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Meeting Notes of the Consistory of the First Reformed Church

A. C. Van Raalte

J. Labots

William Buursma

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22 April 1852

Holland, Michigan

Rev. Albertus C. Van Raalte, elders H. Broek, Hekhuis, Wilterdink, Broersma, and Labot, and deacons, A. de Weerd, Wilterdink, Plugger, v/d Berg, and Keppel were present at this meeting of the Consistory of the First Reformed Church. Van Raalte asked the members how he would write on the spiritual condition of the congregation because the annual report of the denomination called for this information. The elders and deacons were somewhat pessimistic about the current state of affairs but VR felt that he could write many good things on this subject. The consistory members were still troubled about Doesburg's paper.

In Dutch; translation by Rev. William Buursma.

Original in the collection of the Pillar Christian Reformed Church at the Joint Archives of Holland, Hope Collection, Minutes of the Consistory, volume I, pp. 34-36.

Consistory Meeting Held on April 22, 1852

The following persons were present: Rev. van Raalte; Elders H. Broek, Hekhuis, Wilterdink, Broersma, and Labots; Deacons A. de Weerd, Wilterdink, Plugger, v/d Berg, and Keppel.

ARTICLE 1 – The president opened the meeting with prayer.

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

ARTICLE 3 - A list was made of all communicant members and later of all baptized members.

ARTICLE 4 – The president informs the assembly that he is required to give a report on the spiritual condition of the congregation to the Synod of the Dutch Reformed Church in New York. He asks what he should write concerning this matter.

The consistory's judgment is that the congregation is living in a spiritless condition. Rev. van Raalte says that he does not deny that there is a great lack in the congregation. However, his judgment is somewhat different. In the first place, this is a time of great pressure and difficulty, and many have complained and involved themselves in controversy. In addition, there are many upright children of the Lord, who, in times of confusion, such as now,

are dragged along out of ignorance. He adds also that times of rest and calmness can be dangerous. Sometimes periods of pressure and trial are actually good times. Frequently such periods have a blessed influence on the hearts of people causing them to more earnestly seek the Lord.

He (Rev. van Raalte) believes that there is no congregation in our settlement that has been so powerfully protected by the Lord in the unity of its spiritual life as our own congregation. It is clear that the proclamation of the gospel has not only won many to the Lord, but that the gospel is also the salt by which we are preserved against destruction.

The brethren declare that they can accept this evaluation and trust that the Rev. van Raalte will write an authentic report concerning the condition of the congregation to the honorable Synod.

ARTICLE 5 – Rev. van Raalte asks if there are other matters that should be handled by classis. The question is raised whether it might not be advisable to discuss the present circumstances; namely, the misuse of the weekly, *The Hollander*, by Mr. Doesburg, and the matter of the slander against Rev. van Raalte and consistory printed therein,

which has led to ongoing confusion.

Rev. van Raalte's reply is that he has, indeed, given consideration to speak openly about the matter and that he has considered it to be a matter of necessity. However, the timing and the situation has not made it possible for him to speak about this.

Now is the time of testing, and we have been called by our God to self denial and earnest prayer. In patience we must wait for a riper and quieter time to come. Then we will be able to speak and to work with greater freedom, and will be able to live in quiet confidence that the Lord will uphold the honor of his name and the honor of his sincere servants (ministers); all in his own time.

It is wise to wait for the proper time and opportunity when the matter can be brought to classis; also the case of the brothers in North Holland who wish to organize a separate congregation. The brethren present have no objection to this, but they do advise caution in achieving this goal, so that no offense is given to the Zeeland congregation, whose concerns are intertwined with this subject.

No further business remaining, the meeting was closed with prayer and thanksgiving by Elder J. A. Wilterdink.

A.C. van Raalte, president
J. Labots, clerk

MINUTES OF THE NINTH STREET CRC.,

OF

HOLLAND, MICHIGAN

November 5, 1850 – May 24. 1855

Volume I

*Rev. William Beurgma,
Translating*