

# A Lonely Church

You see here a church in the Dutch hamlet Houtigehage, which is part of the village Luchtenveld, in the frontier-area of the provinces Friesland and Groningen, well-known by tourists because of the moors there. During the summer months, flowering tracts of heath all around are a beautiful sight. But on Sundays more and more curious people come to this small church (150 seats). The church and the manse on the right and the sexton's house on the left were built by Jan Overdijk in 1928. He died in 1974. His son, with the same name, continued his work till he died in 2000. Now Rev. Gerard van Loon is there, sent out as a missionary by the Evangelicals of Ekklesia in the South African province of Transvaal.



The Overdijks were independent and self-supporting, writing and printing many booklets about the Scriptures. Above the entrance of the church it says "Jezus leeft" (Jesus lives). Jan Overdijk rang the clock three times a day; it was a tradition he had started. He also founded a center for the help of the poor. He also preached in a chapel in Noord-Jeruel. He received financial support from family members in Leeuwarden; his grandparents had a furniture business there. In 1932 a fire destroyed the organ of the church in Houtigehage (only the front is left as decoration), but the extensive library is still available for study of the Scriptures.

Though the Overdijks were never members of a church or denomination, according to those who heard their preaching, they could have been of the "Free Evangelical Brethren." Rev. van Loon seems to be more of a traditional Baptist. But like the Overdijks he only wishes to spread the Word of God without any alteration and as its only basis.