

In Memoriam Dr. H. A. van Andel¹

In recent weeks a flood of news items from the Dutch East Indies have arrived in our country, some sad, some happy. It is an unspeakable joy to learn that so many of our missionary workers, about whose fate we have been gravely concerned, have not only survived [the Japanese occupation] but are very eager / are itching [popelen van verlangen] to resume their labors / to get back to work again. But we have also suffered blows, blows so severe that we will only be able to get over them with great difficulty.

Among those who perished is Dr. H. A. van Andel, for many years a missionary pastor in Solo. As we reflect on the fact that he is no longer with us, we are overcome with profound grief. Missions has suffered a painful loss in his passing.

Dr. Van Andel was a man of exceptional ability. A great organizer, scholar, speaker, humorist, a man with an unmistakable talent for practical affairs, highly competent in financial matters, in short, a man of universal talents OR a Renaissance man. In every circle where he functioned his word gained immediate authority; in meetings he was a feared debater but at the same time sought after for the wise and powerful leadership that he exuded. But great gifts of mind and insight, however valuable they may be, are ultimately of small significance when it comes to what a person can accomplish in life. There are far more powerful forces that determine the ultimate result of a life of toil and care. They are especially the willingness to be of service and the dedication to a mighty and magnificent task for which one is willing to make any sacrifice. That Dr. Van Andel was a blessing to countless many was not in the first place because he was so capable and practical, but because he had put all his strength in the service of a single goal which he pursued above everything else. And that goal was Missions. He was every inch a missionary. Together with his wife, who was his constant support, he would devise new plans, think about fresh approaches, and together with her carry the tremendous work that came to rest on his shoulders.

Van Andel did everything on a large scale. He erected schools, big schools; education had the special love of his heart. He realized the importance of spreading literature [colportage-arbeid] and this too he tackled in a big way. He thought in numbers / in terms of numbers [cijfers]. Already at the beginning of his work he had set up a scheme for progressive steps in the work he wanted to pursue. Numbers spoke to him, they put a spell on him / he experienced their seductive charm [bekoring]. Yet for all his love of numbers he was never dry and dull, never merely pragmatic [zakelijk]. He was a human being with very warm/sensitive heart [met een uiterst gevoelig hart]. I still remember how he once told me that he always composed his sermons deliberately as a rational argument [betoog], because he was afraid that he might lose his composure / lose control of his emotions in the middle of the sermon/during their

¹ Obituary published by J. H. Bavinck in the journal *Timotheus* in 1945.

delivery/while preaching them. Many a time I have seen him standing on the pulpit, addressing a large audience of young people, when his eyes would fill with tears. The poverty of unbelief and the terrible emptiness of life without God moved him deep in his soul. And that would awaken in him the burning desire to preach the gospel of Christ, to tell it as profoundly and at the same time as simply as only he could tell it.

In his work as pastor he was courageous and strong. He could speak the truth to someone and admonish him as few pastors can. There were not a few who sooner or later collided with him, but I never met anyone who did not in the end come back to him. And no one has ever doubted the sincerity/uprightness [oprechtheid] of his intentions. His cleverness [handigheid] at meetings did give him the name sometimes of being too “political,” and indeed it was not an easy thing to be his opponent. He had his faults and his temptations, like every human being, but everything about him was in the service of the one great cause to which he had devoted his life.

This would come to light in a sublime way during in his actual missionary work, as he stood before high-placed Javanese leaders. Then he was the man of refined culture / cultural refinement, fully capable of socializing with circles where the most refined formalities had been cultivated for centuries. Then his whole demeanor was all friendliness and urbanity / sophistication [voorkomendheid]. But breaking through all that courtesy and friendliness would be the obedience to his Sender, a proud testimony for Jesus Christ, the only Savior, also of the people of Java. Many cares and disappointments were part of this man’s full and active life. He bore them with good cheer [blijmoedigheid]. God took him amid misery and exile. But the fruits of his labor will remain unto eternal life.