A TALE OF TWO CHURCHES: ORANGE CITY'S FIRST REFORMED AND CHRISTIAN REFORMED CONGREGATIONS DURING THEIR FIRST THIRTY-FIVE YEARS (1871-1906)

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The present study is based primarily on the Dutch-language consistory minutes of First Reformed Church (extant 1879 on) and First Christian Reformed Church (extant 1897 on), supplemented by early congregational membership books, the Classis of Iowa minutes of the Reformed Church in America (RCA) (starting 1884), the Classis of Iowa minutes of the Christian Reformed Church (CRC) (starting 1877; researched up to 1897), and various other primary and secondary sources. My heavy reliance upon consistory minutes has the potential disadvantage of overemphasizing church problems, but this may be a helpful corrective to official histories which often tend to be onesidedly positive and somewhat external. In any case, this "preliminary report" needs to be supplemented by thorough research in local newspapers, census records, and recollections of "old timers," as well as histories already in print.

I began my investigation with no conscious thesis. I was simply looking for similarities and/or differences between these two sister congregations in their earliest years, and the relationship, if any, between them. As I read the consistory minutes, alternating between the Reformed and Christian Reformed, I found myself drawn into the ongoing minor dramas recorded therein (occasionally like a religious soap opera; "tune in again next week!"), concerning church members under discipline, building plans, the reception and dismissal of members from and to faraway places, the formation of daughter congregations, the calling of pastors, the election of elders and deacons, and the like. Most of the time I was easily able to identify with the people involved.

Initially, from a very partial induction (a year or two of each consistory record), I thought that I had found a possible but very improbable thesis, namely, that the Reformed congregational problems centered around drunkenness and the saloon, whereas the Christian Reformed problems were concentrated on sex - the breaking of the seventh commandment. But, on further reading, I realized that both congregations had difficulties with both problems, although there may possibly have been just a grain of truth in my initial crude hypothesis. More on this later.

A more mature thesis - or subtitle - might be: "what a difference a dominie makes" - or "so alike and yet so different" - or "Dutch vs. American Reformed" - or "churchly vs. sectarian Reformed" - or "church unity vs. church purity."

The leadership, at least, of both of the Dutch churches in late nineteenth-century Orange City clearly identified with the pietist Calvinist Afscheiding (Secession) of 1834, and with the Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerk in Nederland (the Christian Reformed Church in the Netherlands). The latter, with its theological school at Kampen under the long-time leadership of "Father" Anthony Brummelkamp, was the chief institutional embodiment of the former. To a lesser degree, and only later, did the more worldview-ish Doleantie movement of Abraham Kuyper (1886) gain favor in Orange City. Neither congregation trusted the Hervormde Kerk (the Reformed Church), the Dutch national church, which was regarded as liberal and impure. And neither congregation trusted the other. The invariable early term of the Reformed consistory for the Christian Reformed was afgescheiden (seceder), while for a time the Christian Reformed consistory refused to give or receive attestations of membership in good standing to or from any Reformed Church, including that of Orange City. They were fiercely competitive for members and not eager to recognize each other's right to exist. To ask who was to blame for this or who began it is tantamount to asking whether the chicken or the egg came first. In a sense, these congregations needed one another and were involved in a symbiotic relationship, neither of them being able to live without - or with - the other.

The Afscheiding of 1834 quickly broke apart into various factions. The most important for our purposes were: 1) the "Northern mentality" (largely in Friesland and Groningen), represented by Hendrik de Cock and (after his early death) by Simon van Velzen, was made up of the strictest adherents of the doctrine and church order of the Synod of Dort (1618-19), and favored ecclesiastical centralism; 2) the more moderate "Gelderland mentality" (largely in Gelderland, Overijssel, and Zuid-Holland), whose spokesmen were Anthony Brummelkamp and Albertus C. van Raalte, was somewhat less strenuously principially Calvinistic, espousing experiential piety and the free offer of the gospel to all persons; and 3) the "Scholtian mentality," named after Hendrik Pieter Scholte, was in most respects the extreme opposite of the Northern mentality, for he was committed to a "biblical" (rather than a specifically Reformed) faith, congregationalism (a gathered, independent congregation of the converted), dispensationalism, and the separation of church and state.

All three of these mentalities were represented among those Afscheiding people who, beginning in 1847, came to the United States from the Netherlands for religious and/or economic reasons. Although the afgescheidenen (seceders) were a minority among the Dutch Reformed immigrants, they were an influential minority, and their divisions were long perpetuated in the new world, including Orange City. The Northern mentality was represented in the USA largely by what

would later be called the Christian Reformed Church, which began in Michigan in 1857 with a small secession from the larger body of Dutch Reformed immigrants (Classis Holland, which had joined the RCA in 1850); the Northerners' proportion of the Reformed immigrant population grew significantly after the 1840s. The Gelderland mentality came to the USA with Van Raalte and his followers; he founded Holland, Michigan, in 1847 and led his people into the RCA in 1850. The Scholtian mentality - in many ways the most "American" of the three - appeared in Iowa in 1847, when Scholte himself established the colony of Pella. He never joined the RCA (not to mention the CRC) and tried to keep his people free from denominational involvement. The majority of his constituency, however, refused to follow him in this, and so the First Reformed Church of Pella was formed in 1856, with help from Classis Holland (RCA) and Van Raalte. Several other Reformed congregations soon followed, as well as a Pella Christian Reformed Church in 1866.

Pella's Reformed mayor, Henry Hospers, led a sizeable group of land-hungry citizens of his town to northwestern Iowa in 1870, where they set up the colony of Orange City in Sioux County (Hospers was commonly called the settlement's "father," while Pella was referred to as its "mother," although not usually in the same breath). Soon these pioneers were joined by other "Hollanders" from Michigan, Wisconsin, Illinois, and the Netherlands; and, beginning in the 1880s, Sioux County became the springboard for the more adventurous (or dissatisfied) to move on to South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, and Minnesota, and ultimately to Washington, Montana, and Oklahoma; only a few returned east. 1871 saw the organization of both a Reformed and a Christian Reformed congregation in Orange City; before long, two other congregations were formed: a short-lived "Free Christian Church" (by 1876; with something of the spirit of Scholte, only more theologically liberal) and an "American" (i.e., English-language) Reformed Church (1885); both the First Reformed and the First Christian Reformed Churches conducted their services entirely in Dutch until well into the twentieth century. By the end of the 1870s already, Orange City's Reformed congregation had "mothered" two nearby Sioux County churches, with more "daughters" following in the 1880s; parenting came more slowly to the community's smaller Christian Reformed Church (not until the 1890s). The consistory minutes of both congregations (as well as those of the area's classes) convey something of the excitement of this period of rapid geographical expansion.

The First Reformed Church of Orange City was organized in May 1871 with forty-five families and no pastor. Its earliest members were mostly from the First Reformed Church of Pella, whose Gelderland mentality had been shown during its three-year search (1856-1859) for its initial pastor, by calling, first, Van Raalte himself, then Brummelkamp, then J. H. Donner (a former pupil of Brummelkamp), and, at last successfully,

Pieter J. Oggel, Van Raalte's son-in-law, who had been trained by his father-in-law. A somewhat similar search occurred a few years later (1863-1866) when Donner and two proteges of Van Raalte were called, the third man, Egbert Winter, finally accepting the call; it was during his pastorate that many from his congregation led in founding the Reformed Church in Orange City. Of the latter congregation's consistory members until about 1900, about three out of four had had the Pella experience, about half had come to the United States as afgescheidenen (the other half as adherents of the Dutch state church), and well over half had come from Gelderland and Zuid-Holland (presumably representing the mellower Gelderland mentality), with less than a quarter from the Northern mentality's strongholds of Friesland and Groningen. Thus, it is hardly surprising to find this congregation over the years calling pastors who were either Seceders still living in the Netherlands or RCA men formed in the Van Raalte milieu in Michigan, not in Scholte's Pella.

Two months after the establishment of the Orange City Reformed congregation, the First Christian Reformed Church there was organized (July 1871). Initially, there was a core of Pella "veterans" to provide continuity and cohesion. Of the thirteen males listed as charter members, six belonged to two extended families (from Pella), the majority of whom quickly joined the Reformed Church. This is typical not only of the fluidity of the ecclesiastical situation in general in those early days, but also of the very hard time that the Orange City Christian Reformed congregation had in its infancy. The latter may be partly attributable to the fact that the Reformed procured a (highly esteemed) dominie within a year of their organization, while the Christian Reformed had to wait six years for one. Almost all of these original members had emigrated as adherents of the Seceders, but a majority of them came from Zuid-Holland. Soon, however, the congregational composition changed markedly, with the arrival of many immigrants from the northern Dutch provinces, so that a clear majority of the late nineteenth-century consistory members came from Friesland, Groningen, Drenthe, and West Friesland (in Noord-Holland). Although this congregation had very small beginnings, its members had the satisfaction of being part of De Ware Hollandsche Gereformeerde Kerk (The True Dutch Reformed Church), which was the self-designation of their denomination from 1864 to 1880. This somewhat presumptuous and arrogant sounding title was especially galling to those in the RCA (and there were many) who knew the Belgic Confession (to which both denominations were officially committed) well enough to recognize that the language about the "true church" was taken from Articles 28 and 29, which say that there are but two churches, the true, outside of which there is no salvation, and with which all true believers are to join, and the false (which the context clearly suggests is the apostate Roman Catholic Church), from which genuine Christians are to separate. The implication was obvious: the

RCA was not a true church and was to be forsaken, just as Protestants had deserted the false church of Rome at the time of the Reformation, and just as the true Reformed had seceded from the corrupt state church in the Netherlands in 1834. This strong separatist penchant, characteristic of the Northern mentality (and of the Scholtian mentality) was perpetuated institutionally in the United States by the CRC.

Whether the "great man" theory is true or not, the pastoral leadership of churches was and is important. The dominies, at the very least, mirrored to some extent the aspirations of their congregations, and very probably they also influenced their flocks (certainly that is what they tried to do). Perhaps they were like Hegel's "world historical individuals" who rode the tide of the Zeitgeist. However this may be, Seine Bolks (1814-1894), the first pastor of the Orange City Reformed Church, (1872-1878) seems to have fit his congregation like a glove. "Father" Bolks had been trained by Van Raalte in the Netherlands, had been a Seceder pastor in the province of Overijssel for several years, had emigrated (with most of his flock) to the United States as one of the legendary five original afgescheiden ministers of 1847, had worked near Van Raalte in the new world, had accumulated twenty-five years of experience in a half dozen congregations in Michigan, Wisconsin, and Illinois, and, amazingly, at age fifty-eight and well situated in a healthy congregation, in the spring of 1872 had accepted the call to serve in the frontier town of Orange City. Bolks was pastor of the Reformed Church there for only six years, but these were then (and especially later) seen by his people as a golden era. His ministry began auspiciously with a revival in the winter of 1872-1873; this resulted in many confessions of faith, swelling the congregation's membership. During the middle 1870s, when the colony experienced difficult times, especially because of several grasshopper plagues, Bolks continued to work tirelessly in his widespread parish to minister to both the spiritual and physical needs of his people (self-taught, he did much of the work of a physician). Along with Hospers, the colony's "father," "Father" Bolks promoted Sioux County far and wide, encouraging others, particularly those in Michigan, to settle there. (Van Raalte, two years before his death in 1876, came on a very brief visit to see Orange City for himself.) Bolks' labors not only brought him the affection of his people (as revealed in his $1000-per-year salary, various surprises and gifts) but exacerbated a lung-throat condition, and an asthma attack forced him into early retirement in 1878 at the age of sixty-four; also, overwork and the infirmities of age may have diminished his effectiveness during the final years of his pastorate. His last sixteen years were spent in Orange City, preaching in various churches and serving as president of the board of trustees of the Northwestern Classical Academy. Unlike Scholte and Van Raalte, Bolks had not been university educated; in fact, he had received very little formal

education; but he shared Van Raalte's commitment to higher education under Reformed Church auspices. Thus, just as Van Raalte had established Holland Academy (and Hope College), so Bolks, with Hospers providing the financial muscle, founded the Northwestern Classical Academy in 1882 (the grasshoppers had prevented its being started earlier), which was to prepare young men for Hope College and ultimately for Western Theological Seminary. And, just as Van Raalte's academy gave birth to Hope college, so Bolks' academy eventually evolved into Northwestern College.

After a year-long "interregnum," the Orange City Reformed Church finally succeeded in obtaining the pastoral ministrations of the vigorous Ale Buursma (1841-1901), then in his prime (in contrast to his predecessor). A native of the province of Friesland, he came in 1852 to this country with his parents, who settled near Holland, Michigan. After serving in the Union Army during the Civil War, Buursma attended Hope College and then Hope's theological school; one of his teachers at Hope was Pieter J. Oggel, until recently the pastor of the Reformed in Pella. Buursma ministered for ten years to congregations in Michigan and Illinois, for another decade (1879-1889) in Orange City, and finally for twelve years in Grand Rapids. His popularity is shown by the fact that he turned down five calls to other churches during his Orange City pastorate. The congregation did not grow numerically after Buursma's first two or three years, even with the influx of immigrants from the Netherlands, because the gains were offset by the loss of members who removed to the Dakotas or who established new daughter churches in Sioux County. There seems to have been little leakage to the Orange City Christian Reformed Church during the Masonic controversy (centered in Michigan in the early 1880s), although, after this, because of the RCA's refusal to take a denominational stand against church membership for Freemasons, immigrants from the Seceder churches in the Netherlands would increasingly seek membership in Orange City's afgescheiden congregation. The Orange City Reformed consistory in 1881 and 1883 made strong statements condemning both Freemasonry and schism as sinful; in 1883 the consistory sent money to "Father" Brummelkamp for flood victims in the Netherlands; and Bolks and Buursma led the Classis of Iowa in preparing an 1887 statement of solidarity with Kuyper's Doleantie of the previous year, which was a protest against the "modernism" of the Dutch state church. Closer to home, the consistory gave Buursma a three-month leave to teach in the Northwestern Classical Academy. Also, he was mandated in 1883 to preach a sermon against drunkenness, because of the large number of the congregation's men whom the consistory had to discipline for their abuse of alcohol in the local saloons. Finally, Buursma was attacked in the town's newspaper by Dominie Antonie J. Betten, a premillennialist, biblicist Scholte disciple, who had come from Pella to retire in Orange City, and who had only recently

joined the RCA; the consistory expressed its indignation that Betten had written an article against Buursma, who had contributed an amillenialist's piece to the local paper.

With the departure of Buursma there was once again, as at Bolks' resignation, a year's pastoral vacancy. Five calls were declined, three to the same man; at last, Harm (Harmen) Vander Ploeg (1841-1893), the congregation's fourth choice, accepted. This, plus the facts that his predecessor had had a quite "successful," relatively long Orange City pastorate, and that his own health was precarious, must have made his two-and-a-half-year ministry there none too easy. In any case, a long-term disease, presumably tuberculosis, cut short his life in January 1893. A Groninger, Vander Ploeg had come to the United States in 1866; he received his theological education at Hope. He served four successive midwestern churches (1877-1890) before coming to Orange City (1890-1893) at a salary of $1200 per annum. He seems to have been a gifted man with a great deal of grit, not inclined to cut corners. For whatever reasons, more than the usual number of families "went over" to the Orange City Christian Reformed during his pastorate, and in 1892, to prevent an even worse defection, the Orange City Reformed consistory strongly urged Professor Nicholas M. Steffens of the RCA's Western Theological Seminary to decline the call to teach in the CRC's theological school in Grand Rapids; at the time, he was visiting his daughter who taught at Northwestern Classical Academy; he declined the call but would later accept one from Orange City's First Reformed Church. There was an increase, under Vander Ploeg, in the number of recently married couples who confessed before the consistory to the sin of fornication; this would become a near epidemic under his successor; but the consistory dealt with almost no cases of public drunkenness in the 1890s and later, probably because saloons were banned in Orange City after 1891. Young women who wished to confess their faith could no longer do it in their own homes to a committee of the consistory; henceforth they would be required to appear at the church before the full consistory. The great missionary surge of the 1880s continued during Vander Ploeg's pastorate, with monthly Sunday evening prayer services for missions being inaugurated in 1891.

The death of Dominie Vander Ploeg brought another trying pastoral search, lasting most of 1891. The congregation began and, after seeking much further afield, ended by calling its first American-born minister, Matthew Kolyn (1856-1918); born in Wisconsin, he had been catechized by Bolks and was a graduate of Hope College and New Brunswick Theological Seminary (when there was no RCA theological school in Michigan). Between these two calls to Kolyn, the Orange City church turned a quite different direction to ask two Seceder pastors to come from the Netherlands, first Foppe M. ten Hoor (soon to become a Christian Reformed pastor in the USA and a

long-time anti-Kuyperian professor at Calvin Theological Seminary) and then Jan van Goor. This shows not only the continuing Afscheiding sympathies of the First Reformed Church but probably also its desire to acquire a dominie sufficiently attractive to the newer Dutch immigrants to prevent their becoming Christian Reformed. Professor Herman Bavinck of the Seceder theological school at Kampen, who had visited the United States in 1892, had written the Orange City Reformed Church suggesting Ten Hoor's name, but the latter refused the opportunity to become a minister in the RCA, evidently because of his strongly held anti-Masonic views. Therefore, Matthew Kolyn, the congregation's first choice became their final choice. He had served three churches in Michigan and one in New York before coming to Orange City. A very capable pastor, he received several calls during his five years at First Church (1893-1898). Partly for reasons of health, he then took the "easier" position as principal of the Northwestern Classical Academy just down the street (1898-1901), after which he returned to a Grand Rapids pastorate and then a position at Western Theological Seminary. Like Van Raalte and Bolks, Kolyn was clearly committed to Christian higher education, particularly the training of men for the gospel ministry at home and abroad. More Americanized than his predecessors (doubtless his theological training in the east, at New Brunswick, contributed to this), he was even more caught up in the Anglo-American foreign missionary crusade. First Reformed Church appeared to be moving more toward a universal, global perspective, rather than one confined to Dutch Seceder Calvinism. This would fit well enough with the "Gelderland" mentality's stress on the free preaching of the gospel to all. Kolyn's congregation gave much money for causes such as Samuel Zwemer's mission to Muslims in Arabia, a Christian hospital in China, and the suffering Armenians. This kind of worldwide vision was accompanied in First Church, as undoubtedly the "Northern"-minded Christian Reformed noticed, by more dangerous kinds of universalism. One of Vander Ploeg's catechism teachers had been suspended for holding that all persons would be saved; now, under Kolyn, he was disseminating booklets advocating that opinion; the consistory persuaded him that most of his opinions were wrong and that he should keep quiet about the rest. Also, an open advocate of the view that Christ died for everyone, not just for the elect, was chosen elder during this period; but he now said that he agreed with the Reformed doctrinal standards. An additional manifestation of a less exclusive, more open, "American" attitude was the establishment in 1893 at the First Reformed Church of a branch of Christian Endeavor, the evangelical, nterdenominational youth organization; the Christian Reformed of Orange City and elsewhere maintained their own separate teenage boys' and girls' societies. Even the American-born Seventh-day Adventist "cult," with its eschatologically powered missionary thrust, made small inroads in Orange City; a married couple in the First Reformed Church

received Adventist (re)baptism; consistory disiplined them, ordered 100 tracts against this heresy, and the couple moved away. But openness to the larger, non-Dutch world received a pair of setbacks toward the end of Kolyn's Orange City pastorate. A proposal for making all of the seats in church "free" was defeated in a congregational meeting, and the consistory endorsed a petition from seventy church members that Sunday-school instruction (including the written materials) be as much as possible in Dutch rather than in English. Could these actions have contributed to Kolyn's desire to move on, e.g., to Northwestern Classical Academy, where the instruction was in English?

It took the better part of a year before the next pastor, Nicholas M. Steffens (1839-1912), came, not because there was a long search but because the congregation was calling a teacher, who simply could not drop everything in the middle of an academic year. This many-sided prodigy, who still awaits (and deserves) a biographer, was born in Emden, East Friesland (in Germany next to the Netherlands). After a receiving a classical secondary education, he taught in a girls' school for two years. Then, still only nineteen, he became a missionary to the Jews in Constantinople (Istanbul) under the Free Church of Scotland; here he met a Scottish missionary who became his wife in 1862; he remained a strong advocate of foreign missions throughout his life. In 1863-1864 Steffens studied under Brummelkamp, Van Velzen, and others at the theological school of the afgescheidenen at Kampen. The next six years saw him in three successive Old Reformed pastorates near the Dutch border in Germany, after which he came to this country, where he served two German language RCA congregations from 1872 to 1878 (in Illinois and New York City). He then took his first Dutch-language RCA parish, Seine Bolks' former charge in Zeeland, Michigan, staying there four years. His next congregation was the First Reformed Church of Holland, Michigan, Van Raalte's old church. Steffens' growing reputation for scholarship, together with his forceful representation of the midwestern RCA's anti-schism position over against the CRC in the Michigan Masonic controversy in the early 1880s, brought him the position of professor of systematic and polemic theology at the newly created Western Theological Seminary in 1884. Here he stayed for eleven years, his longest ministry anywhere; by this time he was an advocate of the Neo-Calvinism of his friend Abraham Kuyper; toward the end of this period he refused the CRC Synod's offer to teach in their theological school, he wrote a book controverting the CRC's right to exist, and, as a one-time minister of the separatist Old Reformed Church in Germany, he was a convincing spokesman for the midwestern RCA Dutch in their opposition to the proposed 1893 merger with the (German) Reformed Church in the United States, whose Calvinism was at best lukewarm. The wanderlust came again in 1895, when he returned to his East Frisian roots by accepting the call

to teach theology at the Dubuque Theological Seminary of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. (with whose Old Princeton theologians, such as Benjamin B. Warfield, he had great sympathy), a school serving Germans with origins similar to his own. It was from here that Steffens "settled" in 1899 in Orange City, to remain little more than two years, for he returned to teaching at Dubuque in 1901. Another two years saw this restless scholar back at Western Theological Seminary, where he lived the last nine years of a very full life. He was the major academic light shining in the midwestern Dutch-German, Reformed-Presbyterian theological firmament, acting as a bridge between these groups, having gained the respect of even the CRC. Steffens' two years in the Orange City pastorate were not a very important episode in his life; his major work was done in the twenty-six years of teaching (and more years of writing) which surrounded this brief interlude. His gifts lay in academia. This was probably why his Orange City ministry seems to have been adequate but something less than an overwhelming success. There is relatively little to report about events in the First Reformed Church during the pastorate of their most celebrated dominie (Bolks excluded, perhaps). He was present late in 1898 to be on the platform when Abraham Kuyper addressed Orange City's Dutch Calvinists from the pulpit of his church. The consistory minutes record absolutely nothing about the Spanish-American War, but they do reveal strong support for the South African Boers (for several years beginning in 1900, there were occasional prayer meetings, Afrikaner speakers, and special collections for the victims). The single most striking accomplishment of the Steffens years was the congregation's single-handed donation of $2246 (nearly twice their dominie's yearly salary) in 1900 toward eliminating the $6000 debt of Northwestern Classical Academy, where Kolyn was still principal. Once again, the commitment to Christian (higher) education, and implicitly to the church's mission to the world, was manifest; and Steffens was just the man to articulate this.

The First Reformed Church of Orange City's call to Gerrit H. Dubbink of Michigan (later a Western Seminary professor) to succeed Steffens having been declined, they asked Evert William Stapelkamp (1858-1908) to come, which he did. Born in Wisconsin, he was a graduate of Hope College and New Brunswick Theological Seminary. He had been in the pastorate for eighteen years, having served one church in Wisconsin and two in Michigan. Apparently a man of considerable capacity, he nevertheless represented something of a return to "normalcy" after the "heady" Steffens experience. Moreover, unlike Steffens, Stapelkamp was American born and educated; and, like, Kolyn, he had received his seminary training at New Brunswick, which had a considerably more American ethos than Western. Although the preaching would continue to be entirely in the "Holland" language, the inevitable process of Americanization would not be impeded by Stapelkamp. His six-

year ministry in Orange City (1901-1907) was apparently a relatively happy one for pastor and congregation, except that he, like Vander Ploeg (and, to a lesser extent, Kolyn), suffered from poor health (presumably once again TB), which eventually led to his resignation, followed by his death in Holland, Michigan, less than a year later. The consistory esteemed their ailing dominie sufficiently to offer him early in 1907 a year's leave of absence and $1000 (five-sixths salary) to help him regain his health, but he soon felt compelled to resign, anyway. During Stapelkamp's years in Orange City the tides of Americanization and modernity kept on rising. American politics invaded the consistory meetings, where the Democratic editor of the Vrije Hollander was tried and convicted of slander against a Republican elder, who had written in De Volksvriend that Sioux County Democrats gave far less to the Boers than did Sioux County Republicans; this controversy, begun in the days of Steffens, lasted throughout most of Stapelkamp's pastorate; but more on this later. Another long-term discussion about an "American" issue, the saloon, concerned a German bartender who had joined First Church; is eventual disciplining probably testifies to the increasing influence of the prohibition movement in Orange City. Other new problems included a modestly growing number of divorces and the case of a woman who had joined a "cult," Alexander Dowie's Christian Catholic Church, Zion City (near Chicago), Illinois. The rental of pews was at last terminated in 1903, after about a decade of discussion; this meant that all seats in church were "free," that the church had to raise about $2000 per year some other way, and that ushers were needed to find people seats. About this same time, electric lights were installed in the sanctuary (the parsonage and consistory room had had them for several years), cement sidewalks mandated by the city, replaced wooden ones, and a choir was to sing by the organ. Finally, relations with the local Christian Reformed Church were, to a degree, normalized by direct negotiations. More on this later.

For the afgescheidenen of Orange City, the pastorless years from 1871 to 1877 were anything but easy. They had to struggle along with a very small congregation and virtually no ministerial oversight; as was stated above, some of their charter members very quickly "went over" to the local Reformed Church. Because of their size and because of the dire shortage of clergymen in the CRC at this time, their calls for a minister were repeatedly declined. There was no other Christian Reformed congregation in the area, so their pulpit was supplied only very rarely. The elders read to the congregation from published books of sermons. Nevertheless, the church in Orange City seems to have grown, even in the early 1870s, probably mostly from immigration. The later 1870s saw a few accessions from the Reformed congregation, but growth accelerated rapidly in the 1880s and 1890s, again primarily from immigration, much of it from Frisians and

Groningers with their "Northern" mentality. By the turn of the century, the Orange City Christian Reformed Church was only slightly smaller than the First Reformed Church. But in the years 1874 to 1877, at least five calls were issued by the afgescheiden congregation, and at least five calls were declined. The fourth call was to the erratic Jacobus De Rooy, who had preached for some weeks to the Orange City flock in 1875-1876; he then went to Oostburg, Wisconsin, ostensibly to settle his affairs there before returning to Sioux County, but he seems to have changed his mind and stayed in Wisconsin as pastor of a Christian Reformed congregation.

Finally, in December 1877, Dominie Jan Stadt, Jr. (1828-1900), arrived in Orange City to become the first pastor of the First Christian Reformed Church (1877-1884). He had come as a Seceder cattleman with a wife and two children to the United States from the province of Drenthe in 1868. The next year he was ordained by the CRC and served two congregations in quick succession; in 1872 he became the initial pastor of the church in Cleveland, Ohio, from which he came to Sioux County. His installation there was delayed, because Stadt's Michigan classis had issued no proper dismissal papers, and because his new congregation had issued no proper call, stipulating salary, etc. The Classis of Iowa's concern about the incoming pastor's income was well taken, since these were the grasshopper years in Sioux County, and throughout the 1870s both the synod and classis minutes record the pleas for collections to be taken to help the struggling Orange City congregation, which often could not afford to pay its delegates' rail fare to synod or classis meetings. In 1879 Stadt's salary was only $400 (less than half that of Bolks). The fact that the Orange City Christian Reformed did, at long last, have a resident pastor seems to have attracted some members of First Reformed Church to "come over." Immigration, too, helped Stadt's congregation to grow, but some of the Sioux County folk moved on in the early 1880s to conquer new frontiers, such as South Dakota, Kansas, and Nebraska, where he spent some time organizing congregations for the classis. Unfortunately for both Stadt and his congregation, he was not only a devout, honest, hard-working minister of the gospel but also stubborn, tactless, and old-fashioned, with an odd appearance (bushy beard and drooping eyelids) and unusual pulpit mannerisms. In 1879 he published in a Michigan Christian Reformed paper an unduly and undiplomatically negative letter about the sad economic state of the Sioux County colony. This brought down upon him the wrath and ridicule of De Volksvriend, whose editor, Henry Hospers, did not appreciate the bad publicity Stadt was giving the colony, in whose success Hospers had an enormous stake (financial and otherwise). As time passed and Stadt did not receive a call elsewhere, even his own people became restless. In 1884 one of his flock brought back with him from the East an unmarried young ministerial candidate, whose preaching pleased some of

the Orange City congregation's members so much that they desired that he replace Stadt. Thus, a petition with thirty-four signatures was taken to the Classis of Iowa that year. Although he had the support of some of the consistory and church members, the classis ordered his removal to the nearby new mission field of Le Mars, Iowa. Less than a year later classis declared that he deserved to be suspended for publicly slandering the church in a newspaper; he was ordered to withdraw his remarks and confess his sin, which he presumably did. Although he then had a call from the congregation of Oostfriesland, Nebraska, the classis sent him off to the church in Ridott, Illinois, where he was so ailing by 1887 that he could not continue as pastor. Therefore classis gave him early retirement and a $50 severance loan, which the synod soon took over. He spent his last years in Douglas County, South Dakota. The unhappy disputes involving Jan Stadt were not unique among the Christian Reformed in those early days. There was much similar conflict in this very earnest, understaffed, overworked, overextended denomination, as the minutes of the Classis of Iowa and of the synod show, and as Henry Beets, the early Christian Reformed historian, acknowledges.

We have already met Dominie Johan Gulker (earlier Johannes Guelker or Geulker; 1855-1942), the second pastor of Orange City's First Christian Reformed Church (1884-1890), because he had been the young ministerial candidate smuggled in to supplant Stadt. While this maneuver may not have been strictly according to the church order of Dort, it had the merit of avoiding a long pastorless period such as the congregation had experienced during its first six years. Gulker was a native of the county of Bentheim, Germany, on the Dutch border, where his father had been a long-time elder in the Old Reformed Church; his background was thus similar to that of Steffens. Also like Steffens but unlike Stadt, Gulker received a classical education followed by theological instruction. He was fresh out of the CRC theological school in Grand Rapids when he came to Orange City in 1884, having been in this country only three years. His forty-one-year ministry continued in ten successive small charges in Nebraska, Minnesota, Washington, and Iowa, some of them home mission stations, and some of them German-language congregations. Whether from preference or necessity (he was plagued with poor health), he never again served a church as large as that of Orange City. During his six years there, the congregation nearly doubled in size, in 1885 the church was finally able to build a sanctuary (eleven years after the Reformed did), and by 1890 an embryonic parochial school was in operation. By 1888 Gulker's health had declined to the point that he was unable to fulfill his classical pulpit supply assignments, but his consistory was understanding, and a vacation in Germany brought temporary recovery. In May 1890, however, the consistory, through classis, requested the

synod to grant him temporary emeritus status (at age thirty-five!) for two years, with a subsidy of $500 per year. Like Stadt, he was emeritated, but unlike Stadt, his retirement was not permanent, for by the end of 1890 he was the pastor of a small congregation in Hastings, Nebraska, and he lived over a half century longer. Also, unlike Stadt, he was given kind treatment by his congregation, presumably because he was a more lovable man.

The Christian Reformed in Orange City called Evert Breen, a newly ordained home missionary in the West, as their next pastor, but he declined, only to accept three years later. The second call, to Ebenezer Vanden Berge (1855-1939), was accepted, but he stayed only two years (1891-1893), coinciding almost precisely with the pastorate of his ailing Reformed colleague, Harmen Vander Ploeg. Born in Albany, New York, the son of immigrants from Zeeland, Vanden Berge grew up in Grand Rapids and Holland, Michigan. His father was an elder in the First Reformed Church of Holland, under the ministries of Van Raalte and his successor Roelof Pieters. Vanden Berge went to Hope College, worked for five years as a public school teacher, graduated from both the United Presbyterian Seminary in Xenia, Ohio, and from the CRC theological school in Grand Rapids, and took a Christian Reformed congregation in Passaic, New Jersey from 1888 to 1891. Soon after coming to Orange City he married a non-Dutch New Jersey Presbyterian woman. Although she could not understand Dutch, she attended her husband's church regularly, but since she had difficulty in adjusting to Orange City, the newlyweds left for other fields (was Steffens' English-speaking wife a factor in his departure from Orange City?). Vanden Berge was totally bilingual and, after leaving Sioux County, served a half dozen Christian Reformed congregations in both the Midwest and the East. He left the CRC in 1911, transferring to the RCA, where he had two successive ministries to dying congregations in eastern Iowa; retiring in 1917, he vanished from the roll of the Classis of Pella in 1924. In spite of the fact that he does not appear to have been especially effective in the Orange City situation, his flock continued to grow, not only from immigration but also from an increased number of persons "coming over" from the Reformed congregation; the latter fact seems to suggest that conditions were even "worse" among Reformed at this particular time (whether it was dissatisfaction with Vander Ploeg or something else, is uncertain). Two or three nearby daughter congregations were formed in the early 1890s, which is another indication of the numerical growth of the Sioux County CRC. Finally, evidence that the Christian Reformed had businessmen as well as farmers in their Orange City congregation, that the afgescheidenen were unafraid to discipline prominent people, and that they would even excommunicate for vices of the marketplace, comes to us from "the case of the elder who changed his mind." This man, a Stadt supporter when the

latter was ousted from his pulpit, sold his own furniture business with the proviso that he would have to pay the buyer $2000 if he (the elder) opened a furniture store in Sioux county within twenty years. Not long after this agreement, the elder started another furniture business but in his wife's name; this was legal but not ethical. Therefore, the consistory, with the approval of classis, excommunicated the conniving couple.

Evert Breen (1863-1921) was minister of the First Christian Reformed Church of Orange City from 1894 to 1903. Only thirty-one when he came, he gave nine years of vigorous, capable leadership, the longest pastorate in this church during our period; the first three dominies had not been perfect fits in one way or another, but under Breen the congregation really hit its stride. Born on the island of Texel in Noord-Holland, he came with his parents to Michigan at age four; he was graduated in 1889 from the CRC theological school in Grand Rapids, where he had fallen under the spell of his Kuyperian teacher, Geerhardus Vos, soon to gain fame as Princeton Theological Seminary's biblical theologian. Breen's appreciation for Kuyper would be rewarded when in 1898 he would join his Reformed Kuyperian counterpart Nicholas Steffens in welcoming the great Dutchman to Orange City. Breen's career in the ministry of the CRC began in 1889 with a year and a half as a home missionary, after which he became the first regular pastor of the Firth, Nebraska, congregation, organized by Gulker shortly before he left the Orange City church. Having declined the call to be Gulker's successor, Breen three years later accepted the challenge of following Vanden Berge. Breen's best years were spent in Orange City, where he became known as "the Bishop of the West" because of his church extension work in the vicinity. But, early in 1898, the energetic young dominie, overwhelmed with the load of his many tasks, was granted three weeks' rest for a trip to Michigan; his doctor advised this because of what appears to have been nervous exhaustion. After Orange City, Breen took pastorates in Chicago, Grand Rapids, and Lynden, Washington, where he died of cancer. His son, Quirinus Breen, also became a Christian Reformed minister but left the denomination in 1924 to protest the synod's deposition of a Calvin Theological Seminary professor for heresy; the younger Breen became a well-known Renaissance scholar, specializing in John Calvin.

Three areas of Evert Breen's pastorate in Orange City will receive our attention: church growth, Christian education, and church discipline. The First Church continued to grow, the sanctuary being expanded so as to seat about 1000; concrete sidewalk was laid, while, a few years later than at the Reformed Church, electric lights were installed in the consistory room and the parsonage (they would come to the sanctuary during the next pastorate). A daughter church was founded in a neighboring hamlet, and classis sent Breen to organize a congregation in Amsterdam, Texas. (Just before his

arrival he had been delegated to organize a church in the ill-fated Dutch colony in Crook, Colorado.) Breen and the classis (since the time of Gulker) were committed not only to church extension among their fellow immigrants but also to missions to the "heathen," which then meant first and foremost the American Indians. He spent a month each year in work among the nearby Native Americans; in his next pastorate he would occasionally speak in the Chicago mission to Jews. An Orange City Christian Reformed missionary society began in 1895; it supported annual Fourth of July missions festivals. First Church gave money to the CRC's Board of Heathen Missions. In 1896 Classis Iowa (centered in Orange City) discussed funding mission work in Persia. The fact, however, is that, in contrast to the RCA (both eastern and midwestern), the CRC did not send out foreign missionaries until 1920. The denomination's first priorities were church extension and Christian schools. Much of the time that Breen was in Orange City, a Christian day school was in operation there, although it was not put on a permanent basis until after he left. Doubtless the example of Kuyper's non-parochial, society-controlled Christian schools in the Netherlands was at least part of the inspiration for the Orange City venture, which initially sought the cooperation of the local Reformed, such as Dominie Steffens, a Kuyperian like Breen. Young men planning to enter the CRC ministry, such as the Stuart brothers, Frederick and William, sometimes attended Northwestern Classical Academy, but, presumably because that was an RCA denominational ("parochial") school, the Orange City Christian Reformed consistory began already in 1902 to contemplate a "college" in the area; this was not, however, realized until many years later. As far as church discipline is concerned, the general impression gained in reading the consistory minutes (which for the Christian Reformed are extant only since 1897) is that here, as elsewhere, the afgescheidenen, in comparison with the Reformed, were stricter at certain points and much more thorough, meeting more frequently and at greater length. One major difference was that the repentance of those disciplined by consistory had to be expressed by transgressors (e.g., couples who "had" to get married) personally in front of the whole Christian Reformed congregation, whereas Reformed penitents had only to confess before the consistory, after which the congregation would be notified. Toward the end of Breen's pastorate, an elder had to resign for giving the appearance, at least, of immoral intentions against the seventh commandment; two young women had accused him of making improper advances; the case dragged on throughout his successor's ministry. As in the Reformed congregation, the number of Christian Reformed divorces increased around the turn of the century. Other disciplinary business included the settling of the usual quarrels (sometimes involving the sin of slander) and the censuring of inebriates (even without an Orange City saloon). Because the synod of 1898 extended the prohibition of

membership in secret societies to include the Modern Woodmen of America, two men in the congregation had to choose between the lodge and the church; and because the same synod also prohibited the baptism of the children of baptized non-communicants, Orange City's First Church followed suit, thereby abandoning some of its "Northern" objectivism. Finally, again in the area of prohibitions and "regularizing," Breen's consistory ended the exchange of letters of transfer between the Christian Reformed and Reformed congregations in that community (and RCA churches elsewhere, too), presumably because the RCA was not officially recognized as a sister denomination in correspondence with the CRC; without such recognition, no pulpit and membership exchanges could properly take place. Thus, in spite of a somewhat more open (the Christian Reformed might say, laxer, or less consistent) practice up to the mid-1890s, and in spite of some limited cooperation in areas such as foreign missions and education, the Orange City Christian Reformed under Breen would henceforth regard the RCA in general and the First Reformed Church in particular as they would ordinary American Christians, e.g., the Methodists (Arminians), or as members of the Dutch state church from which the afgescheidenen (many of whom were in the midwestern RCA as well as the CRC) had withdrawn. To join the Orange City Christian Reformed Church, a communicant member of the local Reformed congregation would have to make confession of his/her faith all over again and before the whole congregation. Ostensibly, there was nothing personal in all of this; it was merely a matter of doing everything decently and in order, possibly aided by the Kuyperian distinction between the church as institute and the church as organism; i.e., whereas Calvinists should maintain the purity of the institutional church (of Word, sacraments, and discipline), they should, as part of the church as organism, enter into various voluntary associations of believers to promote the cause of Christ in the world.

Breen's shoes were hard to fill. The Orange City Christian Reformed called three men from "Jerusalem" (Grand Rapids) churches, all of whom declined. The fourth call, to Idzerd Van Dellen (1871-1965), of Luctor, Kansas, was accepted. The son of a CRC pastor who had originated in Groningen, Van Dellen was born in a Seceder parsonage in Zuid-Holland, attended the Kampen theological school (where he was heavily influenced by Herman Bavinck), came to the United States with his father in 1894, and during the next year finished his training for the ministry at the CRC theological school in Grand Rapids. Before coming to Orange City, Van Dellen served young congregations in Maxwell City, New Mexico, and Luctor, Kansas; he stayed four years in Sioux County (1903-1907) where he seems to have been well received, at least by the adults; the last thirty-three years of his ministry were devoted to another new congregation, that of Denver, Colorado. He left Orange City for a higher, dryer climate because his wife suffered from tuberculosis.

Throughout most of his long ministry, he was associated with Bethesda Sanitarium (for TB patients in those days), which began in the 1890s in Maxwell City and later (1910) moved to Denver. In addition to his devotion to the ministry of Christian mercy, he was ardent for missions, Christian education, and church order (he would become a leading CRC author on this subject). During his ministry in Orange City, the church continued to thrive. The sanctuary got a pipe organ, electric lights, and new furnaces. Van Dellen led the consistory in abolishing the practice of centenwisselen, wherein the deacons on Sunday would exchange money, so that the members might have small change (e.g., nickels and cents) for the collection; this change was a sign of the growing affluence of the congregation and of its dominie's penchant for proper form. Collections were taken for the destitute Boers in South Africa (this had begun under Breen) and the consumptives in Maxwell City. The congregation gave birth to yet another Sioux County daughter church. Van Dellen began special monthly missionary services, with neighboring dominies giving a message; a local missionary society was set up to send someone to the heathen but came to nought; the mission festivals continued. In 1904, the Orange City School for Christian Instruction "opened its doors" on a permanent basis, partly because of the public advocacy of Christian day schools in the summer of 1903 by a visiting RCA pastor from Grand Rapids, Marinus E. Broekstra. Van Dellen helped bring order to an unruly Sunday-school by appointing more teachers and providing Sunday-school papers; complaints about a shortage of teachers (and disorderly pupils) had begun under Breen. The youth appeared to be giving some difficulties during and after church, too. For instance, the consistory in 1904 had to admonish five young people (four girls and a boy) for buying refreshments in the restaurant Sunday evening after church. This same month, one J. Brink was reprimanded for driving with several persons per Otomobiel to Leota, Minnesota (a good hour's drive today) on a Sunday a few weeks earlier. "Sunday is no day for recreation," said the consistory sternly. Prior to 1904, very little if anything appears in the Christian Reformed consistory minutes about hallowing the Lord's Day. The orderly Dominie Van Dellen also introduced a standard form for the public confession of young couples who "had" to get married. Finally, his consistory did away with the public confession of faith of those who "came over" from non-CRC churches; and he and his consistory entered into negotiations with the First Reformed Church to further ease the process of transferring members to each other's congregations. We shall take up this subject again shortly.

Now that we have reviewed the separate stories of the two Orange City congregations, it is time for a brief survey of their mutual relationships, some of which have been touched upon already. To begin with, virtually all of their members had come from the rural parts of the Kingdom of the Netherlands (or Germany near the Dutch border); virtually all

of them had come from either the Dutch public church (eventually known as the Hervormde Kerk) or a group which had seceded from the public church, such as the Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerk (the name of the main Afscheiding group between 1869 and 1892, when a majority joined Kuyper's 1886 Doleantie seceders to form the Gereformeerde Kerken). The Orange City Reformed differed from the Christian Reformed, not in being an extension of the Hervormde Kerk as opposed to the Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerk but, rather, in having a somewhat lower percentage (a very large minority, if not a small majority) of its membership with an Afscheiding background. At least as important is the fact that the Reformed Church had a significantly lower "Northern" constituency, and a correspondingly higher "Gelderland" membership (whether Afscheiding or Hervormd). Nevertheless, most of these settlers were cut out of virtually the same piece of Calvinistic cloth. That is what made the dispute so painful for many, particularly when families and friends were divided.

The two congregations both used the the Orange City schoolhouse for their separate services of worship from 1871 to 1874, when the Reformed moved to their new sanctuary; the Christian Reformed would remain in their temporary quarters another eleven years. There was considerable going and coming of members between the two congregations from the very beginning, not always for theological reasons. Certainly "mixed marriages" were hard on ideological fences; shepherds could attract or repel sheep; and personal pique was capable of sending a member scurrying to "the other side." Just as there were sometimes exchanges of official delegates in the higher judicatories of the RCA and CRC, so occasionally an Orange City RCA or CRC minister would request permission to visit unofficially the classis of the other denomination when it met in Orange City; this Seine Bolks did in 1889 and Evert Breen in 1897 (twice). Moreover, Breen led in prayer at the dedication in 1894 of the first permanent building of the RCA's Northwestern Classical Academy, Zwemer Hall. Only very rarely do the consistory minutes mention consultations with the other church, but probably the ministers got together from time to time, either formally or informally. The local newspaper mentioned in 1888 that there was a joint meeting of the Reformed and Christian Reformed teenage boys' societies, at the latter's request, to celebrate its third anniversary. And there were doubtless countless "ecumenical encounters" of an informal, non-ecclesiastical nature not only between the dominies but also between the elders, deacons, and ordinary folk of these two small-town churches.

A major event in the early history of Orange City was the visit in the autumn of 1898 of the famous Dutch religious, educational, and political leader, Abraham Kuyper. He came to the United States to give the Stone Lectures at Princeton on the subject of "Calvinism" (soon published and widely

influential) and to see something of the new world, especially the Dutch settlements in the "West." The minutes of both Orange City consistories tell tantalizingly little about the visit; the newspapers tell more. The committee on local arrangements appointed Henry Hospers (founder of the colony, state senator, and Reformed layman) and Dominie Breen to go to Des Moines to meet Kuyper and accompany him on the train to Sioux County, but Kuyper demurred, preferring to travel alone (perhaps to rest). During his short sojourn in Orange City, he lodged in the Hospers home. Although the Reformed Church was officially without a pastor at this time, when Kuyper spoke there (the biggest auditorium in the area), the pastor-elect Nicholas Steffens was on the platform, along with Matthew Kolyn (his predecessor, now principal of the local academy) and the two Sioux County Christian Reformed pastors, Henry Beets of Sioux Center and Breen. It was indeed an ecumenical occasion of the first magnitude! Kuyper fit none of the older Secession categories (Northern, Gelderland, and Scholtian); he was a kind a bridge figure partly because, whereas he had led a secession from the Hervormde Kerk which had merged with most of the Afscheiding people a half dozen years earlier, he supported the midwestern RCA immigrants' refusal to secede from their denomination simply because of its toleration of Freemasonry; also, for this and other reasons, he had aroused the suspicions of a significant element of the afgescheidenen in both the Netherlands and the United States.

Whether Kuyper's visit to Orange City had any permanent impact on relations between the Reformed and Christian Reformed congregations there is uncertain. On the one hand, the Christian Reformed consistory approached Steffens early in 1901 about a cooperative effort for a local Christian school, and it asked an RCA dominie from Michigan to promote this cause in 1903. On the other hand, it expressed the desire in 1902 to set up a rival to Northwestern Classical Academy, the Reformed consistory ignored the Michigan Christian school booster the following year, and the Christian grade school was founded in 1904 without much evident Reformed support. One indication that an "era of good feeling" had not yet fully come to ecclesiastical Orange City was the Christian Reformed consistory's refusal of the 1904 Reformed request for a little money to help pay their custodian for ringing their church bell thrice daily during the week, to inform the community of the time; the financial aid would relieve the bell ringer of having to go around town to collect for his service. The Christian Reformed gave two reasons for refusing the request: 1) bell ringing was a municipal, not a church, matter; 2) it would be unfair for the congregation's rural members to help pay for a city service. Fifteen years earlier, the Reformed had asked the town for $50 a year to pay for this service but were likewise refused. The upshot in 1904 was that the Reformed consistory agreed to pay their custodian an additional $10 annually.

The important issue of the acceptance of each other's communicant members was clarified in an apparent compromise worked out in 1905-1906, largely on the initiative of the orderly Dominie Van Dellen and the Christian Reformed. This bone of contention had generated enormous animosity, especially on the Reformed side. Only in the late 1890s did the Reformed consistory minutes start calling the Christian Reformed by their proper name, not afgescheidenen. The Christian Reformed consistory minutes often but not consistently called their local rivals hervormd, not gereformeerd, their correct appellation; this misnomer of course implied that the RCA was the American equivalent of the despised Hervormde Kerk, although many in First Reformed Church had seceded from that church in the Netherlands, and although the Orange City Reformed consistory remained just as suspicious of the Hervormde Kerk as the CRC was, for First Reformed never unconditionally accepted the "attestations" (letters of transfer) from the Hervormde Kerk brought by immigrants from the Netherlands. Throughout the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the Orange City Reformed remained in a constant state of irritation because of communicant members who had joined the Christian Reformed on confession of faith, ex poste facto requesting (sometimes) that their names be stricken from the Reformed membership list. It was almost as annoying when, beginning about 1896, attestations from the Reformed congregation were not unconditionally accepted by the Christian Reformed in Orange City (and often elsewhere); the afgescheiden pastor would give the prospective transfers an examination in consistory meeting, after which they would have to make a public confession of their faith before the congregation. Likewise, the Christian Reformed refused to give attestations to the Reformed Church. The Orange City Reformed consistory, understandably, retaliated by refusing to give or receive attestations to or from any Christian Reformed congregation (e.g., Orange City's) which practiced this policy. The compromise offered by the Van Dellen consistory was to give a testimonial letter (as to blamelessness of life and good standing in the congregation; a kind of semi-attestation) for communicant members wishing to transfer to the Reformed congregation, and to accept communicant members of the latter body on the same basis, plus their answers to consistory's questions about "the basic truths." Furthermore, the First Christian Reformed had already decided in 1904 that they would henceforth not require proselytes from other churches to make public confession of their faith before the congregation. These new Christian Reformed policies probably eased tensions between the two congregations, although the exact meaning of the 1906 change is a bit cloudy. For instance, later in 1906, a married couple got a Christian Reformed attestation to the Orange City Reformed Church; was this a scribal error or a further weakening of the Christian Reformed hard line?

Be this as it may, we must conclude with "the case of the elder and the editor," to which allusion has been made earlier, and which illustrates something of the ambivalent relationship between the two Orange City congregations just after the turn of the century. Late in the election year of 1900, an elder of the First Reformed Church of Orange City published an article in the Republican weekly De Volksvriend highly critical of the Democratic party, saying that the local Democrats were extremely niggardly in comparison with the Republicans in giving to the Boer cause in the South African war; whereas thirteen Democrats gave a grand total of $.25, the local GOP had given "nearly $50." The editor of Orange City's De Vrije Hollander, an ardent Democrat (a small minority then and now in Sioux County) and a member of the First Reformed Church, in December 1900 prepared a complaint signed by some members of the congregation (and others), charging the elder with slander. The consistory dismissed the complaint because, first, it's a free country, and people should be able to express their political opinions, and, second, the elder's article named no one by name, so it could not possibly qualify as slander anyway. This ended the matter, or so the consistory thought.

Three years later, in February of 1904 the editor, who had not attended his church since his complaint was dismissed, could keep silent no longer and published a vehement attack on the elder and the consistory, accusing the latter of a cover-up and of using a double standard, so that justice "goes staggering in the streets." The gauntlet having been flung down, the consistory took it up. It summoned the editor, who eventually appeared, and went into judicial session. He was asked to prove his charge that the elder had not written the truth. The editor brought forward what he thought were three untruths. The elder answered each of them in turn, the last response being that $38.75 is "almost $50." The elder begged to differ, accused the consistory of bias (which was quite possible), and walked out of the proceedings. Ironically, it was he, not the elder, who ended up under censure for slander. The elder refused to retract. By 1906 he exhibited the symptoms of diabetes and died in October, still under discipline.

During this same year, the editor's wife and daughter joined the First Christian Reformed Church by testimonial letter, while his son and daughter-in-law had already in 1904 transferred by attestation to the American Reformed Church of Orange City because the elder had brought the editor "before the grand jury." The latter desired to join the Christian Reformed Church but could not because he was under censure at the Reformed Church.

The 1906 funeral service in the home, at the First Christian Reformed Church, and at the graveside was conducted by three ministers: Matthew Kolyn, the editor's former pastor

who had been asked to come from Michigan; Idzerd Van Dellen, the current pastor of the Christian Reformed congregation; and William Stuart of the Sheldon, Iowa, Christian Reformed Church, who was a son of the Orange City Christian Reformed Church, had attended Northwestern Classical Academy, and had just married a daughter of a long-time deacon of the First Reformed Church (her attestation to her husband-to-be's Christian Reformed Church had been accepted unconditionally). The pall bearers were an equally ecumenical group, including several members of the Christian Reformed Church as well as three consistory members of the First Reformed Church. The meditations were on the Christian hope which united - and unites - both Reformed and Christian Reformed - Gelderlanders, Northerners, Scholtians, and Kuyperians - as well as other believers.

When I was examined for ordination in the Presbyterian Church, I was asked if I would "study the peace, unity, and purity" of the church. I replied that I would but that I thought that, in this life, it is hard if not impossible to "study" all three with equal zeal. Perhaps the story of the Christian Reformed and Reformed in Orange City - and elsewhere - illustrates my point.