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9-2-1859

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

A. C. Van Raalte

G. Wakke

William Buursma

Althea Buursma

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2 September 1859

Holland, Michigan

At a meeting of the consistory of the First Reformed Church at which Rev. Albertus C. Van Raalte presided, the case of the separated couple again came up. The husband is portrayed as a very difficult man to deal with. The home in which a child has not yet been baptized is in domestic turmoil. Consistory will bring this situation to the classis before it may move to excommunicate this family. Van Raalte made an extensive report on the parochial school of the congregation. There are many problems. He feels that the consistory and congregation are lacking in support of the school. Hendrika Zwaluwenburg asked that 50 cents a week be restored to her salary as teacher in the school.

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. 100-102.

These parents, in the judgment of some, ought to have their children baptized, that they may be brought up in the Christian church.

ARTICLE 7 – The meeting was closed with prayer by Brother Wilterdink.

A. C. van Raalte  
G. Wakker

Consistory Meeting of September 2, 1859

Except for Brother Plugger, who was away, all members were present.

ARTICLE 1 – The meeting was opened with prayer by the president.

ARTICLE 2 – The minutes of the previous meeting were read and approved.

ARTICLE 3 – A discussion followed concerning the necessity of catechism classes in the town, which have begun for mature members, under the leadership of Brother Wakker. The brethren living outside the city were encouraged to begin catechism classes in their vicinity. They accepted this assignment.

ARTICLE 4 – The committee for van Dam and wife, who have been separated, reported. Rev. van Raalte indicates that the wife complained bitterly about the conduct of her husband and testified that it was impossible for her to live in peace with him. Brother Apeldoorn adds that van Dam had used a very coarse and wicked expression against him. The meeting judged that further work is necessary.

ARTICLE 5 – The committee, in the matter of Visser and Schaddelle, reported that this matter is not yet resolved, but that much of the discussion concerns the financial accounting.

ARTICLE 6 – The committee for encouragement of missionary work reports that it has not been able to make much progress.

ARTICLE 7 – The committee appointed to encourage the baptism of the Wiersma child informs the meeting that, because of domestic turmoil, they have not been able to accomplish their mission. Discussion follows whether excommunication should be considered. It was decided that before presenting this matter to classis, another serious effort will be made with these members

to investigate their spiritual condition. All of the elders agreed that this should happen so that everyone can be adequately convinced personally of the necessity of excommunication.

ARTICLE 8 – According to the decision of the particular synod, an offering will be taken on September 12, because of the special needs of the Second Church of Chicago.

ARTICLE 9 – Rev. A. C. van Raalte makes a formal report, which was known to only a few of the brethren. He states that the congregational school (Christian school) has not attained the necessary level for adequate instruction, and it does not achieve the goals envisioned when the board in the East had been requested to contribute \$100.00. Rev. van Raalte indicated that this inadequate instruction had been overlooked in part, because of many other responsibilities, but now, since a more adequate education outside of the congregation is about to be inaugurated, he feels compelled to ask for two or more competent teachers in the school of the congregation under the control of the church, in order to assure good instruction, not only for the little ones but also a school which offers advanced education. In this effort, he had faced disappointment, and that his good intentions were either not understood or misinterpreted.

He feels that, in this respect, he does not have the support of the congregation and consistory; the latter, because of inadequate participation and carrying through in support of this institution, which was intended to protect against backsliding (apostasy).

He added that he believes this to be the tragic consequence for those who have not come to his assistance in an effort to achieve this goal, but instead, by opposition or fear of difficult circumstances, backed off. In order to have a clear conscience, concerning the consequences of this opposition in the future, he desires to shed responsibility. His protest was noted in the minutes, and he will later put in writing his objections. A few members of the consistory agreed to acquiesce but desired the privilege of making their comments as well. Others did not agree with Rev. van Raalte in his view of the congregation and consistory. They felt that such a protest should not be recorded. The pastor, however, desired that this

absolutely should be included to provide protection for the future.

ARTICLE 10 – In answer to the question whether the school of the congregation will continue in its previous path, upon conclusion of the vacation, was answered in the affirmative.

ARTICLE 11 – The clerk informs the assembly that the present instructor, Henderika Zwaluwenburg, asks for \$.50 more per week as salary, the same amount which she formerly received. Because of certain circumstances in the past, she had voluntarily accepted less, but these circumstances no longer obtain, especially since she has received a contract from another locale. It was decided to request her, given the current difficult situation of the congregation, to continue to serve the school under the most recent terms. If she absolutely declines to do this, then the assembly would acquiesce so that the school will not experience delay. This task was assigned to Brothers Keppel and Labots.

ARTICLE 12 – The stipulated time for adjournment, 9 o'clock having arrived, it was proposed to continue the meeting. By a majority vote, it was decided to adjourn until Tuesday, September 21, at 6:00 P.M.

ARTICLE 13 – In the meantime, the consistory was asked to intervene in the matter of Janusen Veeneklaasen in the debt which he owes to the elderly member, Janus Vriese. This request was received for consideration.

The meeting was closed with prayer by Elder Wilterdink.

G. Wakker