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Meeting Notes on the Consistory of the First Reformed Church

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20 September 1859

Holland, Michigan

At a meeting of the consistory of the First Reformed Church at which Rev. Albertus C. Van Raalte presided, the pastor made a lengthy plea for adequate support for the parochial school. If the school lets go of this school, the children will receive their education "by the world." Mrs. Christina Van Raalte made a plea on behalf of a member who was in desperate need because a member of the church did not pay his bill. Three women of the congregation, representatives of the Ladies Society, appeared before consistory, one of whom was Mrs. Van Raalte, requesting that a well be placed near the church necessary for cleaning purposes. Consistory agreed and expressed their thanks to the ladies for their ongoing concern for cleanliness. The deacons were assigned the task of getting the well dug.

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. 103-105.

Consistory Meeting of September 20, 1859

Absent: Brothers Broek, Ploeg, Labots, te Roller, and Plugger.

ARTICLE 1 – The meeting was open with prayer by the president, Rev. A. C. van Raalte.

ARTICLE 2 – The minutes were read and approved.

ARTICLE 3 – The Rev. A. C. van Raalte presented the protest mentioned in the previous minutes. After having read this aloud, it was received without any discussion, and is as follows:

The undersigned requests, in order that the history of the situation be clear, that the following be placed in the minutes: He has recommended to the board of education, for more than two years, the school of the congregation, in spite of the fact that the instruction has not reached the level for the children of every age, which had been the goal. He had hoped that the congregation would take the first opportunity to provide education for the higher classes as well. He can no longer persist in this endeavor, since he does not believe that the congregation is supporting, according to its ability, this duty and essential calling. It has become clear to him that people are of a mind to allow inadequate instruction to continue, on the ground of inability to support it. This, in spite of the fact, that the undersigned already has a group of five persons who have signed pledges for \$160.00. Although the times are difficult, he believes that the future for the congregation is of such a nature that things will be better and that we cannot be excused from our blameworthy lukewarm attitude. We are not responding to the needs of our children and the requirements of the board of education. We are especially dealing with our calling as the congregation of God, when it is possible for us in our society to provide a godly education. The negligence of the congregation in this matter will have the inevitable consequences that those who are living outside the fellowship of the congregation will be strengthened in their position, and those in the congregation who desire an adequate instruction will discover that their desires for nurturing their children will, if there is no congregational effort, be paralyzed and unable to achieve their goal. Finally, this will mean allowing the education of their children to be provided by the world.

Holland, September, 1859 (signed) A. C. van Raalte

ARTICLE 4 – The committee appointed to consider the request of H. Zwaluwenburg reports in the person of Brother Keppel. She maintains her position that she would like to have an increase of \$.50 per week, but indicated that she would submit herself to the judgment of the consistory

if, indeed, the congregation is unable to assume the costs involved.

ARTICLE 5 – A discussion follows concerning a request brought in by Mrs van Raalte, on behalf of Janus Friese, who had asked for assistance from the consistory in the return of money which had been owed him for a long time by Mr. Veeneklaasen. The elderly Mr. Janus Friese desperately needs this sum. In order to solve the question, a committee was appointed consisting of Brothers Apeldoorn and Broek.

ARTICLE 6 – Several brethren who, in harmony with a decision noted in the previous minutes, have met with the disciplined Wiersma and wife report that they are not convinced that these members should be excommunicated at this time, and advise the consistory to continue to work with them. Brother Broek enters the meeting.

ARTICLE 7 – Brother Wilterdink reports that J. Vinke, among many other expressions, had also said that he was thinking of seceding from our fellowship. Brother Labots enters the meeting.

ARTICLE 8 – Brother Keppel wishes to speak about Mr. Fijn. The president judges that, because of the late hour and other necessary matters which must be discussed, to postpone this discussion until the following meeting.

ARTICLE 9 – The deacons report that the collection for the second congregation of Chicago amounted to \$8.88.

ARTICLE 10 – It was decided to have a meeting of the consistory on Friday, September 23, at 6:00 P.M. The agenda will include discussion on meeting our classical obligations as a congregation.

ARTICLE 11 – The delegates to the next classical meeting were appointed by rotation. Brothers Keppel and Hekhuis are delegated, with Wakker as alternate for Keppel, and Labots as alternate for Hekhuis.

ARTICLE 12 – The president informs the meeting that he has received notice from the board of education that the quarterly support for the school of the congregation could not be sent, because the necessary reports had not been received. The president states that the reports, just as in the past, have been presented, and adds that this rejection has a significance which will become apparent in the future.

ARTICLE 13 – A committee from the Ladies' Society, responsible for cleaning the church, entered the meeting. The committee consists of Mrs. van Raalte, Mrs. Hofman, and Mrs. Schrader. They request that a well

be placed by the church as an essential requirement for the necessary cleaning. The consistory, convinced of the good intentions and interest of this society, promises to provide this essential ingredient. The expenses involved will be recovered from monies obtained for the renting of pews. At the same time, the committee was thanked for their excellent work and their ongoing concern for cleanliness.

ARTICLE 14 – The construction of an appropriate water well was assigned to the deacons.

ARTICLE 15 – Nine o'clock having arrived, it was decided to close the meeting and to meet again on Tuesday, October 2, 6:00 o'clock P.M.

The meeting was closed with prayer by Brother Keppel.

G. Wakker

Special Consistory Meeting of September 22, 1859

Present were Brothers Keppel, Labots, Apeldoorn, Hekhuis, Wakker, Plugger, and te Roller.

ARTICLE 1 – The meeting was opened with prayer by Brother Apeldoorn.

ARTICLE 2 – By a motion by Brother Wakker, Brother Ploeg was chosen to be chairman by an unanimous vote.

ARTICLE 3 – Brother Ploeg proposes that he be excused from all assignments and that he be granted the position of elder emeritus. The assembly judges that they are not willing to acquiesce. Ploeg was not satisfied with this, and the assembly decided to return to this point at the next meeting.

ARTICLE 4 – A motion was made to increase the salary of the pastor to \$800.00 annually, with free housing. After much discussion, a decision was made, based on the general ongoing financial situation of the congregation, to increase the salary to \$700.00 and \$100.00 for housing, with a total of \$800.00. This decision passed by a majority of the votes.

ARTICLE 5 – There was a discussion about how the salary could be raised in the current difficult financial times. The majority judged that we ought to turn to the board of education