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7-4-1872

# Correspondence of A. C. Van Raalte with Abraham Kuyper 

A. C. Van Raalte

Verwey
Henry ten Hoor

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July 4, 1872

Correspondence of A. C. Van Raalte with Abraham Kuyper of this date and July 17 about assisting a Mr. Verwey who has been difficult to deal with.

Originals in the Archives of the Free University of Amsterdam.
Translations by Dr. Henry ten Hoor.

Rev. D ${ }_{\text {y }}$. A. Kuiper.
Dear Brother,
I have sent Verwey to Grand Rapids, 28 miles from here, where many Hollanders live and which is known as a rapidly growing industrial city and have advised him to take work as a laborer in a factory making furniture or barrels or woodturning. That line of work pays well and offers the prospect of being able to start one's own business once it is learned. I gave him $\$ 30$ when he left and sent him 30 more on his request because he had lost his suitcase. Soon after that he comes to Holland to tell me that after a few days the people refused to give him any more instruction, that they had given him the cold shoulder on account of his spectacles and because he was too gentlemanly. But an insurance office wanted to try him out and at the same time he wanted to carry around stuff to peddle and thus earn his daily bread. For this purpose I gave him $\$ 60$. The day before yesterday I was in Grand Rapids. I didn't run into him. I became aware that the insurance company was dubiously asking questions about his character of the Hollanders and I learned from all the Hollanders that he had behaved rudely toward a German friend in a tavern, had been arrested and sentenced to pay a fine of $\$ 10$ (f. 25) and had been jailed since he could not pay. Mr. Van der Sluis, to whom I had recommended him, became aware of this, paid his fine and got him out of jail.

In this way he hinders his own progress and must expect the cold shoulder.

I gave him no more money lest he should lose it. I don't think he needs it. It is difficult to get started, but if he will try he will be able to make a living. If not, his road will be a hard one. In this busy, practical country he will be trampled under foot and such an experience is perhaps necessary to teach him a lesson. Apart from that, he shows some signs of determination and spirit which promise success if he will not waste his efforts. His training gives
him an advantage.
Sending money goes best by means of a draft from Hope on King's Sons, New York. Be so good as to order and pay for me a Wekstem en Bazuin and also deduct enough for a year's subscription to De Standaard which I have been enjoying by borrowing from someone else. You cannot expect many subscribers from here because everybody is drowning in a sea of periodicals.

Brother, God entrusts you with much. It is worth living for. I hope that the reality and the majesty of the things of God's kingdom may preserve your heart and make you happy and effective in your work. And although things of ten seem chaotic within and without, let it strengthen our spirit that Jesus is at the controls and in majesty and repose executes and perpetuates his plan. Although I cpmplimented you on your work, let me say this: don't work yourself to death, don't cripple yourself. Get enough sleep and take a vacation.

Very respectfully,
Your brother in Christ,
A. C. Van Raalte


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A. C. Van Raalte to Dr. Abraham Kuyper, July 4, 1872
___Verwey to A. C. Van Raalte, July 13, 1872
A. C. Van Raalte to Dr. Abraham Kuyper, July 17, 1872

Originals: The Abraham Kuyper Archives, the Free University, Amsterdam

Contents: Verwey attempts to get aid from these men.

Full translation by Prof. Henry ten Hoor, June, 1976

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Respected Sir!
Your letter disappointed me greatly especially since the latest receipt has brought great trouble. Tonight I must, pay my board bill, and since now I cannot do that, I will have to leave without my belongings and spend the nights in the street because this boardinghouse keeper doesn't give a cent of credit. I had hoped to receive the necessary money since I still have $\$ 40$ of credit with you which would allow me to go to another boarding house tonight, which I had already arranged with a Dutch friend who would be willing to keep me for a while on credit while I could have bought wares with the remaining money to peddle on Monday. And now this chance to earn my bread is also lost. I can find no work because I have no trade and I am considered, rightly, unfit fox heavy work on the railroad or anything like that especially at my age and because $I$ am unaccustomed to heavy work. What I must do now I don? t know. Very likely I can get a little food here and there from various people, and I can get along without any for a couple of days, but I will have to spend the nights out of doors until I have saved enough to pay my debt and get my clothes back. So I beg you again, if it is at all possible, to send by money order the remaining creditvI have standing with you so that I can give this last chance of making a living a trial.

As concerns my departure from here, if I had been given such advice and had been told where to go, Iwould certainly have done that; now, hoever, I felt that without knowing your opinion about it, I should not leave Grand Rapids where you sent me.

Concerning my return to the Netherlands I must say this: Rev. Kuyper and $I$ were both of the opinion that it was impossible for me to get started here by myself; he said that he fully expected that you would find me some work. Without this firm expectation neither he nor I would ever have considered my going to America. Now that it appears that this expectation cannot be fulfilled and that, therefore, as I always knew, it would be impossible for me to start on my own, he will very likely agree with me that it is best for me to re-
turn to the Netherlands as soon as possible. If I cannot get to peddling or cannot make a living at it, I will write him more particularly about this and request that a credit account be opened for me somewhere to defray the expenses of my return trip, which I know my family will approve since their intent was never to expose me to poverty and hunger but to give me a chance at an honest livelihood.

I expect your answer to my repeated requests by retum mail, and beg you, if it is possible, to respond favorably. Monday and Tuesday I will go to the post office and 10 k for a letter for me, because I find it unpleasant to discuss my business affairs with Mr. van der Sluyंs since we would have to discuss the matter of money in the presence of his workmen.

Respectfullyr, Your servant, _- Vexvey

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& \text { Holland, Michigan } \\
& \text { July 17, } 1872
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Rev. Df.A. Kuypers. (qい)
Dear Brother,
I enclose Verwey's fiery letter to justify my sending the last \$40 without your honor's approval and against my own conviction that even forty dollars would not help him. A person doesn!t value what he brings along but what he himself produces, as the saying here goes.

I am sorry if I have disappointed you. Recommendation doesn't count for much here; hardy endurance is everything and my recommen- $V$ dation has become useless. If a stranger here behaves himself in such a way that he immediately falls into the hands of the police, then it's better that he leaves. He pays no attention to the hint I gave him about this as if he were bound by my orders to stay in Grand Rapids, notwithatanding the fact that I had already strongly suggested that he look for connections in Grand Haven and Big Rapids.

Besides, he has no aptitude for teaching and would be unable to secure such a position because he lacks the accent and would not be able to pass the examinations.

Clerks are selected on the basis of reputation and character. $H_{i} s$ learning a trade in the factory stopped after an affair with a woman. As a result of this and of his beer drinking the insurance company dismissed him notwithstanding the fact that the company really wanted a qualified Hollander and were willing to give him a trial. And the greatest difficulty is that wherever he goes he acts and talks just as he does in his letter: that he has not learned a trade, that he is unable to do heavy work, that he can't earn his daily bread, that no one will help him and that his family is sending him money for the trip home. Thus he determines his own lot.

My opinion and advice is what it was before: leave him in school. It's best for him to move farther west where he can't depend on anyone
else. This dependence on others isn'ttgood for him: better to be among completely strange Americans. He has taken a condescending attitude toward the Hollanders. He considers them merely congenial companions. With highest respect,

Your friend and brother, A. C. Van Raalte.
P.S. Don't worry yourself over his complaints. We who are here know that it is difficult for this kind of people, but they finally learn and get along fine. However, he must leave these parts. No one dies here faom hunger, etc. I would dare to let the whole of the destitute Netherlands rain dow from the clouds all over the inhabited areas of America without being concerned that one person would perish from poverty.

VR

