Dutch Zion Besieged and Breached: Orange City, 1914-1918

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On May 23rd 1918, one year and seven weeks after the United States entered the Great War on the side of England and France against Germany and its allies, Governor William L. Harding of Iowa issued a proclamation which would set his state apart from the other 47 states until the war ended six months later. The Republican governor's controversial edict read as follows: "First. English should and must be the only medium of instruction in public, private, denominational or other similar schools. Second. Conversation in public places, on trains and over the telephone should be in the English language. Third. All public addresses should be in the English language. Fourth. Let those who cannot speak or understand the English language conduct their religious worship in their homes." Harding reasoned that patriotism would grow if the public use of foreign languages were prohibited (and Iowa had failed to meet its quotas in the First and Second Liberty Loan drives)[see the article by Lord Acton on the Harding mandate in Section C of the Sunday, October 15, 1995 Des Moines Register]. There were then 70,000 German-born living in Iowa - the largest foreign language group, followed by the Swedes, Norwegians, Danes - and then the Dutch with about 12,000 immigrants.

My concern in this paper is with how the Dutch-Americans of Orange City and vicinity, especially the churches, responded to Harding's challenge and to the war in general. How loyal were they to "the Stars and Stripes" and to the Allied cause? How patriotic - or unpatriotic - were they? How Americanized were they? How did the war affect them? My observations are based largely upon research done in the local weekly (Republican, Christian) newspaper, De Volksvriend, the Orange City Reformed and Christian Reformed consistory minutes, and several other sources.

Dutch-Americans in general and the Sioux County Dutch in particular had developed a strong antipathy to England largely because of what the British had done to the "Dutch" Calvinists in South Africa during (and after) the Boer War around the turn of this century. De Volksvriend carried news of heroic Afrikaner resistance to the superior forces of the "evil Empire," coupled with accounts of British atrocities committed against innocent women and children, e.g., in the concentration camps. Sioux County was on the circuit for Boer speakers who gave eye-witness accounts of the injustices which their countrymen were suffering at the hands of their cruel oppressors. These reports brought forth a wave of sympathy which was manifested in gifts of money, food, and clothing for the Afrikaner cousins - as well as unhappiness with the McKinley-Roosevelt administration's failure to support the Boers. Thus recent history reinfoced a residual hostility to England left over from the 17th-century Anglo-Dutch wars, to which was added a dash of good old-fashioned British-bashing patriotism derived from 4th of July rhetoric and American history books.

But not only was there hatred of England in Sioux County but a positive attitude toward Germany. The Netherlands was a trading nation which did much business with its neighbor to the east, spoke a form of "Low German," had a royal family which was far more German than Dutch (also William the Silent had been "of German blood"), and had had many Germans settle within its borders (including the grandfather of H. P. Oggel, De Volksvriend's editor, as well as the ancestors of what had then some claim to be called Orange City's "first family," the Muilenburgs). Also, there were East Frisian (NW German) wings (classes and congregations) in both the Reformed and Christian Reformed denominations.

Then in August 1914 war erupted in Europe: England, France, and Russia against German, Austria-Hungary, and Turkey. President Wilson, a Democrat for whom most of Dutch Sioux County had not voted in 1912, gained a lot of support here because "he kept us out of war," especially if it were to be war on the side of England. The local isolationist-neutralist sentiment was encouraged by the example of the Netherlands which pursued a strictly neutral policy throughout the war.

From late 1914 to April 1915 De Volksvriend hosted an informal debate between letter writers on the relative virtues and vices of the English and the Germans. The paper's editor made every effort to be nonpartisan in

a time when nine out of ten Dutch-American newspapers were anti-English [as one letter put it; 11 Feb. 1915], including De Wachter (Grand Rapids), the denominational weekly of the Christian Reformed Church. The Volksvriend discussion was precipitated largely by contributions to the paper by two Christian Reformed Dutch-Americans who had gone to live in two different British dominions: Dr. Benjamin Masselink who had been a dentist in South Africa, and J. Palenstein, formerly of Sheboygan, Wisconsin, the Winnipeg, Canada, correspondent for the Volksvriend. Each man objected - from an ostensibly neutral position - to De Wachter's editor's [Ds. A. Keizer's] "pro-German" stance. Masselink, visiting in-laws in Orange City and just back from South Africa, wrote a series of articles on that country in De Volksvriend in the latter part of 1914; in these he observes, among many other things, that the British send missionaries to the "natives" - unlike the Dutch Reformed who see themselves as the chosen people in the promised land who drive out the heathen or make them slaves - but do not regard them as candidates for salvation. Furthermore, the British had set up the concentration camps in the Boer War for humanitarian reasons, they have given the Boers a great deal of freedom with their dominion status, and the Boers are now wrongly using the war in Europe as an occasion for rebelling against the British.

These opinions easily led to a general discussion - centering around the Dutch-American-Canadian Palenstein - of the relative merits of the English and the Germans. More and angrier letters came from the anti-English (if not pro-German) side than from the "neutral" or pro-English side. One perceptive Michigan writer [11 Feb. 1915] noted that the most recent immigrants tended to favor Germany, and those longer here the Allies. This fits with the reasons given by the supporters of each side (e.g., those with a greater feeling of Dutchness identified more strongly with the Boers, against the English). And since the newcomers tended to join the Christian Reformed Church, which was "Dutcher" than the Reformed Church in America (especially when its eastern wing is included), and which kept up stronger ties with the Netherlands - the Christian Reformed Church seems to have harbored the stronger anti-English and pro-German sentiments - and would have a harder time than the RCA in adjusting to the USA's entrance into the war on the side of England against Germany. Furthermore, those of De Volksvriend's contributors who were identifiably Christian Reformed seemed generally to be the most vocal in speaking out against the views of Masselink and Palenstein - and for the editorial position of De Wachter.

After De Volksvriend's editor stopped this discussion in April 1915 it had become repetitive and sometimes personal), the paper continued to pursue a neutral editorial policy on this subject for the next two years, until the United States entered the war. Occasionally he expressed "a plague on all your houses" viewpoint, with the hope that our country, by remaining out of the conflict, would be a peacemaker; and, in any case, we should pray for peace. But, on the whole, while De Volksvriend occasionally reported items unfavorable to the English (e.g., the blockade of neutral nations like Holland, the censoring of Dutch mail to the USA) or to both the English and the Germans (e.g., the damage done to mission work, the use of non-European "heathen" troops), the news in and of itself had the cumulative effect of portraying Germany in an increasingly negative light. Thus we hear of [1] the Kaiser's invasion of Belgium at the start of the war, with masses of Belgian refugees seeking sanctuary in Holland; [2] the German allies, the Muslim Turks, engaged in "ethnic cleansing" of the "starving Armenians" (who were Christians)[money and other aid went from Sioux County churches for both of these causes]; [3] the Turkish military threat to RCA (and other) mission stations in the Muslim world (and the British defense of these gospel outposts [remember the Sioux County Arabian Syndicate and Sam Zwemer]) and Reformed missionary reports that Germany was urging a Muslim Jihad against England [the CRC had no foreign missionaries yet but some of its members had missionary concern]; [4] the German all-out U-boat attack on North Atlantic shipping (which hindered traffic to and from the Netherlands; Dutch immigration to the USA dropped to less than half in 1915, 1916, and 1917 - and still more drastically in 1918); and [5] the German sinking of Dutch grain ships, without an apology. Thus, when President Wilson finally found himself compelled to ask Congress to declare war on the Central Powers in April 1917, even the Dutch-Americans, including many of the Christian Reformed, were at least resigned to the inevitable.

Once the country was at war, the Sioux County Dutch, urged on by De Volksvriend's editor, worked hard at being - or at least seeming to be - patriotic Americans. The paper was commended by a Christian Reformed

dominie for striking just the right "pro-American" tone upon our entrance into the conflict and for being the first Dutch-American newspaper to endorse our involvement, just as it had been the only one not to have been "pro-German" before we declared war. The editor's message was that we should now be pro-American and anti-Prussian militarism, not pro-English or anti-German. A close reading of the De Volksvriend reveals that some Dutch-Americans were never fully convinced that we should be in the war against "Kaiser Bill." The local RCA classis sent a letter of support to Wilson; the local CRC classis did not [and the 1918 RCA General Synod was much more unguardedly patriotic in its utterances than was the 1918 CRC Synod]. In Orange City, it is evident that the most enthusiastic patriotism was centered around the American Reformed Church and its British-born pastor, the Rev. David McEwan, while the least enthusiasm was to be found among the Christian Reformed, with the First Reformed Church somewhere in between. As indicated earlier, these differences seem to have been largely - but certainly not totally - a function of the Dutchness of the first generation immigrants in contrast to the more Americanized second and third generations.

Almost as soon as Congress declared war, American flags began to appear everywhere in Orange City and Sioux County: in lapels, atop the editor's column in De Volksvriend, on newly erected town flagpoles, in schools, stores, and homes, and ultimately in churches [the American Reformed Church was first], often beginning with the Sunday school or Christian Endeavor Society. Virtual total mobilization of the people came very fast, too: conscription, five Liberty Bond drives over a period of a year and a half (very successful among the prospering Sioux County Dutch; the three Orange City ministers appeared at a rally to sell the initial bond series, but it was only McEwan who is reported to have gone out to sell them in a neighboring community; the ministers were urged to promote bonds among their own flocks, too; how many did this is unclear), as well as the Red Cross (to provide bandages, sweaters, socks, etc., for the soldiers) and YMCA drives for funds; Red Cross volunteers were soon housed at the American Reformed Church. To provide a little public pressure, the names of all draft registrants and those deferred, in addition to all givers to the Liberty Loan and Red Cross drives were listed in De Volksvriend. Again, it appears that the American Reformed Church contributed a greater percentage of the leaders in giving for these causes, while the First Christian Reformed Church (with a few notable exceptions, such as Chris Aué, the patriotic principal of the local Christian school) remained in the background. "Slackers" (those who did not "do their bit") were mercilessly scorned, some getting the yellow paint treatment (e.g., one store in particular in Orange City - and barns in the surrounding area); "traitors" (anyone who questioned the war effort) were no more kindly treated.

Emotions ran very high. Mass meetings in Orange City became quite frequent - to whip up enthusiasm (by local orators - usually lawyers and initially ministers) for the various drives and to bid farewell to the area's departing soldiers. Parades saw them to the train. School children were involved with junior versions of the Liberty Bonds and the Red Cross; the Orange City Christian school was particularly visible in all of this, partly because it had to prove its patriotism, since the Christian schools (supported largely by the Christian Reformed) were under suspicion as being un-American because of their opting out of the public school system and because of their foreign, "Holland" flavor [note the debate in The Leader 1917-1918 and De Volksvriend between Chris Aué and the Rev. John Vander Beek, the RCA pastor at Maurice; the Christian schools were accused of promoting Prussian militarism!].

Every county had its "Defense Council," with strong coercive powers (fines, jail, etc.). Sioux County's was chaired by Orange City's staunchly patriotic mayor Gerrit Klay. The Defense Council enforced loyalty, investigated "slackers" and "traitors," made sure that every financially able family bought Liberty Bonds, supervised price controls, rationing, etc. Sioux County's council was mainly responsible for our going "over the top" in each of the five Liberty Bond drives. The area churches were concerned with the spiritual welfare of the "boys" who went into the armed forces (mainly the army). Both the area RCA and CRC classes helped provide pastors for the training camps (e.g., Camp Dodge near Des Moines). [The local Reformed were generally more interested than the Christian Reformed in pushing for prohibition for the duration of the war - to have sober fighters and to save grain needed for food.]

As the conflict dragged on, American public opinion became ever more suspicious of anything which looked subversive of the war effort - and even before Governor Harding's proclamation banning foreign speech from public places, there was a good deal of "speak English" only sentiment among the Anglos of Iowa and their Americanizing Dutch sympathizers who wanted to be "more patriotic than thou" (the latter needed to try harder!). One indication of the feeling at this time comes from Orange City at the end of April 1918. An American minister from a nearby town addressed a mass evening meeting in the Town Hall of area residents and departing soldiers. He urged united support by the home folk and fiery courage by the soldiers. At the beginning of the program, new songs like "Over There" and "Keep the Home Fires Burning" were sung - and at the end "America." The crowd then went home, except for some Orange City high school students who "went to the school building, gathered together all of their German books and those of their teachers" - and literally "kept the home fires burning." With this bonfire "they let be known their rejection of all that is German and their refusal to receive further instruction in this language" [2 May 1918 Volksvriend]. Actually they had to continue their German studies - minus textbooks - for another couple of weeks - but the high school principal felt compelled to cut their German lessons two weeks short and to give a long explanation in print of why he allowed German to be taught at all during this school year [23 May 1918 De Volksvriend]. The case got a lot of notoriety far beyond Sioux County. Incidentally, but probably not coincidentally, the Orange City Christian School dropped its teaching of Dutch just about this time, a month before Governor Harding's language proclamation [De Volkvsvriend, 30 May 1918].

In any case, the edict hardly came as a bolt out of the blue, and it had a fair amount of support among the English speaking portion of the population. It was, however, for the Sioux County Dutch "stank voor dank," because they had in general been pretty good sports in supporting the war effort - at least financially (they had exceeded their quota in every bond drive) and in supplying a fair share of their sons to the military. They were understandably quite upset about the prohibition.

As we shall see, the governor's ban on the use of foreign languages including Dutch in services of worship (and elsewhere) was soon weakened a bit in the face of the strong opposition which it encountered. But, even so, it was hardest on those born in the Netherlands, especially the most recent immigrants, who had tended to gravitate to the more "Dutch" church, the Christian Reformed (not to mention the Netherlands Reformed congregation of Sioux Center). And of these newcomers, the prohibition was probably the most onerous for those who had the least contact with the larger "American" world - namely, (farm) women. It was hard on the elderly, too (there were frequent comments in De Volksvriend about this). The policy was doubtless the least unwelcome to those of the younger generation who had recently been in the local public or Christian school, where English was the language of instruction.

What were the results of the proclamation in Orange City and vicinity? To begin with, there was a fierce negative reaction. The area Dutch and German language congregations united in seeking to alter or abolish the mandate. During the next several months (after the May 23rd edict), the clergy gathered occasionally to coordinate strategy and sometimes met with the Sioux County Defense Council, headed by Mayor Gerrit Klay, a Dutch-born reputed Unitarian and not a church member (although his wife and children belonged to the American Reformed Church). The clergy sent delegates to plead with the governor in Des Moines. They also dealt once in a while as individuals with "the powers that be." Sometimes church elders were involved in these negotiations. The upshot of it all was that the government backed down a little on its foreign language prohibition. How much of this was decided at the state level and how much at the county level is not entirely clear. The policy for Sioux County was changed at least twice after the initial edict.

The first relaxation - or clarification - of the rules came at a June 18th 1918 meeting of the Sioux County ministers with the Defense Council. And I quote: "The principal sermon at every public worship must be preached in English. Should the minister desire to hold a double service and preach a double sermon, he can preach his English sermon and then follow, at the same time, with a literal translation in a foreign language. . . . Nobody will be permitted to attend the foreign service who had not attended the English service." The same rule - English first, then Dutch - is also applied to Scripture readings, the liturgy, prayer, and the sacraments.

Only Psalms (and hymns) may be sung in Dutch without translation. This decision meant that pastors were in practice relieved of creating two fresh sermons every Sunday - and their hearers got to hear the same sermon twice (especially if their English was not good). But a price was exacted for this concession to Dutch services. The ministers present had to sign the following pledge: "We, the undersigned, hereby pledge our loyalty to our country and our flag. We will do all we can to promote harmony and unity among our people and counsel obedience to our laws. We will follow the proclamation of May 23, 1918, issued by the governor of our state and will while said proclamation is in force address our congregations at our public worship in the English language and in the presence of the Stars and Stripes." This was signed by almost all of the Sioux County clergy, including the ministers of Orange City's First Reformed and First Christian Reformed churches. [The fire which burned down the Peoria, Iowa, Christian Reformed Church and Christian school had occurred less than a week before this - on June 13th!] Pastor Van Dyke of the Netherlands Reformed congregation of Sioux Center did not have to agree to the clause about preaching in English, because he could not speak in that tongue, so his church closed for the duration (his flock then worshipped in their homes). Pastor Frederick Lubbers of the First Reformed Church of Sioux Center was absent from this meeting and evidently never took the pledge, because he continued preaching in Dutch without translation [at morning services only - the afternoon services were in English] for the rest of the war; he did, however, visit the Defense Council with two of his elders and told them that, although he was loyal to the United States, he could not comply with the governor's edict as a matter of conscience - and that he was ready to go to jail if need be rather than obey it. [Father Brune of Alton, on the other hand, had signed the pledge but preached in German and got himself fined by the Council.] In the same edition of De Volksvriend [20 June 1918] in which the concession and the pledge are reported, the editor quotes God's Word (Romans 13:1), "Be subject to the powers that be" in relation to this case. He goes on to observe that, after all, our ancestors suffered in the Netherlands in the 1830s Afscheiding by being fined and put in jail, so we ought to be able to make this relatively small sacrifice in a time of war. There may be irony here in the mention of the fines and jail which the forebears endured, since they doubtless used another text than Romans 13 to justify their actions, namely, "We must obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29). Either Pastor Lubbers was the only Sioux County dominie made of the same stuff as the ancestors, or perhaps the circumstances were sufficiently different that his fellow pastors may be excused for "giving unto Caesar" what Caesar wanted.

Less than three months later, in early September there was a further relaxation of the Harding mandate: the county Defense Council said that the request of the Reformed and Christian Reformed dominies has been granted that there may be one service in Dutch on the morning of the Lord's day - but that the rest of the day must have English services (usually held in the afternoon) with English singing. This rule presumably allowed for the content of the two services to be different - with nobody who attended the Dutch service compelled to attend the English service. [De Volksvriend, 12 Sept. 1918; word came from Defense Council 5 Sept.; 6 Sept. CRC consistory minutes] In any case, this meant that most Sioux County Dutch churches then went to a morning Dutch service and an afternoon (or evening) English one (as Sioux Center First Reformed Church had been doing all summer). The First Christian Reformed Church of Orange City decided to go along with this new rule, except that the second, or English, service (in the evening) would be without singing, because "we are not good with the English Psalter and also are not yet in possession of English Psalmbooks" [13 Sept. CRC consistory minutes]. (An earlier proposal - the middle of August - by the Defense Council was rejected by the First Christian Reformed consistory [and others?]; it was to the effect that one service be in English and one service in Dutch, but that nobody may attend the Dutch service who had not been born in the Netherlands. [19 Aug. CRC consistory minutes]).

All of this maneuvering, with proposal and counter-proposal, must have been very confusing, especially for the laity. And the actual implementation of these evolving rules varied somewhat from congregation to congregation and from time to time. We have time to glance at only a few of the actual effects of the Harding proclamation on the Dutch Christians in our area. It was especially hard, as has been said, on the Christian Reformed. One hint of how they chafed under the governor's and Defense Council's edicts is the decision of the Orange City Christian Reformed consistory that the consistory members remain seated in the worship service during the "long prayer" and the "thanksgiving prayer" rather than stand as was their custom

- for as long as the language rule was in effect [8 July 1918 and 12 Nov. 1918 CRC consistory minutes]. Some other effects of the edict were the following: The Christian Reformed Classis of Orange City (but not that of Sioux Center) moved its September 1918 meeting out of state from Sheldon, Iowa, to Edgerton, Minnesota, where they could speak Dutch openly (the Reformed Classis meetings could remain in Iowa, because they were already conducted in English). Christian Reformed church (Ocheyedan), near the Minnesota border, saw some of its members attend church in Minnesota, rather than hear English sermons read by elders in the pastor's absence. And sometimes even elders from that same congregation would remain home rather than attend a service which they could not understand - and once a non-elder there had to read a sermon because no elder could be found who could read English. And another Christian Reformed congregation (Sanborn) had to cancel a service because no elder was found who could read English; in this same church two elders resigned because they did not know English. In general, church attendance seems to have suffered [De Volksvriend, 20 June 1918].

The catechism question books had now to be in English, with the catechism classes taught in that language, too (the Christian Reformed had been all in Dutch; the Reformed partly in Dutch). And the Sunday schools had to shift to English - the Christian Reformed ones having been predominantly in Dutch up to then. The Orange City Christian Reformed 4th of July celebration for 1918 was cancelled, as was their mission fest (but partially moved to Worthington, Minnesota). The request to allow the Reformed annual August county mission fest to be exempt from the Harding rule was denied, but the indomitable Sam Zwemer, visiting from out of state, gave two different messages at it, one in Dutch and one in English, anyway. Ads began to appear in De Volksvriend selling English [United Presbyterian Church?] language Psalters, while a few Christian Reformed congregations (including Orange City's) developed (youth) choirs to learn the Psalms in English (even though the governor's edict did not forbid Dutch Psalmody); on the whole, the Reformed did not follow this pattern, preferring to go directly to English hymns and American gospel songs [a similar practice would be seen in Orange City's two post-war congregations, Trinity Reformed and Second Christian Reformed; see below]. In one way, at least, the First Reformed Church of Orange City suffered more than the First Christian Reformed Church, namely, the weekly Wednesday evening prayer meeting had to be cancelled for the duration of the war (the Christian Reformed had none). But there was one other way in which the Orange City Reformed had a harder time than the Christian Reformed. And to that we now turn.

The June 1918 provision that the flag be hung in the church sanctuary (a novelty for the Sioux County Dutch) did not appear to be especially controversial (at least on a reading of De Volksvriend); attention seemed to be entirely on the language question (the more practical matter). The Orange City Christian Reformed consistory matter of factly appointed two elders to implement the flag mandate immediately after the Defense Council gave it [19 June 1918 CRC consistory minutes]. But things were different at the First Reformed Church. The consistory meeting minutes are silent on the subject of the flag during the summer of 1918, but at the September meeting (23 Sept.) a layman (Pieter Mouw) came to request that "the flag, which in the night had been hung above the pulpit, be hung somewhere else" [it had presumably been hung from the tie-rods which reinforced the walls]. The consistory declined to pursue this matter. Only after the war (26 May 1919 consistory meeting) did the consistory decide "to remove the flag above the pulpit" and "to procure a new flag to use for special occasions." The background of the flag hanging is somewhat obscure, but this much is clear: At the end of April 1917 (just after we had entered the war), Elder Arie Van Wyk, evidently a good patriot and soon to be a leader of the English language movement in the congregation, asked the consistory in the name of the Sunday school teachers, to place a flag in the church, which the consistory refused to do. Eleven months later (end of March 1918), the consistory agreed to a request from the congregation's Christian Endeavor Society to put a United States flag and a service flag in the consistory room. But the consistory seems not to have moved rapidly enough for some - hence the flag hanging incident.

This flag flap was evidently closely linked to a furore over the language question, which badly split the consistory and the congregation at the close of 1918. Feeling ran so high that the consistory discussed whether the Lord's Supper should be held or not [16 Sept. 1918 consistory minutes]. Shortly after the war ended and the use of Dutch was no longer controlled, in early December 1918 the consistory put the prickly

question to a congregational vote - whether the First Church should return to two Dutch services or continue with one Dutch and one English service. The men (no women could vote) voted 142 to 41 to go back to two Dutch services. Elders Van Wyk and Samuel Muilenburg and a deacon resigned from the consistory and early next year led in forming a new congregation - the Trinity Reformed Church - over the strong objections of their former colleagues on the consistory [the charges and counter charges can be read in the consistory minutes of First Reformed Church]. There was a good deal of bitterness and rancor, which was only healed with time. Although the language question, the flag incident, and patriotism in general were the ostensible reasons for the creation of a new congregation, the real causes may have more to do with the needs felt by a younger generation (e.g., the Sunday school and its teachers) for a fresh approach to the new world which was emerging after the horrific war just ended.

What happened after the war ended, when Sioux County attempted to return to normalcy? The governor's proclamation was lifted, and most of the Dutch churches returned to two Dutch services, although some were beginning to experiment with an English service at least occasionally. (Only in the 1950s did English finally triumph totally in the Orange City worship services.) The American flag stayed in the Reformed churches, at least. The Sunday schools continued in English. Some of the catechism classes returned to Dutch for a while - especially among the Christian Reformed. The Reformed resumed the midweek (Dutch language) prayer meetings. The Christian Reformed brought back their Dutch language 4th of July and mission festivals. The Red Cross turned to peacetime activities. The troops were demobilized and received a belated but royal welcome in Orange City in August 1919; the camp pastors came home. "Slackers" and "traitors" continued to be ostracized for a time, at least. And the Sioux County Dutch voters took their revenge on Governor Harding, who had carried their districts in 1916 with the traditional Republican majority; they overwhelmingly voted against him and for the Democratic candidate in the closing days of the war (early November 1918).

The postwar cooperative idealism prevalent in much of American (church) life was not very visible in Sioux County. The Interchurch World Movement of 1919 to 1920 was briefly considered here locally (by the Reformed) - and dismissed (as it soon was elsewhere). The League of Nations garnered relatively little support in the area, especially among those who had caught the premillennial "bug," which made them pessimistic about the prospects for any efforts at preserving world peace through international detante. Premillennialism not only had a wide audience among the local RCA people (e.g., the articles in De Volksvriend by the Rev. Gerrit H. Hospers) but also among the Christian Reformed, whose premillennial Dominie Harry Bultema, the author of the bestselling book Maranatha (1917) about the prophetic "signs of the times," had just been suspended from the ministry (1919; he spoke to a large crowd in 1920 in Orange City; incidentally, about this time, the First Christian Reformed Church consistory was dealing with a member of its congregation man with worse theological aberrations than Bultema's - namely, one who had been infected with the millennial teachings of the Jehovah's Witnesses; interest in "the signs of the times" was, for rather obvious reasons, prevalent during the war ["wars and rumors of wars," the gospel preached worldwide, growing heresy and immorality, the return of the Jews to Palestine]). Premillennial social and cultural pessimism seemed to fit the mood among many in Orange City. Division more than cooperation seemed to be the order of the day. Although Professor Louis Berkhof of Calvin Seminary and Pastor John Engelsman of Orange City's First Reformed Church would join forces as the chief speakers at the 1920 Christian 4th of July celebration here in town, the unitive spirit was hardly evident in the founding in 1919, by the Christian Reformed, of the academy at Hull - which was a clear competitor to the Reformed academy in Orange City. Moreover, of the two new daughter churches in Orange City formed at least partly because of the language question, one, as we have seen, was formed in controversy (the Trinity Reformed Church in 1919). But the Christian Reformed daughter church, the Second Christian Reformed Church, began very smoothly in 1921; perhaps its founders had learned from the errors made by the Reformed. (The favorable economic situation in which the farmers had prospered enormously - until 1921 - may have made the founding of the academy and the two daughter churches a bit easier, although Second CRC began when the times had started to turn sour.)

In conclusion, the First World War marked an obvious turning point for Sioux County in general and for its churches in particular. But the language question was not the only thing which indicated change. Perhaps at least as important as that whole matter were the accelerating social/cultural changes occurring during the teens which precipated the "roaring twenties." There is time only to list some of these changes in Orange City and nearby: the automobile (and, with it, better roads), the movies, spectator sports, social, business, and cultural clubs, the Masonic lodge, the American Legion, traveling speakers and musicians, the increasing prominence of women (e.g., the Woman's Club of Orange City, 1916, the WCTU, and women organists in both local Dutch churches [ca. 1920], women's suffrage), local bands and choirs, the public library, the phonograph, "worldly amusements" of all sorts, the flapper, clothing styles, the growing power of the mass media of communication. All of these - and more - meant that there was a good deal of competition for the time and attention of Orange City's Christians, that the church was losing its central position in community life, and that the minister's and the consistory's word was no longer law - if it ever really was in "Sioux County Zion."

A Note on Sources: As is apparent from the foregoing narrative, the data are derived almost entirely from the pages of De Volksvriend and the consistory minutes of the First Reformed and First Christian Reformed Churches of Orange City. Further materials came from the minutes of Orange City's American Reformed Church and of the local classes and national synods of the Reformed and Christian Reformed Churches. The Alton Democrat (local newspaper) and a very few other sources, such as standard Iowa histories, round out the sources used.