

News
from the
Evangelical
and Reformed Historical Society



Reminder – Join us for the ERHS Annual Meeting, September 26, 2015.

The 2015 Annual Meeting will be held on Saturday, September 26, 2015 at the Hafer Center, Philip Schaff Library, on the campus of the Lancaster Theological Society, Lancaster, PA.

Our keynote speaker will be Margaret (Peggy) Bendroth, Executive Director of the Congregational Library & Archives in Boston, <http://www.congregationallibrary.org/>. Author or editor of several books, her most recent book, *The Spiritual Practice of Remembering*, summons readers to remember and honor the past.

In February, 2015, Archivist Phillip B. Anglin set off on a journey – walking the Camino de Santiago. See the next page for a report from his 8-week trip.



Credencial del Peregrino, or Pilgrim's Passport

The Camino de Santiago de Compostela (The French Way)

by Phillip B. Anglin

The Camino de Santiago de Compostela, or The Way of St. James, is a network of trails that crosses the vastness of Europe leading pilgrims westward to the burial site of St. James the Greater, located at Santiago de Compostela, Spain. The Camino has no official starting place and allows the pilgrim to enter through a door that "... is open to all, to sick and healthy, not only to Catholics but also to pagans, Jews, heretics and vagabonds..." according to a poem composed in the 13th century at a Pyrenean monastery. A series of ancient paths and modern highways are strung together leading the pilgrim toward his or her destination. As one enters the city of Santiago de Compostela, one sees carved in stone, "Europe was made on the road to Compostela."

The journey is navigated by always being on the lookout for yellow arrows (*flechas amarillas*) that are painted on anything imaginable, sometimes elusive in nature; scallop shells encased in a concrete marker; and sometimes if lucky a metal sign directing the pilgrim to the end of his or her day's journey. At present, the most popular trail is the French Way (Camino Francés), officially beginning at St. Jean-Pied-de-Port, located in the Basque region of France. From St.-Jean-Pied-de-Port, France to Santiago, Spain the pilgrim journeys 784 kilometers (489 miles).

Legend has it that following the death of Jesus, Saint James "sailed to Padron, Galicia, and began preaching the gospel. Saint James stayed briefly in this region of Spain and eventually returned to Jerusalem, ... In AD 42 Herod beheaded Saint James. His disciples brought his body back to Pardon, and he was buried in the village of Libredon [now present day Santiago de Compostela]" (Pivonka 3).

Pelayo, a shepherd living in Libredon, is credited with finding the lost burial site of St. James the Greater in 813, when he was "startled by a group of bright lights [stars] hovering over a meadow where his flock was pastured" (3). The local bishop, whose name was Theodomir, was alerted of the finding. Upon further exploration "Here ... [was found] a building in ruins with an altar and a lower level crypt with three burials and a piece of parchment in the sarcophagus identifying the remains as St. James and his two disciples, Theodore and Athanasius" (Lago 35).

I began the pilgrimage with the book *A Pilgrim's Guide to the Camino de Santiago St. Jean-Roncesvalles-Santiago* but I found it to be too cumbersome and filled with too much information. In Pamplona, I purchased the Michelin guide *Camino de Santiago: St. Jean-Pied-de-Port – Santiago de Compostela* and it became the only guide that I used. Fellow pilgrims would sometimes take the book and study it before we headed out each morning.

Having the opportunity to walk the pilgrimage during Holy Week and Easter, I was able to see the Lenten processions. In the city of Ponferrada, I walked in one. It was unlike anything I have ever participated in. This particular procession began late in the evening and concluded sometime after 1:00 a.m. Hundreds, maybe even thousands of us walked behind a platform carried on the shoulders of individuals dressed in robes and hoods. This particular platform had a figure of Jesus that depicted his Passion. Behind those carrying the platform was a marching band who played somber religious music. Between the tunes, there was the beating of a large bass drum that was viscerally stirring. As we walked through the streets, people were looking out their apartment windows, seemingly religiously moved by what they were seeing. No one seemed annoyed by the "noise" and or the number of people who were clogging the city streets.

It was a journey that has changed my life. If given the opportunity again, I would be packed and ready to leave tomorrow to make the same journey.

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RECENT ACCESSIONS

Accessions in the first half of 2015 include:

Items from the Pennsylvania Southeast Conference, Camp Mensch Mill, including historic artifacts and large descriptive panels. More information on the sale of Mensch Mill is provided here: <http://psec.org/about-psec/sale-of-mensch-mill/>

Files and artifacts from St. Luke's United Church of Christ, Lancaster; for an article on its closing, see: http://lancasteronline.com/features/faith_values/an-era-ends-at-st-luke-s-united-church-of/article_9f3999d4-fb22-11e4-9bda-dbc71ee612b2.html.

UNIQUE FUNDRAISING EFFORT

ERHS was contacted by a local company that operates two diners in Lancaster and Lititz, and offered the opportunity to participate in a fundraiser. We will receive a small percentage as a donation when people use a swipe card (similar to those for a grocery store) as they pay their restaurant bill. There is no charge to us.

If you are in the Lancaster, PA area, you may be receiving a brochure with your newsletter, featuring this "Sharing our Success" program and the swipe card, as well as a coupon good for a one-time discount. If you would like more of these cards to share with family, friends and colleagues, or if you will be visiting the Lancaster area, please contact ERHS.

Visit to the ERHS Archives

by Tim Mackey, son of The Rev. Dr. Sheldon Mackey and Marie Mackey

In October of 2014 my brothers and sister gathered at Lancaster Theological Seminary (LTS) to celebrate what would have been our parents' hundredth birthday and the endowment we created to honor them at the institution they loved. When the dust settled my eldest brother Peter, an LTS graduate, and I spent some time looking through some incredible material at the E&R Historical Society, focusing on our father's many years of ministry in the Reformed, Evangelical and Reformed and finally the United Church of Christ.

The material was extensive and included many papers and tapes about which we never knew. I have now taken the time to contribute to the Society's collection by offering items related to my father's brother, who lost his life in World War II. In these letters we see a young minister fearful for his brother and counseling him, even encouraging him to go to church. It would be an understatement to say, I will be visiting the Society again to peruse further the collection it contains on my father and the Church he loved.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

General Synod – June 26th - 30th
Archivist Phillip Anglin and Archivist Emeritus Richard Berg will be at the ERHS Exhibit Booth at General Synod, June 26-30, 2015. Stop by and say hello!

2015 Annual Meeting of the ERHS
Hafer Center, Lancaster Theological Seminary
September 26, 2015
Keynote speaker will be Margaret Bendroth, Executive Director of the Congregational Library & Archives.

Note: ERHS has ordered several copies of Bendroth's book *The Spiritual Practice of Remembering* directly from the publisher (Eerdmans) and is able to offer a special price:

\$10 plus \$3 shipping for members,

\$16 plus \$3 shipping for nonmembers.

Please contact us if you would like a copy!

IN MEMORIAM

We have learned of the deaths of the following ERHS members & UCC Clergy:

The Rev. Richard H. Aulenbach, February 2015

The Rev. Wallace J. Bieber, April, 2015

The Rev. William E. Harner Jr., May 2015

The Rev. Dr. Harold A. Henning, April, 2015

Please contact ERHS at erhs@lancasterseminary.edu if you have news of Caravaners or ERHS members to report.

THANK YOU

We have recently accepted the resignations of The Rev. Ronald Grubb, OCC, Dr. Theodore Trost, and Mr. Terry White from the Board of ERHS. *Thank you* for your service to the Board and for your continuing interest in the Society.

We will announce incoming board members in a subsequent newsletter and hope to have them join us for the Annual Meeting.

Another Declaration of Independence

by John B. Frantz

This essay will describe the history of the German Reformed Church from the mid-sixteenth to the late eighteenth century. The emphasis will be on the problems that the church faced in Europe and America as well as the aid rendered to German Reformed people in Pennsylvania by the Dutch Reformed Church. It will conclude with the organization of the independent German Reformed Church in the United States.

The German Reformed Church emerged in what is now southwestern Germany, the valley of the Rhine and Neckar rivers. The area was known as the Palatinate, the major city of which was Heidelberg. The Reformation came late to the Palatinate. In 1545, Elector Otto Henry, one of the eight rulers who elected the Holy Roman Emperor, introduced Lutheranism to his people. In early modern Europe, the ruler determined the religion of his subjects. When Otto Henry died in 1559, his son Frederick, later known as Frederick the Pious, opted for a more comprehensive form of Protestantism. He instructed Zacharias Ursinus, who had studied with Philip Melancthon, and Caspar Olivianus, who had studied in John Calvin's Geneva, to write a catechism. Their document, known as the Heidelberg Catechism, was published in 1563, fulfilled the Elector's hope that it would mediate between doctrinal extremes. It contains Ulrich Zwingli's, Calvin's, and Melancthon's interpretation of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper as spiritual communion with Christ. It includes predestination, that God calls those whom he has chosen for salvation but not Calvin's belief that God condemns the non-elect to eternal perdition (McNeil, 1954, 268-70, 270-71; Holburn, 1964, 260-61). The catechism has been described as combining Lutheran fervor, Melancthonian clarity, Zwinglian simplicity, and Calvinistic fire (Goebel, 1842, quoted in Richards, 1952, 278). It became the doctrinal statement of the German Reformed Church. It was to the Reformed people what Luther's catechism was to his followers. Reformed churches in other lands also accepted it, including the French, Scottish, and Dutch. It was republished frequently and was translated into numerous languages (Good, 1894, 190-91). Printed with the catechism was the Palatinate Liturgy that provided forms for worship services, suggestions for sermon texts, and a specification of holy days (Thompson, 1963, 49-67).

Elector Frederick and most other Protestant rulers tried to preserve the peace that followed the Schmalkaldic Wars and the Treaty of Augsburg of 1555 that permitted Lutheranism in the Empire. Frederick stretched the truth by defending the Heidelberg Catechism before the Emperor and other electors as an expression of Lutheranism. Repeated violations of the treaty by Catholic rulers caused Frederick's successors and Palatine politicians to spread their Protestant beliefs aggressively. They moved against Catholic regimes in German territories and supported the Dutch and French Reformed against Catholic forces in their countries. The acceptance by Palatine Elector Frederick V of the Bohemian crown in 1618 contributed to the outbreak of the Thirty Years War that ended with the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648 (Parker, 1987, 64-65, 179-80). The treaty permitted the Reformed faith in Empire (Classen, 1963, 1-5, 24-25). After a brief period of peace, warfare resumed, and the armies of the French King Louis XIV devastated the Palatinate repeatedly during the late seventeenth and well into the eighteenth centuries (Holborn, 1969, 94-95; Good, 1894, 248-96). Various types of problems, many of which the wars had created, drove thousands of German-speaking emigrants to Pennsylvania.

The German Reformed settlers found that religion in Pennsylvania differed from their homeland in three ways: it was free, voluntary, and pluralistic. Shortly after William Penn received his colony from England's King Charles II in 1681, he declared that, in contrast to Europe, "all persons living in this province who acknowledge one almighty and eternal god... shall in no way be molested or prejudiced for their religious persuasion or practice... nor shall they be compelled" to attend services. Another difference was that while in Europe the civil government paid the clergy and maintained the churches' buildings, Penn promised that no one would be forced to "maintain any religious worship, place, or ministry whatever (Soderlund, 1983, 132). Religious people could provide whatever leadership they wanted and build whatever structures they needed but would have to pay their own expenses. Because religion was free and voluntary, it became more pluralistic than in most areas of Europe. Francis Daniel Pastorius who led the Germantown colony wrote in 1683 that the settlers were so diverse that "they must have come on Noah's ark" (Soderlund, 1983, 355). Pennsylvania's Governor George Thomas wrote in the mid-eighteenth century that "the Germans imported all the religious whimsies of their country" and divided further after their arrival (Perry, 2, 1969, 256). One observer noted that "there exist in Pennsylvania so many varieties and doctrines that it is impossible to name them all." In addition to settlers of Reformed; Lutheran; and Roman Catholic background, called "church people," there were Mennonites; Amish; First Day Baptists, popularly called Dunkers; Seventh Day Baptists; Schwenkfelders; Inspirationists; New Mooners; New Born; and Moravians (Handlin and Clive, 1960, 21). The so-called "sectarians" who had separated from Europe's legally established churches rejoiced in their new-found freedom. Christopher Sauer, later a prominent newspaper publisher and spokesman for the sectarians, praised Penn's policy on religion, writing that Pennsylvania was a colony where everyone may believe what he chooses (Schwartz, 1987, 84).

The "church people," including the German Reformed found it difficult to adjust to this environment. Competitors, especially the Baptists and Moravians, proselytized freely. In Europe, most governments would have suppressed them (Durnbaugh, 1997, 51-67; Wenger, 1961, 103-15); however, in Pennsylvania, as one immigrant complained, the government has nothing to do with religion (Tappert and Doberstein, 1952, I, 67). Another declared that there was too much religious freedom in Pennsylvania (Hinke, 1916, 206, 219). Religious pluralism led to conflict. "Sectarians" regarded as invalid the churches' insistence on an educated professional clergy and taunted the "church people" charging that their clergy served only for their remuneration (Hinke, 1916, 162). They implied that their sermons had so little effect that they were a waste of money. As a result, some colonists became so confused that they did not know what to believe. Seeking spiritual homes, some shifted from one church or sect to another. Others abandoned all religious groups and mocked people of all faiths (Tappert and Doberstein, 1952, I, 143-44; Hinke, 1903, 239).

Consistent clerical leadership was scarce during the early years of settlement in Pennsylvania (Hinke, 1916, 239). Samuel Guldin, a Reformed minister who had been banished from Switzerland, settled near Philadelphia in 1710 and preached occasionally in Germantown but accepted no regular pastorates (Hinke, 1916, 107, n. 122). George Michael Weis arrived in 1727 and served briefly in the Goshenhoppen region. In 1730, he went to Europe to collect funds for the Pennsylvania churches. In 1731, he went to New York where he served until 1746. John Henry Goetschy came to Pennsylvania in 1735, preached in the Goshenhoppen region until 1740 when he left for Dutch Reformed congregations in New Jersey. Shortly after John Peter Miller arrived in Philadelphia in 1730, he preached in Philadelphia and in the Goshenhoppen and Conestoga regions but in 1735 joined the Seventh Day Baptists at Ephrata. Goetschy and Miller were ordained by the Presbytery of Philadelphia. John Bartholomew Rieger irregularly served several congregations while he practiced medicine but frequently was involved in controversies. Eventually, he was dismissed from the

German Reformed ministry (Hinke, 1903, 3, 8, 19; Hinke, 1951, 18-26). Adding to the settlers' problems were morally challenged men who circulated through the colony delivering sermons and sacraments to devout people who lacked legitimately ordained ministers (Frantz, 2008, 22-24).

It was John Philip Boehm who held German Reformed people together during the first half of the eighteenth century. Boehm was the son of a German Reformed minister in the Palatinate and had been a teacher in Reformed Church schools before settling in southeastern Pennsylvania in 1720. He was so effective as a lay reader to Reformed people in the vicinity of Falkner Swamp, near present-day Gilbertsville, that they asked him to become their minister. He wrote that he wanted to "escape this yoke" in order to support his family, but his conscience convinced him to accept this call as from God (Hinke, 1916, 409). On October 15, 1725, he administered the Lord's Supper to them. Boehm then organized congregations at Falkner Swamp, Skippack, and Whitemarsh and wrote constitutions for them. When the recently ordained George Michael Weiss arrived, he informed the elders that according to the German Reformed Church Order the ministry of a layman was not valid (Hinke, 1951, 18-20). Realizing that no help could be expected from their war-torn homeland, the elders described their situation to the Dutch Reformed Classis of Amsterdam and promised to abide by its advice. A year later, the Classis validated Boehm's ministry and instructed him to be ordained by the Dutch Reformed ministers in New York. The Classis added that such irregular behavior was not to be repeated (Hinke, 1916, 157-174).

Although the Dutch were sympathetic to the plight of their German co-religionists, they were slow to act. In 1734, Boehm reported to Dutch churchmen the desperate need of the German Reformed in Pennsylvania for ministers (Hinke, 1916, 234), but they sent no useful clergy until 1746. Boehm often was the only legitimately ordained German Reformed minister in the colony. When German Reformed people in other areas of southeastern and south central Pennsylvania learned about Boehm's ministry in and around Falkner Swamp, they asked him to serve them too. In 1727, he responded to calls from the Conestoga and Tulpehocken regions in what are now Lancaster, Lebanon, and Dauphin counties (Hinke, 1916, 409). In 1734, he began to serve the congregation in Philadelphia (Hinke, 1916, 411). Later, he expanded his ministry to the Schuylkill and Oley valleys, northwest of Philadelphia (Hinke, 1916, 73-74). Indeed, the entire area between Philadelphia and the Blue Mountains, between the Delaware and Susquehanna rivers became his parish, an area now covered by at least ten counties. Thousands of German Reformed people became his parishioners. Among them, he organized congregations, preached the Gospel, administered the church's sacraments and rites, and conducted catechetical training (Frantz, 1982, 28-29). Boehm reported that because of the people's poverty, he received only modest compensation. Probably, Boehm's oldest son's careful management of his farm made possible his far-flung ministry (Hinke, 1916, 146, 184-85, 426-27). Despite Boehm's efforts, the Dutch authorities did not seem to respect him (Hinke, 1916, 339). In 1737, they appointed the Dutch Reformed minister at Neshaminy, Peter Henry Dorsius, as their "Commissioner" over the German Reformed congregations in Pennsylvania. Consequently, Boehm wrote that his "heart was troubled" (Hinke, 1916, 262-3). Probably his heart was even more troubled when he learned that Dorsius had sent to Dutch churchmen information that he had gathered as if he, Dorsius, had obtained it (Hinke, 1916, 321, n. 204). Perhaps in order to rid themselves of responsibility for the German Reformed people in Pennsylvania, Dutch officials advised Boehm to unite the German Reformed with the Presbyterians in Philadelphia. Boehm rejected their proposal because he believed that it would require the German Reformed people to give up their Heidelberg Catechism and Palatinate Liturgy (Hinke, 1916, 391).

When the Dutch officials learned in the early 1740s that the Moravians were sending missionaries to Pennsylvania, they began to provide more effective assistance. They sent published

warnings about the evangelistic Moravians to Boehm who used them as sources in his own pamphlets that he circulated and paid for (Hinke, 1916, 110-31, 348-49, 370-71). In addition, they sent the thirty year-old Michael Schlatter to serve the approximately 30,000 German settlers of Reformed background (Hinke, 1903, 32; Hinke, 1916, 243-44, n. 102). He had been born into a distinguished Swiss family, studied in the canton of St. Gall, and served as vicar in Thurgau (Hinke, 1951, 37-39). He came with challenging instructions from the Dutch churchmen. He was to visit settlements and organize Reformed congregations where there were none, determine the amount of salary they could pay their ministers, report annually to the synods of Holland, accept congregations that would call him to be their minister, and organize an administrative body called a Coetus. It was to be subordinate to the Dutch Classis of Amsterdam (Hinke, 1951, 38-39). Schlatter carried out his instructions with extraordinary energy. In 1747, he organized the Coetus. It included ministers and elders who provided centralized organization that the German Reformed people had lacked. When the Dutch sent ministers to Pennsylvania, the Coetus assigned them to locations where they were needed. When the Dutch sent funds for the salaries of ministers and schoolmasters, the Coetus distributed them. The Coetus attempted to resolve disputes between ministers and congregations. In order to minister to the scattered German Reformed settlers, Schlatter traveled farther into the interior than Boehm, even to the Monocacy region of Maryland, near present-day Frederick, and to the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia, almost to the vicinity of what is now Harrisonburg. Simultaneously, he served as minister of the Philadelphia congregation (Harbaugh, 1857, 118-97). Unfortunately for Schlatter and the German Reformed Church, his indiscreet behavior in Switzerland and Philadelphia led to his dismissal in 1755 by his congregation, the Coetus, and the Dutch churchmen who had sent him (Hinke, 1915, 452, 460; Pritzker-Ehrlich, 1986, 8-10, 84-85, 93 n.).

Nevertheless, the Dutch intensified their assistance. They sent to Pennsylvania numerous ministers to serve existing congregations and to organize others. In 1747, they financed John Philip Leydich's journey. Boehm, who was to live only another two years, asked that Leydich succeed him at Falkner Swamp and Providence, now known as Trappe, located between what became Norristown and Pottstown (Hinke, 1951, 52-53). A year later, they sent John Conrad Steiner, who served in Philadelphia, Germantown, and Frederick. From Frederick, Steiner preached to German Reformed settlers in other parts of western Maryland and Virginia (Hinke, 1951, 60-65). During a trip to Europe in 1751 and '52, Schlatter recruited five candidates for the ministry in Pennsylvania whom the Dutch approved and sent. The most important was Philip William Otterbein who during more than six decades served congregations in Lancaster, Tulpehocken, Frederick, York, and Baltimore. Despite the opposition of some Reformed ministers, he conducted "big meetings" in rural areas; organized classes for Bible reading, prayer, and testimony; associated with Methodists, and participated in the consecration of Francis Asbury as a Methodist bishop (Hinke, 1951, 71-79; Core, 1968, 26-31; Clark, 1991, I, 474 n. 55, 2, 753-54). The others, John Waldschmidt, Henry William Stoy, Theodore Frankenfeld, and John Jacob Wissler, also served effectively (Hinke, 1951, 89-94, 84-88, 68-71, 94-96). Subsequently, the Dutch officials sent other ministers to serve the German Reformed people in Pennsylvania, some of whom had outstanding ministries. Among them were John George Alsentz who arrived in 1757, having been aided by the Dutch synods of South and North Holland and the English Charity Fund. While Alsentz served in Germantown from 1758 to 1767, he extended his ministry to the east as far as Amwell in new Jersey, west to Reading, and south to Virginia. He presided over the expansion of the Germantown church and the construction of the church building at Worcester and preached dedicatory sermons in Reading and Tohickon. The Coetus elected him president in 1760, '61, and '64. His death at the young age of thirty-three in 1767 was a serious loss to the German Reformed Church (Hinke, 1951, 101-04). Casper Dietrich Weyberg, sent in 1763, stabilized the congregation in Philadelphia that he served from 1764 to 1790 (Hinke, 1951, 106-11). Nicholas Pomp arrived in 1764 and William Hendel in 1765. Both had been sent by the Dutch and

became outstanding leaders of the church (Hinke, 1951, 111, 117). Dutch officials sent Abraham Blumer in 1770. He organized congregations in the Lehigh Valley and served them for three decades (Hinke, 1951, 158-60). The Dutch continued to send capable ministers until the 1780s.

Not only did the Dutch churchmen fund the passage of numerous ministers but they also provided subsidies to salaries for ministers and schoolmasters (Hinke, 1903, 240, 274, 276, 293). Boehm and his successors explained that such aid was necessary because of the German settlers' extreme poverty (Hinke, 1903, 234, 268, 274, 452-53). Some had spent all of their resources before reaching Rotterdam, the port of debarkation for most German emigrants. Many had to sign indentures to sell their labor in order to pay for their passage to Pennsylvania (Hinke, 1951, 21; Handlin and Clive, 1960, 16). Coetus officials usually administered the funds that they received. In order to avoid quarreling, they distributed them equally to ministers, most of whom "are satisfied with their small salary, and will suffer a little than be too burdensome..." (Hinke, 1903, 221, 293). Later, the Coetus was unable to continue that policy and asked the Dutch to specify which ministers were to receive what they called the "charitable donations" (Hinke, 1903, 293). In addition, the Dutch provided copies of the Dutch Church Order and Bibles. The Coetus directed that a Bible be placed in "every pulpit, in which regular ministers officiate" (Harbaugh, 1857, 128-29; Hinke, 1903, 68-69, 110, 128, 322). Although it is difficult to calculate the amount of financial support that the Dutch provided, it was significant (Good, 1899, 666-73). The Dutch Reformed synods of South and North Holland were under no obligation to assist the German Reformed people in Pennsylvania. That they did so for almost a half century was an act of uncommon charity. The Coetus frequently expressed gratitude to the Dutch Church "for these large gifts and this long continued interest and supervision" (Hinke, 1903, 240, 276, 322, 402; Good, 1899, 666-69). It is doubtful that the German Reformed Church in this country could have survived without the aid of the Dutch.

As time passed, however, the Germans in Pennsylvania and the Dutch eventually drifted apart. They were separated by three thousand miles of ocean which made communication difficult. Reports that the Coetus sent to Dutch churchmen did not always survive the journey. Pirates and storms sometimes destroyed the ships that carried the messages. The same hazards occasionally prevented Dutch responses to questions that Coetus officials asked from reaching their destination (Hinke, 1903, 60, 252, 410, 441, 445). The difference in language caused problems. The Dutch wanted reports and other communications to be written in their language or in Latin. Secretaries of the Coetus were German and most knew neither Dutch nor Latin (Dubbs, 1902, 200).

Concern developed among the Coetus members in the 1780s concerning the quality of clergymen whom the Dutch sent from Holland. When Dietrich Christian Peck arrived in New York in 1788, he requested a significant sum of money. Coetus officials could not provide the funds and refused to admit him. He then served briefly in New York before being suspended from the ministry for unspecified reasons (Hinke, 1903, 220-25). Bernard Willy's offense was clear. He had arrived in 1784 with excellent credentials and received a call to serve the Reading congregation. Shortly after beginning his ministry there, he went to Muddy Creek, in Lancaster County, to be married. Before he returned, a letter arrived from his wife whom he had left in Switzerland. Following his confession, the Reading congregation and the Coetus dismissed him. Subsequently, he went to Virginia where he served faithfully until his death in 1810 (Hinke, 1903, 395-406). Worse were the offenses of Paul Peter Pernisius whom the Dutch had sent to Pennsylvania in 1784. Initially, the Coetus sent him to German Reformed congregations in New Jersey that promptly rejected him. Coetus then recommended him to congregations in and around Lebanon. They refused to have him. Reluctantly, congregations in the Schuylkill and Oley valleys accepted him, but he did not please them either. The Coetus secretary wrote, "this gentleman is useless in this country." While living in Chester County in

1788, Pernisius was charged but not convicted of murdering a Danish beggar. Pernisius went to Philadelphia where he "proved to be a continuous drunkard, and blasphemer, and also a digger of hidden treasures, and a conjurer of the devil." The Coetus excommunicated him (Hinke, 1903, 409, 432-33). After such experiences with clergy whom the Dutch had sent, they wrote in 1786 "it is very hazardous to continue sending ministers from Europe, since they have too often proved failures, and in the future may be equally bad. We would rather get along as best we can..." They felt that "men raised up in America were often better suited for their work than those sent from abroad" (Hinke, 1903, 409).

The solution to this problem, according to the members of the Coetus, was to establish a school in Pennsylvania to train ministers. In 1766, the Dutch Reformed founded such an institution in New Jersey that later became Rutgers University (Brown, 1928, 87-91). After the War for American Independence (1775-1783), John Henry Helffrich, secretary of the Coetus, asked for permission to develop a similar school for the German Reformed, but the Dutch churchmen denied permission (Hinke, 1903, 409; Dubbs, 1903, 7-8). Lutheran ministers also wanted such an institution, especially Justus Heinrich Christian Helmuth, a leader of the German Department of the University of Pennsylvania (Dubbs, 1903, 9-12). At the same time, several prominent Pennsylvanians, including Benjamin Rush, promoted the cause of a college to educate German young men. Rush and others envisioned the college "as a collaborative project among various religious denominations and civic leaders" (Griffith, 2010, 6). It was located in Lancaster, the approximate center of the state's German population. Rush wrote that the college would introduce the English language to the Germans which would be essential to them in legal transactions and in business (Klein, 1952, 14-15). Although the college was founded primarily for the Germans, Rush hoped that the college would contribute to Pennsylvania's ethnic and religious unity. Probably, he was a major fundraiser. Although Robert Morris, Peter Muhlenberg, Charles Biddle, and other well know Pennsylvanians contributed to the college, Benjamin Franklin was the most generous benefactor. Perhaps for that reason and that he was the most famous Pennsylvanian at that time, the college was named for him (Dubbs, 1903, 21, 25). The state legislature granted a charter to the college in 1787 and provided an endowment consisting of land in western Pennsylvania and later added two town lots in Lancaster (Dubbs, 1903, 24, 29). The principal of the new institution was Henry Gotthilf Ernest Muhlenberg, minister of Lancaster's Lutheran Church. The vice-principal was William Hendel, who served the local Reformed Church who was older than Muhlenberg and therefore resented not having been named principal (Dubbs, 1903, 68). The principal's father, Henry Melchior Muhlenberg, confided to his journal that if the college "is of God, it will come into being despite many difficulties. On the other hand if it is only of man, it will not succeed..." (Tappert and Doberstein, III, 1958, 725). The college was not of God; it was of politics and might have been designed to gain the German vote in Pennsylvania and national politics. The ministers' desire for a school to train ministers and the politicians' goal for the higher education of the Germans were not the same (Griffith, 2010, 8; John, 2003, iii, 195). The Dutch Reformed authorities again opposed the founding of the college, fearing that educating and ordaining ministers in America would lead to the independence of the American church. They need not have worried that the college would educate ministers because the college had failed by 1790 for various reasons, particularly financial (Dubbs, 1903, 86-89). Nevertheless, they did have reason to fear that the American church would become independent of the Dutch.

What led directly to the separation was the desire of the Coetus to ordain candidates for the ministry (Good, 1899, 664). Almost all other American churches had this ability. The German Reformed Church needed ministers who could serve effectively in American surroundings. When the Coetus ordained Daniel Gros in 1765, the Dutch sent a stern rebuke (Hinke, 203, 235, 248; Good, 1899, 563). When the Coetus in 1771 asked for permission to ordain Caspar Wack, John William

Weber, John Daniel Wagner, John Conrad Steiner, Jr., and John Wesel Gilbert, the Coetus received no response and ordained them in 1772 (Hinke, 1903, 328). Again in the 1780s and '90s, because the Coetus received no responses to requests for permissions to ordain candidates it considered qualified, it proceeded on its own to ordain Jonathan Rahauer and Anthony Houtz (Hinke, 1903, 445).

At the Coetus meeting in 1791, members of the Coetus defied the Dutch officials and members passed a resolution stating that "the Coetus has the right at all times to examine and ordain those who offer themselves as candidates for the ministry without asking or waiting for permission to do so from the Fathers in Holland." This was a "declaration of independence" (Dubbs, 1902, 265). In 1792, the Coetus appointed a committee to prepare a constitution (Hinke, 1903, 446-51). In 1793, members thoroughly examined, discussed, and approved the document. Its title, the Synod of the German Reformed Church in the United States, originally in German, proclaimed that the assembly was no longer to be considered a Coetus, subordinate to the Dutch church, but was now an independent body. The constitution specified that the officers who were to be elected were a president and secretary and described their duties. Qualifications for the ministry were prescribed. Both ministers and elders were to be permitted to "vote on questions pertaining to the government of the Church..." Other important regulations were included in the constitution's nineteen articles (Klein, 1952, 80-89).

The German Reformed Church acted in accord with thirteen of Great Britain's American colonies that had declared their independence in 1776 and with other American denominations in breaking ties to European counterparts. The Congregationalists, Presbyterians, and Baptists never had been bound to foreign bodies. American Methodists separated from the Church of England in 1784 and became the Methodist Episcopal Church. In 1789, Anglicans also formed an American branch of the Church of England and named it the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States. During the 1780s, German Lutherans in America became less dependent on the Halle Missionary Society that had supported them. American Catholic priests requested and received an American bishop in 1790. The Dutch Reformed Church in America became fully independent in 1794. (See Ahlstrom, 1972, 372, 370, 377, 531; Roeber, 1993, 324-25).

In conclusion, the German Reformed Church, established in the Palatinate late in the Reformation of the sixteenth century, experienced a troubled existence. Europe's wars, many of which had religious implications, and poverty in America threatened its survival. John Philip Boehm provided steady leadership and held the church together during the settlers' early years in Pennsylvania. His appeals to officials of the Dutch Reformed Church produced leadership, financial aid, books, and organization that essential for its survival. By the late eighteenth century, the association with the Dutch had become superfluous, and the German Reformed Church in the United States became independent, as had most other American churches. It then assumed from the Dutch the authority and responsibilities for its future development.

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