

The Boers' Early Missionary Style

Letter from CRWM to II Highland CRC¹

in Support of Boer Study Leave

Note: This letter was written to the Boers' main supporting church by Dr. Eugene Rubingh, at that time the Nigeria Secretary in the Grand Rapids office.

Rev. De Vries, (pastor II Highland CRC)

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In a general way, let me say that I am personally well acquainted with John and Fran and served with them as missionary colleagues for many years. Indeed I visited the Boers in the summer of 1971 and traveled to many of the outstations with them and conducted services together with Rev. Boer in several places on Sunday. I want to assure you that John and Fran have established a tremendous rapport with the national church. They have literally poured themselves out for the East Benue churches rejoicing with them in their joys and weeping with them in their sorrows. They are willing to stand for hours in the hot sun to cross the streams to sit around the campfire and eat strange foods and in general live into the life of the Africans with whom they commune. I stress these facts because they are very important in the making of a missionary who can relate the gospel in a strange culture.

¹ 3 Oct/1972. *Every Square Inch*, vol. 2, p. 107. "CRWM" is the acronym for "Christian Reformed World Missions," based in Grand Rapids MI, USA. Strictly speaking, this document belongs in Section 2 under "Comments." However, it gives so much information about our early missionary style that it is placed in Section 1 under "Missions...."

Furthermore, I want to assure you that the Boers plan to return to Nigeria at the conclusion of this study leave. I have not the slightest hesitation in assuring you that they will return to Nigeria, God willing. While John wants very much to see the relationship of the gospel to questions of society and kingdom development, he is no abstract intellectual. He is a working missionary deeply interested in the development of a viable Christian community in the heart of Africa.

Rev. Boer has been placed in a very responsible position in the East Benue church. He serves the entire Wukari district with its far flung congregations as counselor and has been a teacher to many of the church leaders. Thus in the areas of strengthening and revitalizing the church, John and Fran have been very effective. They are also intrepid trekkers, going with the evangelists out to the cutting edge.

Your third question is difficult to answer. Naturally, we as a mission are committed to the raising up of nationals who may replace as quickly as possible. However, even while this is being accomplished new challenges and opportunities arise before us. Particularly in the area of leadership training we are now experiencing a tremendous need. John has shown a particular concern for the leadership of the Christian community, and wants to influence them for Christ. Therefore, we believe that our mission will be committed to his support for some time to come.

Cordially in Him,

Dr. Eugene Rubingh,

Nigeria Secretary ,

CRC World Missions