



Antheunis Janse of Biggekerke (1890–1960) Morning star of a 20th-century reformation¹

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Abstract

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This first biography is the result of research on the life and work of the Dutch thinker, Antheunis Janse (1890-1960) of Biggekerke conducted at intervals in South Africa and in the Netherlands during the past 35 years. The stimulus for the research was the fact that Janse has never been acknowledged for his contribution to Christian philosophy – especially anthropology – which originated in the thirties of the previous century in the Netherlands. The aim of this article is to demonstrate that he should be regarded (with Professors D.H. Th. Vollenhoven and H. Dooyeweerd) as a founding father of Christian-Reformational philosophy, also known as the philosophy of the Cosmomic Idea or simply as the Amsterdam philosophy. No biography on this important thinker exists; the historical information provided is thus needed. The biographical details are intertwined with the following systematic aspects: Why reformation was required during Janse's lifetime; Janse's contribution to the development of Reformational philosophy; a more detailed discussion of his anthropological viewpoints; the secret of his reformational endeavours; and in conclusion, some suggestions are given about much needed research to be done to be able to fully profit from the rich heritage of this

1 This study was first published in Afrikaans in 1989 (reprinted 1990) by the Institute for Reformational Studies at the Potchefstroom University in South Africa and in Dutch in 2000 in Kampen, the Netherlands. This English version is expanded and updated in the light of continued research and new information which has become available since 1989.

“morning star of a 20th-century reformation”. An addendum of his most important publications are also provided.

Samevatting

Antheunis Janse van Biggekerke (1890-1960). Môrester van 'n 20ste-eeuse reformasie

Hierdie eerste biografie weerspieël navorsing wat die afgelope 35 jaar met onderbrekings in Suid-Afrika en Nederland gedoen is oor die lewe en werk van die Nederlandse denker, Antheunis Janse (1890-1960) van Biggekerke. Die navorsing is gedoen omdat Janse nog nie werklik erkenning ontvang het vir sy bydrae tot die Christelike filosofie – veral die mensbeskouing – wat in die dertigerjare van die vorige eeu in Nederland ontstaan het nie. Die bedoeling van hierdie artikel is om aan te toon dat hy (tesame met proff. D.H. Th. Vollenhoven en H. Dooyeweerd) beskou behoort te word as een van die grondleggers van die Christelik-Reformatoriese filosofie, wat ook bekend staan as die Wysbegeerte van die Wetsidee of eenvoudig as die Amsterdamse filosofie. Die historiese gegewens is noodsaaklik, aangesien die lewensverhaal van hierdie belangrike denker nog steeds nie op skrif gestel is nie. Die biografiese gegewens word saamgeveg met die volgende sistematiese aspekte: Waarom reformasie in Janse se tyd noodsaaklik was; Janse se eie bydrae tot die ontwikkeling van die Reformatoriese Filosofie; sy besondere bydrae tot 'n Bybels-verantwoorde mensbeskouing; die geheim van sy reformatoriese arbeid. Ten slotte word enkele suggesties gemaak oor navorsing wat verder gedoen behoort te word om ten volle verryk te kan word deur die geestelike nalatenskap van hierdie “môrester van 'n twintigste-eeuse reformasie”. 'n Bibliografie van sy belangrikste publikasies word in 'n bylaag verstrek.

1. Prologue

Reformation will never finish – it is a continuing task. The sixteenth-century motto, *ecclesia reformata semper reformanda est* (a reformed church must always keep reforming), is as valid today as 500 years ago and this is true not only of the church, but of all of society. If Christians do not take their reformational task to heart every day, stagnation will certainly set in. We should not believe that our reforming task was completed in the distant past and that in the present we can relax.

Even though we believe that every age in history calls for an ongoing reformation, we can learn from reformations of the past and from reformers in history. Of course, we look at things differently today and maybe beyond. But as a thinker of the Renaissance

already confessed, that is largely due to the fact that we – as dwarfs – can stand on the shoulders of the giants of the past.

It is thus important that the focus on an almost forgotten figure of our Reformational tradition, Antheunis Janse van Biggekerke, should be brought to the fore again. (In the *Epilogue* it will be explained why and how this biographical overview came into being.)

2. A descendant of the Huguenots

More than three hundred years ago, in 1685, when the Edict of Nantes was revoked, many Frenchmen, who remained faithful to their Reformed faith decided to flee to an unknown future in foreign countries.

A certain Remsté (or Raimsté), a farmer from northern France, also fled (via England) and settled on a farm in Ritthem (near Vlissingen) in the Netherlands. At the beginning of the nineteenth century his descendants still lived there. Very likely the descendants of Jan Hendrikz (eleven children) received the name “Janse” during the time of Napoleon. His grandchild, Antheunis Janse (1833-1916), later lived in Oostkapelle on the island of Walcheren in the south-west of the Netherlands. Eight children were born from his marriage with Catharina Maljaars, one of whom was called Jan, who eventually married Catharina Wondergem.

On 1 July 1890 this Oostkapelle couple stood with joy at the cradle of their first-born, a son, who was called after grandpa Antheunis. Shortly after that he received a brother who was called Jan.

Antheunis lost his father at an early age. He died in 1899 at the age of 33 years, and left a wife and two small boys in a small worker’s cottage on the Noordweg in Oostkapelle, near Middelburg. Antheunis and Jan thus had to work on their grandfather’s farm during summer, and could go to school only during winter.

In *De betekenis der drie hoofdvakken (Bijbelse, Vaderlandse en Kerkgeschiedenis) voor de principiële vorming* (originally printed in 1938, reprinted in 1979, in *Gereformeerde Schoolblad*), Janse wrote a fascinating narrative about his youth memories. Among other things, he relates how much the Reformed Boys’ Society – under the leadership of a simple gardener – meant to him. From this man he learned the Calvinist principle of serving God in all areas of life – not just on Sundays and not only in church. He compares this guidance with the ethical, mystical, pietistic kind of religion of which his own *Hervormde* pastor was an example. According to this

conviction, creation is left to the sinful “world” and religion is seen merely as a means of salvation. Since childhood this kind of piety did not satisfy Janse.

Already at that stage a special gift which emerged more and more in his adult life, namely the discernment of the spirits was manifested. He chose for the real Reformational principle, that of the sovereignty of God in all areas of life. This viewpoint emphasises that life should not be divided into profane and religious sections, implying that belief and religion is the domain of God and the rest of life is the domain of man.

This, after all, is what the Scripture teaches. The reign of the God of the covenant encompasses everything: God is concerned with butting oxen and sacrifices, birds’ nests and priests, with the clean linen of the Israelites and their worship, with workers’ pay and also with their tithes, with the education of history to children and their circumcision. The Lord, the God of the covenant, is sovereign over our existence in totality and over all areas of life.

3. Teacher training

When he was seventeen years old Antheunis received the opportunity, thanks to his childless uncle, Adriaan de Visser, to attend the Normal School in order to take up teacher training. Up until then Antheunis had only completed elementary school. (His brother Jan meanwhile continued in the footsteps of his forefathers and became a farmer.) At first it was difficult for the young student because he had much to catch up. However, on 3 May 1910 he received his diploma (*de acte van bekwaamheid als onderwijzer*) to teach at elementary school level.

In October of that same year, the energetic young man began his career in education in Schoondijke (1910-1917). Shortly after this Europe was plunged into World War I (1914-1918), and the young teacher also had to fulfil his military duty (1914-1915). We have an interesting letter at our disposal written on 28 July 1915 from Zuiddorpe to his brother. His military service turned out to be useful as he learned German which, later in his life gave him access to important literature from that country. Since German money was of little value and German books cost next to nothing, the bookworm Janse duly made use of the opportunity. At that time he could not have known that he would experience a second – and much worse – worldwar.

4. Work in Biggekerke

In 1917 circumstances, however, changed for the better – wedding bells rang for him and Debora Louwerse (born in 1885). In that same year he also got a position at the two-teacher Christian School in Biggekerke. In 1918 he became the principal. He began to work, study and write, inexhaustibly, for nearly a quarter of a century (1917-1942).

He was very dedicated, a born teacher. The many textbooks, handwritten by him and illustrated with his own drawings, showing special drawing talent, testify to this. He especially had a keen interest in history. (He also, by the way, knew the history of South Africa.) It is interesting that – contrary to the norm – he did not begin with the history of the Egyptians, Greeks and Romans, but that he started his history education with the Biblical story about creation. By all accounts he did not accept the dualism between church history and world history.

Because he believed in concrete, illustrated education, he not only told the history of faraway lands and unknown nations, but also the history of Biggekerke itself, a small village with a rich history. In Biggekerke a church already existed around 800 A.D. and the 16th-century Reformation had a strong influence on the island of Walcheren. No wonder that Janse was loved by his pupils for his interest in their local history. Many letters in the Janse archives still testify to that.

However, the teacher of Biggekerke was not only good in the classroom. He also intensively reflected on the theories of the education process in its totality. He, for example, developed his own reading and arithmetic methods. (Cf. his publications in the addendum.)

In those days a teacher could not, of course, be only a teacher. He had to serve in wider society. Besides being a teacher and the secretary of the school board, he also gave Sunday-school classes, was president of the Reformed Boys' Society, secretary of the *antirevolutionaire* electoral association and much more. It was not always easy to work together on the schoolboard with the old farmers of Walcheren. If master Janse had not helped, the book accounts of the treasurer would never have tallied. And the cheap cigars of the board members stank so badly that the young teacher at the beginning of the meeting preferred to share out his own better brand of cigars.

According to the testimony of his children, he was a very diligent worker. At the end of a school day (15:30) Antheunis would first take a long walk along the footpaths of Biggekerke and would then begin to work. It was normal for him to sit in his study until two in the morning, and at times to work until dawn.

5. Appearance and character

He was not an impressive personality. He was merely 1,60 meters tall and had a soft voice. Stellingwerf (1992:39, 40) describes him as a man with a clear mind and deep knowledge of the Bible who, because of his many writings, acquired great influence among Reformed people. According to his children, he was extremely modest, very gentle and a friendly person. Although the analytical content in his writings could be very sharp in nature, he never used sharp words against his fellowmen, nor spoke evil of them, nor ran them into the ground. (Sinful behaviour, however, could make him angry.) His gentle nature did not mean that he was not a brave man. For example, he did not hesitate to go against the opinion of the general public.

In response to my question to his three sons, whether such a busy father ever had time for his children, the answer was positive. On Sunday evenings he, for example, regularly related Bible history to the family. On Saturday afternoons they also went for walks together, and along the way he supplied his children with interesting facts about the flowers, plants and birds. Typically Zeelands, there was, however, a distinct distance between father and son, so that he did not talk as confidentially with them as a Dutch father nowadays would talk with his son(s).

6. A time which calls for reformation

From Janse's letters and diaries we know how he longed for reformation, for which he also prayed. "For several years I am praying ardently to God for reformation ..." (letter March 13, 1929). "Oh, Lord, remember your covenant. Dry my tears. The mourners of Zion will rejoice when Your reformation comes" (diary May 9, 1931). And when his ideas about reformation were opposed, he wrote, "No attempt of any reformational activity has escaped the cross of Christ" (letter April 6, 1936).

A cursory glance at the time in which Janse grew up and in which he worked will make us realise why there was such an urgent need for renewal, real reformation. At theological and ecclesiastical levels

there were two reasons in particular for reformation: Pietistic theology and Reformed Scholasticism – two currents still present in many contemporary Reformed churches the world over.

6.1 Against Pietism

We have already pointed to the fact that he had encountered Pietism in his youth and did not feel at home in it. Whoever wants to know more about this aspect, should not leave unread his delightful work *Lourens Ingelse; een episode uit het godsdienstige leven op Walcheren omstreeks 1780* (1926). In this book he brilliantly describes the religious life of the introspective believers of his time. Through mystical inner illumination people such as Ingelse from Zeeland wanted to come to religious certainty. They sought peace and certainty in their own religious experience whereas they already could have this outside of themselves in Christ (Romans 5:1). Whoever depends on the result of their own “soul-searching” and whoever moans and groans in order to have peace with God, will never find real peace. These soul-searching people of his time focused inwardly, to see if there were signs of the working of the Holy Spirit in them. Questions generally asked were: How is my faith? Am I sincere? Am I really aware of my sins? After having made up the balance of their spiritual life, and a attaining a positive outcome, they were happy. If not, they fell into deep doubt and uncertainty. Pietistic people are constantly busy with themselves. They are trying to believe in their own faith. Instead of throwing out the anchor of their faith (to God), they try to anchor inside their ship (in themselves) with the sad result that they never find any certainty of faith or security.

In contrast to the self-*searching* of pietistic theology Janse puts the Biblical notion of self-*testing*. In self-testing one does not stand in front of oneself, but before God. In the light of God’s Word one discovers one’s unbelief and sinfulness, but at the same time one latches onto God’s infallible promises. Such a person does not believe in her/himself, but in a God who demands faith, but also – amazingly – provides faith. In such a manner one can forget oneself because one is safe with God.

With his booklet (*Lourens Ingelse ...*) Janse undoubtedly helped many who doubted and struggled, who were constantly delving in their own soul-life, to look away from themselves and to focus only on God’s Word and promises.

6.2 Against Scholasticism

In the second place, Janse wanted to bring his people back from the barren, dry and narrow consciousness of Scholastic dogmatism to the concrete, practical and living Scriptures. The Reformed (Gereformeerde) Scholasticism from before and during his time allowed the wonderful warm reality of the Good News to be swallowed up in cold concepts. Although Abraham Kuyper and Herman Bavinck could not entirely free themselves of Scholasticism, their thoughts heralded a golden age in the Reformed world. The Kuyperian age, however, was coming to an end. Followers of Kuyper (such as V. Hepp and A. Kuyper jr.), did not only try to canonise the work of Kuyper, but also fell back into the Scholasticism of the seventeenth century.

Scholasticism is characterised by a dualism between the sacred (holy) and profane (secular) or the nature-grace dualism (cf. Janse, 2001:286). The life of a Christian is accordingly divided into an area in which one can serve God (religion, church, theology, etc.) in contrast to a sphere which is more or less neutral (science, politics, philosophy, etc.). In the light of the Bible, which emphasises the unity of life and obedience to God in all areas of life, Janse emphatically rejected this harmful and unbiblical dualism.

Reformed theologians landed in the grip of their dogmatic system to such an extent that they did not acknowledge the limits of theology as a science any more. Because the difference between human, fallible theological scholarship and the infallible Word of God was not seen clearly any more, intellectual Scholastic theology in fact received absolute power over the believers in the church. Ordinary church people looked up to the academic knowledge of the theologians who ruled the church and church meetings with their perspectives. The “queen of the sciences” (as theology was called) blocked the access to the living Word of God and to the living God himself. Even more: The idea developed that dogmatic theology could help a person to be saved – instead of childlike belief in the death of Christ on the hill of Golgotha. In his *Dogmatiek als wetenschap* (Dogmatics as a science) of 1939 Janse attributed a much more limited role to theology.

What were the consequences of Scholasticism? As far as theologians were concerned, these could be seen in arrogance and complacency; conceit and finally deadness as far as the congregations were concerned.

In these winter times the preaching of ministers such as S.G. de Graaf and K. Sietsma, and the writings of men as prof. S. Greijdanus, K. Schilder, D.H. Th. Vollenhoven, H. Dooyeweerd, and the teacher from Biggekerke were the first signs of a new spring.

In his grace, the Lord gave a revival in the Netherlands, known as the Reformational Movement (Reformatorische Beweging) of the thirties. If we keep in mind that the Reformational philosophy which originated in these years is known around the world today and inspires many people, we realise what great things God did then. These people were not looking primarily for a new theology or philosophy in contrast to dry Reformed Scholasticism. In the first place they wanted to return to the living Word of God and to the true, living God himself. They realised that reformation, new life, was possible only when God's prophetic Word is viewed as incomparably more important than abstract theology.

Janse was, fortunately, no theologian but by the grace of God he was an authority on Scripture. He could explain the Bible better than the majority of theologians – also the Reformed ones – because Scholasticism did not cloud it. Only a few people could let the old treasures of the Word, freed of all Scholastic dust, sparkle in the way as he could. In a surprising and an encouraging way he made God's Word alive again in his time.

7. The key to real reformation

The secret of Janse's reformational work is like a two-sided coin. We could also say that God blessed him particularly with two gifts of the Spirit, namely a prophetic gift and that of a discernment of the spirits.

In the first place, Janse had at his disposal an astonishing knowledge of the Bible. In the second place, he displayed an unbelievably clear insight into the intellectual movements of his day. He could expertly expose the deepest motivation behind the different movements in pedagogy, politics, theology and philosophy. And he could, sometimes in an amazingly simple manner, offer a Biblical-reformational answer to counter the views of his time. And are these two things (to let the Bible speak clearly again, and to take the pulse of our times in the light of the Word) not the deepest secret of every true Christian reformer? The only difference is that every reformer must do this in and for his/her own times.

8. Development as a thinker in the circle of a Reformational philosophy

Following these remarks about Janse's reformational work in general, a closer look at his more specific contribution towards the development of a Reformational philosophy is necessary.

8.1 Philosophically interested – already in his childhood

The philosophical interest of Antheunis was already obvious when he was thirteen years old. At that age he read a booklet by P. Biesterveld (Professor of Philosophy at Kampen, later called to the Free University of Amsterdam for Practical Theology), titled: *Het echt menselijke; hoe het is gezocht en waar het is te vinden*: ("The truly human: how it was sought and where it can be found", 1902). He literally devoured it. His son, Rev. J.C. Janse, still has the original copy in his possession. Antheunis used a bread-knife in order to cut open the pages. Those things that were important to him he underlined in blue and in black, and read it about six times.

Rev. J.C. Janse also has other books of his father in his possession, with personal underlining and comments. Among those, for example, are Karl Barth's *Römerbrief* (1924, 3rd printing), and the first volume (*Prolegomena*) of Barth's *Christliche* (later *Kirchliche*) *Dogmatik* (1927), which was first sold and later bought back by Rev. Janse. Janse, it is said, read them, being rather in agreement with Barth's anthropology, although he was very critical of Barth's perspectives in general.

It is interesting to point out in passing that Janse realised, long before anyone else in the Netherlands had written about Barth, what a great and influential thinker Barth would become, and started to struggle with his ideas. For example, he wrote 19 pages about *Karl Barth en de waarheid*, dated February 2, 1929. It was followed by an article "De nominalistische inslag in de Kirchliche Dogmatik" (Janse, 1935:92-105). The book, *A. Janse on Karl Barth* (1987, 121 pages), contains other articles on Barth and shows how Janse struggled with this theological giant. Another interesting document (in the archives of his son J.C. Janse) is an incomplete and unpublished manuscript from his youth, in which Janse presents the history of philosophy in the form of a novel.

8.2 Contact with Vollenhoven

Through God's providence Janse early in his life met Dirk H. Th. Vollenhoven (1892-1978), who is regarded with Herman Dooye-

weerd (1894-1977) as founder of Reformational philosophy from about the middle of the twenties of the previous century. Janse and Vollenhoven influenced each other (cf. Janse, 2001:286).

On 27 September 1918 Vollenhoven defended his doctoral thesis *De wijsbegeerte der Wiskunde van theistisch standpunt* at the Free University. This thesis is not only an extensive work (444 pages) but also difficult philosophical fare. (The story goes that even Vollenhoven's promotor, Prof. W. Geesink, acknowledged that he did not understand everything in the thesis.) Shortly after his promotion Vollenhoven became minister in Oostkapelle on Walcheren. On 13 February 1919 he received a request from the young teacher Janse from Biggekerke (only a few kilometres from Oostkapelle) for a copy of his dissertation. Soon afterwards Vollenhoven received a letter (about 20 pages) in which his thesis was pursued and in which there were also several questions. Obviously the writer had clearly understood the essence of the indigestible material.

The written contact quickly became personal contact. Already in 1918 Vollenhoven and Janse together published an article on "De activiteit der ziel in het rekenonderwijs" (Vollenhoven & Janse, 1918:97-109).

From the outset it was evident that two kindred spirits had found each other. (A bulky file containing the correspondence between the professor and the teacher is to be found in the Vollenhoven Archives in the Library of the Free University.) Janse enthusiastically cooperated with Vollenhoven for the founding of De Vereniging voor Calvinistische Wijsbegeerte (1935) and during the initial stages he contributed to the society's philosophical journal, *Philosophia Reformata* (for details see Stellingwerf, 1992:120-124). All over the country he offered popular courses in Reformational philosophy, which were attended by up to 80 people per course. In 1937 and 1938, for example, he published a series of articles on "Calvinistische wijsbegeerte" in the journal *De School met de Bijbel*. (In 1982 these articles were republished as a volume with the title *Inleiding in de Calvinistische filosofie* by Buijten en Schipperheijn in Amsterdam). Publishing about this new Reformational philosophy in popular form was not fruitless.

8.3 Janse's influence

Stellingwerf (1992:60) indicates how Janse had already struggled to formulate a more Biblically true anthropology before Vollenhoven paid attention to the issue.

Prof. A. Troost (Emeritus Professor of Philosophy at the Free University of Amsterdam) told me (during a discussion about A. Janse on 13 August 1986) that he had already been a student of Janse before he was even introduced to Vollenhoven and Dooyeweerd and Dooyeweerd's *Wijsbegeerte der Wetsidee* (later translated as *A new critique of theoretical thought*). The first book of Janse's that made a deep impression on him was *Van de rechtvaardigen* (first published in 1931).

Prof. K.J. Popma (1903-1986) also learned much from Janse, and till Janse's death close contact between them as well as an extensive correspondence exists. He especially had great appreciation for Janse's Biblical view of man and said about him: "He was the only one who explained the unique unity of human nature *perfectly clearly*" (Popma, 1963:168).

Janse and Vollenhoven remained life-long friends. They worked together and corresponded regularly (cf. Kok, 1992:40, 41 and especially Stellingwerf, 1992:261 (authors' index) for their extensive correspondence up to the end of the thirties.) Later on the contact became sporadic due to all kinds of circumstances. During the years of the Second World War (1939-1945) they could not correspond about everything as openly as before. When Rev. B. Telder was suspended, Janse also became a member of the Vrijgemaakte Gereformeerde Kerken. Due to illness, Janse could only write with great difficulty, and later he could not write at all. Vollenhoven also wrote less. Vollenhoven visited his friend, Janse, once more around 1950 in Breda (where Janse lived for the last twenty years of his life.) However (according to Janse), the conversation did not really flow well and it did not reach the depth of earlier years. Still, Janse was contented with this visit.

Twenty years later (1972), more than ten years after the death of his friend, Janse, when Vollenhoven himself was seriously ill, he, however, thought much about his own anthropological views. He then again read Janse's books on being human, and according to trustworthy sources Vollenhoven acknowledged that Janse's anthropological views were correct. Earlier he had certainly been influenced by Janse, but now he fully supported him (cf. Bril, 1982: 113).

Instead of the traditional leadership of two (Vollenhoven and Dooyeweerd) at the birth of Calvinist philosophy, we should therefore rather see a joint leadership of three – Janse included – standing at the dawn of a new Reformational philosophy.

8.4 An unrecognised father of Reformational thought

These facts are not only important in order to understand the spiritual development of Janse; they may also explain why Janse did not receive the recognition he should have received as one of the fathers of Calvinist philosophy (see 19.1 of the *Epilogue*).

Janse became isolated because of the following circumstances: The war, political unrest, strife that accompanied the church struggle and which eventually led to the secession of the *Vrijgemaakte Gereformeerde Kerk*. His illness and his move to Breda also played a role. Especially as a result of his illness, he could no longer continue to participate. The second and third generation of Reformational thinkers have, therefore, for the most part forgotten him.

9. An impressive list of publications

One is simply astounded by the enormous number of publications that flowed from Janse's pen in less than 25 years. (The bibliography of his writings is more than 25 pages.) In addition to at least ten larger books, there are many smaller brochures, about 500 articles in journals, a large number of unpublished lectures and speeches, hundreds of letters and his personal diaries. Especially when one keeps in mind that these publications represent not only quantity but also quality work, it becomes clear how untiringly this teacher from Biggekerke must have worked. He did not have an university study career behind him, during which he might have read up ahead of time and studied. As a self-educated man he had to spend much time reading and reflecting before he could start writing. In spite of that, he had since 1932 warned against ideologies like Fascism and National-socialism – far ahead of time.

The limited space available makes it possible to mention only Janse's most important books. Some bibliographical particulars are given with each title, keeping in mind those interested readers who would like to further delve into his work. Many of the books are collections of articles originally published in different journals.

The different areas and evidence of the many different topics about which Janse published are indicated in the addendum to this article. (cf. also Janse, 2001:286-287, *sub voce* "Geschriften").

It is regrettable that (as far as I am aware) as yet no publication by Janse has been translated or published in English. A few of his works were, however, translated into Spanish, and have been

distributed in Spain and in Central and South America: *Que es politica christiana frente a la del mundo?* (1977) en *Los justos en la Biblia I* (1984), *II* (1986) and *III* (1987).

Further research will have to determine which of the writings included in the addendum can be regarded as the most original, important, or most influential, and which would still be relevant today. Of course, the answer to this question will depend on the area one has in mind. For example, *Lourens Ingelse* (published in 1926) is a treasure when the concern is for religious piety. If it is anthropology one is looking for, then Janse's *Van idolen en schepselen* (Janse, 1938) is certainly a standard work, although *De mensch als "levende ziel"* (1937) definitely would be an easier introduction. For his view on theology, one should read his article "Dogmatiek als wetenschap en hare wijsgerige motieven" (Janse, 1939). In the political realm *De verhouding van Christelijke politiek tot de wereldse* (1937) is certainly the most important. Furthermore, it is striking how highly many people appreciate Janse's *Van de rechtvaardigen* (Janse, 1931). Janse jnr. (2001:285) regards it as his grandfather's most important work.

The result of all these Biblical, prophetic, reformational publications was that Janse did not remain an unknown teacher at an elementary school on the island of Walcheren. He became the pioneer of a refreshing reformational movement in the thirties and forties in the Netherlands.

10. His anthropology

Since his view on man (compare in the addendum the books listed under "Biblical studies specific on the portrayal of being human") is one of the aspects of his thinking which not only was the most original (for his time), but which also provoked the most vehement reaction, a brief exposition follows.

10.1 The essence of his anthropology

The traditional Reformed-scholastic viewpoint starts from a dichotomist perspective, namely that a human being consists of spirit (the immortal soul) and matter (the mortal body). At death a human being will be disassembled. The tie between soul and body will be undone, so that the body will perish in the grave and the soul will continue to exist in an intermediate state. In their criticism of Janse, Prof. V. Hepp (1937) and Prof. J. Ridderbos (1939) represent this school of thought.

Janse refutes them with the argument that being human implies much more than a simple dualistic matter-spirit framework. A human being is a unity, but not a unity as a compound formed of two substances. A person does not only *have* a soul, but *is* soul. The word “soul” in the Bible usually simply means “living being”. Nowhere in the Bible an immortal soul is mentioned. God alone is immortal, and only after the resurrection does He clothe the believer (not his/her soul) with immortality. It is, therefore, not the immortality (of the soul) that accompanies us through death, but the almighty God.

Janse does not believe that one is “taken apart” into two substances at death (as in dichotomist teaching) but that one is *broken*, so that one is simultaneously in the grave and with God. That does not mean that at death one becomes *two* (persons). No logical thinking can explain how this is possible, but according to Janse this is what the Bible teaches and therefore we must accept it in faith. In this respect science reaches a limit that cannot be crossed without falling into speculation. Janse does not doubt our existence after death (as Hepp suggests). Rather he puts the accent on the *unity* of the person in this life, his/her *brokenness* in death and his/her *resurrection* at the return of Christ.

10.2 Janse’s influence

Especially three people have benefited from Janse’s anthropological insights: Prof. K.J. Popma, Rev. B. Telder and Rev. C. Vonk. Popma (1961:196) says, for example: “A dead person continues to exist, although we absolutely do not know how; he exists as a dead person ... Nowhere is the Christian faith as mysterious as here: God is not a God of the dead, but of the living” (cf. *inter alia* Matthew 22:32).

B. Telder (1961, 1963) and C. Vonk (n.d. and 1963) want to go further, because they cannot accept that a dead person will exist *consciously*. They do not teach that a person *disappears* between death and resurrection, but according to them Janse did not really solve the problem of what happens to him/her at death. If he had considered the logical consequences of his point of view that a person is a unity, he would also have taught that she/he dies *totally* at death before God resurrects her/him at the return of Christ. Because Janse did not follow this line of thought, a contradiction seemingly exists, that is that man/woman, after death and before resurrection, is in the grave *and, at the same time*, with God.

According to Antheunis Janse's son, Rev. J.C. Janse, Janse could still read Telder's books, and had said that although Telder's arguments would appear to be waterproof, he could not agree with him. Janse, therefore, rejected both the (Scholastic) doctrine of immortality and Telder's idea of the unconscious intermediate state between death and resurrection (cf. Janse, 2001:286).

If I understand it correctly, Janse wanted to accept neither a dualistic nor a monistic interpretation of the Scriptures, because the first interpretation leads to the view that a person is a duo-unity (dichotomy), and the latter has the result that a person's being becomes indivisible. According to him a person is, indeed, an indivisible "unity", but as a result of sin, she/he is broken in death – therefore death is such a terrible punishment of sin.

10.3 Janse's view on death and the unity of a person

In conclusion to this part some brief excerpts from Janse's book, *Om "de levende ziel"* (1939), chapter 15 (p. 62-66) with the title "Wasn't Lazarus himself in the grave?" will be presented:

It would be a too simple a conception if we were to say that the real person is the 'soul' and the buried person is no longer that person. It would be altogether too simple a conception to say (according to the dichotomist opinion): God has created two *parts*, soul and body, and at death the 'tie' between the two is simply broken. Death is the breaking of 'a *tie*' even if it is a strong tie, between two things, two 'substances'.

In the Bible 'death' is much worse. Then the jug at the well breaks into *pieces*. Then *man* turns to dust again, that which God let live as man decomposes, and *man* descends into the grave, he is buried with his fathers.

We must hold onto this.

And we must not say that the one who is being laid in the grave, is not that person himself ... (p. 63).

In the Bible the conception of man is open to being divided. The person Paul does not know if he is 'in the body' or 'outside of the body' when he is taken up into the third heaven. He considers both possible. And the same Paul differentiates between an inner man and an outer man without speaking about two persons because of that.

Why shouldn't man as a whole be able to break into pieces, that all belong to the whole? If I pick up a valuable vase, I could call it a unity. I could even say that in principle it is an unbreakable unity.

In the same manner, man also is an unbreakable unity in the Bible.

But still the vase is breakable. So also, under the judgement of God, man is 'breakable'. When a piece of the vase breaks off, I can save the vase and the piece I can leave somewhere else. Is the unity broken then? Yes, and no. The unbreakable unity of the work of art remains. The viewer thinks and desires the missing piece to be there as well. It cannot be missed. Whoever sees the small piece broken off would gladly join it to the whole. Whoever sees the larger piece, would gladly join the little piece to the larger one – that which was broken was a unity and it remains a unity, even though it is broken.

So it is with our body.

It is also a unity of, for example, body and limbs.

An unbreakable unity.

But still breakable ... (p. 64).

Couldn't one say of someone that he is both in the grave and with the Lord?

Precisely those who confess the unity of man according to Scripture, can understand the brokenness through death as brokenness.

Dichotomy, which explains 'soul' as 'the person himself', and the dead body as *not-the-person*, has only seen the breaking of a tie.

Those who confess that '*he*' is in the grave and that '*he*' is also with the Lord, has seen a '*he*' break and prays: 'Come quickly, Lord Jesus', sighing and expecting the redemption of our body, Romans 8:23.

According to Scripture we must maintain: *I* must go into the grave ... and *I* shall be with the Lord. Then the one person does not become *two* ... Just as the broken vase does not become ten and Paul outside of his body did not become two.

This is not preposterous.

It is preposterous to want a person to share the concept indivisability (which is only God's according to our confession). And it is absurd to say that it is not man himself that is buried, because then it is also not he himself who will come out of the grave (p. 66). (Translations: Aria Sawyer)

One could divide A. Janse's life into three periods. The first thirty years (1890-1920) one could call his youth and years of preparation for his life's work. The next twenty years (1920-1940) one could call

the period of great activity, during which basically all his writings originated. The last twenty years (1940-1960) were difficult times for Antheunis. The overview of this phase in his life starts with the opposition which he experienced in spite of the appreciation for his work.

11. Honour and appreciation, opposition and insult

As all 'high trees' before him, Janse experienced both attention and resistance, appreciation but also criticism. This man with his loving heart, who wanted nothing else than to live his faith intensely in all areas of life, was honoured and insulted, knighted and kicked, loved and hated.

11.1 Appreciation

One example that his work has not gone by unnoticed, is the fact that A. Janse, "hoofd van een bijzondere lagere school in Biggekerke" (principal of a special elementary school) was honoured on 24 August 1931 by Queen Wilhelmina with the conferral of the Companion of the Order of Orange-Nassau. This acknowledgement is similar to the *Dekorasie vir Voortreflike Diens (D.V.D.)* that South Africa previously granted to people who in all kinds of areas made special and important contributions.

Another example that Janse was appreciated in certain circles, is evident from the fact that his name was on the nomination list for a Professorship in Pedagogy. However, he chose to remain a teacher in Biggekerke.

Ministers like B. Holwerda, H.J. Jager, C. Veenhof, G. Visee and C. Vonk also regarded Janse as a much needed reformer and appreciated his work.

11.2 Opposition

As in everyone's life there were, however, not only roses, but also thistles. Someone who tests the spirits with the sword of the Spirit cannot expect to experience no opposition, especially if he is not afraid to reveal the truth in no uncertain terms.

As could be expected (cf. Janse, 2001:285), he experienced fierce opposition from adherents of both Reformed Pietism (like Rev. G.H. Kersten) and Reformed Scholasticism (supposedly followers of Kuyper and Bavinck).

He had to endure opposition and scorn, insults and even slander. For example, someone remarked that in his anthropology truths that even pagans accept, are repudiated by Janse. There were examples of disapproving criticism, viciously fierce mockery and slander in the press. The response to his publication on the Biblical view of being human, especially from two theologians, V. Hepp and H.H. Kuyper, can be found in his publication *Om 'de levende ziel'* (1939).

Especially Mrs. H.H. Kuyper-Van Oord was guilty of a nasty review in the style of: How can anyone who has no degrees or titles know anything about Greek or Biblical anthropology? Apparently Biggekerke was regarded like Nazareth: how can any good come from such a despicable village on an island?

11.3 His reaction

Janse was not a fighter by nature, but through his publications – and his pen could be sharp – he was forced to battle. He had to accept this – not because he enjoyed it, but because it was imposed on him as a result of the cause he supported. Janse also tried to remain positive – reformation is not in the first place to be *against* something, but to be *for* obedience to God. That is why, for example, he did not write a book on how bad the “gezangen” were, but rather on *De heerlijkheid der psalmen* (1933).

He held on and did not sit down in sackcloth and ashes. It undoubtedly must have been a great encouragement to him that when the heat of the strife subsided, it clearly emerged that he had for the most part understood Scripture correctly.

Especially the strife in the different churches was extremely sordid and must have caused Janse much pain. He never wrote in the trend of “we, the true church” in contrast to “you, the false church”. His struggle for reformation in the thirties was also not only for church renewal, but for reformation on the broader front of life in its totality.

He, for instance, wrote a catechism book (around 1935) that was not accepted by synod and was published only in 1950 – but not by synod. In his letter of release (after almost 25 years as a teacher in Biggekerke) the school board crossed out the normally used word: “honourable” so that Janse – by his own “Gereformeerde broeders” – received a dishonourable discharge when he left for Breda. The Reformed church council also did not want to give Janse his

certificate of membership when he left for Breda, because he had in the meantime transferred to the dissenting *Vrijgemaakte Kerk*.

When his son, the later Rev. J.C. Janse, was not accepted as a theological candidate, because he could not agree with the prevailing theological views, Janse wrote to him (on 2/8/1944):

Lay it before the face of the Lord and ask Him to give you licence to preach and to strengthen you through his Holy Spirit. And be happy, because your reward in heaven will be greater than the salary of professors. And the Bank there is very safe. The Lord Jesus who promised this, has also read the church documents. Pray for the brothers of the classis that the Lord will not hold their weakness and ignorance against them and call for revenge on the leaders of the synod (Luke 18:7, 8) who mislead the church.

In the midst of pain and abuse it is reported that Janse often said, "Some things I shall take higher up – to the heavenly Judge". Maybe it also applies to him, as it did to Luther in an especially trying time of his reformational work, that his friends heard him pray from behind his closed door: "Lord, because it is Your cause, You must now give it Your protection".

12. Sorrow in the family

Already earlier in his life Janse experienced another kind of pain: the sorrow of losing his wife to death. At the birth of their second son (C.J. in 1926) Debora (1885-1826) died at the age of forty-one. It was a hard blow to Antheunis, and he had great difficulty dealing with it. As a result of it he landed up in a sanitorium. He writes about it in a letter (13/5/1929): "Sometimes the Lord does not answer our prayers. For example, when I begged Him to be allowed to keep my wife, when she was dying. Who knows ... He could spare her. But no. And it tore my heart apart ..." But again God provides. In 1929 he married Francina Pieterella Fregeres (1895-1974). From this marriage another two sons were born as well as three daughters. Large families were normal in those times. We, with our families of two or maximum four, are somewhat surprised how this man, besides his responsibilities as father and his duties in education, could accomplish so much work in other areas and especially as a writer.

13. Incurably ill and departure from Biggekerke

The Lord not only saddened Antheunis by taking away a loved one. Just like Job, he himself was chastised – so much so that it is

actually frightening us. At the outbreak of the Second World War (1939) the first symptoms of Parkinson's disease (*paralysis agitans*) were already noticeable.

In 1942 the German Wehrmacht claimed the large Janse home in Biggekerke for military purposes. Walcheren was flooded with soldiers. There was no other living space available. The Janse family had to leave for Breda, where Rev. Telder gave them his garage to live in until they later found their own place. These nerve-wrecking experiences – and all that still would happen before the liberation in 1945 – forced the ailing man to consider early retirement (1945). It certainly was not easy to put food on the table for a large family on such a small pension ...

At first he could still write articles for the local church paper, but the lingering illness caused his strength to deteriorate and made him constantly more of an invalid, until the hand which had written so much finally refused to hold the pen.

It must have been extremely difficult for Janse to take leave of his beloved school and the familiar surroundings of Biggekerke after almost 25 years. Here he had spent the happiest and the most productive years of his life. He almost lost his valuable library. When the Germans notified Janse that he had to leave his house within 24 hours, so that they could use it as a military office, they did seal his study so that it could not be robbed or damaged. When Janse later realised that they might never get their house back, his books were taken out of the house and stored in the attics of several farms on the island. Shortly afterwards, however, the farms were flooded as a result of the bombings of the dyke by the English (October 1944) and the books had to be saved by his son Chris, who used some kind of amphibian transportation to save them from the water (April 1945). The whole library was brought to Breda, first by horse and wagon and then by truck.

14. In prison

The war brought even more misery. From a letter which Janse wrote from Breda to P. Grootheest, and also through his children, we know more about this.

14.1 Arrested as a traitor

Breda was liberated by the Polish army. (That is why the Molengracht Street, where the Janses lived at the time, was renamed as Poolseweg.) Shortly after the liberation, on 31 October

1944 Antheunis Janse was picked up by a “gereformeerd” man and two boys from the resistance movement. In all haste, he could just grab his Bible and some other documents that he would need in order to defend himself. During the march through the city he – branded as a traitor – was booed at by the roaring crowd. At night in the prison he was snapped at by the personnel.

The worst is that a “gereformeerde broeder” took away his glasses and his Bible with the words: “You’ve done enough Bible reading!”

That night he and three others slept in the cold and dark cell without having had anything to eat. Not until five o’clock the next day did they get anything to eat – a piece of dry bread, beans and two cups of tea.

On the fourth of November he and 250 other *N.S.B.-ers* were transported to the attic of the Military Academy. Apparently some of them were arrested on the false accusation that they had sympathised with the Germans during the war.

14.2 The background

As far as I could determine (the case still has to be thoroughly examined) the accusations against Janse were unfounded.

As already indicated (also see the addendum), even before the war, he wrote against the National-Socialism of Hitler in Germany and Mussolini in Italy. (It was precisely these publications which he quickly grabbed at his arrest to defend himself against the accusations.) He was, therefore, not pro-German nor was he for the Dutch *Nationaal-Socialistische Beweging* (N.S.B.). The Germans captured the Netherlands in 1940 and as a result of their ideology of “race, blood and soil”, already in October all the teachers had to fill in forms about their ancestry in order to check if they were not Jews or possibly had any Jewish blood in their family. During the occupation teachers were forced to put the N.S.B. party papers in their classrooms, so that students could look at them and read them. Many teachers of the resistance did not want to do this and threw the party papers into the wastepaper basket. Janse did not see this as a solution. He pointed out the papers to his students, but not before he told them what the National-Socialist ideology entailed and how dangerous these papers actually were.

In this he obeyed the enemy, but at the same time he counteracted the effect of their ideology. (Rev. J.D. Janse was at that time an eight-year old boy, and had his father for a teacher.) In the eyes of

those who supported resistance, however, this pedagogically correct behaviour was something terrible. He was regarded as a coward. The teachers who dared to throw away the papers, of course, were seen as heroes.

14.3 His reply

Since in that time many people asked Janse what their attitude in the war should be, Janse compiled a stencilled paper of 22 pages at the end of 1942 or at the beginning 1943, with the title: *Onze houding in deze tijd* (Our attitude in the present circumstances). It consists of 55 questions which Janse answers. To show how relevant this paper still is just a few examples of the questions: “Couldn’t it happen that the government becomes so anti-Christian that we don’t need to obey it (according to Romans 13) anymore?” (question 11), “or that we need no longer pray for it?” (question 12). “When is armed resistance allowed?” (question 15). “Shouldn’t we obey God more than man?” (question 25). “Why are you now so set against the spirit of the world, which curses and despises Hitler and Germany?” (question 32). “Is our queen Wilhelmina still sovereign in the Netherlands, now that the Germans have occupied it?” (question 36). “Don’t we have a right to resist the Germans?” (question 38). “Is a positive Christian life still possible under the National-Socialist reign?” (question 48). “Would you recommend voluntary military service?” (question 52) and so forth.

Janse wrestled with the difference between a lawful government and an occupying force (the Germans). In such a complex situation one cannot simply say: You must obey. (Janse also resisted, for example, in the case of the N.S.B. papers, by warning his students against them.) On the other hand, Janse did not say: You may never resist. People, however, could not understand that, while before the war Janse had written against National-Socialism, when this ideology actually had the Netherlands in its grip, he was silent – or even created the impression that he condoned it. Janse’s answer was that he continued to back what he had written before the war. Now, however, there was an even greater danger than National-Socialism that threatened his nation. Just like Israel – as a result of their disobedience – was attacked on the authority of God by pagan foreign nations, Janse saw the invasion by the “Moffen” (Germans) as a punishment or judgment of God. It was the covenantal revenge of God for the apostasy and sins of Christianity, and therefore one had to humble oneself.

But what was the reaction of the Dutch people? Pride instead of a confession of sins; Dutch people reasoned: God cannot punish our nation – we're His chosen people! In contrast to the National-Socialist ideology Janse saw a nationalist *volksideologie* in his own nation, that practised idolatry concerning *het Vaderland*. He regarded the one ideology as not better than the other – according to Janse's views both imply idolatry and renounce the true God.

According to his grandson, W. Janse (cf. Janse, 2001:287), Janse called for obedience to the German occupiers instead of to the Dutch rulers who fled the Netherlands. He also expected the Germans to counteract communism. He called on his own people to humble themselves because of God's punishment. He rejected resistance and interpreted it as not acknowledging God's wrath upon Christianity. In this way Janse, however, got estranged from many of his friends.

According to Stellingwerf (1992:155,156) Vollenhoven had already in the summer of 1940 disagreed with this viewpoint of Janse. It also affected their long friendship. At the end of 1943 Vollenhoven and Dooyeweerd even wanted to prevent Janse from being re-elected on the board of the Society for Calvinist Philosophy. K.J. Popma, however, defended Janse.

At a time when political feelings – immediately after the terrible occupation, the winter of hunger and all the atrocities of Hitler all over Europe – was explosive, there really was no understanding for Janse's point of view. Even today, Janse's behaviour during the Second World War is still a sensitive issue (cf., for instance, Kramer-Vreugdenhil, 2001 who gives an unhistorical and incorrect picture of Janse's position in World War II).

14.4 The rest of the story

In the previously mentioned letter to Grootheest, Janse relates how he confessed the Name of Christ with others prisoners. As the eldest, he was later appointed as the leader of a group of ten and therefore responsible also for all the "crime" in this group. The times when a certain Mr. Bakker (who could retain his Bible) read from his Bible to Janse were his best moments in prison.

On 14 November many Dutch citizens were sent to Vucht (a feared prison camp – before the liberation the Germans were in command there). With three others Janse had to live in a cell with only two straw sacks and no table or chair. He was permitted to get a couple

of blankets but no news or visits from his family. Finally, on 18 November, after receiving special permission, he could exchange a few words with his wife. In order to fill the long hours, with nothing to read, he taught Bible history to his fellow prisoners, who were Catholic, in his Zeelands dialect, “mijn teerste Moedertaal, waarin ik het nog beter kan zeggen dan in het Algemeen Beschaafd Nederlands” (“my dearest mother language, in which I can better express myself than in High Cultural Dutch”).

Meanwhile his health deteriorated. Luckily, on 18 November he was transferred with ten others to the *Regentenkamer* in the prison. There were chairs and a table, light, water, a strawsack on the floor and a toilet. His wife and two of his children were allowed to visit him once a week and they took him sandwiches and apples. All the attempts to retrieve his Bible and his glasses were in vain. His wife was permitted to bring him another Bible and also the glasses of someone who had been evacuated, with which he could once again see.

Not until 23 January, after almost three months in prison, was he released, although he remained under house arrest. He did receive permission to go to church once on a Sunday. On 22 May (the date on his previously mentioned letter) this was still the case.

The lawsuit did not take place until much later – in August 1945. He did not appear before an official lawcourt, but in Breda before a “tribunal” – something like a people’s court at the time of the French Revolution. In this lawsuit the nationalist spirit prevailed. He was acquitted of collaboration with the German enemy, but a year later a subpoena was served on him again. Finally, in July 1947, he was found guilty of not participating in the resistance against the German occupation of his country. He only received a light punishment (he was not allowed to vote for the next ten years), and after that he was acquitted. He was permitted to keep his insignia of knighthood.

15. Twenty years of chastisement

The last twenty years (1940-1960) in Janse’s life was a period of broken vitality as a result of Parkinson’s disease, which made it ever more difficult for him to write, to move and later even to speak. The fact that this energetic man of earlier times could hardly work anymore after his fiftieth year must have been a great trial for him. How mysterious are God’s ways with us. How much more could we have learned from Janse if he had remained healthy.

However, according to Rev. B. Telder, his pastor in Breda, the contribution of Janse as elder during these last years of his life was something special: no pastor was as experienced and trained in the mysteries of faith as this farmer's son from Zeeland.

16. The end of his life

At the beginning of 1960 it became clear that Janse's strength was declining. On 6 March he could celebrate the Lord's Supper for the last time together with the congregation. After a short sickbed he passed away on 18 March. His last words to Rev. Telder were almost unintelligible: "May the Lord strengthen you in your work".

The modest reformer of Biggekerke was buried in the Protestant graveyard of Zuilen in Breda. During the memorial service Rev. Telder asked those present to sing the last stanza of Psalm 90: "Strengthen our hands and bless our efforts, crown our work now and always". The text on the tombstone is typical for this modest servant of God, who did not put his trust in his own work, but only trusted in God's deeds: "Uw werk, o Heere, behoud dat in het leven" (Habakkuk 3:2).

In his *In Memoriam* in the church paper, *Opbouw*, Rev. Telder very appropriately quoted from Daniel 12 verse 1 to 3. In the first verses of this chapter the curtains of eternity are pulled back to reveal the resurrection of the dead, in which Janse, who had thought about life and death so profoundly, believed with all his heart: "At that time shall arise Michael, the great prince ... And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life and some to shame and everlasting contempt. 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." (R.S.V.)

Antheunis Janse also belonged to the group of those wise men, because he had such a clear insight into the will of God. Therefore he could lead many of his contemporaries – and today us as well – through the maze of confusing movements onto the right path.

17. The secret of his Reformational contribution

If the previous sections gave the impression that Janse was almost perfect, without flaw or sin or faulty formulations (see James 3:2), it was a wrong impression. As with all of us, in his life too only a small

beginning of obedience was disclosed. There is, however, nothing noble about delving into someone's faults and weaknesses.

17.1 An important lesson

Maybe the most important asset of Janse's biography is that one does not need to be a great or learned person in order to be a reformer. Janse never studied at a university and yet he had been more influential than many university professors of his day. Reformation is urgently needed in our country in all areas and it is not only the calling of the "great leaders". Everyone – in the "Biggekerke" where God has placed us – has a task in it.

What then was his secret? It can perhaps be summarised in one word: wisdom. He was a wise man. How did he obtain that rare and precious gift, that is so needed in our day?

17.2 Three ways to acquire wisdom

There are three ways to obtain wisdom: from experience, from God's Word and (sometimes) from scholarship. Janse made use of all three sources.

In the first place, he was a man who had practical knowledge of life. With an alert spirit, a sharp capability to distinguish, and an open heart full of love he stood in the midst of the world where God had placed him. He paid attention and had an intense interest in what happened around him. His experience in life made him a prudent man. One could also say that Janse had great respect for God's marvellous creation and, at the same time, the realisation of the terrible results of the fall into sin.

He was not, in the first place, a scholarly man. This does not mean that Janse despised scholarliness. His large library, with the many scholarly works which he had worked through, would immediately contradict this. He only corrected the order: scholarly knowledge does not have the last word. Therefore he constantly tried to apply scholarly knowledge in the service of practical life. The two ways of knowing reality (the pre-scientific and scientific) should influence each other in such a way as to stimulate and correct each other.

17.3 The most important source of his wisdom

Janse never severed his practical life experience or his studies from the most important source of wisdom, that is, God's Word. He continuously directs our attention to the concrete and non-scientific

language of the Bible. This insight did not make him appreciate the revelation of Scripture less, but rather it made him appreciate it more. For him the Bible is *relevant*, aimed at concrete circumstances and not a book with timeless explanations about redemptive truths – which Reformed Scholasticism made of it. He did not regard the Bible as having a complete set of rules for living or a book that should be used in a Biblicistic manner as a handbook to solve every kind of issue.

Janse, however, did not simply acquire his extensive Bible knowledge passively. He read and reread his Bible, underlined, made comments, compared Scripture with Scripture, and contemplated. His main resources were the Biblical concordance by Trommius and the notes of the *Statenvertaling*. He had taught himself enough Hebrew and Greek to check important concepts with the help of dictionaries.

Above all, therefore, the humble teacher from Biggekerke loved and knew the Bible. He heard the Word of his heavenly Father in it and applied it concretely in his whole life. Time and again we are surprised by the refreshing, unique and authentic way in which he opens up the treasures of God's revelation for his own time and also for our time. He does this in such a manner that revelation touches our hearts as the direct and living Word of God.

From his wrestling with the Word of God, Janse gathered principal perspectives for his Christian worldview. Well-known reformational ideas, such as the sovereignty of God in our entire life and the central meaning of the covenant, were once again highlighted in value.

17.4 Testing the spirits of his times

The fact that he lived so close to creation and to God's Light on creation, gave Janse particularly sharp eyes to test the spirits of his times. His study was not just an interesting hobby – he wanted to hear the Lord speak in the midst of the time in which he lived. In his sharp analyses of people such as Barth, Gandhi, Mussolini, Lenin, Kant, Hegel and Dostoyevsky, and his gauging of all kinds of movements such as Pietism, Scholasticism, Marxism, National-Socialism and the Anabaptist school of thought, Scripture was his final criterion. In his attempt to understand his times, he was always searching for the core, the essence, the deepest motivations, the spirit which possesses people and movements and which can incite millions.

Janse indeed had a sensitive antennae for the disastrous results of attempts to synthesise or compromise on the side of Christians with all kinds of non-Scriptural tendencies. He continually warned against these and kept an eye on the principle of antithesis in his struggle against the spirit of the times.

Because he lived in the assurance that Christ is King, he did not consider it necessary to create the impression that he was important, distinguished or significant. Modestly he kept working tirelessly – also when criticism, mockery and insinuations came along his way.

17.5 A message for today

Hopefully it has become clear how a common teacher on an isolated, distant island could become such an influential figure. He took up the torch of the Reformational tradition in the twenties and thirties of the past century and carried it further. Today it is our task to take over this torch of hope from him – and others of kindred spirit who have accompanied and followed him – and to spread its light in our own times. This is the best way in which we can bring our respect to this modest morning star of a twentieth-century reformation.

18. For future research

As possible Janse research projects for the future, the following could be considered (not necessarily in order of priority):

- A complete index (bibliography) of his publications – more or less completed.
- Expansion of the Janse archives, for example, photocopies of still lacking important correspondence with his contemporaries.
- Editing and publishing of publishable unpublished manuscripts and correspondence.
- The compiling of a “reader” of the best Janse has produced – if possible in English – so that it can be read by a broader public.
- A scientific biography – preferably also in English.
- Systematic-critical studies of different aspects of his thought.

19. Epilogue

As promised at the beginning, this postscript will explain why and how this biographical sketch came into being.

19.1 A forgotten thinker

There are many forgotten reformers in history. That is also true of the Reformational philosophical movement which was started at about the thirties of the past century.

The name of Janse is not even mentioned in the two *Festschriften* dedicated to Vollenhoven (cf. Zuidema, 1951 and De Boer, 1973). In 1961, at the 25th commemoration on the “Vereniging voor Calvinistische Wijsbegeerte” (cf. Van Dijk & Stellingwerf, 1961), extensive attention was given to H. Dooyeweerd, D.H. Th. Vollenhoven, S.U. Zuidema, J.P.A. Mekkes, K.J. Popma, and H. van Riessen. In this book the name of A. Janse, however, is only mentioned twice in passing (p. 89 & 90) when Vollenhoven is discussed. Although Janse actually disappears from the scene in 1942, he died in 1960 – the year in which the editors were still working on the *Festschrift*, and his death undoubtedly must have focused the attention of those compiling the edition on Vollenhoven’s contribution to a Reformational philosophy. In Klapwijk’s description of the 100 years history of philosophy at the Free University of Amsterdam (Klapwijk, 1980), the name of Janse is not even mentioned in a footnote.

In 1986, at the fiftieth commemoration of the “Vereniging voor Calvinistische Wijsbegeerte” it was no different, even though the theme of the symposium (11-15 August) was: “On being human: anthropology in Christian perspective.” It was exactly in this area of anthropology that Janse was a pioneer, long before any of the above-mentioned important figures of the Reformational philosophy. Janse thought and wrote a series of articles about being human according to the Scriptures, and he left us no less than three books about this topic (see addendum). He focused attention on the unity of the person in a time when the Reformed world was still holding on to old Scholastic dualism a la Voetius *cum suis*. Without his tireless work, many of us would even today still be in the spell of such unbiblical ideas about the human being.

Some recognition at least was given to Janse when Stellingwerf (1992:252) wrote that Vollenhoven “in cooperation with A. Janse and H. Dooyeweerd” became the *de facto* leader of the Reformational movement in Philosophy.

Maybe I feel so strongly attracted to this largely forgotten thinker because with him we are at the start of the movement for a Christian philosophy in the twentieth century. With him, more than with the other, later representatives, we feel the deeply religious pulse of the movement beating. Maybe he was ignored because he did not offer us a strictly scholarly philosophical system, but something more in the nature of a Biblical worldview, which gradually grew within him and was stimulated by his personal relationship with God and his Word.

19.2 The origin of this biography

This popular sketch of Janse's life and work developed during the past 35 years through the following four phases:

19.2.1 First encounter with Janse's work in the Netherlands

I first got to know the writings of A. Janse when I studied Philosophy at the Centrale Interfaculteit (the Faculty of Philosophy) of the Free University of Amsterdam (the Netherlands) nearly 35 years ago (from July 1968 to June 1970). Then already, I was fascinated in a special way by what he wrote: What was the secret of this simple teacher from Biggekerke who had never had any formal academic training?

Regretfully the library of the Free University had no more than a dozen of the works of A. Janse. Fortunately I discovered a "Lijst van werken, referaten, brochures, tijdschriften, enz. van A. Janse" (a list of works, lectures, brochures, magazine articles, etc. of A. Janse), which gave me an impression of his many writings since 1917. At the time I managed to acquire (and read) most of his works from second-hand bookstores, and I also made photocopies of his articles in journals. My ideal was to immerse myself in Janse's works in their entirety and maybe to write something about this remarkable man and his thinking.

19.2.2 The first draft in Afrikaans

In the meantime a lot of water has gone under the bridge after my return to South Africa. The Janse collection on my bookshelves has grown with the republishing of a couple of his books, including the reprinting of many of his shorter writings in *Gereformeerde Schoolblad*. Thanks to the help of my friend, Dr. K.A. Brill, previously head of the Medical Library of the Free University, I obtained much (complementary) material on Janse during 1980/1981. Among these were several "in memoriam" articles which appeared in different

journals after his death plus some photocopies of articles by Janse himself.

Especially valuable was a bibliography of 25 pages compiled by C.J. Janse, a son of A. Janse. This bibliography contains different manuscripts (e.g. lectures), typed articles, a number of published articles and an extensive number of monographs (books and brochures). For the children of Janse, C.J. Janse compiled a folder with many interesting bits of information about their father. Using some summaries from that (plus some additions) he also made a collection for Janse's grandchildren in 1980, of which I obtained a photocopy, thanks again to Dr. Bril. (In the "Beknopte lijst van publicaties 1916-1961" more of Janse's later publications were mentioned, and also an entire series of articles in Breda's church paper, from 1945-1948, which was not included in the former bibliography compiled by C.J. Janse.)

After almost twenty years I finally had two weeks off (in July 1986) in order to at least write something about Janse. I realised only too well that the limited number of pages devoted to him was entirely insufficient to do justice to the reformational work of this man. Janse is someone worthy of a complete biography. More than 30 years ago Prof. C. Veenhof wrote that it would only be detrimental to the Reformed world to forget Janse. During that same time, Rev. B. Telder wrote that no historian would do justice to the history of Reformed life in the second quarter of the twentieth century in the Netherlands if he would bypass the person and influence of A. Janse.

19.2.3 The final Afrikaans text

Many years had again passed since I wrote the above in July 1986. This has, however, produced a better end result, especially since I could test my temporary manuscript in August 1986 in the Netherlands, and in response to the discussions I was able to have with the three sons of Janse, correct and expand it.

On 4 August 1986 I had a long interview with C.J. Janse and his brother, Rev. J.D. Janse. At that time the Janse Archive had been organised in chronological order into 16 binders of considerable size and except for Janse's books, also contained brochures and other publications, many unpublished articles, his diaries (from 1929 to

1932), correspondence (with Janse and also copies of letters from Janse to others), photographs, newspaper clippings, etc.²

On 6 August 1986 I was able to have a very insightful discussion with Rev. Jan J. Janse, emeritus minister. As already mentioned, he owns several books from Janse's library containing his comments, besides Janse's own writings.

I would like to express my thanks to these family members (and also to others in the Netherlands) who were so cooperative and not only read the first copy of my manuscript (1986), but also checked the final text (1988) and gave worthwhile comments which improved it before publication (cf. Van der Walt, 1989).

19.2.4 The present English text

My original booklet in Afrikaans on Janse (cf. Van der Walt, 1989) was translated into Dutch and published in the Netherlands in 2000 without any changes in content (cf. Van der Walt, 2000). However, when Mrs. Aria Sawyer of Hungary translated it into English in 2004, I took the opportunity to rework the manuscript in the light of *inter alia* the following publications which appeared after 1989 on Vollenhoven and which also shed some new light on Janse: Brill and Tol (1992), Kok (1992) and Stellingwerf (1992). Finally W. Janse (2001, 2006), A. Janse's grandson, provided me with valuable information. Apart from a brief biography, his article of 2001 provides details about Janse's letters, diaries, lectures, stencilled material, manuscripts, etc. and the different Dutch archives where these can be found. This article (cf. Janse, 2001:287-288) also includes a long list of literature on A. Janse.

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2 The A. Janse Archive was afterwards rearranged by Dr. Wim Janse, a grandson, and handed over to the "Historisch Documentatiecentrum voor het Nederlands Protestantisme vanaf 1800 tot heden" at the Free University of Amsterdam, where it is accessible today (compiled by D. Smits, archive number 157).

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Addendum

Janse's most important publications

Education/pedagogy/didactics/psychology

Opvoeding en onderwijs (1957).

Het eigen karakter der Christelijke school. Kampen: Kok, 1935.

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De betekenis van de drie hoofdvakken (Bijbelse, Vaderlandse en Kerkgeschiedenis) voor de principiële vorming. *Gereformeerd Schoolblad*, Nov. 1979.

De humanistische wetsidee in het lager onderwijs. *Gereformeerd Schoolblad*, March 1980.

Werk maken van zijn persoon(lijkheid). *Gereformeerd Schoolblad*, August 1980.

Vertellen uit de Bijbel aan kleuters. *Gereformeerd Schoolblad*, March 1981.

Psychologie der schoolgemeenschap. *Gereformeerd Schoolblad*, Dec. 1981.

Religieuze ontwikkeling bij kinderen. *Gereformeerd Schoolblad*. s.a.

The following titles appeared in Bibliotheek voor Bijbelsche Opvoedkunde:

Vader.10(5), 1926.

Ikke. 18(2), 1934.

Concentratie. 19(6), 1936.

De grens van het kunnen bij kinderen. 21(3), 1973.

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De belijdenis der kerk naar de Schriften. Enschede: Boersma, 1950.

(Church) History

Van "Dordt" tot '34. Kampen: Kok, 1934. 2nd printing 1984.

Uit de geschiedenis der kerk. Groningen: De Vuurbaak, 1952, 2nd printing 1966.

Lourens Ingelse; een episode uit het godsdienstig leven op Walcheren omstreeks 1780. Goes: Oosterbaan & Le Cointre. 1926, reprinted 1932.

De factoren die geleid hebben tot de inzinking van het Calvinisme in ons land in de 17e en 18e eeuw. Reünistenorganization N.D.D.D. number 3, 1930.

Rondom de Reformatie. Goes: Oosterbaan & Le Cointre. 1939.

Biblical studies

Over de onfeilbare Schrift. *Gereformeerd Schoolblad*, June 1982.

Leven in het verbond. Kampen: Kok. 1st printing 1937; Groningen: De Vuurbaak. 2nd printing 1975.

De heerlijkheid der Psalmen als liederen des verbonds. 1st printing 1933. Rijswijk: Stichting Uitgave Reformatorische Boeken. 2nd printing 1964.

Met geheel uw verstand. Kampen: Kok. 1939.

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Eva's dochteren: Oud-Testamentische opvattingen over de plaats der vrouw in de wereldgeschiedenis. Kampen: Kok, 1923; Groningen: De Vuurbaak. 2nd printing 1975.

Biblical studies specifically on the portrayal of being human according to the Scriptures

A series of articles on what happens to man at death and afterwards. (*Op den uitkijk; tijdschrift voor het Christelijk gezin.* 9, 1939, and 10, 1934.

De mensch als "levende ziel". Amsterdam: Holland. 1st printing 1934; 2nd printing 1937.

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Politics

De verhouding van de Christelijke politiek tot de wereldse. Aalten: De Graafschap, 1933.

Burgerlijke of kerkelijke politiek. Aalten: De Graafschap, 1932.

Het socialisme; leidraad ter bestudering van het werk van prof. P.A. Diepenhorst "Het Socialisme". Amsterdam: Patrimonium, 1932.

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Articles such as "De rede van Mussolini van 14 November 1933 over den corporatieve staat", "De nieuwe vorm van nominalistische wereldbeschouwing in het Nationaal-Socialisme" and "Gandhi", published in *Antirevolutionaire Staatkunde*.

Philosophy

Inleiding in de Calvinistische filosofie. 2nd print. Amsterdam: Buijten & Schipperheijn, 1982.

Dogmatics/Theology

Dogmatiek als wetenskap en hare wijsgerige motieven. (*In Boodt, C.P., red. De reformatie van het Calvinistiese denke.* 's Gravenhage: Guido de Bres, 1939. p. 120-157.

Several articles on Karl Barth, of which some were published in 1987 in the book *A. Janse over Karl Barth*. Kampen: Van den Berg.

Key concepts:

Janse, Antheunis (1890-1960), his contribution towards a Christian worldview, philosophy, anthropology

Kernbegrippe:

Janse, Antheunis (1890-1960), sy bydrae tot 'n Christelike lewensvisie, filosofie, antropologie

