The Reformed Church in America and Higher Education
(with special reference to Northwestern Academy and College)\(^1\)

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The Dutch were the first successful non-British people to establish themselves in the original thirteen colonies; New Amsterdam was settled in 1624 and, subsequently, the Dutch penetrated to the far reaches of the Hudson Valley. These "early" Dutch came not primarily for religious reasons, but for commercial and economic reasons. These people, from a tradition sturdy in the Reformed faith and one which recognized the cause of sound and broad education (their universities and common schools in the earlier days of modern times bear witness to this), early founded schools. The first of these was the famous Collegiate school dating back to the early 1630's, undoubtedly the oldest educational institution in the U. S.; subsequently, public schools were established in many other Dutch settlements.\(^2\) Furthermore a Latin school was established in New Amsterdam in 1659. Though these were termed "public schools," they were actually Christian schools in that the emphasis was upon piety, and instructional materials included a specially prepared catechism and reading books containing the Lord’s Prayer, the Ten Commandments, the Proverbs of Solomon, prayers and other pious matter.\(^3\) Furthermore, the early teachers were often ministers or teachers who served as "lay preachers" as well.\(^4\) Permanent English occupation in the 1670's did little to promote the cause of education in the colony. It should be noted here that these "early" Dutch never considered themselves "separate" from the church in the Netherlands as the later Michigan and Iowa Dutch would. The Dutch in New Amsterdam (and later New York) long considered themselves part of Classis Amsterdam.

It was not until 1766 that the ministers and elders of the Dutch Reformed Church petitioned Gov. William Franklin of New Jersey for the right to establish a college as a training school for ministers. A real need existed to train their own ministers since the process of keeping pulpits supplied by ministers trained in Holland or by Americans schooled in Holland was increasingly difficult. The charter, granted by George III, stressed the religious goals of the school: the object of the college was to be "for the education of youth in the learned languages, liberal and useful arts and sciences, and especially in divinity, preparing them for the ministry and for other good offices."\(^5\) The name of this institution was later changed to Rutgers College in honor of Colonel Henry Rutgers; today, of course, it bears the appellation of Rutgers University and it has become the (secular) state-university of New Jersey.

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A theological seminary was begun in 1784. Though it started in New York, it found its permanent home in New Brunswick in 1810. By that time the Dutch had become pretty well "Americanized" and this seminary was very similar to its American counterparts. It remains today as the eastern seminary of the Reformed Church, and has tended to be more typically "American" than its Western sister.

It might be mentioned that the Dutch were also involved in the founding of Union College (1795) at Schenectady, New York. This started as an academy through the work of the Rev. Dirck Romeyn, a Dutch Reformed pastor in Schenectady, and various Hollanders in the Mohawk Valley. It was nonetheless founded as a non-denominational college with religious goals paramount. It was never, however, as closely affiliated with the early church as Rutgers.

The academies and colleges of the West, however, were more specifically the products of the Dutch themselves, and they more accurately reflected the Dutch heritage in terms of its religious emphasis and its culture. Two of the present Reformed colleges of the West—Hope and Northwestern—had their own origins as college-preparatory schools which grew into colleges which have become rather typical American institutions. These schools were founded by "later" Hollanders who migrated to America in the mid-nineteenth century.

A bit of historical background is in order here. The Netherlands emerged from the Napoleonic Era with a State Church—the Hervormde Kerk—and with the state controlling the theological faculties and the church and university properties. There were those who viewed this with alarm; and in the early 1830's a secession (the Afscheiding) occurred which threatened the established state church. Leaders in this movement were men such as the Rev. Hendrik P. Scholte and the Rev. Albertus C. Van Raalte, as well as many others. Not permitted to preach in the state churches, they preached in homes, barns, and fields. Constantly harassed, arrested, fined, and jailed, the leaders nevertheless continued to defy the government and the state church. The persecution was, in the main, petty, but the decade 1836-46 remains as a blot on the long Dutch record of tolerance. And, as has commonly been the case, persecution increased the numbers of dissenters; and when, in the end, the government reluctantly agreed to compromise, many of the "Separatists" had decided to migrate.

Consideration was given to the finding of a new home in the Dutch East Indies but, fearing government interference there as well, they fixed their sights on America. It must be said that religious reasons were not the only ones for the migration, but they were the primary ones. Heavy taxation upon the poor, hunger in the Netherlands and in Europe generally, a severe cholera epidemic, and a potato-crop failure in 1845 all provided added impetus to the decision. Nevertheless it must be maintained that the state church and the education situation in the homeland were the main, compelling reasons for migration; this is evidenced in the movement by congregations and the fact that not all of the migrants were poor by any means. Christian education was an objective of prime importance, for in the homeland they were hindered by the local authorities in educating their
own children; special schools—i.e., Christian schools were viewed with disfavor and actually forbidden. Thus, the members of the Secession—and the Iowa and Michigan contingents were largely members of the Secession—who came to America were strong proponents of Christian education.

Evidence of this can be seen in the “Principles of the Society for the Dutch Emigration to the U. S. of America,” which was drawn up by the Michigan group. Article 7 dealt with the need to establish a Christian community; in another article, dealing with education, was the statement that “Christian parents cannot excuse themselves before God for the lack of opportunity to have their children educated in accordance with their religious convictions.” This was Van Raalte’s view—education and religion were inseparable; and the student’s training, as he put it, must be “permeated in the principles of the teachings and admonitions of the Lord.”

The Van Raalte group chose a Michigan site in the late spring of 1847, probably because the area was well-watered and timbered. These sought to persuade the Scholte group to join them, but Scholte chose to settle his people on the prairies of Iowa where farming was immediately practicable.

In the Michigan settlement Van Raalte worked hard for the cause of Christian education. His personal papers reveal the strong conviction “that the fear of God must be the soul of our education; our Christian color must come out everywhere.” Soon discontented with the public township schools established, he sought to establish Christian schools. A central problem was financing (the Michigan group was not a very affluent one) and, in the end, he appealed to the Board of Education of the Reformed Church for aid to the “Pioneer School.”

This request was received with sympathy, for the Reformed Church, as early as 1836, had been considering the establishment of a school farther west, in the valley of the Mississippi. When the Dutch Michigan settlers, as the Classis of Holland, joined with the Reformed Church in 1850, the way was cleared for establishing such a school in their midst.

Thus, in 1853, the Reformed Church cooperated in undergirding the Pioneer School, and plans were made to add a secondary school to prepare students for further instruction at Rutgers College. The Academy, founded less than four years after the Michigan colony began in 1851, remained until after World War I the Preparatory Department of Hope College. Van Raalte, however, still was not content; his dream was the establishment of a university, a suggestion which was made at one time to the General Synod but was rejected. He did get his college, the first class of which graduated in 1866—nineteen years after the community was founded. Van Raalte’s slogan, “This is my Anchor of Hope,” provided the name “Hope” for the college. In 1866 a theological seminary was started but its founding was premature; the community was too small and not wealthy enough to support an academy, college, and seminary, with New Brunswick Seminary available in the East. The closing was temporary, however; the Seminary was re-opened in 1884 and it remains a vigorous school today.
At the time the Pioneer School became a denominational enterprise (1853), denominational plans envisioned a college to "equip competent teachers, train ministers, and prepare missionaries for the force in the field." It was under the administration of the Rev. P. Phelps (beginning in 1859) that the functions of the Academy were enlarged and a Collegiate Department was added. Phelps, in his inaugural address (July 12, 1866), pledged his efforts to make the institution serve its founding church for, as he put it, "everything exists for the sake of that church, and this Institution exists chiefly for the sake of extending that church . . . "

Hope's curriculum, from the beginning, was strictly classical with a special emphasis upon Greek and Latin; a knowledge of the classical languages was considered essential for an educated clergy. For the same reason, Dutch was taught well into the twentieth century. For all that, Hope was basically an American, liberal arts college in terms of organization, curriculum, and language of instruction. By the beginning of the twentieth century, Hope, too, was feeling the pressure and influences to which other American colleges were being subjected. The curriculum was gradually modified in favor of the more practical scientific and modern language courses. By World War I, the classical course was clearly on the defensive amid demands for greater diversity and practicality in the curriculum. Following that war, many new courses and departments were added and, in the 1930's for a few years, the college offered a master of arts degree in many areas. By the late 1940's the academic program consisted of a broad, general education during the first two years with concentration in a major subject area during the next two years. This was the typical program of an American college at that date.

The Hollanders who settled in the Pella area in 1847 differed somewhat from their brethren in the Michigan area. They were perhaps less homogeneous, theologically speaking; they were relatively more affluent than their Michigan brethren; and their leader, the Rev. Hendrik P. Scholte, was more independent by nature and more suspicious of ties with established churches. Then, too, from the beginning, these Hollanders were in closer contact with "other" Americans (as evidenced in the founding of a Baptist college in their midst). All of these help to explain the somewhat more easy-going, more "liberal" atmosphere of the Iowa Dutch frontier.

Scholte, as influential among the Pella Dutch as Van Raalte was in Michigan, was from a background of wealth. A student in the Academy of Arts in Amsterdam until his father's death when he was sixteen, he turned to philosophical studies at the University of Leyden but ended up by concentrating on theology. His wife came from the same background of wealth as he. Her background included two years at an exclusive school for girls in Paris where her father was Professor of Astronomy, courses in painting, and a piano recital at the Grand Opera House in Paris. She moved easily in fashionable eastern social circles while her husband was busy founding his colony. In Pella, Scholte would soon build for her a mansion and formal English garden that was the talk of the area. Mrs.
Scholte, always considered somewhat "worldly" by her fellow migrants in Pella, devoted herself there to music, the latest fashions, and the European "atmosphere" of her home.

Scholte, again like Van Raalte, did not limit himself to theology and preaching. In America he became an architect, gentleman farmer, owner of saw mills and assorted other businesses, a land agent, notary, printer, broker, banker, implement dealer, attorney, editor owner and publisher of a weekly, and politician (he attended the famous Republican Party Convention of 1860, was an early backer of Lincoln, and was referred to by Lincoln as his "Dutch friend"). Scholte's independence, perhaps fostered by his early difficulties with the established church in the Netherlands but certainly also a part of his nature, led him to found an independent religious organization in Pella, the Christian Church of Pella, though there were soon seceders there who formed churches which joined the Reformed Church in America. Rather interestingly, this church was not transferred to the Northwest Iowa area when the Pella hive "swarmed" in the 1860's.

Still, both the Michigan and Iowa contingents were largely members of the Secession in the Netherlands and had been united there in objecting to the limitations of government schools for their children, schools in which they felt the atmosphere was unsuitable for Christian principles (some had even sent their children to Roman Catholic schools). The same Hollanders who were energetic in fighting for Christian schools in their homeland were strangely apathetic about these schools in the New World (Van Raalte, it has been noted was a strong advocate of Christian schools in Michigan, but except for the Holland Academy and Hope College, his efforts there were largely unsuccessful). Van Raalte, according to his own assertion, wished to interest the Iowa Dutch in Christian education (he visited there in 1859 to preach for five weeks to pastorless congregations of the Dutch Reformed Church).

Not that the Iowa Dutch were entirely oblivious to the need for Christian education. Within four years of their settlement in the Pella area, many participated in the founding of the Baptist college, Central. Scholte himself was a chief promoter and donated eight acres of land for the campus; other wealthy members of his colony donated large sums of money for the institution "that which in its moral, literary, and religious bearing upon the community would be more important than country or government seats." Scholte cooperated with the Baptists in every way, giving liberally of his wealth and time and interest. His dream was always of the day when Central would become a real university with departments of law, medicine, theology, and the liberal arts. Central existed for a few years as a college-preparatory school, or academy, but by June, 1958, it had become a college. Not all the Pella Hollanders were as eager as Scholte to cooperate with the Baptists, but attempts, such as those of Van Raalte, to found a college of the Dutch Reformed Church at Pella, failed; the community was simply unable to support two colleges. Thus Central came into being in 1853, only six years after the first sod cottage had been built, supported enthusiastically by the Scholte group.
(Scholte might very well have preferred an independent Christian institution but, since this was out of the question, he threw his support to the Baptist institution). Central remained a Baptist school until 1916 when it was taken over by the Reformed Church in America, chiefly because the area was dominated by the Dutch and the Dutch were prominent in its constituency.29

Some twenty-two years after the Pella settlement, the Dutch were starting to look for new frontiers to conquer. A key motivation was "cheaper" land (the Pella land was becoming too expensive for the thrifty Dutch). After considering Texas and Kansas, a committee decided on Northwest Iowa where good, cheap land was still available. It was the beginning of the "great Iowa trek;" the first group left Pella in 1869, some seventy-five men and eighteen wagons, and came to the now-familiar Orange City area. They were soon followed by other waves until the colony was well established. These took with them their familiar ecclesiastical institutions—notably the Reformed Church which rapidly grew there and the relatively new Christian Reformed Church which was destined to play an ever-increasing role in Sioux County.30 Curiously, Scholte's church—the Christian Church of Pella—was not transplanted.

They took with them, too, their interest in Christian education, particularly in a college-preparatory high school which would produce future Reformed Church ministers. Orange City had a public grade school from the start (1870). Some settlers also desired to establish an institution similar to Holland Academy in Michigan, but hard times and the grasshopper plague delayed such an undertaking. During the 1870's Henry Hospers and the Rev. Seine Bolks led in keeping the vision of an academy before the Sioux County Dutch. Hospers, formerly mayor of Pella, was the new colony's leading citizen. Bolks, the first pastor (1872-1878) of the First Reformed Church of Orange City, had studied in the Netherlands for sixteen months under Van Raalte, had come to the United States with his whole congregation in 1847, had served various Reformed churches in Michigan, Wisconsin, and Illinois, and had witnessed the beginnings of Holland Academy and Hope College. He retired in Orange City and spent the last dozen years of his life (1882-1894) as the first president of the Board of Trustees of the Northwestern Classical Academy.

That institution came into being in the early 1880's. It was founded by a joint effort of the denomination (the General Synod and the Classes of Illinois and Iowa) and the Sioux County Dutch (the Reformed Church ministers and some local businessmen). Starting in 1881 or 1882, and continuing well into 1883, Jacob Van Zanten, a recent (1880) graduate of Hope College and the principal of the Orange City grade school (and later a Reformed Church minister), privately instructed about a dozen young men in "languages and other higher branches . . . with a view and in the hope that ere long an institution of higher learning would be established in that place."31 In June 1882, the General Synod recommended that college-preparatory schools be established in the West under the care of Classes and the guidance of the denomination's Board of Education; these in-
stitutions were to “indoctrinate” their students “in Gospel truths and the standards of our Church” and were to be similar to “the Grammar School of Hope College.” The Sioux County response was immediate; the next month (July 19, 1882), the Northwestern Classical Academy had a Board of Trustees and a constitution.

The following year, the Academy began its teaching ministry — 9:00 a.m., Monday, September 24, 1883, in the newly-built Consistory Room of the First Reformed Church of Orange City. Its pupils were apportioned into three “classes” (grades); the next year there were students in each of the classes of the full four-year program; some pupils began in 1883 at the second and third-year levels because of the previous tutoring they had received from Van Zanten. The initial faculty was composed of three part-time teachers: the Rev. Ale Buursma, pastor of the host church, the Rev. John W. Warnshuis, pastor of the Alton Reformed Church, and Van Zanten. By the end of 1883, a modest $900 temporary classroom building was erected on land (the present site of the college) donated by Henry Hospers, who for many years was the treasurer of Northwestern’s Board and the leading local financial force behind the institution. From 1886 to 1895, the Academy—classrooms and dormitory—found refuge in an abandoned skating rink, from which it moved to a more lasting home, the present Zwemer Hall. On Tuesday, January 15, 1884, the Rev. John A. De Spelder was installed as the first principal and first full-time teacher of the Academy after the Board had spent over a year in the search for a principal (De Spelder finally accepted the second call extended to him, and he was the third man whom the Board called). By the end of the school year 1883-84 there were two full-time instructors (De Spelder and Van Zanten, who resigned his public school position in April, 1884) and about twenty-five pupils (including five girls), almost all certainly Dutch, and drawn entirely from Orange City and immediate vicinity. The Orange City public elementary school at this time had a total of nearly 200 pupils; although only a small percentage of the public school graduates went on to the Academy in its initial year, the beginning must be reckoned as fairly auspicious.

The classical, college-preparatory orientation of the course of study doubtless discouraged many from attending, even though the tuition was free. The first curriculum, as advertised in 1883, contained mathematics and natural science, English, Latin, rhetoric, and history during each of the pupil’s four years, reading and spelling, Greek, and Dutch during three of those years, and geography, penmanship, and teaching methods during one of the years. In order to increase enrollment and to aid primary school education, a teacher education course was added in 1888; this was evidently a popular innovation, since, during the school year 1888-89, over one-third of the total Academy enrollment of seventy-four students (about triple the first school year’s enrollment) were not in the “classical section.” By 1890 there were three courses of study—classical, scientific, and normal, with some variations between the requirements.

What did the founding fathers of Northwestern Classical Academy conceive
its raison d'être to be? The chief thrust in the earliest explications of Northwestern’s Christian purpose is that the Academy existed to train the mind and character of young people that they might serve both church and society—and that Christian education differed from secular education principally, if not solely, in adding the moral dimension. Beyond this, there seems to have been little clear agreement among the Academy’s founders and first supporters regarding the institution’s reason for existence. Important differences of opinion—and lack of distinct opinions—evidently existed among those initially associated with Northwestern. Pioneers rarely have opportunity or inclination to be reflective, and the fact that the Academy’s fathers did not provide comprehensive and detailed philosophical guidelines for the institution they were founding, should not overshadow their notable sacrifice and achievement in bringing Northwestern to birth and sustaining it during its frail infancy. Nevertheless the initial vagueness and ambivalence in educational philosophy help to explain Northwestern’s subsequent drift from its original liberal arts commitment to a more “practical” and vocationally-oriented program. The seeds of later developments were present from the very first.

Northwestern’s earliest interpreters—the General Synod, local newspapers, prominent trustees, and the first principal—in espousing varying viewpoints, tacitly raised questions about the institution’s purpose. Was the Academy to be a distinctively Christian institution, or was the emphasis to be placed on the academic and vocational? Was it to be a definitely Reformed school or non-sectarian Protestant in orientation? To what degree, if at all, was it to “indoctrinate” its students in the Bible and Reformed theology (as opposed to “secular” studies)? By what means would it accomplish this? Was it to remain an academy permanently (to get Eastern financial aid), or was it to grow eventually into a college (to get local Sioux County “booster” support)? Did it exist primarily to prepare future ministers (as the theory was) or to train future teachers (as the practice was) or to educate Christians for all walks of life? Was it to be a classical liberal arts (college-preparatory) school, or would it seek to have a broader appeal and “serve its constituency” by being a pragmatically vocational institution? Was it to seek to preserve the Dutch way of life among “the children of the covenant,” or was it to Americanize them, or was it to instill in them a cosmopolitan Christian way of thinking and living? Was it to shelter them or to equip them for service in the world? Some of these questions still face Northwestern, as well as Hope and Central.

The college-preparatory aim of the Academy was qualified, from the beginning, by a more directly vocational goal. This is borne out by the facts that in the 1883-84 curriculum a class in teaching methods was projected for the fourth year, that bookkeeping was added in 1884-85, that a specific normal program of study was instituted in 1888, and that by 1892-93 three education courses were listed as electives. Only about one-quarter (i.e., about a dozen) of the members of the Academy’s first eight graduating classes (1885-1892) went on to be grad-
uated from Hope College. They constituted about one-sixth of the total number of students who finished the Hope College course between 1889 and 1896. Ministers predominated among the Academy's early graduates; between 1885 and 1909 it produced approximately sixty-eight ministers or missionaries (not counting wives of clergymen), twenty-seven medical doctors, twenty-one teachers, thirteen lawyers, thirteen businessmen, ten farmers, five dentists, five bankers, three editors, three pharmacists, etc.—a number of whom scattered to all parts of the nation and the world. But the majority who attended Northwestern in the early days did not complete the four-year course of study, nor did most of them intend to. After perhaps a year or two at the Academy, many young people went into the public schools as apprentice teachers who eventually became full-fledged teachers. (One reason for the establishment of the Academy was to train Reformed teachers who would replace the Roman Catholic teachers in the public schools which Reformed children attended.) The occupational statistics for all those who attended (both graduates and non-graduates) the Academy during the first decade or so were given by the school's second principal, the Rev. James F. Zwemer (brother of the well-known missionary Samuel Zwemer), in 1895. A little over one hundred teachers (including about eighty apprentices, twenty public school teachers, and three more advanced teachers), thirty persons in various fields, and twenty students for the ministry were graduated. In terms of its overall program and practice, therefore, the Northwestern Classical Academy cannot be said to have ever succeeded in adhering very rigorously to its original stated purpose of being mainly a college-preparatory (pre-ministerial) institution, i.e., a Hope College feeder; from the start, Northwestern was willy-nilly primarily a teacher-training school.33

As for the later history of the Academy, state requirements for normal training resulted in agriculture, domestic science, and manual training being offered by 1916. The classical course was still offered, but pressures were increasing to offer a more practical course. Domestic science and agriculture were dropped in 1918 because of lack of interest. By 1920 Dutch had disappeared from the curriculum, and it was increasingly difficult to maintain the classical curriculum because of outside pressures. In 1927 consideration was given to drop the normal course since the state law required some college training for a teaching certificate.34 This would provide impetus for the junior college movement already underway; as early as 1911 suggestions were heard to add two years to the educational program. In early 1917 the Board so recommended, but World War I ended the idea for a time.35

From 1920 on, the ground work was laid for adding several years of college so that in June, 1926, the Board of Trustees approved the addition of one year's work. However, the first year was not added until September, 1928, partly because of the opposition of the Eastern Churches. The Northwestern Junior College did begin in September, 1928, with a class of thirty students.36

By 1930 the influence of the Junior College was being felt in the Academy. Only two years of foreign language were being required; the mathematics require-
ment was reduced from four years to two; and there were now four courses of study available—the classical, the modern classical, the scientific, and the general. The curriculum was slipping from its classical moorings and more and more meeting the “needs” of the students. By 1950 a foreign language was no longer required and its classical approach was pretty well gone. Courses such as manual training and home economics were required in the freshman year, and the curriculum resembled that of most high schools. The hope of the founders that this would not be just another high school had vanished.

The present Northwestern College had its beginnings in the Junior College which began in 1928. Since the college was to carry on the functions and purposes of the academy, its avowed Christian purpose would continue. In May, 1949, the General Synod of the Reformed Church removed the two-year college limitation and from that point on plans were made for a four-year college. These reached fruition in 1957 when the Northwestern Board of Trustees, the Board of Education, and the General Synod officially approved the plans for a four-year institution. However, until the 1965-66 term the school granted bachelor degrees only in the field of teacher training. In that year, a separate liberal arts course was designed for which the bachelor of arts degree is granted. To date, the majority of students still graduate with the bachelor of science degree in education.

It is significant to note that the Board of Trustees in 1965, by endorsing the liberal arts program, was bringing the institution back into line with the original purposes of the institution. To quote from the 1968-69 college catalogue: “The Academy’s stated purposes were: (1) To provide a good education premised on the Christian faith as interpreted by Reformed theology, and (2) to lay a thorough foundation of liberal education which would prepare young people for entrance into the leading colleges of the country.”

Like the Academy in its later years, the college program came into being in a somewhat haphazard way in response to various pressures and demands, and to meet practical needs (such as secretarial training courses; more education hours for prospective teachers; athletic, musical, and dramatic community entertainment; etc.). Perhaps the greatest pressure has been that which would make Northwestern conform, in terms of curriculum and program and college life, to similar institutions elsewhere. In view of this and mindful of the Board endorsement of a sound, Christian liberal arts program for the institution, the Northwestern faculty is currently engaged in an intensive self-study to determine the future course and direction of the college’s program.

It is obvious from this historical sketch that the Reformed Church has always had a keen interest in Christian higher education. And it is equally obvious, even from a cursory examination of the history of church-related colleges in the United States, that most “Christian” colleges have lost their sense of identity and differ little from their secular counterparts. The colleges of the Reformed Church are subject to the same eroding influences that other church colleges are; and they, if
they are to remain true to their Christian commitment, must continually scrutinize their positions and programs so as most effectively to carry on a genuine program of Christian higher education. This is as it should be, true to the spirit of the Reformation.

1This paper was originally prepared as part of a self-study which is currently being undertaken at Northwestern College; it has been modified to some extent but the coverage given Northwestern is still somewhat more extensive and detailed than that given the other colleges. In view of the purpose of the original study, this imbalance is understandable.


3Ibid.

4Ibid., p. 105.

5Rutgers College, The Celebration of the 150th Anniversary of its Founding at Queen's College, 1766-1916 (Rutgers College, 1917), p. 21. The original charter is no longer extant, but its contents were likely similar to a second charter, granted in 1770, a copy of which is in the college's possession. See also Arnold Mulder, Americans from Holland (New York, 1947), p.p. 205-206.


8Of course some of the nineteenth-century Dutch immigrants helped form the nucleus of the present Christian Reformed Church, whose colleges (all in the Midwest) are not under consideration here. On the whole, the Christian Reformed are less Americanized and more in touch with recent "old world" Dutch thinking than are the Reformed. Thus the Christian Reformed, in their educational thinking, have been deeply influenced first by Abraham Kuyper (and his "Free University," 1880) and more recently by the Christian philosophy of D. H. T. Vollenhoven and Herman Dooyeweerd (both of the Free University); the newer Christian Reformed colleges (Dordt and Trinity Christian) appear to have moved (or are moving) toward a fairly close adherence to the Vollenhoven-Dooyeweerd outlook, whereas Calvin College, begun in 1876, is somewhat less exclusive and homogeneous in its orientation; for a statement of Calvin College's philosophy of Christian higher education, see "Christian Liberal Arts Education: Report of the Calvin College Curriculum Study Committee," privately distributed by Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Mich., 1965. In keeping with Kuyper's doctrine of the "antithesis," the Christian Reformed have developed Christian schools on all levels (note Van Raalte's ideal below); because of this, their colleges have little trouble finding enough students. In keeping with Kuyper's emphasis on the doctrine of common grace and on the "cultural mandate" given by God to man in creation, the Christian Reformed colleges have consciously sought to relate their Christian presuppositions to every area of life and thought—to build a Christian culture. Also, among the leading non-Reformed evangelical Protestant colleges, such as Wheaton (Illinois) and Westmont, there is also an awareness of the necessity of an explicit and distinctively Christian approach to higher education.


10Ibid. See also Henry S. Lucas, Netherldeens in America (Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1955), pp. 42-68.

11Jacob Van Der Zee, The Hollanders of Iowa (Iowa City, 1912), p. 34.

12Stegenga, op. cit., p. 28.

13Ibid.


15Quoted in Stegena, op. cit., p. 38.

16Ibid., p. 39.

17Ibid.

18Ibid., p. 60.


20Stegenga, op. cit., p. 68.
31Ibid., p. 76.
32Ibid., pp. 244-247.
34Ibid., pp. 153-154.
35Van Der Zee, op. cit., pp. 266-7.
36Ibid.
37Ibid., p. 276.
38Ibid., p. 277.
40Ibid., pp. 161-167.
44Hubers, op. cit., pp. 26-42.
46Ibid., pp. 21-23.
47Ibid., pp. 43-45.
49See especially the 1966 Danforth study of church-related colleges (Manning M. Pattillo, Jr., and Donald M. Mackenzie, Church-Sponsored Higher Education in the United States, Report of the Danforth Commission, American Council on Education, Washington, D. C., 1966; see particularly Chapter 9). This comprehensive study points out clearly that most church-related colleges have gone far down the road towards secularism; they have lost their distinctiveness and have become but poor imitators of their secular counterparts. The study sounds a clarion call for such colleges to recover their identity, and to seek positively to implement their objectives in their total program so that they may once again offer a viable alternative to secular education.