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Meeting Minutes of the Consistory of the First Reformed Church

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12 November 1856

Holland, Michigan

At a consistory meeting of the First Reformed Church at which Rev. Albertus C. Van Raalte presided and also served as clerk, the major discussion centered on Van Raalte's call to the newly formed First Reformed Church of Pella, Iowa. The matter was so important that it was to be brought to the attention of the congregation. VR saw the urgent need in Pella but also the necessity to remain in the Holland Colony for various reasons enumerated in the minutes.

In Dutch; translation by Rev. William and Althea Buursma, 2000.

Original in the records of the Pillar Christian Reformed Church in the Joint Archives of Holland, vol. II, pp. 35-36.

Meeting held on November 12, 1856

Present were Elders Ploeg, Hekhuis, Broek, Apeldoorn, Wilterdink; Deacons te Roller, de Vries, Wilterdink; and Rev. van Raalte.

ARTICLE 1 – The meeting was opened with prayer by A. C. van Raalte, after which the minutes were read and approved.

ARTICLE 2 - The membership papers of Albert Huizinga and his wife, Keman, as well as the membership paper of A. Duinen, were requested and approved.

ARTICLE 3 – Mrs. Trijntje van Alsburg, nee Bolhouse, made profession of her faith and was accepted. A membership statement on behalf of Jacob Tolk and his wife, Sara Ooms, from Zaandam, was received and accepted.

ARTICLE 4 – The consistory at Noordeloos requested an offering to help them in the support of their pastor. It was decided to take this offering on the Sunday after eight days.

ARTICLE 5 – The brethren request information from Rev. van Raalte concerning the call he has received from Pella. The Rev. declares that there are many items that must be considered, particularly the fact that the work in Pella is urgent and necessary. He adds that his decision to depart is made more difficult because he fears that his departure would have a negative impact on the entire colony. He cannot simply reject the call unless permission is given to assist Pella in their efforts to obtain a pastor from the Netherlands. He also brings up the matter of the Holland Academy and the schools for education. As far as the Holland Academy is concerned, the buildings for the Institute need to be erected. We will also need to have some assurance that the present instructor will remain. We may hope that in a few years God's blessing will provide, in all of the Dutch congregations, some competent and gifted members who can function as citizens, guarding the rights and maintaining the law against cursing and Sabbath desecration. The congregations must not become dependent upon the state, and, in order to provide for all of the ecclesiastical needs, including mission work, we will need competent instructors from our own community. It was decided that it is necessary

to bring this matter to the attention of the congregation.

The meeting was closed with prayer by Brother Broek.

A. C. van Raalte

Meeting Held on November 18, 1856

Present were Elders Keppel, J. A. Wilterdink, Labots, Ploeg, Apeldoorn, and Broek; Deacons G. W. Wilterdink, te Roller, P. de Vries, and Plugger; as well as Rev. van Raalte

ARTICLE 1 – The meeting was opened with prayer by Rev. van Raalte. The minutes were read and approved.

ARTICLE 2 – A membership statement was received and accepted for Jacob den Dekker and his daughter, Bastiane den Dekker, and baptized grandchild, Willem Dekker, from Gorrichem.

ARTICLE 3 – A request was received and granted for the membership transfer of Maria Rallewaard, L. H. Streng, and Roosje van der Sluis, as well as the membership statement for Hendrik Naul.

ARTICLE 4 – It was decided to inform the congregation that on Thanksgiving Day afternoon, the consistory, in harmony with a previous decision, will allow casting of lots for seating in the church. Each place will cost 50 cents. Before the casting of lots takes place, members can indicate how many places they will require. Concern has been expressed that this may have a negative impact for those who need many seating places, and that this may cause them to hold back from the casting of lots. In order to determine how realistic this is, the congregation will be asked to vote on how many places will be required. This is being done, because, for various reasons, there are those who do not prefer this procedure or are unable to participate. If it becomes necessary, we will return to the previous method of renting the pews.

ARTICLE 5 – Those who were not present at the previous meeting requested information concerning the announcement of Rev. van Raalte in connection with his call to Pella. Rev. van Raalte refers to the minutes and indicates that much has been spoken about him and his possible departure from the congregation. He believes, however, that it is not edifying to discuss this any further, and the elders are available to give answers. As far as the call to Pella is concerned, in the first place, he notes the requested permission to assist the congregation at Pella whenever circumstances require this.