

# **A. C. Van Raalte Institute**

## **Annual Report 1998-1999**



**A. C. Van Raalte Institute**

**Hope College  
Holland, Michigan  
1999**

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Hope College**

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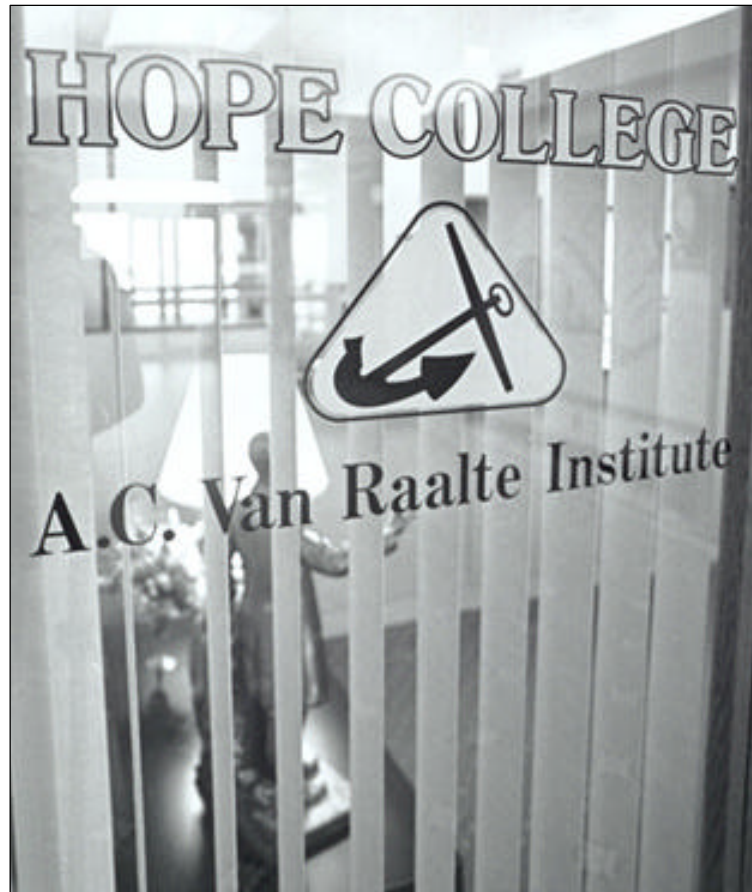
**Elton J. Bruins, Ph.D., Director**

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### **Acknowledgements**

The contributions of Tom Renner and Greg Olgers of Hope College are gratefully acknowledged.

### **Illustrations**

- cover:** Portrait of Rev. Albertus C. Van Raalte, D. D.  
in middle life. (Hope College Collection of the Joint Archives of Holland)
- above:** Front window of the Institute (Lou Schakel)
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## A Message from the Director

It is a pleasure to present our third annual report to our friends and constituency in order to keep you updated about our work. The most measurable aspect of the Van Raalte Institute's productivity is found at the back of the annual report. There you will note the list of publications and presentations produced by the fellows of the Institute. The publications represent the basic function of the Institute, which is pursuing research and writing in the fields of Dutch history and Dutch-American studies.

During the past summer, James Kennedy studied in the Netherlands, as Visiting Research Fellow at SISWO, the Netherlands Institute for the Coordination of Social Scientific Research, at the University of Amsterdam, conducting research for his forthcoming book on the history of euthanasia. Dr. Kennedy is widely known in the Netherlands as a scholar of the 1960s decade, and his book, *Nieuw Babylon in aanbouw: Nederland in de jaren zestig*, is now in its third printing.

Since all four fellows in the Institute work part-time, I consider our professional productivity to be remarkable. Dr. Swierenga, Dr. Jacobson, and I are retired professors; Dr. Kennedy is assigned one-third of his time to the Institute while giving two-thirds to the History Department at Hope College. We all enjoy our work at the Institute and willingly give it more time than we are required to do. In this report, some of Dr. Swierenga's many scholarly achievements are highlighted.

Lest we give the impression that it is only the fellows who make this place go, it must be noted that the person at the heart of our operation is Karen Schakel, who has the title of Editorial Assistant/Office Manager. She works five mornings a week, but in those four hours each morning she does wonders in covering all aspects of our operation. Her editorial skills are put to use often and her management skills, which include the supervision of our student workers, keep the Institute running effectively. After being here for two years she is actually the administrative assistant and is close to being indispensable to the Institute.

The Institute also is fortunate in its association with three translators, two volunteers, and three student assistants. The translators who contract for work with us, Simone Kennedy, William Buursma, and Nella Kennedy, are bringing many documents to light for non-Dutch speaking people who wish to know more about the Dutch heritage of our country, particularly in the Midwest. The Institute is making a contribution to Dutch-American studies which will bear fruit many years hence because the translators diligently bring old documents written in the Dutch

language into current English idiom. More about their contribution is presented in this annual report.

Two volunteers who are making important contributions to the Institute are Sara Fredrickson Simmons, a great-great-granddaughter of Albertus and Christina Van Raalte, and Marie Zingle. Their extensive genealogical research into the Van Raalte family is correcting much of the genealogical data of the family which has appeared in print thus far. It is our hope that their work will be published by the Institute in this coming year.

The three Hope College students who work part-time for the Institute are Nathan Klay, Michelle Lubbers, and Essy Sakala. They serve mainly as research assistants, finding and obtaining documents and recording data for Fellows of the Institute. John Krueger, a former Hope student, was in our employ for three years. His computer expertise was extremely valuable to all of us in the Institute, and he enhanced our computer literacy considerably. We wish him well in the next phase of his life.

Our affiliation with Hope College provides opportunities for us to cosponsor visiting scholars, and to arrange for events honoring them during their stay — recently, Dr. Barend de Vries, whose lecture is discussed later in this report, and Dr. Paul Otto, of Dordt College. Dr. Otto's visit was coordinated through the Institute and the Department of History by James Kennedy. His lecture, part of the annual Colloquium Series, was titled "Wilden en Calvinisten: Dutch Missions to Native Americans in Colonial New York." In his speech, he explored Dutch attitudes toward Native Americans in early American history, and explained how the idea that Native Americans were incapable of becoming "civilized" affected efforts by the Dutch to evangelize them.

The sesquicentennial celebration of the Dutch migration to the Midwest in 1847 was celebrated with great festivity two years ago. One of many results of this well-organized celebration is the recent publication of *Family Quarrels in the Dutch Reformed Churches in the Nineteenth Century*. Dr. Swierenga and I were invited in 1997 by Rev. Michael De Vries, pastor of the historic Pillar Church of Holland, Michigan, to present two lectures each at the church to mark its 150th anniversary, because Dominie Van Raalte gathered the settlers into this congregation the same year the immigrants arrived. Dr. Swierenga edited the lectures, added a bibliographical essay and an index. The editor of our annual report, Dr. Jeanne Jacobson, says more about this publication in this report and tells you how to obtain a copy of the book.

Speaking of Dr. Jacobson, we take note of her move to Sarasota, Florida, in June, following the retirement of her husband as the tenth president of Hope College. Although she is no longer on campus, she continues as a valuable fellow of the Institute. She is currently editing a series of papers produced for a symposium in the Netherlands, under the direction of Dr. Hans Krabbendam, of the Roosevelt Center in Middelburg, the Netherlands.

Judith Scholte of Utrecht, the Netherlands, spent several months in Holland, Michigan, engaged in a research project which is also mentioned in our annual report. During the course of her research, we gave her the privilege of using the resources of the Institute including workspace. Her presence was a joy to us and she is sorely missed.

With sorrow, we announce to our readers the death of a major donor to the endowment of our Institute, Mrs. Elizabeth Bovenkerk Huizenga, the mother of Elizabeth Buntrock, Suzanne Kanis, Peter Huizenga, Ginger Jurries, and J.C. Huizenga. The Huizenga family gave the endowment funds which led to the establishment and funding the operation of the Institute. All of us at the Institute are in her debt and mourn her passing.

We are always grateful for the support of the administration of Hope College: Dr. James E. Bultman, Dr. John H. Jacobson's successor; Jacob E. Nyenhuis, our provost; and Alfredo Gonzales, Assistant Provost. The goodwill and generous spirit of these Hope College leaders are cherished by all of us. President Bultman spent an hour at the Institute in September, giving us the opportunity to explain our mission and the research pursuits of the fellows.

The official hours of the Institute are from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. and afternoons by appointment. We are always happy to have visitors. Our phone number is 616-395-7678, our fax number is 616-395-7120, and our e-mail address is [vanraalte@hope.edu](mailto:vanraalte@hope.edu). Institute news is available on <http://www.hope.edu/resources/vri/>.

*Elton J. Bruins*  
Director, A. C. Van Raalte Institute

## Ambassadorial Visits

An exhibition of Dutch art works at the Grand Rapids Museum was the occasion for trips to Western Michigan in April 1999 by the United States ambassador to the Netherlands, Dr. Cynthia Schneider, and the Dutch ambassador to the United States, Mr. Joris M. Vos. Both visited Holland, and, while there, met Elton Bruins, Director of the A.C. Van Raalte Institute.

Dr. Schneider, formerly professor of art and history at Georgetown University, spoke at a reception in her honor held at the Haworth Conference Center. She discussed economic and ethical linkages between the United States and the Netherlands. Among the commonalities between the Netherlands and America, she told her audience, are their shared love of freedom, and their humanitarianism, in both public and private sectors.



Ambassador Schneider examines a copy of *Albertus C. Van Raalte: Dutch Leader and American Patriot* presented to her by Elton Bruins



Ambassador Joris Vos, Dr. Bruins, Mrs. Yolanda Vos  
Elton Bruins presents the Van Raalte biography to Ambassador Vos

During his visit, Ambassador Vos commented on the importance, for a Netherlands ambassador, of "paying his respects to Holland... perhaps the most 'Dutch' city in the U.S."

## Focus on Robert P. Swierenga

Dr. Robert P. Swierenga joined the A.C. Van Raalte Institute in May 1996. His appointment as the A.C. Van Raalte Research Professor enabled the recently created Institute to add to its staff the leading scholar of nineteenth century Dutch American studies. Formerly Professor of History at Kent State University, Dr. Swierenga holds adjunct professor status in the history department of Hope College. He is a graduate of Calvin College, with a master's degree in history from Northwestern University. His Ph.D. degree is from the University of Iowa, where his thesis was a quantitative study of public land sales in early Iowa. This became the basis for the first of many books he has published, *Pioneers and Profits: Land Speculation on the Iowa Frontier*.

His first college teaching was done at his alma mater, Calvin College, and there, in the college archives, he discovered hitherto unexamined records of early Dutch immigration. Statistical knowledge, computer expertise, and interest in his Dutch heritage combined in a new scholarly focus, which eventually resulted in a six-volume compilation of 19th century emigration lists, ship passenger manifests, and census lists, which has been an important resource for genealogists.



Dr. Swierenga held Fulbright Fellowships for study in Leiden, the Netherlands, in 1976 and 1985. In 1991 he returned to Europe to teach for one semester at the Catholic University of Leuven, Belgium. These opportunities enabled him to extend his research on Dutch immigration. *The Forerunners: Dutch Jewry in the North American Diaspora*, published in 1998 by Wayne State University Press, is the first detailed history of the immigration of Dutch Jews to the United States. The book has been included in the American Jewish Civilization Series.

*Faith and Family: Dutch Immigration and Settlement in the United States, 1820-1920*, was published this year, and two books are in progress. *For Food and Faith: Dutch Immigration to America* will present in print a series of lectures given at the Holland Museum during the city's sesquicentennial celebration. Dr. Swierenga's study of the Chicago Dutch, *The Groninger Hoek: Chicago's West Side Dutch Community*, has an expected publication date of 2000. He regards this study of the city and the community where he was born as his "magnum opus."

His scholarly knowledge and editorial expertise contributed to a revised edition of an important resource in Dutch-American history: Henry S. Lucas' compilation of the recollections of early Dutch immigrants to the United States, *Dutch Immigrant Memoirs and Related Writings*, first published in 1955. The revision, published by William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company in 1997, was a project of the Dutch American Historical Commission, of which Dr. Swierenga is a member. He prepared an index, provided an appendix with translations of the memoirs written in Dutch, and wrote the introduction to the book, which combines the two volumes of Lucas' original publication.

An authority on the leading figures of the immigration, Hendrik P. Scholte and Albertus C. Van Raalte, he has contributed biographical essays to resource texts, and made numerous presentations. More recent international travel has included trips to Kampen, the Netherlands, for a presentation at the International Conference *Breaches and Bridges: A Comparison between the Reformed Subcultures in the Netherlands and the USA*, and to Madrid, Spain, where he was invited to address the Twelfth International Economic History Conference on the topic of Dutch immigration in Argentina. With his friend and colleague Elton J. Bruins, Director of the A.C. Van Raalte Institute, he has recently published *Family Quarrels in the Dutch Reformed Church of the Nineteenth Century*, described more fully later in this report.

Dr. Swierenga is married to Joan Swierenga-Boomker, and is the father of five children and grandfather of five. Since moving to Holland, he has become a popular presenter for city and area organizations. Dr. Swierenga says that he regards his position with the Institute as a "permanent sabbatical," where he is able to continue his passionate interest in scholarly research and writing.

## Institute Director Honored

The contributions of Elton J. Bruins, Director of the A.C. Van Raalte Institute, were celebrated during the past academic year at three significant occasions. In July 1998, when the Holland Historical Trust initiated a Friends of History Award honoring those who have contributed to the preservation of Holland's heritage, Dr. Bruins and State Representative Jessie Dalman were the first recipients. On Dutch-American Heritage Day, Dr. Bruins received the Heritage Award "for exemplary service in preserving the story of Dutch-Americans in 'The Colony' and beyond; for keen scholarship and groundbreaking research helping others discover the rich contributions of the Dutch-American pioneer-preacher Albertus Christiaan Van Raalte; and for a lifetime of dedication to the church, the academy, and the community."

The President's Award, recognizing individuals or groups, not themselves archivists, who give significant support to archival work, is given annually by the Midwest Archives Conference. Nominated by Larry Wagenaar, Director of the Joint Archives of Holland at Hope College, and selected from among candidates from the twelve Midwest states, Dr. Bruins was presented with this prestigious award in May 1999 in Chicago.



Dr. Bruins accepts the President's Award from Valerie Gerrard Browne at the Midwest Archives Conference

As he concluded his acceptance speech, Dr. Bruins spoke of his joy in his scholarly work, quoting from Psalm 16:6: "the lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage." A fifth generation Dutch descendant born in Alto, Wisconsin, Dr. Bruins has directed the A.C. Van Raalte Institute since its founding in 1994. He organized the Holland Area Historical Society in 1980, and has served on the Dutch-American Historical Commission since 1966. Among his many publications is *The Americanization of a Congregation*.

## *Family Quarrels*

*Family Quarrels in the Dutch Reformed Church of the Nineteenth Century*, written by Robert P. Swierenga, A.C. Van Raalte Research Professor of the Van Raalte Institute and Adjunct Professor of History at Hope College, and Elton J. Bruins, Director of the A. C. Van Raalte Institute and Blekkink Professor Emeritus at Hope College, is based on a lecture series sponsored in March 1997 by the Pillar Christian Reformed Church of Holland, Michigan, in celebration of its sesquicentennial. In his preface to the book, Rev. Michael De Vries, pastor of Pillar Church, describes preparations for the lecture series, and comments on the theme of the series:

*On 9 February 1997, Pillar Church celebrated Dominie Albertus Van Raalte's founding of the town and church by holding a "Unity Service" with its long-estranged daughter congregation, First Reformed Church. I preached on the theme of "The Beauty of Unity," based on Psalm 133, and presented to the Reverend Daniel N. Gillett, pastor of First Reformed Church, a complete copy of the consistory minutes for the years 1850-1882, which include the years prior to the painful separation in 1882.*



Pillar Christian Reformed Church, Holland Michigan  
This view of the church was used as the cover illustration for *Family Quarrels*.

*Despite an ardent desire for reconciliation in the Reformed community, this lecture series deals as much with divisions and strife as with unity. Every one of the pioneer pastors of the Holland colony — Albertus Van Raalte, Cornelius Vander Meulen, Marten Ypma, Seine Bolks, and Hendrik Klijn — were seceders from the Nederlands Hervormde Kerk (Reformed Church), the national church. If these leaders had not separated in 1834, there would have been no Holland colony to celebrate. Moreover, . . . while God does not condone divisions in the church, God has blessed the local congregations and their respective denominations. One must also know that the founders, even when they disagreed, did so in the conviction that they were being obedient to God's word.*

The authors of *Family Quarrels* are themselves members of the two denominations. Dr. Swierenga is a long-time member of the Christian Reformed Church, and he and his wife Joan are currently members of the Pillar Church. Dr. Bruins is an ordained minister in the Reformed Church of America, and he and his wife Elaine are long-time members of the Third Reformed Church of Holland.

Extensively illustrated chapters are presented in historical sequence: "1834 — Afscheiding and Emigration," "1850 — The Union of 1850: The Classis of Holland Joins the Reformed Protestant Dutch Church," "1857 — Secession Again: Origins of the Christian Reformed Church," "1882 — Secession Yet Again: The Masonic Controversy." *Family Quarrels* is the 32nd book in The Historical Series of the Reformed Church of America. Dr. Donald J. Bruggink, editor of the series, is professor emeritus of historical theology at Western Theological Seminary.

*Family Quarrels in the Dutch Reformed Church  
of the Nineteenth Century*

Robert P. Swierenga and Elton J. Bruins.  
Grand Rapids Michigan: William B. Eerdmans, 1999.

This book, priced at \$18.00, may be purchased through  
the Hope-Geneva Bookstore, located in the DeWitt Center, Hope College.

The bookstore may be reached through  
e-mail: [bookstore@hope.edu](mailto:bookstore@hope.edu); web: [www.hope.edu/bookstore](http://www.hope.edu/bookstore)  
phone: 616-395-7833. The mailing address is P.O. Box 9000, Hope College,  
Holland MI 49422-9000. Attention: Special Book Orders

## Visiting Researcher

Judith Scholte, a graduate student at the University of Utrecht, recently completed a five-month period of research conducted from the A.C. Van Raalte Institute, where she was provided with office space and collegial assistance. The focus of Ms. Scholte's research is on post World War II Dutch emigration to the United States. She intends to add to the field of knowledge about immigration by studying a group of people who can recall and recount their experiences. Her decision to visit Holland, Michigan, to conduct interviews was influenced by the television coverage in the Netherlands of Princess Margriet's visit to the city in the fall of 1997. (See "The Visit of Princess Margriet" in last year's A. C. Van Raalte Institute Annual Report.)



Judith Scholte, photographed in Holland's Centennial Park

At the end of her stay, Ms. Scholte provided a summary of her research findings for the Institute, and concluded with a statement of appreciation: "These past few months I had the wonderful opportunity of discovering a very interesting warm-hearted group of people in Holland, Michigan. I feel blessed that everyone I talked to was willing to share his or her life-history with me. Also without the generous support of everyone working at the Van Raalte Institute my research wouldn't have turned out in such a positive way. I cannot stress enough my thankfulness to all of you.

## Dr. Barend A. de Vries

During October 1999, the A.C. Van Raalte Institute, in conjunction with the Department of Economics and Business Administration at Hope College, hosted Dr. Barend A. de Vries, a noted international economist. His most recent book is *Champions of the Poor: The Economic Consequences of Judeo-Christian Values*, published in 1998 by Georgetown University Press. Dr. de Vries, who holds a Ph.D. in industrial economics from M.I.T., has served on the Cowles Commission at the University of Chicago, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Bank, where he advised developing countries on issues of economic policy, and oversaw programs to improve nutrition, education, and health, and to enhance the status of women.

In a moving address on "The Economic and Moral Imperative of Fighting Poverty," Dr. de Vries first described the extent of poverty in both developing and affluent nations. In developing countries, 1.3 billion people live in deepest poverty, having less than \$1 a day, and 3 billion people exist on less than \$2 a day. In the United States, 11 million children still lack health insurance. "The extent of poverty," he told his audience, "is totally incompatible with our Christian faith." Economic action, though essential, is insufficient; the attack on poverty must be "multi-pronged," and involve personal giving and political action. He quoted John Wesley, who directed his followers to "earn all you can, and give all you can."

He then discussed four factors which contribute to poverty throughout the world, all of which are contrary to Biblical teachings. Unequal treatment of women is widespread, but "the bottom line is that Jesus Christ treated males and females the same." Environmental degradation "rests most heavily on the poor." Recalling Cain's murder of Abel, when God said that the shed blood would contaminate the soil, Dr. de Vries drew a direct connection between killing one's brother and contaminating the earth, cautioning that "we must cut our consumption to cease despoiling the environment." Describing the military as "the greatest despoilers of the environment, and the greatest cause of debt," he cited St. Paul's admonition that the only debt we must have is to love one another. "The Bible comes out on the side of the oppressed," he concluded. "We cannot deal with the problems of our world with a heart of stone."

## The Translation Program

The Institute's ongoing translation program expanded substantially this year, and now includes three translators fluent in both Dutch and English. In translating historical documents written in Dutch which are related to the work of the Institute, William Buursma and Nella Kennedy have joined Simone Kennedy, whose primary work continues to be translation of the letters of Albertus C. Van Raalte. The translation program also assists Hope College faculty and staff and colleagues in the Netherlands in their research.

William D. Buursma, born in Friesland, the Netherlands, emigrated with his parents to Holland, Michigan. A graduate of Holland Christian High School, Calvin College, and Calvin Seminary, he retired from the ministry after serving Christian Reformed Church churches in Canada and the United States. Now living in Grand Rapids, he is translating the minutes of the Holland Classis from 1859-1876. Nella Kennedy is participating in this important task, translating Classis minutes of 1858-1859.

Examples of recent translations are a regular part of our Annual Report. As before, translations are followed by related excerpts from *Albertus C. Van Raalte: Dutch Leader and American Patriot*, by Jeanne M. Jacobson, Elton J. Bruins, and Larry J. Wagenaar, published by Hope College.

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A letter from Albertus C. Van Raalte to his wife Christina, written 26 October 1837, while he was attending a classis meeting in Groningen. In his letter he refers to the primary leader of the Afscheiding, Rev. Hendrik de Cock.

*26 oktober 1837, handgeschreven brief van ACVR aan zijn vrouw Christina*

Original: Western Theological Seminary Collection, Joint Archives of Holland

Translation by Simone Kennedy

(Ellipses indicate places where the text is illegible.)

*Ms. C. J. Van Raalte, Genemuiden, province of Overijssel*

*Groningen, 26 Oct. 1837*

*Dear beloved wife,*

*May the Lord shine on you with the light of His kind face, may He grant you His Spirit to teach you and reveal your heart, may He show you the path of salvation and the work of God in you, so that you may live here to praise the Trinity, and to be a blessing to the people around you, so that you may also be assured of being a child of God through its fruits.*

*Through the Lord's goodness I did arrive in good health, and found their churches to be in better condition than ours. The churches do not harbor any suspicion against the Ministers, to the contrary, they love them, respect them and care for them. I also have the feeling that my background may be useful to educate these churches and battle against many misconceptions;*

*Today, Thursday, the Classis met here in Groningen, and it was decided that... [protests] would not yet be accepted, but that a ruling would be made only after the documents are made public and can be studied carefully. They were planning on publishing their decision as an addendum to the minutes. They will be meeting again on Saturday in Wildervank, Tuesday somewhere else, and Thursday again at a different place. The condition of the churches and the pressure by the ministers forces me to be also present at these meetings. I would rather be home and work in our churches, but I should sacrifice my own desires, and hope that this will work out to be a blessing for the churches.*

*Yesterday night I was able to preach in this town without being disturbed and ... a blessing for a number of people.*

*Tomorrow I hope to join Brother de Cock to travel to Wildervank.*

*Ms. Dijkema, the lady whom you met at Van Velzen's home in Drogeham, is also with us, and sends you her sincere regards. Her sister is also present, as is Rev. [de] Cock and his wife.*

*Dear wife, may the Lord be with you and keep you well in body and soul.*

*Give my love to Daatje and Mientje, and greet the ... church council and the church sincerely. I greatly desire that the Lord live among you, ... Amen!*

*Your husband who sincerely loves you,  
A.C. Van Raalte*

Albertus Van Raalte graduated in 1835, but in the few years which intervened between [Hendrik] Scholte's graduation and his own there had been an upheaval in the Hervormde Kerk. Some ministers — among them Scholte and Hendrik de Cock, a graduate of the University of Groningen — protested against church practices which they believed were not biblically and doctrinally sound, and many people flocked to hear these powerful new pastors preach.

...Van Raalte and his fellow pastors attempted to follow regulations — or to evade them — while still serving the needs of parishioners who were eager to hear them preach. Many families permitted their farms or barns to be used, even though they risked heavy fines. When he held services outdoors, Van Raalte often met his congregation in places where they could quickly cross over into another town out of the jurisdiction of local officers sent to break up the meeting. Other pastors sometimes preached on board boats, while their congregation listened to them from smaller boats nearby. At indoor meetings the pastors would carefully see to it that only 19 people were inside, while others listened outside the house. Nevertheless, official harassment continued, resulting in fines and sometimes imprisonment. Van Raalte was jailed in Zwolle between February 27 and March 7 in 1837 and his wife and his brother-in-law Antonie Brummelkamp visited him there.

The excerpts on this page and the previous page are taken from “The idea of emigration swept over the land like a breath of God,” the second chapter of *Albertus C. Van Raalte: Dutch Leader and American Patriot*. This chapter, presenting events leading up to and following the *Afscheiding*, the secession from the established church of the Netherlands, describes Van Raalte's graduation from Leiden University in 1835; his marriage in 1836 to Christina De Moen, whose sisters were married to Antonie Brummelkamp and Simon Van Velzen; and his early pastorates. At the time of this classis meeting, he had accepted his first call, and served congregations in the province of Overijssel. The chapter title is from a pamphlet written by Brummelkamp and Van Raalte, discussing the advantages of emigration to North America rather than to Dutch-controlled Java.

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Excerpts from the minutes of the Classical Meeting held at Kalamazoo, opened on Tuesday, the 17th of September, 1860 at 7:00 p.m. and closed the following Thursday morning.

Original: Joint Archives of Holland

Translation by William Buursma

*Delegates from the congregations present were Drenthe: J. Wiggers, elder; Grand Haven: J. Mieras, elder; Grand Rapids: Rev. W.A. Houbolt, and J. van Zee, elder; Grandville: Snitzler, deacon; Holland: Rev. A.C. van Raalte, J. Labots and G. Wakker, elders; Kalamazoo: Rev. H.G. Klyn, and J. van Kersen, elder; Muskegon: K.*

*Zuidema, elder; Overysel: Rev. G.J. Nykerk, and L. Dangeremont, elder; Vriesland: Rev. A. Zwemer, and M. den Herder, elder; Zeeland: A. Gleerum and A. Borgers, elders. Also present was Rev. H. Stobelaar from Alto, Wisconsin, who has received the call from Zeeland.*

*ARTICLE X - Committee for Mission Work*

*The committee for the advancement of mission activity delivers the following reports:*

*The committee for the extension of missionary work respectfully presents the following:*

*1. That in every congregation of classis the task of missions should receive more encouragement. The committee judges that it would be appropriate that mission clubs be formed with the goal of encouraging the work of missions.*

*2. Missionary preacher - It is proposed that the Board of Domestic Missions be requested to send out Christiaan van der Veen, theological student at New Brunswick, as missionary pastor for the vacant congregations in Classis Holland, if he is willing, upon completion of his studies, to take upon himself this task.*

*3. The committee also asks if it would not be appropriate for the welfare and extension of God's kingdom to send a competent pastor of the classis to the Dutch population of South Africa in order to serve as a pioneer gospel minister. This task would be to open and to provide places for others, either for temporary or more permanent service.*

*G.J. Nykerk, President*

*This report was approved and accepted with the restriction that the first proposal concerning missionary clubs does not require the congregation to institute them but only encourage them in this matter. How this suggestion shall be implemented is left entirely to the judgment of the congregations.*

*In connection with the third proposal, classis faces a problem, asking where a man can be found who is both willing and able to assume this task.*

*At this point, Rev. A.C. van Raalte offered himself for this position. Whereupon, a serious discussion concerning this offer followed. Classis is unwilling to see Rev. van Raalte leave its midst and believes that the reasons underlying this offer are not sufficiently justified for sending Rev. van Raalte to Africa.*

*Noon time having arrived, the discussion of the matter will be continued at the following session.*

Van Raalte was not only a man of principle; he was a man of understanding. Thus, he could discern what was important and what was not. Throughout his life, he encountered people with more limited minds who were challenged and intrigued by opportunities to take a self-righteous stand — such as the view that hymn singing marked people and churches as wicked — and condemn others roundly for an easily-grasped error. ... His strong leadership faltered when bickering about minor matters rose to heights which set neighbor against neighbor. ... At the end of August [1860] he wrote a letter which is probably the most despairing of the letters that have survived: "I see too much strife among the people on my account; the influence of my preaching is injured: they sin against God's gift of the ministry. Many good things are opposed on my account. ... The foul insane fury against hymns is going on."

The excerpt is taken from "People bound for Zion almost always have trouble with their fellows along the way," the sixth chapter of *Albertus C. Van Raalte: Dutch Leader and American Patriot*, by Jeanne M. Jacobson, Elton J. Bruins, and Larry J. Wagenaar. This chapter sets controversies within the classis that led to the schism of 1857 in the context of national turmoil outside the Holland colony which preceded the Civil War; the title quotation, from Bruce Catton's history *Never Call Retreat*, refers to attacks on President Lincoln.

Some people seem to be born enthusiasts. Will Rogers said he never met a man he didn't like. Albertus Van Raalte never envisioned an opportunity that didn't excite him. He wasn't perennially optimistic, but he was a spontaneous optimist. Throughout his life his heart leapt up at the thought of new challenges, and he reacted to the possibility of new endeavors with the thought, "I could do that! I could do that *well!*" Eventually it grew more and more difficult for him to walk and not faint, to run and not be weary — but it was always in his power to mount up with wings like an eagle.

*But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength:  
they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary;  
and they shall walk, and not faint.*

Isaiah 40:31. KJV

This excerpt is taken from "I thirst after an opportunity to free myself of these annoyances and to devote myself entirely to the Kingdom of God," tenth chapter of *Albertus C. Van Raalte: Dutch Leader and American Patriot*, which describes Van Raalte's attempt to found a new colony in the south after the Civil War. The chapter title is taken from a letter written by Van Raalte to his friend and colleague Philip Phelps, then head of the Holland Academy and later first president of Hope College. The letter, written 31 August 1860, is now in the Joint Archives of Holland at Hope College.