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Meeting Notes of the Consistory of the First Reformed Church

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28 March 1853

Holland, Michigan

The purpose of this meeting of the Consistory of the First Reformed Church of Holland was ostensibly to discuss the building program but it turned into an attack on the pastor, Rev. Albertus C. Van Raalte, and how he allegedly was not performing his duties as pastor of the congregation. "Some of the brethren are of the opinion the Rev. van Raalte should lay aside some other activities, for example, preaching in other congregations and his writings....They indicate that in the last few years, the power of his preaching seems to have disappeared." Van Raalte explained that he worked often into the night to the point of exhaustion. He admitted that he was not able to do the studying he should but that is due to the fact that he spends so much of "his time in the congregation is used to visits to sick and depressed members." He is also fully aware "that there will be many who dislike him, no matter what." Van Raalte promised to labor among his people to the best of his ability and "to labor with a blessing."

In Dutch; translation by Rev. William Buursma.

Original in the collection of the Pillar Christian Reformed Church at the Joint Archives of Holland, Hope College, Minutes of the Consistory, volume I, pp. 59-61.

After an extensive exchange of various viewpoints, the assembly judged it appropriate to discontinue the discussion until next Monday.

The meeting was closed with prayer by A. C. van Raalte, clerk.

Consistory Meeting Held on March 28, 1853

ARTICLE 1 – Rev. van Raalte led in prayer. The minutes were read and approved by all.

ARTICLE 2 – Brother Jonker presents a protest against the loss of the previous minutes, brought about by the illness of the previous clerk. There is no evidence, therefore, that he has legitimately been installed as a member of the consistory. Concerning the delay occasioned by objections brought against him, it was decided to note the omissions in the previous minutes. This will assure that Brother Jonker has, indeed, been lawfully received.

ARTICLE 3 – Many and lengthy discussions were held concerning the building project. The final conclusion was that a majority decided that eight days after next Wednesday, the congregation will be called together at 4 o'clock in the afternoon. The purpose will be to request a voluntary contribution for the building project to the limit of the financial situation.

Rev. van Raalte asks whether, in spite of the fact that he is always responsible and willing to serve in the material

needs of the congregation, it would be possible to be released from involvement in collecting and administrating funds. His many and weighty activities are grounds for this request, which is agreed to by all. Rev. van Raalte further informs the group that he has received approximately \$20 from some friends in Chicago for the church building project.

ARTICLE 4 – Some of the brethren are of the opinion that Rev. van Raalte should lay aside some other activities, for example, preaching in other congregations and his writings. They believe he should set these activities aside, in order to be more active within the congregation. They indicate that in the last few years, the power of his preaching seems to have disappeared. This opinion leads to a far-ranging discussion among the brethren about whether it is possible or not for the pastor to withdraw from the above-mentioned activities. The pastor believes this cannot be done.

Further discussion revolves around the question whether or not the above accusations are well grounded. The character of the people who are angry that the minister has not visited them is also discussed.

Rev. van Raalte declares that from morning to evening, often into the night, he is busy to the point of exhaustion. He adds that he spends so much time in the congregation that, alas, no time remains for the necessary study, which a pastor ought to do. Much of his time in the congregation is used by visits to sick and depressed members,

and those who have fallen into sin and disputations.

He is also convinced that if we look at all of the homes in the village, he has made frequent visits to nearly all of the homes within the last months. He is also fully aware that there will be many who dislike him, no matter what. He requests the brethren, in addition, for assistance, should they be aware of accusations against him by informing him of complaints and the persons making them, so that it will be possible for him to labor with a blessing.

ARTICLE 5 – Brother Rensink requests release from the responsibility of care for an orphan living with him. The brethren wish to discuss this with him personally.

The meeting was closed with prayer by Brother Wilterdink.

A. C. van Raalte

Meeting Held April 22, 1853

ARTICLE 1 – The meeting was opened with prayer by Rev. van Raalte.

ARTICLE 2 – The minutes were read, and Brother Keppel makes the comment that he had not asserted that the preaching (of van Raalte) had become powerless, but that he had said that family visiting had received a higher priority than the preaching. With this correction, the minutes were approved.

ARTICLE 3 – Brother Binnenkant requests release from the responsibility for an orphan of

MINUTES OF THE NINTH STREET CRC.,

OF

HOLLAND, MICHIGAN

November 5, 1850 – May 24. 1855

Volume I

*Rev. William Burisma,
Translating*