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Meeting Minutes of the Consistory of the First Reformed Church

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26 July 1867

Holland, Michigan

At a meeting of the consistory of the First Reformed Church at which Rev. Albertus C. Van Raalte presided, the pastor announced that he would be concluding his service as pastor. Both First Reformed Church and the new congregation would then be free to call their pastors. "In any event, a formal dissolution does not need to take place, because there has never been a formal connection." The pastor had to leave at this point because of another meeting. Elder Labots was chosen chairman and routine matters were taken care of. A congregational meeting would be called for Tuesday, August 13, at 7 p.m. regarding the pastor's severance with the congregation

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. 292-293.

Consistory Meeting of July 26, 1867

Present: Rev. van Raalte, Labots, Wakker, de Bruin, Geerlings, Kieft, te Roller, Beeuwkes.

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

ARTICLE 2 – Rev. van Raalte reports that he finds himself compelled to make an end to the hurtful situation in which the congregation has far too long found itself in its relationship to him. Because of the manifold activities which he, through God's providence, is involved, it has been impossible for him, particularly now as his bodily strength is failing, to do for the church what he would dearly desire, and which they also deserve to have. Now that the congregation is to be divided, one would think that one part of the church will receive more profit from his labors, but that cannot happen, and, as a consequence, new disappointments have arisen. The Rev. declares that for this reason, after mature reflection, he is forced for the welfare of the people that also this part of the congregation must begin the process for calling a pastor. He is prepared from his vantage point to remove all hindrances that might come in the way; hindrances, such as local chairmanship, salary, etc. All these things can be regulated in an orderly fashion and without breaking bonds and connections of many years standing. In any event, a formal dissolution does not need to take place, because there has never been a formal connection. Hence, no change is necessary at this time. The only thing required is that each congregation should call a pastor in the normal fashion, so that he can labor in the congregations, which will provide for the most necessary labors among the people. This will mean that the pastor will have an adequate opportunity to continue to utilize his time and strength on behalf of this people, without the hindrances currently existing. This will remove any hindrance for increased service of the pastor in the congregation.

The pastor added to this statement that it flows out of a total conviction and, for this reason, he felt compelled to express this in the midst of the congregation.

The consistory, although sensitive to the situation, believed that the matter should be received for information, while totaling agreeing that additional labors in the church are required. A congregational

meeting must be called. It is scheduled for Tuesday at 7 P.M., on August 13, 1867. The pastor, called to another meeting, left the assembly.

ARTICLE 2 – Brother Labots was chosen as chairman.

ARTICLE 3 – Pieter Kwist entered the meeting, indicating a desire for further education. He is without sufficient funds to provide for his needs, because his parents are still in the Netherlands. Therefore, he requests the consistory for a recommendation to receive assistance from the classical fund. After having spoken to him, he left the meeting, with the promise that he will later receive a response. It was decided that because he is not a member and gives no evidence of personal piety, to leave the matter undecided for the time being.

ARTICLE 4 – The clerk presents a request from Jan van Dam for a statement of membership. It was decided that this request cannot be granted, unless this disciplined member indicated the reason for requesting this statement. The clerk was assigned to inform van Dam of this decision.

The meeting was closed by Brother Keppel.

G. Wakker, clerk

Congregational Meeting of August 13, 1867

Psalm 97: 1, 6 were sung, and Rev. van Raalte, as chairman, led in prayer.

ARTICLE 1 – The Rev. A. C. van Raalte presented the reasons why this congregational meeting has been called. He indicates that he has previously informed the consistory and now reports the substance recorded in the previous minutes of the consistory (see Article 2). He advises the congregation to move towards the calling of a pastor.

ARTICLE 2 – After some discussion and questions which were answered, 54 votes were cast in favor and no votes against. The congregation decided to agree to the explanation of the pastor and to move forward towards calling a pastor.

ARTICLE 3 – It was decided to meet again in fourteen days, for the purpose of forming a trio, and then, eight days later to extend a call.

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

G. Wakker, clerk