

Letter 083
Etten, 31 December 1876

Dear Theo,

Best wishes for the New Year, may it be a happy and prosperous in all respects. How delightful it was to meet again, how beautiful that morning you left was, and how often we shall recall that journey to Chaam. Father preached a beautiful sermon this morning!

And now it is New Year's Eve, I wish you were here too. There is another thing I have to tell you. A few days ago Mr. Braat ¹ from Dordrecht came to visit Uncle Vincent, and they talked about me; Uncle asked Mr. Braat if he had a place for me in his business, should I want one. Mr. Braat thought so, and said that I should just come and talk it over. So I went there early yesterday morning; I thought I could not let it go by without seeing what it was. We arranged that I should come for a week after New Year's to try it out, and after that we will see. It would be desirable, for several reasons, that I remain in Holland, near Father and Mother, you also, and the others. My salary would certainly be a bit higher than with Mr. Jones, and it is one's duty to think of that because later in life a man needs more.

As for the religious work, I still do not give it up. Father has so many interests and he is so versatile, I hope that in whatever circumstances I may be, something similar will develop in me. The change will be that, instead of teaching the boys, I shall work in a bookshop.

How often have we longed to be together, and how dreadful the feeling of being far from each other is in times of illness or care – as we felt it, for instance, during your illness – and then the feeling that want of the necessary money might be an obstacle to coming together in time of need.

So it is quite possible that I shall go there.

Yesterday evening I was at Uncle Vincent's to tell him that I had gone to Dordrecht at once. It was a stormy night; you can imagine how beautiful the road to Prinsenhage was with the dark clouds and their silver linings.

I just entered for a minute the Catholic church where evening service was being held. It was a beautiful sight, all those peasants and peasant women in their black dresses and white caps, and the church looked so cheerful in the evening light.

You must tell Mr. Tersteeg at once that I am going to Dordrecht for a week to try it. Wish him and Mrs. Tersteeg a happy New Year for me. I am writing in a great hurry, Anna and the girls went to Prinsenhage, and Father thought it better for me to go with them. Aunt came back with them in the carriage, and I walked with Willem Carpentus. Well, boy, my dear brother, what happy days we all had together. Have a pleasant New Year's Eve, and believe me,

Your loving brother, Vincent

More soon, à Dieu. If you write, address your letter to Dordrecht.

1. Head of the bookselling firm Blussé and Van Braam in Dordrecht.