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4-24-1837

### Letter from Albertus C. Van Raalte to Christina de Moen Van Raalte

Albertus C. Van Raalte

Leonard Sweetman

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#### Recommended Citation

Van Raalte, Albertus C. and Sweetman, Leonard, "Letter from Albertus C. Van Raalte to Christina de Moen Van Raalte" (1837). *Van Raalte Papers: 1830-1839*. 61.

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April 24, 1837

Ommen, Overijssel Province, the Netherlands

A letter of Ds. Albertus C. Van Raalte, to his wife, Christina de Moen Van Raalte, reporting that he arrived safely at the Brummelkamps. On Sunday he preached to a thousand people.

Original: The Archives of Calvin College

Translation by Dr. Leonard Sweetman and published in *From Heart to Heart, Letters from the Rev. Albertus Christiaan Van Raalte to His Wife, Christina Johanna Van Raalte-De Moen*, 1997, pp. 3-6, 42-44.

*Common, Apr 24,*

*The*  
Story of Van Raalte

"A Man Strong and of Good Courage"

*by*  
MARIAN M. SCHOOLLAND

AUTHOR OF  
*A Land I will Show Thee, etc.*



WM. B. EERDMANS PUBLISHING COMPANY  
Grand Rapids 1951 Michigan

Dearly beloved wife!

May God the Lord lift up the light of His countenance upon you and give you peace!

... Saturday afternoon I rode to Hofwyk and from there continued the journey with Gerrit. Although we had with us two who knew the territory well, we lost our way because of the heavy darkness and wandered in the fields for a long time, in constant danger of tipping over. I have traveled much, but have never had a more distressing journey. Many a time I was glad you were not with me. Late at night we finally arrived at our destination, preserved by God's grace. After sleeping a couple of hours, I awoke to find the weather beautiful, though it had rained hard during the night. Streams of people came from every direction, and I preached twice to much more than a thousand people. The enemy was misled, because there had been many previous rumors of my coming and, having found them false each time, they thought the present rumors false also — the more so since our wanderings in the field made it appear as if we were not coming on Saturday. When on Sunday they discovered that I was there, it was too late to call the soldiers. So the burgo-master merely came, with threats and talk. That evening, when we came to Ommen, there was some shouting and some rapping at windows, but for the most part things went off quite peaceably. . . ."

On the 1st of May he again wrote from Ommen, as follows.

Last Saturday I was at Den Ham and there we were left in peace and blessed. The populace shouted some, but the burgo-master went fishing. Yesterday I was privileged to preach without disturbance and I served communion to an even larger group than the previous Sunday. . . . Tomorrow I hope to go to Dedemsvaart, then to Hellendoorn, and then to the vicinity of Rysen. . . .

Next week Tuesday I am to appear in court at Deventer. Perhaps I shall not go, as it is useless and the needs of the congregations are many and urgent. Van Rees has notified me that soldiers are quartered with Jan Van der Haar, and also that notice has been received of another fine, to be paid by the 4th of May. I have asked him to take care of it for us. Dear wife, I hope you will not lose courage. Dear wife, to preach is my calling; and if it costs money, it is the Lord's work; if we but fear and love Him, this too will work together for our good. We have never yet lacked anything, and truly He will not forsake us. . . ."

It is clear from the tone of these letters as well as from their content that, in spite of hardships and difficulties, Van Raalte found a deep joy in dispensing the bread of life to his fellowmen. Nothing could keep him from the work to which he felt himself called.

#### The king grants his favor

After several years of persecution, it was evident that force would not bring the sheep back into the fold. When in 1839 Scholte requested permission to organize a congregation at Utrecht, to meet in a building which they had ready, the king granted his favor -- upon certain conditions, chief of which was that the congregation must take care of its own poor and should renounce all right to State aid.

Following the lead of Scholte, more groups applied for the king's favor. Some were refused, because of inadequate buildings or inability to care for their poor. But many received favorable reply, with the result that small congregations were organized throughout the Netherlands.