

Hope College

Hope College Digital Commons

Van Raalte Papers: 1850-1859

Van Raalte Papers

8-19-1858

Notes on the Meeting of the Consistory of the First Reformed Church

Albertus C. Van Raalte

Gerrit Wakker

William Buursma

Althea Buursma

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.hope.edu/vrp_1850s

The original documents are held in The Joint Archives of Holland. This digitized material is intended for personal research/study only. The original documents may not be reproduced for commercial use in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, without permission in writing from [The Joint Archives of Holland](#).

Recommended Citation

Van Raalte, Albertus C.; Wakker, Gerrit; Buursma, William; and Buursma, Althea, "Notes on the Meeting of the Consistory of the First Reformed Church" (1858). *Van Raalte Papers: 1850-1859*. 56. https://digitalcommons.hope.edu/vrp_1850s/56

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the Van Raalte Papers at Hope College Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Van Raalte Papers: 1850-1859 by an authorized administrator of Hope College Digital Commons. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@hope.edu.

19 August 1858

Holland, Michigan

At a meeting of the consistory of the First Reformed Church at which Rev. Albertus C. Van Raalte presided and at which Gerrit Wakker served as clerk, some elders were asked why they were absent at the last meeting. Keppel said he was not aware of the time of the meeting, Broek did not like evening meetings because he had a long way to travel and it was too difficult to walk home in the dark, and Wilterdink did not know the time of the meeting and, in addition, his wife was sick. Consistory was informed that a newly married couple had separated. A three-week vacation for the school of the church was approved. A committee had reported on the charges made by Wilterdink that the pastor was "unfaithful, if not in doctrine, then in his dealings." Wakker, Broek, and the pastor were appointed to meet with Wilterdink to solve the problems this elder had with the church. The deacons were admonished for not having brought their books with them for review.

In Dutch; translation by Rev. William and Althea Buursma, 2000.

Original in the records of the Pillar Christian Reformed Church at the Joint Archives of Holland, vol. II, pp. 63-65.
[It is strange that the minutes of this meeting precede the 1 August minutes in the record book.]

It will then be possible for him to be received as a member and entitled to (have his children) receive the seal of the covenant (baptism), which the Lord has granted to his church.

ARTICLE 6 – Grootehuis has asked Brother Apeldoorn to bring his request for transfer to the Scottish congregation, since he wishes to join them. Rev. van Raalte returns to the meeting. The majority agrees to give him a membership transfer, with the notation that the censure placed upon him has not been lifted.

ARTICLE 7 – The committee mentioned in Article 6 of the previous meeting brings its report. Eelke van Aarendonk is received upon her confession of faith, with the promise that she will faithfully attend catechism classes.

ARTICLE 8 – It was decided that the deacons will be asked to give an account of their finances by presenting their books.

The meeting was closed by Brother Hekhuis.

A. C. van Raalte
G. Wakker

Consistory Meeting Held on August 19, 1858

Absent: Brothers Hekhuis and Labots.

The meeting was opened by the president. The minutes of both previous meetings were read and approved.

ARTICLE 1 – The president asks of Brother Keppel the reason for his absence from the previous meeting. He says that he was not aware of the time of the meeting. The same question is put to Brother Broek, who said that he does not enjoy going to the consistory meetings which are held in the evening, because it is too difficult for him to walk to his home in the dark. Upon this, the remark is made that the gravity of our consistory meetings deserves to be taken very seriously, because it concerns the welfare of our congregation in what we discuss. For us to have a good conscience, as far as our calling before God is concerned, we should not be absent unless it is absolutely necessary and there are lawful reasons. Brother Wilterdink adds that he also did not know the time of the previous meeting. Moreover, he still would not have been able to be present because of the illness of his wife.

ARTICLE 2 – The matter of the recently married members, van Dam and wife, was put on the table. Brother Apeldoorn says that these members have already broken their marriage covenant by separating from each other. After the information has been discussed, a committee consisting of Keppel and Apeldoorn was appointed, with the mandate that if the situation is as reported and van Dam and wife, after admonishment, do not return to one another, they will be placed under censure. This will then be announced to the congregation on the following Sunday.

ARTICLE 3 – It was decided, in the matter of Nagelkerk, to wait to see whether previous actions will improve the situation. In the meantime, the silent censure, keeping him from the table of the Lord, will be continued.

ARTICLE 4 – The request of the congregation's school for a three-week vacation was approved. Keppel and de Vries were appointed to visit the school before the closing session. Brother de Vries refuses the assignment, and Brother te Roller takes upon himself the task to do so.

ARTICLE 5 – Wakker gives a report of a visit by the president, Labots, and himself with the departing elder Wilterdink. Wilterdink made many accusations, old and new, against the consistory, pastor, and church. Most of these were based upon unconfirmed rumors or prejudice. After much discussion, the bottom line was that Wilterdink believes the pastor to be unfaithful, if not in doctrine, then in his dealings. Brother Keppel confirms the accuracy of the report. Wilterdink does not wish to have fellowship with the congregation, according to his testimony.

Brother Wakker proposes the following: A committee should be appointed to once more discuss the matter, and if he (Wilterdink) persists in his unproven and irrational accusations, he should at the very least be deposed as elder, because such a conduct and withdrawal may not go unpunished. This proposal was unanimously adopted. The committee will be Wakker, Broek, and the pastor.

As part of the discussion, there was also consideration given to the previous behavior of van Pfanstel and wife and son. They have spoken ill of a part of the consistory. The fear is expressed that this evil has not yet been eliminated but may very well at any time

could break out again.

It was decided, however, not to do anything in this matter, but that each consistory member will take advantage of every opportunity to help these people find the right path.

ARTICLE 6 – The deacons, having been asked to bring their books at the previous meeting, announced that they have not taken their books along because they were of the opinion that this meeting would not have time for that item. They were rebuked and promised that at the next meeting they will fulfill their responsibility.

ARTICLE 7 – The meeting was closed by Brother Broek.

Additional Note: According to Article 2 of the above-mentioned meeting, the committee reported that they found husband and wife in a condition which led to rejecting all admonishment to return to one another. Neither expressed any feeling of guilt or sorrow about their divorce. They were willing to admit that they entered into the marriage relationship too lightly, and regret this. They wish that they had never seen each other. They declared that it was impossible to return to the marriage state. As a consequence, the committee informed them that they were both under censure, and that on Sunday, August 24, the congregation would be publicly informed.

A. C. van Raalte
G. Wakker