

# “The Origins of Pella II”

by Rev. Wm. Zeilstra

## Introduction<sup>1</sup>

When I serve churches, I like to know the stories of their beginnings. Usually, this presents no problems. When I set out to discover for myself the origin of Pella II, I thought a few weeks of work would bring me to the beginning. According to the pattern of many churches, I expected to find that First church became overcrowded, so that Second church had to be started. Or, perhaps, a group of people gathered together spontaneously and applied for permission to organize and become the Second CRC. This is not unusual for many churches.

But not so Pella II. In my reading, I soon discovered that Pella II rose out of the Fourth Reformed Church of Pella. According to its fiftieth anniversary booklet, this happened when the people of that congregation became unhappy with the trends they saw in the Reformed denomination. Some questions came to mind:

- What trends were those?
- How did those trends show themselves in Fourth Reformed?
- Where did Fourth Reformed come from? Where did they worship? How did Pella II get to be located where they are today?

So I began to hunt down the answers. I began with Murt Kooi’s little article<sup>2</sup> entitled “Fourth Reformed Church – Presbyterian Churches” in the big, black book entitled The History of Pella, Iowa.

Murt Kooi’s words are like a surprising splash of cold water in the face. “The history of the Fourth Reformed Church is an enigma,” she writes.

It existed in brief spurts of time, experienced discord and was mobile in its places of worship. Early records were lost and the real reason for organization has been obscured by time.

. . .

It would seem [she concludes] that Fourth Reformed is sometimes referred to as First Presbyterian, and then later called the Holland Presbyterian, and then later the Fourth Reformed again. Fourth Reformed and First Presbyterian may well have struggled, independent of each other but leaning upon one another and thus merged. As time passed, recollections dimmed and we are left only to surmise.”

Clearly, there is a story to be told here. The sources are few and mostly second hand. They echo each other’s work, and I certainly claim no originality here. But taken together,

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<sup>1</sup> This is a paper was written for the Centennial of the Second Christian Reformed Church of Pella, Iowa, and delivered at the Centennial Banquet at Central College of Pella on August 15, 1997.

<sup>2</sup> “Fourth Reformed Church – Presbyterian Churches,” The History of Pella, Iowa 1847-1987, © 1988 by the Curtis Media Corporation, Sponsored by the Pella Historical Society, p. 104.

they allow a story to be told which none of them tells completely. Not many of you have ever heard this story that I am to tell, so I look forward to telling it.

I have come to believe, furthermore, that this story should have a significant voice in the story of the churches of Pella, and even the story of Henry Scholte. In brief, it appears to me that in the story of the origins of Pella II, we find the last major conflict and significant deliberate move by a group of church people away from the influence of Henry Scholte. In fact, the origins of the Second Christian Reformed Church of Pella cannot be fully understood without learning about the ambitions and convictions of Henry Scholte for Christian life in Pella. Let's get to the story.

### The Conflict Occurring Vande Kieft's Ministry, Part I

We begin in 1895, with the arrival of Reijer Vande Kieft in Pella from the Netherlands. Few ministers look for trouble. Vande Kieft was one, I believe, who preferred peace. But as other ministers have learned, Vande Kieft found that sometimes peace must be "bought with a price."

Having arrived in Pella in 1895 at the age of 33 with his wife Meintje and their seven children, he needed to find work. Since 1889 he had been working in the Netherlands as an evangelist and religious instructor, even pastoring some large churches. But his dream was to go to America, and in those days (as we learned from the Henry and Maria Scholte story), when the husbands dreamed, the wives and children followed. As one author described it in a personal narrative about these events:<sup>3</sup>

Not being able to harmonize his heart and mind with existing conditions in the established or state church (Ned. Herv. Kerk) in the Netherlands, our brother set sail for the American shore arriving with his helpmate and seven children at Pella, Iowa on May 15th 1895 having bid adieu to a peace and truth loving church of some 300 families at Els near Rhenen.

When Vande Kieft arrived in Pella, the Fourth Reformed Church was without a minister, and the elders were eager to secure his ministry for their congregation. They did so. Perhaps we can say at this point that Vande Kieft applied immediately for ordination in the Reformed Church of America, that being the denomination of this Fourth Church. But his request was

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<sup>3</sup> One helpful way to understand all of this is by reading a paper entitled Pella II: 1910: A Narrative. This is an eight page, handwritten document in English, held by the Historical Archives of the Christian Reformed Church at Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Michigan; sadly, it indicates no author. I use this source extensively, but, due to its short length, will not refer to page numbers; unattributed quotations, therefore, are from this manuscript.

denied. No doubt, the clergy of the Reformed Church wanted to get to know the substance and style of this young man before they would approve his application. But it remained a disappointment for Vande Kieft who had long been aspiring to serve as an ordained minister.<sup>4</sup>

So the Fourth church now had a minister of sorts, and they found him one who would keep to the Reformed way of emphasizing obedience to God, the cultivation of doctrinal understanding, and the teachings of the Scriptures as explained in the Canons of Dordt. He did this by reading the Ten Commandments; preaching according to the Heidelberg Catechism, and adhering to the radical grace of God's salvation expressed in the "five articles against the Remonstrants" (as the Canons of Dordt were then called).

Before long, however, Vande Kieft discovered that a number of people definitely were not happy about this. Many of them, apparently, were involved with teaching Sunday School and, in today's language, we might say they were unionized. They wanted Vande Kieft to preach the doctrines of Jacob Arminius (which were rejected by the Canons of Dordt), endorse the teachings of dispensational pre-millennialism (which Henry Scholte endorsed), and sympathetically present the interpretations of "soul-sleep" teachings (which claimed not only that the soul rested after death, but also that the soul was unconscious until raised on the last day). Still others believed that the wicked would be annihilated on the Last Day, while others believed that all would be saved on the Last Day.<sup>5</sup> They used threatening language suggesting that Vande Kieft's tenure of ministry there would be short. But Vande Kieft refused to listen to them. Furthermore, the elders supported him unitedly in this decision. In the personal narrative, we read:

Upon an absolute refusal to comply with their request the enmity broke loose and, . . . "they would bring it to pass," [he said,] that I with wife and children would be placed in the street.!"

This dispute was no doubt fueled by the frictions of ambitious personalities, as many disputes are, and the Sunday School teachers pressed their arguments upon the congregation against the advice given to them to accept the decision of the minister and the elders. When they persisted, the Consistory removed them from their teaching positions, and "discontinued the S.S.

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<sup>4</sup> There is no record of Vande Kieft's service at Fourth Reformed Church. The ensuing history of withdrawal, and the lack of ordination likely did not bring anyone officially to record his work. Rozendaal, p. 36.

<sup>5</sup> From the "Life Sketch of the Rev. R. Vande Kieft," by his son Joseph Vande Kieft. The first page of this indicates that it was published in The Banner in the June 8, 1934, issue.

for a short time but soon opened the same again taking it under its immediate supervision and direction." And so the conflict intensified by another step.

### The Background of the Conflict

This conflict, as most conflicts, was a blend of personal and doctrinal factors. We might better understand this conflict if we look very briefly back at the history of Pella, Scholte, and, as little as we can know of it, of Fourth Reformed Church.

Lubertus Oostendorp, a student of Pella's church history, notes that Scholte aspired toward one, united, Christian church of Pella, its members meeting in full assembly each week to govern this church.<sup>6</sup> Through the course of events in Pella, Scholte's ambition was rejected. Having arrived at Pella in 1847, within two years there was trouble, within four years the church split, and within eight years Scholte felt it necessary to establish his own church and build his own building. Scholte preached there without salary until his death in 1868.

Though Scholte did not join any Reformed Church in Pella, he did remain Reformed in much of his theology and he rejected the teachings of the Freemasons. But Scholte also became a dispensational pre-millenarian, however, and also became a despiser of the *ware gereformeerde kerk* [True Reformed Church] -- one of the former names of the Christian Reformed Church. Giving free rein to his dispensational leanings, rising from his friendship with Darby, its founder, Scholte edited a magazine entitled *Toekomst* [He Comes] for two years that focused upon the themes of the coming of Christ. In the last issue, published shortly after he died, Scholte had this to say about the Christian Reformed Church:

We cannot conclude any different than that the denomination which deceives itself and others with the title *ware gereformeerde kerk* is the wickedest district in the contemporary Babylon, with its choking atmosphere destroying the spiritual life and hindering spiritual maturity in grace, . . . 'a lantern without light and a temple without God.'<sup>7</sup>

Scholte died on August 25, 1868, a month short of his sixty-third birthday. People must have wondered: "What would happen to his church now?" Oostendorp suggests that, after Scholte's death, "the nucleus" of the Scholte congregation joined with the early Fourth

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<sup>6</sup> Lubertus Oostendorp completed his doctoral dissertation on Scholte in 1964 at the Free University of Amsterdam. This was published as *H. P. Scholte: Leader of the Secession of 1834 and Founder of Pella* (Franeker: T. Wever, 1964). A copy can be found in the Archives of Central College, of Pella.

Reformed Church.<sup>8</sup> Perhaps not all would be well: surely they brought with them to their new church home some of the ideas and willfulness of Scholte<sup>9</sup>, and would favor dispensational teaching, hold a suspicion of the rule of the church by the consistory, and exhibit a predisposition against the confessionalism and the concern for doctrine that characterized the early Christian Reformed Church.

Where did this Fourth Reformed Church come from? It appears from church records that a First Presbyterian Church existed in Pella from 1861. It also appears that an early Fourth Reformed Church existed in Pella from 1869 to 1879<sup>10</sup>. It can be argued that these two churches were actually the same church. It is known, for instance, that the First Presbyterians bought the property at 606 Union Street, and built a church building there in 1872 for \$3000. Henry Rozendaal, writing in 1969, writes that the early Fourth Reformed Church also built in 1872 for \$3000. Rozendaal concludes, therefore, that the early Fourth Reformed and the First Presbyterian were one and the same church.<sup>11</sup>

This congregation, then worshipping on Union Street, was a blend of Presbyterians (who were perhaps Dutch) and "the nucleus" of Scholte's old congregation. They went independent in

<sup>7</sup> Cited by Oostendorp, p. 190, from Toekomst, II, No. 12, blz. 187, Aug 1868.

<sup>8</sup> Oostendorp, p. 182. Oostendorp says that this early Fourth Reformed Church was served by Vander Kley and Stobbelaar. What is the connection between this "early" Fourth Reformed group, and the "later" Fourth Reformed church (1894-1910, to be mentioned later)? Oostendorp's warning is well taken: "It is impossible to determine how large a continuation there had been in the membership or ideology." Page 182 n. 6. True enough, but Oostendorp himself provides the motive for thinking about continuation: there was precedent for trouble, for instance, in the founding of First CRC of Pella out of tensions in the First Reformed Church, due to Scholte influence there. Also, the pre-millennial objections raised against Vande Kieft and the resistance to the authority of the creeds of the church and its elders (viz. the church's government turned against the spontaneous and pious convictions of ordinary church members): these would likely rise from the sentiments of Scholte that persisted in his followers. (See the next note.)

<sup>9</sup> See Oostendorp's description of Scholte's character: "Willful character, combined with economic independence and ready rationalization made him careless of his friends or colleagues. There is no evidence that he ever accepted correction or admitted he was wrong. More basically his Reveil individualism [referring to the pietistic revivalism in the Netherlands of the early thirty's], biblicism and romantic idealism unfit him for bondage to crowd, creed, or custom." Oostendorp, p. 191; cf. pp. 13-15. Oostendorp claims that "the spirit of Scholte" also continued to exert significant trouble in the First Reformed Church, to which some members of his own church had gone. In fact, Oostendorp traces the founding of the First Christian Reformed to the tensions aroused in First Reformed by the ideas taught in that church's Sunday School by the admirers of Scholte! See p. 176-178.

<sup>10</sup> From an examination of the Historical Directory of the Reformed Church in America. Cited in Henry T. Rozendaal's Heralds of Truth: A brief History of the Churches in Pella, 1969, p. 24.

<sup>11</sup> Rozendaal, p. 43-44. It is worth quoting Rozendaal in full: "So the records tell us that the Holland Presbyterian Church was once the Fourth Reformed Church and that the Fourth Reformed Church built a sanctuary in 1872 at the cost of three thousand dollars. Also they tell us that the First Presbyterian Church was built in 1872 at a cost of three thousand dollars. One is inclined to conclude that the First Presbyterian Church became the Fourth Reformed and, due to the paucity of records and because of their sketchy nature, was referred to sometimes as Fourth Reformed and sometimes First Presbyterian; then later became the Holland Presbyterian, and still later the second Fourth Reformed. That would give a history something like this: from 1861 to 1869 First Presbyterian; from 1869 to 1879 Fourth Reformed; from 1879 to 1880 independent; from 1880 to 1894 Holland Presbyterian and from 1894 to

1879. They stayed independent for one year, all of my sources claim, when, in 1880, they became known as the Holland Presbyterian Church,<sup>12</sup> which existed until 1894.

In 1884, the building which the First Presbyterian or early Fourth Reformed had erected in 1872 was purchased by two men on behalf of the Grace Brethren group.<sup>13</sup> Among the Grace Brethren group were numbered two sons of Scholte: Henry and David.<sup>14</sup> The Brethren occupied this place until 1897.<sup>15</sup>

The Holland Presbyterian church, for unknown reasons, joined the Reformed denomination once again in 1894, becoming once again the Fourth Reformed Church.<sup>16</sup> They procured the use of the old Scholte church building located on West First Street, between Liberty and Franklin Streets, with the sign over the entrance: "In Deo Spes Nostra et Refugium" (In God is Our Hope and Refuge). When Vande Kieft arrived, a year later, they were worshipping in Scholte's old church building.<sup>17</sup>

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1910 Fourth Reformed." Rozendaal also cites The History of Marion County as saying that the First Presbyterian "was originally known as the Fourth Reformed Church."

<sup>12</sup> A number of sources claim that the Presbyterian Church dissolved in 1882. But see note 15 below.

<sup>13</sup> R. R. Beard and D. Kruidenier.

<sup>14</sup> "Plymouth Brethren So-Called," by Dean Ver Steeg, The History of Pella, Iowa 1847-1987, © 1988 by the Curtis Media Corporation, Sponsored by the Pella Historical Society, p. 101.

<sup>15</sup> We do not know where this "Holland Presbyterian" church worshipped, and we wonder why they did not use the building on Union Street. From the Property Abstract of 606 Union Street (which is presently owned by Pella II Church), we do know the following:

1. On August 6, 1872, the Warranty Deed passed from Abraham and Dina Wisse to the Trustees of the First Presbyterian Church of Pella, viz., D. W. Vohies, Wm. Ramsey, and A. L. Halstead.
2. That the First Presbyterian Church filed Articles of Incorporation on January 6, 1863 and January 10, 1871.
3. That the above mentioned Trustees took out a \$700 mortgage from the Trustees of the Church Erection Fund of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, filed January 17, 1873.
4. That in a document dated October 13, 1884 (and filed January 29, 1887!), Trustees of the First Presbyterian Church of Pella, (E. L. Wallace, J. S. Baker) consigned the Warranty Deed to D. Kruidenier and R. R. Beard.
5. That Kruidenier & Beard passed the Warranty Deed to Willem Thomassen on April 27, 1897, who in turn passed it on to Jan Van den Berg on September 4, 1897. Perhaps Thomassen was the one "unfriendly" to Pella II (see further in the story).

This official account, therefore, speaks of the existence of the First Presbyterian Church of Pella at least to 1884. Yet all we might conclude with certainty is that the Board of First Presbyterian carried on the business concerns of the corporation to that date -- the on-going life of the church may have ceased years before. Or maybe not! Maybe the Holland Presbyterian Church simply was the First Presbyterian Church. But then why should they sell their own building? Too small? But Scholte's building was hardly larger! And why, when the young Second Christian Reformed bought the property in 1897, was no mention made of the fact their congregation had built, owned, and used the building for years not very long before? Unanswered questions!

<sup>16</sup> Recorded in the minutes of the Presbyterian Synod of Iowa and the Historical Directory of the Reformed Church in America, as noted by Rozendaal, p. 24.

<sup>17</sup> This building had been used by the "Maasdam group" out of Scholte's congregation until 1888. The building was demolished in 1916. A replica has been built as part of Pella's "Historical Village" on Franklin Street.

The Conflict Occurring During Vande Kieft's Ministry, Part II

Now let us return to the conflict in Fourth Reformed Church in 1896. We left the Sunday School Teachers removed from their classrooms by the Consistory. They resisted this decision, and filed an appeal with the Classis Iowa of the Reformed Church, asking them to reverse the decision of the elders. At this, the "Consistory asked Classis the right to discipline members of whom it could be proven that they advocated Arminian doctrines and the soul's repose in the grave (zielenslaap) teaching, thus causing unrest in the congregation." Classis, however did nothing: they responded to neither request.

The Consistory was disturbed by this lack of support. The elders took their calling seriously to "guard the soundness of doctrine" and "manifest more obedience to God than man." With some reluctance, therefore, they proposed an "Act of Separation" to the congregation, and set forth their reasons for their recommendation. Though the doctrinal differences were deep and important, the Act cites not doctrine, but their desire for peace. Apparently, the former Sunday School teachers thought that Classis gave them a victory, and they began to press their views in various settings, including the meetings of the consistory. In order to get away from this harassment, the elders felt they had to withdraw from the authority of the Reformed Church.

The congregation met on November 9, 1896. Acts 20:17-38 was read. By a vote of twenty-one to six, the Act of Separation was approved. It read<sup>18</sup>:

It is the conviction of this Meeting that, in behalf of the mutual rest and peace, the duty of the Congregation is to withdraw itself from the direction of the Classis of Iowa of the Ref. Church in America, which we hereby do. The Congregation affirms hereby its continued loyalty to the teachings of the Reformed Church as expressed in the 37 articles of our Confession. Our action we found in Art. 32 of said Confession: "And therefore we reject all human inventions, and all laws which man would introduce into the worship of God, thereby to bind and compel the conscience, in any manner whatever. Therefore we admit only of that, which tends to nourish and preserve concord and unity, and to keep all men in obedience to God."

We have been pressed to this action through the threat of our opponents at nearly each meeting, threatening us with the influence of Classis Iowa.

We have informed Classis how the parties, holding to the Arminian and soul sleep teachings, did appeal against the ordination of chosen Consistory members, sound in doctrine.

These parties however encouraged by action of Classis in their unsound views were more active in giving unrest and discord within the bounds of the Congregation.

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<sup>18</sup> As it is recorded in the personal narrative. Small differences occur between this rendering and the official minutes of the Act as found in the minutes of the Consistory of Pella II, dated September 28, 1897.

We are exceedingly tired of all this quarreling and are perfectly convinced that Classis is giving in against the real welfare of the congregation and can not see into it to come to rest under the present personnel of the Classis.

It grieves us to be obliged thus to do. At the same time we express our respect for some members of Classis Iowa, who will acknowledge with us [...] the admonition of the Holy Ghost in Acts 20:28 . . .<sup>19</sup>

[“Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood.” Acts 20:28]

So it was done. As the winter of 1896-1897 approached, the congregation was divided, the difference within it having come to final expression.

Classis Iowa of the Reformed Church tried to bring the group back into their midst, but when Classis would not take a position in the dispute between the elders and the Sunday School teachers, and make a promise of support for Reformed doctrine, the elders declined their proposal.

Upon the failure to persuade this group to return to the fold of the Reformed Church in America, Classis Iowa selected some members of the Sunday School teachers to serve on the new Consistory of Fourth Reformed. The continuing Fourth Reformed obtained a court injunction to keep Vande Kieft's church from worshipping in the Scholte church building, where they had been meeting until this point. Apparently this made for some drama on one Sunday morning, because people came to church only to discover that they were locked out! They were quite indignant about this turn of events: “A dangerous act indeed, for closing the doors of God's house on the purity of his truth is placing the favor of the God of Hope and Refuge out of doors and sounds our death knell as a church.”<sup>20</sup>

Accepting the help generously offered by the mayor of Pella, Vande Kieft's group began meeting in the City Hall (with fuel provided!), whose quarters, apparently, were very crowded. As one person remembered:

The spacious chambers were filled to overflow -- even the stairway leading to the street was packed like herring<sup>21</sup> and the Lord blessed His Word preached.

Months later, they voted to join the Christian Reformed Church (but only by a 60-40% vote!):

Not desiring to continue as an independent congregation, a Congregational Meeting was held June 7, 1897 at which it was decided with 23 affirmative to 15 negative

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<sup>19</sup> The manuscript of the personal narrative becomes illegible at this point.

<sup>20</sup> Personal narrative, 1910. The “padlock” incident is also mentioned in the reminiscences of Joseph Vande Kieft.

<sup>21</sup> The personal narrative reads: “a la mode herring”.

votes to join the Christian Reformed Church and an application to that effect was directed to Classis Iowa of the Chr. Ref. Ch.

By August, all was ready, and, on the 18th, a Wednesday, every individual of Vande Kieft's church was interviewed, and asked to promise to adhere to the doctrinal standards of the Christian Reformed Church, and reject the teachings and fellowship of the lodge.<sup>22</sup> Some 109 souls became the Second Christian Reformed Church of Pella. "Thus we see," our narrator concludes,

it was not mere petty quarrels that gave birth to our Pella II church, but real principles of truth and government were involved of which she certainly needs not to be ashamed but truly thankful to have been accounted worthy to suffer loss for Christ's sake.

But the story should proceed just a little farther. What became of the Fourth Reformed Church? In March of 1909, the Consistory officially noted "serious discontent" in the church.<sup>23</sup> Their very existence no longer seemed justified. On April 20, 1910, the church ceased to exist. Fifty-four members were transferred to other Reformed, Christian Reformed, and other churches in the area.<sup>24</sup> This indicates that it is wrong to say that "Fourth Reformed became Second Christian Reformed;" it is more correct to say that the withdrawal of 109 members from the Fourth Reformed to the Second Christian Reformed amounted to between one-half and two-thirds of the membership of Fourth Church.

Having withdrawn in November of 1896, the congregation voted to attempt the purchase of the "Grace Church" on Union Street, just a short distance from City Hall.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Pella II Fiftieth Anniversary Booklet, p. 8. The Lodge issue had agitated the Reformed Churches in Western Michigan in the early eighties and caused tens of thousands of Reformed Church people to join the still-young Christian Reformed Church. For an account of this, see "The Masonic Controversy in Holland, Michigan, 1879-1882" by Elton J. Bruins in Perspectives on the Christian Reformed Church: Studies in Its History, Theology, and Ecumenicity, edited by Peter De Klerk and Richard R. De Ridder (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1983), pp. 53-72.

<sup>23</sup> Rozendaal, p. 24. In the Archives of Central College, a letter is filed from J. E. Hoffman, the Stated Clerk of the Reformed Church in America (1556 Fifth Avenue, New York, 10, New York), to Teunis Wormhoudt of Pella, dated February 15, 1956. The Letter says that the Fourth Reformed Church of Pella was last mentioned in the minutes of the Particular Synod of Chicago in 1909 as having for its membership 34 families, 55 in communion, and 88 in Sunday School.

<sup>24</sup> Rozendaal, pp. 24-25. Rozendaal writes fifty-four, but accounts for only fifty-two. Murt Kooi report reads his sentence a different way, summing these two figures when she reports in The History of Pella, p. 104, that 106 persons were members at its close. The key sentence in Rozendaal reads: "On April the twentieth, fifty-four members of the Fourth Church were transferred, twenty to ..., six to ..., two to ..., twelve to ..., two to ..., one to ..., two to ..., one to ..., and one to .... Five did not ask for a transfer." Between Rozendaal's research, and the numbers mention by the Stated Clerk above in his letter of 1956, it appears that Fourth Reformed dissolved with over one hundred members. When Fourth Reformed of Pella dissolved, some of its assets were given to the Reformed Church of Eddyville, Iowa. A granddaughter of an Eddyville Church elder receiving these (Barb Dieleman of Pella) has lent Fourth Reformed's Communion set for display at Pella II's centennial celebration.

<sup>25</sup> It is disappointing not to hear some awareness that this building was likely constructed by forebears of the soon-to-be Second CRC!

Apparently, it was not to be -- until "Brother John Van de Berg<sup>26</sup> appeared at the worried Consistory meeting, having bought the mortgage out of the hands of those unfavorable to the church." People were impressed: they called him a "proved, firm friend of the congregation . . . by his Christian liberality and sympathy manifested in all things."<sup>27</sup> (Remember, this was written in 1910, when memories could have faded, but did not!) Within a year, the congregation had bought a parsonage on two lots, two blocks south of Union Street.

Rev. Vande Kieft, with some preparation, was examined and ordained in the Christian Reformed Church in 1898, and served four additional churches, the last being the Tracy church, from 1915 to 1922; he passed away in 1934 in Grand Rapids at the age of seventy-two. It appears from accounts of his ministry that he was a man of great-heartedness, with true love for the Savior and his work. Pella II was well served by his leadership.

#### Conclusion

Where did Pella II come from? From the preceding study, it seems that we came from a restless amalgamation of Christian people in Pella, some influenced by the ideals of Scholte, others holding to the ideals of the Reformation. They did not become clear about their deepest beliefs until a crisis arrived in their relationships. It seems to me that the influence of Scholte among the churches of Pella was finally played out in the Fourth Reformed Church. When Vande Kieft and the elders came up against the Sunday School teachers, they were really coming against the influence of Scholte in their midst. As happened so many times before, Scholte lost in the confrontation. The Second Christian Reformed Church was the last deliberate, significant movement of people away from Scholte's thoughts and pre-occupations; those who likely continued to follow them could not keep themselves together, and dissolved amidst much unrest within 13 years of the dispute with Vande Kieft and the elders.

I am glad that the founders of Pella II pursued the truth about the gospel, and helped preserve it for us. We do well to dwell upon their struggle and decisions for our own day. Having been founded upon strong convictions about the gospel, and the need to adhere to its teaching, Second Christian Reformed has been blessed for one-hundred years, serving God in partnership with seventeen pastors. May we always be found established upon the Rock that is Christ and the true confession about him!

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<sup>26</sup> Margaret Brass, presently of Pella II, is a granddaughter of Van de Berg.

<sup>27</sup> Anonymous narrative, 1910.