/hh/calvin\\_college\\_presidents/pres\\_hiemenga.htm](http://www.calvin.edu/hh/calvin_college_presidents/pres_hiemenga.htm). It does not appear as if Rev. Fles performed his daughter's funeral service, only several other Revs. were mentioned. (A record of Dena's obit is at Herrick Public Library. One for Johanna is now on findagrave.) Johanna's illness was a long-term one. Rev. Bultema was in charge of her funeral. Rev. Fles did all or some of their weddings, see FamilySearch. Stayed with Isaac is from the Volksvriend newspaper's note on 07-10-1915 (in October).

<sup>92</sup> Valiant and Diligent for Truth: An Autobiography. By Harry Bultema. Publisher: Grace Publications Inc. (1987). Bultema might have been making a point about the earlier days of their relationship when he repeated twice again how it was due to Fles's "influence" and "strong advice." (Was it meant to show a contrast to later?) p. 77, p. 86-88. The Rev. was called I. Fles. At least two other sources (the 1910 First Muskegon church membership listing and some or all of the Beets histories) also confuse the issue by mixing up the minister's first and middle initial, thus making his name look more like his son's name. The same thing also happened in 1883.

The Old Testament's Daniel 12 is a prophetic chapter which begins "And there shall be a time of trouble," and is about the resurrection of the dead in the last days. The third verse says, "And those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament; and those who turn many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever." Fles cited the same chapter's verse 3 in his = 1890 obituary of his instructor from the Netherlands, Rev. Bulens.

<sup>93</sup> 1916 Acts of Synod. [https://www.calvin.edu/library/database/crcnasynod/1916acts\\_et.pdf](https://www.calvin.edu/library/database/crcnasynod/1916acts_et.pdf). p. 25 - 26. A "Committee of Pre-Advice for Jewish Missions" recommended or made that decision (p. 25.), with Rev. Hollebeek reporting. However no reasons were provided, seemingly a violation of the 1898 decision that said Pre-Advice reasons must be made plain. There was another "Committee to appoint a Committee of Pre Advice" as listed on their p. 10. Beets, Berkhof, Rooks, D. H. Kromminga, Dr. Van Lonkhuyzen (of First Chicago C.R.C.), etc. were on it. Berkhof studied at Princeton Seminary under Dr. Geerhardus Vos (per Vos biographer D. Olinger, see [here](#)), and he became the first Pres. of Calvin Seminary in 1931. Rev. A Keizer was the President of that year's Synod. He served on the board of trustees of Calvin College for twenty-five years, and was the editor of the De Wachter.

One "Committee of Pre-advice" reported about a controversy with a minister's interpretation of Romans 9: 22-23.



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The Synod disagreed whether to make a statement about the War, and stated their grounds for that decision. It also touched on timely topics like unions, women's rights, and visiting saloons. The Synod formed a committee to consider that "the Reformed Church in America, which through its Acting Foreign Secretary, Dr. Cantine, urgently requested our Church to cooperate in Arabian Missions." I am pretty sure they did not do so.

However individuals and churches in the CRC contributed to the RCA's foreign missions fund in 1916. Rev. and Mrs. J. I. Fles donated five dollars, North Street Christian Reformed Church of Zeeland donated fifteen dollars, and several other CRC churches also contributed. The Heidenwereld missionary magazine fund gave \$60. (Sounds like a discretionary disbursement.) Moody Church gave \$100, and Moody Bible Institute \$25. RCA 1916 source here, [http://digitalcommons.hope.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1063&context=world\\_annual\\_report](http://digitalcommons.hope.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1063&context=world_annual_report).

The CRC gave \$1,000 to the C. H. M. that year, as they had the previous one or two years. Fles explained why the actual amount donated ended up to be more than that, since donors specifically designated their contributions for Chicago, possibly contributing directly to it. Fles's committee didn't respond to the Blackstone issue, but they did ask the Church to continue supporting the C. H. M. whether with other denominations or alone. On p. 26 and 88.

It would be interesting to know what happened during the decision making process, but I don't see anything else pertaining to it yet. Jews returning to the Promised Land was not one of the topics listed in their "important matters [that] lie before you [the members of Synod]." (p. 5). I'd really like to know what Beets did and thought, both then and during the next difficult period. (Have I already said that?) What about when he cited Isaiah 66:9 which says, "'If I cause you the pain, I will not stop you from giving birth to your new nation,' says your God." Were there any dissenting voices during the CRC decision making process?

Pope Benedict XV met with Sokolow on May 4, 1917, and described the return of the Jews to Palestine as "providential; God has willed it." Per Martin Kramer's June 5, 2017 Mosaic magazine article on the hundredth anniversary of the Balfour Declaration. <https://mosaicmagazine.com/essay/2017/06/the-forgotten-truth-about-the-balfour-declaration/>. Sokolow's "History of Zionism" in 1919 didn't pay much attention to theological issues.

Yaakov Ariel writes on p. 76 of the book, Studies in Contemporary Jewry: Volume VII: Jews and Messianism in the Modern Era (article may be the same one as in following link) that the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America (FCCC) did sign Blackstone's petition in 1916. But this signing may be in dispute. End note 106 says the CRC joined that ecumenical group in 1918. The denomination left the group later; one example of moving back and forth.

Did the RCA sign it in 1916? I'm not sure, but they worked with both William Blackstone and the Chicago Hebrew Mission after that. Blackstone, acting as the sole trustee of the "Milton Stewart Evangelistic Fund," donated \$5,000 to their Arabian Mission in 1920. Blackstone's donations to the RCA Foreign and Arabian missions (they were separate from each other) from 1920 – 1927 totaled at least \$38,500. End notes 32 and 84 here has more on the Arabian Mission.

Specify the site to search for lists of donations to RCA missions and more, like details on Zwemer, etc.

I put this into the Google search bar - site:<http://digitalcommons.hope.edu/> "Board of World Missions" Blackstone [https://www.google.com/#q=site:http%2F%2Fdigitalcommons.hope.edu%2F+%22Board+of+World+Missions%22+Blackstone+&\\*](https://www.google.com/#q=site:http%2F%2Fdigitalcommons.hope.edu%2F+%22Board+of+World+Missions%22+Blackstone+&*) I am not sure if that query works now? Pulling key words from old pdfs isn't exact, so here are all the annual reports in order; [https://digitalcommons.hope.edu/world\\_annual\\_report/index.2.html](https://digitalcommons.hope.edu/world_annual_report/index.2.html). Still works!

Dr. Samuel Zwemer requested specific donations directly from Blackstone, who then "immediately sent that amount [\$500] to Mr. Upson in Cairo." Per a Volksvriend newspaper article from April, 1919.

The Volksvriend had an article about the Chicago Hebrew Mission on 10-03-1921 (in March, a few weeks before Fles died and the Bultema affair wrapped up), that said, "During the past year, 11,728 personal visits were made to



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Jews in Chicago, and 7,305 personal conversations with them; Remain interested in their salvation and churches. ... Spread 3,012 Bibles.” I’m not sure who wrote that section or translated the next; if it was from a Dutch denomination and/or if it came directly from the C. H. M. Obviously it’s directed towards Christians more than to Jews; I wonder how often that emphasis occurred. The same point is also made in the [C. H. M. archival information](#). This example provides another basis for my conclusion on p. 30 of this paper about a “more involved” C. H. M. However, later I found [an indication](#) that this document was first published in 1890. Had I realized that early origin, then I would’ve saved a similar listing of prophetic verses from Fles – was it the same?

#### **Why Christians Should Pray Specially For Israel.**

1. Because of the intimate relationship between Israel and the True Church. Acts 2: 5; 11:26:13:46; Rom. 9: 1-5; 10: 1; 11:11; Gal. 4: 22-31.
2. Because of God's command, with special promises of blessing. Gen. 1 2: 3; Ps. 122: 6; Isaiah 62: 6, 7.
3. Because Israel is still loved by God, to the Father. Rom. 11:28; Jer. 31: 3.
4. Because it is the will of God, that all Israel will be saved. Isaiah 12: 1-6; Matt. 23:37; Rom. 11: 23-32.
5. Because of the tribulation testimony of Israel, after the joyful delight [or rapture] of the Church. Matt. 24: 9-14; Rev. 6: 9; 7: 1-8.
6. Because of the great many who will be saved by their ministry. Rom. 11:25; Rev. 7: 9-17;
7. Because no millennial blessings come before the nations can be separated from Israel.
8. Because of Israel's national awakening, with repentance and fear, indicating that their salvation is near. Than. 12: 1: Matt. 24: 4-3: Luke's [gospel]: John: 24-31; (See Dan. 9: 1-22).

Anyone who wants to distribute this excerpt of this tract (in English), write to The Chicago Hebrew Mission, 1311 South Kedzie Ave.; Chicago, Ill. The tract was only 1 page (per a different archival record about the original in English), so this version might be complete.

Dr. J. F. Van de Roovaart of Bethany Reformed Church in the Roseland area (the church moved during or after that period – see Swierenga’s section of Dutch Chicago about it) was on the C. H. M. board during the later 1910s and early twenties. A.M.F. Monthly, Volumes 28-30, Jan. 1919-1921. As was another RCA pastor. [https://books.google.com/books?id=jn0zAQAAIAAJ&newbks=1&newbks\\_redir=0&printsec=frontcover&source=gs\\_ge\\_summary\\_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false](https://books.google.com/books?id=jn0zAQAAIAAJ&newbks=1&newbks_redir=0&printsec=frontcover&source=gs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false)

I wonder if the RCA was supportive of the Zionism movement and its development in Palestine/Israel during the 1920s? Maybe the RCA’s New York classis was familiar with Jews and wanted to support it? Has anyone ever wondered if Blackstone’s donations could have had some type of an impact upon the RCA Arabian Mission? Did Newman’s mission there interact with it? See end note 112.

This section might need to be put back into chronological order, but Ariel’s description of this time is worth noting, “But despite all their resentment of British policy, few evangelical activists pressed their protest beyond the pages of their own journals. They did not mount any organized effort to combat the British policy regarding Palestine. One explanation for this may be that during that period conservative evangelicals were not very active politically as a group. Both in Britain and America, their political activity weakened considerably.” Ariel, Yaakov. *Philosemites or Antisemites? : Evangelical Christian Attitudes Toward Jews, Judaism and the State of Israel*. Jerusalem: Vidal Sassoon International Center for the Study of Antisemitism, 2002. The source link is not available now.

<sup>94</sup> The Presbyterian Church (USA) and other major Protestant denominations did sign or support it. President Wilson was the son of a Presbyterian minister, and in 1918 he publically supported Zionism (p. 77 of this [Jews and Messianism ...](#) history with Yaakov Ariel’s article about Blackstone’s 1916 petition. And his [An Unusual Relationship:...](#)) Both he and later Pres. Truman compared themselves to the Biblical king who allowed Jews to return to Israel; Truman said, “I am Cyrus.” It is available [on Google Books](#). Published 1991, article by P. Merkley.

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Pres. Harding (after Wilson) wouldn't commit to Zionism, so Jewish leaders (Rabbi Wise) turned to Congress, which did unanimously embrace it. (100 years ago in 1922, per R. Medoff in Jewish Journal, <https://jewishjournal.com/commentary/opinion/349171/100-years-ago-this-month-when-congress-embraced-zionism-unanimously/>). Also see this Jewish perspective by Jerry Klinger (the essay is also in a pdf elsewhere); [http://www.jewishmag.com/146mag/brandeis\\_blackstone/brandeis\\_blackstone.htm](http://www.jewishmag.com/146mag/brandeis_blackstone/brandeis_blackstone.htm). "What was incredible was that Brandeis, the head of the American Zionist movement acknowledged that Reverend William E. Blackstone, a dispensationalist Christian, was the father of Zionism. He said as his (Blackstone's) work and ideas predated Theodor Herzl by nearly six years." "Contemporary historians have almost entirely ignored, forgotten or even deliberately marginalized Blackstone's crucial role in Zionist and American history. Anti-Zionist and pro-Palestinian sources actively remember him but with vitriol." Klinger also said about the 1916 version of Blackstone's Memorial; "Most importantly, he secured the endorsement of the Presbyterian Church." The Balfour declaration depended upon obtaining American support. Klinger said Blackstone was a leader of Restorationism, which believed "one of the preconditions for the Second Coming of Jesus was the return of the Jews to their God pledged land of Palestine."

The C. H. M. bio of Blackstone says something similar, <http://www.lifeinmessiah.org/godslittleerrandboy/>. Robert O. Smith's 2013 *More Desired than Our Own Salvation: The Roots of Christian Zionism* chapter on Blackstone viewed prophecy as being fulfilled in his own times – not after the Rapture. As an example, he said the Islamic capture of Jerusalem occurred in 637 AD. Then 1260 years later (a significant number derived from Daniel and is in Revelation 11) was the 1897 Zionist Conference. p. 170-171.

Brandeis said "a good time" "to cheer" on December 6, 1917, just days before England's Gen. Allenby captured Jerusalem. More along these lines is in end note 96. And see end note 107 for the 1924 source giving "threatened." My conclusion was derived from the general tone of that section.

Rev. Elias Newman said, "Zionism ... owes its origin ... to the efforts of a Christian ... William E. Blackstone. ... The American Jewish Chronicle ... in the issue of December 7, 1917, says of this [Blackstone's petitioning] memorial: 'The ... memorial may rightly be called precursors [sic] of Theodor Herzl.' Dr. Theodor Herzl no doubt was greatly inspired by Blackstone's idea and was led to found the Zionist Movement ..." p. 37 of Joseph Hall's dissertation. Rausch mentions it too. This was during his speech at the Winona Lake conference in 1919. See end note 45, 112.

"State Of Israel Is Born" proclaimed the Palestine Post on May 14, 1948. Please turn to Isaiah 66: 7-9 for the story!

Paul Merkley. *The Politics of Christian Zionism 1891-1948*. Routledge, 2012. p. 88-89. p. 93 says in summary: "While it would be reckless to claim that we can trace a clear line of cause and effect from Blackstone's memorial of 1891 to the Creation of the State of Israel in 1948, it is not far-fetched to say the memorial is ... the clearest expression of the motivation that won President Wilson, and which would continue to be the surest, the most constant source of American Christian Zionism."

Although Merkley named Blackstone and 1891, most say the Zionism movement began with Herzl in 1897. The First Zionist Conference he organized said, "Zionism aims at establishing for the Jewish people a publicly and legally assured home in Palestine." History books agree that Zionism began in the 1890s, and culminated in 1948. Merkley's article linked to above connects Balfour in 1917 through the '30s to 1948 and after.

Merkley defended Christian Zionism in his article here; <https://thebayviewreview.com/2017/01/01/the-creedal-basis-of-christian-zionism/>. In it he makes this point, "The Restoration of the State of Israel in our own time is the best proof of the Sovereignty of the Lord of History." End note 110 has more on Merkley's book.

<sup>95</sup> Gordon Spykman, "Fundamentalism in the CRC: A Critique," *Pro Rege*, (September 1986) 12. (He refers to Scofield's book as well as its theology.) Rev. Spykman was a CRC minister. [http://www.dordt.edu/publications/pro\\_rege/crcpi/64058.pdf](http://www.dordt.edu/publications/pro_rege/crcpi/64058.pdf). A following end note has another link for it.

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[https://dutchamericans.files.wordpress.com/2017/03/1995\\_11\\_kennedy.pdf](https://dutchamericans.files.wordpress.com/2017/03/1995_11_kennedy.pdf) (new link). Kennedy's "Dutch Zion Besieged and Breached ..." describes a WWI premillennial "bug" in Orange City, Iowa. End note 64 looks at his material.

Michael Borgert's paper (cited in end note 2, can't find it online) said pessimism arose, and "eschatological fervor ... reached a fever pitch." He said the CRC was "not immune from the atmosphere of this fervor," and lists two articles that were probably against that atmosphere from 1917 by J. Van Lonkhuyzen, an "antithetical" (pietistic) minister who went to serve at First Chicago CRC in 1918. He became the President of the CRC Jewish Mission Committee after Fles died by 1922 (per Acts of Synod from that year).

Fles apparently wrote something on the controversies in 1916 through 1918 (see what Kennedy said on page 27 of this paper), but I haven't tracked that source down yet (other than the missionary magazine). It could be on microfilm at the library, or available and searchable online; see here <http://library.nwciowa.edu/collections/archives/devolksvriend>.

<sup>96</sup> Lord Balfour. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Balfour\\_Declaration\\_in\\_the\\_Times\\_9\\_November\\_1917.jpg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Balfour_Declaration_in_the_Times_9_November_1917.jpg).

Moody's *The Christian Workers Magazine* said early in 1918, "Every Christian heart thrills at the tidings that Jerusalem after twelve centuries of almost unbroken Moslem rule, has surrendered to the British forces." And "Since God has so clearly associated the gathering of Israel and the end of the times of the Gentiles with the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, it seems to us duty again to invite those who are interested in the covenant people and the coming King to assemble for prayer and teaching of God's Word" with the Chicago Hebrew Mission at the Moody Tabernacle. They hoped David Baron could attend. Rev. Cornelius Kuyper of the Reformed Church would speak, but Henry Beets was among those sending regrets because prior arrangements would prevent taking part in the occasion. Blackstone sent his thoughts and regards from Los Angeles ( p. 99 of second link, which also mentions Balfour and the "official recognition of the Jewish right to the land.") He was probably speaking at another Zionist mass meeting then - when he was in his late seventies. It is available [on Google Books](#). Moody Bible Institute of Chicago, 1917. p. 394 & 396.

Schedule of speakers, etc. from The Jewish Era. Newman gave a speech. It is available [on Google Books](#). Published 1917. p. 1-15, and 94.

<sup>97</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scofield\\_Reference\\_Bible](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scofield_Reference_Bible). The first edition by Scofield was published in 1909.

<sup>98</sup> [https://www.calvin.edu/library/database/crcnasynod/1918acts\\_et.pdf](https://www.calvin.edu/library/database/crcnasynod/1918acts_et.pdf), p. 78. The Synod session was held in Grand Rapids. p. 95 has "The Lord is coming." Its article 62 quotes from Bultema's book and goes into detail for almost six pages.

A certain Wisconsin CRC church's study of Revelation (which is online) also cites and applies the "In response to a theological challenge to its underlying eschatology, the synod of the CRC adopted...succinct statements in 1920, which implicitly reject dispensationalism and some facets of premillennialism..." (Christian Reformed Church Position Statement).

Bultema said Christ is King of Israel and the Head of the Church (something Capadosse also examined, see below). The CRC Church's eschatology page says "Christ is not only head of the church as an organic unity but also king of his church in the juridical sense of the word."

Theological contentions and interpretations came up during the trial (per the book about it at Heritage Hall). The CRC Classes bringing up the issue said they would "test Maranatha by the confession." That side brought up the Heidelberg Catechism question 31 – which basically says the "kingdom of Christ" is for believers, and the Belgic Confession of Faith Twenty-Seven that says, "Christ is an eternal King" of the "one catholic or universal Church." Bultema responded in different ways as he was examined and cross examined. He regretted that "he did

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not from the outset express his views more accurately in harmony with the standards of the church.” He agreed that the CRC uses the “language of love,” although their thinking was “far from an innocent error.” He cited the verses Eph. 1:22 and Col. 1:18, which refer to Christ as the Head of the Church. I wonder if Fles attended the trial. Bultema wrote an article ([image](#)) in the *Jewish Era* in 1917 (A.M.F. Monthly, Vol. 26-27) about Bilderdijk, Da Costa, and Capadose. End note 40 says Capadose wrote in 1848 about Christ as the head of all creation and King of Israel. <https://books.google.com/books?id=aH0zAQAAAJ&pg=PA13&focus=viewport&vq=bultema&dq=%22jewish+era%22+%22christian+quarterly%22+1917>. Bultema’s article.

Another prophecy book Bultema wrote; *Commentary on Isaiah* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Kregel Publishers, 1981). I’ll probably read this book first, *Romans: Truth in Paradox*. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Grace Publications, 1989.) He also wrote *Zechariah: a Brief Commentary* and other commentaries. I haven’t looked very closely at Bultema’s theology yet.

Vlach’s 2017 *He Will Reign Forever* analyzes Isaiah 2 (which is virtually the same as the passage from Micah that I cite on p. 33) and quotes points from Bultema’s commentary that argue against spiritualized interpretations. Vlach’s p. 152-153 noted CRC theologian A. Hoekema was an amillennialist who “rightly rejected ... [a specific] spiritualization of Isaiah 2 [that would apply the passage to the Church and its work, or only to heaven or to a personal salvation].” (Apologies if my summary is inaccurate; read Vlach’s book!)

I should look for more development or examples of the CRC’s specific theology regarding those two points made in 1918. See Berkhof from that year in end note 104. Later in the story and end notes we see Fles brought up one of those points soon after this. End note 107 quotes from Rev. Van Dellen’s autobiography.

<sup>99</sup> The Northwestern Reporter, Volume 182. It is available [on Google Books](#). Published 1921. p. 94 of legal story.

<sup>100</sup> Valiant and diligent for truth: An autobiography. By Harry Bultema. p. 107. He said it was “I. Fles,” apparently sometimes referring to both father and son similarly. The legal case is in a book at Calvin’s Heritage Hall; p. 60-63 said it was Isaac Fles who was elected as a two year elder on the “new consistory,” along with A. Langeland and others. In the 1920 yearbook, link below, page 145 confirms A. Langeland stayed and replaced Scholtens who left. Bultema doesn’t give any other details about what took place between Rev. Fles and himself during those difficult times. Boslooper’s long version of *Grace and Glory Days* is available in a Heritage Hall collection; it said Isaac Fles and the 17 plaintiffs filed a lengthy, type-written “Bill of Complaint” (to begin the civil legal action). The First C.R.C. reactions were emphatic; “... [a] ghastly testimony to the treachery of broken ordination vows, and the scars that remain on the souls of men will never be obliterated this side of eternity.” From the Congregations box 10 History.

<sup>101</sup> op. cit. Bryan Ross. *Grace History Project*. [gracelifebiblechurch.com](http://gracelifebiblechurch.com) p. 5-7. It quotes Boslooper. The Vol. IX, Number 1, 1991 *Origins* article, *Grace and Glory Days* by Thomas Boslooper (link in end note 82) said Michigan’s Supreme Court rendered its decision about the church building on March 31, 1921 (right after Fles died).

<sup>102</sup> *Origins* magazine. By Herbert J. Brinks. <http://www.calvin.edu/hh/origins/Fall88.pdf>. p. 14 - 15. Boslooper (p. 90 of long version); “Within a very short time ... former pastor J. Isaac Fles ... was in charge” of the young people’s society, which had 36 members in it. The 1918 CRC Yearbook said the group had 50 members (link follows). <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015071425261;view=1up;seq=133>. The 1917 Yearbook said “I. J. Fles” was their President the prior year, probably mistakenly but perhaps actually referring to Rev. Fles’s son.

<sup>103</sup> <http://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015071425287;view=1up;seq=146>. 1920 CRC Yearbook. Benjamin was President of their Men’s Bible Class.

The Fles Brothers clothing store was listed in the Muskegon city directory (online now) almost every year. It probably closed during the Depression, or possibly sooner. Hartford Christian School was mentioned in Isaac and Lutena Fles’s obituaries.

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I can't resist adding this picture of Isaac and my Grandpa in '26. The old page from [www.migenweb.org](http://www.migenweb.org) is gone now. I still have [a copy of it](#), stored on the Internet Archive! My great-grandfather taught and coached at the CRC Grand Rapids Christian High. I recognize my Grandpa because of his family resemblance to my dad.

<sup>104</sup> [http://www.bereanmuskegon.com/berean\\_history.htm](http://www.bereanmuskegon.com/berean_history.htm) has some of the general details.

op. cit. Bryan Ross. *Grace History Project*. Boslooper's short version, link in end note 82, gives the "every Dutch church ... was affected" quote on p. 24-25. Beets longer history said, "In Grand Rapids, Grand Haven, Holland, Moline, and Chicago, the ... new group ... obtained a foothold." He was not any more specific here. p. 117-118. The Holland church is now called Parkside Bible Church; they celebrated a 100 years anniversary by reading Psalm 100:5. J. Bennink, another Reformed Church minister in Muskegon, was also deposed in 1932 (per the same Boslooper).

Rev. H. Hoeksema developed an opposing "covenantal" eschatology. Boslooper described Rev. Henry Beets as one of Bultema's "leading antagonists." Beets soon began a Sunday evening series on Revelation. p. 27-29. L. Berkhof also responded to Bultema's book by giving public speeches. He wrote them up in a 1918 book in Dutch against premillennialism. <https://www.digibron.nl/search/detail/7f4f6fa5dea8a3d8065e2eca656ca179/premillennialisme>.

Or has that also been reformatted now? You can try this method, which goes from page to page; <https://www.digibron.nl/zoeken/Deel/Premillennialisme/sortering/paginnummer-oplopend/groepeer-boek/off/Dag/1918-01-01>

"[Christ] explicitly teaches that the Kingdom of God is a present reality is in the hearts of believers ... Luke 17:20." Next he cites the first part of John 18:36. Blackstone was "guilty of twisting Scriptures [Schriftverdraaien]," (per Pagina 50 = actual p. 53, citing his 1878 book), then he cites "some of" Matthew's parables; van Andel was a premillennialist. See [Berkhof's article analyzed](#). Geoffrey Kirkland's 2009 [online thesis](#) notes, "Berkhof says that 'the New Testament never says anything about the restoration to that ancient covenant people.'" (Others: it really does). Kirkland's p. 28 has Berkhof saying, "I wonder" if Isaiah 2 and 11 don't describe "a literal, physical, national Kingdom," and not "spiritual realities." More about Louis Berkhof is in the end notes 107, 124 and 128.

Boslooper said Rev. Y. P. De Jong was also an adversary; De Jong wrote ("launched a counterattack," per Hesselink) another [book in Dutch](#) refuting premillennialism in 1920. Its preface (available online) called Moody Institute and other schools "a perverse influence" (Google translated from "verkeerden invloed") putting "erroneous ideas into our circles;" it examined Bultema and [Maranatha](#) at length – 104 times. It referred to Rev. Hospers' 1915 book on the subject (end note 64), and it too compares van Andel's doctrines with Blackstone's on p. 295-296.

This CRC archival entry on Bultema has more information. I wish the author had been more detailed or given the sources when saying, "[Premillennial beliefs were] held, at that time, by a number of Christian Reformed ministers." <https://archives.calvin.edu/?p=collections/findingaid&id=34&q=&rootcontentid=10150>. Rev. De Ridder's paper (linked in end note 132) said, "[A] few pastors from Jewish background left for other organizations" in the 1920s, "motivated largely by dispensational views and opportunities for ... [more] outreach." I suppose he may have meant Rev. Rottenberg (who was at their school in Grand Rapids during the big break up), but am not aware of other Jewish ministers, or which ministers chose to join Bultema and the Grace Movement. Beets said in 1924 there was "a split in a half dozen churches." (See end note 107).

<sup>105</sup> Lawrence Spalink. [http://www.crchurches.net/resources/crcstuff/WhoWeAre/history/part\\_ix.html](http://www.crchurches.net/resources/crcstuff/WhoWeAre/history/part_ix.html). I wanted to include his history in this paper, but now their website doesn't appear to be online anymore. However here is a look back at an archive of his history; (one image from "[Early Doctrinal Controversies](#)" tells the Bultema story.) <https://web.archive.org/web/20081013232433/http://www.crchurches.net:80/resources/crcstuff/WhoWeAre/history/index.html>. He and his wife work in Tokyo, Japan as CRC World Missions leaders. <https://www.crcna.org/news-and-views/muskegon-crcs-light-dims> Muskegon CRC's Light Dims. Rev. Hoeksema was at Eastern Ave. C.R.C. and most of the families left with him -so the remainder became liberal?

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<sup>106</sup> Acts of Synod. [https://www.calvin.edu/library/database/crcnasynod/1918acts\\_et.pdf](https://www.calvin.edu/library/database/crcnasynod/1918acts_et.pdf). Their p. 23-24 is p. 21-22 of the pdf document. Page 114 starts Rev. Fles's "the following reasons not to do this" and then "suffer damage" and "not church related" are from document's p. 115. "Israel shall be glad" on p. 115.

A 2017 Oxford study by Heath Carter of "Social Christianity in America" said the FCC endorsed a "Social Creed" which the Methodist Church "generated" in 1908. The RCA was a FCC charter member in 1906, per a history by Donald Bruggink and Kim Baker.  
[http://religion.oxfordre.com/oso/viewentry/10.1093\\$002facrefore\\$002f9780199340378.001.0001\\$002facrefore-9780199340378-e-424](http://religion.oxfordre.com/oso/viewentry/10.1093$002facrefore$002f9780199340378.001.0001$002facrefore-9780199340378-e-424)

The influential Swiss Reformed theologian Karl Barth has been called a Christian Zionist ( by Gerald McDermott and others ). He wrote his commentary, [The Epistle to the Romans](#) in 1916, published 1917. "Protestant Liberal theology had played a significant role in the rise of German nationalism prior to World War I, leading to Barth's disillusionment and attempts to restructure Protestant theology," per the above Wikipedia article. The Church's inclination to hope its social gospel was enabling progress towards a more wide-spread, more perfect, more Christian society temporarily paused after WWI.

And in 1918, this CRC Church history, <http://www.crcna.org/welcome/history/memorable-events> says on June 26 - Denomination affiliated with Federal Council of Christian Churches. Spalink's history said they joined the FCCC because of WWI, for prosaic reasons such as allowing battlefield ministers access to more soldiers.

Then later in 1924 the CRC withdrew from that ecumenical organization (but the RCA stayed on in spite of "theological liberalism and social activism" because of its "commitment as a church to Protestant unity and Christian service." p. 113-114 ), according to Schneider from Between the Times: The Travail of the Protestant Establishment in America ...  
<http://books.google.com/books?id=wMH7PRqQDGkC&pg=PA109&dq=speer+Federal+Council+%22christian+reformed%22&hl=en&sa=X&ei=2g5dVLv-J9SyASs5IKYDw&ved=0CBgQ6AEwAQ>. Published 1990.

The CRC 1924 Acts of Synod (p. 18) mentions one Grand Rapids Classis reason to quit the FCCC; "Liberalism is in control of the council as is clearly seen from its emphasis on the social gospel and its humanitarian tendencies." Robert Speer was the group's President in 1920-1924. Rev. Kromminga described the organization as pursuing "grand programs of social betterment" through "social creeds." (p. 329 of his book mentioned elsewhere here).

The movements by the CRC and other Protestant denominations toward or against social involvement apparently didn't involve eschatology and their interpretations of prophecies about Israel, but it had to be a post-War subtext.

<sup>107</sup> H. Beets, op. cit., page 159. His history in English.  
<http://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?view=plaintext;size=100;id=mdp.39015071424637;page=root;seq=163;num=159>. The CRC's decision to end their support of the Chicago Hebrew Mission and its reaction to Bultema were probably motivated by similar rationales. They would have ended their support for the C. H. M. even if the CRC didn't begin a new mission (but Classis Illinois thought "Calvinistic mission methods are especially effective with Hebrews"), since the C. H. M. "is not conducted on a Reformed basis" (per "Agenda for the Synod" p. xii). The 1918 Synod's discussion and interview with Bultema details their confessional objections (on pages 75-80 of source), the Confessions were also part of their discussion about the "two points." In 1920 the Synod discussed the Confessions, and called them "the Formulas of Unity." Beets said they consisted of the Belgic Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism, and the Canons of Dordrecht. Other confessions from the 1500s also directly spell out their concerns about premillennial eschatology, as I noted earlier.



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The same 1918 Synod also said on p. 58, “We boast to be a confessional Church, and do not go along, nor wish to go along with undogmatic Christendom, which in our time invades Church after Church and conquers.” I think they were referring to Fundamentalist type doctrines, but they could have meant liberal ones.

I discussed the L. Berkhof 1918 book on premillennialism in end note 104.

The C. H. M. published Bergman’s Yiddish Bible in 1918, per <https://www.yiddishbookcenter.org/language-literature-culture/vault/converts-bible-scholars-and-yiddishists>. (I was looking for info on Rev. Rottenberg.)

As for the following paragraph regarding not appointing a delegate to Synod, the 1918 Synod on p. 25 said, “it is decided no longer to appoint a Synodical Committee for Jewish Missions, but only a general Treasurer and his alternate.” Fles was that Treasurer in 1918. A quote from p. 46 of the Church Order of the Christian Reformed Church as Adopted by the Synod of 1920 ... By Christian Reformed Church, William Stuart, Gerrit Hoeksema said, “No Synodical delegates for Jewish Missions are to be appointed anymore.” And similarly, this quote from its p. 47 about 1920 rephrases the Acts in that year, “Synod appoints a Secretary of Missions especially connected with the Board of Heathen Missions, but also charged to plead for and promote the interests of the Home and Jewish Missions.” Acts 1920, Art 34-8. The Illinois Classis was apparently granted more authority over that Mission work, “according to Rules approved by the Synod of 1918 and 1920.” (p. 46 of the 1924 Church Manual.) I am not sure whether doctrinal differences influenced the Synod’s decision to restructure their Jewish Mission Committee, or if it was part of the more widespread changes which included new missions in China. Fles’s “a new phase” quote was from the 1918 Acts on p. 116. Van Dellen’s book (below, p. 105) said control of missions moved away from individual churches and to centralized Boards.

The 1918 Synod President Van Dellen said, “It is not very well possible for me to survey all the work accomplished by this Synod. History will point out what its significance is. ... Wonderful decisions have been made, which testified to largeness of heart and broadness of vision. ... Special delicate questions were up for consideration. Think of ‘Maranatha’ ...” p. 94-95.

The 1918 Synod has been called “visionary” because they “decided to extend the denomination’s mission program overseas.” On actual p. 8 of a CTJ article on the CRC China mission by Kurt Selles, which was citing Henry Zwaanstra. (The source also said “Another eleven CRC students were studying [to be missionaries] at the Moody Bible Institute” in 1917.)

Rev. Bultema was not permitted to address the 1918 Synod. (I wonder if they tried to keep his followers out too? It reminds me of the Netherlands CRC and that other minister over 40 years earlier.) The 1918 Synod session is mentioned again in end note 123.

A note on my page 98 tells more of the American political treatment of Zionism after this period, but here is a good spot to add another historical [2022 Tablet article](#) about this period, “Massacres of over 100,000 [Ukrainian] Jews between 1918 and 1921” per J. Veidlinger. I didn’t see this terrible story in *Jewish Era*.

Rev. I. Van Dellen went to Kampen seminary from 1889 – 1894, and pastored at First CRC Orange City, IA, 1903-07. His autobiography said Rev. Bultema’s book on eschatology “also caused a stir in our [CRC] Denver Church.” “One after another” left, most joining Baptist churches, and a “young lady who taught Sunday School in our Church” went to the “so called Church with the Open Bible.” p. 115 of his autobiography, [In God’s Crucible](#) (is on archive.org). Some wanted Rev. Van Dellen to preach against pre-millennialism, but he didn’t because he thought if the “followers of Bultema and of the Denver Bible Institute” “had been Reformed it would not have meant so much that they differed from most reformed theologians in regard to the millennium, the reign of Christ of a thousand years. They showed however, in various ways that they believed in the ‘free will of man’ and were ‘Arminian.’” “Therefore I deemed it better to preach a series of sermons following the teaching in the Canons of Dort, also called the Five Articles against the Remonstrants.” I don’t think his concern about free will was the same as the one he expressed against “each [one who left] came to his own interpretation [of Scripture]” at the “Open Bible” churches, thus rejecting the Creeds. You can see Rev. Beets’ concern about ‘free will’ in end note 87.



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Van Dellen was elected the “Moderator” of Synod again in 1924. In the 1924 Acts of Synod (p. 317-318), Henry Beets gives this report. [https://www.calvin.edu/library/database/crcnasynod/1924acts\\_et.pdf](https://www.calvin.edu/library/database/crcnasynod/1924acts_et.pdf).

“Alas, our battle is not only offensive---extending the church and winning new territories- but the battle is also defensive. For a few years our brigade [denomination] has been agitated by a disturbance brought in by those who sought to impose on us a new and strange doctrine. Through Scofield and his Bible, and also others, the doctrine of the old premillennialism was cast in a new cloak. And even more importantly, this developed into a system that influences the entire system of Christian truth. It is not only a speculation about the future -if only this were the case- but it goes much deeper. The basic principle, that prophecy must be literally interpreted, undermines the age-old Reformed doctrine of the Covenant of Grace, the Covenant of Baptism, the use of the Psalms, yes even the Lord's Prayer and the content of the Sermon on the Mount are being revised. Within our circles it came to advancing two dangerous propositions. The first was the essential distinction between the New Testament Church and the believers among the Jews, destroying the oneness of the church of God through all the ages, as our confessions teach. The second proposition was that Christ is indeed the head of the church but not its king. Unpleasant strife lead to the deposition of a minister of the Word and a split in a half dozen churches, however it only had serious consequences in one community.” (i.e. Muskegon.)

Was the Lord's Prayer truly affected or revised? I don't think so, but it's “thy Kingdom come” was thought by premillennialists to mean come *to Earth*. The Belgic Confession, Article 37 and the Heidelberg Catechism both state, “[Christ will] come as judge *from heaven*.” I think most premillennialists agreed but suggested this point about the Last Judgement means there will be another separate arrival of Christ to Earth. Kennedy noted a related question derived from that article – is the number of the elect already complete before Christ's return or will people turn to Christ during the millennium? However Kromminga did recognize this difference in interpretation was an issue, and he appealed to Synod for their judgment on it (said the CRC's A. Hoekema, per W. Bergsma's 2007 prophecy book). End note 127 tells what happened to Kromminga.

A different Second Helvetic Confession from 1562 or so (about the same time as the Heidelberg Catechism) said, “We further condemn Jewish dreams that there will be a golden age on earth before the Day of Judgment.” Cited by amillennial minister/theologians David Engelsma, Robert Strimple, Kim Riddlebarger, and R. Scott Clark. Also noted by the RCA's Dr. I. John Hesselink at the beginning of his *Millennium* paper, see end note 124. Clark writes at <https://heidelblog.net/>. Engelsma is a PRC minister who wrote [A Defense of \(Reformed\) Amillennialism](https://www.salvationbygrace.org/Audio/Eschatology/047_Amillennialism.mp3). A nondenominational rebuttal of it; [https://www.salvationbygrace.org/Audio/Eschatology/047\\_Amillennialism.mp3](https://www.salvationbygrace.org/Audio/Eschatology/047_Amillennialism.mp3). Dr. M. Vlach has a [2023 article](#) (and [a book](#)) that disagrees with the “hermeneutics” of “non-dispensationalists [who] believe Jesus ‘fulfills’ the Old Testament in a way that transforms the original Old Testament expectations.”

Not sure which Confessions were included in Fles's acknowledgment from 1884; the full quote there was quite obscure (unless you went to seminary), “Rev. Fles ... has stated he is in hearty accord with the Articles of Confession of the Old Reformed Church, the thirty seven Articles, the Heidelberg Catechism and the five Articles against the Remonstrants.” Rev. Zeilstra's history of Pella II explains the last “five Articles” were later called “the Canons of Dordt.” He said they were about the “radical grace of God's salvation,” and reject Arminianism. They are probably the “Five Points of Calvinism” as formulated by the Synod of Dordt, now commonly known by their acronym, TULIP. (That description was cribbed from another local denomination's “what we believe” website.) Who were the Remonstrants? Liberals who believed works save. See <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Remonstrants>.

Henry Zwaanstra, “Louis Berkhof,” in *Reformed Theology in America: A History of its Modern Development*, ed. by David F. Welles (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1985). “After 1926 the turbulent storms of theological controversy in the Christian Reformed Church subsided ... The church had purged itself of premillennialism ... [conservative, orthodox] consensus ... resulted.”

<sup>108</sup> Rev. H. Bultema donated 2 dollars to the mission in Feb. 1919 – reported in March's edition of the magazine.

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So that small note is another opportunity to guess what events were occurring, and what motivations led to however he handed over some money. Did he give it to Fles? I've wondered if they were still on good terms, and tried to find what sources are available from the Bultema Memorial Library at Grace Christian University (GCU). I've heard there are untranslated, handwritten ones which still need work!

I asked the archivist at Calvin's Heritage Hall about their plans to digitize the Heidenwereld missionary magazines, and said how I'd talked to the RCA's Dr. Swierenga and he considers it to be a priority. Heritage Hall does (or did) as well; their digitization plans include "looking specifically at missionary records which might be particularly useful to researchers" ... (especially records that are) "documenting conflict." <https://calvinchimes.org/2017/11/03/new-archives-director-pursues-digitization-and-student-access/> and [https://library.calvin.edu/guide/research\\_advice](https://library.calvin.edu/guide/research_advice). Will they translate them too?

"A considerable number of Palestinian Jews who had been deported by the Turkish authorities to Damascus have returned to their homes. ... Similarly many Palestinians [Jews] who sought refuge in Egypt have joined the Judaeans... [and] three hundred and fifty Jewish exiles recently returned from Constantinople. They sailed in a French vessel flying the Jewish flag." In a Stand With Us tweet which shows/cites February 21, 1919 edition of 'The Sentinel'. The article was from this Chicago Jewish weekly paper that supported Zionism; <https://web.nli.org.il/sites/jpress/english/pages/sentinal.aspx> p. 4 of issue.

I'm not completely sure he wrote it (although other poems *were* attributed to other authors), but Fles's "your King [Koning]" apparently showed he disagreed with one of the two points the CRC Synod of 1918 raised. See end note 98 for more on them. The poem seems to throw some doubt on Kennedy's "moderating influence" conclusion found on page 27, but really wasn't different from what Fles had said in 1886 – see end note 31. The RCA contributions to their Jewish mission and its outreaches continued. I'm not sure when it ended.

<sup>109</sup> Letters of Louis D. Brandeis Volume 4. It is available [on Google Books](#). Published 1975. Blackstone said individual Jews still would have to choose to believe the Gospel and accept Christ before receiving salvation. Elsewhere Blackstone said that first a remnant will "accept ... the Gospel" and "become members of the bride of Christ" (which means the Church). Finally, "Jesus will come to Israel." He quotes Zech. 14:10 and Romans 11:26 and other verses. (From the Jewish Era link in end note 2.) Their p. 278.

<sup>110</sup> Paul Charles Merkley. The Politics of Christian Zionism 1891-1948. p. 198. And Ariel. An Unusual Relationship: ... p. 92. And Louis D. Brandeis. Letters of Louis D. Brandeis, Volume 4. p. 278. Merkley explained Blackstone was referring to Jews converting after Christians had been taken away from this earth (in the Rapture). And an earlier link from C. H. M. (lifeinmessiah.org) is the source that said "during the Tribulation." (I defined it by adding "doom.") It says Blackstone's Rapture will money was an endowment given by the financiers of The Fundamentals essay books, Milton and Lyman Stewart of the Union Oil Company of California. When did that occur? After the Stewarts sponsored Blackstone's evangelizing in China and across the world for five years – through early 1914? He was "then asked to be the trustee" of their two million dollar Fund. I can't help wondering if the CRC may have become concerned when the two brothers gained influence. Or could it have been the other way around; perhaps the Mission anticipated before 1909 they would need another source of support? See end note 93 for more about the fund.

The Chicago Hebrew Mission's outreach to Jews gave a New Testament to Mr. Israel Saxe, probably around 1909. Per a Rev. C. Kuyper article. He became involved at the mission. His son began a Bible Church that still preaches dispensationalism in Ann Arbor, MI.

Following paragraph's mention of Cedar Grove Presbyterians is in The [Jewish Era here](#), p. 107 of journal. Page 163 and other pages make it clear the Mission was very active with their outreach efforts to Christian churches in various locations that year. The RCA is mentioned a few times, but not the CRC (apart from Fles).

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And the quote from Rev. Cornelius Kuyper was in The [Jewish Era here](#). I shortened the link for more space! p. 107 of journal.

[https://guides.library.brandeis.edu/schusterman\\_home](https://guides.library.brandeis.edu/schusterman_home) is a recent study guide of Israel from Brandeis University.

<sup>111</sup> Acts of Synod. [https://www.calvin.edu/library/database/crcnasynod/1920acts\\_et.pdf](https://www.calvin.edu/library/database/crcnasynod/1920acts_et.pdf). p. 124 and 128.

<sup>112</sup> Robert Swierenga's Dutch Chicago: A History... p. 184 said they bought the existing First C.R.C. church building in 1921, after that congregation had moved from the inner city. Picture on p. 28. Swierenga relates on p. 187 how neighboring Jews threw eggs and stones at two trucks carrying mothers and children. Dr. Amry Vandenbosch told the same story.

The new CRC Chicago Jewish Mission was first led by CRC Rev. John Beld (per the CRC's account) and by two other ministers, both converted Jews from the C. H. M. Rev. John Rottenberg had studied Judaism and Zionism in Basel, Switzerland, then came into contact with a mission to Jews there, journeyed down the Rhine River, worked at a Jewish mission as an associate of Joseph Zalman and was baptized, emigrated in 1914 and lived in Lansing, Ill., studied at Moody Bible, then went to Calvin Seminary and graduated in 1920. I should cite Zalman-Marda's Rottenberg quote, "[S]o many speak and write about Israel's future and recovery/ restoration." She wasn't sure who he meant. (Was it Bultema?) Rottenberg was put in charge over Newman, who had previous experience with Jewish missions in Canada. The (non-prophetic) work was "difficult and discouraging" (per 1924 report to Synod). Please consider the differences then, Fles had reported the C. H. M. mission was doing "exceedingly well" in 1907. In 1924 he went to work with David Baron's mission in London, returned to the Netherlands and the same Jewish mission in 1929, and died in a concentration camp in 1942. He wrote an [article](#) on "AntiSemitism and the Christian Church" in 1931. His article about "Israel's Restoration" cited Hosea 3:5 and Romans 11:17. His son Isaac was an interesting RCA minister and theologian; see his take on Jewish missions, <http://www.religion-online.org/showarticle.asp?title=1156>, Isaac's story is here; [http://www.isaacrottenberg.com/uploads/pdf/www.isaacrottenberg.com/my\\_journey\\_as\\_a\\_.pdf](http://www.isaacrottenberg.com/uploads/pdf/www.isaacrottenberg.com/my_journey_as_a_.pdf).

Did his own denomination ever applaud Rev. John Rottenberg, a hero who gave up his life for his beliefs, bringing Dutch Jews to Christ!? Perhaps the RCA has acknowledged his work, I haven't checked to see what they may have said about him. And see notes 123, 128 and 129 of this paper, and my other document (with images) on him.

Evangelist Rev. Elias Newman (1888 – 1967) was not from the CRC. Fles knew of him in 1914, after Newman emigrated in 1912 and before he went to the C. H. M., as seen in two missionary magazine articles which quoted from Newman's "The Glory Of Israel." I can't find that publication. Fles was very well informed about mission evangelizers/ Jewish converts, and he may have been writing to or meeting with them. Newman represented the C. H. M. at the 1918 Synod session. He was premillennial, but said in the Jewish Era, "With regard to the minute details of unfulfilled prophecy, one cannot be dogmatic." He also said of the converted Jews in those days, "We had to watch our step," lest they be called "Judaizers" who "were considered in danger of apostasy." ([http://www.justreligion.org/resources/NR1501\\_04.pdf](http://www.justreligion.org/resources/NR1501_04.pdf) is quoting Rausch's *Messianic Judaism*.)

Swierenga said Chicago's First C.R.C. and the new Mission were influenced by "the evangelical ministry of the Moody Bible Institute." He noted Rev. Poot was a "powerful preacher" at Gano Reformed Church whose son went to Moody for missionary training. From Dutch Chicago p. 287-288, 326, which also said the CRC warned about "the danger at Moody [Bible] of being drawn away from Reformed doctrines by 'foolish and dangerous' ideas."

The (unnumbered?) start of Joseph Hall's dissertation mentions the Winona Lake Indiana Bible conferences. Both Newman and Rottenberg spoke on Jewish missions and premillennialism at the ecumenical 1919 conference held in that resort town, according to the "Christian Mission To Israel" organization's booklet from the conference – a copy is at Calvin's Hekman library. I already noted Newman praised Blackstone's work there. Rev. Frank Solin was that group's Superintendent. He was a converted Jew and a C. H. M. leader. Here is a [picture](#) from it in 1919.

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Henry Beets went to the Winona Lake conferences for three years in a row. He “criticized the conferees on several issues,” said Hall. Beets named their “almost” total premillennialism, their doctrine of “legal conversion,” and their “lack of Reformed and covenantal emphases.” But Beets said in 1920 that he “considered the theology that was exhibited at the Conference representative of the ‘pulse-beat of orthodox Protestant America.’”

Winona Echoes: A Book of Sermons and Addresses Delivered at the twenty-sixth Annual Bible Conference. This link contains both the 1919 and 1920 conferences. Fundamentalist Presbyterian and Democrat politician/lawyer William Jennings Bryan gave the opening address in 1919 (Read it on the first p. 12). William Riley and Rev. Melvin Trotter spoke that year. Rev. Solin spoke both years. Bob Jones was another prominent speaker in 1920. The page numbering and pdf searching don’t work well! Is available [on Google Books](#). Published 1919.

Newman was also a member of the Executive Committee of the ecumenical Hebrew Christian Alliance of America (HCAA). Carl A.F. Schwartz began the similar HCA of Great Britain in 1866, “with branches in several European countries.” Capadose spoke at their first meeting the next year; which was when “it all began!” (Per J. Cahn prophecy book, The Oracle, page 249 and it’s end note). HCAA began in 1915, but Louis Meyer was somehow an earlier leader as well. (Said Dan Cohn-Sherbok in a book edited by Peter Tomson and Doris Lambers-Petry). Meyer was a Corresponding Secretary at the first Hebrew Christian Conference in 1903. (That text is available online.) Ariel said they were premillennial. It is available [on Google Books](#). Moody Bible Institute monthly from 1921. Rev. Newman’s HCAA address.

Newman left the CRC Jewish Mission and became a missionary/teacher working among Jewish students in Palestine and Syria from 1924 to 1929. Did he receive any financial support? Bultema went there and met him, calling him “my friend.” Valiant and Diligent for Truth. p. 128. Maybe that was when/how Bultema became known for evangelizing to Jews (per Boslooper article and Bultema family members). Bultema’s trip likely happened after he cancelled a speech at the C. H. M. in ’24. The Mission called him “our beloved brother.” They must have understood his situation pretty well, they knew the CRC, and perhaps they had seen other Fundamentalist churches end denominational associations. The Revs. J. C. O’Hair and C. Kuyper were two of the C. H. M. trustees that year. The same issue shows CRC member, Simon Dekker, was still there too. I don’t think he wanted to guide the C. H. M. away from their core beliefs, as the CRC had once (umm) requested.

Rausch said the H.C.A.A. made a declaration in 1917 that completely “severed itself from Messianic Judaism.” Rev. Fles and the CRC could not have suggested that Jewish converts would be able to keep their Jewish festivals, rituals or traditions, although Fles did testify about Christ at a church near the Chicago Hebrew Mission in 1893 sometime near the Jewish Day of Atonement, Yom Kippur, their holiest day of the year. Maybe that made the talk more difficult? I should double check the date he went there, this [article](#) from the Chicago Tribune said Yom Kippur was on Sept. 20 in 1893. There was a Yom Kippur celebration on the Fair’s Midway, per this article by Stephen Winick, <https://blogs.loc.gov/folklife/2016/10/the-faith-of-far-away-moses-yom-kippur-1893/>. It was held in a mosque!

Fles’s 1896 Jewish Era article told Jews that the bloody sacrifices in their Bible (the Old Testament) are not necessary now. His message began with the standard Christian Reformed doctrine; neither “good works, alms, the blood [of sacrificial animals] ...” can take away our sins. The Messiah who Moses pointed to is Christ; only he can pay our debts, save us from their sins, and reconcile us with our God. Fles uses the singular words “you and I,” the plural “we,” and next he told how the collective “Israel” has acted and been treated by God as a whole. Fles described Israel as “the people, the nation,” and believed it would come to Christ and receive salvation as a group. The CRC believes guilt is collective – all humanity has fallen, then Christ’s death offers redemption to everyone, but salvation is given to individuals – all members of the Church. In fact the Calvinist idea of election isn’t dissimilar, but I’ll leave that theology out of this paper. The article goes on as told on page 16 here to finish with “Hallelujah!”

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Rausch said (in <http://www.religion-online.org/showarticle.asp?title=1339>) it was fascinating how the HCAA was “an organization that has consistently assuaged the fears of fundamentalist Christians by emphasizing that it is *not* a separate denomination but only an evangelistic arm of the evangelical church,” but later it was the same place where the Messianic Judaism movement “would arise.” (Wikipedia says it “arose in the 1960s and 70s.” They quote the same Rausch article; [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Messianic\\_Judaism#cite\\_note-RauschCCa-57](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Messianic_Judaism#cite_note-RauschCCa-57).)

<sup>113</sup> James D. Bratt, *Dutch Calvinism in Modern America: A History of a Conservative Subculture* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1984). p. 98. He wrote about the Bultema story. This chapter is called “Forming The Battle Lines, 1919-1920.” It is available [on Google Books](#).

Herman Hoeksema: A Theological Biography by Patrick Baskwell (2009) said Hoeksema “finally spoke of the Bultema Case by name ... only because ‘the act of synod 1918 regarding Maranatha has been called mockingly a “heretic trial”; and has been bitterly denounced as a manifestation of religious intolerance and an act of persecution.”’ (Sourced to The Banner 1919:581). He then “vigorously defended his actions.” Page 123.

Beets used a militaristic tone and called premillennialism “strange” in the 1924 Synod session (end note 107), reflecting the changes that happened since only a few years prior in 1920, when he said the Winona prophecy conference was “representative” of “orthodox Protestant America.” This paper refers to the conflicts that occurred within (and outside of) the CRC around then – see Robert Swierenga’s “friction arose” and George Marsden’s “pushed to extremes by the intense heat of controversy.” Beets also brought up Rev. H. Hoeksema’s case in the same 1924 section. If anyone wants to know more about this turbulent time, perhaps they should read James Bratt’s book. I’ll have to look for a biography of Beets! I don’t think there is one.

<sup>114</sup> According to the *Alton Democrat* Newspaper Archive: January 1, 1921. And his ten year old granddaughter Hermine would tell how much fun they had with him. She said he was a jolly person who told stories, sang little songs, and gave nice gifts. “He wore a high black hat (like the one that Lincoln wore) and always used a cane with a gold handle.” Their family had moved from Pella to Sioux Center, IA in 1919. She later discovered some details of the story here, and sent them to Heritage Hall at Calvin College.

<sup>115</sup> According to [an obit](#) in the *Kalamazoo Gazette* Wed. Mar. 30, 1921. Rev. Fles was “well known... having preached in the different Christian Reformed **and** Reformed churches here at various times.” (Quite unusual.) Fles “sought out and filled many speaking engagements” to promote Jewish missions. (Rozeboom. p. 10.) P. Zuidema was a printer; they didn’t have any children. The Rev. Poot papers noted the Kalamazoo River was polluted by that industry or by other dangerous contamination, which may have affected fetal development.

<sup>116</sup> [https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/94184198/john-j\\_-fles#view-photo=84767781](https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/94184198/john-j_-fles#view-photo=84767781). [https://images.findagrave.com/photos/2013/200/114105666\\_137436818990.jpg](https://images.findagrave.com/photos/2013/200/114105666_137436818990.jpg). This one shows the inscription, see its “DOODEN” on the left.

<sup>117</sup> <http://www.biblestudytools.com/isaiah/passage.aspx?q=isaiah+26:19-21>. This verse and Daniel 12 (which Fles preached on) are both about a physical, bodily resurrection. So that contrasts with any spiritualized concepts. Believing in Christ’s bodily resurrection was a determinative issue while checking for modernism in Dordrecht, Netherlands in 1871-1877, per [P. Dillingh in 2011](#), and that oldest city in the Netherlands was the site of 1879’s CRC Synod where Rev. Bulens spoke – he had proposed that location (apparently for other reasons, per [a source](#)).

Rev. Jeff Carlson’s study of this passage said it’s “hide yourselves for a little while ... ” is like what a Jewish bride would do before her celebration back then, and that “... until his wrath has passed by” shows it refers to the Rapture and Tribulation. Other similar verses: Psalm 27:5, Zeph. 2:3 “... you shall be hid in the day of the LORD’S anger.” Malachi 3:17, “I will spare them.” In the NT, read Rev. 3:10 “[God] will keep you from the hour of trial.”

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<sup>118</sup> John Rozeboom's 1973 seminary dissertation, *The Christian Reformed Church in mission to Jews*. p. 12. At Calvin's Hekman Library. Rozeboom served CRC missions for many years; <https://www.crcna.org/node/269225>.

Dr. Hesselink said the brothers B. K. and R. B. Kuiper "began to make premillennial-type prophecies" in 1918, per page 16 (his p. 112) of his *Millennium* paper – see end note 124. He clearly got that from Dr. Bratt's book, see pages 94-95, and 98-101. "By the war's end, apocalyptic premillennialism was the rage of Dutch-American conversation." Bratt goes on to discuss Bultema, and to compare the optimistic outlook among some Dutch people ("Confessionalists" or spiritualizers) versus the premillennial, more negative one. So the premillennial view outgrew its category within Bratt's classifications; other groups ascribed to it after the war, perhaps also due to Americanization and those influences. Bratt said it could've been due to Bultema's treatment of contemporary events and "Zionism" on p. 96. However, R. B. Kuiper was not generally considered to be premillennial.

It is hard to identify and separate the effects from those of similar sources and causes. Was Dutch premillennialism distinct from other early American evangelical beliefs about eschatology?

I'm trying to remember advice from Calvin's freshman English class ... didn't it suggest having a thesis? (I'm joking.) OK, I'd say that Fles was one of the first CRC ministers to affect the RCA denomination. He had more interaction and involvement across denominations than most CRC ministers, and the impact of his ministries still continues. What would've happened if ... (fill in a hypothetical question)?

<sup>119</sup> His sermons were undoubtedly forceful, but did Fles "stir up" the congregation so they would agree to support Jewish missions, or was he less overt? (I'm not sure if the phrase in Dutch is the same as the one in Rom. 11:14.) That first sermon listed on page 12 might well have been on Jeremiah 30:7 – a classic premillennial verse about the Tribulation. (Perhaps understanding if it was so depends on how the noun was translated from original Dutch, the English word most known is 'trouble'.) The 1899 C. H. M. Prophecy Conference started off with this verse. "Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it." Then the passage goes on to say, "Jacob [the Jews] shall return and have quiet and ease, and none shall make him afraid. For I am with you and will save you, declares the Lord." The author of the Muskegon paper's article about First C.R.C. might have chosen to specify those particular sermon titles – most are listed on page 12 of the main text - because he agreed with them.

The family story saying Fles agreed to "never preach his own... premillennial beliefs" was from Rev. De Leeuw's daughter, Hermine. It was probably how they recalled the 1883-1886 Synod hearings. It might also have reflected their thoughts and feelings about the matter. I am sure members of my extended family relations have had their own different ideas about eschatology, and perhaps some have recalled Rev. Fles's beliefs in other ways too. For example, the one who went to Bible College compared Fles's view of the salvation of the Jews "to that of later Reformed Theologian John Murray and the American Puritan Jonathan Edwards" i.e. his beliefs may have been more church-oriented and less dispensational than I've presented here.

<sup>120</sup> Gordon Spykman. op. cit. p. 14. has both his "all too hastily" and "agitation." He said that Bultema's case was "the first major official intrusion of fundamentalist theology into the ranks of the CRC." He said, "Basically, liberalism and fundamentalism both share a common worldview [from Kuyper's dualistic sacred/secular view], arising out of the enlightenment. ... Both are, of course, mistaken." Spykman sought another hermeneutic (Biblical approach) to unify the two (also described as faith and science in a [different source](http://www.gordonspykman.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/fundamentalism.pdf) from him in 1973). <http://www.gordonspykman.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/fundamentalism.pdf>. Bultema called his Berean church Fundamentalist.

<sup>121</sup> John Calvin Rediscovered: The Impact of His Social and Economic Thought. Ed. Dommen and Bratt. Eduardo Faria. Published 2007. p. 97-98. Interrupted account gives a Latin perspective and says an Ecumenical Movement started there in 1916 with "new possibilities of social and political action as means of bearing Christian witness." It is available [on Google Books](https://books.google.com/books?id=...). Published 2007.



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S. Goldman's *God's Country* (pub. 2018), p. 150 said that "fundamentalists had little presence in the organized Christian Zionism of the war years." Then he said Daniel Poling was not a dispensationalist. (See page 116 here.) And the next page said that for M. R. DeHaan, "Zionism was a confirmation of faith, not a program for action." Page 157 notes historian D. Hummel realized "neo-evangelicals like Henry" and "dispensationalists like Walvoord" couldn't reach consensus at a 1971 prophecy conference. (Note 132 has a section from Hummel.)

<https://www.calvin.edu/library/database/crcpi/fulltext/calvinforum/> The Calvin Forum publication had articles from the '30s – '50s by various writers including Rev. Pieters in 1938 (which asked if the Apostolic Fathers were chiliast) and a Berean minister in Holland, Michigan who had known Fles.

<http://www.cardus.ca/comment/article/3151/the-grand-rapids-intellectuals/> This interesting overview of Grand Rapids notables (mostly Calvin philosophy professors and writers) says, "Located on the boundary between mainline Protestantism and evangelicalism, the CRC felt at home in neither." Another Calvin College historian, Joel Carpenter's 1997 book, *Revive Us Again: The Reawakening of American Fundamentalism* on p. 156 said, "The liberalization of mainline Protestantism seemed even more menacing" than "revivalism" to the CRC (during the thirties and forties). The same book gives examples of CRC fundamentalism; one began within a CRC mission in New Jersey that had been there for about thirty years (not their Mission to Jews). But later in the forties, "Christian Reformed officials started trying to control the Stam's revival work." p. 156. They were "a family of missionaries," said David Stam in his 2014 autobiography, *What Happened to Me ...* His father Peter (a director of the Africa Inland Mission) was assigned the task of removing his doctrinally divisive grandfather, Cornelius, who went on to found the Berean Bible Society. From page 3. Also see a link in end note 31. The Star of Hope Mission still serves their community; it is not affiliated with the CRC, but some of their churches are members.

<sup>122</sup> James Bratt. *Dutch Calvinism in Modern America: A History of a Conservative Subculture*. p. 257. He mentions Shailer Mathews, among others (they are not from the CRC). Mathews was a dean at the University of Chicago's Divinity School at that time. He also wrote a book in 1907, the same year Rauschenbusch did. Another Christian liberal was Harris Franklin Rall, who wrote a critique of the premillennial doctrine in 1920. And Rev. H. Fosdick, see his [liberal 1922 sermon](#) (it featured eschatology of second coming = a main difference between Modernists and Fundamentalists, [image of section](#)).

Here is some history from 1936 to 1944 of the dispensational – covenantal rift by R. Todd Mangum, PhD in 2010. It is a book too, this is his synopsis; [http://ntresources.com/blog/documents/DSG2010\\_Mangum\\_DispCovRift.pdf](http://ntresources.com/blog/documents/DSG2010_Mangum_DispCovRift.pdf).

<sup>123</sup> Robert Swierenga. *Dutch Chicago: A History of the Hollanders in the Windy City*. p. 192. His <http://www.swierenga.com/Faithcraec lec.html>; Rev. Essenburg was "heavily influenced" by Moody Bible. The 2015 fall issue of *Origins* article (link available on main page) by J. S. Sheeres p. 7 mentions an example; listening to the radio sermons of evangelist Paul Rader (of Moody Church) produced "unrest in the congregation" and resulted in the dismissal of four Sunday School teachers at Evergreen Park C.R.C. (in the Chicago area) in 1927.

Rev. De Leeuw's church in Sioux Center, Iowa also experienced discord during the 1920s as the congregation tried "to steer a middle course" between modernism and fundamentalism. Premillennialism is not specifically mentioned in this 1995 article, [https://dutchamericans.files.wordpress.com/2017/03/1995\\_08\\_vandyke.pdf](https://dutchamericans.files.wordpress.com/2017/03/1995_08_vandyke.pdf) (new link) by Louis Van Dyke. But it does say that "revivalism" in Sunday schools made them more popular than regular services at some churches. Were those classes for adults? The 1918 CRC Synod adopted curriculum guidelines to address the "Sunday School movement." p. 2-3. "Sunday School" was mentioned over 71 times in the 1918 Acts of Synod; I won't look any further into those issues here. (Capadose once had a similar approach and used them in Holland.) The Sioux Center C.R.C. congregation disagreed with each other for ten years, and it finally split into separate CRC churches. Rev. De Leeuw and his family left in 1924 to minister in Lansing, Illinois.

More from Sioux Center (their CRC Dordt College):



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"Christian Zionism: Listening Left Behind" by Prof. Charles Veenstra, 2008. Pro Rege: Vol. 36: No. 4, 29 - 39.  
[https://digitalcollections.dordt.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1376&context=pro\\_rege](https://digitalcollections.dordt.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1376&context=pro_rege). Page 2 quotes Burge.

More from the 1920s and '30s:

Hervormde Kerk ministers in the Confessional Association were [writing](#) (an image) about "kerkherstel" and against church liberalism and social gospel influences in the Netherlands in the 1920s-30s, part of a "church restoration movement in the 1930s," (per a website on Hoedemaker and one on Schilder by G. Thomas). Kromsigt also spoke in America at the 1928 CRC Synod, and other ministers supported John Rottenberg's Jewish mission (in the Netherlands), at least one of whom had "[premillennial] expectations for Israel" (per [rd.nl/artikel/880903-ds-dirk-arie-van-den-bosch-bloedgetuige-in-kamp-amersfoort](http://rd.nl/artikel/880903-ds-dirk-arie-van-den-bosch-bloedgetuige-in-kamp-amersfoort) - has "verwachting voor Israël" or try <https://theworldnews.net/nl-news/ds-dirk-arie-van-den-bosch-bloedgetuige-in-kamp-amersfoort> ).

The early 1930s had another round of various actions against premillennialists! (In the Netherlands -per the Holtrigter article in end note 40, and see end notes 64 and 113 and following for examples here in the US.) Pages 21 (212) and 22 (213) of the 1932 Acts of Synod mentions Rottenberg (for the last time?). CRC volunteers in Sheboygan, WI and Chicago distributed tracts "donated **to us** by ... the Chicago Hebrew Mission" written by Rev. John Rottenberg in Yiddish. What should those tracts have said? "Antisemitism is increasing. Your European relatives will be targets." I don't really believe the denomination could have done anything differently.

<sup>124</sup> Western Theological Seminary.

[http://digitalcommons.hope.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1271&context=collection\\_registers](http://digitalcommons.hope.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1271&context=collection_registers). De Haan was raised in Zeeland. His family was initially in the CRC, but not at North Street Church. He heard about premillennial beliefs as a boy from his uncle. [http://cdn.dhp.org/files/QQ339\\_sample.pdf](http://cdn.dhp.org/files/QQ339_sample.pdf). M. R. De Haan biography by James Adair, pub. 2008, their p. 26. I wonder if his uncle had heard Fles preach; if he could have been influenced by Fles, perhaps second hand. De Haan was one of the founders of The Independent Fundamental Churches of America, founded in 1930. That organization still says, "His love for Israel and the Jewish people made a lasting mark on our Fellowship." <http://www.ifca.org/home/140001498/140001500/sep-oct03.pdf>. They are based near Grand Rapids. Their history, [http://www.ifca.org/site/cpage.asp?cpage\\_id=140043237&sec\\_id=140007594](http://www.ifca.org/site/cpage.asp?cpage_id=140043237&sec_id=140007594).

De Haan published a book in 1950, *The Jew and Palestine in Prophecy*, which basically transcribed his radio broadcasts, and so they must have been made prior to or right after the founding of Israel.

Romans 11 is prominent in both its introduction and on its last page.

The introduction: "To mix Israel and the Church, to make the Church spiritual Israel, is the surest way to bring upon one's self the very blindness which characterizes natural Israel today (Romans 11:25). It is with a hope the reader may learn to distinguish the things that differ that these chapters are set forth. We must be able to distinguish law and grace, Israel and the Church, the Kingdom and the Body of Christ. Failure to do this limits our Bible by making whole sections and even whole books practically worthless, except for moral applications and instructions, while leaving us entirely in the dark concerning God's Prophetic Kingdom at the consummation of the ages."

In pages 20-21: "The recent activities among the dry bones [such as displaced wartime refugees finally being allowed into Palestine and 'dry bones' is a metaphor in prophecies from Ezekiel that he analyzed] are the sure indication of the next step, the coming of Israel's Messiah, to bring in the Kingdom of Heaven upon the earth." "The Lord will reign in Jerusalem over the house of Jacob forever." He didn't need to note that last line was said by the angel Gabriel to Mary in Luke 1:32-33.

In p. 24 De Haan says of the same passages in Ezekiel, "Surely the Holy Spirit could not have made this truth any plainer, and yet, such is the perversity of human nature that men will read passages like this and yet miss the truth of Israel's literal restoration entirely." "To take the first prophecy of the scattering [of Jews] literally [and he already emphasized the return to Palestine as truly fulfilling prophecy] and then to spiritualize the latter prophecy [the promises] concerning Israel's restorations is to violate every sane principal of Bible interpretation."

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He returned to the Romans 11:25 verse on the last page by quoting it: 'For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in.' Then De Haan pointed out what the word 'until' there means; "the fig tree is withered, but not permanently. The root remains alive" ... and then "God will remember Israel again." Next De Haan quotes the following verses 26-27 and says "May God haste the day, 'Pray for the peace of Jerusalem. They shall prosper that love thee.'" (end of book)

De Haan's church has evolved into a mega-church which had three services last Easter morning, (but none in person in 2020) with thousands of people attending; <http://calvarygr.org/>. Calvary Non-denominational Church's former longtime pastor, Rev. Ed Dobson, was included on a list of premillennial ministers. That source is in Dutch. Dobson wrote a book predicting Jesus could return by the year 2000 A.D.

De Haan's radio ministry would become RBC, now renamed ODB - Wikipedia; [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Our\\_Daily\\_Bread\\_Ministries](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Our_Daily_Bread_Ministries). I checked one of their devotional booklets for premillennial topics. Israel was not a topic within its alphabetical listing, but (social) injustice was included. I'd have to say that "moral applications and instructions" is a mainstay, but agree their posters are inspirational.

See the strong reaction to De Haan's breakaway in [one section from Pieters' Jonah paper](#) (mentioned in end note 64 – search on the word 'Jonah'); "The childishness and cowardice of this [legal] proceeding..." (per its p. 8). J. C. O'Hair replied to Pieters in 1931 – the long letter is online below, one part said: "It is my honest opinion that your relentless hatred for this Blessed Truth [premillennialist doctrine as interpreted in the Scofield Bible] is the chief cause for your continuous attacks upon Dr. De Haan and other brethren, including myself." p. 2 of his "[Epistle to ... Pieters](#)."

Dr. Pieters (1869-1955), the son of a minister, he had been in the same Hope College 1887 class as Zwemer, and became an RCA missionary to Japan, but was later known as a teacher/theologian (per *Reformed Review*). A Paul Fries article in a 1986 compilation by Van Hoeven, [Word and World](#), analyzed Pieters' hermeneutical approach. It had been influenced by the critical analysis of earlier days, and was part of the "battle for the Bible" in the Reformed Church. p. 85. An RCA historian said that battle was also/still occurring in 1970 in other denominations too (likely referring to events in Lindsell's book on it – per Gary Dykes). Another article by I. J. Hesselink from the compilation said, "Western Seminary[s] ... teaching of systematic theology ... eschewed the historical-development approach to theology, ... and often was translated by students and clergy into static fundamentalist formulations." He was then a Professor of theology at that Seminary, so he would know. Next he noted Pieters "polemic" against dispensationalists. p. 101.

Dr. Hesselink has a paper online; "This historical survey has revealed a variety of Reformed interpretations of the millennial question." [https://www.preteristarchive.com/Books/pdf/1998\\_hesselink\\_millennium-in-reformed-tradition.pdf](https://www.preteristarchive.com/Books/pdf/1998_hesselink_millennium-in-reformed-tradition.pdf) (but link doesn't seem to work now, try going to it some other way, e.g. directly to their Books, then add pdf part). It covers some of the persons included in my paper (not Fles), and uses some of the same sources.

I've found an example of that type of "polemic" – Pieters delivered a lecture to the CRC in 1938 (is online at <http://www.chapellibrary.org/files/9413/9844/3837/ceot.pdf>) on Scofield's Bible commentary. Not sure if a brief look can do it justice, but from p. 16-17 is Scofield's "eschatological scheme," which supposedly included this item, "At last comes the establishment of the millennial kingdom, not by persuasion but by force. Thus Christ bears rule over the Jews, who bear rule over the rest of the world." He apparently thought persuasion (by the Church) would be effective enough to do so. And his summary after that: "[I]t is immediately clear that no such program can be justified except by laborious exegesis of numerous passages of Scripture—each of which is open to different interpretations and most of which have received from the Christian Church at large a very different interpretation from the one held by Dr. Scofield and his school. One doubtful exposition must be piled

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upon another, and then others again on those, before you can arrive at any such scheme as this [premillennial eschatology].” He goes on to say these beliefs would render the Bible to be a Jewish book.

Pieters wrote The seed of Abraham: A Biblical study of Israel, the church, and the Jew in 1950 (in the same year as De Haan’s book). I haven’t read it yet, but this passage from page 123 has been cited by several premillennial sources: “God willed that after the institution of the New Covenant there should no longer be any Jewish people in the world – yet here they are! That is a fact – a very sad fact, brought about by their wicked rebellion against God; but is it not monstrous to hold that by reason of this wickedness the said undesired and undesirable group are now heirs to the many and exceedingly precious promises of God? Shall we be accused of anti-Semitism because we speak thus of the Jews?” Dr. Barry Horner’s Future Israel (see end note 128) critiqued the book; it quotes Pieters:

“In conclusion, some will ask what we think of Zionism and of the establishment of the state of Israel in Palestine. We reply that this is a biblical study, not a political forecast. No doubt God has His plans for this new development, as for the whole course of affairs in the world, but as students of prophecy it is our task to determine what He has revealed concerning such plans; and whether this new state becomes permanent or not, we are still sure that no such thing is to be found in the scriptures.” From p. 148 of Pieters Seed of Abraham, and p. 134 (or 60- 62) of Horner’s book. Horner calls this viewpoint “un-Pauline.” Isaac Rottenberg, an RCA “maverick” and son of John in the CRC –I am going to call him a martyr, said, “[It] embodied all the key views on Israel theology that I rejected.”

The CRC’s Dr. L. Berkhof delivered a lecture series and published it in a book on the Kingdom of God in 1951 that said the NT spiritualizes OT prophetic promises (“The theocratic nation [of Old Testament Israel] itself was merely a type, a shadow of the spiritual realities ...” p. 170. It won’t be recreated in the future, in a millennial Kingdom.); this note is partially based on p. 39-40 of Vlach’s He Will Reign Forever; with two of the three names listed there being from the CRC. <https://www.ccel.org/ccel/berkhof>. Search their site for “amillennialism” for more Berkhof.

I’m looking up the founding of Israel, and there are some good sources about those years. Another history article by David Rausch and (liberal Christian Zionist) Carl H. Voss, “American Christians and Israel, 1948 -1988” (the 41 page [article is also available online](#)) was in a compilation edited by Naomi Cohen, published in 1990, p. 282-283. I recommend that Essential Papers on Jewish-Christian Relations in the United States ... “The Evangelical publication, *Christian Herald*, with a circulation approaching 400,000 in 1948, claimed to be interdenominational and undenominational. Its editor was Dr. Daniel A. Poling, a member of the (Dutch) Reformed Church of America ... Answering unequivocally [sic] a reader’s question in October 1947, Daniel Poling declared to the *Christian Herald* readership: ‘I am a Christian Zionist who believes that Palestine should become, as promised, the Jewish state.’ Welcoming the new State of Israel, he never wavered from that position.” More from that source is in end note 132.

Tuvia Pollack has a [current series](#) about the three religions of Jerusalem, and he notes that the Byzantines of the fourth century adhered to replacement theology, and so did most 1948 Christians there.

<sup>125</sup> Scattered end notes have looked at the RCA; note 93 has RCA links that I totaled to get Blackstone’s donations. This may still not be entirely chronological, but in 1923 The Jewish Era noted “financial difficulties,” and so the C.H.M. would “speak more frankly and fully of the situation;” apparently to encourage donations, and then “deliverance from anxiety and indebtedness has resulted.”

Did the RCA’s Dr. I. John Hesselink write any books on this time period within the RCA? See the previous end note for a link to one of his histories. He and his wife were missionaries in Japan, among his other accomplishments.

op. cit. Pastor Bryan Ross, Grace Life School of Theology. *Grace History Project*. <http://www.gracelifebiblechurch.com/SundaySchool/ChurchHistory/2013/012713/012713SSNotes.pdf>. Their group also met in St. Cecelia Auditorium for a time around then (as did the Open Bible Church in Grand Rapids). “In June of 1929 nearly 800 people were attending mid-week prayer meetings.”

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<sup>126</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grace\\_Bible\\_College](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grace_Bible_College). Here are many of his sermons; <http://doctrine.org/ohair/>. They also consider Bultema to be important; Boslooper (His short version, linked above. p. 29) said Grace Fellowship developed from the Berean ministry. Bultema taught (at his home) and influenced Rev. O'Hair and Rev. De Haan, and all of their radio ministries brought many Christians in the Midwest to their churches. "Early IFCA pioneer and host of the 1931 Convention, Pastor J.C. O'Hair left the IFCA to start another fellowship." (Per their history, link is in end note 124). The DeWitt and Ross biography of O'Hair was published recently (go to [website](https://dispensationalpublishing.com/product/j-c-ohair/)); <https://dispensationalpublishing.com/product/j-c-ohair/>. Here is a shorter [online version](#) from the same authors; Bultema and O'Hair remained friends (p.2). Both Bultema and O'Hair are memorialized at GCU; [see this picture](#).

<sup>127</sup> Op. Cit. Yaakov Ariel. Evangelizing the Chosen People: Missions to the Jews in America 1880 – 2000. Pages 178-180. It is available [on Google Books](#). Published 2000.

CRC Prof. D. H. Kromminga's 1945 book, The Millennium in the Church said on p. 239, "Finally, the fact is well known, that modernism or neoprotestantism has adopted the Christian concept of the kingdom as the symbol for its own cultural hopes and has thereby temporarily given great encouragement and deceitful friendship to the Postmillenarians. When neoprotestantism at the beginning of the present century began its triumphant march through America, the association of liberalism with Postmillennialism and, by way of reaction, of fundamentalism with Premillennialism became practically unavoidable." The liberal church used theology to justify a social gospel. His book finished by saying current events corresponded to prophecy in Revelation, and so ... "Our efforts to help correct society's evils must go on; our labors to hold aloft God's Word as the norm for their correction must increase; but should we not also *shift our emphasis* to the message of His return?"

See a snippet of [his 1944 Foreword](#). Kromminga wrote another book on the Millennium, published in 1948. <https://archive.org/search>. It was based on the two unpublished chapters of his previous book. Gribben's 2009 book about prophetic fiction, Writing the Rapture, cites Borgert's article on Bultema, notes the "significant disquiet" about the topic in the CRC in the forties, and said the Christian publishing company in Grand Rapids, Zondervan, might have stopped publishing early prophetic fictional books because "premillennialism had become too contentious." p. 77-78. The CRC reaction to Kromminga's premillennial eschatology was not to engage in a public discussion, as Dr. Horner has noted in the link in end note 128. In fact, they were considering some type of reprimand or censure before Kromminga died in 1947. Dr. James Bratt's Dutch Calvinism in Modern America said in the end notes on p. 274, "The Seminary Board of Trustees prohibited the publication of two chapters of Kromminga's 1945 book." Kromminga referred to being "completely shut up" by his denomination, "... without the opportunity of ... discussion", p. 154 in a chapter by Dr. Harry Boer on the topic in a 1983 book edited by Rev. De Ridder et al. about the CRC presented by the denomination to his son, the President of Calvin Theological Seminary.

<sup>128</sup> op. cit. Hoezee and Meehan. p. 48. They go on to say Christians may have thought Jews didn't need saving.

Why did several Protestant denominations end their Jewish missions during the same time period? Did doctrines change, or was it in response to changing social factors?

[http://www.lamblion.com/articles/articles\\_jews7.php](http://www.lamblion.com/articles/articles_jews7.php) a history from Messianic Judaism perspective says, "The Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. conducted the most extensive denominational effort to evangelize Jews. But it faded in the 1960's and 70's when the Presbyterian Church became involved in the Ecumenical Movement and finally decided Judaism was a valid religion of its own."

Yaakov Ariel's An Unusual Relationship... agrees by saying the Presbyterians became more ecumenical and liberal.

Daniel Fuchs, A Profile of Jewish Missions in the U.S.A.; <http://www.lcje.net/papers/1988/Fuchs.pdf> (now deleted from server.) It also appears to blame "Ecumenism" since "many mainline denominations ... ceased their Jewish mission work" after WWII. Page 9 has a story about the Second Assembly of the World Council of Churches at

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Evanston Illinois in 1954. Pres. Eisenhower gave an address there (<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=9991>). The group became involved in Israel's political situation and has made statements advocating for the two-state solution.

Fuchs also notes how the CRC "changed their focus" from institutional Jewish evangelism to encouraging "local churches to participate in parish evangelism." The Synod of 1956 (see [that year's Acts, p. 130-135](#)) described the change similarly. That was "the last report of this Board directly to Synod "and "all Jewish work" would be "realigned." The Synod session of 1954 (p. 409) said the Paterson NJ Mission staff went to an HCAA meeting in Buffalo (so that group was still affecting CRC relations with Jews), and the Superintendent of that Mission distinguished the CRC message from the "optimistic" premillennial one of most Christian Jews by saying, "salvation ... addresses itself to Jew and Gentile alike upon the same ground, and with the same conditions prevailing."

Spalink's history had an eschatology section in APPENDIX II that said the CRC in 1918 considered dispensationalists to believe "there were two ways of salvation and two peoples of God. One could be saved by being born Jewish or by believing in Jesus as Savior." I am not sure how the CRC came to that conclusion, but it may have been derived from John Darby's writings. Their conclusion probably could not have been based on something Rev. Fles said. I'd say he emphasized the Romans 11 view seen in the section, The Ingrafting of the Gentiles; God has one people. Actually I'd say most Jewish Christians around then would have also agreed, Rev. **Rottenberg** said, "When that glorious time comes ... and the believing Jews are grafted in again into that olive tree, then it will be one Church of the living God, one people Israel through faith in Jesus Christ." ... "But diversity is not separation and does not conflict with unity." (Is my underline. This seems to differentiate his beliefs from separating, dispensationalist ones. Translated from an excerpted article about his biography by Zalman-Marda, which also noted Rottenberg said, "So many speak and write about Israel's future and restoration.")

Other Christians have defined dispensationalism in separating terms. Dr. Charles Ryrie (b. 1925), a premillennial theologian, emphasized a distinction between Israel and the church. And this article by Dennis Swanson on English theologian Charles Spurgeon (1834 – 1892) includes a definition by modern day Timothy Weber (Ariel reviewed Weber's first book and called Weber "no fan" of dispensationalists); who said it tells of a "separation of Israel and the church as two distinct peoples of God." (Try this link; <http://www.romans45.org/spurgeon/misc/eschat2.htm>. Or this; <http://www.reformedreader.org/spurgeon/mview.htm>.)

Yaakov Ariel's book, *An Unusual Relationship Evangelical Christians and Jews* (2013. NYU Press) gives a better analysis than I attempt here, but I've used many of the same sources as he. Page 37 also cites Swanson's web page about Spurgeon and Ariel calls Swanson's essay "highly learned." Dr. B. Horner cited it and also noted Spurgeon's 1864 sermon, see p. 237 of Congdon's compilation. I found and wrote on the above sources myself, not by copying Professor Ariel or Horner. Get Ariel's book for more about evangelicalism's premillennial roots. Romans 11 and its "All Israel" have been called "the crux of the debate" (by Michael Newkirk, his 2009 thesis against American CZ is online). Beets' statement on p. 13 here followed what has often been called "the Dutch interpretation." I won't try to analyze it, but will point out Romans 11:31 says Israel may "receive mercy." Here are more links;

The CRC's Henry Center and Chosen People Ministries had a streamed debate explaining viewpoints in 2010. <https://henrycenter.tiu.edu/resource/how-and-when-will-all-israel-be-saved-part-1/> and [part 2](#) and a [summary](#).

The premillennial Dr. S. Lewis Johnson (1915 – 2004) examines both sides. <http://www.believerschapeldallas.org/temp/resources/millennial.htm>.

And so does Dr. Michael Vlach's 2010 book, *Has The Church Replaced Israel?* p. 138. The title refers to replacement aka covenant or fulfillment theology, or supersessionism. That belief system has a Wikipedia page, Vlach's book is one of its sources. Vlach says no, and his hermeneutic is here: reusing the OT is **not** the same as replacing it ([see this book](#))! He lists five modern era supersessionists with Dutch backgrounds (but not Beets) and quotes from one of them, CRC theologian Louis Berkhof on Romans 11. Berkhof's Objections to Premillennialism

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and more; <https://www.biblicaltraining.org/library/millennial-views/systematic-theology/louis-berkhof>. Berkhof includes van Andel among premillennialists. See end note 104. The links at bottom of page move to more pages of Berkhof's systematic theology. In 1953 he wrote *The Second Coming of Christ*, which cites 2 Thessalonians 1. It is available at Calvin's library. BT885 .B42

Some more recent Dutch theologians like Berkouwer have emphasized a redeemed "new earth," which is similar to a premillennial understanding. (per J. Richard Middleton's book, *A New Heaven and A New Earth*, pub. 2014, page no. is unclear in Google Books.) A. Hoekema seems to have thought the same way – more in end note 98. Robert Strimple, a representative of amillennialism in the book, *Three Views on the Millennium and Beyond*, included Herman Bavinck, Geerhardus Vos, Anthony Hoekema among those who believed in a "more earth-oriented vision" (of eternal heaven, not a millennial period). Per M. Vlach in his essay on the new creation here; [https://mymission.lamission.edu/userdata%5Cschustm%5Cdocs%5CPlatonism and EarlyChristEschatology.pdf](https://mymission.lamission.edu/userdata%5Cschustm%5Cdocs%5CPlatonism%20and%20EarlyChristEschatology.pdf).

Dr. Barry Horner's *Future Israel: ...*, published in 2007, mentions many of those Dutch theologians, and analyzes what other more recent Calvin professors/CRC ministers have said including Marten Woudstra, Richard Mouw, David Holwerda, and Gary Burge. The book also has a section on Rev. A. Pieters. Read its introduction or at least that last paragraph! It is available from Calvin's library (no one has ever checked it out) and Dr. Horner's website here; <http://www.bunyanministries.org/books/Future%20Israel.pdf> and here; [www.futureisraelministries.org/](http://www.futureisraelministries.org/). Dr. Horner passed away to glory in 2024. Both of those websites are **defunct** now. I'll search for [his pdf online](#). Dr. Horner wrote other essays; however I can't always find which of his books each essay comes from. [http://bunyanministries.org/books/israel and millennialism/02 israel%20 representations of reformed eschatology.pdf](http://bunyanministries.org/books/israel%20and%20millennialism/02%20israel%20representations%20of%20reformed%20eschatology.pdf). One section of this article focuses on another amillennial CRC theologian, Geerhardus Vos (1862 –1949). My third paragraph's "in a realistic manner" came from Vos in 1930, cited on p. 48. Vos called the literalism a "naïve type of faith."

Similar to the above is Chapter 5 and other parts of Horner's 2004 *JUDEO-CENTRIC ESCHATOLOGY an ethical challenge to REFORMED ESCHATOLOGY*; but it is **not** online now. This book has a lot of great historical and theological analysis in it. For instance see Appendix C – A Synthesis of Romans 11, Galatians 6, Ephesians 2, Hebrews 8, I Peter 2, and the Future of Israel.

Dr. John F. Walvoord (1910 – 2002), of Dutch heritage - his ancestors were originally from Aalten, Gelderland. Their family farm(s) was towards Winterswijk (see [1868 map](#)) - hmm, were there any interactions between them and my ancestors? Did they ever hear John preach? If so, then that whole story would be very interesting ... <http://walvoordhistory.com/origins/> - it has a 1743 drawing of their large house or "castle" and raised in Cedar Grove, WI, he became the President of Dallas Theological Seminary. He wrote *Israel in Prophecy*, published 1962, along with many other theological books on eschatology. Written in 1949 – '56?, [this series](#) of millennial articles (its chapters refer to promises) has a definition of premillennialism along with his reaction to D. H. Kromminga's 1945 book (which "attempts to prove that Scofield was guilty of 'heretical aberration'"), see in website about him, <http://walvoord.com/article/38> with more about amillennennialism (a different book of his said it enhances and strengthens the church as an institution), and from his <https://walvoord.com/article/45> has "Amillennial Ecclesiology in Relation to Israel." The latter says what the CRC Calvin Seminary's William Hendriksen (who wrote about Romans 8; and was a minister in Zeeland and Muskegon!) thought about Romans 11:25-26. His "The return of many Jews to Palestine and their establishment as an independent state May 14, 1948, is a fulfilment of prophecy. ... [to] **be refuted** point by point." He did so (see here; <http://www.the-highway.com/articleApr04.html>) in [his book with that same title](#). It was published by Baker after the 1967 six-day war (when Israel was attacked, then they repossessed Jerusalem after two thousand years), Walvoord's premillennial view of Romans 11 is here; <https://bible.org/seriespage/8-israel-s-blindness>, and here <https://bible.org/book/export/html/5436>.

Per Wikipedia, Barry Horner also critiqued Dr. Hendriksen's *Israel and the Bible* (1968 = likely same book?) and *The Premillennialist Conception concerning Israel and the Church* (I can't find his thesis online, but it is at [Heritage Hall](#)). This pdf file is **not** available from Horner's website, [http://futureisraelministries.org/files/william\\_hendriksen.pdf](http://futureisraelministries.org/files/william_hendriksen.pdf). Here is an [archived version](#) of it. It analyzes the "two ways" controversy.



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I do not think Rev. Fles would have agreed that “there were two ways of salvation” (Spalink’s quote). See his “no distinction” in end note 31. His mission work to both Jews and Christians each preached the same message. Fles described the only way for anyone to be saved - through Christ; beautifully saying, “Yes, it is true, Jesus will come to His people and they will mourn over Him as over an only son, and Israel will believe in Him and walk in the ways of truth and peace, and all the earth will be a Lord’s Garden and Jesus will reign as the King of all nations.” From the last sentence of the Jewish Era link in end note 2. He seems to be quoting from Zechariah 12:10 with “as over an only son.” The verse says “the House of David” will receive “a spirit of grace and supplication” and “the inhabitants of Jerusalem” will look at Christ and mourn on that day. Fles also quoted from the same chapter in his 1896 Jewish Era article (link in end note 61); The Israelites had been blinded and “refused to search.” But one day, “[Israel] shall see Him whose side they pierced, and mourn because they so long rejected Him.” (See more in end notes 31 and 86 (“after the battle”) and the end note 112, and in the document linked on page 24 of this paper.) I would like to know how Fles extended that group – of those who will witness salvation arriving and mourn at first - to include other nations (non-Jewish Christians) when he analyzed a parallel verse in the New Testament in his *Three Bible Lessons*. I’ve translated part of that booklet. In the verse Matt. 24:30, Matthew alludes to (or cites) the earlier prophecy; “And then all the peoples of the earth will mourn when they see the Son of Man coming ...” Rev. 1:7 also cites those same verses. Other Bible versions use “nations of the earth” instead. D. H. Kromminga’s 1945 book (p. 309) notes “the order [of events]” in that passage. Fles’s story in end note 34 suggests Christians will first see Christ and then experience a resulting “party [celebration – he likely meant during the Millennium.]”

Should Fles be included among the Second Advent will be post-Tribulation group that Kromminga’s 1945 book (p. 243-245) said included Lange, Van Oosterzee, et al. or among those with a pre-Tribulation timing for the rapture that he said included Blackstone? Fles doesn’t seem to have talked about the Rapture much – but he probably did (see when his “Three Lessons” booklet compared Matt. 24:31 to 1 Thess. 4: 15-17 to distinguish between their different definitions of “the elect.” You can [look there](#) for his discussion of verse 29’s “Immediately after the tribulation of those days ...”)

<sup>129</sup> Rozeboom. op. cit. I can’t find that page! His dissertation was one source for Hoezee and Meehan’s missions book. (I asked Rev. Hoezee about their book’s sources. Dr. Mitch Glaser used it too.) It also said, “The vision ... seemed lost.” One main reason was because “splendid leaders” like Fles and others more recently didn’t exist anymore. (p. 122.) He called Fles a “great champion” of Jewish missions. He noted Beets’ Romans 11 quote about “a number of Jews,” but didn’t go on to specifically consider amillennialism or premillennialism. On p. 11 he noted that Fles based “the coming wholesale conversion of the Jews” on “his interpretation of Romans 11:26.”

His paper proposed or at least suggested several possible reasons the CRC’s mission to Jews ended. A 1966 Study Committee on the topic judged the Mission House method had “no useful place in Jewish evangelism” on the basis of Christian Reformed experience with mission houses and that of other major Protestant denominations. (p. 111.) It “no longer offered any significant challenge in reaching out to Jews.” Does that mean opportunity? It probably means the missionaries became frustrated from their lack of success – which had likely resulted from replacement theology. Dr. Barry Horner’s *Future Israel* said inquiring Jews must have been discouraged by Church supersessionism. p. 57. His article in Congdon’s missions anthology said, “[A non-Augustinian] perspective is of fundamental importance where evangelistic outreach toward the Jew is concerned.” p. 234. He makes a good point about which approach can be one that makes the Jewish people “[jealous](#).”

There isn’t much, if anything, from Fles about the complexities of the conversion process, although he did describe some general difficulties when preaching to the Jews. It was often a struggle when Jews resisted and objected or perhaps were hostile. I wonder which group was more intransigent (hard-headed) and sure they were right - the Jews or the Dutch!

Fles said to the 1914 Synod, “The Spirit knows how to strike the heart, and many grains of seed have found their way into the hearts of those who were enemies of the Crucified One. So let us not become sluggish and



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discouraged, even though it takes a long time before one seed bears fruit. ... The Spirit of the Lord by means of the Word preached make alive the dead bones of the whole house of Israel.” (A reference to a verse from Ezekiel 37. When Rev. De Haan analyzed that prophecy -see end note 124 for source - he put its words ‘whole house of Israel’ into italics to show they did not mean only part of Israel would be renewed, saying “its meaning is simple, clear, and easy to understand.” My pastor’s Bible study agrees; Ezekiel 39:22, 25 says it will be a national conversion.)

It seems Christians won over more converts back in the early Chicago Hebrew Mission days than the CRC did with their amillennial Mission. They reported “the most virulent opposition, and of tremendous difficulties” in 1924. I think one reason for it was because Jews preferred a premillennial message about their ultimate destiny. Was that motivation why Rottenberg left Chicago to go join Baron’s mission? Many Jews were literally (and spiritually) saved after he went back to the Netherlands, and then became friendly with Rev. Willem ten Boom’s crowd!

More in 1924: “Chicago Hebrew Mission sponsors a [fundraising] campaign for Jewish missions in Grand Rapids, MI” and two years later they do the same in Muskegon. Presumably, most donors must have heard Fles preach. (Per a timeline from <http://www.israelinprophecy.org/wiki/pmwiki.php/Resources/Timeline>).

Rozeboom had another perspective from earlier times; the CRC Dutch were still minorities prior to 1925, when they were poor and spoke a different language. But new prosperity meant “a shucking of minority status” (p. 121) which formerly enabled them to identify with Jews and vice versa. The “golden age of the mission” ended when the Dutch moved away from the city neighborhoods they had once shared with Jews. Rozeboom’s paper reminded readers that the CRC mission to Jews had lasted seventy years, longer than any of their other church missions at that time when he wrote it. Another source used the same phrase to describe general – not just the CRC one– Jewish missions then, it used numbers showing how popular and successful all those missions were. The London Mission to Jews applied their premillennial perspective, as did many other ones – per various sources such as the eschatology section of Congdon’s 2009 anthology about Jewish missions. Also see the Caspari Center link in end note 59. [Israeli Messianic Jewish congregations] “said that modern Israel is a fulfillment of the biblical prophecies about the end-time restoration of the Jewish people.” Per page 8, Mishkan 86: Summer 2023, and p. 22 basically adds Ariel’s description of their beliefs “... in preparation for the imminent return of Jesus to earth.”

Christian evangelism to/from Jews also increased when Jews for Jesus began their Messianic mission in 1973. David Rausch offers a brief history of Messianic Judaism at <https://www.religion-online.org/article/the-messianic-jewish-congregational-movement/>.

The premillennial Jewish Christian bestselling author Joel C. Rosenberg has noted on his [flashtraffic blog](#), “In the 1950s, there were fewer than 1,000 Jewish believers [in Jesus] worldwide. Today, there are 871,000 Jewish believers in the U.S. alone – a spiritual earthquake of historic proportions.” “The veil that has covered the eyes [of Jews and/or Christians with Jewish ancestry] ... is lifting.”

I’ll put this word (back) into my paper! Heilsgeschiedenis in Dutch/ heilsgeschichte in German translates to “salvation history.”

<https://www.encyclopedia.com/religion/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/salvation-history-heilsgeschichte>. “God’s fidelity inspires hope for the future conversion of all Israel (Rom 9–11). God has called all, Jews and Gentiles, to be united in Christ (Eph 2.11–22).” See W. Kaiser’s book on the Unity of God’s Promise-Plan.

<sup>130</sup> Historical Overview of the American Messianic Fellowship. <http://lcje.net/papers/1989/LCJE.pdf>. <http://www.lifeinmessiah.org/history>. Their website. A prophetic Bible Conference in Zeeland, MI Oct. 30 - Nov. 6 at First Baptist Church (where Rev. Douglas Gray, pastor of the First Baptist Church, chose for his sermon topic: “Christ Is Coming Soon, So What?”) had Rev. A. J. Hoolsema, a premillennial Baptist minister and missionary with the AMF as a speaker in 1960; actually he went there (from Florida) in both spring and fall that year. (Per [HOLLAND CITY NEWS](#)). This information is now in the main text. I wonder about several aspects of this event, possibly

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someone in Zeeland knows more? The Chicago AMF Mission is currently located in Lansing, IL. That is interesting, some direct descendants of Fles live there and belong to the CRC church in that same town.

<sup>131</sup> Yaakov Ariel. *Studies in Contemporary Jewry: Volume VII: Jews and Messianism in the Modern Era*. Jonathan Frankel ed. p. 79. Has the story of Blackstone and his 1916 Petition.  
[https://books.google.com/books?id=dM\\_fCwid2aIC&pg=PA79&lpg=PA83&ots=0M9nBrAN8R&focus=viewport&dq=blackstone+1918](https://books.google.com/books?id=dM_fCwid2aIC&pg=PA79&lpg=PA83&ots=0M9nBrAN8R&focus=viewport&dq=blackstone+1918). Published 1991.

<sup>132</sup> What was the “bitter” conflict mentioned in my main text? It happened whenever Christian Zionists “objected” to “Spiritualizing” the Bible, or said the Jews returning to Palestine -already in the 1880s - were revealing “fulfilled” prophecies. Chapman’s pages 97-98 quote had to go in the main text! It’s so reminiscent of earlier difficult times. Quotes are from Chapman’s book, its description, Prof. Wyngaarden’s 1934 book in end note 64, and see end note 128 that said the CRC’s Rev. Hendriksen “refuted” Rev. Walwood’s literal interpretation of Biblical prophecy.

I’ll add historical notes from the 1960s – ‘80s, and leave it to readers to integrate them into context somehow! Daniel Hummel’s 2015 “A ‘Practical Outlet’ to Premillennial Faith” says: “... [G. Douglas Young] sought to place Christian Zionism at the center of American evangelicalism after 1967 and that his effort was only partially successful. While Young spoke to thousands of evangelicals, trained hundreds of students, and sat on boards and committees to broaden the appeal of Christian Zionism, he also met **stiff resistance** by some members of the American evangelical establishment. The Jerusalem Conference on Biblical Prophecy, which saw Young **collide** with Carl F. H. Henry, a leading American evangelical, illustrates the limits of Young’s efforts.” (In abstract on p. 80 - 81.) “Most crucially, Young and Henry disagreed over their basic approach to Israel and prophecy. ... [Henry] did not believe the state of Israel or the Jewish people had a unique role to play in history **ASIDE FROM mass conversion** to Christianity in the future.” (His p. 59.) Hummel has another good [2019 paper](#) on US policy toward Israel. 2 sources provide a quote by Dr. H. Van Dusen about Israel’s “most violent, ruthless” 1967 war (and see page 116). “[The Chicago Declaration](#)” is signed in 1973 by a broad range of 40 evangelical leaders committed to strengthening evangelical social concern. These included neoevangelical/Baptist/CRC theologians Carl Henry (a premillennial social ethicist who did not think Revelation 20 could support an amillennial theology – per a good [2012 Russell Moore article](#); BUT Hummel’s end note 79 in source above noted that Henry was reluctant to sign it since he was worried about the “leftward drift” there) and Richard Mouw (per [Evangelicals for Social Action](#)). Dr. Mouw wrote his book *Political Evangelism* that year. “Evangelicals who are Christian Zionists want to see events unfold, but they aren’t so concerned about **justice**.” (Quote isn’t in that book; I couldn’t find a source – other than from Smith’s [article](#) against CZ. But “Justice” is.) In 1975, the CRC “decided not to ask the RES for a more detailed study” about eschatology (per the link in page 27).

Rausch’s *Communities in Conflict: Evangelicals and Jews* p. 150 (is also available from his pdf in link above) says, “Dr. Bert De Vries, an evangelical professor of history at Calvin College, strongly disagreed with [Billy Graham’s] *His Land* pro-Jewish stance. ... By 1975 [De Vries] had gone further than any of his evangelical Calvinist colleagues had expected. He announced in his article, ‘The Palestinian Issue’:

Why then the vehement Israeli reaction to Arafat and the PLO? The PLO call for an end to the State of Israel does not mean the destruction of its Jews, but the destruction of its Jewishness. Arafat proposed to replace Israel with a state in which Muslim, Jew, and Christian will live together in a ‘democratic, humanistic, and progressive’ society. (The Reformed Journal. )

Even De Vries’s anti-Zionist colleagues were dismayed at his naiveté, and rejoinders by his friends appeared in the same periodical. Nevertheless, the anti-Israel crusade slowly gained converts ...”

The same story is also told in Rausch and his co-author Voss’ article (it is online) in Cohen’s compilation (see note 124) which says De Vries “declared the Jews had forfeited their right to the Promised Land long ago through their ‘unfaithfulness.’” He seems to have been applying a supersessionist type of theology.

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The article also says Rev. Elias Newman of Minneapolis wrote to *Christianity Today* about his "chagrin and disillusionment" in another similar July 21, 1967 (after the June War / Six Day War) CT article "against Israel" by Rev. James Kelso of the UPC. Kelso thought the Balfour Declaration was the "major cause" of that war.

In 1978, Dr. Nicholas Wolterstorff, a CRC professor of philosophy, "attended a conference on Palestinian rights on the west side of Chicago. ... There were about 150 Palestinians present, and they emphatically identified themselves as Palestinians, not as Arabs who just happened to live in Palestine. Most of them were Christian. They poured out their guts in flaming rhetoric—rhetoric too hot, I subsequently learned, for most Americans to handle. They too spoke of the ways in which they were daily demeaned; they spoke of how they had been dispossessed of their land in 1948 and of how that dispossession was continuing. And they too issued a call for justice. Again I felt that I had been called by God to speak up for these wronged and suffering people and to speak up for justice." (per an online excerpt from his autobiography, [The Way to Justice: How My Mind Has Changed](#)). He led the Palestine Human Rights Campaign, and signed the 1979 LaGrange Declaration which challenged the Evangelical position on Israeli-Palestinian issues by saying, "We are anguished by the fact that countless Christians believe that the Bible gives to the modern State of Israel a divine right to lands inhabited by Palestinian people, and divine sanction to the State of Israel's policy of territorial acquisition." (per [Sojourners Magazine](#), which says their "community began at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Illinois, in the early 1970s when a handful of students began meeting to discuss the relationship between their faith and political issues.")

Rev. Michael Prior's [Zionism and the State of Israel: A Moral Inquiry](#) (1999) said over 5,000 Christians signed that Declaration, and subsequently "Christian Evangelicals have had to contend with the collision between the conflicting claims of biblical social justice and millennialist interpretation of biblical prophecy." Paul Wilkinson said in his 2011 book, [For Zion's Sake: ...](#) (is [in Google Books](#)) that the "radical" Father Prior "believes that the narratives in Genesis-Joshua belong to the genre of myths and legends." Wilkinson's book goes on to say Evangelicals's view of "the State of Israel as the fulfillment of biblical prophecy is under severe strain," and then it mentions Christian engagement with "The Palestinian Liberation Theology Centre, Sabeel." Prior's "thought-provoking" [source](#) is on Google Books. (More on Sabeel follows later.)

The RCA's Dr. Arie Brouwer moved to Geneva, Switzerland to serve the World Council of Churches in 1983, a term that got contentious as he and the denomination sought ecumenicalism and became more politically liberal. He also initiated a "new effort for justice and peace" in the Middle East in the nineties before he died.

The RCA denomination examined theological issues in the 1970s and early '80s. These here were not necessarily approved by Synod; I couldn't find the whole book (and I checked a library), and so this is from Google Books. In [The Church Speaks: Papers of the Commission on Theology, Reformed Church in America, 1959-1984](#), edited by J. I. Cook, the section "Recent Studies in the Letter to the Romans Have Increasingly Emphasized the Theological Significance of Chapters 9-11" (p. 184) asks interesting questions, and the section "The Phenomenon of the State of Israel" says, "With regard to the theological significance of the State of Israel, there is no unanimity among Christians." It said Hendrikus Berkhof "concludes that the way is open to a new reflection of the connection between Israel's promised future and the promised land." (p. 191). The next section has their thoughts on witnessing to Jews, and it does not seem to deny those efforts are a "precious foretoken of that time when 'All Israel will be saved.'" (p. 194). I could grab an image of that page to show what it said about Romans 11:11, 14 and the obligation it puts upon Christians to manifest the blessings of salvation, to display its fullness to Jews.

The Rev. Richard De Ridder (CRC bio <https://www.crcna.org/node/269123>, it included First C.R.C. of Muskegon), "How does one's theological position affect one's attitude toward Jewish evangelism" (in caps) written in 1985, <http://www.lcje.net/papers/1985/DeRidder.pdf>. This brief paper said why amillennialists should support Christian missions to Jews. One reason was this: "The church must recognize that the day of salvation for the Jews is now; that the saving of 'All Israel' does not await a new epoch in the history of salvation." (p. 5.) De Ridder quotes

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Hendrikus Berkhof (who was from the Netherlands Dutch Reformed Church), “through Israel the sign of God’s covenant will always become visible.”

One of his paper’s sources was the Dutch Reformed in the Netherlands Dr. J. Verkuyl’s 1975 book on the new Science of Missions (he held Bavinck’s one-time University position, and its topic was the same as Bavinck’s 1954 book). Page 154 of the translated version says Dr. Hendrikus Berkhof’s church report on “Israel, People, Land, and State” showed “traces of theological Zionism.” Verkuyl questions it and states, “But in my judgment it is improper to assign a special theological significance to the land of Palestine and view the Jewish return as a fulfillment of God’s promise to Abraham. Such ideas can only produce unacceptable consequences. For example, many Israelis view the western shores of the Jordan River as ‘God’s gift to Abraham’ and therefore reject any Palestinian claims to this land. Does not the danger lurk here of clothing the claims of any ideology with the mantle of authority of the God of Abraham? ... In the New Testament there is talk of the rights of all people throughout the whole earth.” On the next page he notes that “While some opt for the State of Israel because of their theological Zionism, others choose for the Palestinian Arabs and against Israel because of a theology of the poor. ... [Many who know firsthand] about the problems the Arab refugees encounter and about their attempts to rectify the injustice through resistance movements claim God is on the Arabs’ side, for Yahweh is the God who sides with the poor and oppressed.” On p. 201 Verkuyl says of “our missionary task,” that “participation in the fight against every vestige of evil ... is an intrinsic part of our calling. *According to the Bible the kingdom does not belong to the future* [Emphasis mine]. It is a **present reality** which, though not yet fully revealed, does nevertheless show definite signs of being underway.”

One of Verkuyl’s sources was also from Richard De Ridder; [The Dispersion of the People of God ... Matt. 28:18-20](#). It seems to me that H. Berkhof’s paper did at least get other theologians thinking, but this blurb in Dutch on a reprinted modern version of it said the original one didn’t really convince the opponents who resisted it. <https://www.bol.com/nl/p/centrum-voor-israel-studies-israel-volk-land-staat/1001004002129577/>. Here is something else about the Center for Israel above; <https://hetcis.nl/helsinki-conference-statement-2014/>.

It pretty much goes without saying that Modernists today are still not inclined to believe in Biblical miracles. I’ll just give a [2012 quote](#) from one liberal minister (he’d gone to the same Christian Reformed high school that I and many of my relatives once did –then Calvin ‘66, and now he is semi-retired from the PCUSA) Rev. Tom Eggebeen cited a [liberal 1922 sermon](#) and claimed; “[Fundamentalist Evangelicals show] a reliance on outlandish promises and miracle stories.” He wants to “continue the struggle for ... Palestinian justice (among other causes).”

Quotation was from the CRCNA Office of Social Justice. [http://www2.crcna.org/pages/osj\\_meinvolvement.cfm](http://www2.crcna.org/pages/osj_meinvolvement.cfm). Has “radical.” That link is not available now. This is still the OSJ page for Middle East peace (“under the new name of Thrive”), <http://justice.crcna.org/middle-east-peace>, it has “well-organized links to many of the websites related to peace and justice issues in Israel and Palestine.” In recent years CRC groups have hosted several prominent Christian Palestinians and their supporters (as specifically requested by the OSJ), many of whom have also spoken and written against Christian Zionism. One in 2015 was Stephen Sizer, a vicar who left or was perhaps expelled from his Anglican Church for repeatedly exceeding their liberal views about Israel. Another in 2013 was Rev. Naim Ateek, the founder of this OSJ-recommended organization, [Sabeel \(Palestinian Christian group\)](#). Ateek’s booklet, “A Palestinian Christian Cry for Reconciliation” (2008, available online), said of Isaiah 61:5-6, “This exclusivist text is unacceptable today, whether it has to do with God or people or land. It must be de-Zionized as well.” (p. 56). As noted by Rev. Paul Wilkinson, author of [For Zion’s Sake: ...](#) in ‘08 (and/or 2011) in favor of Christian Zionism; he has also written against Christian Palestinianism in a book and in this pdf article, [Prophets-Who-Prophesy-Lies...](#) (Go to [the Pre-Trib Research Center](#)). Rev. Sizer wrote a book against CZ in 2005, and [Zion’s Christian Soldiers?](#) in ‘08. Wilkinson’s books disputed Sizer’s 2005 “roadmap to Armageddon” premise. Rev. Tony Highton wrote his 2006 [“Response to Stephen Sizer’s criticisms of CMJ and ITAC.”](#) CMJ is the former [London Mission to Jews](#), see link. I’ll add this 2018 Times of Israel opinion piece, “longer than the average.” It corroborates much of what I’ve said about Christian Palestinianism; <https://blogs.timesofisrael.com/how-palestinian-activists-manipulate-western-christians/> by Daniel Swindell. Prophetic teacher Olivier Melnick has a [similar article](#), perhaps it’s less radical.

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The CRC still advocates perhaps modified supersessionist ideas, which remain part of a complex political situation. In other words, one's beliefs for or against (Jewish) Zionism are still associated with eschatology. Let me note that not all Jews feel the same way about Zionism either. Here is a quote to prove my assertion (which Horner cites – linked below), “Political Zionism and Christian Zionism are **anathema** to Christian faith. ... The true Israel today is neither Jews nor Israelis, but believers in the Messiah, even if they are Gentiles,” per Anglican priest and a leader of the Lausanne evangelicals, [John Stott](#) (who was preaching at All Souls Church, London England in 1975 or before). Another example from Mitch Glaser says, “The supersessionism undergirding the Kairos [Palestine] Document is evident” [which] “emboldens and seems to justify some evangelicals to speak more harshly about the modern State of Israel,” per his article about “The Dangers of Supersessionism” in [Israel, The Church, and the Middle East 2018](#), p. 103, 117. (More later on this source).

Here is a link to an analysis of the K.P.D. document; <https://www.ngo-monitor.org/key-issues/kairos-palestine-document/problematic-themes-in-the-kairos-palestine-document/>. It includes one of their profiles of CMEP, and one of Mitri Raheb, a Palestinian Christian whom I saw make the same [controversial statement](#) at Calvin's 2016 January Series – his talk is available online. Melanie Phillips' key [2014 article](#) says Raheb's lessons he gave (since 2010) were that the Jewish aren't really Jews, and that Jesus was a Palestinian. (A new link [on this subject](#).) This pastor also made a speech at Calvin around then (per the AMCHA Initiative). Another Palestinian Christian minister cites him and “confronts” Christian Zionism in this Presbyterian [recent article](#). And here is a link to a related document published in 2012 by Mark Braverman's Kairos USA organization; <https://kairosusa.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/Kairos-USA-Call-to-Action.pdf>. It has a section against Christian (and political) Zionism. Dr. Braverman [spoke recently](#) (after the attack upon Israel) at Calvin Seminary. Soon after that, Congress voted in a bill that described Anti-Zionism as antisemitic (see [a picture](#) or a link for more; <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/10/us/politics/anti-zionism-antisemitism.html>).

Another instance of that type of connection occurred close to home in the fall of 2018. Dr. Gary Burge, a CRC Seminary professor, [was on stage](#) with former vicar Sizer, and their topic for the day was Christian Zionism (CZ). Dr. McDermott made his argument for premillennialism while on the stage with Burge and Sizer. <https://juicyecumenism.com/2018/10/18/land-of-israel/>. Dr. Burge's speech is available on Youtube; <https://youtu.be/HnVEMkmNciY>. The amillennial Dr. Burge has a 2003 book with political implications, *Whose Land? Whose Promise?...* C. Marsh called it “inflammatory” in 2020. Horner critiques it in his book *Future Israel*, link in end note 128 and in his *Territorial Supersessionism: A Response to Gary Burge*. Page 12 said Chapman is “representative of Burge's anti-Judaic supersessionism.” Henebury has a series on the subject, [one part is on him](#). Burge wrote a 1993 book about the Middle East (per Phillips' 2014 article above – it also mentions Chapman) that has what I'll call his origin story featuring replacement theology – but wasn't he already aware of it?, and another one, *Jesus and the Land: The New Testament Challenge to “Holy Land” Theology* in 2010. It cites [Romans 4:13](#), read that and pray. A reviewer said it “offers an honest and compelling presentation of present-day tensions surrounding ‘territorial religion’ in the modern Middle East.” In 2006 Burge, Hubers, Sizer, and Wagner (His ‘Anxious for Armageddon’ is within their [accusatory genre](#) is by Billy Alford) founded the Institute for the Study of Christian Zionism. Their organization is now defunct. Wagner was on the “Friends of Sabeel N.A.” and on the Kairos USA Committee with Dr. Burge.

More from an organization about Christian Zionism which Burge called “intriguing” in 2018; note that CMEP and Chapman were involved in June, 2022. The CRCNA OSJ once used to link to its website. I checked the website owner on whois = Registrant Name: REDACTED FOR PRIVACY; <https://www.christianzionism.org/en/news-index>.

Not associated with the OSJ dept., but this CRC publication provides a relatively recent CRC viewpoint about covenant theology from Rev. Gary Roest. <http://www.thebanner.org/departments/2011/01/our-view-of-israel>. Their publication once offered room to comment. I recall that a premillennialist, Dr. Colin Barnes wrote one, but it is not available now. The Banner explained why they removed that capability – it was hard to handle negativity. Their doctrines had not changed very much, they were probably less punitive – see Vlach's Various Forms document linked in end note 83, but these comparisons sound similar to the analogy from the 1913 Iowa



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minister's meeting. Like CRC theologian Rev. A. Hoekema once did, Roest uses a scaffolding analogy; "[W]e cannot force God to act on the basis of a covenant that long ago served its purpose in leading humankind to Christ. When the building is complete, the scaffolding must come down." Rev. Fles responded to the denomination's dismissive theology once by saying (source in end note 84), "**Then nothing remains** for Jacob's descendants to hope for." Reformed (in the Netherlands) theologian Herman Ridderbos (1909-2007) had another similar analogy; "The church ... as the people of the New Covenant has **taken the place** of Israel, and national Israel is nothing other than the empty shell from which the pearl has been removed and which has lost its function in the history of redemption." Herman Ridderbos, "*Paul: An Outline of His Theology*" (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975) p.354-355, as noted by Eitan Bar in his article analyzing the meaning of "All Israel" in Romans 11:26. Bar's article is available online (by searching Google for it). <https://www.oneforisrael.org/author/eitanb3/>. The new Jewish Evangelism. Rev. John MacArthur has [noted this quote](#) as well.

Another look at Romans 11:26 is in a new 2023 book edited by Porter and Kurschner, *The Future Restoration of Israel: A Response to Supersessionism*. It's still \$9.99 for [Kindle at Amazon](#). See [an image from it](#). See some parts of it in [Google Books](#). It defines supersessionism as claiming that "God has no future redemptive plan for national Israel." I agree with Porter's view, which argues for such a plan. Another of its articles by Jewish missions expert Mitch Glaser covers much of the same ground as in his other one. His dissertation on this subject is online. I can't download [his paper](#): "How the Messianic Movement Emerged from the Evangelical World or Did It?"

<sup>133</sup> <http://images.rca.org/docs/mission/IsraelWorkingGroup.pdf>. p. 1 of document from their 2012 General Synod. <https://www.rca.org/christianzionism>: advises RCA staff to "continue working with the Middle East Council of Churches, Churches for Middle East Peace, and other ecumenical groups that seek to address Christian Zionism." <https://www.christiancentury.org/article/2004-07/reformed-church-calls-christian-zionism-distortion-scripture>. The General Synod of the Reformed Church in America has endorsed Rev. John Hubers' paper, *Christian Zionism: A Historical Analysis and Critique*, which also criticized Dr. M.R. De Haan calling Palestinians "unlawful possessors" of the Holy Land in 1947. <http://images.rca.org/docs/synod/ChristianZionism.pdf>. Hubers graduated from and now teaches at the RCA's Northwestern College in Orange City, IA. An RCA Seminary graduate (now a President of one school) signed the 2002 "Open Letter to Evangelicals" (it used the words "True" and "replaced" and spells out "The present secular state of Israel, however, is not an authentic or prophetic realization of the Messianic kingdom of Jesus Christ. Furthermore, a day should **not** be anticipated in which Christ's kingdom will manifest Jewish distinctives ... Instead, this present age will come to a climactic conclusion with the arrival of the final, eternal phase of the kingdom of the Messiah." Hmm, its point 8 doesn't seem right - see Acts 3:21) linked in end note 87. The two denominational statements in the main text of this paper were made before Pres. Trump was elected.

The World Communion of Reformed Churches has claimed that the Christian faith has been used to justify the injustice against the Palestinian people. They rejected any use of the Bible "to legitimize or support political options and positions that are based upon injustice, imposed by one person on another, or by one people on another." They stated in 2017, "It is time for Israelis and Palestinians to live alongside each other in peace, security and justice." <http://wcrc.ch/news/world-protestant-body-issues-solidarity-message-with-palestinian-christians>.

Another source is similar, "The writers share a general understanding that peacemaking is the only way forward," from an introduction to a new book about Christian Perspectives on the Holy Land, edited by Dr. Mae Cannon, an ordained pastor in the Evangelical Covenant Church denomination – founded in Chicago in 1885, and she is the director of Churches for Middle East Peace, an ecumenical organization supported by the CRC, RCA, and PC USA.

"CRC Leader Disconcerted by [Pres. Trump's] Jerusalem Declaration," said a CRC Banner article that also cited CMEP's director. <https://www.thebanner.org/news/2017/12/crc-leader-disconcerted-by-jerusalem-declaration>. It links to an earlier description of their visit which noted how CRC representatives from the revamped Office of Social Justice met with Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas on the 100th anniversary of the Balfour Declaration!

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On the day before Israel's 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary, an article in the Jerusalem Post said, "The credit for the [US] embassy's move [to Jerusalem] goes to Christian Zionists." They were asked "why this move was so important to them. The answer they gave is that it is foretold in the Bible." Abbas noted Palestinians had once rejected the Balfour Declaration, and would not agree with the embassy move or Trump's "deal of the century." (Per Geller Report.)

The CRC still "seeks a third way between mainline and evangelical approaches and fosters increased reconciliation on all sides," per p. 26 regarding Israel and Palestine in their 2020 agenda. "OSJ staff members were invited to join a gathering of women clergy in Israel and Palestine to better engage with Palestinian Christians, paid for by our partner Churches for Middle East Peace." per page 200 of the same document (search for quote to find it online).

Dr. Cannon has another [2021 article](#) published by the revamped OSJ that says, "The fallacy of Christian Nationalism is the idea that the United States is exceptional. Any kind of exceptionalism ... privileges some over others and ultimately creates a space for the activities we saw on January 6 and other ongoing manifestations of injustice."

The CRC worldview (which has undoubtedly been affected to some extent by both politics and eschatology) is shown in a 2021 book by a former CRC Pastor and NT Professor, David Crump (Gary Burge wrote its forward, and other recommendations from S. Sizer, D. Wagner, and C. Chapman are on the [back of book](#)); [Like Birds in a Cage](#) Christian Zionism's Collusion in Israel's Oppression of the Palestinian People. "'American Evangelism,' Crump writes, 'is helping to finance political Zionism's flagrant imitation of Nazi Germany.'" (Per Dexter Van Zile's, <https://www.algemeiner.com/2021/12/20/evangelical-contempt-for-jewish-life-in-israel-must-be-confronted/>. See an [image of that article's beginning](#). Also see Van Zile's longish article with more history of how and why evangelicalism has become more Anti-Zionist.

<https://jcpa.org/article/evangelical-anti-zionism/>. He is -or likely was- a pro-CZ "Christian Media Analyst" for [CAMERA.org](#). M. Phillips' key 2014 article, linked above, also mentions and cites Van Zile and Merkley.) Crump's main premise; Peter and Paul reinterpreted OT (Hosea), so we can too. Crump refutes many of the contemporary authors I've also cited, including Mitch Glaser's "Dangers of ..." (on previous page) by saying it "accuses anti-Zionists who criticize Israeli policies of fomenting ... antisemitism within the church." (See [p. 89](#) and [p. 132](#).) Perhaps that is a valid point; however I don't like most of what Dr. Crump has said in [his "humanity" blog](#).

Here is [the link](#) to my ICEJ source, and here is another that might be better than the one I've linked to from NPR. <https://crcc.usc.edu/munther-isaac-what-would-jesus-do-at-an-israeli-military-checkpoint/>. It's about another Palestinian Christian minister who is currently in social media news because he was on a popular interview show.

I'm trying to refrain from bringing up the newest ME war! Rampant worldwide antisemitism has now been revealed. I wrote a letter to Calvin's President in 2015 that protested against Sizer's appearance there and warned, "We can all see how anti-Semitism is spreading on many campuses. ... I hope the Office of Social Justice realizes how often pursuing one goal – like calling the Israeli government oppressors of downtrodden Palestinians, can lead to this other horrible result. That is when we should ask ourselves the hardest questions." Their reply said the subject that day had not been recorded. OK, but wasn't his [book on Christian Zionism](#) published that year too?

Cheaper than Crump's book, is another accusing "official new report [that] looks at the decades-long suffering of Palestinians under Israel's rule." It's from <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde15/5141/2022/en/>. The director of its US branch opposed "the idea that Israel should be preserved as a state for the Jewish people." David Litman of [CAMERA](#) says on social media, "According to the language of the @amnesty report, that [2021] terrorist rocket – ... [which ultimately killed Naomi Perlman, a 91-year-old Holocaust survivor] – was actually just 'popular resistance' by 'opponents of Israel's occupation and its policies.'"

A 2021 rebuttal of similar campaigns; [part 1 from Kern and Herzberg](#) at NGO Monitor and [part 2](#) (longer than first). Here is the accusing [Human Rights Watch 2021 web page](#) that is formatted to read, or download a pdf from there. Another long rebuttal of it; <https://www.ngo-monitor.org/reports/threshold-crossed-hrw-apartheid/>.



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The rhetoric back-and-forth between supporters and accusers has no end! “Most people knowledgeable about Israel, [said a former head of Human Rights Watch], understand that NGO Monitor ‘is a profoundly biased source’ that ‘has never found a criticism of Israel’s human rights record to be valid.’” (Per a 2023 [article in The Nation](#)).

(Political) Palestinianism is a strategic “false narrative” that “reversed aggressor and victim and demonised Israel”. (Per Melanie Phillips. [Her 2022 article](#) mentions CAMERA.) A surprising (?) [story in the Washington Free Beacon](#): State Department Is Funding the Effort to Delegitimize Israel.

David Parsons’ ICEJ document on CZ gives a favorable description of their beliefs, and covers some of the topics in this paper; <https://old.int.icej.org/files/en/pdf/Swords%20into%20Ploughshares.pdf>. See [image](#) of [another article](#). It has good points such as one about the “growing understanding in that time of the Hebraic roots of Christianity.”

Dr. J. Bolt wrote an introduction to a book on Da Costa in which; “[He] discusses at length the present-day bifurcation among Calvinists regarding Israel”. Unfortunately it’s not available at all? Da Costa’s original 1876 book said, “They [Israel] shall see, Whose law, Whose heart they broke, (He [God] never breaks His covenant!).” Bolt’s 2022 article (linked in main text) “heartily” recommended [McDermott’s 2017 book](#), “Israel Matters: Why Christians Must Think Differently ...” while conversely his colleague, Dr. Burge had critiqued it in [his review of it](#). (An excerpt of Chapman’s is at the end of end note 71.) One more 2024 article about [“Reformed Theology and Zionism”](#) by Professor Craig A. Carter of Tynsdale University in Canada.

<sup>134</sup> <https://www.cedargrovefepc.com/>. Cedar Grove First Evangelical Presbyterian Church. Their website doesn’t have a history page right now, but here is an article on the topic if you want to know more; <http://www.christianpost.com/news/congregation-to-pay-presbyterian-church-usa-a-half-million-dollars-to-finalize-leaving-denomination-120763/>. The final end note tells what happened to that church in the 1930s.

<sup>135</sup> <http://www.oakhill-church.com/thursday-pm-bible-study.html>. Oakhill Church has a community Bible study. Want to know more about premillennialism, etc.? It is now online streamed live and on youtube. <http://www.oakhill-church.com/sermons.html> Pastor’s sermons. April had a premillennial sermon series. [Notes](#). <http://www.carlsonreport.com/articles/israel-today.html> Pastor’s blog has a section on Israel; an Easter report quotes from Ezekiel 37:13-14, “You, my people, ... will live.” Israel’s resurrection in 1948 fulfilled that prophecy. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8g3Oq4m2Byc> Pastor’s associated video is probably similar to Fle’s second lesson from 1879. The Matt. 24: 32-34 fig tree prophecy showing Israel’s rebirth also foretells Christ’s return.

<sup>136</sup> I took the year of the vote out (2012), since it was actually a process which took several years. The EPC’s website doesn’t mention premillennialism or eschatology. Wikipedia says those beliefs are allowed in the denomination but there is room for disagreement, and it is not essential for their churches to claim certain positions. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Evangelical\\_Presbyterian\\_Church\\_\(United\\_States\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Evangelical_Presbyterian_Church_(United_States)).

<sup>137</sup> I wonder if Fle’s strong words in the RCA missionary magazine in the fall of 1913 (see end note 84) influenced any impressionable Hope College students? A junior undergrad, Mr. R. Kroodsmma, wrote a long article in November, 1913’s The Anchor (available online) on Jewish missions that said, “To the Jew first” from Romans was a “supreme motive for evangelizing the Jews.” He mentioned the C. H. M. and a “movement now on foot for Jews to settle in Palestine.” He foresaw Christian Jews as a “hitherto undreamed of” blessing to the World. He became an RCA minister who switched to the Presbyterian Church in 1925 – likely going to a premillennial church.

[http://digitalcommons.hope.edu/collection\\_registers/979/](http://digitalcommons.hope.edu/collection_registers/979/) has some of these biographical details. Not sure if it was in Roslyn and/or Yakima WA (there was a Reformed Church there too), however a 2005 thesis (is online) by Bonnie Sue Kopp on the history of Multnomah Bible College in Portland said on p. 53-54 that there was a “strong sense of urgency ... for more in-depth Bible training” and a request from the Yakima area for Lewis Sperry Chafer to visit in 1934. Multnomah supporters met in 1936, and it began offering classes in 1937.

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The founder of Multnomah, John Mitchell, had been a pastor in 1930 of the Open Bible Church in Grand Rapids, Michigan. p. 50. According to an online biography, *Lion Of God* by Dick Bohrer, "The Open Bible Church, a little mission church, contained a group of people who were unhappy in their denomination. China Inland Mission [which originally was to Chinese Jews and Moslems] speakers had preached the second coming and missions in a local Christian Reformed Church and had so moved the congregation that some of them left and started this new work. They rented rooms first in St. Cecelia Hall until they were able to build on Labelle Street." p. 84-86. Mitchell already knew Chafer and first met with the church's representatives at a summer conference near Kalamazoo, maybe in 1929. The book asks why Mitchell went to Grand Rapids and says it was probably because of the members' "sacrificial spirit [for missions] and their hunger for the Word of God. ... He preached and taught from a central location ... and then went out of town to teach Bible classes in Chicago; Byrne [or Berne], Indiana; and Zeeland, Michigan." "Mitchell met and instantly liked Dr. M. R. De Haan during those years."

<http://www.dickbohrerbooks.com/Biography/LionofGod.pdf>.

That Open Bible Church -IFCA is still around and its long-time minister, Pastor Dan Spaulding, went to Grace Bible College (GCU) to begin his studies.

Page 27 of Kopp's paper said, "Fundamentalists were especially aggressive within the Presbyterian and Baptist denominations. The more liberal theologians led a counter attack within the seminaries where teaching became increasingly liberal."

The conflict between orthodox and increasingly liberal Presbyterian churches included some mentioned here; Tacoma Bible Church split off of First Presbyterian in 1935. Ministers such as Rev. J. DeWaard, who had spoken out in 1936 against their denomination's growing unbelief as the pastor of the First Presbyterian Church in Cedar Grove, WI, (once Fles's church) and others elsewhere, moved (or were removed, as he was) with part (it was over 300 in that case) of their congregations to newer, more conservative Presbyterian denominations. From Cedar Grove's Calvary Orthodox Presbyterian Church website;

<http://www.calvarychurchcg.com/templates/System/details.asp?id=53362&PID=840540>.

[http://www.opc.org/nh.html?article\\_id=660](http://www.opc.org/nh.html?article_id=660). Brian De Jong's article has "Rev. DeWaard was publicly maligned."

Article about many of that area's PC(USA) churches leaving the denomination in 2014. <https://layman.org/mount-pisgah-changes-name-leaves-pcusa/>.

Kroodsmas's daughter went to a Bible Institute that Blackstone founded in 1908 in California, Biola. According to her obituary, Betty was a longtime member of the Tacoma Bible Presbyterian Church.

"The BPC at its first Synod in 1938 amended the Westminster standards to present the premillennial view exclusively," per John A. Battle's article on their eschatology in this journal; WRS Journal 11/2 (August 2004) 12-27. It is online here; [http://wrs.edu/Materials\\_for\\_Web\\_Site/Journals/11-2%20Aug-2004/Battle%20-%20Eschatology%20in%20the%20BPC.pdf](http://wrs.edu/Materials_for_Web_Site/Journals/11-2%20Aug-2004/Battle%20-%20Eschatology%20in%20the%20BPC.pdf), and on its p. 5, Presbyterian Westminster Seminary Professors "[C.] Van Til and [R. B.] Kuiper from the Christian Reformed Church" were amillennial. Prof. Kuiper determined whether students appeared dispensational at their ordination examinations (per Sandeen). Some said Kuiper attacked premillennialism in 1936 (<http://www.pcahistory.org/findingaids/rpces/history/06.pdf>, actual page 30 or p. 223).

The relatively recent move away from the Presbyterian Church (USA) reminds me of those similar departures in the 1930s. The Wisconsin church mentioned at the end of this paper is the other remaining one that didn't leave in the 1930s, so there are still two Cedar Grove churches with the same nineteenth century origin.

The "battle" over eschatology certainly played out in Presbyterian churches (and it still does – [see picture](#), without the story behind it). Some of that is included here; Vos and B. B. Warfield taught at Princeton Seminary in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, and then "Dr. Geerhardus Vos had recommended his young student " (per De Jong, link above) in the 1920s, but Rev. DeWaard and many in his Wisconsin church had to leave the denomination in the 1930s. I once included more documentation of contentious Presbyterian history, but this paper on "Israel-Palestine" from the PC (USA) "assesses the situation through a lens of Reformed Christian moral values" (per [presbyterianmission.org](http://presbyterianmission.org) about the paper); "For Human Values in the Absence of a Just Peace."

<https://www.layman.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/PFJP-Two-State-2016.02-.pdf>

"A serious example of Christian complicity in the exacerbation of suffering in Israel-Palestine is the promotion of contemporary Christian Zionism—the idea that Christians should support the return of Jews to Israel in order to fulfill prophecy and initiate Jesus' return." p. 15 of the document. Does anyone want to analyze that statement? (Perhaps American Jews were even an intended audience?) It mentions the CRC's Dr. Nicholas Wolterstorff, who has applied human rights to help form a "Christian understanding of justice." p. 15. The words and themes from modern times echo those used in 1907; end note 71.

[Recent PC\(USA\) resolutions](#) and this [branch of the Democrat party](#) again make harsh accusations ([see image](#)), which sound like that book by Dr. Crump and cite the human rights organizations mentioned in my paper above.

An article in the 6/17/22 Wall Street Journal by Eugene Kontorovich (Wikipedia [biography](#)) said, "The PCUSA's approach to the Israel-Arab conflict lies at the crossroads of liberation theology and **replacement theology** [my bold], the ancient doctrine, frequently invoked by anti-Semites, that God's covenant with the Jews has been annulled in favor of others. Since 2014 the church has pursued a boycott of Israeli businesses. It also calls the Jewish state's presence in biblical areas a 'violation of international law' and 'sin against God.'"

The [2024 JPost article](#) says why young American Evangelicals don't support Israel as much as was per a recent survey of "American Evangelical Opinion on Israel" by Inbari and Bumin and their recent [book about Christian Zionism](#).

There is more information above, but the first link here is a 2021 article from a Christian publication that strikes close to home, since both of the local Reformed denominations have signed it. It mentions CMEP and "addressed the 'problem' of Christian Zionism and its influence on American foreign policy towards Israel. 'We need to think about ... how to combat it [Christian Zionism].'" <https://juicyecumenism.com/2021/01/28/anti-israel-christian-left/>

<https://www.thebanner.org/news/2021/05/crcna-leaders-among-those-to-sign-churches-for-middle-east-peace-advocacy-letter> Image below. I gave my opinion of this CRC letter on social media, saying that it seems simplistic.

I've noted here that there was a 2021 Mideast skirmish between Israel and Hamas. Peace has not followed, instead war did. The vicious attack on October 7, 2023 has been called a modern-day pogrom.

The CRC still wants to support CMEP in 2024, with their "calls to action for sustaining peace" and #ceasefireNOW during tricky negotiations; <https://network.crcna.org/topic/justice-inclusion/biblical-justice/continued-prayers-peace-middle-east>. And now they're moving past passive support toward activism. I've copied [a petition](#) entitled "Faculty Letter Calling for Calvin University to Divest from the State of Israel and Gaza War Profiteers" which was mentioned in Calvin University's student newspaper. The [March, 2024 petition](#) was from a Professor's personal website. It cites and links to this [CMEP letter to President Biden](#). It also noted the World Communion of Reformed Churches' "Calls for Peace with Justice" (published on October 9) from "both sides" – but one of the "theological understandings" [= Christian Zionism] has "offered legitimacy to oppression and discrimination in the region"?

The Banner is a periodical CRC magazine "sent to every [denominational member's] household."



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This is an article from Christianity Today (before Russell Moore landed there) about the social justice controversy; <https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2018/september-web-only/john-macarthur-statement-social-justice-gospel-thabiti.html>. “Evangelicalism as a movement [is] splintered.” Views on social justice issues can be related to the eschatology one holds - quiz for readers: guess how and why? Read 1 Thessalonians 5:3 (said my pastor). These issues are “roiling” the world today (quoted from frequent headlines in the news).