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SUMMARY

This study ('Zoo heerlijk eenvoudig' – 'So wonderfully simple') is the first to describe the history of children's Bibles in The Netherlands. No, or hardly any, systematic research has been conducted into this history, and therefore very little earlier research, and very few earlier research results, can be used as a point of departure. The material's size is considerable. An estimate places the number of publications that roughly fit the definition of a children's Bible written in and translated into Dutch up until July 2007, between 850 and 900, a number higher than for any other language.

The structure of this study is as follows. In Chapter 1 the research area is both explored and restricted. I describe my research methods, and give a positioning of my study in a number of relevant research disciplines, such as book history, practical theology and historical pedagogy. I also develop a relatively broad definition of the notion of 'children's Bible' underlying my research, enabling me to include publications which would otherwise be at, if not beyond, the margins of the material. Especially the period up until 1800 is rich in publications of this type. I present a preliminary categorisation of my material, and a reasoned subdivision into successive periods of publication. I give a sketch of the developments of the genre in other countries, making clear that they are both similar to and different from those that occurred in The Netherlands. I present some quantitative data on the material, showing the number of different publications in the periods investigated, the number of originally Dutch publications compared to that of translated publications, and the number of male children's Bible authors compared to that of female authors. Finally in this chapter I give some general considerations concerning the working methods and range of options available both to a children's Bible's author and to an illustrator.

Chapter 2 is devoted to the history, perhaps better the pre-history, of the Dutch children's Bible up until 1811. This latter year demarcates the publication of J.H. van der Palm's *Bijbel voor de jeugd*, a new type of children's Bible in the Netherlands (to be discussed in Chapter 3). Children's Bibles in this early period include educational reading books, schoolbooks and picture books containing passages from the Bible, for youngsters. From the seventeenth century onwards, Bibles specifically aimed at children take the form of didactically structured editions, which use questions and answers, dialogues, short children's verse, illustrations, rebuses, and other 'playful' formats to familiarise children with literal biblical texts, to be learned by heart. From the eighteenth century onwards, then, books start appearing of a more story-like character. This format becomes more frequent in that century's final few decades, when, under the impetus of the German *Philanthropinen* ['enlightened pedagogues'] a new type of children's Bibles start being published which retell the stories of the Bible, not just to reproduce the text, but as a means of educating children to become useful and virtuous citizens, equipped with biblical moral values.

This latter type of the 'retold children's Bible' is typical of by and large the extended first half of the nineteenth century, a period discussed in Chapter 3. The *Maatschappij tot Nut van 't Algemeen* ['Common Good Society'] initiates numerous school books providing education towards reasonable and

decent living, by retelling and clarifying passages from the Bible. Mrs. Van Meerten's 1845 Children's Bible simply promotes biblical etiquette for young children. A nineteenth century children's Bible trendsetter is the orientalist scholar J.H. van der Palm. His 24-part biblical paraphrase for adolescents (1811-1834) sets an example for many later authors. In this period, the orthodox, 'pietistic' branch of protestantism rises against the dominant, liberal church, resulting in disputes and schisms; this affects children's Bible writing only later, but the first conflict involving such a Bible's contents dates from as early as 1836.

Chapter 4 starts with the 1871 *Bijbel voor Jongelieden* ['Bible for youngsters'], which addresses its audience from a completely different angle, using the then most recent insights from the area of critical Bible Studies. This new 'youth Bible' is an apologia of the modern Humanities, and emphasises to its audience the status of biblical stories as 'legends'. In the period covered by this chapter, that of 1871 to 1918, children's Bibles appear with the aim, from a variety of religious and theological points of view, of rendering and promoting that view's interpretative correctness of the Bible. More often than not this coincides with a disregard for the actual audience, and with a decided loss of book quality, as shown for instance by the reduced number of illustrations and the use of complicated language. In this period innovation of the genre takes place only hesitantly, and if it does it does so among the upcoming *vrijzinnig protestanten* ['Liberal Protestants']. One striking example is Nellie van Kol's 1905 biblical paraphrase: it highlights the education of the child into a mature and responsible citizen, rather than into a useful and virtuous member of society. This implies the disappearance of the enlightened children's Bibles, from the last few decades of the century onwards.

The starting point of Chapter 5 is W.G. van de Hulst's narrative revolution. His 1918 *De Bijbelsche Geschiedenissen* ['The Biblical Histories'] implies a radical choice for relating the biblical stories in one's own words. In this way Van de Hulst starts a tradition of Bible rendering which was adopted by many after him, but hardly ever to the same level of quality. A typical feature of the interbellum children's Bibles, rather, is a relatively large degree of *ver-zuil-ing* ['compartmentalization']: each denomination has its own editions. Even so, this does not inhibit the development during these years of different variants of children's Bibles, ranging from orthodox retellings to biblical youth novels to Bible renderings of a methodically liberal design. Two names are dominant during these years, that of Van de Hulst and that of Anne de Vries; the latter's post-war *Kleuterverteelboek voor de bijbelse geschiedenis* ['Pre-schoolers' story book for biblical history'] becomes the Low Countries' most important export product in this area, selling a few million copies worldwide. Famous illustrators such as Isings, Jetses and Bottema are involved in the production of children's Bibles, relegating the genre's 'pictorial poverty' to the past.

In Chapter 6 developments are described which have been left untouched in this study up until this point. Specifically, it addresses the history of the Roman Catholic children's Bible up to the Second World War. The first catholic children's Bibles appear at the beginning of the nineteenth century, and they are written in a liberal style for a general audience. When Roman Catholics after a long period of social seclusion start reorganising themselves in Dutch society from the 1820's onwards, their children's Bibles also start becoming religion-specific. As a result, for about a century and a half these catholic Bibles are of a both didactic and doctrinal nature. Especially after the reintroduction of episcopal rule in The Netherlands in 1853, many – often translated – Roman Catholic biblical histories start appearing, specifically intended for use in schools, showing a systemized approach to the Bible in a manner characterisable sooner as dogma rendering rather than story telling. The latter approach arrives only in the twentieth century, although the 1939 youth

Bibles by Pater ['Father'] Romualdus, and To Hölscher's and B.C. Kloostermans's biblical reading books from the 1930's are still among the exceptions. Catholic children's Bibles, too, benefit from contributions by some well-known illustrators, such as Rie Cramer and Jan Wiegman.

Slowly but surely denominational and religious differences disappear in the period described in Chapter 7, that between 1945 and 1976, even though some orthodox traditions, of both protestant and catholic persuasions, continue to exist, up until this day. Liberal Protestantism produces three children's Bibles which have become a part of the genre's *canon*, although at the same time the liberal 'compartment' erodes quickly. The *ont-zuil-ing* ['decompartmentalisation'] of Dutch society implies a new type of ecumenical children's Bibles, produced for a general Christian market. Concomitant secularisation and the rise of new media such as television, lead to experimental children's Bibles for a young audience, unacquainted with the Bible from their own education. A striking example is the *Woord voor Woord* television series, produced and broadcast by the IKOR service ['Inter Religion Consultation board on Radio Issues'] from 1964 until the 1980's. Simultaneously, the rise of the evangelical movement generates a demand for more and more, and also newer, children's Bibles. As a result the number of different children's Bibles grows explosively during this period, including an increasing number of children's Bibles translated from the English. Moreover, quickly developing and expanding visual culture greatly affects the design of and the illustrations contained in the newest children's Bibles.

The developments of the past three decades are described in Chapter 8. In spite of a shrinking church the sheer number and the diversity of children's Bibles continue to grow significantly. The children's Bible enters the free market. Various old traditions undergo renovation, but especially the 'ordinary' Christians in the centre of the churches turn out to be susceptible to a supply of new, often translated, editions. The secular market is increasingly served with editions which are experimental in both form and content. Especially innovative are those editions in which biblical stories are presented side by side with stories of other religious traditions. An era in which children are raised as children rather than as future adults, implies a growing demand for editions geared towards youngsters. Playfully and creatively edited and presented children's Bibles become highly popular. I make an attempt in this last chronological chapter to predict developments that may be foreseen to take place in the twenty-first century.

Chapter 9, the final one of this study, deals with children's Bibles from 'other' traditions, such as those of the Jewish tradition and of specific Christian movements such as the Seventh-Day Adventists and the Jehovah's Witnesses, and children's Bibles influenced by New Age and anthroposophical approaches. This chapter also contains a section on children's Bibles and children's Korans, illustrating some recent attempts at presenting stories from these traditions together, to children.

This study's final sections contain a List of 869 children's Bibles, either originally written in Dutch or translated into it, preceded by an Introduction to the List and followed by an Editor's Register. Two sections conclude this study: a list of *References* to this study's secondary literature and a *Name Index* referring to this latter list, and to all chapters and footnotes.