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Meeting Minutes of the Consistory of the First Reformed Church

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Recommended Citation

Van Raalte, A. C.; Buursma, William; and Buursma, Althea, "Meeting Minutes of the Consistory of the First Reformed Church" (1856). *Van Raalte Papers: 1850-1859*. 326.
https://digitalcommons.hope.edu/vrp_1850s/326

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29 April 1856

Holland, Michigan

At a meeting of the consistory of the First Reformed Church at which Rev. Albertus C. Van Raalte presided, offered the opening prayer, and served as the clerk, friends of Abraham Krabshuis presented a letter protesting the laxity of the consistory. The writers, J. Hogenhorst and J. Piljzer, have been barred from the Lord's table because of their bitter spirit. They have requested transfer of membership to the Scottish church. Van Raalte suggested that two extensions be built for the Lord's table in the new church. After some discussion about the salvation of children dying in infancy, the meeting was closed with prayer by Broek.

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. 26-28.

ARTICLE 4 – Membership received for Willem Notting and wife.

ARTICLE 5 – With a unanimous approval, the \$1,000.00 which has been received was given to Deacon te Roller for exchange in Chicago.

ARTICLE 6 – The minutes were read and approved.

ARTICLE 7 – Mrs. Boeve was found to be in a humble mood, and it was decided that on the following Lord's Day, she will be permitted to make a public confession.

ARTICLE 8 – It is reported that Adriane Slotter continues to be obstinate in rejecting paternal discipline and admonition. It was decided to continue consistorial admonition.

ARTICLE 9 – Brothers Labots, te Roller, and Hekhuis were appointed as a committee for arranging for the digging of a basement under the church.

ARTICLE 10 – The meeting was closed with prayer.

A. C. van Raalte, clerk

Consistory Meeting of April 29, 1856

Present were Elders Broek, Ploeg, Wilterdink, Keppel, Apeldoorn; Deacon te Roller; as well as Rev. van Raalte.

Absent were Brother Hekhuis, due to illness, and Brother Ploeg, because of busyness.

The meeting was opened with prayer by Rev. van Raalte.

ARTICLE 1 – After discussion concerning his agreement with the Canons of Dort, the membership of Eise J. Broekema was received.

ARTICLE 2 – The following letter from J. Hogenhorst and J. Piljzier to Rev. van Raalte and the consistory was received. The letter asserts that "it seems obvious that Rev. A. C. van Raalte and Rev. van der Meulen, up to this point, show no desire to defend, but rather allow individuals to remain in their 'devastation.' The consistory also seems to be of this mind, since the discipline that they have applied to us has not been acknowledged as a sinful act, because otherwise they would a long time ago have cancelled it. We are weary of the situation, and the admonition we have given to you to make a just judgment in harmony with truth seems to have been in vain. Our request now to you is to give us a copy of the minutes in which you make the accusation against us, according to the writings of A. Krabshuis. In these writings, everything has painstakingly been written down. We expect to receive these minutes by next Monday evening, not later, so that we can continue with our business." Signed: J. Hogenhorst and J. Piljzier

It was decided to inform the undersigned that their "devastation" pains us. It is not our goal, nor our intention, to bring about this "devastation." They will be able to live in peace with the congregation if they will promise to relinquish their feelings of bitterness and wrath. It is because of the consequences of this bitterness and wrath that they have been barred from the Lord's table. They have requested membership transfer and have separated themselves from our church in order to join the Reformed Associate Church, also called the Scottish Church. In our judgment, we were not able to deny this request, but had to give it in a truthful fashion. It would be presumptuous of the classical committee, which the protestants apparently desire, to restore them to fellowship. The committee is ready to speak with them, to judge them as being indifferent, about their situation, since they are not currently held back by excessive responsibilities.

The consistory, now as always, is prepared to permit the Scottish consistory to read our minutes if they so desire. We will, however, not permit the classical minutes to be reviewed outside of the consistory room nor when things are discussed that have nothing to do with the matter at hand. It is the judgment of everyone present that this is a modest and fair offer, since such a review (by the Scottish consistory) can never lead to any evil consequences.

ARTICLE 3 – Rev. van Raalte informs the meeting that he has once again visited Jaantje Slotter, stepdaughter of Smit, also Mrs. Smit and her daughter. He found Jaantje to be hardened of heart. She is unwilling to return to her parents or seek reconciliation with them, on the ground that her parents are also guilty and that she wanted to be free. She was also unwilling to accept ecclesiastical discipline and wished to be looked at someone who has nothing to do with the congregation. She looks upon her church attendance as something that is entirely dependent upon her own decision. Based on this hardening of her heart, it was decided to give public notice to the congregation of the matter, asking them to pray for and to admonish her.

ARTICLE 4 – The church bell (tower) is in danger of collapse, due to the unregulated tolling of the bell by young boys. Consequently, it was decided to ring the bell for Sunday School and to permit only the appointed bell ringer to function with Brandt tolling the bell for the English services.

ARTICLE 5 – At the suggestion of A. C. van Raalte, it was decided that, in addition to the table 20 feet long, two separate extensions of ten feet each will be constructed for the celebration of the Lord's Supper in the new church.

ARTICLE 6 – The question was asked whether it is time to discontinue discussions with church member Slag. It was decided to address him once again. The meeting was informed that \$47.00 had been collected for the fire at Slag.

ARTICLE 7 – After some discussion about the salvation of children dying in infancy, the meeting was closed with prayer by Brother Broek.

A. C. van Raalte

Meeting Held on May 13, 1856

Present were Elders J. A. Wilterdink, W. Apeldoorn, T. Keppel, Ploeg, Broek and Hekhuis; Deacons de Vries, te Roller, G. W. Wilterdink; and Rev. A. C. van Raalte.

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

ARTICLE 2 – Mr. van Roeijers requested membership. After an interview, he was advised to seek further instruction; advice which he accepted. This task is, for the time being, given to Brothers Ploeg and Keppel.

ARTICLE 3 – Brother Broek presents concerns concerning the Widow Kleijs, who has been neglecting church attendance and baptism. Rev. van Raalte was appointed to visit her.

ARTICLE 4 – The minutes were read and approved.

ARTICLE 5 – A brief was read from Hoogenhorst and wife. There was also a report from Rev. van Raalte that he had visited them and found them to be somewhat more open. He had encouraged them to come to church. However, some of the brethren have noted an arrogant attitude. It was decided that there was nothing further to be done, since they will not be satisfied until their censure has been declared unlawful. The entire congregation has encouraged us in this matter, because of the public bitterness and wrath in which they (Hoogenhorst and wife) have been living. In addition, they no longer belong to our congregation, since they have separated themselves and requested transfer of membership, something which could not be truthfully given.

ARTICLE 6 – Brother te Roller presents a question, asking for clarification of the teaching concerning the vessels of wrath in Romans 9: 22. The ensuing conversation took up the rest of the evening.